

TIBET DIGEST

JULY 2024

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



FOUNDATION FOR NON-VIOLENT ALTERNATIVES (FNVA)

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

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Summary- July Tibet Digest

In July, Tibet witnessed intensified cultural suppression and sinicisation efforts by China, with increased control over religious practices and reports of forced labour and human rights abuses. The "Resolve Tibet Act" highlighted ongoing diplomatic tensions, while China's political and economic manoeuvres in the region raised international concerns. Despite natural disasters and environmental challenges on the Tibetan Plateau, China's academic and archaeological activities continued. International advocacy for Tibetan rights remained strong, with continued support from exile communities and Western nations. This month's Digest also covers military developments, Sino-Indian relations, and expert commentaries on Tibet's future.

CCP's Tibet Policies

China Closes 30-Year-Old Tibetan School Amid Controversial Boarding Policy: Chinese authorities have shut down the Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbulung school, a prominent 30-year-old private Tibetan educational institution located in Amdo Golog, Qinghai Province. Despite its founder, Jigme Gyaltzen, being acquitted of corruption charges, the school faced multiple lawsuits and sustained pressure from Communist Party officials leading to its closure. This move is part of a broader crackdown on Tibetan cultural education, aligning with China's contentious boarding school policy for Tibetan children. The policy has resulted in the widespread closure of traditional Tibetan schools, forcing students into Mandarin-medium government institutions. While the Chinese government asserts that these boarding schools offer access to quality education, critics argue they serve as tools for cultural assimilation, eroding Tibetan language and heritage.

The international community, including human rights organizations and foreign governments, has condemned the policy for its coercive nature and detrimental impact on Tibetan cultural preservation.

Tibetans Express Anguish Over China's Ban of Tibetan Language on Douyin: The Chinese government banned the use of the Tibetan language and removed Tibetan posts on Douyin (Chinese TikTok). The ban has sparked widespread outrage among Tibetans, who see it as an infringement on their cultural and linguistic rights. Videos have circulated online, with Tibetans questioning the legality and fairness of the ban. This move is viewed as part of a continued effort by Chinese authorities to suppress Tibetan culture and promote Mandarin, even extending these policies to digital platforms.

Compulsory State-Run Education in Tibet: Chinese authorities have closed Buddhist schools in Tibetan areas, forcing children to enroll in state-administered residential schools. These schools promote loyalty to the Communist Party and undermine Tibetan culture and language. Parents are required to sign agreements to prevent their children from attending other schools, signaling a broader attempt to assimilate Tibetan youth.

China Clamps Down on Social Media Ahead of Dalai Lama's Birthday: Chinese authorities tightened social media restrictions on Tibetans ahead of the Dalai Lama's birthday on July 6, 2024. The government intensified phone checks, banned the possession of the Dalai Lama's photos, and monitored communications to prevent celebrations or expressions of loyalty to the Tibetan spiritual leader. This is part of a broader strategy to suppress Tibetan cultural and religious identity, especially during significant events related to the Dalai Lama, whom China views as a separatist.

Buddhism

Demolition of Historic Tibetan Monastery for Hydropower Project: China has demolished a 135-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Qinghai province to expand the world's tallest 3D-printed hydropower dam. Despite local protests, the Chinese government proceeded with the project, offering minimal compensation and

unfulfilled promises of reconstruction. The monastery's monks remain in makeshift housing, with no alternative accommodations provided.

Forced Removal of Tibetan Religious Structures: Chinese authorities in Sichuan province have mandated the removal of religious symbols from Tibetan homes, marking a new level of cultural suppression. This includes the destruction of prayer flags and incense offering structures. Additionally, online prayer sessions have been banned, further restricting Tibetan religious practices.

China's Colonial Schools Target Tibetan Monasteries: Chinese authorities are increasing efforts to integrate Tibetan children into Mandarin-speaking, government-run boarding schools, closing monastic schools in historically Tibetan regions. The crackdown is part of a larger strategy to weaken Tibetan Buddhism's influence, enforce Chinese cultural norms, and ensure loyalty to the CCP.

Graduation of Monks and Nuns to Promote Sinicization: China has graduated 320 monks and nuns from Xizang Buddhism University in Lhasa, aimed at promoting the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism. The curriculum focuses on Mandarin language and loyalty to the Communist Party, with the goal of integrating Chinese cultural elements into Tibetan religious practices.

China's Top Leaders Push for Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and Culture: Chinese President Xi Jinping and top leader Wang Huning visited Tibetan regions in Amdo and Kham, emphasising the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and urging loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The visit, amid concerns over the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, highlighted China's efforts to assimilate Tibetan culture and religion. Xi also visited a colonial boarding school aimed at separating Tibetan children from their culture, drawing international criticism.

China Forcibly Enrolls Tibetan Monks in Government Boarding Schools: Authorities in Sichuan province closed monastic schools in two counties, forcing young Tibetan monks under 18 into government-run residential schools. This move, seen as part of a broader campaign to assimilate Tibetan culture, affects over 1,600 monks and aims to instill loyalty to the CCP over religious devotion, furthering China's Sinicization efforts.

China Closes Tibetan Monastery Schools, Forces Novice Monks into State-Run Schools:

Chinese authorities have shut down Buddhist schools at Kirti and Lhamo Kirti Monasteries in Tibetan areas of Sichuan province, compelling young monks to attend state-run boarding schools that teach in Mandarin. This move, part of a broader campaign to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, targets over 1,600 novice monks, restricting their religious education and separating them from their cultural roots.

China Claims Authority Over Dalai Lama's Reincarnation Process: As the Dalai Lama nears his decision on reincarnation, Chinese state-backed analysts assert Beijing's "natural" authority to control the process. Despite the religious nature of the Dalai Lama's role, China justifies its control based on its political power over Tibet, ignoring its lack of religious legitimacy. The move is seen as part of China's broader strategy to dominate Tibetan Buddhism.

29 Buddhist Nuns Earn Master's Degree at Tibet Buddhism University: On June 30, 2024, a graduation ceremony at Tibet Buddhism University in Lhasa, Xizang Autonomous Region, saw 29 Buddhist nuns awarded the "Chi Ram Pa" diploma, equivalent to a master's degree. This event highlights the academic achievements of the nuns within the Tibetan Buddhist education system.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Over-10,000-Year-Old Stone Tool Site in Tibet a Rare Find: Chinese scientists have uncovered a microblade technology site near Serling Tso lake in Amdo county, Tibet. Dating back 11,000 to 10,000 years, this discovery provides significant insights into early human activity and migration on the Tibetan Plateau, filling gaps in the region's prehistoric cultural history.

Tibet Floods and Landslides Leave Hundreds Stranded: Heavy rainfall in Tibet has caused severe floods and landslides, trapping over 470 people near Chentang Township in Shigatse. Continuous rainfall has damaged roads

and cut off power and communications, with rescue operations successfully relocating 342 individuals, though more than 130 remain stranded.

The First Electrified Railway in Tibet: Achievements and Prospects: The Lhasa-Nyingchi electrified railway, operational since June 2021, has transported over 3 million passengers and 783,000 tons of cargo. This 435-kilometer line has reduced travel time and boosted regional economic development, tourism, and infrastructure. The railway is part of the broader Sichuan-Tibet railway project.

Tibet in Exile

'People's Court' Verdict Against President Xi Jinping: In a symbolic but powerful act, a "people's court" in The Hague found Chinese President Xi Jinping guilty of crimes against humanity in Tibet, Taiwan, and Xinjiang. This tribunal, comprised of international law experts and human rights advocates, issued a symbolic arrest warrant against Xi on July 12, 2024. The court's findings highlight widespread human rights violations, including the forcible transfer of Tibetan children and persecution. Despite the non-binding nature of the verdict, it sends a strong moral and legal message against China's human rights violations, potentially influencing global perceptions and policies towards China.

Central Tibetan Administration Seeks US Action on Exiled Tibetans as Chinese Repression Intensifies: The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has called for concrete support from the United States for Tibetans facing increasing retaliation from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The CTA emphasized the importance of the US Resolve Tibet Act in challenging CCP's historical revisionism but stressed that tangible support for the Tibetan community is needed. The Act aims to bolster US support for Tibetans, promote human rights, and confront Chinese government actions perceived as oppressive. The situation in Tibet, including political repression, cultural suppression, and environmental damage, remains a sensitive international issue.

China's Interference in Dalai Lama's Succession: The French Senate's Interparliamentary group for Tibet, led by Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio, condemned China's interference in the succession of the Dalai Lama. The statement affirmed that only Tibetans should determine the next Dalai Lama, highlighting the spiritual and historical significance of this decision.

China Condemns US and India's Birthday Greetings: China criticised the US and India for sending birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama, labeling their actions as attempts to undermine China. China dismissed the greetings as ineffective and reiterated its stance that it will control the selection process for the Dalai Lama's successor, rejecting any foreign interference.

US and India's Stance on Dalai Lama Succession: The US and India are opposed to China's involvement in selecting the Dalai Lama's successor. As the Dalai Lama approaches his 90th birthday, there is significant concern about the future of the Tibetan movement. The US is preparing legislation to counter China's claims about Tibet and support Tibetan autonomy, while India remains cautious but privately supports the Dalai Lama's position against Chinese control.

US and India's Support for Tibet Heightens Tensions with China as Resolve Tibet Act Passes: The passage of the Resolve Tibet Act by the US Congress, recently signed into law by President Joe Biden, has escalated tensions with China, which views Tibet as an internal matter. The Act challenges China's historical claims over Tibet, advocates for peaceful negotiations, and empowers the US State Department to counter Chinese propaganda. In response, China has strongly criticized the legislation, viewing it as interference in its internal affairs.

The Tibetan government-in-exile, led by President Penpa Tsering, has praised the Act, emphasizing its significance in correcting misconceptions about Tibet's history and asserting Tibet's unique cultural identity. Tsering expressed gratitude during his visit to Washington DC, where he met with US Congress members and officials, acknowledging the support from the US and underscoring the Act's role in advancing the Tibetan cause.

India has also aligned with the US stance, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi engaged with the bipartisan US delegation that met the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan community has expressed deep appreciation for the support

from both the US and India, highlighting the shared cultural heritage between Tibet and India. Celebrations in Tibetan communities, such as those in Shimla, further reflected this gratitude.

This increased international support for Tibet has put additional pressure on China, with Tibetan leaders asserting that China cannot simply rewrite history. The ongoing advocacy by the Tibetan government-in-exile, bolstered by the Resolve Tibet Act, signals a significant shift in global strategy to address Tibet's status and challenge China's narrative.

Panel Discussion on Forced Closure of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institution: The Tibet Policy Institute hosted a panel discussion on the forced closure of the Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institute in Tibet. The discussion, featuring prominent Tibetan figures, focused on the impacts of the closure on Tibetan education and culture. The panelists criticised the Chinese government's actions as part of a broader strategy to undermine Tibetan culture and language. They highlighted the historical significance of the institute and the broader implications for Tibetan language education.

Tibetan Govt in Exile to Issue Map of Tibet to Counter China's 'Cartographic Aggression':

In response to China's renaming of Tibetan locations, the Tibetan government-in-exile plans to release a historical map of Tibet featuring original boundaries and place names. Sikyong Penpa Tsering announced the initiative to counter China's cartographic efforts and to preserve Tibet's historical geography. The map will be developed in collaboration with experts and will be available online. Additionally, the CTA plans to create a search engine for Tibetan place names to further counter China's renaming practices. This initiative aims to preserve Tibetan cultural and historical identity amidst ongoing Chinese territorial claims.

World Tibet Day - Showcasing Uniqueness of Tibetan Culture: World Tibet Day, observed on July 6, highlights the unique aspects of Tibetan culture and the threats faced by Tibetans under Chinese rule. The day, coinciding with the Dalai Lama's birthday, aims to raise awareness about human rights violations in Tibet and promote the preservation of Tibetan culture and thought. The Dalai Lama, currently in exile in India, has been a prominent figure in advocating for Tibet's autonomy and non-violent liberation.

2nd International Tibet Youth Forum: The Central Tibetan Administration's 2nd International Tibet Youth Forum in Dharamshala gathered over 100 young Tibetans from around the world to discuss and advance the Tibetan freedom movement. Sikyong Penpa Tsering emphasized unity and the importance of continuing His Holiness the Dalai Lama's guidance, while also promoting the V-TAG initiative for coordinated advocacy.

7th International Rangzen Conference Held in Toronto: The 7th International Rangzen Conference, focused on Tibetan independence, was held in Toronto from July 13-15. The event, which attracted over 250 delegates from various countries, featured discussions on the Tibetan struggle for independence and criticisms of the Chinese government's actions. Key resolutions included condemning China's repression and expressing solidarity with a Tibetan school recently closed by China. Speakers emphasized the need for Tibetans to focus on their own strengths and to critically evaluate international support for their cause. The next conference is planned for Australia in 2025.

Seminar on Sino-Tibet Relations in the Post-Xi Jinping Era: On July 10, 2024, the Office of Tibet, Canberra, and the Chinese Alliance for Democracy hosted a seminar at Sydney University titled "Sino-Tibet Relations in the Post-Xi Jinping Era." The seminar covered the impact of Xi Jinping's policies on Tibet, including cultural genocide and forced sinicisation. Key speakers discussed the urgency of challenging China's expansionist and repressive policies, the need for democratic reforms in China for self-determination, and the importance of strengthening Tibetan-Chinese community relations. The event highlighted the need for continued dialogue and allyship to address the Sino-Tibetan conflict.

Japan to Host International Tibet Meeting in June 2025: Japan will host its first international meeting on Tibet in June 2025, organized by the Japan-Tibet Parliamentary Association. The event, supported by the Tibetan government-in-exile, will include around 90 participants from 26 countries. The Dalai Lama is expected to give an online speech, marking Japan's increased involvement in advocating for Tibetan rights.

Penpa Tsering Sikyong Raises Concerns Over China's Restrictions: Penpa Tsering Sikyong, President of the Central Tibetan Administration, expressed regret that Tibetans inside Tibet are unable to celebrate the Dalai Lama's 89th birthday due to Chinese restrictions. He urged Tibetans globally to unite and support the Dalai Lama's efforts. Sikyong also criticised China's social media restrictions and accused the Chinese government of attempting to erase Tibetan culture. He highlighted ongoing international support, including new U.S. legislation, and called for greater global pressure on China to address human rights abuses in Tibet.

International Campaign for Tibet Alleges Systematic Censorship of Tibetan Content on Chinese Platforms: The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) reported systematic censorship of Tibetan content on Chinese social media platforms like Douyin. The ICT claimed that these restrictions are part of a broader strategy to diminish Tibetan language and culture while promoting Mandarin. Tibetan users face barriers such as blocked livestreams and restricted comments, impacting their ability to communicate and engage online. The report criticised the Chinese government for failing to acknowledge or address these issues, highlighting concerns about freedom of expression and cultural preservation.

Tibetans in Exile Condemn China's Policies, Hold Candlelight Vigil: On International Justice Day, Tibetan NGOs in Dharamshala held a candlelight vigil to protest the closure of the Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbulung School and other Chinese policies affecting Tibetans. They condemned China's human rights violations and the forced assimilation of Tibetan children into colonial-style boarding schools. The closure of the Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbu School, a key institution for Tibetan education and culture, was particularly denounced as part of a broader strategy to undermine Tibetan cultural heritage. The NGOs called on the international community to hold China accountable and support efforts to preserve Tibetan culture and education.

Dr. Gyal Lo's Presentation on China's Colonial-Style Boarding Schools in Tibet at a Conference in Tokyo: Dr. Gyal Lo, a Tibetan educational sociologist, presented on China's colonial-style boarding schools in Tibet at a conference in Tokyo. The presentation highlighted the evolution of China's assimilative education policies, including the forced relocation of Tibetan children to Chinese cities and the closure of native Tibetan schools. Dr. Gyal Lo detailed the impact of these policies on Tibetan identity and culture. The event, organized by Tibet House Japan and the Asian Democracy Movement, also included discussions on the US Tibet Resolve Act and its implications for Tibet. The conference sought to raise awareness and garner international support against China's educational policies in Tibet.

UN Human Rights Council Criticizes China's Tibet Abuses: The UN Human Rights Council's latest review harshly criticised China's human rights abuses in Tibet. Despite China's efforts to downplay these issues through lobbying and GONGOS, 21 countries voiced substantial criticism. Key concerns include forced labor and human rights violations. China rejected many recommendations and claimed it had already addressed issues, which experts dispute. The review highlights the need for open access to Tibet and stronger international pressure to address ongoing abuses.

Dalai Lama's 89th Birthday Celebrated in Nepal: The Dalai Lama's 89th birthday was celebrated in Kathmandu without major government interference, a departure from past years. The event, held at Hyolmo Monastery, was attended by international diplomats and featured Tibetan cultural performances. Nepal continues to restrict regular celebrations but allowed this significant event to proceed.

Tibet Represented at the Opening Ceremony of Paris Olympic Games: A Tibetan delegation, led by Representative Rigzin Genkhang, attended the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games. Despite Tibet not being officially represented, the delegation, including notable figures like Co-ordinator Thupten Tsering and Tibetan Community President Pema Rinchen, used the opportunity to advocate for Tibet and raise awareness of the Tibetan situation. France, home to a significant Tibetan diaspora, saw the delegation proudly display the Tibetan flag, attracting interest and fostering discussions about Tibet's issues.

Hegemonistic Ambitions: Tibet PM-in-Exile on China Renaming Places in India: Tibetan Prime Minister-in-Exile, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, criticised China's renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh and its aggressive stance in Ladakh, calling it a reflection of China's hegemonistic ambitions. In an interview with NDTV, Tsering discussed the recent US Resolve Tibet Act, which challenges China's historical claims over Tibet and supports Tibetan independence. He noted the heightened tensions following a US delegation's visit to India and the Dalai Lama, and the Chinese government's reaction to the new law as interference in its internal affairs. Tsering linked China's

actions to broader regional tensions, emphasizing the impact on neighboring countries and international defense spending.

Dalai Lama's 89th Birthday and Future Succession Concerns: As the Dalai Lama turns 89, there is growing concern about his succession. Tibetan Buddhists believe in reincarnation, and the Dalai Lama has indicated he will address succession plans around his 90th birthday. The Chinese government asserts it will control the selection process for his successor, while international support, including from the US and India, continues to back Tibetan autonomy and challenge China's claims.

Dalai Lama's Recovery in NYC: The Dalai Lama, recovering from knee surgery at the Park Hyatt Hotel in New York City, has drawn crowds of followers who pray and circumambulate the hotel as if it were a temple. His surgery was successful, and while his recovery time at the hotel is unclear, the atmosphere outside has been joyous and supportive. His visit follows recent diplomatic tensions with China, which views him as a separatist.

Tibetans in Exile Commemorate Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche: On July 15, 2024, Tibetans in exile held a memorial event in Dharamshala to mark the anniversary of Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's death. Rinpoche, a Tibetan freedom fighter, died in Chinese custody under controversial circumstances. The event at the Gangkyi Tibetan Library included the release of a book by his niece, Nyima Lhamo, detailing the struggles faced by Rinpoche and his family. Exile Tibetan Minister of Defence Gryari Dolma and activist Sonam Tsering spoke at the event, highlighting the ongoing repression of Tibetans in China and calling for the release of all Tibetan political prisoners.

Back-Channel Talks Between China and Tibetan Govt-in-Exile Ongoing: The Tibetan government-in-exile and China are engaging in back-channel negotiations, with the latest round taking place earlier this month. Sikyong Penpa Tsering confirmed the talks, noting that they are conducted with a long-term perspective despite China's lack of acknowledgment. These discussions follow a period of stalled formal dialogue, with no official talks since 2010. Beijing has rejected talks with the Tibetan government-in-exile, insisting on direct negotiations with the Dalai Lama's representatives. Tsering emphasized that while the Tibetan side remains committed to the Dalai Lama's Middle Way approach, they are also adjusting their policy to reflect the current geopolitical realities.

Delhi High Court Rejects Plea Against Dalai Lama: The Delhi High Court dismissed a plea for legal action against the Dalai Lama under the POCSO Act for kissing a child on the lips. The court accepted the Dalai Lama's explanation that the act was intended to be playful and should be understood within the context of Tibetan culture.

Tibetan Art Collection Launch: Artist Jamyang Tenzin launched a book featuring "108 Exile Tibetan Visual Artists," showcasing their work and celebrating Tibetan art and culture in exile. The number 108 holds symbolic significance in Buddhism. The book aims to highlight the contributions of Tibetan artists, address the lack of recognition they often face, and unify their artistic efforts.

Seminar on Sino-Tibet Relations at Sydney University: The Office of Tibet in Canberra, in collaboration with the Chinese Alliance for Democracy, hosted a seminar at Sydney University on July 10, 2024. Titled "Sino-Tibet Relations in the Post-Xi Jinping Era," the seminar focused on the impact of Xi Jinping's policies on Tibet, including cultural genocide and forced sinicisation. Speakers discussed the urgent need to challenge China's repressive policies and emphasized the importance of strengthening Tibetan-Chinese community relations. The seminar also explored the role of democratic reforms in China as a prerequisite for resolving the Tibet conflict.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering's Visit to Ladakh:

Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration visited monasteries and schools in Ladakh, including SOS Tibetan Children's Village and its affiliate Old People's Home. He discussed the importance of preserving Tibetan culture and education with students and teachers. Sikyong also inspected housing projects in Choglamsar and attended a dinner hosted by Triksey Rinpoche, with participation from local officials.

Dalai Lama Relocates to Syracuse, NY:

The Dalai Lama has moved from New York City to Syracuse, NY, for continued recovery and physiotherapy following knee replacement surgery. His recovery is progressing well, and his physicians are optimistic about his

continued improvement. Tibetans and supporters gathered outside the Park Hyatt to bid him farewell and wish for his swift recovery.

Sonam Wangchuk Demands Bharat Ratna for Dalai Lama: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has called for India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, to be awarded to the Dalai Lama on his 89th birthday. Wangchuk praised the Dalai Lama's contributions to global peace, compassion, and environmental awareness, and suggested that honoring him with the Bharat Ratna would be a fitting recognition of his impact and a reaffirmation of Indian values.

PM Modi Sends Greetings to Dalai Lama: Prime Minister Narendra Modi publicly wished the Dalai Lama a happy 89th birthday, continuing his tradition of sending greetings since 2021. Modi's gesture is seen as a statement against Beijing's objections, reflecting ongoing tensions between India and China, especially after the 2020 border clashes.

Long-time Friend of Tibet Richard Gere Recovering After Prostate Operation: Hollywood actor Richard Gere, a long-time advocate for Tibet and close friend of the Dalai Lama, is recovering after undergoing prostate surgery earlier this year. During a public address in Ladakh, Sikyong Penpa Tsering revealed that Gere had surgery in June and faced complications that required a second procedure. Gere has been a significant ally in the Tibetan cause, publicly challenging China's policies and supporting Tibetan institutions through his foundations. His health issues have drawn widespread concern and well-wishes from supporters globally, reflecting his deep connection with the Tibetan community.

Protests, Detentions and Other News from the PRC

Job Losses, Protests Present Difficulties for Chinese Communist Party: China is facing significant economic challenges, with job losses and wage cuts affecting key industries such as technology and real estate. These issues have led to an increase in protests and strikes, although not enough to directly threaten the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or President Xi Jinping. The economic downturn has affected a wide range of workers, from blue-collar to white-collar, leading to growing dissatisfaction. Despite efforts by Chinese authorities to present a stable economic picture, analysts warn of potential "hidden dangers" for the CCP if the economy doesn't improve, potentially leading to greater instability.

Rights Group Urges Forced Labour Investigation, Especially in Mining Industry, in Tibet: A report by the Human Rights Foundation highlights the potential use of forced labor in Tibet under China's "rural surplus labor transfer" policy, particularly in the mining industry. The report draws parallels with policies in the Uyghur region, suggesting that Tibetans may be coerced into leaving traditional livelihoods for jobs in mining, disrupting their way of life. The report calls for independent investigations into these practices, citing cases involving state-owned mining companies in Tibet that may be exploiting Tibetan workers. The potential for forced labor is exacerbated by policies that penalize Tibetans who refuse state-arranged employment.

Banking Crackdown Led by Tibetan Official: Wang Weidong, an official recently relocated from Tibet, has been appointed to lead a crackdown on China's financial sector. This move is part of a broader anti-corruption drive within the industry, emphasizing the Communist Party's control and political supervision. The crackdown is a continuation of efforts to tighten oversight in China's \$66 trillion finance industry.

China's Economic Struggles Amid Political Uncertainty: China's ruling Communist Party is meeting to address significant economic challenges, including a property sector crisis, high local government debt, and weak consumer demand. The ongoing economic difficulties, exacerbated by stringent pandemic controls, have led to social frustration and questions about the country's future under Xi Jinping. The third plenum of the Central Committee, a key event in China's political calendar, is expected to signal the government's economic direction, focusing on targeted reforms rather than sweeping changes. The outcome of this meeting will have broad implications for China's role in the global economy and its relationships with foreign investors.

China Amasses Record Half-Year 'Tiger' Tally in Anti-Corruption Campaign: In the first half of 2024, China's anti-corruption watchdog detained 36 senior officials, a record number for a six-month period.

The detained officials, known as “tigers,” include high-profile figures such as former ministers and regional leaders. This crackdown indicates that past achievements and connections offer no protection against Xi Jinping’s anti-corruption drive. The aggressive campaign highlights the Chinese government’s resolve to root out corruption at all levels, reinforcing the message that no one is immune, regardless of their rank or contributions.

CCP's TIBET POLICY

Tibetan parents forced to enroll children at state-run residential schools

23 July 2024, [RFA](#)

Authorities shut down the monastery school they were attending in May.

Chinese authorities are requiring the parents of students who attend a Buddhist school in a Tibetan area of western China to enroll their children in state-administered residential schools, Tibetans with knowledge of the situation said.

Earlier this month, Radio Free Asia learned that Chinese authorities had closed down the Buddhist school of Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Dzoge county, Sichuan province, affecting about 600 students. Another school at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county was also shut down, affecting 1,000 students. Authorities said students at both schools had not attained the age at which they could receive monastic education — now set at 18 — though children as young as 5 or 6 years old previously were allowed to enroll in monastery schools, sources told RFA in the earlier report.

Now, more than 300 students, ages 6 to 14, at the Lhamo Kirti Monastery school must enroll in what critics of Chinese policies in Tibet call “colonial-style” boarding schools, where young Tibetans are separated from their families and taught a Chinese-language curriculum that promotes loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party, the sources said.

Efforts are being made to allow another 200 students, ages 15 to 18, to remain at and attend the Buddhist school, one of the sources said.

Tibetans and rights activists say dozens of such school closures in recent years are part of the Chinese government’s systematic efforts to assimilate Tibetans by wiping out their culture, language and religion.

“Parents are currently required to send their children to state-administered residential schools and sign written agreements not to enroll them in any other schools or monasteries until they reach adulthood,” said a Tibetan from Lhasa who declined to be identified so he could speak freely.

“This move was made under the guise of enforcing the compulsory education system established by the Chinese government,” he said.

Tibetan as medium of instruction

Parents of Children at the Lhamo Kirti Monastery school must sign a document — a copy of which was obtained by RFA — confirming that their children are enrolled in a state-run boarding school in accordance with Article 16 of China’s Law on the Protection of Minors.

That article states that parents who work in other places and can’t perform their guardianship duty with respect to minors shall entrust other adults who have the ability to act as guardians with such duty.

The document sent to parents also specifies that once they receive the notice, they must prepare their children to attend a residential school beginning in September.

Though Tibetans have argued that sending their children to Buddhist schools does not violate Chinese law, government authorities have accused them of brainwashing the children with the curriculum taught in the Buddhist schools, sources said.

Unlike state-run boarding schools, Buddhist schools teach Tibetan literature, English and Buddhist philosophy as subjects using the Tibetan language as the medium of instruction.

Founded in 1986, the school at Lhamo Kirti Monastery — known among locals as Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery — initially offered three classes held in the monastery’s hall and monks’ residences.

In 1993, a separate school called Taktsang Lhamo Tibetan Culture school was established, but it faced interference from the Chinese government when officials ramped up restrictions on the study of the Tibetan language and Buddhist philosophy, ultimately leading to its closure.

The monastery’s primary school later reopened and served novice monks under the age of 18 and children from nearby nomadic areas.

China Brings Official From Tibet to Lead Banker Crackdown

23 July 2024, [BNN](#)

China relocated an official from Tibet to lead its crackdown on the financial sector, indicating no let-up in its unprecedented efforts to clean up the industry.

Wang Weidong was named chief of the Central Financial Discipline Inspection and Supervision Work Committee, according to an article published Monday by the top graft buster’s official newspaper. It marks the first reference to the special committee, which was newly set up within the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Caixin reported on Tuesday.

Wang pledged to strengthen political supervision and party building within the financial system as well “promptly discover deviations” and “vigorously implement rectification,” according to the article.

Wang resigned in March from a supervisory post in Tibet. Prior to that, he held various roles at the National Government Offices Administration as well as the CCDI.

China has tightened its grip on the \$66 trillion finance industry, labeling bankers as “hedonistic” and emphasizing the Communist Party’s “centralized and unified leadership” of the sector. An anti-graft drive that was unleashed in 2021 has shocked the industry, bringing down more than 100 financial officials and executives last year alone.

The new financial corruption work committee suggests more permanent oversight of the industry. It follows an overhaul of China’s financial regulatory regime last year that saw the creation of an enlarged regulator as well as two financial bodies that oversee the sector’s development, ideology and discipline.

Authorities also pledged to improve its supervision mechanism for the financial sector at the Third Plenum last week, a twice-a-decade gathering where the top leaders map out long-term plans for the world’s second largest economy. It will also formulate a financial law to strengthen regulatory responsibilities and accountability.

China shuts down 30-year-old Tibetan school in Amdo Golog

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

Chinese authorities forcibly closed the renowned Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbulung school in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Amdo (Ch. Qinghai) Province, according to multiple sources. The private institution, founded in 1994 by Ragya Jigme Gyalsten, was shut down ending a 30 year old Tibetan educational institution.

A video released on Saturday by the Dharamshala-based *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy* (TCHRD) showed the emotional closing ceremony of the school where students can be seen mourning and in tears during the closing ceremony held on Sunday morning.

According to a report by *Tibet Times*, a Tibetan-language media house based in Dharamshala, Chinese authorities concealed the true reasons for the closure of the school. They claimed that the search and interrogation were conducted to identify any monks or nuns under the age of 18, threatening severe punishment and fines if any were found.

On April 12, the school faced multiple lawsuits and pressures from the Communist Party Secretary of Golok and other officials who had been conspiring to close the school for many years. Additionally, a student association formed in 2018, dedicated to preserving the Tibetan language was sued for using the jewel and lion emblems from the banned Tibetan National Flag as their group’s logo.



Screengrab of the closing ceremony of the Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbulung school in Amdo Golog

The school's founder, Jigme Gyaltzen, faced false allegations of corruption and accepting bribes in his roles as chairman of the Snow Land Pastoral Association and the Qinghai-Tibet Trade Association. These charges were brought to trial, and on June 28, Jigme Gyaltzen was found not guilty of any crime.

Observers say that the incident is part of a broader crackdown on Tibetan language and cultural education where Tibetan language is the medium of instruction. The closure of Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbulung school follows a series of similar actions in recent years. In 2022, Chinese authorities in the so called Sersbul County, Kardze (Ch. Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, mandated the closure of all Tibetan private schools. According to information obtained by the *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy* (TCHRD), the authorities ordered that students be enrolled in government schools, where the medium of instruction is Mandarin, by April 20, 2022.

Tibetans express anguish over China's ban of Tibetan language on Douyin

09 July 2024, Phayul



Screengrab of Tibetans on social media criticising Chinese government's ban on Tibetan language and posts on Douyin

Tibetans in Tibet have voiced concerns and anguish over the Chinese government's decision to ban the Tibetan language and remove Tibetan language posts on Douyin, China's version of the popular social media platform TikTok. This decision has sparked widespread outrage among Tibetans, highlighting the ongoing struggle for cultural and linguistic freedoms online.

In a widely circulated video on X (formerly Twitter), a Tibetan netizen vehemently expressed discontentment over the deliberate ban and removal of Tibetan language posts on Douyin. "I question whether Douyin holds more power and authority than the nation and the legal system. Is Douyin more powerful than the state? What is the reality here? To clarify, the state's policies explicitly grant protection for cultural preservation and language promotion, a mandate supported by both the legal system and the government," he stated.

In another video, a Tibetan woman is seen lamenting the removal of Tibetan language posts on TikTok in China. "I am a native Tibetan speaker and cannot speak perfect Chinese. Why am I not allowed to post in my native language?" she questioned.

In another widely circulated recent video, a Tibetan man can be seen criticising China's ban on the use of the Tibetan language in live broadcasts. "An anchor confirmed the ban after speaking a few words of Tibetan and getting banned. Despite China's Constitution protecting national languages, TikTok discriminates against the Tibetan language," he remarked.

The ban on the Tibetan language in Douyin is part of a wider pattern of suppression and delegitimisation of the native language in Tibet. Over the years, the Chinese government has implemented various policies aimed at diminishing Tibetan cultural practices, including restrictions on religious freedom, language and instead the promotion of Mandarin over Tibetan in schools. This latest move is seen as an extension of these policies into the digital realm.

The Dharamshala-based rights group, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), has condemned this move, calling it "a flagrant violation of provisions enshrined in Chinese constitution as well as Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, which promised but rarely granted meaningful autonomous powers to ethnic minorities including Tibetans,"

China clamps down on social media ahead of Dalai Lama's birthday

02 July 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar

Beijing sees the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader as a 'splittist.'

The Chinese government is intensifying already stringent social media restrictions on Tibetans to keep them from celebrating the July 6 birthday of the Dalai Lama, two Tibetan sources said.

Authorities already ban the possession of photos of the Tibetan Buddhist leader, who turns 89, and posting images of him or religious symbols on social media.

But during the past three weeks, authorities have more frequently and rigorously checked the cell phones of Tibetan travelers to ensure they have not downloaded any photos, said the sources who live inside the western region of China and who requested anonymity for safety reasons.

Police also have summoned individuals deemed suspicious to local offices to warn them not to contact family members living outside the Tibet Autonomous Region, they said.

Every year, authorities intensify their monitoring of Tibetans in the run-up to the birthday of the Dalai

Lama, who has lived in exile in northern India since 1959 and is viewed by China as a “splittist” seeking independence for Tibet.

The Dalai Lama has maintained that he does not advocate independence but rather genuine autonomy to allow Tibetans to maintain their culture, religion and language under China’s rule, which has sought to Sinicize Tibetan-populated areas.

Knee surgery in US

This year, authorities are extra vigilant because Tibetans concerned about the Dalai Lama’s health following his recent knee replacement surgery in the United States may have downloaded his photo to their phones to pray for a speedy recovery, the sources said. Chinese authorities turned down visa requests by some Tibetans who planned to travel to the U.S., after asking them if they were going to see the Dalai Lama there, sources in Tibet said.

Authorities have prohibited Tibetans inside the Tibet Autonomous Region and in Tibetan-populated areas of China’s western provinces from communicating with the outside world about the Dalai Lama’s birthday, the first source said.

The second Tibetan said whenever he travels from Lhasa to Shigatse, the region’s second-largest city, authorities now closely monitor his mobile phone. “I am questioned about whether I possess a photo of the Dalai Lama or if I have been in contact with anyone,” he said.

In Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in southeastern Qinghai province, Chinese officials and monastery heads have ramped up propaganda efforts, urging Tibetans to exercise caution and self-control on social media.

Despite the government’s strict measures, Tibetans in Tibet continue to celebrate the Dalai Lama’s birthday each year by posting poems and childhood photos of their spiritual leader.

Many also make traditional smoke offerings in the mountains and observe moments of silence.

BUDDHISM

China destroys monastery to expand world's tallest 3D-printed hydropower dam in Tibet

27 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

After brushing aside heartbreaking pleas, protests and what not, Chinese authorities in Tsolho (Chinese: Hainan) Prefecture of Qinghai province have completed the demolition of a 135-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monastery ahead of the planned completion later this year of an expansion of the world's tallest 3D-printed hydropower dam. Very little has been done to fulfil the promise to rebuild the monastery elsewhere while its 160 monks are yet to see the promised alternative housing, said the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* Jul 27, citing sources from Tibet and exile. Local Tibetans had pleaded for the demolition or relocation of Atsok Gon Dechen Choekhorling Monastery in the prefecture's Dragkar county (Xinghai) to be scrapped and the dam expansion plan cancelled out of consideration for their veneration for its sanctity and antiquity. Nevertheless, in Apr 2023, China's Department of National Heritage declared that the artifacts and murals inside the monastery were of "no significant value or importance" and so began the work for its relocation.

The report said an early July video footage shows that nothing has remained of the religious structure, with the monastery's main prayer halls and the many stupas that surround it completely razed to the ground.

The work of the expansion of the Yangqu hydropower station on the Yellow River (Tibetan: Machu) was started in the province in 2022 and will be completed later this year. Filling it would submerge the 19th century monastery's site.

The report said Chinese authorities have spoken of taking two to three years to rebuild the monastery elsewhere. "However, only a few tens of thousands of Chinese yuan have been allocated for the reconstruction, with no additional funds planned," the report quoted one of the sources as saying.

Meanwhile, the monastery's 160 monks continue to live in makeshift tin huts. Nothing has materialised of the alternative housing for them in Khokar Naglo near the county's Palkha township promised by the authorities, the report cited several sources as saying. Tibetan have been prohibited from taking pictures of the site where the monastery stood only months earlier.

The Chinese authorities' only concern is seen to be focused on a successful completion of the hydropower dam's expansion.

Lu Gang, secretary of the prefecture party committee, visited the site on Jul 25, called the expansion plan a major project for the prefecture to build a "national clean energy industry highland", and told local

authorities to ensure its gate closed completely when built to store water as scheduled for power generation, the report said.

Tibetans forced to remove religious structures outside their homes

25 July 2024, [RFA](#)

The measures come as Beijing intensifies efforts to assimilate Tibetans.

For the first time, Chinese authorities are forcing ordinary Tibetans to remove religious symbols and destroy such structures from the exteriors and roofs of their homes in several villages in a Tibetan area of Sichuan province, two sources with knowledge of the situation said.

Authorities also are prohibiting Tibetans in Sichuan province and elsewhere from organizing and participating in prayer sessions online, said the sources who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal. The measures come as Beijing intensifies efforts to assimilate Tibetans and adapt Tibetan Buddhism so that its tenets and practices conform with the ideology of China's Communist Party.

While authorities have demolished religious objects and structures at times at Buddhist monasteries in Tibet, this is the first instance of religious symbols at ordinary people's homes being destroyed.

Since the beginning of July, Chinese authorities have conducted searches of all homes in at least four villages in Ngaba county, said the sources, one of whom lives in exile and the other who is inside Tibet. They are forcing Tibetans to remove prayer flags hoisted on rooftops and to destroy religious objects, said the source from inside Tibet.

Among the objects being dismantled are concrete structures resembling chimneys outside homes where Tibetans perform *Sang-sol*, or incense offerings, to mark important religious and personal events in their lives, he said.

While authorities have not publicly disclosed the reason for their actions, Tibetans expect similar inspections in neighboring Tibetan areas, both sources said.

No online prayer sessions

Tibetans in Sichuan province and elsewhere are also prohibited from organizing any religious prayer sessions online in their social media messaging groups or chat groups, one of the sources said.

"Individuals who have initiated these prayer sessions have been summoned for interrogations by Chinese authorities," he said.

China has continued to restrict and control Tibetan religious practices and shown no willingness to resume formal negotiations about greater autonomy for the

region with representatives of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, according to the most recent annual report by the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

Beijing also bans Tibetans from observing significant cultural, religious and historical events such as Tibetan National Uprising Day and the Dalai Lama's birthday. But Tibetans have defied these prohibitions, despite possible severe consequences.

During the Dalai Lama's birthday on July 6, monks from monasteries in the Ngaba area were confined to their compounds under police presence to enforce such restrictions, said the first source from inside Tibet.

With the birthday of Kirti Rinpoche, the head of Ngaba's Kirti Monastery, approaching in August, Chinese authorities have already implemented online restrictions and threatened Tibetans against posting any photos or well wishes, said the second source.

In March, Chinese police arrested Pema, a Tibetan monk from Kirti Monastery for staging a solo protest while holding a portrait of the Dalai Lama on the streets of Ngaba county.

Pema, who was working as a teacher for the preliminary Buddhist study section at the monastery, also shouted slogans against Chinese policies in Tibet during his protest and was immediately arrested.

China graduates 320 more monks and nuns to promote Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism

12 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China says it has graduated 320 more monks and nuns this year from the Xizang Buddhism University in Lhasa with the mandate, among others, to promote the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism, bringing the total since its establishment in 2011 to more than 1,700. "Xizang" is China's term for Tibet truncated to the territory of Tibet (Xizang) Autonomous Region.

The graduates "should learn to use the national language and script, infuse Tibetan Buddhism with excellent traditional Chinese culture, actively engage in doctrinal interpretation, promote positive thoughts in Tibetan Buddhist doctrine such as promoting equality and tolerance, poverty alleviation, and helping the needy, and jointly promote the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism," China's official *chinadaily.com.cn* Jul 12 quoted Drubkhang Thubtan Khaidrub, the head of the university, as saying.

Drubkhang, who is also the executive vice-president of the Tibet branch of the Buddhist Association of China, has also "emphasized the pivotal role the graduates will play in the healthy development of Tibetan Buddhism, encouraging them to continuously enhance their religious knowledge and moral values, and embrace diverse cultural experiences."

Drubkhang has made his remarks during the university's graduation ceremony on Jun 30 which saw the conferral of graduation certificates and academic titles, and the commendation of exceptional teachers and students, the report noted.

The report quoted graduate student Tenzin Yontan, a monk from the Gonsar Monastery in Driru county, Nagchu City, as saying during the ceremony that the graduates would engage in social development and progress, promote patriotism and dedication to Tibetan Buddhism, and contribute "every bit of our efforts to maintaining social stability, harmony and national unity".

The university was established by China outside the rigorous traditional Geshe degree programme to educate Tibetan monks and nuns to promote the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism and culture with focus on teaching Mandarin Chinese and the ideology of patriotic loyalty to the communist Party of China-state as the basis for learning Buddhism.

China's top leaders visit Tibet, seeking to assimilate Tibet's religion and children

10 July 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Wang Huning, China's two highest decision makers on Tibet, visited the Tibetan regions of Amdo and Kham. Xi and Wang called for the full implementation of the Party's policy to Sinify Tibetan Buddhism – essentially, converting it into a tool of the Chinese state.

Xi also visited one of the colonial boarding schools China has established in Tibet. This visit is significant, as it comes amid ongoing international criticism of a project aimed at separating Tibetan children from the language and culture.

Transforming Tibetan Buddhism

During their visits to Xining in Qinghai, Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and Ngaba (Aba) Tibetan & Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, Xi and Wang asked Tibetans to regard themselves as Chinese and demanded loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from Tibetan Buddhists, instructing them to integrate their religious practices with the CCP's value system.

While these are standard CCP positions concerning Tibetan Buddhism, the timing of these visits appears connected to anxiety among Chinese leaders concerning the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. A "news tea party" was organized by the All-China Journalists Association on Tibet on June 27, 2024, purportedly on "65th Anniversary of the Democratic Reform in Tibet," and some staff from the Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) were there to respond to questions.

Chinese state media reported that one reporter asked, "The 14th Dalai Lama, who will be 89 soon, has said that he will announce his reincarnation plan when he is about 90 years old. What attitude and policy will the Chinese government take in response?"

This is a reference to the Dalai Lama's 2011 statement on his reincarnation in which he outlined his timeline, saying:

"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, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust. They should consult the various heads of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the reliable oath-bound Dharma Protectors who are linked inseparably to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. They should seek advice and direction from these concerned beings and carry out the procedures of search and recognition in accordance with past tradition. I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China."

China claims Tibetan religious rights protected, but reiterates right to appoint next Dalai Lama

09 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China's foreign ministry has added its voice to Beijing's criticism of US Secretary of Antony Blinken's statement of greetings on the Dalai Lama's 89th birthday on Jul 6, while its official media also took exception to his support for Tibetan people's right to freely choose their religious leaders.

Noting that Blinken's statement reaffirmed US commitment to supporting efforts to preserve Tibet's linguistic, cultural and religious heritage, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian has urged the United States Jul 8 to stop supporting or endorsing in any way the "Tibet independence" forces and their anti-China and separatist activities."

Addressing a regular press briefing, Li has maintained that "Xizang" affairs are China's internal affairs which brook no interference by any external forces, referring to Tibet by its colonial redefinition.

"The rights and freedoms of all ethnic groups in Xizang, including the freedom of religious belief and the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and

written languages, are fully protected,” China’s official *Xinhua* news agency Jul 8 quoted Lin as claiming.

Condemning the 14th Dalai Lama as “not a pure religious figure, but a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion” for the umpteenth time, the report, which also appeared on China’s military website *eng.chinamil.com.cn* Jul 8, also quoted Lin as calling on the US to “stop supporting or endorsing in any way the ‘Tibet independence’ forces and their (Dalai group’s) anti-China and separatist activities.”

Meanwhile, an opinion piece carried by China’s official *chinadaily.com.cn* Jul 8 took particular exception to Blinken’s statement for stressing that Tibetans should have the “ability to freely choose and venerate religious leaders without interference”.

It accused the US of being fearful of losing “a long-term agent on the “Xizang” front after the Dalai Lama passes away” to offer a disingenuous explanation that the recent US passage of the Resolve Tibet Act and the high profile bipartisan Congressional delegation’s recent visit to Dharamshala just after that last month.

China targeting Tibet’s monasteries to student-populate their colonial-style boarding schools

04 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In what is seen as a part of an ongoing campaign to coerce the Tibetan people to be more loyal to the party-state of China than in their devotion to Buddhism under President Xi Jinping’s call to Sinicize the ethnic minority areas, authorities in two counties in a historically Tibetan-inhabited prefecture in Sichuan province have closed down two monastic schools and ordered their students to be enrolled in the much-criticized government-run residential schools to undergo mandarin-Chinese education.

Officials said young monks in training at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) county and Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Dzoeg (Ruo’ergai) county in the province’s Ngaba prefecture had not attained the age at which they could receive monastic education, reported the Tibetan service of *rfa.org* Jul 3, citing local Tibetans speaking anonymously for safety reasons.

Apparently, the move is part of China’s strengthening of the enforcement of its rule that those aged below 18 years cannot be enrolled in monasteries. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries have historically enrolled children as young as 5-6 years of age.

The order was stated to have been issued by provincial authorities in April, requiring the monasteries to send their novice and young monks under the age of 18 to government-run residential schools.

The order was stated to have been enforced this month with the parents being warned not to send back their young children to the monasteries after the summer break. The monasteries are now stated to be patrolled by police to enforce the order. Also, security personnel are stated to be posted at monastery gates to prevent parents from entering them.

The order is said to have affected some 1,000 novice monks at Kirti Monastery and 600 at Lhamo Kirti Monastery, who all must now attend Chinese government-run residential schools whose curricula are said to be designed to assimilate them as Chinese. These “colonial-style” boarding schools have been widely condemned for separating the children from their families and depriving them of their UN recognized right to a Tibetan cultural educational upbringing.

The report cited experts as saying the measures are part of the Chinese government’s systematic efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism by making Tibetans more loyal to the Chinese Communist Party and its political agenda than to their own religious doctrine.

The report said Chinese authorities have also forbidden young novice monks from entering Ngaba Nangshug and Gomang monasteries in Sichuan province and Labrang Monastery in Sangchu county in neighbouring Gansu province, indicating a widening and general enforcement of the order.

China closes 2 Tibetan monastery schools, sends novices to state boarding schools

03 July 2024, [RFA](#), Pelbar

The move is aimed at making Tibetans more loyal to China than to Buddhism, experts say.

Chinese authorities have closed Buddhist schools at two monasteries in Tibetan-populated areas of western China and forced hundreds of novice monks to attend state-run boarding schools that teach a curriculum in Mandarin, Tibetans with knowledge of the situation said.

Officials said young monks in training at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county and Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Dzoeg county — both located in Sichuan province — had not attained the age at which they could receive monastic education, the sources said.

Chinese authorities have now set that age at 18, though children as young as 5 or 6 years old previously had been allowed to enroll in schools at monasteries, they said.

This month, authorities pressured parents not to send their young children back to the monasteries – now patrolled by police – after summer break, said the sources from inside Tibet who declined to be named for fear of retribution.

Instead, the roughly 1,000 novices at Kirti Monastery and 600 novices at Lhamo Kirti Monastery must now attend government-administered residential schools. Tibetan rights activists and U.S. lawmakers call such educational institutions “colonial-style” boarding schools, where Tibetan children are separated from their families and taught a Chinese-language curriculum.

The measures are part of the Chinese government’s systematic efforts to Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism by making Tibetans more loyal to the Chinese Communist Party and its political agenda than to their own religious doctrine, experts say.

To this end, Chinese authorities also restrict the entry of new monks into monasteries, interfere in religious activities especially around politically sensitive dates, require Buddhist monks to translate texts from Tibetan to Mandarin, and force monasteries to display portraits of party leaders.

All the young monks between the ages of 6 and 15 joined Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county voluntarily and did not violate any Chinese laws by doing so, though Chinese authorities suspect that the head lama ordered their admission, one source said.

But this April, provincial authorities ordered the monastery to send novices and young monks under the age of 18 to government-run residential schools, he said.

In response, monastery administrators said the government had to bear responsibility for educating the youngsters. Otherwise, they would not expel them from the school.

Authorities also met with administrators at Lhamo Kirti Monastery and demanded that all 600 students be enrolled in government-run schools, another source said.

Security personnel guarded the entrance to the monastery to prevent parents from entering, he added.

Chinese authorities also have forbidden young novices from entering Ngaba Nangshug and Gomang monasteries in Sichuan province and Labrang Monastery in Sangchu county of neighboring Gansu province.

China now asserts ‘natural’ authority to identify Dalai Lama reincarnation

01 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

As the Dalai Lama reincarnation increasingly dominates the international discourse on Tibet, and as the exile Tibetan spiritual leader himself nears his designated approximate time for making his decision on the issue, China has sought to drive home the point that this matter falls within the rubric of its “natural”

authority, speaking through its state employed academics.

Beijing has “natural” authority in identifying the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the *scmp.com* Jun 30 cited state-backed analysts as saying at a Beijing forum Jun 26.

The justifications of the analysts, tasked by the party leadership to “construct narratives” to support its decisions on the matter, range from the outlandish to outright falsehood, resting entirely on the fact that China controls Tibet. The atheist-lack of legitimacy of the Communist Party of China-state to take decision on such a profoundly religious matter is very obviously ignored.

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

“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 has said, referring to the dominant school of Tibetan Buddhism to which he belongs.

“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 has also claimed that 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.

While the Dalai Lama has constantly sought to establish contact with Beijing towards the resolution of the issue of Tibet, seeking a negotiated genuine autonomy for his homeland, China’s so-called experts on Tibet have blamed him 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,” Zhang Shigao, director of the Institute for Contemporary Tibetan Studies at CTRC (China Tibetology Research Centre) has said.

The report said the Jun 26 forum, which aimed to address 65 years of reforms in Tibet, was attended by several Chinese and international media outlets.

The forum has sought to justify China’s use of the name “Xizang” for Tibet, noting that the latter was

being “wrongly” applied to include historical Tibetan territories that are now outside Tibet Autonomous Region.

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 has maintained.

Truth be told, the term “Greater Tibet” does not occur in any of the Tibet policy bills passed by the US. Exile Tibetans use the name “Tibet” to refer to the historically three traditional provinces of Tibet, around half of which now make up the Qinghai Province or parts of the Chinese provinces of Gansu, Yunnan and Sichuan.

29 Buddhist nuns awarded "Chi Ram Pa" diploma in China's Xizang

01 July 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

A Buddhist nun shows her diploma at the graduation ceremony at Tibet Buddhism University in Lhasa, southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region, June 30, 2024. A graduation ceremony was organized by the Tibet Buddhism University here on Sunday, awarding the "Chi Ram Pa" diploma (master's degree) to 29 Buddhist nuns. (Xinhua/Tenzing Nima Qadhup)



STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

Over-10,000-year-old stone tool site in Tibet a rare find

22 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Chinese scientists have discovered a microblade technology site on the south bank of the Serling Tso lake (in Amdo county of Nagchu City), Tibet autonomous region, reported China's official *chinadaily.com.cn* Jul 22. The discovery, named the Niadi Site, is the earliest of its kind, adding to the historical timeline of early human activity on the Tibetan Plateau, the report said, citing a research team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology.

Microblade technology is a period of technological microlith (tiny-blade-tool) development marked by the creation and use of small stone blades, which are produced by chipping silica-rich stones like chert, quartz, or obsidian. It was said to have come into widespread use over vast parts of northern Asia and northeastern Siberia in hunter-gatherer cultures during and after the Ice Age.

Migration to the Tibetan Plateau in that period may be closely linked to the long-term occupation of the region by humans and the formation of modern populations in Tibet, said China's official *globaltimes.cn* Jul 21, citing a report by the *Science and Technology Daily*.

This ground-breaking find fills a gap in the region's prehistoric cultural history and offers crucial insights into early human migration and adaptation on the plateau, the report said.

Significantly, the site has been dated to between 11,000 and 10,000 years ago. This time frame not only outlines the early activities of microblade technology groups in the heart of the plateau, but also provides an essential chronological marker for understanding the evolution of prehistoric human culture in the region.

In addition to the archaeological discoveries, the research team was stated to have integrated molecular biology findings, discovering that the migration of microblade technology groups into the Tibetan Plateau may be closely linked to the long-term occupation of the region by humans and the formation of modern populations in Tibet.

Tibet rain: Floods and landslides leave hundreds stranded

10 July 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

Over 472 people, including local residents and tourists from outside the area, were trapped outside Chentang Township in the Shigatse area, says state media.

Hundreds of people were trapped in rural Tibet in recent days after heavy rainfall caused floods and

landslides, Chinese state media reported on Wednesday.

At least 472 people, including local residents and tourists from outside the area, were trapped outside Chentang Township in the Shigatse area, state broadcaster CCTV said.

China is battling extreme weather across the country this summer, with the national weather agency expecting extreme heat to persist for much of the season.

Swathes of northern China have already been baked by heat waves this summer, while unseasonably torrential rains have triggered deadly floods and landslides across much of the south.

Climate change driven by human-emitted greenhouse gases makes extreme weather events more frequent and intense, and China is the world's biggest emitter. Continuous rainfall since Saturday in Tibet had left roads damaged, and "power and communications in the area of Chentang Township was cut off", according to CCTV.

Footage published by the broadcaster showed murky water tumbling down rocky hillsides, and large groups of people trekking along crumbled roads.

Large parts of one road appeared to have fallen into a river, while another one was covered in debris from a landslide.

CCTV said rescuers had been working for four days, and had successfully relocated 342 of the stranded people to nearby urban areas.

"Additionally, more than 130 tourists from outside this area, migrant workers and merchants remain temporarily stranded there due to road disruptions, rainy weather and insufficient physical ability to walk long distances," CCTV said.

An emergency communications network has now been set up in the area, according to the broadcaster.

Extinct humans survived on the Tibetan plateau for 160,000 years

03 July 2024, [Science Daily](#), University of Reading

Bone remains found in a Tibetan cave 3,280 m above sea level indicate an ancient group of humans survived here for many millennia, according to a new study published in *Nature*.

The Denisovans are an extinct species of ancient human that lived at the same time and in the same places as Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*.

Only a handful Denisovan remains have ever been discovered by archaeologists.

Little is known about the group, including when they became extinct, but evidence exists to suggest they interbred with both Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*.

A research team led by Lanzhou University, China, the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, the Institute of

Tibetan Plateau Research, CAS, China, and involving the University of Reading studied more than 2,500 bones from the Baishiya Karst Cave on the high-altitude Tibetan Plateau, one of the only two places where Denisovans are known to have lived.

Their new analysis, published today (Wednesday, 3 July) in *Nature*, has identified a new Denisovan fossil and shed light on the species' ability to survive in fluctuating climatic conditions -- including the ice age -- on the Tibetan plateau from around 200,000 to 40,000 years ago.

Dr Geoff Smith, a zooarchaeologist at the University of Reading, is a co-author of the study.

He said: "We were able to identify that Denisovans hunted, butchered and ate a range of animal species. Our study reveals new information about the behaviour and adaptation of Denisovans both to high altitude conditions and shifting climates. We are only just beginning to understand the behaviour of this extraordinary human species."

Dietary diversity

Bone remains from Baishya Karst Cave were broken into numerous fragments preventing identification.

The team used a novel scientific method that exploits differences in bone collagen between animals to determine which species the bone remains came from.

Dr Huan Xia, of Lanzhou University, said: "Zooarchaeology by Mass Spectrometry (ZooMS) allows us to extract valuable information from often overlooked bone fragments, providing deeper insight into human activities."

The research team determined that most of the bones were from blue sheep, known as the bharal, as well as wild yaks, equids, the extinct woolly rhino, and the spotted hyena.

The researchers also identified bone fragments from small mammals, such as marmots, and birds.

Dr Jian Wang, of Lanzhou University, said: "Current evidence suggests that it was Denisovans, not any other human groups, who occupied the cave and made efficient use of all the animal resources available to them throughout their occupation."

Detailed analysis of the fragmented bone surfaces shows the Denisovans removed meat and bone marrow from the bones, but also indicate the humans used them as raw material to produce tools.

A new Denisovan fossil

The scientists also identified one rib bone as belonging to a new Denisovan individual.

The layer where the rib was found was dated to between 48,000 and 32,000 years ago, implying that this Denisovan individual lived at a time when modern humans were dispersing across the Eurasian continent.

The results indicate that Denisovans lived through two cold periods, but also during a warmer interglacial period between the Middle and Late Pleistocene eras. Dr Frido Welker, of the University of Copenhagen, said: "Together, the fossil and molecular evidence indicates that Ganjia Basin, where Baishiya Karst Cave is located, provided a relatively stable environment for Denisovans, despite its high-altitude. "The question now arises when and why these Denisovans on the Tibetan Plateau went extinct."

Taming the Driчу: China's Derge Dam Threatens Tibetan Culture and Communities

01 July 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The people of Derge, a town in eastern Tibet, have risen up in opposition to the planned Kamtok (Ch: Gangtuo) hydropower project in their region. China's move to build the dam despite local opposition is indicative of the Chinese government's willingness to disregard negative impacts on Tibetan communities upstream in order to provide energy to the Chinese towns downstream.

This report expands on the Derge (Dege) situation and delves further into some of the systemic dangers of China's dam-building spree on the Driчу (Jinsha)^[1] river. We hope to elucidate the stark contrast between the Tibetan people's deep-rooted connection to their ancestral lands and cultural heritage in Derge and beyond, and China's authoritarian approach that views the displacement of Tibetans and the erasure of their civilization as an acceptable cost for serving the interests of the Chinese state.

Much has already been reported regarding the feared submergence of Wontö monastery and the displacement of upwards of 10,000 Tibetans due to the planned Kamtok Dam.^[2] These fears reflect the familiar pattern of dislocation throughout Tibet, as recently reported by Human Rights Watch.^[3]

Since 2016, the Chinese government has intensified its efforts to forcibly relocate Tibetan populations under the guise of policy initiatives euphemistically labeled as "extremely high-altitude ecological relocation" and "targeted poverty alleviation." These programs are thinly veiled pretexts for the coercive displacement of Tibetans, facilitating the exploitation of Tibet's abundant natural resources. The implementation of these policies has resulted in the involuntary resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans from their communities, paving the way for the unimpeded extraction and utilization of Tibet's rich natural endowment, including minerals and water resources.

Read more [here](#).

TIBET IN EXILE

Central Tibetan Administration seeks US action on exiled Tibetans as Chinese repression intensifies

30 July 2024, [Take One](#)

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), based in Dharamshala, which represents Tibetans living in exile, highlighted the need for the United States to provide concrete assistance to Tibetans who are already experiencing backlash from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In a post on X, the CTA emphasised that while the US Resolve Tibet Act is a significant step in challenging the CCP's attempts to rewrite Tibetan history, it's crucial for the US to support the Tibetan community actively as they face increasing retaliation. The CTB on X said, "The act takes a landmark step in challenging the CCP's historical revisionism. But the US should be prepared to offer concrete support to the Tibetan community, which is already beginning to feel the CCP's retaliation."

The US Resolve Tibet Act is a legislative measure aimed at supporting Tibetans and addressing issues related to Chinese policies in Tibet. The act typically focuses on enhancing US support for the Tibetan people, promoting human rights, and challenging Chinese government actions that are perceived as oppressive or unjust.

In the 1950s, Tibet came under the control of the People's Republic of China (PRC) following a military invasion. This event prompted the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, to flee to India in 1959, where he set up a government in exile. China considers Tibet a fundamental part of its territory and has worked to integrate it into the broader Chinese state. This has involved relocating Han Chinese settlers to Tibet and enforcing strict regulations on Tibetan political and religious practices.

Human rights organisations and Tibetan advocacy groups have raised alarms about various issues in Tibet, including political repression, restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, arbitrary detentions of activists, and cultural suppression.

Reports also indicate significant environmental damage and resource exploitation in Tibetan areas. On the global stage, Tibet's situation remains a sensitive diplomatic matter, with some countries and international bodies expressing concern over human rights violations and advocating for peaceful dialogue between China and Tibetan representatives to address these issues.

Panel Discussion on 'Forced Closure of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institution: Causes and Impacts'

29 July 2024, [CTA](#)

The Tibet Policy Institute, a research center affiliated with the Central Tibetan Administration, hosted a

panel discussion titled “Forced Closure of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institute: Causes and Impacts” this morning at 10 a.m. in the TPI Hall.

The event featured distinguished panellists, including Pema Tso, Member of the Tibetan Parliament and Chief Editor of Tibet Times; Dawa Tsering, Director of the Tibet Policy Institute, CTA; and Shede Dawa, Researcher at Tibet Watch and former student of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institute.

TPI’s Deputy Director, Zamlha Tempa Gyaltzen, moderated the discussion. He provided an overview of the subject matter and introduced the topic. He brought up ‘The Last Class,’ a story by Alphonse Daudet, exploring different aspects of French nationalism and identity. The protagonist was a young boy attending his last French class, drawing parallels to the situation of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institute.

The panel discussion commenced with poignant opening remarks from each panellist, delving into the recent ‘Forced Closure of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institute (Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational High School in Golog) in Tibet’ and its multifaceted implications within their respective domains of expertise.

Parliamentarian Pema Tso highlighted the challenges and restrictions Ragya Sherig Norling faced in its educational endeavours. She first received the news on the morning of 14 July 2024, at 5:35 a.m. via mobile, learning that the school had been closed two hours earlier and that all students were being sent home. Following this, Tibetans inside and outside Tibet started writing articles about the closure and sharing videos of students crying on the school grounds. This news spread across almost all social media platforms, raising questions among Tibetans about the reason behind the closure. She stated, “Between 1994 and 2021, more than 2,200 students graduated from this institution, and 253 were former staff members. As of 2021, this year in 2024, more than 120 students have graduated from the same institute.” She also provided a brief history of the founder of Jigme Ragya Sherig School, Gen Jigme Gyaltzen.

Shede Dawa, a former student of Ragya Sherig Norling Educational Institute, shared his experiences and memories from his school days. He also discussed the history of the school’s founder, Gen Jigme Gyaltzen. He recalled the latter emphasising the importance of the Tibetan language for the Tibetan people, asserting that without their own language, they would fall behind in society. He remarked that Gen Jigme wasn’t someone of high social status or wealth who established the university but rather a humble monk from a nomadic region who made it possible through immense effort and dedication to the Tibetan language.

In his account of being a student at the institute, Shide Dawa shared that he initially had no interest in Tibetan. However, under the educational guidance of Gen Jigme Gyaltzen, he was eventually able to enroll in the institute for further studies. “Gen Jigme Gyaltzen consistently emphasised that preserving the Tibetan language and writing was crucial for the survival of the Tibetan people.” He further added that Gen Jigme used to inspire students by saying that just as a Chinese or English person must know their language first, so must Tibetans. His inspiring words and active participation in every co-curricular activity motivated the students to embrace their heritage and language.

Geshe Akuk Tseten, a member of the Tibetan Parliament and a special guest on the panel, highlighted the significance of the school for Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet. He explained that the Chinese government shut down the school because they saw it as a threat. He also mentioned that Jigme Gyaltzen, a student of the Panchen Lama, sold his mother’s jewellery to establish the school. Recognizing his noble intention, some monks assisted him without any compensation. He noted that Rejia Sherab Ling was not only a center for Tibetan language studies but also for logic and contemporary education. Tenzin Lekshey, the spokesman and Additional Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, expressed strong opposition to the Chinese government’s policy of shutting down Tibetan schools and replacing them with boarding schools. He argued that these measures aim to undermine Tibetan culture, religion, and people. Tenzin Pema, Additional Secretary for Education at the Central Tibetan Administration; Kalsang Dolma, deputy secretary of the Tibetan Women’s League; Sonam Tsering, secretary of the Tibetan Youth League; and Lobsang Yangtso, director of the Tibet Affairs Office, also spoke on the matter, highlighting its seriousness.

TPI Director Dawa Tsering addressed the future prospects for Tibetan language education in light of the closure of Ragya Sherig Norling. He emphasised that to shape a positive future for Tibet, it is crucial to understand and address the current situation. “Presently, the Chinese government is actively closing monasteries and Tibetan schools. This is not the first instance of such actions; recent events include the mass relocation of Tibetans due to hydropower projects in Tibetan areas and the downstream regions outside Tibet. These measures are part of a broader strategy by Chinese authorities to eradicate the Tibetan language and culture systematically,” he added.

The panel discussion was also attended by Tibetan parliamentarians Geshe Lhampa Atuk Tseten, Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen and Geshe Ngaba Gangri,

along with Additional Secretaries Tenzin Lekshey and Tenzin Pema, and representatives from various Tibetan NGOs and media outlets came together to engage in insightful discussions.

Tibet Represented at the Opening Ceremony of Paris Olympic Games

27 July 2024, [CTA](#)

Representative Rigzin Genkhang led a Tibetan delegation comprising Co-ordinator Thupten Tsering, Tibetan Community President Pema Rinchen and former President Ven. Tenzin Penpa, as invited guests to the opening Ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games along the Seine river, flowing through the heart of the city of light.

Despite Tibet not being represented at the Olympics alongside other nations, the presence of this delegation was crucial to represent Tibet and raise awareness and advocate for the ongoing Tibetan situation.

It may be noted here that France, with one the highest number of Tibet Support Groups, is also home to the largest Tibetan diaspora in Europe.

Proudly displaying their national flag, which quickly attracted a lot of interest and questions, the Tibetan delegation joined the French people in this historic moment, celebrating the Olympic spirit.

-Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Brussels

Sikyong Penpa Tsering Meets US Congress Members in Washington DC, Expresses Gratitude on Behalf of Tibetans

26 July 2024, [CTA](#)

From 22 to 25 July, Sikyong Penpa Tsering visited Washington DC for a series of official engagements, during which he expressed gratitude to US legislators in person for their support of the “Resolve Tibet Act.”

In addition to meeting with the US Congress members, Sikyong had meetings with the State Department and White House officials on Tibet-related issues. Sikyong also participated in a closed-door expert roundtable at Brookings Institution, moderated by its China centre director, Ryan Hass. Other engagements included meetings with USAID officials and congressional staffers.

A reception was organised at the Capitol Visitor Center to mark the signing of “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act” into law. Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the Tibetan political leader, expressed the gratitude of the Tibetan people to the sponsors of the Bill. The reception was attended by Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, Chairman Michael McCaul, Congressman Jim McGovern, and Congressman Joe Wilson. A video with a collection of

Tibetan people thanking the United States was also screened at the reception and enjoyed by the attendees.

Sikyong also attended the community celebration of the Resolve Tibet Act becoming law at the Capital Area Tibetan Community Center and addressed the gathering. In his speech, Sikyong said, “It’s very rare for Tibetans to celebrate. There were times when Tibetans celebrated when His Holiness was honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize, the US Congressional Gold Medal, and recognitions from many institutions and organisations or otherwise; the Tibet issue became known internationally because of Tibetans suffering inside Tibet. And, for the first time, this is a very momentous day for the Tibetans that we celebrate because of the government’s decision to pass legislation like the Resolve Tibet Act, which challenges every aspect of China’s claim on Tibet.”

Regarding the development of the “Resolve Tibet Act,” Sikyong Penpa Tsering expressed his gratitude, stating, “I want to extend my thanks to Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi. This bill originated from her office during her tenure as Speaker in 2022. At that time, Richard Gere as the President of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), I as Sikyong, and the team from the Office of Tibet and ICT met with Speaker Pelosi and Congressman Jim McGovern. During this meeting, we strategise on three basic issues: organising a World Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet in Washington, DC—since the last one was held in 1997 and this was organised in June 2022, and around the same time, the testimony on Tibet’s historical status by Tenzin Namgyal Tethong, Ellen Bork, Chinese historian Professor Lao, and Professor Michael, the four of them testified before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. Based on that testimony, this “Resolve Tibet Act” was sponsored by Congressman Jim McGovern and Chairman McCaul in the house, and Senator Todd Young and Senator Jeff Markley in the Senate with the support of Senator Cardin as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. We are deeply thankful for their support.”

Sikyong further added, “As Speaker Pelosi said when she visited Dharamshala, she mentioned that this was also due to the Tibetan people that this bill got passed. So, I am gonna thank all the Tibetans in America, the Tibet Support Groups, the Tibetan associations, the Tibetan advocates, particularly the younger generations of Tibet who have been at the Hill this year in March. And I know that there has been a lot of input and support also from the Congressional staffers, some of whom are present here, who have been architects of this bill.”

During the weekend, Sikyong will be visiting Tibetan communities in Madison-Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Chicago.

International Campaign for Tibet alleges "systematic censorship" of Tibetan content on Chinese platforms

25 July 2024, [ANI](#)

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), in its recent report, has highlighted the "severe challenges" faced by Tibetan users on platforms like Douyin and other prominent Chinese social media channels due to a "systematic censorship" of Tibetan content. The report stated that these platforms are part of Beijing's broader strategy to diminish Tibetan language and culture in favour of promoting Mandarin.

Despite assertions by Chinese authorities that they support minority languages, including Tibetan, there has been no official acknowledgment or response to protests from Tibetans regarding these discriminatory practices, claims ICT.

According to the International Campaign for Tibet, Tibetans engaging in online commerce and communication encounter significant barriers such as blocked livestreams and restricted comments in Tibetan.

This censorship severely limits their ability to freely engage online. Even Tibetan medical professionals are impacted, as they are unable to effectively communicate with patients in Tibetan due to language restrictions imposed by platforms like Douyin.

The report underscores that these actions are part of a deliberate effort to enhance the dominance of Mandarin while suppressing Tibetan cultural expression. This contradicts official claims of respecting ethnic minority languages and suggests governmental complicity in enforcing policies that undermine Tibetan language rights, despite constitutional protections.

This situation raises broader concerns about freedom of expression and cultural preservation in Tibet, echoing ongoing struggles faced by Tibetan advocates like Tashi Wangchuk, who continue to advocate for language rights amid repression. ICT further stated that the stringent censorship and monitoring of Tibetan-related content on social media platforms like Douyin reflect a systematic approach to control narratives and silence dissenting voices, aligning with the broader objectives of the Chinese Communist Party.

This suppression extends globally, as seen in instances where platforms such as TikTok are used to harass Tibetan communities abroad, highlighting the international impact of these restrictive policies. The ongoing restrictions on Tibetan language use online and the lack of official response to grievances highlight a troubling pattern of neglect and suppression. This situation raises serious concerns about the future of Tibetan cultural identity and linguistic heritage under Chinese governance, the report added.

In the Tibetan region, the Chinese government has promoted a bilingual education policy where Mandarin Chinese is increasingly emphasised over Tibetan.

This policy has led to Mandarin becoming the primary language of instruction in many schools, reducing the prominence of Tibetan language education. There have been reports of restrictions on teaching Tibetan language in schools beyond a certain level, particularly in higher education institutions. This limits opportunities for Tibetan language development and higher education in Tibetan.

As per reports, the Chinese government exercises strict control over textbooks and publications in Tibetan areas, ensuring that materials align with state-approved narratives and ideologies. This control extends to content related to Tibetan language and culture. (ANI)

Secretary Tsering Yangkyi is Appointed Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Office of Tibet, London

24 July 2024, [CTA](#)

In a circular issued today, 24 July 2024, the Kashag announced the appointment of Secretary Tsering Yangkyi as the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Office of Tibet in London.

Currently serving as the Secretary of the Election and Public Service Commission (CTA), Secretary Tsering Yangkyi's appointment aligns with Article 19 (1) of the Public Service Commission's rules and regulations. This article stipulates that the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Offices of Tibet must be appointed by the Kashag in the presence of Sikyong and the Kalons.



གསལ་བསྐྱབས་

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'People's Court' finds President Xi guilty of 'crime against humanity' in Tibet, verdict refutes China's propaganda

21 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

While defeated rulers and fallen military leaders of smaller countries with limited global influence have faced judicial scrutiny and punishment under international law, those in the Communist Party of China leadership, topped by President Xi Jinping, continue their crimes against humanity, including acts bordering on genocide, with impunity. This has outraged the global civil society which recently held a 'people's court' hearing in The Hague on China's acts of aggression in Taiwan, crimes against humanity in Tibet, and genocide against the Uyghur population in Xinjiang. The tribunal found Chinese President Xi Jinping guilty on most counts and issued a symbolic arrest warrant against him on Jul 12.

"The evidence-backed findings affirm the occurrence of severe crimes against humanity, lending credibility to calls for justice and accountability. They may compel countries to impose sanctions or reconsider their economic and political ties with China," noted the *jurist.org* Jul 13.

The court confirmed charges of crimes against humanity against Chinese President Xi Jinping based on evidence of his effective control over the state organs committing widespread and systematic violations in Tibet and Xinjiang with knowledge of the situation.

Regarding China's actions in Tibet, the court confirmed crimes against humanity, including forcible transfer of children, imprisonment, and persecution. Judge Fonseca has said, "We believe there are substantial grounds to infer a widespread and systematic attack directed against the civilian population with knowledge of cyber attacks. Thus, the court confirms counts two, three and four of the indictment."

The 'people's court' known as 'The Court of the Citizens of the World', comprised of Former Ambassador for War Crimes Stephen Rapp, Former Madela appointee before the Constitutional Court of South Africa Zak Yacoob, and lawyer and international law specialist Bhavani Fonseca, and held its hearing from Jul 8-11, 2024. The cases were meticulously presented through opening statements, expert testimonies, and victim narratives, the report noted.

Apart from lending credibility to calls for justice and accountability, the tribunal's judgment may challenge domestic Chinese propaganda and prompt the younger Chinese populace to question their government's policies. The rulings imply that human rights violations will not go unnoticed and signal to authoritarian regimes worldwide that justice may ultimately prevail. The tribunal's findings validate the survivors' and advocates' efforts against atrocities,

reinforcing their hopes for eventual accountability, noted the *jurist.org* report.

"The tribunal has imparted a powerful moral and legal message against human rights violations, even if current geopolitical realities might impede immediate action. Its comprehensive findings and unequivocal moral stance ensure these crimes remain in global consciousness. This judgment provides enduring hope that future international legal bodies might hold even the most powerful leaders accountable, thus upholding the rights of vulnerable communities worldwide," the report said.

The court successfully concluded its session despite facing harassment and attempts to shut it down with fake threats that called the trial illegal by citing a series of alleged violations under Article 118 of the Dutch Penal Code "including but not limited to impersonation of judicial authority, violation of public order, defamation, false imprisonment, and complicity in criminal activities."

Besides, an alleged spy, disguised as a new legal volunteer from Italy, was stated to have claimed on Jul 2 with no reason in an unauthorised group message to all staff members that the court was not paying its staff, was acting 'unjustly,' while also questioning the court's moral legitimacy. The individual was stated to have "provoked fellow volunteers to resign and sent an email to legal participants from the official email accounts, asking them not to attend the trial this coming week in The Hague against President Xi."

The pursuit of peace and human rights remains a universal endeavour, with the China Tribunal paving the way for a more just world, the report concluded.

"China cannot just change history", says Tibet President in exile as US passes Resolve Tibet act

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

US House recently passed the Tibet bill S-138, urging China to resolve the Tibet dispute. This bill also known as the Resolve Tibet Act, refutes Beijing's claims about Tibet and urges China to stop spreading disinformation about Tibet's history and the Tibetan people.

The bill was followed by the visit of a bipartisan group of US lawmakers led by Congressman Michael McCaul and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Dharamshala where they met with the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. The visit raised the hackles of the Chinese government which had described the bill as being groundless and futile.

The passage of the bill, however, has given a fillip to the Tibetan struggle for independence. Speaking exclusively to ANI, Tibetan President in exile, Penpa Tsering, said they want a clear message to go out to China that it cannot just change history.

"This is part of the strategy that we adopted since we came into this job in May 2021. The first time I travelled to the United States was in April 2022... we informed Speaker Pelosi that this is our changing strategy and we need to focus on the extremes... There cannot be a middle way... There could be political, social, economic and educational dimensions... One extreme is the present situation of Tibet, occupied under the repressive communist government... The other extreme is the historical status of Tibet as an independent state," Tsering said. "We have reasons for doing this. First is to send a message to China that they cannot just change history... The second message is to the international community that without understanding Tibet's history, how can they parrot what the Chinese government wants them to say over the last 60-65 years?" Tsering added.

Congressman Michael McCaul who leads the Republican House Committee on Foreign Affairs had led a delegation that called on the Dalai Lama after the Resolve Tibet bill was passed in the House said that the Chinese government has been working to stomp out Tibetan culture.

"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," Congressman McCaul said.

"The CCP's (Chinese Communist Party) propaganda campaign can't hide the truth: the people of Tibet have a unique culture, history, and religion that have never been part of China, despite the regime's lies. The CCP is working to stomp out Tibetan culture. This cannot be allowed to happen," he added.

Tibetan President in exile Penpa Tsering agrees with that view and says that for the first time the Chinese claim that Tibet is part of the Peoples Republic of China is being challenged.

"There are a lot of discrepancies in China's logic towards history and they have been shifting the goalpost all the time. This Tibet Resolve Act focuses on the part countering China's disinformation on Tibetan history, its people and His Holiness... The first issue is that it's an unresolved conflict. Because China thinks Tibet is already resolved, they have managed to convince the world that Tibet is part of PRC and that is being challenged for the first time," Tsering said. "They keep saying there is not one country that recognizes the independence of Tibet. The law does not say we recognize independence, but it challenges China's narrative that they have not accepted Tibet as a part of China... In the fourth part of this bill, these are all acting against China's narrative, and it is a new tool in our hand," Tsering added.

The new act has now opened a fresh standoff point between the United States and China. China's Foreign Ministry has questioned the Resolve Tibet act, saying

the move is pure interference in the country's internal affairs.

Tibetan gov't-in-exile takes on Chinese embassy, says Tibet not 'internal affair'

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

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Tibetan govt in exile to issue map of Tibet to counter China's 'cartographic aggression'

20 July 2024, [MyIndMakers](#)

The Tibetan government-in-exile plans to release a map of Tibet founded on historical records, featuring original boundaries and place names, in response to China's "cartographic aggression" and its practice of renaming locations to assert claims over disputed territories.

Penpa Tsering, the Sikyong or political leader of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) based in Dharamshala, announced that the CTA will utilise various research studies by experts on Tibet and ancient maps to create a new map. This map will be made available online for Tibetans and academics globally.

"We are doing this so that Tibetans living around the world get to know the real history of their country, and so that the memories of the Tibetans living inside Tibet don't fade away in the face of China's cartographic aggression," Tsering told HT.

"This is the overall Chinese strategy, it's nothing new. Renaming [of places] has happened before with Tibet. They did it last year too. If you look at the overall Chinese strategy, they use only Chinese names for [territories they claim, such as] Senkaku islands of Japan, or islands near Taiwan or Spratly Islands in the South China Sea," said Tsering, who like most of the current Tibetan leadership in exile was born in India and has never been to Tibet.

"The Chinese have their own names for islands they claim, not the names coined by other countries. They have also done something similar in Arunachal Pradesh. Within China, they are trying to erase the historical background of these names."

Tsering stated that the CTA will collaborate with a Tibetan cartographer based at Stanford to develop a searchable map of Tibet, with the project expected to be completed within six months to a year.

"We will then make it available online for everyone, otherwise there is no reason to have this map. It will provide a complete picture of Tibet," he said.

Another project taken up by the CTA is developing a search engine with Tibetan names of places. "Now, if I go to Google, I can't recognise names or places inside Tibet. We're going to do research on names of every place inside Tibet, and their Tibetan origins," Tsering said.

According to a recent report by Human Rights Watch, Chinese authorities have forcibly relocated 500 villages, displacing over 140,000 residents in the Tibet Autonomous Region since 2016. They have also renamed numerous places across the ancient kingdom of Tibet.

In addition to renaming Tibet as Xizang and establishing the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1965, Chinese authorities have incorporated several regions of the ancient kingdom of Tibet into Chinese provinces. For example, Tibetan officials noted that the region of Amdo is now part of Qinghai province, the Kham region was included in Sichuan province, and some other areas were integrated into Yunnan province.

The map being developed by the CTA will address these historical issues. Tsering expressed his belief that other countries facing similar problems with China should also push back.

"Countries with disputes in the South China Sea and in the case of the Senkaku Islands – everyone should push back against their designs. Because these designs amplify China's hegemonistic ambitions despite their denials," he said.

China refers to the northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as "Zangnan" and claims the strategic region as part of South Tibet. In recent years, China has renamed dozens of towns and geographical features in Arunachal Pradesh to assert its claim on the region. The Indian government has dismissed such moves, stating that the state will always remain a part of India.

Referring to the Resolve Tibet Act, signed by US President Joe Biden on 12th July, which aims to pressure China for a negotiated settlement regarding Tibet's demand for greater autonomy, Tsering said, "The main issue is that we were trying to push against China's disinformation on Tibetan history. [The Act] says the US doesn't recognise China's assertion that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times."

Dr Gyal Lo's Makes Presentation on China's Colonial-style Boarding Schools in Tibet at a Conference in Tokyo

20 July 2024, [CTA](#)

Tibet House Japan and the Asian Democracy Movement organised a talk and press conference by Tibetan Educational Sociologist Dr. Gyal Lo and his team comprising Dorjee Tsetan, Tibetan Parliamentarian and Asia Program Manager at Tibet Action Institute, and Tenzin Minlek and Tsering Dorjee of the Students for Free Tibet at Bunkyo Civic Center in Tokyo today.

Representative of the Liaison Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia, Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, welcomed the audience and introduced Dr. Gyal Lo, who has a long experience as a teacher and lecturer in different schools and universities in Tibet, and how Chinese policy behind the boarding school and the discrimination he faced forced him to flee Tibet and take refuge abroad. A short documentary on the Chinese colonial boarding school was presented to highlight the gravity of the situation.

Dr. Arya also shared the good news of the signing of the US Congress' Tibet Resolve Act by President Joe Biden on 12 July. He explained the importance of the law and how it strongly establishes and demonstrates the US's support and vision for a free and democratic Tibet. A Japanese translation of the law (S.138) was distributed to the audience, and some important points were read for particular attention.

Dr. Gyal Lo, educational sociologist and a leading expert on China's assimilative education policies in Tibet, made a presentation on China's colonial boarding schools in Tibet and how it started and evolved in three stages: first in 1970s with introduction of assimilative policies; second from 1984 onwards to take the Tibetan children away to Chinese cities; and third and the latest from 2016 with the closure of the native schools and forced education of one million Tibetan children from as young as 4 and 5 to 18 years old at the Chinese boarding schools. He explained how young children are indoctrinated and how they behave awkwardly after attending boarding school for some time.

Tenzin Minlek of the Students for Free Tibet (SFT) talked about the activities of the SFT to highlight the Chinese brutal assimilative policy to destroy Tibetan identity and deny the young children their mother tongue, culture, and religion.

Tibetan MP Dorjee Tsetan thanked the organisers and the audience for providing a platform to speak on this CCP's drastic policy to rob the Tibetan children of their language and identity. He also talked about the US Tibet Resolve Act. He requested the Japanese people and the government to come up with a statement condemning China's colonial boarding schools and for

legislation similar to the US Tibet Resolve Act to demonstrate Japan's support for freedom, human rights, and democracy in Tibet.

The press conference was held after the talk. Media people asked about specific suffering and torture faced by the children and its impact on both children and the parents, and how Tibetans in exile are making efforts to counter this Chinese assimilative policy.

A report booklet on colonial boarding schools by the Tibetan Action Institute and translated into Japanese by the Tibet House Japan was distributed freely to the audience and the media. Akira Shiho moderated the talk event, and Takayuki Kojima of the Asian Democracy Movement moderated the press conference.

Dr. Gyal Lo and the team delivered talks and presentations at Meiji and Waseda Universities. They met Shimomura Hakubun, Chairman of the Japan Parliamentarian Support Group for Tibet, where Dr. Gyal Lo informed the critical nature of the situation in Tibet and sought the lawmaker's support. Dr. Gyal Lo will speak at Tokyo University and some other places.

-Report filed by Office of Tibet, Japan

Hegemonistic Ambitions: Tibet PM-In-Exile On China Renaming Places In India

18 July 2024, [NDTV](#)

"All the neighboring countries from Japan to Taiwan to Philippines, now they are having serious problems in the strategies," said Tibetan Prime Minister-in-Exile, Sikyong Penpa Tsering

Renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh and belligerence in Ladakh -- this is what reflects China's hegemonistic ambition and now that the US law about Tibet has been passed, it has challenged China's claim that no nation recognises Tibetan Independence, Tibetan Prime Minister-in-Exile, Sikyong Penpa Tsering told NDTV today in an exclusive interview.

Asked about the Resolve Tibet Act -- which became a law in the United States four days ago -- he said through the Act, the US government says they do not accept the Chinese narrative that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times.

"So far, the Chinese government has been saying that there is not a single country that recognises the independence of Tibet or the government in exile... 'But with this act, would the Chinese government be able to say that?'" he said.

China has watched warily as a bipartisan delegation led by ex-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Michael McCaul came to India last month and met the Dalai Lama, underscoring an acceleration in US diplomatic initiative on a long-pending human rights issue.

China had asked the US to respect its sensitivity on matters related to Tibet and suggested that the Dalai

Lama "correct" his political propositions before talks can be held with him.

Asked about that, Mr McKaul said the US message to China was that "Do not destroy the culture of these people, their religion... Every people and country have a right to self-determination".

The US message to China was also a silent criticism of Beijing's alleged hegemonistic ambition that has led to discomfort among some.

Mr Tsering also alluded to it, saying, "All the neighboring countries from Japan to Taiwan to Philippines, now they are having serious problems in the strategies... Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam, everywhere they are escalating the situation. And then also because of their behavior, all the defense expenditures of all these countries are going on increasing every year, including New Zealand and Australia".

"Some 8, 10 years ago, China declared an air identification [zone] and so on. At that time, I told our US friends when China can claim the air, they will claim everything under that air, sea or land or whatever," he said.

"So these days, China's hegemonistic ambitions are also reflected in terms of how they are renaming places, not just in Arunachal Pradesh or belligerence on Ladakh," he added.

Chinese know "they're hurt": Tibetan leader on US President Biden signing 'Resolve Tibet Bill'

18 July 2024, [The Print](#)

Penpa Tsering, the President of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, commented on President Biden's recent signing of the 'Resolve Tibet Bill,' stating that the move has clearly struck a nerve with China.

Last week, US President Joe Biden signed the 'Resolve Tibet Act', which states that China's ongoing occupation of Tibet must be resolved per international law peacefully and not through repression.

In an interview with ANI, Tsering highlighted the intense reaction from the Chinese government, which has condemned the bill as an interference in their domestic affairs.

"The very fact that they came here to deliver the bill to His Holiness and then President Biden signing it, even before he signed, they said, please don't sign the form. Now, after signing, they are saying, don't implement the bill; otherwise, it will have consequences," Tsering said, adding, "So, in that sense, we know that it has worked and China has for it."

Expressing a confident stance on the impact of the newly signed 'Resolve Tibet Bill' and highlighting that the bill has significantly unsettled the Chinese government. Tsering remarked that the strong Chinese

reaction underscores the bill's effectiveness in challenging Beijing's narrative on Tibet.

Reflecting on the strategic approach adopted by his administration since May 2021, Tsering explained, "This is part of the strategy that we adopted since we came into this job in May 2021. The first time I managed to travel to the United States was in April 2022, because the pandemic was going on. And at that time, we did inform our friends in Congress, particularly Speaker Nancy Pelosi at that time, that this is our change in strategy, that we need to focus on the extremes."

He elaborated on this strategy, saying, "When we talk about the middle way, then there has to be extremes. Without extremes, there is no middle way. And if you have no recognition for the extremes, then there is no value for the middle way. So extreme could be in many dimensions. It could be political, social, economic, educational, whatever."

Tsering highlighted the bill's role in countering China's historical claims over Tibet. He asserted, "One is to send a message to China that they cannot just change history. History is in the past. And it's best left to historians." He criticised the Chinese government's shifting historical narratives, saying, "China thinks Tibet is already resolved, that they have managed to convince the world that Tibet is part of the PRC. And that is being challenged for the first time."

He further elaborated on the bill's impact, "The law does not say we recognise independence, but it challenges China's narratives that they have not accepted that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times."

Regarding future diplomatic strategies, Tsering expressed a commitment to international advocacy, stating, "Definitely, definitely. Now we would expect the United States to lend a shoulder to work with like-minded countries, because that is something about which the United States has always been talking, and we can reach out only to the free world."

He also addressed the role of India in this context, saying, "I have always said that no country will leave aside their national interests and pick up India's national interests. So as long as that nation's security interests and other interests align with Tibetan interests, and Tibet and India, we have age-old relations."

On the subject of back-channel talks with China, Tsering was sceptical, noting, "No, I have admitted to having back channels, but then it's nothing important to talk about. There's nothing significant to talk about. It doesn't look very likely that there would be any positive outcome."

Regarding the Dalai Lama's health and return to Dharamshala, Tsering said, "The dates are not fixed because it will all depend on how well His Holiness

recovers and what other engagements might appear.” (ANI)

Tibetans in-exile condemn China's policies, hold candlelight vigil

18 July 2024, [ANI](#)

The Tibetans in exile held a candlelight vigil in Dharamshala on Wednesday to condemn China's forced closure of the renowned Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbulung School in Golog and to stand in solidarity with Tibetans.

On the occasion of International Justice Day on Wednesday, the Tibetan NGOs in Dharamshala condemned Chinese policies in Tibet. Eight non-governmental organisations based in Dharamshala express their profound concern and condemnation of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) systematic violations of human rights in Tibet.

Tibetan activists said that Beijing's policies in Tibet have resulted in egregious violations affecting the fundamental rights of Tibetan children and their access to education.

More than one million Tibetan children are currently enrolled in colonial-style boarding schools, forcibly separated from their families and cultural roots. This forced assimilation into the Chinese language and culture runs counter to international standards on cultural rights and education, they said.

Moreover, the Communist Party has aggressively shut down privately-run Tibetan schools and educational institutions, eroding Tibetan communities' ability to preserve and transmit their unique cultural heritage and values through education, they alleged. On July 14, 2024, the Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbu School, founded by the renowned Tibetan educator Jigme Gyaltsen with the approval of the local people's government, was forced to close under pressure from the Chinese Communist government, they said. Therefore, the coalition of NGOs based in Dharamshala vehemently condemns the forced closure of the school founded in 1994 by Ragya Jigme Gyalsten, the school served as a cornerstone of Tibetan cultural and linguistic education for three decades before its abrupt shutdown by CCP. These actions are part of a malicious policy aimed at destroying the environment for nurturing Tibetan education, culture, psychology, and consciousness, effectively erasing the Tibetan people's identity. "We strongly oppose this policy and condemn the Chinese government's actions," they said. The NGOs in Dharamshala call upon the international community, including governments, human rights organisations, and educational institutions, to take immediate and decisive action to hold China accountable for these grave violations. On this World Justice Day, the NGOs in Dharamshala

reaffirm their commitment to advocating for justice, freedom, and the preservation of Tibetan cultural heritage, they said. (ANI)

Long-time friend of Tibet Richard Gere recovering after prostate operation

18 July 2024, [Phayul](#)

Richard Gere, hollywood actor and long-time advocate for Tibet and a good friend of the Tibetan exiled spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has recently been the subject of public concern over reports of his health. The President of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) Sikyong Penpa during a public talk on the last-day visit to Ladakh, revealed that the 74-year-old actor had undergone prostate surgery earlier in June.

“Earlier in June, Richard Gere underwent a prostate operation. He relocated to Spain 10-15 days post-operation. Unfortunately, he required a second procedure due to an infection. Gere has been a devoted ally to our cause for many years. During this challenging time, I urge Tibetans to pray for his swift recovery,” stated Sikyong Penpa Tsering in his public address (min. 47:43 onwards).

The concerns over Richard Gere's health amplified following an online post by Tibetan singer Loten Namling who shared information received from Fabrizio Pallotti, a close friend of Gere. According to the post, Gere's health issues began with an operation in the United States, during which his blood became infected. The details of the initial procedure and the nature of the infection remain undisclosed. Following the complications from the initial operation, Gere underwent a second operation and is now recuperating in Spain.

The news of Richard Gere's health has elicited widespread concern and well-wishes from supporters around the world. Social media platforms have been flooded with messages of support and prayers for his recovery. Gere's unwavering support for the Tibetan cause has earned him immense respect and built a strong emotional connection, particularly within the Tibetan community.

In 1993, during the Academy Awards, while presenting the Best Art Direction, Gere skipped the script and called out China's occupation of Tibet and its “horrendous, horrendous human rights situation.” He continued his advocacy, calling for a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and he continues to support the cause through his two foundations, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet and the Gere Foundation in New York.

A netizen via Facebook wrote, “I really hope he will recover well as soon as possible. He is our real friend. May Buddha bless him.”

"Sending from my heart streams of sincere prayers and wishes for a speedy recovery and long life. We Tibetans deeply remain grateful to you dearest Gere," another netizen expressed.

"We consider ourselves extension of Indian culture," says Tibetan leader in exile

18 July 2024, [ANI](#)

Penpa Tsering, the President of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, appreciated India's support for Tibetan culture and highlighted their strong cultural connection with New Delhi, adding that Tibetans consider themselves an extension of Indian culture, language and religion.

Tsering further noted that Tibetan language and religion are based on Indian scripts and have translated many Sanskrit and Pali texts into Tibetan, preserving ancient Indian wisdom.

"We consider ourselves as an extension of Indian culture, language or religion. The script of our language and religion all came from India. We consider ourselves as an extension of Indian culture because we translated every available Sanskrit and Pali text into Tibetan and we are the only country to do that. So, we are the repository of one part of ancient Indian wisdom," Penpa Tsering said.

Further, he also acknowledged India's role in providing refuge to the Dalai Lama and 72,000 Tibetan people when China annexed Tibet in 1951.

"We are very grateful to the Indian government at the most difficult period of our history, to give refuge here in India to His Holiness and now there are 72,000 Indian Tibetans in India," said Tsering. Tsering also spoke about the recent United States Congressional delegation's visit to India. The delegation, including former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, met Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamshala on June 20.

The US delegation also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Tsering said that India's permission for a congressional visit to Dharamshala and the subsequent meetings with Indian leaders is a sign of validation and support for the Tibetan cause.

"I think a lot of analysis has been done during the congressional visit to Dharamshala where a lot of credit is given to the Indian government for allowing them to visit India, visit Dharamshala make those statements and they're on the way back meet with Prime Minister Modi ji and also the foreign minister," said Tsering. "So I think in Taiwan also it's being interpreted as validation of this visit to Dharamshala by the Indian government," he added.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile President also hailed US President Joe Biden's recent signing of the 'Resolve

Tibet Bill,' stating that the move has clearly struck a nerve with China.

Last week, US President Joe Biden signed the 'Resolve Tibet Act', which states that China's ongoing occupation of Tibet must be resolved per international law peacefully and not through repression. Expressing a confident stance on the impact of the newly signed 'Resolve Tibet Bill' and highlighting that the bill has "significantly unsettled" the Chinese government, Tsering remarked that the strong Chinese reaction underscores the bill's effectiveness in challenging Beijing's narrative on Tibet. (ANI)

Tibetans express gratitude to US President for enacting 'Resolve Tibet Act'

17 July 2024, [Awaz The Voice](#)

The Tibetan community in Shimla held a grand ceremony at the Sambhota Tibetan School on Wednesday to thank the US and President Joe Biden for enacting the 'Resolve Tibet Act' which calls for a resolution to the Tibet-China dispute.

Last week, US President Joe Biden signed the 'Resolve Tibet Act', which states that China's ongoing occupation of Tibet must be resolved per international law peacefully and not through repression.

The Tibetan community said the legislation is a historical milestone and sends a strong political message to China, seven decades since the People's Republic of China (PRC) illegally occupied Tibet and forced the Tibetan delegation to sign the so-called 17-point Agreement in 1951 under duress.

During the celebration, Tibetan students, elders and others performed traditional dances at the Tibetan Sambhota School in Shimla. The Traditional circle dance (Gorshey) was also performed by Tibetans.

Tsewang Phuntsok, Chief Representative Officer of the Central Tibetan Administration in Shimla, said this will help the international community to send a strong message and enforce China to start dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

"The Tibetan community in Shimla has gathered to celebrate the signing of the Tibet Issue Resolve Act. This will help the Tibetan community and international community to send a strong message and enforce China to start dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and between the democratically elected representatives of the Tibetan government-in-exile and China," Phuntsok said.

Calling it a "landmark for the Tibetan issue," he said, "This is the first ever such act signed by any country in the past seven decades."

Phuntsok said that the function is organised by the Tibetan community to pay gratitude and heartfelt thanks to the US.

"It's important, as it's Wednesday today, that we organise the traditional circle dance (gorshey). We

take this day as the birth of the Dalai Lama as per the Tibetan lunar calendar," Tsewang Phuntsok added.

The Tibetan community said they are happy that the bill was passed with overwhelming support. They said the signing of the legislation further reiterated the current policy of the China's systematically eradicating the Tibetan religion, culture, language, history, way of life and environment.

Tibetan freedom activist Tenzin Palden said that this is a "landmark legislation" for their freedom struggle.

"This is an important day for us. We have gathered here to thank the United States of America for signing the Act for Tibet. This is a landmark for us, as since 1959 it has been an act, which makes it important for us as a landmark of our freedom struggle. They have made it an act and law and it will send a message to China and to the countries of the world as the friends of Tibet across the globe are coming forward," he said. Palden added that they are expressing their gratitude to US President Joe Biden and the people of the US for signing this act favouring the resolution of the Tibet issue. "It is a historic milestone for us," Palden said.

The young Tibetan generation are happy to know that powerful Nations like the USA are coming forward to understand and recognise the issue of Tibet.

Dawa Choedon, a young Tibetan activist, said the young generation is happy that strong nations like the US are coming forward to understand and recognise the issue of Tibet.

"On July 12, US President Joe Biden signed an Act to resolve the Tibet issue. We, the Tibetan diaspora here in Shimla, have gathered to celebrate this day. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the US, as it is a very important day for us. Today is White Wednesday, which we usually celebrate, and today is a very special Wednesday because of the support we get from the world, especially the powerful countries like the USA, as they are recognising our problems." Choedon added that this would enforce China to realise its mistake, recognise our problems and resolve them.

"As I said, this is the first milestone that we have achieved, the young Tibetan population across the globe are happy for this and are thankful to the United States of America," Choedonb said.

Back-channel talks between China, Tibetan govt-in-exile going on: Sikyong Penpa Tsering
17 July 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The Tibetan government-in-exile and China are continuing to hold back-channel talks and the last round took place this month, just days before US President Joe Biden signed a legislation that seeks to press Beijing for a negotiated settlement to Tibet's demands for greater autonomy. "Last round of talks happened at the beginning of this month," Penpa

Tsering, the Sikyong or political head of Tibet's government-in-exile, said on Wednesday.

The Tibetan side has been joining the back-channel negotiations with a long-term perspective and that it does not have any expectations from the Xi Jinping-led Chinese government, he told a small group of journalists.

"We just cannot think of the short term. We cannot only think about Xi Jinping. He will be there for sometime and then he will be gone. But we have to keep our communications (with Beijing) .. In April, Beijing rejected reports of the back-channel talks with the Tibetan government-in-exile and said it will hold negotiations only with the representatives of the Dalai Lama.

"The back-channel talks are going on. However China never acknowledges them. It is their policy not to acknowledge," Tsering said.

From 2002 to 2010, Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government held nine rounds of dialogue that did not produce any concrete outcomes. No formal talks have been held since then.

The back-channel talks were seen as willingness by both sides to re-engage over a decade after the formal dialogue process hit a dead end in view of anti-China protests in Tibet and Beijing's hardline approach towards the Buddhist region.

Sikyong said the talks are taking place in a third country and it was Beijing which reached out to Tibet's government-in-exile for the negotiations. At the same time, he said there has been no contact between the two sides since Biden signed into law the "The Resolve Tibet Act".

"My Administration will continue to call on the People's Republic of China to resume direct dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet," Biden said after signing the Act on July 12. The legislation, seen as significant in Tibet's struggle for autonomy, says it is Washington's policy that the conflict must be resolved in accordance with international law through dialogue without preconditions.

"If there has to be a resolution, it should be based on international law -- that is the first aspect of this act," the Sikyong said.

"Even though we are asking for some kind of autonomy under the Middle-Way policy, the concept of autonomy is not defined in international law. The only thing that is defined in international law is self determination," he explained.

"And that is what the US recognises that the Tibetan people have the right to self determination just as the UN General Assembly passed a resolution way back in 1961." Tsering said the Tibetan people are very

committed to the 'Middleway' policy of the Dalai Lama to resolve the conflict.

"We are very very committed to the Middleway policy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that is approved by the majority of Tibetans and unanimously adopted by the Parliament way back in 1997," he said.

"We remain committed to His Holiness's thinking and try to find a non-violent, negotiated, mutually-beneficial lasting solution to the cause of Tibet," he said.

"But we decided to change our policy a little bit in the sense that when we speak about the Middle-way, then there needs to be polarities. Without polarities, there cannot be a middle-way and without recognition of the polarities, there is no value for middle-way," Tsering said.

Explaining the two polarities, he said one is the present situation in Tibet under the "repressive" Chinese communist government and the other is the historical status of Tibet as an independent state. Another significant aspect of "The Resolve Tibet Act" is the US's assertion that China is wrong in claiming that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times. In its talks with China between 2002 and 2010, the Tibetan side pitched genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people in line with the Dalai Lama's middle way policy.

China has in the past accused the Dalai Lama of indulging in "separatist" activities and trying to split Tibet and considers him as a divisive figure. However, the Tibetan spiritual leader has insisted that he is not seeking independence but "genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet" under the "Middle-Way approach". After a failed anti-Chinese uprising in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet and came to India where he set up the government-in-exile. The Chinese government officials and the Dalai Lama or his representatives have not met in formal negotiations since 2010. Beijing has been maintaining that it freed "serfs and slaves" from a brutal theocracy in Tibet and bringing the region on the path of prosperity and modernisation.

7th international Rangzen Conference concludes in Toronto, Canada

16 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

The 7th International Rangzen (Independence) Conference, dedicated to the cause of Tibetan independence, was held from July 13-15 in Toronto, Canada, garnering over 250 delegates from Canada, the US, Australia, Europe, and India.

The conference was honoured by the presence of Bradd Redekopp, a Canadian Member of Parliament, who served as the chief guest. Other distinguished attendees included members of the Tibetan

Parliament-in-Exile, Geshe Monlam Tharchin, Geshe Lharampa Gowo Lobsang Phende, Tenpa Yarphe, Tenzin Jigdal, Juchen Kunchok Chodon, Phurba Dorje Gyalthong, and Lhagyari Namgyal Dolkar. Additionally, the event featured special guests such as Tibetan writers, artists, and researchers besides other members of the public.

The conference organisers passed four resolutions reaffirming their stance. They reiterated their belief to never trust the Chinese government due to the ongoing repression, torture and murder of the Tibetan people. They condemned the recent forced closure of a highly successful Tibetan school in Golog, expressing solidarity with its students and teachers. They expressed deep gratitude to the Court of Citizens of the World for issuing an arrest warrant against Xi Jinping for crimes against humanity in Tibet. They also voiced concerns over "selective and biased reporting by Tibetan mainstream media," urging these outlets to "prioritise fair and objective reporting."

In his speech, Geshe Monlam Tharchin emphasised, "When advocating for people's cause, we must prioritise on their capabilities. While many countries offer support and enact legislation in our favour, they often prioritise their national interests and consider all circumstances first. Although we should be grateful for their support, it is essential to recognise and leverage our own strengths."

"We have received support and condolences, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and had the opportunity to propose the Five-Point Peace Plan in Congress. However, we must carefully consider whether the current legislation genuinely benefits us. Various individuals and organisations have actively lobbied for the bill's passage, so they must reflect on whether the law is truly intended to benefit Tibetans or if it is using Tibet's issue on an international platform," he further emphasised.

During the question and answer session with the public, Tibetan filmmaker and activist Shenpen Khymdar stated, "Rangzen (Independence) is not a policy but our birth right. When we speak of Rangzen, we must be clear about from whom we seek it—whether it is from those who bully us, torture us, killed our parents, or stole our land. The moment we speak of Rangzen, we should automatically think of China. However, when we speak of Rangzen, we often overlook China, leading to internal disputes within the community. Ideally, China should be the focus of our pursuit of Rangzen, but instead, Umaylam (Middle Way Approach) enters the discussion, which is unnecessary."

"We Tibetans should prepare to counter China not just by vocalising our demands or organising protests, but by understanding the political landscape within China and its relations with other countries. Personally, I

believe it is not our role to host debates between supporters of Rangzen and Umaylam. In parliamentary sessions, I hope to see discussions on how to resolve the Tibet conflict, counter China's narrative, and unite Tibetans spread across the globe. I do not wish to hear debates on Umaylam, Rangzen, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, and Sisur Lobsang Sangay," he further remarked.

The inaugural Rangzen Conference took place in Dharamsala on June 27, 2012. Subsequent editions were held in New Delhi (2015), New York (2016), and Paris (2017). The fifth conference returned to Dharamsala in 2018, where participants were honoured with an audience by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. The sixth conference convened in New Delhi in 2023. During the seventh International Rangzen Conference in Toronto, Canada, it was decided that the eighth International Rangzen Conference would be held in Australia in 2025.

OoT, Canberra & Chinese Alliance for Democracy Conduct Seminar titled "Sino-Tibet Relations in the Post-Xi Jinping Era"

15 July 2024, [CTA](#)

The Office of Tibet, Canberra, in collaboration with the Chinese Alliance for Democracy, organised a seminar titled "Sino-Tibet Relations in the Post Xi Jinping Era" at Sydney University on 10 July 2024.

The seminar, graced by the presence of esteemed researchers, activists, and leading experts on China, engaged in a comprehensive discourse. The discussions ranged from the impact of Xi-Jinping's policies on Sino-Tibetan relations to the alarming cultural genocide unfolding in Tibet under his rule.

In his opening remarks, Representative Karma Singey underscored the situation's urgency, stating, "Today, a deep sense of insecurity, uncertainty, and fear pervades due to the Chinese government's expansionist greed and repressive policies. If these policies remain unchallenged, the world's peace and security are in grave jeopardy." He further revealed China's policy to securitise Tibet and Sinicise Tibetan people as part of Xi Jinping's long-term assimilation drive.

Dr Gyalo, a leading expert on China's assimilation and education policies in Tibet, shared his profound insights on Xi Jinping's overall vision to create a Han-centric nationalism policy and how the Chinese government has enforced mandatory boarding school education for Tibetan children, which he described as forced sinicisation and policy of culture genocide against Tibetans.

Bawa Kalsang Gyaltsen, Representative of the Office of Tibet in Taiwan, explained the Central Tibetan Administration's commitment to Middle Way Policy in finding a peaceful solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict. He further emphasised the importance of more vital

interaction and allyship between Tibetan and Chinese communities to strengthen the friendship between the two communities.

Finally, Prof. Feng Chongyi, Associate Professor at the University of Technology Sydney and Chairman of the Australia and New Zealand Alliance of Victims of Chinese Communist Party spoke on how establishing a democratic constitutional government in China is the prerequisite for any nationality to achieve self-determination. He further explained that democratic negotiation or a referendum under a democratic political system is necessary to realise self-determination, which could result in autonomy, independence, or maintaining the status quo.

Dr Jin Jiang, Chairman of the Chinese Alliance for Democracy, Duoduo Zhang, President of the Sydney Chinese-Tibetan Friendship Group, and Sophia Tsai, a Taiwanese ally, moderated the seminar.

Dawa Sangmo, Chinese liaison officer of the Tibet Office, Canberra, delivered the closing remarks.

Tibetans in exile mark death anniversary of freedom fighter Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, release book on his struggles

15 July 2024, [Rtv](#)

A memorial event for Tibetan freedom fighter Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, marking the anniversary of his unjust death in Chinese custody, was organized on Friday at the Gangkyi Tibetan Library in the North Indian hill town of Dharamshala.

A memorial event for Tibetan freedom fighter Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, marking the anniversary of his unjust death in Chinese custody, was organized on Friday at the Gangkyi Tibetan Library in the North Indian hill town of Dharamshala. A book about Rinpoche's life, authored by his niece Nyima Lhamo, was also released at the event.

Exile Tibetan Minister of Defence Gryari Dolma attended the event as the chief guest and honoured the memory of Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a Tibetan freedom fighter who was wrongly accused and imprisoned by China. Speaking to ANI, Dolma Gyari said, 'Today marks the death anniversary of the renowned Tibetan freedom fighter and former political prisoner Tulku Tenzin Delek Rinpoche. He was arrested on false charges, spent a long time in Chinese prison, and ultimately died there. This event is to remember his death anniversary.'

During the event, Rinpoche's niece launched a book detailing her personal experiences from the time her family faced pressures and challenges due to the false charges against Rinpoche. She has written the book to speak the truth about her experiences.

Following this, Tibetan activist Sonam Tsering was also present at the event to honour Rinpoche's memory. He highlighted the ongoing struggles of Tibetans facing

persecution in China and urged the Chinese government to free all Tibetan political prisoners. Sonam Tsering also spoke with ANI, stating, 'Today marks the 10th anniversary of Tulku Rinpoche, a prominent Lama who passed away under Chinese torture and prosecution. We also demand that the Chinese Communist government release all Tibetan political prisoners.'

President Biden signs Resolve Tibet Act, strengthening US support for Tibet negotiations
12 July 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The United States has a message for Beijing: China's ongoing occupation of Tibet must be peacefully resolved through negotiation, not repression.

President Joe Biden signed the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act [read his message here], popularly known as the Resolve Tibet Act, earlier today. The law states that it is American policy that the Tibet issue must be resolved in accordance with international law by peaceful means, through dialogue without preconditions.

It also takes aim at China's lies about Tibet, calling on China to stop propagating disinformation about Tibet's history and giving the State Department a new mandate to directly counter these false claims.

"The Resolve Tibet Act cuts to the heart of China's brutal treatment of the Tibetan people," said Tencho Gyatso, President of the International Campaign for Tibet. "To Tibetans it is a statement of hope. To other countries it is a clarion call to support Tibet's peaceful struggle for human rights and democratic freedoms. And to Beijing it is a declaration that American support for Tibet does not come with an expiration date; China must resume dialogue and find a solution that supports the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people."

Empowering the Tibetan people

One key feature of the bill is defining the Tibetan people as a people with their own distinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical identity. It then states that Chinese policies are systematically suppressing the ability of the Tibetan people to preserve their way of life.

The Dalai Lama has repeatedly called for China to grant genuine autonomy to the Tibetan people, and it is clear under international law that people are entitled to self-determination. When House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) spoke before it passed Congress, he expressed his hopes that the new law will help "put the people of Tibet in charge of their own future."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken frequently refers to support for self-determination as a core principle of American foreign policy. President Biden previously

pledged to push Beijing to "return to direct dialogue with the representatives of the Tibetan people to achieve meaningful autonomy, respect for human rights, and the preservation of Tibet's environment as well as its unique cultural, linguistic and religious traditions."

Now that the Resolve Tibet Act is law, the onus is on the State Department and the White House to vigorously champion genuine negotiation and overcome Beijing's stalling tactics.

"President Biden promised his administration would stand up for the people of Tibet," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. "There is not a moment to lose. Experienced State Department officials like Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Uzra Zeya now have a valuable tool to elevate their calls for negotiations and fulfill the core objective of the Special Coordinator's office: promoting substantive dialogue, without preconditions, between China and the Dalai Lama, his representatives, or democratically elected Tibetan leaders in support of a negotiated agreement on Tibet."

Persistent advocacy for Tibet

The Resolve Tibet Act became law after three years of effort by a select group of members of Congress backed by a broad range of Tibet supporters and Tibetan Americans.

Senior leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration and the ICT board and staff met with Congressional leaders to brief them on the situation in Tibet and discuss how new initiatives could help. Representatives Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Michael McCaul (R-TX) took the lead in the House, while Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Todd Young (R-IN) introduced the bill in the Senate. All four leads and their staff worked tirelessly to put this law in place.

Advocates for Tibet helped at every step along the way. These efforts included testimony from international law scholars, grassroots advocacy by Tibetan Associations, waves of petitions from ICT members, record-breaking turnout at Tibet Lobby Day, and coordination between the Office of Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, and other prominent Tibet groups.

"It was inspiring to witness such a positive response to the Resolve Tibet Act from across the country and around the world," said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. "It is clear how much can be accomplished when citizens, organizations, and dedicated decision makers unite. Moving forward, I know we can build on today's extraordinary accomplishment."

"As His Holiness the Dalai Lama says, change only takes place through action," she added.

To see a timeline of how the bill was crafted, introduced, and passed, please click here.

Quotes from Members of Congress and Tibetan leaders

The Resolve Tibet Act's lead sponsors put out videos celebrating the passage of the bill, partially transcribed below. Separately, Tibetan leader Namgyal Choedup issued a statement:

Rep. Jim McGovern, D-MA, said: "I am thrilled. The United States once again affirms our strong support for the rights of the Tibetan people under international law, including their right to self-determination.

With its bipartisan passage, we hope to restart dialogue between Tibet and China to resolve the decades-long dispute over Tibet's autonomy and governance in keeping with U.S. policy. The Tibetans are willing; the People's Republic of China should come to the table."

Rep. Michael McCaul, R-TX, said during his recent visit to Dharamsala: "We are here just one week after the House of Representatives and the Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act. This bill makes it clear the United States believes Tibet has its own unique language, religion and culture, and has a right to self-determination. The bill also requires the State Department to aggressively challenge CCP propaganda about Tibet."

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-OR, said: "All people should have the right to live in peace and decide their own future. But the people of Tibet have not had those freedoms for more than 70 years. We just took an important step toward changing that.

President Biden signed into law my bipartisan bill to support Tibet, which passed Congress overwhelmingly. This bill empowers the State Department to counter the Chinese government's attempt to rewrite or in some cases erase history, and it encourages dialogue between the leaders of Tibet and China to reach a peaceful resolution."

Sen. Todd Young, R-IN, said: "Over the past several years, I've worked with my colleague Jeff Merkley on legislation to encourage a peaceful resolution to the dispute between Tibet and China.

I want to thank the Office of Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet for your tireless advocacy for this legislation. Your brave leadership on this issue has been instrumental in making the case for why American leadership, grounded in liberal values like pluralism, religious freedom, and self-determination, is so critical to ensuring a safer, more secure future for Tibet and the Tibetan people."

Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America Namgyal Choedup said: "The bipartisan and bicameral passage of the Tibet bill and the signing of the bill into law by President Biden is a huge moral boost to the Tibetan people, who continues to suffer PRC's systematic repression. This is a clear indication of unwavering support of the US government and its people towards the just cause of Tibetan people. This is a call to Beijing that the only solution to Tibet China

dispute is through dialogue and negotiation in good faith."

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.

Statement from President Joe Biden on S. 138, the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act"

12 July 2024, [WH.GOV](https://www.whitehouse.gov)

Today, I have signed into law S. 138, the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" (the "Act"). I share the Congress's bipartisan commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage. My Administration will continue to call on the People's Republic of China to resume direct dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet. The Act does not change longstanding bipartisan United States policy to recognize the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China as part of the People's Republic of China — a policy decision that falls within my

authority to recognize foreign states and the territorial bounds of such states.

India and US support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetans upsets China

12 July 2024, [The Pioneer](#), K.S. Tomar

India and America's identical and unequivocal stance on Tibet has rattled China, highlighting the evolving geopolitical dynamics in Asia

In a significant diplomatic move, both India and the United States have extended their support to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause, provoking a strong reaction from China. The adoption of the Resolve Tibet Act by the US Congress and a recent high-profile meeting between a bipartisan American Congressional delegation and the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala have amplified the tensions between the US, India, and China. This article explores the strategic and ideological implications of these developments.

A Diplomatic Convergence:

The backdrop of this development is the increasingly strained relationship between the United States and China.

The US Congress's passage of the Resolve Tibet Act, which promises comprehensive support for the Tibetan cause, marks a clear stance against China's policies in Tibet. The meeting between the American delegation and the Dalai Lama further underscores this commitment.

In a related move, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the US delegation, who congratulated him on his historic third-term election victory and praised the fairness and transparency of the recent Indian general elections. Modi's subsequent Twitter post highlighted the strong bipartisan support for advancing the India-US strategic partnership. Notably, the post did not mention the Dalai Lama, though it was clear the topic was a significant aspect of the discussions.

India's hosting of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamshala places it in a unique position concerning the Tibetan cause. The Indian government has historically balanced its support for Tibet with its broader strategic and economic relations with China. The timing of the meetings suggests a coordinated diplomatic effort to highlight shared values and mutual interests in countering China's assertive policies.

Strategic Ramifications: The convergence of American and Indian interests reflects the evolving geopolitical landscape in Asia. Both nations share concerns about China's growing influence and assertive behavior, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. By reinforcing their strategic partnership, the United States and India

signal their commitment to a rules-based international order, countering China's ambitions.

In response, China is likely to intensify its efforts to strengthen alliances and expand its influence in the region. This could involve deepening ties with Pakistan, increasing engagement with other South Asian nations, and accelerating Belt and Road Initiative projects to secure strategic footholds. Additionally, China might enhance its military posture along disputed borders with India, particularly in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, to assert territorial claims.

Beyond immediate strategic calculations, these meetings highlight the broader ideological contest between democratic values and authoritarian governance. The Dalai Lama, a symbol of non-violent resistance and spiritual leadership, embodies values resonating with global advocates of democracy and human rights. Engaging with him reinforces the US and India's commitment to these principles.

China, facing scrutiny over its human rights record in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong, is placed in a defensive position. In the global influence battle, soft power and moral authority are becoming increasingly important. The Dharamshala and Delhi meetings enhance the soft power of the United States and India, positioning them as champions of human rights and democratic values. The Path Forward: As the geopolitical chessboard in Asia becomes more complex, the interplay between diplomacy and deterrence will be crucial. The United States and India, through coordinated diplomatic actions, are setting the stage for a more assertive and collaborative approach to countering China's influence. This involves not only strengthening bilateral ties but also fostering broader coalitions with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

The high-level US delegation, led by Republican Rep. Michael McCaul and including prominent figures like Democratic former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, discussed the relevance and significance of the Resolve Tibet Act. President Joe Biden, a strong advocate for Tibetan rights, is expected to approve the Act.

China's reaction has been predictably strong, warning the United States against sending the "wrong signal." The Chinese embassy in India emphasized China's stance on Tibet as an internal matter, condemning any perceived interference in its domestic affairs.

Conclusion

India and America's identical and unequivocal stance on Tibet has rattled China, highlighting the evolving geopolitical dynamics in Asia. The historical breach of trust by China in 1962, replicated in 2020 during the Ladakh confrontation, underscores the challenges in Sino-Indian relations. Prime Minister Modi's efforts to normalize ties with Beijing have not yielded desired results, reflecting the ongoing tension.

Adopting a more nuanced approach to diplomacy may help mitigate tensions while advancing China's strategic goals.

Japan to Host International Meeting on Support for Tibet Next June for 1st Time; Dalai Lama to Deliver Speech Online

11 July 2024, [The Japan News](#), The Yomiuri Shimbun

Japan will hold an international meeting to discuss support for Tibetans early next June in Tokyo, it has been learned.

Since the first such meeting in 1994, talks on aiding the oppressed ethnic minority in China have mainly been held in the United States and Europe. It will be the first time for Japan to host.

The meeting is being backed by the cross-party Japan-Tibet Parliamentary Association, which is headed by former education minister Hakubun Shimomura and aims to boost support for Tibet.

The legislative body of Tibet's government in exile will run the meeting, with around 90 people including lawmakers and scholars to come from 26 countries. The Dalai Lama, exiled supreme leader of Tibetan Buddhism, is planned to deliver a speech online.

The parliamentary association includes 105 members of the Diet. Shu Watanabe, a member of the lower house for the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, serves as acting chair and Keiji Furuya, a member of the lower house for the Liberal Democratic Party who previously chaired the National Public Safety Commission, serves as vice chair.

In 2022, both houses of the Diet adopted a resolution expressing concern about human rights abuses in China including in Tibet.

Previously banned, Dalai Lama's 89th birthday celebrated in Nepal's capital

11 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The 89th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, usually clamped down on by the government of Nepal with preventive detentions, police deployments and onsite arrests due to its fear of offending China, appears to have been held in Kathmandu without a hitch this time as a religious and cultural event on Jul 6.

The event was held at the Hyolmo Monastery near the capital city's landmark Buddhist site of Boudha stupa. Senior diplomats and officials from the European Union, Australia, Switzerland, France and the United States, attended the event, said the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) on its *Tibet.net* website Jul 10.

The chief guest was stated to be Sabchu Rinpoché, with the special guest being HH the Dalai Lama's representative at the Office of Tibet, CTA, Tsepri Lopan

Tulku Ngawang Chokdup. His office previously organized the event until Nepal's crackdown came since many years ago.

Besides, prominent figures from Nepal's human rights groups such as Inhured International, Human Rights Organisation for Nepal, and HURON, as well as prominent individual human rights activists were stated to have attended the event which drew a crowd of more than 2000.

The celebrations, in fact, continued over two days filled with Tibetan opera and other Tibetan cultural performances, the report said.

However, Nepal still does not allow Tibetans to gather on Wednesdays to mark the Dalai Lama's weekly birthday with traditional folk group dances.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering's Visit to Ladakh: Engaging with Monasteries and Schools on a Cultural and Educational Journey

10 July 2024, [CTA](#)

On 9 July 2024, as part of the ongoing official visit in Ladakh, Sikyong Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) paid visits to monasteries under the jurisdiction of Department of Religion and Culture (CTA) and SOS Tibetan Children's Village School (TCV) and its branch schools in Choglamsar, along with the latter's affiliate Old People's Home. Sikyong was also honoured with a dinner reception at the Triksey Monastery hosted by Venerable Triksey Rinpoche.

Beginning from the Shewatsel Phodrang Gapheling, Sikyong paid obeisance to sacred icons in Leh-based Monasteries, namely Karma Drupgyu Choeling, Sheten Youngdrung Lhatse Bon Monastery, and Rutok Lhundup Choeling, as part of his second-day itinerary. At the same time, Sikyong held a brief meetings with the respective monastic administrations to discuss on necessities crucial for their sustenances.

Thereafter, Sikyong headed towards TCV Menlha and Agling branch schools to inspect education facilities over there. Likewise, Sikyong toured premises of Sonamling main TCV school, including its affiliate Old People's Home.

Sikyong later addressed the students and teachers of Ladakh TCV at its auditorium to apprise the gathering on the geo-political and strategic significance of the Tibetan plateau and its environment that has immense potential to bring harmony in the region, the imperativeness of maintaining the unique cultural and linguistic heritage of Tibet amidst intensifies restrictions and systematic annihilations of Tibetan identity in Tibet under CCP, and benefits of the Tibetan Buddhist culture in bringing about global peace. Given the CCP's continued repression and manipulation over these matters, Sikyong underscored CTA's policy of the Middle Way Approach that is pragmatically actionable

and has the potential to resolve the longstanding Tibet-China conflict. In light of this, Sikyong briefly touched on the passage of the Resolve Tibet Act in both houses of the United States with unanimous bipartisan support. Hence, to strengthen and continue the Tibetan freedom struggle, Sikyong implored teachers to educate students on these issues during class and advised students to enhance their knowledge of Tibet's current status.

Following Sikyong's address, a Q&A session was held with students in which he delved into an array of issues concerning the Tibet cause as well as student's education.

Additionally, Sikyong conducted an inspection of the housing projects currently underway in Choglamsar where he toured the project site and interacted with the residents of Maque and Chushul, who are about to relocate to the project site area after its completion.

Later in the evening, Sikyong attended a dinner reception hosted by Triksey Rinpoche. It was also joined by the honourable Chairman of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Shri Tashi Gyaltson, and Deputy Chair Tsering Angchuk, along with Councillors and prominent officials of Ladakh UT. Throughout these programmes, Sikyong was accompanied by Chief Representative Officer Dhondup Tashi and Joint Secretary Tashi Dickey from the Department of Home (CTA).

China's Interference in the Succession of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama Unacceptable

10 July 2024, [CTA](#)

In a press release issued on the occasion of the 89th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Interparliamentary group for Tibet in the French Senate led by Senator Jacqueline Eustache-Brinio asserts that the life of His Holiness Dalai Lama, heir to a long historical lineage, is inseparable from the destiny of his people and Tibetan Buddhism. As such, it is unacceptable for the Chinese authorities to interfere in the process of appointing the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, since it is undeniable and legitimate that the choice of a possible successor to the 14th Dalai Lama should be made by Tibetans alone.

In the same communication, the Senator also recalls His Holiness the Dalai Lama's contribution to his people and the world at large.

The full statement in French can be read [here](#)

–Filed by Office of Tibet, Brussels

"He was being playful": Delhi High Court rejects plea for POCSO action against Dalai Lama for kissing child

09 July 2024, [Bar and Bench](#), Prashant Jha

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday rejected a plea seeking action under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act (POCSO Act) against the spiritual leader Dalai Lama for kissing a child on the lips [*Confederation of NGOs & Anr v Union of India & Ors*].

A Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela rejected the plea filed by a bunch of non-governmental organizations.

"Dalai Lama has apologised for it. He has said he was just trying to be playful. It should be seen in the context of Tibetan culture," the Court observed.

Dalai Lama relocates to Syracuse, NY for recovery from knee surgery

09 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

The revered exiled spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, departed the Park Hyatt hotel in New York early Tuesday morning to a temporary residence in Syracuse, New York, to aid his recovery and undergo follow-up physiotherapy in the coming days.

The Dalai Lama, who recently had knee replacement surgery at the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) in New York, had been staying at the Park Hyatt since his discharge from the hospital. According to his personal physicians, Dr. Tsetan Dorjee Sadhutsang and Dr. Tsewang Tamdin, the octogenarian leader's recovery is progressing positively, prompting the move to a more accommodating environment for his continued recovery.

"His Holiness is recovering exceptionally well and is able to walk. Soon, he will move to a place with a better environment. Tibetans inside Tibet and in exile should not be worried about his condition. There's nothing to worry about," stated Dr. Tsetan D. Sadhutsang.

In a medical bulletin, Dr. David J. Mayman, Chief of the Adult Reconstruction and Joint Replacement Service at HSS, detailed the recovery process earlier. "During the first week after knee replacement, the primary objective is to minimise inflammation and swelling. His Holiness is mobile and walking with our physical therapy team." "I would expect His Holiness to continue to improve in terms of his knee and walking over this coming year," Dr. Mayman said.



Tibetans in New York city welcoming H.H. the Dalai Lama
(Photo/Indianeconomicobserver)

Meanwhile, a large number of Tibetans and followers of the Dalai Lama gathered outside the Park Hyatt hotel early in the morning to see their leader off, expressing strong emotions and chanting longevity prayers for his swift recovery. International leaders, followers and well-wishers have poured in with their message of love and speedy recovery for the much admired religious leader.

China condemns US and India's Dalai Lama birthday greetings as subversive, reiterates vow of its own successor to him

08 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China's party-government experts have condemned the United States and India for conveying their greetings to the exile spiritual leader of Tibet on his 89th birthday on Jul 6. They have condemned their actions as attempts to play "the so-called Dalai card" to contain China, according to China's official *globaltimes.cn* Jul 7.

When asked whether the actions of the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi may imply an intention to contain China by playing the so-called Dalai card, Zhu Weiqun, former head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, affirmed such intention, the report said.

Without explaining what he meant by it, Zhu has maintained that "such attempts are increasingly ineffective as the influence of the Dalai clique has been declining, which is an inevitable historical trend."

"The attempts of the US and India are a self-consoling elegy," he has said.

Blinken extended his birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama in a statement on the website of the US Department of State while Modi did so in an X (formerly *Twitter*) post, wishing him a long life.

The report also had Chinese analysts refuting a *Reuters* report Jul 6, titled as titled "As the Dalai

Lama turns 89, exiled Tibetans fear a future without him."

"The initiative of finding the successor of Dalai Lama is firmly held by the Chinese central government," Zhu has asserted, emphasizing that "the finding work will definitely be in accordance with relevant policies and the sincere wishes of religious believers in Xizang, and will never be based on the fantasies of the separatist Dalai clique."

Dalai Lama Succession: US, India Don't Want China Involved

08 July 2024, [India West Journal](#)

In a monastery beneath snow-capped mountains in northern India, the Buddhist monk entrusted with protecting the Dalai Lama and foretelling his people's future is concerned.

The Dalai Lama has turned 89 and China insists it will choose his successor as Tibet's chief spiritual leader. That has the Medium of Tibet's Chief State Oracle contemplating what might come next.

"His Holiness is the fourteenth Dalai Lama, then there will be a fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth," the Medium, known as the Nechung, said. "In countries, leaders change, and then that story is over. But in Tibet it works differently."

Tibetan Buddhists believe that learned monastics are reincarnated after death as newborns. The Dalai Lama, who is currently recuperating in the United States from a medical procedure, has said he will clarify questions about succession – including if and where he will be reincarnated – around his ninetieth birthday. As part of a reincarnation identification process, the medium will enter a trance to consult the oracle.

The incumbent Dalai Lama is a charismatic figure who popularized Buddhism internationally and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for keeping alive the Tibetan cause in exile. Beijing sees him as a dangerous separatist, though he has embraced what he calls a "Middle Way" of peacefully seeking genuine autonomy and religious freedom within China.

Any successor will be inexperienced and unknown on the global stage. That has sparked concerns about whether the movement will lose momentum or grow more radical amid heightened tensions between Beijing and Washington, long a source of bipartisan support for the Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet's government-in-exile.

The CTA and its partners in the West as well as India, which has hosted the Dalai Lama in the Himalayan foothills for more than six decades, are preparing for a future without his influential presence.

President Joe Biden is expected to soon sign a bill that requires the State Department to counter what it calls Chinese "disinformation" that Tibet, which was

annexed by the People's Republic of China in 1951, has been part of China since ancient times.

"China wants recognition that Tibet has been part of China ... throughout history, and this bill is suggesting that it would be relatively easy for Tibet supporters to get a western government to refuse to give recognition for such an extensive claim," said Tibet specialist Robert Barnett of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

U.S. lawmakers, including former House speaker Nancy Pelosi, visited the Dalai Lama in June to celebrate Congress passing the legislation, which Sikyong Penpa Tsering, who heads the CTA, called a "breakthrough."

The bill is part of a strategic shift away from emphasizing Chinese rights violations such as forced assimilation, the Sikyong, or political leader. Since 2021, CTA has lobbied two dozen countries including the U.S., to publicly undermine Beijing's narrative that Tibet has always been part of China, he said.

With U.S. weight behind this strategy, the exiles hope to push China to the negotiating table, he said. "If every country keeps saying that Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China, then where is the reason for China to come and talk to us?"

The Chinese foreign ministry said in response to Reuters' questions that it would be open to discussions with the Dalai Lama about his "personal future" if he "truly gives up his position of splitting the motherland" and recognized Tibet as an unalienable part of China.

Beijing, which has not held official talks with the Dalai Lama's representatives since 2010, has also urged Biden not to sign the bill.

The office of the Dalai Lama, who has in recent years apologized for remarks he made about women and to a young child, referred an interview request to the Sikyong.

Succession

Most historians say Tibet was assimilated into the Mongol empire during the 13th-14th century Yuan dynasty, which also covered large parts of present-day China. Beijing says that established its sovereign claim, though scholars believe the relationship varied greatly over the centuries and remote Tibet largely governed itself for much of the time.

In 1995, atheist China and the Dalai Lama separately identified two boys as the Panchen Lama, the second-most-important Tibetan Buddhist leader. The Dalai Lama's pick was taken away by Chinese authorities and has not been seen since.

Many Buddhists consider Beijing's choice illegitimate, though most expect a similar parallel selection for the next Dalai Lama given the Chinese government's stance that he must reincarnate, and it must approve the successor.

Chinese authorities have "tried to insert themselves into the succession of the Dalai Lama but we will not let that happen," said Michael McCaul, Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee during his Dharamsala visit.

India, whose troops clashed with China near the Tibetan plateau in 2022, has been less vocal about its position on succession.

"The U.S. ... does not have to worry about border incursions as India does," said Donald Camp, a former top South Asia official on the U.S. National Security Council.

But as home to tens of thousands of Tibetans and an ascendant voice on the global stage, Delhi will be pulled into the fray, observers of Indian diplomacy say. Hawkish commentators have already called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to meet with the Dalai Lama as a way of pressuring China.

Delhi's Ministry of External Affairs declined to comment on the succession but its former ambassador to China, Ashok Kantha, said India would not be "comfortable with China trying to control that process."

"Privately we have told China ... that for them the best option is engaging with the Dalai Lama and his representatives," said Kantha. "Post-fourteenth Dalai Lama we don't know what will happen."

The respect that the Dalai Lama commands among Tibetan exiles has kept in check frustrations and a formal push for independence, though it isn't clear if that balance will be maintained following his death

Sonam Wangchuk demands Bharat Ratna for Dalai Lama

08 July 2024, [The Earth News](#)

Renowned climate activist and innovator Sonam Wangchuk has called for India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, to be conferred upon His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso. This appeal was made on the auspicious occasion of the Dalai Lama's 89th birthday, highlighting his lifelong dedication to peace, compassion, and humanity.

In a heartfelt video message posted on X, Wangchuk emphasized the Dalai Lama's unparalleled contributions to global harmony, spiritual teachings, and advocacy for non-violence. He noted that the Dalai Lama has dedicated his life to promoting the values of compassion, peace, and understanding, making him a tremendous ambassador of Indian values and culture to the world. "Bestowing the Bharat Ratna upon him would be a fitting acknowledgment of his tireless efforts and a message of support for his enduring legacy," Wangchuk stated.

The post captioned, HH THE #DALAILAMA, has been the biggest ambassador of Indian values in the world.

Today 6th July is His birthday. Let's give Him a befitting gift from India.

Wangchuk also highlighted the Dalai Lama's influential role in promoting interfaith dialogue, environmental consciousness, and the preservation of Tibetan culture. "In a world facing unprecedented challenges, His Holiness has been a beacon of hope and wisdom. His teachings on compassion and sustainability resonate deeply with the principles of our nation," he added.

The Dalai Lama, born on July 6, 1935, in Taktser, Amdo, Tibet, has been a global spiritual leader and a symbol of the Tibetan struggle for autonomy. Despite living in exile for over six decades, he continues to inspire millions worldwide with his message of love and forgiveness.

Wangchuk's appeal has garnered widespread support from various quarters, including social activists, religious leaders, and political figures. Many believe that honouring the Dalai Lama with the Bharat Ratna would not only celebrate his contributions but also reinforce the values of peace and compassion in the contemporary world.

PM Modi sends greetings to the Dalai Lama on his 89th birthday

07 July 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Anirban Bhaumik

This is the fourth year in a row the prime minister went public about his greetings to the Tibetan Buddhist monk on his birthday. He started doing it in 2021, apparently to send a message to Beijing in the wake of China's aggressive moves along its Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India.

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday sent greetings to the 14th Dalai Lama on occasion of the 89th birthday of the monk and prayed for his long life, disregarding Beijing's objection to such greetings to the icon of the global campaign against the occupation of Tibet by China.

The Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India since 1959. He is currently in the United States recuperating after knee surgery.

"Sent my greetings to His Holiness @DalaiLama on the occasion of his 89th birthday. Pray for his quick recovery after knee surgery, good health, and long life", the prime minister wrote on X.

This is the fourth year in a row the prime minister went public about his greetings to the Tibetan Buddhist monk on his birthday. He started doing it in 2021, apparently to send a message to Beijing in the wake of China's aggressive moves along its Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India.

The military stand-off along the LAC brought down the relations between India and China to a new low.

"Beijing had strongly reacted after Modi had called and greeted the Dalai Lama last year. The Indian side should fully recognise the anti-China separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama. It should abide by its commitment to China, speak and act prudently, and stop using Tibet-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs", a spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Government had told journalists in Beijing.

The Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India following his 1959 escape from Tibet, which had been occupied by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1950-51.

The monk, a staunch advocate for non-violence and freedom, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. He has been arguing for "genuine autonomy" – not independence from the Chinese Government's rule – for Tibet. Beijing, however, still calls him a "separatist" and accuses him of running a campaign to split China. His meeting with the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in August 2010 or his visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan on an invitation from then President Pranab Mukherjee in December 2016 had triggered strong protests from China. So did New Delhi's decisions in 2009 and 2017 to allow him to visit Arunachal Pradesh, where China claims nearly 90,000 sq. km of Indian territory to be its own.

Modi, however, did not have any public contact or engagement with the Dalai Lama till 2021, ostensibly to avoid hurting the sensitivity of China. He did not change the policy of maintaining distance from the Dalai Lama and refrained from publicly wishing the octogenarian on his birthday on July 6, 2020, even though New Delhi's relations with Beijing nosedived after the June 15, 2020 clash between the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army along the LAC in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh.

The Dalai Lama turns 89; exiled Tibetans fear future without him

06 July 2024, [VOA](#)

In a monastery beneath snow-capped mountains in northern India, the Buddhist monk entrusted with protecting the Dalai Lama and foretelling his people's future is concerned.

The Dalai Lama turns 89 on Saturday and China insists it will choose his successor as Tibet's chief spiritual leader.

That has the Medium of Tibet's Chief State Oracle contemplating what might come next.

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The incumbent Dalai Lama is a charismatic figure who popularized Buddhism internationally and won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for keeping alive the Tibetan cause in exile. Beijing sees him as a dangerous separatist, though he has embraced what he calls a "Middle Way" of peacefully seeking genuine autonomy and religious freedom within China.

Any successor will be inexperienced and unknown on the global stage. That has sparked concerns about whether the movement will lose momentum or grow more radical amid heightened tensions between Beijing and Washington, long a source of bipartisan support for the Central Tibetan Administration, or CTA, Tibet's government-in-exile.

The CTA and its partners in the West, as well as India, which has hosted the Dalai Lama in the Himalayan foothills for more than six decades, are preparing for a future without his influential presence.

U.S. President Joe Biden is expected to soon sign a bill that requires the State Department to counter what it calls Chinese "disinformation" that Tibet, which was annexed by the People's Republic of China in 1951, has been part of China since ancient times.

"China wants recognition that Tibet has been part of China ... throughout history, and this bill is suggesting that it would be relatively easy for Tibet supporters to get a western government to refuse to give recognition for such an extensive claim," said Tibet specialist Robert Barnett of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

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The bill is part of a strategic shift away from emphasizing Chinese rights violations such as forced assimilation, the Sikyong, or political leader, told Reuters. Since 2021, CTA has lobbied two dozen countries including the U.S., to publicly undermine Beijing's narrative that Tibet has always been part of China, he said.

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with the Dalai Lama about his "personal future" if he "truly gives up his position of splitting the motherland" and recognized Tibet as an unalienable part of China. Beijing, which has not held official talks with the Dalai Lama's representatives since 2010, has also urged Biden not to sign the bill.

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Succession questions

Most historians say Tibet was assimilated into the Mongol empire during the 13th-14th century Yuan dynasty, which also covered large parts of present day China. Beijing says that established its sovereign claim, though scholars believe the relationship varied greatly over the centuries and remote Tibet largely governed itself for much of the time.

The People's Liberation Army marched into Tibet in 1950 and announced its "peaceful liberation." After a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959, a young Dalai Lama fled into exile in India.

In 1995, atheist China and the Dalai Lama separately identified two boys as the Panchen Lama, the second-most-important Tibetan Buddhist leader. The Dalai Lama's pick was taken away by Chinese authorities and has not been seen since.

Many Buddhists consider Beijing's choice illegitimate, though most expect a similar parallel selection for the next Dalai Lama, given the Chinese government's stance that he must reincarnate, and it must approve the successor.

Chinese authorities have "tried to insert themselves into the succession of the Dalai Lama but we will not let that happen," said Michael McCaul, Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee during his Dharamsala visit.

World Tibet Day - Showcasing Uniqueness Of Tibetan Culture, Thought

06 July 2024, [ETV Bharat](#)

World Tibet Day is observed every year on July 6. It aims to increase awareness of the genocidal threats to the Tibetan people, and showcase the uniqueness of Tibetan culture and thought.

July 6 is observed as World Tibet Day, marking the birthday of His Holiness, the XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet. It aims to help restore essential freedoms for those living in Chinese-occupied Tibet, increase awareness of the genocidal threats to the Tibetan people, and showcase the uniqueness of Tibetan culture and thought.

Tibet is a region in East Asia, centred on the Tibetan Plateau north of the Himalayas. It is technically part of China, but it has had a long history as an independent power, and its rule by China is controversial. Tibet's

unique form of Buddhism is its predominant religion and the central part of its culture.

Who is Called Dalai Lama: Dalai Lama is called the biggest religious leader of Tibet. Lama means Guru who inspires his people to follow the right path.

The current 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, Tenzin Gyatso, has been living in India since 1959. The Dalai Lama lives in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh and from here he runs the Tibetan government in exile.

In 1937, the child was declared the reincarnation of a great Buddhist spiritual leader and named the 14th Dalai Lama. His leadership rights were exercised by a regency until 1950. That same year, he was forced to flee by the Chinese but negotiated an agreement and returned to lead Tibet for the next eight years.

On March 17, 1959, an unsuccessful Tibetan nationalist uprising led to a crackdown by China, and the Dalai Lama fled to Punjab, India, where he established his democratic government in exile. In 1989, he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to the nonviolent liberation of Tibet.

Dalai Lama Sent A Message To Nehru: After reaching Lhotse Zog, Dalai Lama performed the ceremony of forming the new Tibetan government. But by then it was clear that Dalai Lama's life was in great danger while staying in Tibet. Therefore, messages were sent to India and America that the Dalai Lama wanted to cross the border and take refuge in India.

John Greeny, a senior CIA officer, received this message on March 28. He immediately sent information to Delhi and informed about the Dalai Lama's intention. Earlier on March 26, Dalai Lama had sent a message to India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, "Indian people are known all over the world for supporting human values. We are entering India from the Sona area. We hope that you will make arrangements for our stay on Indian soil. We have full faith in your kindness." Nehru immediately said 'yes' to this.

23 May 1951 - Tibetans consider this day a black day, while the Chinese call it a day of peace efforts. On this day, Tibet signed an agreement with China. With this agreement, Tibet was occupied by China.

History Of Tibet Since The Chinese Invasion: China's newly established communist government sent troops to invade Tibet in 1949-50. An agreement was imposed on the Tibetan government in May of 1951, acknowledging sovereignty over Tibet but recognising the Tibetan government's autonomy with respect to Tibet's internal affairs. As the Chinese consolidated their control, they repeatedly violated the treaty and open resistance to their rule grew, leading to the National Uprising in 1959 and the flight into India of the Dalai Lama.

The international community reacted with shock at the events in Tibet. The question of Tibet was discussed on numerous occasions by the UN General

Assembly between 1959 and 1965. Three resolutions were passed by the General Assembly condemning China's violations of human rights in Tibet and calling upon China to respect those rights, including Tibet's right to self-determination.

Penpa Tsering, Sikyong of CTA raises concern as China imposes restrictions ahead of Dalai Lama's 89th birthday

05 July 2024, [ANI](#)

President of the Central Tibetan Administration of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Penpa Tsering Sikyong, expressed regret that Tibetans cannot celebrate the 89th birthday of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, on July 6 in his birthplace due to China's restrictions. Conveying his message to all Tibetans, Sikyong said, "It is a joyous occasion for us who have the freedom to celebrate his birthday, but for Tibetans inside, of course, they still have to be bound by the restrictions that the Chinese government has imposed on not being able to celebrate Dalai Lama's birthday in the place of his birth."

The 14th Dalai Lama, known to the Tibetan people as Gyalwa Rinpoche, is the current Dalai Lama, also the highest spiritual leader and head of Tibet. The Chinese government is intensifying already stringent social media restrictions on Tibetans to keep them from celebrating the July 6 birthday of the Dalai Lama. While speaking to ANI on Friday, he urged Tibetans to unite and support the Dalai Lama's efforts to keep the Tibetan issue alive.

"So that is very unfortunate but people have learned to understand the situation and the Chinese government is always very nervous around this time. Dalai Lama is going to be 89 this year, so to all the Tibetans inside and outside, I keep saying we see his holiness reincarnation of Avilokteshvara and so far, he alone travelled around the world with his folded hands and made sure that the Tibet issue is alive and one form of Avilokteshvara is a thousand eyes, thousand hands, now I ask Tibetans inside and outside to be one eye and one hand of Dalai Lama," said Sikyong.

Dalai Lama is in United States these days, as he went there for knee surgery. Talking about Dalai Lama's health, Sikyong said, "Dalai Lama's health is improving. The surgery went very well on the 28th of the last month and it was a short surgery and now he is in the recovery section and he will move somewhere to have physiotherapy for a complete recovery." The US has also come up with a new law in support of Tibet and Tibetans are waiting for US President Biden to sign new legislation, the 'Tibet Resolve Act'. Commenting on the government of India's vision or policy towards China, Sikyong said, "I keep saying that

I am nobody to advise the Indian government and they are much smarter. People working at the top there and we of course work with them and yeah when a lot of things are happening, when there are lot of things on the table, it is also important to think about recalibration depending on the changing political scenario..."

The Chinese government labels Tibet as a "socialist paradise," but the CTA President questions why they don't allow people to see it for themselves if that's truly the case. "Sometimes we get to know only after things have happened, one or two weeks or sometimes even one month after things have happened because the Chinese government knows that the world community and the media need evidence so they don't allow people to come and see for themselves. They call Tibet a socialist paradise so we keep asking, If Tibet is a socialist paradise, then why don't you allow people to see for themselves?" said CTA President "Instead of going into a very single detail about what is happening inside Tibet, all I could say is that we're dying a slow death," he added. Tibetan Buddhism originated from India and Tibetans consider themselves a part of Indian culture, said Tsering, adding that China is trying to erase Tibetan culture and replace it with Chinese culture, which will also affect India. "Tibetan Buddhism came from India. We consider ourselves as an extension of Indian culture. Because we have translated every available Sanskrit and Pali text into Tibetan way back from the 8th to 13th century. So today it is being destroyed and this will also have implications for India because what China is trying to do is turn every young Tibetan into a Chinese," said Tsering.

China considers Dalai Lama, who has been living in exile in India for decades, a separatist intending to split the formerly independent region from the control of China, as per UCA News.

Chinese forces invaded and annexed Tibet in the 1950s under the pretext that it had always been a part of China. (ANI)

As UPR concludes, UN Human Rights Council voices clear criticism of China's abuses in Tibet

04 July 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

The United Nations Human Rights Council has once again issued substantive criticism of Beijing's systematic human rights violations against Tibetans, Uyghurs, Hong Kongers and Chinese. This evaluation of China's human rights record came during China's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which takes place every four and a half years and whose final report was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council today.

Despite intense lobbying by Beijing and the deployment of an array of non-governmental organizations controlled by the Chinese government (government-organized non-government organizations, or GONGOs), 21 states addressed the situation in Tibet. This was the largest number since China underwent its first review in 2009.

The United Kingdom made the following statement: "China tried to claim that the Office of the High Commissioners' authoritative Xinjiang assessment is, and I quote: illegal and void. It is neither. Let me again urge China to end its persecution and arbitrary detention of Uighurs and Tibetans and to allow genuine freedom of religion and expression."

The United States also made a statement, saying, "The United States condemns the human rights abuses in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and across China."

As expected, the Chinese government rejected substantial recommendations, or in some cases "accepted" them with the argument that various human rights standards had "already been implemented." These claims are in clear contradiction to the reality in Tibet, as has been stated many times by independent UN human rights experts.

ICT Executive Director Kai Müller said: "*No matter how hard they try, the Chinese government cannot conceal what is happening in Tibet. However, it is a cause for concern that more and more states are apparently allowing themselves to be put under pressure by China and are singing Beijing's song. The large number of GONGOs on the Human Rights Council is also a serious impediment to the proper functioning of these processes.*

"On the other hand, it is positive that more states than ever before have critically addressed the situation in Tibet and called for change. Especially as a member of the UN Security Council, China must comply with international rules, and human rights are a central part of this," Müller continued.

Increased criticism

Compared to the UPR review six years ago, 21 states – up from nine – expressed substantial criticism of China's human rights record in Tibet and 19 states made recommendations. The so-called "Advanced Questions" to China, which could be submitted to the Chinese government in advance, indicated increased interest. Twice as many of these questions were submitted compared to 2018.

The review took place in a tense climate, as the Chinese government was once again present with an unusually large delegation of diplomats. Beijing also mobilized a large number of GONGOs that strictly repeat the party line. Of the 67 organizations registered to speak at the Human Rights Council, at least 25 were Chinese GONGOs and another five were GONGOs from friendly authoritarian states such as Russia or Cuba. At the same time, a large number of

states used their speaking time for statements supportive of Chinese policies.

ICT advocacy

ICT advocacy staffer Melanie Blondelle was able to deliver a statement on behalf of the *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights* in the plenary session of the Human Rights Council. Blondelle:

“Over the past two years, several UN human rights bodies have raised the alarm over the escalation of human rights violations in Tibet. These include the boarding school system that has separated nearly one million Tibetan children from their families and communities, extensive forced labor programs, massive displacement of the rural Tibetan population, and the imprisonment of Tibetan environmentalists. Tibetans continue to face torture, death in custody and enforced disappearances at the hands of the Chinese state.

As a result, an unprecedented number of states have made recommendations and raised preliminary questions on Tibet, expressing the growing concern of the international community. We strongly welcome this expression of genuine concern, which not only recognizes the situation on the ground, but also protects the credibility of the Human Rights Council itself.”

In her statement on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Blondelle also pointed out that several nations had called on the Chinese government to grant open, independent and unrestricted access to Tibet, including through the UN OHCHR and special rapporteurs. China is consistently blocking this access and instead spreading disinformation in which alleged social progress is used to justify its repressive tactics. The international community must see through this barely disguised strategy and insist on the universality and indivisibility of human rights, Blondelle continued.

Appendix: Statement in the original text

Item 6: UPR outcomes

Statement delivered by Mélanie Blondelle on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights – Check against delivery

Mr. President,

Over the last two years, multiple UN human rights bodies raised alarm at the escalation of human rights violations in Tibet. This includes nearly one million Tibetan children separated from their families and forced into Mandarin dominated schools; extensive forced labor transfer programs; massive dislocation of the rural Tibetan population; and imprisonment of Tibetan environmental and human rights defenders. Tibetans are routinely tortured, die in custody, and are disappeared.

An unprecedented number of states offered recommendations and submitted advance questions on Tibet, demonstrating the international community's dismay. We welcome this expression of

genuine concern, which does not only acknowledge the situation on the ground, but also protects the credibility of the Human Rights Council itself.

China's predicted rejection of almost 70% of the 23 Tibet-specific recommendations and its listing of the remainder as 'accepted and already implemented', contradicts verified facts.

Several states and the EU called on China to provide independent and unfettered access to Tibet, including by UN OHCHR and Special Rapporteurs. China consistently blocks such access, opting instead to spread disinformation alleging social progress as justification for its oppressive tactics. The international community must see through this thinly veiled strategy and insist on the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

We also stress that Tibetans in Tibet are not able to engage freely with UN mechanisms, foremost the UPR due to the pervasive climate of fear instilled by decades long oppression.

Despite this dire situation, options exist to achieve peaceful change. The Dalai Lama continues to pursue a path to invite dialogue and mutual understanding. The Chinese government should seize this opportunity, and the international community should press China, a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, to fully respect the rights of the Tibetan people and to address the root causes for the conflict on the plateau.

Tibet is a test of the UN Human Rights Council's ability to uphold universal human rights, through the UPR and beyond. It is a test it must not fail.

Thank you.

Dalai Lama's followers pray for his knee surgery recovery outside makeshift 'temple' — a ritzy NYC hotel

04 July 2024, [New York Post](#), Caitlin McCormack and Matt Troutman

They're Tibet-ing on a speedy recovery.

Acolytes of the Dalai Lama congregated during the July Fourth holiday outside Midtown's ritzy Park Hyatt Hotel, where the exiled leader of Tibetan Buddhism is recuperating from knee replacement surgery.

Throngs of Dalai devotees, some wearing traditional Tibetan garb and prayer beads, posed for photos and prayed outside the West 57th Street hotel Thursday, walking around the block clockwise as if it were a Buddhist temple.

"We believe that if you circumambulate, it's offering us good luck in our future and in our present also," said Yonten Dorjee, 40, of Kew Gardens, Queens.

"We imagine this as our temple and His Holiness is inside," Dorjee's wife, Kalsang Youdon, 45, said.



Acolytes offered prayers to the Dalai Lama's recovery and sought to circumambulate the Park Hyatt hotel.

The Dalai Lama arrived in New York City in late June — his first trip to the US since 2017 — to undergo knee replacement surgery at the Hospital for Special Surgery.

The 88-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet, has suffered health problems for years. His June 28 surgery was successful and he's expected to make a full recovery after his discharge a day later, said David J. Mayman, the chief of adult reconstruction and joint replacement service at the Upper East Side hospital, in a statement.

"His Holiness's personal medical team and office were in constant communication with the surgical and medical staff at HSS," Mayman said.

It's unclear how long the Dalai Lama will be recovering at the five-star hotel across from Carnegie Hall, where admirers' have been making daily devotional visits, Gothamist first reported.

Existence may be suffering, as the Buddha taught, but the mood outside the hotel has been joyous.

The Dalai Lama's personal cook Tenzin Pasang made an appearance at one point Thursday and was immediately greeted by spectators as though he were Taylor Swift.

"I heard that [the Dalai Lama's] treatments were successful, so that's why we're very happy," said Kalsang Phuntsok, 58, who brought his family from Jackson Heights.

"He shares wisdom throughout all of Tibet and India, and my family is so proud of what he's done," said Phuntsok's son Baruwa Kunshey, 11.

China views the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist, a charge the religious leader has dismissed.

Indeed, his New York City visit came shortly after a bipartisan House delegation visited him in northern India — a trip that drew a threatening letter from China's embassy to the US.

"The visit interferes with China's internal affairs, violates China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," the letter stated.

"Free Tibet" chatter was scarce outside the Park Hyatt among the Independence Day crowd.

For Ella Krivova, 37, an Upper East Sider who was grateful for the holiday off so she could spend more time near the Dalai Lama, the religious leader's presence itself was a "precious opportunity."

"This city can be so materialistic, being here helps you to be closer to the teaching and to develop and deepen your life," she said.

"His mindstream is very vast and kind and generous so it's to be connected to the teaching and to liberate and help other people in the future."

2nd International Tibet Youth Forum Commences in Dharamshala, Sikyong Calls for Unified Efforts in Advocating for Tibet

03 July 2024, [CTA](#)



Sikyong Penpa Tsering addressing the gathering. Photo / Tenzin Phende / CTA

The Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration, earlier today commenced the 2nd International Tibet Youth Forum, a hallmark initiative of the 16th Kashag, in Dharamshala that brought together over 100 Tibetan youths representing diverse educational and professional backgrounds from more than 13 countries.

The inaugural session of this three-day seminar, from 3 to 5 July, was honoured by the presence of Sikyong Penpa Tsering, the democratically elected leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, who presided over the proceedings with grace and conviction. Secretary Karma Choeying and Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay from the DIIR also graced the occasion with their presence.

Following the arrival of the guests and participants at the venue, Secretary Karma Choeying delivered a welcome address to emphasise the importance of this conference. He stated that in this critical time of generational transition, it is paramount for younger Tibetans to inherit the mantle of our freedom struggle and safeguard Tibet's unique identity. Hence, under

the stewardship of Sikyong Penpa Tsering and the 16th Kashag, the V-TAG (Voluntary Tibet Advocacy Group) initiative was introduced in 2021 to amplify Tibet advocacy efforts worldwide. The Secretary further said this seminar aims to empower members of V-TAG and other Tibetan youths from diverse organisations to advance the Tibetan Freedom Movement through coordinated advocacy and awareness campaigns.

In addition, Secretary Karma Choeying clarified that V-TAG is not a Central Tibetan Administration's youth group but rather a platform for younger Tibetans, regardless of their political opinions, to dedicate themselves to furthering the cause of Tibet.

The event's chief guest, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, extended his greetings to the participants and lauded their commitment to advocating for the Tibetan cause while introducing the conference speakers.

Beginning with the benevolent and lifelong contributions of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in resolving the longstanding Tibet-China conflict and establishing this unparalleled exile Tibetan community, Sikyong implored everyone to pray for the wellbeing of His Holiness. Sikyong further stated that following His Holiness' noble guidance is the most appropriate way to offer prayers and to do so, "We must not fall into petty factional arguments and, instead, we must all unify our efforts regardless of our political stands to strive for freedom in Tibet." In relation to this, Sikyong shed light on the Central Tibetan Administration's policy of the Middle Way Approach (MWA). "Every political view among Tibetans, including those seeking a win-win solution through MWA and others who want complete independence, have their valid reasons based on the truth. But, His Holiness introduced MWA, which was later unanimously adopted as the official political position by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, for the sole reason of Tibet's survival that otherwise has reached a stage of complete extinction."

Apart from that, as part of his keynote speech, Sikyong Penpa Tsering spoke about the V-TAG's increasing impact over the last three years and commended all active members for their efforts. "Central Tibetan Administration has prioritised inclusiveness of all sections of our community in the Tibetan freedom struggle", and therefore, Sikyong encouraged others to take part in the journey of V-TAG. "A success of V-TAG can later be translated into a people's movement", Sikyong declared.

Furthermore, the exile Tibetan political leader shared profound insights into international politics, shedding light on China's current geopolitical stance and its internal political dynamics before concluding his talk. Thereafter, a Q&A session with Sikyong was held for around half an hour that was followed by a vote of thanks from DIIR Additional Secretary Tenzin Lekshay.

Over the course of following three days, Kasur (former Kalon) Tenpa Tsering; Bhutika Karpoche, Member of the Provincial Parliament for Parkdale-High Park, Canada; Namgyal Gangshontsang, Mayor of the Oetwil am See, Switzerland; Geshe Lhakdor, Director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives; Namkyi, a former Tibetan Political Prisoner; Franz Matzner, Director of Government Relations, International Campaign for Tibet; Tenzin Dorjee, Strategist and Senior Researcher, Tibet Action Institute; Karma Lekshey, Director of the Tibetan Centre for Conflict Resolution; Topjor Tsultrim, Communication Coordinator of the Students for a Free Tibet; and Tenzin Yangzom, Campaign Coordinator, International Tibet Network, will speak on various topics concerning Tibet advocacy.

Artist launches collection of 108 visual arts from exile Tibetan artists

03 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Whiteline Graphics, an initiative by Jamyang Tenzin and his brother Tsering Namgyal, launched the first-ever meticulously curated book titled "108 Exile Tibetan Visual Artists and Their Expression of Universal Responsibility and The Environment." This unique project celebrated the rich tapestry of Tibetan art and culture in exile. Through this initiative, Jamyang showcased unique artworks of 108 incredible talents that boast of diversity and inclusiveness within the Tibetan art community.

A panel discussion featured Ven. Tenzin Tselek, a former TCV Education Director; Bhuchung D. Sonam, a writer, poet, and co-founder of Tibetwrites; and was attended by Geshe Lhakdor, Director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. During the discussions, Ven. Tselek, who also served as the Principal of TCV Selakui, emphasised the importance of prioritising the foundations of the arts in schools.

Bhuchung D. Sonam urged the audience to respect and support artists, highlighting the lack of recognition they receive. He referenced an editorial from Amnye Machen's magazine, *Lungtah*, which noted that traditionally, artists in Tibet, including dancers and singers, are often viewed unfavourably. He also discussed Drubchen Thangtong Gyalpo, who pioneered Tibetan opera in the 15th century.

Despite his significant contributions, historical records and biographies seldom acknowledged him as the founder of Tibetan opera. Nowadays, his contributions are verbally recognised, as demonstrated during Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts' Opera Festival, where homage is duly paid to Thangtong Gyalpo. Bhuchung also shared personal anecdotes, recounting how his parents would disparagingly refer to singers as

“beggars” during the harvest festival, where these performers would sing songs.

“The purpose of including 108 artists’ works holds symbolic significance,” Jamyang told Phayul. “There are numerous ways to interpret this number. In Buddhism, we believe that 108 steps are required to reach Nirvana, and the Tibetan rosary typically consists of 108 beads. While there isn’t a definitive reason for choosing 108, it is considered an auspicious number. Based on this symbolism, I curated the artworks of 108 Tibetan artists in exile. Although I had a list of around 270 visual artists, I could only contact 108.”

Discussing the process of compiling the artworks, Jamyang mentioned facing challenges in reaching senior artists due to their lack of social media presence, which required considerable effort to contact them. With younger artists, transparency was a concern, as they wanted assurance that their artworks would not be used for commercial purposes. Jamyang reported that the response from most artists has been positive. He explained that his inspiration for creating this book was to unite the artistic efforts of 108 exiled Tibetan visual artists, each contributing a piece that reflects their unique perspective.

CHINA POLITICS

China's state employees to face forced three-child policy?

29 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China is desperate as it fails to repeat the spectacular success of its decades-long one-child policy in implementing its current three-child policy. Burdened by economic hardship and for sundry other reasons, young people are simply refusing to marry and procreate or otherwise have more children.

A leaked draft document has revealed that the government plans to coerce government officials and employees into having more children, reported *news.com.au* Jul 28.

China's population is already contracting. As its citizens age, the labour force is shrinking. And that means its social, economic and military ambitions are coming under increasing pressure, the report noted.

While the party-state realized this as early as 2015 when it abandoned its long-enforced draconian one-child policy, the nation's birth-rates only continued to decline.

Now, a leaked draft document circulating on Chinese social media reportedly details plans to "organise and implement" Chairman Xi Jinping's 2021 "three-child" policy among party officials and municipal employees. In particular, the document states among its "key tasks and measures" the need for bureaucrats at all levels to lead by example.

"Party members and cadres at all levels of government agencies, state-owned enterprises, and public institutions should take the lead in implementing the three-child policy," the report cited the Chinese *Sina* news service report as saying, referring to the leaked document.

The Quanzhou Municipal Health Commission is stated to have confirmed to *Sina* the document was authentic, while blaming "negligent" staff for its early release.

"Later, the relevant departments of Quanzhou City may publish it in due course according to the situation," it has added.

It is not clear from the report whether this is a nationwide policy yet.

The Quanzhou documents is stated to list three main areas of work: "First, organise and implement the three-child policy; Second, cancel fertility restrictions, including cancelling social maintenance fees, cleaning up policy documents and social restrictions that are not suitable for the population development situation; Third, improve the population service system, improve the overall solution for the 'old and young', and establish and improve the population service system covering the life cycle."

But what attracted public attention was stated to be a fourth element. "In the section on 'organising and implementing the three-child policy', the mention of

party members and cadres taking the lead in implementing the three-child policy made some netizens feel uncomfortable," the *Sina* report was stated to read.

"Some people worried that it would become a disguised forced birth of three children," the report quoted one commentator as saying.

Apart from the prosperous Quanzhou, *Jiemian Financial News* has reported that the Xiangtan District in Xiangtan City, Hunan Province, had already taken similar steps.

"We call on party members and cadres to publicise and guide, take the lead in implementation, and consciously implement the country's optimised fertility policy, and make positive contributions to promoting the long-term balanced development of the population," the Xiangtan District CPC administration was stated to have proclaimed in Nov 2023.

Party General Secretary Xi set the ball rolling in Nov 2023, when he told an assembly of the All-China Women's Federation: "We need to actively cultivate a new culture of marriage and child-bearing" as an essential contribution to the "rejuvenation" of the nation.

Following it, the party last year ordered government family planning officials to "intervene" and reduce the number of abortions among teenagers. They must now campaign for "respecting the social value of childbirth, advocating age-appropriate marriage and child-bearing, as well as optimal child-bearing and raising", the report noted.

"The new marriage and childbirth culture must be incorporated into village regulations, and content that is inconsistent with this must be revised," the family planning directive was stated to have added.

State employees who fail to comply "can forget about getting promoted or getting rich," another commentator was stated to have noted.

The concern about declining birth rate was also mentioned recently by China's Central Party Committee, whose 205 members are responsible for establishing national policy, during its Third Plenum (five-yearly assembly) under Chairman Xi Jinping earlier this month.

"A sound system will be instituted to provide full life-cycle population services to all in order to promote high-quality population development. China will refine the policy system and incentive mechanisms for boosting the birth-rate and strive to build a childbirth-friendly society," *Xinhua* reported the Plenum as ruling.

A *Global Times* article Jul 22 stated that work was already underway to establish a "child-bearing and child-rearing support system".

Progress so far includes "a number of policies rolled out in localities across the country, including extending

maternity leave to 158 days or longer, raising childbirth allowance and child-rearing subsidies, and providing more professional and affordable babysitter services at childcare institutions," it added.

China's former Hainan party chief Luo Baoming faces corruption investigation

26 July 2024, [SCMP](#)

Official who helped transform Hainan into strategic and economic hub in the South China Sea is being probed for 'violations of party discipline and the law' The former Communist Party boss of the southern Chinese province of Hainan who helped transform it into a strategic hub in the South China Sea has been placed under investigation for corruption.

China's top corruption watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), said on Thursday that Luo Baoming was being investigated for suspected severe violations of party discipline and the law – the usual euphemism for corruption.

Luo, who went on to serve as the vice-chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, China's legislature, "voluntarily turned himself in", according to the commission. No further details were given.

Luo, 72, a native of northern city of Tianjin, started his career at the Inner Mongolia Production and Construction Corporation in 1969, then returned to Tianjin in 1973, where he rose through the ranks to eventually head the city's Communist Party propaganda department in 1997, according to public records.

Luo rose to prominence in Hainan where he spent more than 15 years in various senior roles.

During his time in office, the rustic island was transformed into one of the region's most popular tourist destinations, and has become a strategic Chinese outpost in the northern part of the South China Sea, where China has staked vast territorial claims that have fuelled tensions between Beijing, its neighbours and Washington.

In 2001, Luo was promoted to deputy secretary of the party committee in Hainan. He became the provincial governor in 2007 and was appointed as the province's Communist Party chief in 2011.

Hainan, which is almost the size of Taiwan, has gone through rapid development on its way to becoming a major resort.

After being approved by the State Council, the province established the prefecture-level city of Sansha in 2012 at Yongxing Island – or Woody Island – under Luo's watch. The city, which is situated in the contested Paracel Islands, is responsible for managing the islands, reefs, and surrounding waters in the South China Sea.

While Luo was in power, Hainan invested in building, upgrading and expanding critical civilian infrastructure, including railways, ports and airports – such as Meilan International airport in Haikou city – to boost capacity and connectivity, transforming the island into a strategic and economic hub.

In 2016, Luo led a delegation to Canada and the United States and said Chinese provincial party secretaries should be invited “to lead Communist Party delegations to visit the US annually to enhance dialogue, exchanges, and mutual trust between the two sides”, according to the official Hainan Daily.

Luo stepped down from his role as Hainan’s party secretary in 2017 to serve as the vice-chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the 12th and 13th National People’s Congress until 2023, according to public records.

Chinese Communist Party Plans To Raise Retirement Age To Deal With Aging Population

25 July 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Hsia Hsiao-hwa

The ruling Chinese Communist Party has announced plans to raise the retirement age as part of its response to falling births and a rapidly aging population.

Party leader Xi Jinping called on party and government at a recent top-level meeting in Beijing to “advance reform to gradually raise the statutory retirement age in a prudent and orderly manner in line with the principle of promoting voluntary participation while allowing appropriate flexibility.”

Xi also called for moves to “improve the systems for supporting population development and providing related services, refine the policy system and incentive mechanisms for boosting the birth rate, and refine the policies and mechanisms for developing elderly care programs and industries.”

China has one of the lowest statutory retirement ages in the world, currently set at 60 for men, at 55 for female officials and at 50 for female workers.

Retired teacher Gu Guoping, who currently lives in Shanghai, said the authorities are likely to change the mandatory retirement age to 65 for men and 55 for women, which is likely to be unpopular.

“The vast majority of people in China don’t want a later retirement age,” he said. “Some men want to retire at 58 or 55.”

“If you start to receive [your pension] too late, you’ll only have a short time left to enjoy it,” Gu said.

He added: “Women live longer on average than men, so having them retire at 50 is too soon,” Gu said.

“Extending their retirement age to 55 is reasonable and acceptable to most people.”

“But it makes no sense to stop men from retiring at 60 given that they don’t live as long as women.”

Rising life expectancy

In the meantime, the authorities are getting people used to the idea of a later retirement by promoting “flexibility” and voluntary approaches, he said.

International medical journal *The Lancet* reported last year that average life expectancy in China will likely rise to 81.3 years old by 2035, 85.1 years for women and 78 years for men, with the gap widening from 5.2 years in 2019 to 7 years by that time.

However, the disadvantage of later retirement is that older people continue to occupy jobs at a time of widespread youth unemployment, according to Gu.

A Beijing resident who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals said part of the issue is that people currently in work are paying for the pensions of people who are currently retired, making the social security system increasingly top-heavy and unsustainable as the population ages and births plummet

Raising the pension age to 65 could plunge a lot of people into economic hardship, she said.

“Delaying retirement should be part of a system-wide approach,” she said, saying more jobs for older people would be needed if they can’t collect their pensions until that age.

“Not many people in today’s China stay with the same employer their whole life,” the woman said. “Once they delay the pensionable retirement age, people will be forced to do odd jobs, change employers and jobs.”

“Measures need to be in place to support this kind of situation, especially when it comes to [preventing rampant] age discrimination,” she said. “Those attitudes are entrenched, and aren’t going to change overnight.”

Meager pension resources

The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences estimated recently that there will be nothing left in the national pension fund for city-based employees by 2035, while the International Monetary Fund has predicted that a sluggish economy will also impact the pension system. Some 300 million people are expected to retire in China over the next decade, putting huge pressure on pension funding.

While 10 working-age people supported 1 retiree in 2002, the ratio had fallen to 5 to 1 by 2021. It will likely fall further to 4 in 2030 and 2 in 2050, Larry Hu, chief economist at Macquarie, told Reuters in January.

China’s pension system consists of three elements: basic pension, corporate and occupational annuities, and personal pension plans.

The economic downturn has reduced people’s ability to pay into the optional elements of that package.

At the end of 2023, only 20% of the 50 million people who have personal pensions had paid anything into them, with the average value of personal pension pots standing at a meager 2,000 yuan (US\$275).

China’s population aged 60 and over reached 296.97 million in 2023, about 21.1% of its total population, up

from 280.04 million in 2022, Reuters reported on Jan. 18.

China created a special fund in 2018 to shift pension funds from richer coastal provinces like Guangdong to places like Heilongjiang and Liaoning, to tackle cross-country disparities, yet about a third of China's provincial-level jurisdictions are running pension deficits, the agency reported.

China's third plenum sees Communist Party double down on economic, tech, military power

21 July 2024, [SCMP](#)

China will focus on boosting its economic, technological and defence capabilities to tackle growing conflicts with the US-led West, the full text of decisions from a key party conclave has revealed.

The more than 22,000-word resolution document lists a wide range of measures for the next five years approved by the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party, which met for its key third plenum last week.

The measures aim to strengthen China's economic resilience, deepen the tech talent pool and narrow the rural-urban gap as part of efforts to find new growth engines and address demographic challenges, according to the document released by state news agency Xinhua on Sunday.

National security also gets greater prominence, with pledges to keep key industrial chains safe and boost strategic military deterrence.

The goals have to be accomplished by 2029, the 80th anniversary of the People's Republic. The coming five years will also be a decisive period for the party's target of building a modern socialist China by 2035, giving it a strong position in the great power rivalry with the United States and other geopolitical hostilities.

President Xi Jinping said the measures aimed to meet China's "urgent need" to counter major risks and challenges, according to a separate Xinhua article on decisions made at the plenum.

Xi, who leads the Central Committee, said China was faced with "increasing uncertainties and unpredictable factors" impacting national development, as "external suppression and containment are continuously escalating".

The four-day, closed-door plenary session of the Central Committee concluded on Thursday.

A unified set of market rules, fair and consistent regulatory framework, removal of restrictions to market entry and competition are among the aims listed in the resolution document, which also calls for efficient and coordinated policy implementation and pledges to address the financing difficulties of local governments.

It includes a promise to equally protect the "property rights of all types of ownership economies", and to support the private sector.

The leadership also aims to promote the development of future industries, "new fields and new competitive tracks" in the global tech race.

The boost for tech and the private sector – the backbone of job creation and innovation – comes as China's post-Covid economic recovery remains patchy. Growth momentum slowed in the second quarter, and public sentiment remains weak amid a prolonged property market slump, lacklustre financial markets and rising unemployment.

In manufacturing, China is under pressure from a global supply chain diversification away from its market and tightened hi-tech restrictions led by the US. Trade tensions with the European Union have also escalated, with exports of electric vehicles and some new energy products in limbo.

The difficulties have pushed Beijing to strengthen the resilience and security of its supply chains, including a mission to build up a "strategic hinterland" as backup for key industries and improve the national reserve system for key resources.

According to the document, the party also called to "step up building a self-controlled industrial and supply chain" with a focus on integrated chips, industrial master machines, medical equipment and advanced materials.

Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at Tsinghua University's National Institute of Strategic Studies, said the fact that almost all of the long document was devoted to domestic issues indicated the leadership's focus on stability and the push for progress.

He said the message was clear, that the only way China could cope better was by making itself stronger and be more prepared to tackle challenges on all fronts, he said.

"The message from the top leadership is consistent: we should prioritise our own matters first," Xie said.

"But China's door will remain wide open. It will continue to push for trade, investment and innovation links with the more friendly parts of the world as the decision indicates."

The document includes a pledge to implement "transparent, stable and predictable" policies, in an apparent attempt to restore China's market allure for foreign investors. This group has raised concerns about tightened security control in China, as they come under pressure to adjust supply chains or China operations amid the US-led decoupling.

Beijing has also doubled down on national security and stepped up military reform efforts, at a time when maritime tensions threaten to become flashpoints in its tensions with the US and its regional allies.

"[We should] accelerate the development of strategic deterrence forces, and develop new domain and

quality combat forces," the document said, elaborating on aims to build up military power in five years.

The leadership has also vowed to further improve national security mechanisms, to counter "long-arm jurisdiction" and to better safeguard China's maritime rights and interests.

A mainland-based political analyst, who requested anonymity, said Beijing will continue to launch sanctions and legislation to hit back at US sanctions and protect its core interests over the issue of Taiwan and the South China Sea.

On the science and tech front, the decisions from the plenum include a call to cultivate national "innovative capabilities" and encourage "high-level foreign science and engineering universities to cooperate in running schools in China".

More open and effective talent recruitment and cultivation mechanisms are expected, with the party calling for better treatment for young scientists so that they can focus on research.

It has also pledged more funding for basic research and better allocation of funds for research projects – including giving scientists more decision-making power and greater control over the funds.

Xi's big economic meeting shows the Party bracing for slower growth driven by advanced manufacturing

18 July 2024, [Himalayan Dak](#)

China's Communist Party concluded its "third plenum," a biennial meeting focused on long-term reform, from July 15th to 18th. President Xi Jinping emphasized "high-quality development" as the guiding principle, but there were few signs of major changes to boost demand or address the property market decline. The communique indicated no significant shift from recent economic policies. State media Xinhua briefly published an article praising Xi as a reformer, which was later removed for unknown reasons. One might ask: How does that affect the supply chain and manufacturing shifts between China and India?

China's Communist Party removes ex-foreign, defence ministers from top body

18 July 2024, [Reuters](#), Laurie Chen and Jessie Pang

China's Communist Party removed its former foreign and defence ministers, Qin Gang and Li Shangfu, from its Central Committee on Thursday during a meeting of its largest top decision-making body, state news agency Xinhua reported.

The two officials had been removed from their jobs last year.

The ruling Communist Party ended its long-delayed third plenum on Thursday, a meeting of the 205-member Central Committee held roughly once every five years to map out the general direction of the country's long-term social and economic policies. Removals of Central Committee members would also be approved at such meetings.

The Central Committee said in a communique released by Xinhua that it accepted Qin Gang's resignation from the body, and confirmed the expulsion of Li Shangfu, 66, as well as former PLA Rocket Force commander Li Yuchao, 61, from the Communist Party for "serious violations of discipline and law", a euphemism for corruption. Li Yuchao was also removed from his job last year.

The decision to expel Li Shangfu and Li Yuchao from the Communist Party and its Central Committee by extension suggests harsher political consequences for the pair, compared to Qin Gang's resignation. Qin remains a Communist Party member.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has spearheaded a wide-ranging anti-corruption campaign since becoming leader of the Communist Party in 2012. In the first half of this year alone, the party's top graft watchdog has investigated 36 officials at the vice-ministerial level and above.

Li Shangfu and his predecessor Wei Fenghe were both expelled from the Communist Party last month on bribery charges, as China's People's Liberation Army undergoes a sweeping anti-corruption purge which has implicated two former defence ministers and nine top generals.

Qin, 58, was abruptly removed as foreign minister in July last year after seven months in the job, and has not been seen in public since following rumours of an extramarital affair. He was removed from China's cabinet, the State Council, in October and "resigned" from the national legislative body in February.

He became one of the country's youngest foreign ministers when he was appointed in December 2022, enjoying a meteoric rise which analysts partly attributed to his closeness to President Xi. No official reason was given for Qin's resignation from the Central Committee.

"Qin and Xi's images are somewhat tied - there is no way to make Qin look bad without making Xi look bad," said Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub.

"Qin Gang is able to get a relatively more graceful exit. The communique grants him the dignity of appearing to 'resign' on his own volition, and still calls him a 'comrade'"

ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE

Li Shangfu was ousted as defence minister last October without explanation, before being placed under a graft investigation. He was removed from the party's highest military command body in February.

Li Yuchao was replaced last July during a shakeup of the Rocket Force leadership which also saw its political commissar dismissed. He oversaw a highly strategic unit of the PLA responsible for the nation's conventional and nuclear missile arsenal.

The Central Committee's communique also pledged to deepen Chinese military reforms, "uphold the party's leadership over the PLA", and to "provide effective guarantees for achieving military and national defence modernisation" - without mentioning the military corruption crackdown.

Agriculture minister Tang Renjian, 61, who has been under investigation for corruption since May, remains a member of the Central Committee.

"One could see (the dismissals) as a sign of the continued vigour of Xi's anti-corruption campaign - or its sub-optimal effectiveness at preventing corruption even after more than a decade," said Sung.

Three alternate Central Committee members were appointed as full members according to the communique: Anhui provincial Communist Party personnel boss Ding Xiangqun, Sichuan provincial Communist Party personnel boss Yu Lijun and Beijing Normal University President Yu Jihong.

According to past convention, the Central Committee would appoint some of its 171 alternate members to fill in vacancies by order of the number of votes they received.

The new appointments this time skipped PLA Rocket Force deputy political commissar Ding Xingnong, who would have been second in line to join the Central Committee.

Former Central Committee alternate member and PLA Rocket Force chief of staff Lieutenant General Sun Jinming was also expelled from the Communist Party for corruption, the communique said.

Only 199 full Central Committee members and 165 alternate members attended the plenum, according to the communique.

China's Communist Party meets to set direction for troubled economy

14 July 2024, [CNN](#), Simone McCarthy

After months of unexplained delay, top officials from China's ruling Communist Party are gathering in Beijing this week to signal the direction forward for the world's second largest economy as it faces major economic challenges and friction with the West.

Stakes are high for the meeting, which takes place every five years and is known as China's third plenum. It has historically been a platform for the party's leadership to announce key economic reforms and policy directives.

China is grappling with a property sector crisis, high local government debt and weak consumer

demand — as well as flagging investor confidence and intensifying trade and technology tensions with the United States and Europe.

Those challenges were underscored by its latest economic growth data, which were announced Monday. China's gross domestic product expanded by 4.7% in the April to June months, compared to the previous year.

That represents a slowdown from the 5.3% growth reported for the first quarter and also missed the expectations of a group of economists polled by Reuters who had predicted 5.1% expansion in the second quarter.

Economic problems on the back of years of stringent pandemic controls have triggered mounting social frustration, as well as questions about the direction of the country under Xi Jinping, its most powerful leader in decades.

Those questions have been underscored by a recent shake-up in the upper echelons of Xi's government that saw three ministers and a handful of top military officers removed from posts or investigated, a situation that some observers of China's opaque political system believe contributed to the plenum's delay.

How Xi and his top officials choose to address the country's economic challenges will have significant impact on whether they can continue to raise quality of life, and public confidence, within China.

They could also have a broad impact on the country's role in the global economy and how willing foreign investors will be to do business there as uncertainties, including the outcome of the upcoming US presidential election, loom.

Here's what to expect at the four-day gathering, which begins Monday.

Big changes?

About 200 members of the party's Central Committee leadership body as well as 170 alternate committee members are gathering in Beijing to approve a document laying out a plan on "deepening reform" and advancing "Chinese-style modernization," according to state media.

Past third plenums have delivered sweeping reforms. The meeting in 1978 was linked to the landmark shift toward the "reform and opening" of China's economy, while Xi's first third plenum as leader in 2013 set in motion the move to dismantle the decades-old one child policy.

But observers of China's opaque political machine don't believe there will be fundamental economic reforms this time around.

Instead, they will be watching for more targeted efforts to address structural economic issues and social problems — and to enhance China's technological self-reliance at a time when it faces a raft

of restrictions on access to technology driven by the US.

This is Xi's third time overseeing this meeting after he extended his rule into a norm-breaking second decade at the last Party Congress in 2022.

Speculation has swirled around why the meeting, which was widely expected to take place last fall, is only happening now.

Some observers suggested the flagging economy and internal disagreement over how to address it, as well as the high-level personnel shake-ups that cast a shadow over Xi's third term, could have played a role.



Uncompleted residential buildings at a real estate project on the outskirts of Shenyang in China's Liaoning province earlier this year. Andrea Verdelli/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Economic challenges

The high debt loads held by local governments and their shrinking income, linked to an ongoing property sector crisis, lie at the heart of China's current economic woes.

They'll also be looking for signals on a new direction for real estate development and property sector policy in the wake of the industry crisis that's seen dozens of Chinese developers default on their debts, which has, in turn, devastated investors, homebuyers and construction workers.

Observers will be watching for fiscal reforms, especially around taxation and government spending, that could reduce pressure on local governments and bolster their revenue.

Many also say the government should take steps to boost consumer spending and increase household income, including potential reforms to change rural land ownership and China's restrictive household registration system, as well as to expand social safety nets in a country grappling with high medical costs and a rapidly aging population.

Xi has acknowledged economic hardship in China, saying in a New Year's speech that "some people" had "difficulty finding jobs and meeting basic needs." In a May speech, he also stressed that the party should "do more practical things that benefit the people's livelihood," adding that reform should give people a sense of "gain."

While chasing rapid economic growth is "no longer Beijing's singular priority," Asia Society Center for China Analysis experts Neil Thomas and Jing Qian wrote last week, Xi likely recognizes that his priorities of national security and tech self-reliance "must co-exist with a baseline level of growth that sustains consumption, investment, social stability, and his own political security."

Tech push

Tech self-reliance has become a key focus for Beijing as the US and its allies have moved to limit China's access to high-end technologies, citing their own security concerns.

The plenum is expected to greenlight more government coordination around Xi's plan to build China into a "science and technology power," both in terms of innovation as well as industry.

But such a focus also threatens to heighten frictions with the West.

The EU and the US have recently slapped hefty tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, saying they are unfairly subsidized by the government and flooding global markets. Any moves this week that bolster the production of such high-end green technologies, which also include goods like solar panels or batteries, could further inflame the issue.

Meanwhile, global investors will be looking for Beijing to make good on promises to further open up its market, even as many firms have become more wary of doing business in the country as Xi has prioritized heightened state control and security.

The plenum could also see the formal ousting of top Communist Party officials who have been ensnared in opaque disciplinary investigations or removed from posts without explanation, some of whom were linked to an apparent military purge.

Li Shangfu, China's former defense minister who was fired from his role in October and expelled from the Communist Party following a corruption investigation, will likely be formally removed from the Central Committee.

Observers will be watching closely for any similar movement around other ousted government and military officials, including former Foreign Minister Qin Gang, People's Liberation Army Rocket Force commander Li Yuchao and his political commissar Xu Zhongbo.

China's ailing economy under spotlight as leader Xi Jinping and top officials to meet

14 July 2024, [Hong Kong Free Press](#)

The world's second-largest economy is grappling with a real estate debt crisis, weakening consumption, an ageing population and geopolitical tensions overseas,

some of which are expected to be addressed at the upcoming Third Plenum.

Top Chinese officials gather in Beijing on Monday, with all eyes on how they might kickstart lacklustre growth at a key political meeting that has traditionally seen officials unveil big-picture economic policy changes.

The world's second-largest economy is grappling with a real estate debt crisis, weakening consumption, an ageing population and geopolitical tensions overseas. President Xi Jinping will oversee the ruling Communist Party's secretive Third Plenum, which usually takes place every five years in October, though Beijing has offered few hints about what might be on the table.

State media in June said the delayed four-day gathering would "primarily examine issues related to further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization", and Xi last week said the CCP was planning "major" reforms.

Analysts are hoping those pledges will result in badly needed support for the economy.

"There are many hopes that this Third Plenum will provide some new breakthroughs on policy," Andrew Batson of the Beijing-based consultancy Gavekal Dragonomics told AFP.

"China's government has struggled to execute a successful economic strategy since emerging from the pandemic," he added.

But he said he did not expect a "fundamental departure from the course Xi has already laid out", in which technological self-sufficiency and national security outweigh economic growth.

And the People's Daily, the Communist Party's official newspaper, warned on Monday that "reform is not about changing direction and transformation is not about changing colour".

Ting Lu, chief China economist at Nomura, said the meeting was "intended to generate and discuss big, long-term ideas and structural reforms instead of making short-term policy adjustments".

The Third Plenum has long been an occasion for the Communist Party's top leadership to unveil major economic policy shifts.

In 1978, then-leader Deng Xiaoping used the meeting to announce market reforms that would put China on the path to dazzling economic growth by opening it to the world.

And more recently following the closed-door meeting in 2013, the leadership pledged to give the free market a "decisive" role in resource allocation as well as other sweeping changes to economic and social policy.

Growth figures expected

This year's conclave will begin the same day China is due to release its growth figures for the second quarter.

Experts polled by AFP expect China's economy to have grown, on average, 5.3 percent year-on-year between April and June.

Beijing has said it is aiming for five percent growth this year — enviable for many Western countries but a far cry from the double-digit expansion that for years drove the Chinese economy.

Authorities have been clear they want to reorient the economy away from state-funded investment and instead base growth around high-tech innovation and domestic consumption.

But economic uncertainty is fuelling a vicious cycle that has kept consumption stubbornly low.

Among the most urgent issues facing the economy is a persistent crisis in the property sector, which long served as a key engine for growth but is now mired in debt, with several top firms facing liquidation.

Authorities have moved in recent months to ease pressure on developers and restore confidence, such as by encouraging local governments to buy up unsold homes.

Analysts say much more is required for a full rebound as the country's economy has yet to bounce back more than 18 months after damaging Covid-19 restrictions ended.

"Short-term stimulus is badly needed to boost the teetering economy," Nomura's Ting said.

But, he added, "major steps towards market-oriented reforms might be limited this time".

China amasses record half-year 'tiger' tally in anti-corruption campaign

06 July 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

High-profile casualties show that past glories are no protection in the long-running crackdown, analyst says.

Three dozen "tigers" were detained by China's anti-corruption watchdog in the first half of the year, setting a new six-month benchmark for President Xi Jinping's signature anti-corruption campaign.

The detention of the 36 senior officials of at least vice-ministerial rank compares to the 22 investigated in the same time last year, a total that was a half-year high at the time, according to a South China Morning Post tally.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) — China's top anti-corruption agency — announced 45 investigations into senior officials last year but two more have since been added to that total with the announcement in June that former defence ministers Li Shangfu and Wei Fenghe came under investigation in 2023.

All of the tigers — as the CCDI refers to them — belonged to a pool of officials known as "centrally managed cadres", meaning they held ranks at the deputy

ministerial level or above. A smaller number held slightly lower ranks but occupied key positions in critical sectors.

Eight of the 36 detained in the first half held positions in central Communist Party and state agencies, while 20 of them were from local governments or party bodies, suggesting the investigators cast a wide net.

The biggest cases involved former agriculture minister Tang Renjian; former justice minister Tang Yijun; Gou Zhongwen, China's former sports chief credited with the country's Olympic medals success; former deputy propaganda chief Zhang Jiancun; and Zhong Ziran, former director of the China Geological Survey.

The most high-profile downfalls among the 20 regional officials were former Tibet party boss Wu Yingjie; Gansu's deputy provincial governor Yang Zixing; and his counterpart in Yunnan province, Li Shisong.

Li Shisong is the first alternate member of the party's present Central Committee – convened in 2022 – ensnared in a corruption investigation. The CCDI announced his detention on June 25, just three weeks before the committee meets for its much-awaited third plenum, set to start July 15.

The plenum is likely to endorse a decision to remove three full members of the Central Committee under investigation, namely former defence minister Li Shangfu, agriculture minister Tang Renjian and former rocket force commander Li Yuchao.

Beyond the Central Committee, other big names brought down by CCDI in the six months include two prominent security officials. Liu Yuejin, China's former anti-terror chief and renowned anti-narcotics hero, was targeted in March and Liu Zhiqiang, the police's former international cooperation head and deputy justice minister, found himself in the cross hairs in April.

Liu Yuejing's downfall was particularly shocking because he was known as one of the country's best anti-narcotics officers, working on many high-profile cases before rising to head the China National Narcotics Control Commission in May 2015.

He became the country's first anti-terror chief in December 2015, following a series of attacks across China, notably one in March 2014 when dozens of people were killed by a knife-wielding gang that rampaged at a railway station in Kunming, Yunnan province. Beijing blamed that attack on Xinjiang separatists.

These investigations showed that past glories, outstanding expertise or political connections were no longer bargaining chips with the disciplinary watchdog, said a political scientist from Beijing's Renmin university.

"Liu [Yuejing] was a well-known anti-narcotics cop. Gou was hailed as the man behind China's successful winter Olympics run ... Tibet's Wu Yingjie had boasted of Tibet's stability during his rule. But the anti-

corruption team did not let them hide behind their past glories," the political scientist said on condition of anonymity.

"In Xi's era, no one can be spared. The investigators don't care about officials' past contributions. At the ministerial level, there is no immunity privilege."

China's uncalled for gloating over UN's adoption of its rights review report

05 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has sought to gloat over the fact that the UN human rights Council, Geneva, has "unanimously" approved the 4th Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of its human rights record on Jul 4 as if this amounted to unanimous approval of its human rights record. In fact, a number of countries have expressed serious concern at the gravity of the situation not only in China itself but also in Tibet, Xinjiang, and elsewhere and Beijing's continued refusal to address them both during the UPR hearing and when the report came up for adoption.

The only countries that praised it, even if many, were those with serious human rights problems of their own and that had been lobbied by China to be present and speak for it. China's official *globaltimes.cn*, reporting Jul 5 on the report's adoption, mentioned some of them. "Russia, Venezuela, Uzbekistan, Gambia, Vietnam, and many other countries at the meeting positively assessed China's efforts and achievements in human rights development."

In fact, during the UPR hearing to evaluate China's record, 21 states made substantial criticism of its human rights record in Tibet – the largest number since China underwent its first review in 2009, said Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet ([savetibet.org](#)) Jul 4.

Criticism of China's human rights record, including in Tibet, was galore even at the meeting for the adoption of the report.

The United Kingdom made the following scathing statement: "China tried to claim that the Office of the High Commissioners' authoritative Xinjiang assessment is, and I quote: illegal and void. It is neither. Let me again urge China to end its persecution and arbitrary detention of Uighurs and Tibetans and to allow genuine freedom of religion and expression."

It "again" urged China to "end its persecution and arbitrary detention of Uyghurs and Tibetans and to allow genuine freedom of religion or belief and cultural expression," and so forth.

Likewise, the United States said, "The United States condemns the human rights abuses in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and across China."

China brought a large delegation to the meeting. "Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

the Supreme People's Court, as well as delegates from the Xizang Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Hong Kong, and Macao Special Administrative Regions also attended as members of the Chinese government delegation," said the *globaltimes.cn* report.

The report also said, "After the Human Rights Council approved China's report, the venue resounded with warm applause, and many representatives from other countries congratulated the Chinese delegation."

Nevertheless, Ambassador Chen Xu, Permanent Representative of China to the UN Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland, who led the Chinese government delegation, has felt constrained to vent his anger at the criticisms China had received throughout the UPR process.

"China firmly opposes the politicization, instrumentalization, and weaponization of human rights issues, and firmly opposes using human rights issues as an excuse to interfere in China's internal affairs," the report cited him as saying.

China rejects key Western calls for human-rights reforms at U.N. meeting

04 July 2024, [Reuters](#), Emma Farge

China on Thursday rejected Western-led recommendations for human-rights reforms including calls for greater freedoms in Hong Kong and for Uyghurs in Xinjiang, but accepted others from allies, as it sought to defend its record at a U.N. meeting.

The U.N. Human Rights Council session in Geneva caps off a review process in which Beijing has strived to fend off criticism following a 2022 U.N. report which said the detention of Uyghurs and other Muslims in China's Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity. China denies any abuses.

The council's president, Omar Zniber, said China had accepted nearly 70% of the more than 400 reform recommendations it received as part of the U.N. review.

"Progress and development on human rights is achieved in China with each passing day," China's ambassador, Chen Xu, told the meeting, alongside a large delegation of Chinese diplomats and officials. He said it rejected recommendations that were "politically motivated based on disinformation, ideologically biased or interfering in China's traditional sovereignty" and condemned what he called an attempt to "smear and attack" it.

Yet China's critics say its high acceptance rate is misleading, with one Western diplomat alleging the country had "stacked the deck" by investing political capital in quelling criticism.

Reuters previously reported that China had lobbied non-Western countries to praise its

record by asking them to make "constructive recommendations."

British ambassador Simon Manley complained to the council that China had rejected each and every one of its recommendations, including a call for an end to persecutions of Uyghurs and for the Hong Kong security law to be repealed.

U.S. Human Rights Ambassador Michèle Taylor also voiced disappointment at what she called China's refusal to take action.

"China's abuses constitute a rejection of U.N. assessments and recommendations and violate or undermine international commitments," she said. Other countries were more upbeat, including Russia's envoy who praised China's "constructive approach" and Gambia's envoy who lauded the country's progress.

The U.N. review of China is not unique and all countries undergo the process every few years at the council - the only intergovernmental body designed to protect human rights worldwide.

An attempt to hold a debate about the U.N. High Commissioner's China report was voted down by mostly non-Western members later in 2022 - a result seen as a diplomatic victory for Beijing.

China's internet watchdog calls for 'favourable' environment ahead of third plenum

03 July 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

China's top internet watchdog has called on regulators and internet companies to create a "favourable" environment ahead of a crucial Communist Party meeting this month.

The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) made the call at a national cyberspace meeting held last week, according to a statement released on social media on Tuesday.

The meeting came less than a month ahead of the third plenum, a gathering of more than 370 members of the party elite setting out the policy direction to tackle China's economic and social challenges over the next five to 10 years.

CAC deputy director Niu Yibing urged all departments and China's web platforms to "go all out" to create a "favourable" public opinion environment in the build-up to the four-day meeting, which starts in just under two weeks.

"[We must] adhere to the correct political position of directing public opinion and orienting social values," the statement said, also vowing to continue a crackdown on bad behaviour online.

The statement also warned regulators and internet companies to properly handle "the relationship between security and development".

They must make use of the internet to help drive economic growth, especially for new industries, and at the same time strengthen content management and control to “prevent various risks and hidden dangers”, it said.

Officials from the CAC’s Beijing headquarters and provincial branches, as well as representatives of leading internet companies attended the meeting.

A few days after the meeting finished, internet platforms started to crack down on ultranationalist comments in the wake of the death of Hu Youping, who tried to stop a knife attack on a Japanese school bus in Suzhou.

Hu’s bravery was applauded by most of the public, but some sporadic anti-Japanese postings described her as a “Japanese spy”.

On Sunday some of the country’s top tech firms, including Tencent, NetEase, Sina Weibo, Douyin – the Chinese version of TikTok – and Phoenix New Media’s news portal Ifeng.com, said they had deleted comments of this nature and banned accounts that promoted hatred and extremism.

Although it is routine for the internet watchdog to keep online opinion in check ahead of major political meetings, the authorities need to tread carefully and not be seen as too aggressive in undermining economic growth, said Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

“Security is clearly still the top concern ahead of the party plenum. Any incident can create unnecessary attention from the top leadership and result in potential setbacks in the careers of the officials in charge,” Wu said.

“But for the Chinese regulators, now they are also mindful of not going overboard in the security aspect. They probably don’t want to create another saga like the online gaming rule proposal, which caused a major market meltdown.”

In January regulators were forced into a rare reversal after a proposal to limit the amount of time and money people could spend on video games caused the share price of some major companies such as Tencent Holdings and NetEase to plummet.

Former Chinese TAR boss Wu Yingjie’s fall likely due to misuse of funds

03 July 2024, [International Campaign for Tibet](#)

On June 16, 2024, Chinese state media reported that former Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) Party Secretary Wu Yingjie is being investigated for “suspected severe violations of Party discipline and the law.”

The announcement has prompted speculation that Wu’s downfall might be connected to his work in Tibet.

Wu spent over 45 years working in different departments of the TAR government from 1974 to 2021, lending some credence to this speculation.

However, given the Chinese government’s penchant for secrecy no details have been provided about Wu’s investigation, and there may not be an authoritative answer until charges have been filed and his sentencing is announced. In the meantime, it is possible to analyze some developments around the time of Wu’s investigation, including actions taken against other senior officials that are connected to the possible misuse of funds in Tibet.

Timeline of events

On December 28, 2020, Chinese state media reported on a meeting that Wu Yingjie, then secretary of the TAR Party Committee, and Che Dralha (Chinese: Qi Zhala), then chairman of TAR, had in Beijing with China Development Bank (CDB) Chairman Zhao Huan and Ouyang Weimin, then president of the Bank. They signed a “Memorandum of Cooperation on Development Finance Supporting Long-term Stability and High-quality Development in Tibet in the New Era.” Also present in that meeting were Zhou Qingyu, then vice president of CDB, and Jiang Jie, then TAR party committee member.



(from left) Wu Yingjie, Che Dralha, Zhao Huan, Ouyang Weimin, Zhou Qingyu, and Jiang Jie

Since then investigations, indictments, and trials have been variously announced against three of the six participants of this meeting, while another one has disappeared from public view. This could indicate that this meeting and the participants involved are connected with the latest investigation against Wu Yingjie.

On June 14, 2024, two days before Wu’s investigation was announced, Jiang Jie, one of the attendees of the meeting, was indicted after prosecutors accused him of “taking advantage of his various positions to seek profits for others, in return he illegally accepted huge sums of money and valuables,” according to state media. The investigation against Jiang was announced on July 3, 2023, and the reasoning given was the same as for Wu: “for suspected severe violations of Party discipline and laws.” Jiang was subsequently dismissed from the membership of the TAR committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

On May 19, 2023, disciplinary and supervisory investigation was announced against Zhou Qingyu of

CDB, another participant in the 2020 meeting. He was arrested in December 2023 on suspicion of bribetaking, again with the same reasoning given as Jiang and Wu.

On June 14, 2024, state media reported on his trial. Reports said between 2013 and 2023, “Zhou took advantage of his various positions at the bank to provide assistance to others in matters such as loan financing, project contracting, business operations, and personnel arrangements. In return, Zhou accepted money and valuables worth over 67.43 million yuan (about 9.5 million U.S. dollars).”

Corruption in Tibet under Chinese rule

The official narrative is that these are part of the broader anti-corruption campaign announced by Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping. It is possible that given the close proximity of these announcements, they might be connected to a larger group of people working on Tibet – if corruption is the real reason for the investigation.

To date, from among the participants of the 2020 meeting, only CDB’s Zhao Huan remains in his position as the chair of the Bank. On February 17, 2023, CDB announced that Ouyang Weimin was relieved of his post without providing any reason. He seems to have disappeared from public view, and it will be unsurprising if an investigation against him is announced soon.

The only other named attendee, and the only Tibetan in that meeting, is Che Dralha. Soon after his transfer to the TAR from Dechen (Diqing) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan in 2017 observers noted indications that Chinese authorities were promoting him for possible token Tibetan representation as a senior leader at the national level. However, in October 2021 he was unexpectedly transferred to serve as a vice chair of a committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC). It might not be a coincidence that Wu was also transferred from Lhasa to be a vice chair of another committee of the NPC. It may be the case that Wu and Che Dralha were already being scrutinized by the Party.

Available information indicates that CBD has been involved in funding projects in the TAR for years. It has a branch in Lhasa that opened in 2011, and according to a recruitment announcement, it “closely focuses on serving the Party’s Tibet governance strategy in the new era, gives full play to the advantages of medium- and long-term investment and financing of development finance and comprehensive financial services, takes root in the snow-covered plateau, serves the construction of the border, vigorously supports infrastructure construction, energy and transportation, ecological protection, rural revitalization, improvement of people’s livelihood and characteristic and advantageous industries, and serves

the long-term stability and high-quality development of Tibet.”

In 2013 CDB announced that it was investing 50 billion yuan (around US \$ 7 billion) of financing to support TAR economic and social development from 2013 to 2020. In 2018, CDB announced that it was investing 60 billion yuan (around US \$8 billion).

Wu has spent most of his professional career working in TAR, having worked there nearly 50 years (from 1974 to 2021). In August 2016, he became TAR party secretary before being shunted to Beijing in October 2021. Interestingly, on Dec. 9, 2022 the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), announced that Wu was among 40 individuals and entities that are being sanctioned for their connection to corruption or human rights abuse across nine countries.

Will Che Dralha face investigation?

A Tibetan source in exile with contacts in Lhasa said that when hearing about the investigation into Wu Yingjie in June, some people there asked why Che Dralha was not being investigated.

There may be some basis for this speculation. Che Dralha and Wu worked together in Lhasa from 2017 to October 2021, and the announcement of their transfer from Lhasa was made on the same day, indicating a likely connection. The fact that he did not appear anywhere during the 20th Party Congress and did not make the jump to national leadership despite previous years of active promotion by the Party may be another indication.

Also, in January 2024 Zhang Yongze, who was vice chairman of TAR when Che Dralha was the chairman, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for bribery. According to Chinese state media, he been indicted earlier on charges of taking bribes of about 51.8 million yuan (US \$7 million). Similarly, on January 29, 2024, investigation against another TAR vice chair, Wang Yong, was announced and in March he was dismissed from his position in Tibet.

Conclusion

It may be some time before there are conclusive answers about Wu’s actions and those of the other members of this circle.

The established facts, however, are indicative of the nature of Chinese rule in Tibet. The absence of a free press, freedom of speech, and an independent judiciary have created the conditions for massive, endemic corruption that includes China’s highest leaders in Tibet. Xi’s anti-corruption campaign may remove some of these officials from power, but it has not addressed the broader factors that gave rise their corruption in the first place. It seems unlikely that many leading officials, from the lowest level to the highest, could survive any level of scrutiny into their actions.

There is an awareness in Tibet of widespread corruption in Chinese officialdom and the Chinese Communist Party. Chinese authorities do not take kindly to outside attempts to curb this corruption, however; see the case of Sengdra, a Tibetan township chief who spent more than a year in prison for raising questions about government corruption.

If Xi is truly concerned about corruption in Tibet, allowing Tibetans to speak freely about the abuses of CCP officials in Tibet is a better solution than fostering an environment of corruption and then haphazardly pursuing some of the officials within it.

Xi Jinping exposes China's hypocrisy with Panchsheel fakery

01 July 2024, [India Today](#), Yudhajit Shankar Das

China celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, or Panchsheel Agreement, first signed with India. As Chinese President Xi Jinping heaped praises on Panchsheel, it exposed China's hypocrisy of celebrating the anniversary of the principles that it continues to trample on with impunity.

China commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which is known in India as Panchsheel and a cornerstone of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a world order. In marking the anniversary and heaping praise on Panchsheel, China and its President, Xi Jinping, revealed their hypocrisy. There's a reason why China is talking about Panchsheel now, an agreement that it trampled upon with its war against India in 1962.

It is to increase its influence on the global south that China is parroting the Five Principles of Peaceful Existence. It signed the first agreement with India in 1954.

However, unlike the 60th anniversary celebrations in 2014, India officially stayed away from the Panchsheel ceremony in China this year.

National strategy experts have called out China's fakery in commemorating the Panchsheel anniversary. They pointed out that the commemoration is ironic because China itself has "flagrantly violated all the Panchsheel principles".

The first of the Panchsheel principles is mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. China has, from the very beginning, blatantly flouted that.

Experts also pointed out how China still continues to violate these principles with its continuing territorial claims and massing of troops along the border.

PANCHSHEEL, ONE OF BIGGEST BLUNDERS, SAY EXPERTS

The Panchsheel Agreement, signed on April 29, 1954, is formerly known as The Agreement on Trade and Intercourse with Tibet Region. It was signed by the Indian envoy to Beijing, N Raghavan, and the Chinese Foreign Minister, Zhang Han-Fu.

It gave major concessions to the Chinese side, and ended up trading Tibet's independence, which made India share immediate borders with China.

There has been vehement opposition to the agreement in India since the very beginning.

"Born in sin" is how Congress leader Acharya Kriplani described the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954. Kriplani said during a debate in the Lok Sabha in 1959 that with the Panchsheel, India "put the seal of our approval on the destruction of an ancient nation [Tibet]".

Kriplani's criticism came years before the Chinese thrust upon a war on unprepared India.

"The 1954 Panchsheel Agreement represented one of India's biggest post-Independence blunders," said geostrategist Brahma Chellaney, while commenting on China marking the Panchsheel anniversary.

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday (June 29) highlighted the significance of the Panchsheel Agreement in resolving current global conflicts as he sought to expand influence in the Global South amid its tussle with the West.

"The Five Principles have set a historic benchmark for international relations and international rule of law," said Xi.

EXPERTS CALL OUT CHINA'S, XI'S PANCHSHEEL FAKERY
"It is scarcely a surprise that Xi heaps praise on the five principles ("Panchsheel") of peaceful coexistence... What Xi did not say is that, just about eight years later, China, by invading India in 1962, flagrantly violated all the Panchsheel Principles," wrote Brahma Chellaney on X.

"Worse still, China continues to violate those principles in its relations with its neighbours," added Chellaney.

It isn't just with India, China has territorial disputes with several neighbours.

Recently, Chinese military personnel rammed two Philippine navy boats, boarded them and used axes, spears, machetes and hammers to damage the boats.

The Chinese aggression in a disputed area of the South China Sea seemed similar to China's Galwan Valley attack of June 2020, and Indians called it "Galwan 2.0 in the South China Sea".

A post by Sudheendra Kulkarni, columnist and an official of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's PMO, on him attending the Panchsheel anniversary celebration in Beijing irked several experts.

"Panchsheel principles were supposed to be the bedrock of India-China ties following India's acceptance of Tibet as part of China, a massive political concession India made to China in the interest

of peaceful relations," said Kanwal Sibal, former foreign secretary of India.

"China totally violated these principles in 1962 and continues to violate them with continuing territorial claims on India and military pressures on the border," Sibal wrote on X, reacting to Kulkarni's post.

"Is massing of 50,000 troops by each side on the border consistent with Panch Sheel principles?" asked Sibal, a career diplomat.

Against this backdrop, Kanwal Sibal said it was appropriate that India didn't attend the celebrations in Beijing.

"India's presence at this self-serving Chinese propagandist show would be endorsing China's adherence to these principles in India-China ties and Chinese conduct elsewhere," he said. "We would be making a political fool of ourselves as a country," he added.

CHINA'S PANCSHEEL MOVE STRATEGIC

There's a reason why China is showing its affinity to the Panchsheel.

Chinese President Xi invoked the Five Principles and linked them to his Global Security Initiative, saying it aims for "joint security and a shared future for humanity".

Xi has been promoting various initiatives, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), to expand China's global influence.

However, it is a hogwash that doesn't need much effort to be deciphered.

China has trampled upon all five of the Panchsheel principles and continues to violate them in its dealings with its neighbours. Therefore, marking the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles is plain Chinese fakery, which was exposed by President Xi as he heaped praises on the Panchsheel Agreement, while working against its spirit.

China's Communist Party on track for 100 million members by year's end

01 July 2024, [SCMP](#), Phoebe Zhang

Membership of the Chinese Communist Party reached 99 million last year and is on track to reach 100 million by the end of 2024, but the rate of growth continues to slow, according to the latest official tally.

In line with tradition, the data was released a day ahead of the July 1 celebrations to honour the party's founding in 1921.

The Central Organisation Department – the party's top personnel office – reported a net increase of 1.14 million members, a 1.2 per cent growth, compared with the end of 2022 when party membership rose by 1.4 per cent, increasing by 1.32 million.

Chinese President Xi Jinping – who is also the party's general secretary – extended greetings to party

members across the country on Friday, in advance of the 103rd anniversary, at a Politburo study session.

Xi stressed that "comprehensive and strict governance over the party" must be upheld, to push forward party-building in the new era, and its organisation needs to be effective, insisting on a centralised and united leadership.

Grass roots party organisations also need to be reformed, to increase the party's local governance ability, he said. Internet and information technologies should be applied to party-building, to achieve full coverage of the organisation, online and offline.

A closer look at the tally shows that the number of members aged under 30 dropped to 12.41 million – a 0.18 per cent decrease of 23,000 on 2022. The drop was much slower than the previous year, when young membership fell by 1.5 per cent, or 189,000 from 2021.

The party has become more educated, with 56.2 per cent – 55.78 million members – having a college degree or higher, an increase of 2.13 million. While women and ethnic minority groups remain under-represented, there have been improvements.

Female members increased by 88,300 to reach 30.18 million – 30.4 per cent of the membership – while ethnic minority groups now represent 7.7 per cent of the party, with a rise of 14,700 in 2023 to a total of 7.59 million, the data showed.

Xi has used various domestic and international settings over the years to stress the importance of female issues and called for women's rights and interests to be protected.

At a United Nations meeting in 2020 marking the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women for example, he said efforts must be made to ensure that women's development went hand in hand with economic and social development.

And in October last year, at a meeting with the All-China Women's Federation, Xi said women's roles were "irreplaceable" and called for more female participation in areas including high-quality development and village revitalisation.

Despite leadership support for economic and social empowerment, female participation in China's elite politics is lagging. In a break from a two-decade tradition, the current Politburo has 24 men and no women.

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

Job losses, protests present difficulties for Chinese Communist Party

27 July 2024, [VOA](#)

Job losses and wage cuts from China's economic downturn are hitting key industries, according to the South China Morning Post, and analysts say the situation could lead to political difficulties for the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Rights groups say the situation has triggered a sharp increase in protests and strikes around the country – not enough to threaten the rule of the CCP or President Xi Jinping, but enough that an analyst sees a "hidden danger" for Chinese authorities unless they can rejuvenate the economy.

Mr. Wang, in his early 40s, lives in Bao'an District, Shenzhen, in southern China. He was formerly employed at a well-known business travel platform but was laid off earlier this year. He prefers not to disclose his full name or the company's name due to the matter's sensitivity.

Wang tells VOA, "In the area of business travel software, our company is at the forefront of China in terms of R&D and sales, and it is also one of the top 500 private enterprises in China. But now many companies have run out of money, our sales have plummeted, and the layoffs finally fell on our group of old employees."

He compares China's economic slowdown to a high-speed train suddenly hitting the brakes, and everyone on the train hitting the ground, even those better-off, like himself.

China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate has been dropping since hitting 10.6% in 2010, well before the COVID pandemic, which cut growth to 2.2% in 2020, according to the World Bank.

The global lender says growth bounced back to 8.4% in 2021 but then fell to 3% in 2022 before a moderate recovery to 5.2% in 2023. The World Bank expects China's growth rate to drop back below 5% this year.

Several Chinese workers VOA talked with said they were unprepared for the economy to slow so quickly.

Two large IT companies laid off Mr. Liu in Guangzhou in the past two years, and his life has turned gloomy. He also prefers not to disclose his full name due to the matter's sensitivity. Still struggling to find a job, Liu has a second child, and his wife was diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer.

"When I was laid off for the first time, I got decent severance pay because I had worked there for a long time," says Liu. "Later, when I came to a large company, I was laid off again, and I felt that I was quite unlucky. Fortunately, we don't have too much debt."

According to *South Morning China Post's* (SCMP) July analysis of the annual reports of 23 top Chinese companies, 14 of them carried out large layoffs in

2023, with technology and real estate companies among the worst hit amid a glut of empty buildings.

The online newspaper reports that one company, Poly Real Estate, laid off 16.3% of its workforce in the past year, or 11,000 people; Greenland Holdings, a Shanghai-based real estate company, also saw a 14.5% drop in the number of its employees.

The SCMP reports online retail giant Alibaba cut 12.8% of its workforce, or about 20,000 jobs, in the 2023 fiscal year, while technology conglomerate Tencent's headcount fell 2.8% in 2023 to about 3,000, and in the first quarter of 2024, the company laid off another 630 people.

In addition, Chinese internet tech firms ByteDance, JD.com, Kuaishou, Didi Chuxing, Bilibili and Weibo have all conducted layoffs this year.

China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) is painting a rosier picture this month, calling employment and the national economy "generally stable" and citing "steady progress." In June, it showed only a 0.2% drop in urban jobs compared with the same period last year.

The NBS also claimed China's lowest youth unemployment rate this year, 13.2%, after it removed students from the calculation. The new methodology was introduced after China hit a record high 21.3% youth unemployment in June 2023, prompting authorities to suspend publication of the statistic.

Chen Yingxuan, a policy analyst at the Taiwan Institute of National Defense and Security Studies who specializes in Chinese unemployment, tells VOA that Beijing's job worries have shifted from fresh graduates and the working class to middle class and senior managers.

She says many have faced salary cuts or layoffs to reduce costs and increase efficiency as China struggles with a weak housing market, sluggish consumption, high government debt, foreign investment withdrawals, and trade barriers.

Even people with relatively stable incomes, such as workers at state-owned enterprises, are feeling the pinch.

Ms. Zhang, who works for a state-owned commercial bank in Guangzhou and prefers not to disclose her full name due to the matter's sensitivity, says many bank employees are seeing paychecks shrink.

"State owned banks such as China Construction Bank and Agricultural Bank of China, or joint-stock banks, are now cutting salaries, let alone urban commercial banks in many places," she tells VOA. "Salary cuts already started last year, and it seems to be worse this year."

She projects the cuts will be 20% to 30% by the end of the year.

In July, China's 31 provincial-level administrative regions issued regulations calling for party and government organs to "live a tight life," focusing on budget cuts and reductions in public spending.

Analysts say further job and wage cuts could lead to intensified protests and strikes, leading to greater instability.

Rights group China Labor Bulletin (CLB) in 2023 counted 1,794 strike incidents in China, more than double the number in 2022.

In the past six months alone, the group documented about 1,200 incidents in protest of the wage cuts, unpaid wages, unforeseen layoffs, and unfair compensation, a more than 50% increase from the same period in 2023.

CLB estimates "only 5% to 10% of all collective actions of workers have been recorded," suggesting many more protests are taking place.

But Chen of the Taiwan Institute of National Defense and Security Studies says the wage cuts and unemployment have not yet been severe enough to spark large-scale protests that threaten the power of the ruling party or President Xi.

"Although there has been an increase in protests, they are still relatively sporadic. There are no large-scale incidents, and local governments can easily quell them," she says. "So, for the legitimacy of the CCP and Xi's third term, it is more of a hidden danger than an imminent crisis."

While protests in China are usually by working class people, Wang notes the economic pain is spreading to other, more influential groups.

"Whether for blue-collar, white-collar, or even gold-collar workers, the economic losses are now very large," says Wang. "The worse the economy and the more emergencies there are, the more the CCP will suppress it with high pressure. It's a vicious circle, where people suffer more, and stability is more costly."

Meanwhile, analysts say Chinese authorities are struggling to come up with a plan to reverse the unemployment and wage cutting trend.

The communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, released on July 18, mentioned employment only once, saying "it is necessary to improve the income distribution system and the employment priority policy."

Rights group urges forced labour investigation, especially in mining industry, in Tibet

23 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China is using its so-called "rural surplus labour transfer" policy, sometimes carried out under a broader regime policy of "poverty alleviation through labour transfer", to potentially subject Tibetan farmers and herders to forced labour. And the risk of forced labour is rising in Tibet, specifically in its mining industry, as China's hunger for the territory's rich

resources, especially those related to the renewable energy sector and the 'green energy transition', keeps growing, said a new report by New York-based Human Rights Foundation posted on its *hrf.org* website Jul 22. The report said available information taken from official sources and published reports warrant independent investigations of the true situation there. China's claim is that by facilitating the transition of workers in subsistence industries, such as herding and farming, to sectors with more "profitable" jobs, such as mining, the regime can grow key industrial sectors while also providing jobs to workers who are at risk of being "left behind" in Tibet's economic growth. While this is ostensibly meant to promote societal progress, the industrialization of Tibetan lands and recruitment of local communities also disrupt traditional Tibetan livelihoods and raise questions about the extent to which Tibetans freely participate in the recruitment process, the report said.

It pointed out that this forced resettlement and sedentarization makes formerly self-sufficient farmers and nomads dependent on the regime's markets and social support programmes to survive, hindering their customary way of life.

Due to China's imposition of especially tight ban on access to Tibet, direct evidence, including testimonies, cannot be obtained. Nevertheless, certain parallels can be drawn between Tibet and the Uyghur Region in terms of policy terminology and implementation. The rural surplus labour transfer policies of Tibet contain the same key phrases (*tifa*) as those in the Uyghur Region, the report pointed out.

"*Tifa*" are CCP-approved terms that are euphemisms for specific and often sinister policies, and function like codewords. They refer to various, strictly-defined policies, and it is mandatory for regime officials to use *tifa* whenever discussing such policies and their implementation, to ensure total conformity in policy implementation. In both Tibet and the Uyghur Region, *tifa* for rural surplus labour transfer include language, such as "labour absorption", "surplus rural labour transfer", "labour export", "transfer employment", and other such phrases, the report noted.

Besides, both in Xinjiang and Tibet, employment is arranged by the state and local cadres go from door to door to recruit villagers, making the process strongly likely to be coercive in nature.

The report cited two case studies in Tibet.

Zijin Mining Group Ltd., a state-owned Chinese company that mines gold, lithium, and copper, own two mines in Tibet. It was previously linked to forced labour practices in Xinjiang. It owns and runs the Julong Copper Mine, and the Lakkor Tso lithium mine in Tibet. Julong is one of the largest copper mines owned by China and is expected to operate until 2067, the report noted.

The report said an Apr 2023 article published by state media described how Julong, along with another mining company (Tibet Huatailong) and the Chikang Village Party Committee, engaged in trainings and that "labourers were exported".

Besides, in 2018, Julong Mine exported 38 labourers, according to Menba Township's 2018 poverty alleviation objective. This document mentioned that such labour export was done with the support of Maizhokunggar (Tibetan: Maldrogungkar) County's government and the human resources and social security bureaus, the report said.

The second case study is on China Gold International Resources, a mining company based in Canada and owned by China. It is the parent company of Tibet Huatailong, which owns and operates Jiama mine, one of the biggest copper-gold polymetallic mines in Tibet. The parent company was stated to have cited in its 2018 Annual Report Tibet Huatailong's employment of 377 Tibetans as a case study of how the company "has absorbed and arranged" employment of local Tibetan farmers and herders – echoing the *tifa* associated with labour transfer programmes.

Indeed, Tibet Huatailong was stated to have engaged in this example of possible labour transfer in accordance with a government poverty alleviation scheme as outlined in the Lhasa City government's Thirteenth Five-Year Plan Characteristic Industry Development Plan (2017). In another instance, Tibet Huatailong was stated to have spoken of having "absorbed" 435 farmers and herdsmen by 2020 – the word "absorb" being a key indicator that this employment may have been implemented as part of a labour transfer programme.

A strong indication that forced labour is being implemented in Tibet could be seen from the fact that a Jan 2023 Chinese law applying to the entire Tibetan Autonomous Region states that if Tibetans refuse to accept state-arranged employment three times, the regime will reduce or suspend subsistence allowances on which many Tibetans have come to depend for survival. This financial penalty, though not directly mentioned in rural labour transfer policies, should be examined as an additional potential risk factor for state-imposed coercive labour conditions in Tibet, the report said.

Other mines based in Tibet should also be investigated, such as the Luobusa chromite mine. This mine's parent company, Tibet Mining, published a 2020 Social Responsibility Report which explicitly admits to concentrating "surplus labour" and engaging in the "relocation" of households in Qamdo in the context of governmental poverty alleviation laws. Tibet Mining's own parent company, Baowu, also describes Tibet Mining as engaging in labour transfer and has even been linked to forced labour in the Uyghur Region, the report noted.

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

China's defence spending dwarfs rest of Asia combined, likely to be close to US

20 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China's economic growth may have hit a stubborn roadblock since hitting the Covid-19 pandemic brakes in 2020. Nevertheless, the country spent more on defence than the rest of Asia combined last year as President Xi Jinping progressed toward his goal of building a military to rival the United States, noted *newsweek.com* Jul 19, citing a peace research report. This is based on estimates released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in an April report, which compared China's military budget with the continent's next eight-largest defence spenders.

China is now stated to boast more warships than the US and to be rapidly building its stockpiles of nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles.

SIPRI's estimate is reported to show that China's military spending totalled nearly \$296.4 billion in 2023, more than three times the defence budget of the second-largest spender in the region, India, at \$83.6 billion. The two countries have been in a border standoff across eastern Ladakh since mid-2020.

The other 'big' spenders in Asia are stated to be Japan (\$50.2 billion), South Korea (\$47.2 billion), Taiwan (\$16.6 billion), Singapore (\$13.2 billion), Indonesia (\$9.5 billion), Thailand (\$5.8 billion) and the Philippines (\$5.5 billion).

China also lays claim over more than 90% of the South China Sea maritime territory, riding roughshod over international law-based rights of other countries. Besides, it engages in grey zone warfare tactics against Taiwan, which it has vowed to annex, including by naked armed invasion if necessary.

The report notes that during a session of its rubber-stamp parliament in March, China announced a 7.2% increase in its defence budget for the year, bringing it to \$236.1 billion .

But the country's actual defence spending is believed to be far higher than its as well as SIPRI reports. In fact, the Washington, DC-based American Enterprise Institute (AEI) has estimated, accounting for unreported expenditures, that China's 2022 military budget was about \$711 billion, nearly equal to that of the US.

Xiao Liang, a researcher for SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme, has said in the institute's report, "China is directing much of its growing military budget to boost the combat readiness of the People's Liberation Army."

SIPRI generally considers national data accurate unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary. Estimates are made when official data does not align with SIPRI's definition or lacks consistent time series coverage, the report said.

Beijing promises joint facility, but builds full army base in Tajikistan

16 July 2024, [The Economic Times](#), Dipankan Roy Chaudhury

New Delhi: China may have duped Tajikistan by establishing a full-scale military base instead of a joint counter-terror facility in collaboration with the host's interior ministry as originally planned.

As reports emerged alleging that China has created a full-scale military base in the Central Asian country bordering Afghanistan, both China and Tajikistan recently denied the existence of a secret military base near Tajik-Afghan border.

However, ET has learnt that the Chinese military base, located in a remote mountainous area at an altitude of 13,000 feet, includes observation towers and hosts troops from China.

The purported counter-terror base was built following developments in Afghanistan and the agreement for the same may have been signed in 2021, sources said. Both Russia and India have big stakes in Tajikistan. Any Chinese military facility in Central Asia, particularly in Tajikistan close to the Afghan border and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), is a matter of concern for India as well as Russia.

While Russia has retained a military base in Tajikistan, India has worked closely with the country in the past to address terror threats in the region.

India operated out of Ayni air base in Tajikistan (near capital Dushanbe) and even deployed Sukhois, but later this facility was wound up. Between 2002 and 2010, India spent nearly \$70 million to renovate the air base, extending the runway to 3,200 metres and installing state-of-the-art navigational and air defence equipment.

During the Cold War, Ayni served as a major base for the Soviet military in the region.

President Xi Jinping purges PLA generals in massive military overhaul

14 July 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Shishir Gupta

As per a list of officers facing purges in China compiled by HT through open-source intelligence, close to 52 top generals have faced the axe since 2014.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has been on a strident campaign to rid the country's armed forces of corruption and has powered through with major military reforms.

Since he took over as powerful general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on November 15, 2012, and as the chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), Xi has conducted large-scale purges in the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA). In this period, he fired two defence ministers and at least two

vice chairmen of CMC, in addition to a large number of top officers on grounds of corruption, inefficiency, political rivalry and for resisting reforms in the PLA.

On June 19, addressing a political-military conference at Yanan, Jinping acknowledged that there were "deep-seated problems" in the Chinese military's politics, ideology, work style and discipline. He was quoted by state-run CCTV saying, "There must be no hiding place for corrupt elements in the army."

Another list compiled by HT shows that no less than 65 top PLA officers/ commissars/ commanders/ directors have been purged since 2012, with eight other generals being investigated for corruption and allied charges but not punished.

In fact, a report published in PLA daily in 2015 showed that in just two years, since 2013, 4,024 officers of the rank of Lt Colonel and above, including 82 generals, were the subject of anti-corruption inquiries. As a result of which 21 commanders and 144 officers were demoted and at least 77 were reprimanded.

Generals like Xu Caihou, who was vice chairman of CMC, was expelled from the party in June 2014 on charges of corruption but the charges were dropped after he passed away in March 2015. Another vice chairman Gen Guo Boxiong was purged by chairman Xi in July 2015.

Defence ministers Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu were expelled from the Communist Party on charges of accepting gifts and facilitating benefits.

According to China watchers in India, the likely reason for purges in PLA, PLA Navy, Air Force or Rocket Forces is that during President Xi's first term, officers close to or appointed by the previous Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao administrations were at higher echelons of PLA leadership – a position that meant they could exercise influence even after their political mentors went out of power – and that it was to check this that Xi replaced them.

Another key reason for the purge, they said, was the widespread rampant corruption in the PLA as viewed by Xi when he took over as chairman of CMC. In December 2012, Xi emphatically claimed that the PLA should be absolutely loyal to the party, absolutely clean and absolutely reliable. At the first meeting of the CMC under his leadership, Xi stated that the Chinese military, which controls the guns, cannot be a hiding place for corrupt figures.

The third reason for the purge, they added, was the inefficiency and opposition of top commanders to Xi's modernisation and mechanisation of the PLA.

With Xi determined to make PLA a world-class military rivalling the American armed forces, a large number of generals who were proving to be a hindrance or had performance deemed not up to the mark were fired by paramount leader Xi.

China redefining air power with huge stealth fighter rollout

10 July 2024, [Asia Times](#), Gabriel Honrada

J-31B and J-20 fighters will boost carrier aviation, long-range maritime strike and deep penetration capabilities vis-a-vis US and India

China is on a roll with its rapid deployment of advanced fifth-generation fighters, potentially revolutionizing its airpower versus potential adversaries such as the US and India.

This month, Nikkei reported that China's new stealth combat aircraft, the J-31B, is expected to be deployed on its third aircraft carrier, the Fujian. Nikkei mentions that the fifth-generation fighter jet, revealed by Shenyang Aircraft Industry Group in late June, is designed for aircraft carrier use and will enhance the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) air and sea strategies. The report says that the J-31B, which is more challenging to detect by radars and capable of coordinating with drones, is a significant upgrade from the current fourth-generation Shenyang J-15.

It says that the Fujian, China's largest aircraft carrier, is equipped with an electromagnetic catapult, allowing jets to carry more fuel and weapons, thus expanding their operational area and combat capabilities.

Nikkei notes that the J-31B is seen as a competitor to the US F-35 Lightning II and is part of China's ongoing efforts to increase its deployment of fifth-generation fighter jets, including the Chengdu J-20.

Janes reported last month that the PLA Air Force (PLA-AF) has significantly bolstered its fleet with the advanced Chengdu J-20 "Mighty Dragon" fifth-generation stealth fighters. Janes says that over 11 months leading up to July 2023, the PLA-AF incorporated over 70 J-20s, bringing the total to approximately 195 aircraft.

It notes that this expansion has enabled the replacement of older fourth-generation fighters like the Shenyang J-11s and Sukhoi Su-27SK/UKBs across multiple air brigades. The report also says that as of May 2024, the PLA-AF operated 12 air brigades equipped with J-20s, with three fully outfitted with the stealth fighter.

Jane's notes that the J-20's enhanced capabilities, such as airborne early warning and control (AEW&C), underscore its growing importance within the PLA-AF. The Janes report points out that China's strategic deployment of the J-20s aligns with its objective to concurrently strengthen its five theater commands. It says recent satellite imagery indicates the presence of J-20s in the Eastern, Western, and Southern Theater Commands, with the Eastern Theater Command conducting aerial operations around Taiwan and projecting air power over the East China Sea.

Janes also notes that the increasing presence of J-20s near India, as observed at Shigatse Peace Airport in Tibet, suggests a strategic shift in China's military posture.

The J-31B may replace China's carrier aviation workhorse, the J-15. In November 2022, Asia Times pointed out that Chinese media have derisively referred to the aircraft as a "flopping fish" because of its minimal range and weapons payload.

The J-15's flight tests on the ski-ramp carrier Liaoning have shown that it can only travel up to 120 kilometers from the carrier when carrying heavy weapons. Additionally, if the J-15 is loaded with fuel, it can only carry up to 2 tons of weapons, even though its capacity is 12 tons.

The design of the Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carriers' ski ramps presents a significant challenge for launching aircraft weighing over 26 tons unless the aircraft has more powerful engines. Implementing the electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) on China's third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, may allow it to use newer aircraft types such as the J-31B.

On capability, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) mentioned this month that in addition to stealth, the J-31B features weapons bays on both sides, noting that such a feature could significantly increase its combat capabilities.

SCMP says that each weapons bay can carry two missiles, distinguishing the J-31B from the US F-22 and China's J-20, which have side weapon bays but can carry only one missile in each. It notes that the J-31B's added weapons payload can increase its combat capabilities in close-range fighting.

As for armaments, Brandon Weichert notes in an article this month for The National Interest (TNI) that the J-31B has an active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, an electro-optical targeting system and a helmet-mounted display system.

Weichert mentions that the J-31B can carry an assortment of munitions, such as the PL-10 and PL-15 air-to-air missiles (AAM), various guided bombs, and air-to-ground missiles (AGM). He says that while many dispute China's claims about the J-31B, the aircraft may be a decent counterpart to the US F-35.

As for the J-20, a February 2017 China Power report says that opinions vary about the J-20's role, ranging from the aircraft being a long-range interceptor for aerial engagements to a long-range strike aircraft designed to penetrate enemy air defenses and destroy critical infrastructure.

The report says that the J-20 could target intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft and aerial tankers with long-range AAMs in an interceptor role. In a strike role, it says that possible targets could include airfields, command centers, and other military installations.

Furthermore, the report says that the J-20's stealth and range could enable it to threaten US warships and that J-20s in a maritime strike role may be a more significant threat than short-range air superiority fighters.

Newsweek mentioned in an article last month that China's deployment of J-20 fighters at Shigatse and H-6 bombers at Hotan in the Taklamakan Desert raises the threat to India in its Sikkim-Arunachal Pradesh region.

While the Newsweek report says that India's S-400 surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and Rafale fighters can challenge China's J-20, the J-20's stealth capabilities must be factored into its air threat wargames.

Despite China's advances in fifth-generation fighters, such developments may be overrated while China may still face significant challenges in developing such sophisticated aircraft.

Owen Sirrs says in a 2020 Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs article that as political regimes may flaunt sophisticated military equipment for prestige reasons, China is no exception and that alarmist conclusions about the J-31B should not be drawn from limited glimpses at a distance.

Sirrs says that while China has made significant strides in fighter aircraft design, it is still behind in critical technologies such as jet engines.

In line with that analysis, Alex Hollings says in a February 2024 TNI article that a stealth fighter's performance relies heavily on its engine's power, and only the US can build high-end jet engines in quantities enough to equip a high-end fighter fleet.

Hollings notes that while China and Russia are fielding new jet engines such as the WS-15 and AL-51, new US technologies like adaptive cycle engines with advanced composites and ceramics may maintain the US's lead in jet engine production.

Sirrs also points out that a modern fighter integrates avionics, weapons systems, electronic countermeasures, radar, and other systems, not just one piece of cutting-edge technology.

Lastly, Sirrs says that China's J-20 and J-31B may face obsolescence problems as they employ technology developed by the US more than two decades ago. He adds that advances in aviation technology, such as sensors and combat drones, could render China's stealth fighters obsolete in a war scenario.

Satellite images show China's new bunker near Pangong Lake in eastern Ladakh

10 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

The situation at Indo-Tibetan border near Ladakh may escalate after China reportedly constructed extensive underground bunkers and hardened shelters at a crucial base, according to satellite images by BlackSky,

a US-based firm. These images show Chinese military build-up at Sirjap, an area claimed by India, located over 120 km southeast of the Galwan Valley, the site of a brutal skirmish in June 2020.



Satellite images by BlackSky reveal China's extensive military build-up near Pangong Lake (Photo/Hindustan Times)

The satellite images show China's preparation for a long-term presence with eight sloping entrances to large underground bunkers and five entrances to smaller bunkers intended for ammunition and fuel storage. Additionally, hardened shelters for armoured vehicles have been established at Sirjap Post, which serves as a headquarters, just 5 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at the Indo-Tibet border.

There has been no immediate response from New Delhi or Indian officials regarding the images. A former Indian Army commander who served in the Pangong Lake region, speaking anonymously to *Hindustan Times*, remarked, "In today's battlefield, everything can be pinpointed using satellites or aerial surveillance platforms. We have no such underground shelters on our side. Tunnelling is the only way out to create better defences."

"Without underground shelters, weapons and stores are sitting ducks for air strikes with precision-guided munitions. The Chinese are pioneers in tunnelling activities and no hi-tech is required for these structures, just civil engineering skills and funds. Otherwise, we have to invest in more air defence equipment," he added.

The developments at Pangong Lake have emerged at a time when, before the start of the standoff on the LAC in May 2020, this region was almost completely devoid of human habitation. However, India has since constructed roads, bridges, tunnels, airfields, and helipads for military logistics. India's Border Roads Organisation (BRO) completed 125 infrastructure projects worth Rs. 3,611 crore in 2023-24.

The activity at Pangong Lake coincides with increased Chinese operations at the Shigatse airbase in Tibet on May 30. Satellite images from that period showed six J-20 and eight J-10 jets at the Shigatse airbase. Shigatse airbase is 300 km from India's Hasimara base, which hosts Rafale jets. Analysts believe China's J-20 deployment aims to counter the Indian Air Force's

(IAF) Rafales, among the most advanced aircraft in the IAF's arsenal.

Exclusive: India races to build power plants in region claimed by China

09 July 2024, [Reuters](#)

India plans to spend \$1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in the northeastern Himalayan state of Arunachal Pradesh, two government sources said, a move that could raise tensions with China that lays claims to the region.

The federal finance ministry under Nirmala Sitharaman recently approved up to 7.5 billion rupees (\$89.85 million) in financial assistance to each hydropower project in the northeastern region, the sources said.

Under the scheme, about 90 billion rupees will likely be allotted for the 12 hydropower projects in Arunachal Pradesh, said the sources, who have direct knowledge of the matter.

The scheme is likely to support northeastern states and help them finance equity holdings in the projects they host. Having state governments on board generally helps in expediting regulatory clearances, locals rehabilitation and negotiations on sharing electricity with the host state.

The plans for the hydropower stations are expected to be announced in the 2024/2025 federal budget that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government will unveil on July 23, the sources said, declining to be named as the information remained confidential.

The Indian finance and power ministries and China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Last August, the government awarded contracts to state-run firms NHPC (NHPC.NS), opens new tab, SJVNL (SJV.NS), opens new tab and NEEPCO for the construction of the 11.5-gigawatt-capacity plants entailing an estimated investment of \$11 billion, as part of a broader project to develop infrastructure in the border region.

None of the companies responded to a request for comments.

These power plants were earlier enlisted with private sector firms, but remained non-starters due to various reasons.

India has built less than 15-gigawatt hydropower plants in the last 20 years, while installations of new coal and other renewable sources of energy were nearly 10 times of the new hydropower projects.

India and China share a 2,500 km (1553.43 mile) largely un-demarcated border, over which they fought a war in 1962.

India says Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the country, but China claims it is a part of southern Tibet,

and has objected to other Indian infrastructure projects there.

The Indian government is pushing projects in the eastern region following reports that Beijing could construct dams on a section of the Brahmaputra river, known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in China, that flows from Tibet through Arunachal Pradesh.

India is concerned that Chinese projects in the region could trigger flash floods or create water scarcity.

Both countries are working to improve infrastructure along their border regions since clashes in western Himalayas left 20 Indian and at least four Chinese troops dead in 2020.

Last week, India Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Kazakhstan where the two agreed to step up talks to resolve issues along their border.

(\$1 = 83.4710 Indian rupees)

China's military sends troops to Laos for 2-week joint military drills

09 July 2024, [RFA](#)

Chinese troops have arrived in Laos for a two-week exercise with the Lao military on the outskirts of Vientiane, just weeks after a similar training in Cambodia that's part of a push by Beijing to strengthen ties with Southeast Asian countries.

Some 300 Chinese troops and about 900 Lao military personnel are participating in the Laos-China Friendship Shield-2024 exercise, which began on July 5, according to Lt. Col. Santi Chanthalangson, who directs training for Laos' armed forces.

Most of the Chinese participants and military equipment arrived on the newly constructed Laos-China railway, which was funded mostly through loans from Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.

"Participants will focus on technical cooperation and how to use armed vehicles and weapons," Santi Chanthalangson told local media on July 5.

"The Chinese side might have weapons and experiences that can be shared with us," he said. "The drill will help strengthen our military ties, organize and modernize our armed forces."

The exercises at the Kommdam Military Academy will last until July 18, he said.

'China's backyard'

The two militaries also held exercises in May 2023, when they trained for a joint attack on transnational armed crime syndicates operating in a mountain jungle environment.

Laos also participated in military exercises in China's Guangdong province last November that included the militaries from Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Laos' dire economic conditions and its large national debt – most of which is owed to China – means that it realistically can't hold military exercises with anyone else, according to Prof. Adisorn Semyaem, a researcher on Lao studies at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University. "The drill could affect its ties with Vietnam. It won't be easy for Laos. Laos and Vietnam share the same border," he said. "But Laos is also in China's backyard." China has been seeking closer military-to-military cooperation with its regional neighbors to respond to what it calls "interference" from the United States and its allies.



Soldiers unload military vehicles at Phonhong Railway Station in Laos' Vientiane province on July 2, 2024. (Yi Ding/Xinhua via Getty Images)

The United States conducts annual war games in Indonesia and Thailand, and in April it held a large-scale drill with its mutual defense treaty partner, the Philippines.

In May, Chinese troops went to Sihanoukville in Cambodia to take part in the largest ever bilateral military exercise between those two countries.

Chinese warships have also been spotted since December at a new Chinese-built pier at Cambodia's Ream Naval Base. Cambodia has repeatedly denied that China is being given exclusive military access to the base.

The First Electrified Railway in Tibet: Achievements and Prospects

07 July 2024, [Railway Supply](#)

The commissioning of the first electrified railway in the Tibet Autonomous Region in southwestern China has become a significant event for both the region and the entire country, this is reported by the railway transport news portal Railway Supply.

Three years since the opening of the Lhasa-Nyingchi line on June 25, 2021, the China Railway Qinghai-Tibet Group reported that over 3 million passengers and more than 783,000 tons of cargo have been transported.

Ukrzaliznytsia launches a new project: UZ Energo

This achievement indicates significant changes in the region's transportation infrastructure and economy.

Transportation Advantages

The Lhasa-Nyingchi line, stretching about 435 kilometers, has reduced travel time between these two important points from 5 to 3.5 hours, greatly enhancing accessibility and convenience for locals and tourists.

The high-speed Fuxing electric trains operating on this line reach speeds of up to 160 km/h, making travel not only fast but also comfortable.

Notably, over 90% of the route runs at an altitude of more than 3000 meters, which is a unique engineering feat.

Economic Development and Tourism

In 2023, the city of Nyingchi was visited by more than 13 million tourists, generating revenue of 11.6 billion yuan (about 1.6 billion US dollars).

The development of railway infrastructure has opened new opportunities for tourism, improved the quality of life for residents, and contributed to the creation of new jobs.

The railway has also played a crucial role in the transportation of local goods, handicrafts, and agricultural products, fostering regional business and economic growth.

Construction of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway

The Lhasa-Nyingchi line is part of the ongoing Sichuan-Tibet railway project, which will span over 1600 kilometers.

The first section of this railway, Chengdu-Ya'an, was put into operation in December 2018.

SOF Pic of the Day: People's Armed Police Tibet Special Warfare Detachment – Guardians of the Roof of the World

07 July 2024, [SOFREP](#), Guy D. McCardle



Elite operatives from the PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment demonstrate their readiness and tactical prowess in high-stakes urban combat scenarios.

For today's SOF Pic of the Day, I've found a rather unusual photo for you. It's not every day we talk about the Tibetan People's Armed Police (PAP).

The People's Armed Police (PAP) Tibet Special Warfare Detachment, often called the Tibet Special Police, plays a crucial role in maintaining security and order in one of the world's most challenging regions. Operating

in Tibet's high-altitude, rugged terrain, this elite unit is tasked with counterterrorism, riot control, and other special operations that demand exceptional physical and mental resilience.

Origins and Structure

The PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment was formed to address the unique security needs of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Given Tibet's strategic significance and the potential for unrest, this unit was established to provide a rapid response force capable of handling a wide range of security challenges.

The unit is part of the larger People's Armed Police Force, which operates under the dual leadership of the Central Military Commission and the State Council of China.

Make no mistake, these are Chinese warriors.

Training for the PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment is intense and tailored to the harsh conditions of the Tibetan Plateau. Recruits undergo rigorous physical conditioning to cope with the thin air and extreme weather. High-altitude acclimatization is a crucial part of their training regimen, which includes long-distance marches, mountain climbing, and survival skills.

The detachment is also trained in various aspects of modern warfare, including counterterrorism, urban combat, and hostage rescue. It is equipped with advanced weaponry and tactical gear, ensuring it is prepared for any situation. Specialized training in snow and ice combat and high-altitude marksmanship sets it apart from other units.

Operations and Responsibilities

The PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment's primary responsibility is to maintain stability and security in Tibet. This includes counterterrorism operations to neutralize threats posed by separatist groups and extremists. The unit also plays a vital role in riot control, ensuring that protests and demonstrations do not escalate into violence.

One of their key missions is to protect critical infrastructure and important landmarks, such as the Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple. These sites are not only of cultural and historical significance but also potential targets for terrorist attacks.

Challenges and Adaptability

Operating in Tibet presents unique challenges. The high altitude can cause altitude sickness, fatigue, and decreased performance, even for well-trained soldiers. The extreme cold and unpredictable weather further complicate their operations. Despite these challenges, the PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment has proven adaptable and resilient.

Their ability to conduct operations in such a demanding environment is a testament to their rigorous training and dedication. The unit continuously evolves its tactics and strategies to address emerging threats and changing regional conditions.

International Perception and Controversy

The presence and activities of the PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment are not without controversy. Human rights organizations have criticized the unit's involvement in suppressing protests and unrest in Tibet. Allegations of excessive force and human rights abuses have drawn international condemnation.

China, however, maintains that the detachment is essential for maintaining stability and combating terrorism in a volatile region. The government argues that the unit's actions are necessary to ensure the safety and security of both Tibetans and Chinese nationals in the area.

Conclusion

The PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment symbolizes China's commitment to maintaining control and security in Tibet. Its operations in one of the most challenging environments on Earth highlight its unique capabilities and resilience. While its role is often mired in controversy, this elite unit's critical importance in safeguarding the region's stability cannot be denied.

As geopolitical tensions continue to evolve, the PAP Tibet Special Warfare Detachment will remain a key player in China's strategy for the Tibetan Plateau, embodying the delicate balance between security and human rights in one of the world's most contentious regions.

Satellite images reveal China's military build-up near Pangong Lake, India's western border

07 July 2024, [First Post](#), Prakriti Jash

The developments at Pangong Lake coincide with new images indicating increased Chinese military activity at Shigatse air base, a dual-use high-altitude airport in the Tibet Autonomous Region's second largest city, and the disputed Doklam tri-junction, the site of a 73-day standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in 2017

According to satellite pictures, China's military is preparing for the long haul in the area surrounding Pangong Lake in eastern Ladakh, having built subterranean bunkers to store weapons and fuel, as well as hardened shelters for armoured vehicles at a crucial base in the region.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) post at Sirjap, hidden among mountains on the northern bank of Pangong Lake, is the headquarters for Chinese forces stationed around the lake. It was established in an area claimed by India and is around 5 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Until the start of the LAC conflict in May 2020, this region was nearly entirely free of human settlements.

The station, which will be erected between 2021 and 2022, will have subterranean bunkers that may be used to store missile systems, fuel, or other supplies,

according to photos given by BlackSky, a US-based company capable of obtaining photographs 15 times each day with its satellites. One photograph, taken on May 30, clearly depicts the eight sloping entrances to a massive subterranean bunker. A smaller bunker with five entrances is positioned near the bigger one.

Aside from many big command buildings, the site contains reinforced shelters and covered parking for armoured vehicles stationed in the region. According to experts, these shelters are designed to shield cars from air assaults using precision-guided weapons.

On the condition of anonymity, a BlackSky analyst said the base hosts an expanse of armoured vehicle storage facilities, test ranges, and fuel and munitions storage buildings. According to the analyst, the base's current construction comprises artillery and other defensive positions fortified by enormous berms and connected by a vast network of roads and trenches that are not apparent on publicly available mapping apps.

The outpost is located somewhat more than 120 km southeast of Galwan Valley, the location of a deadly combat in June 2020 that killed 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese forces.

There was no immediate response from Indian officials to the photographs. A former Indian Army general who deployed in the region surrounding Pangong Lake, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said China's expanded development of subterranean infrastructure made perfect military sense.

According to those familiar with the situation, India has built a number of roads, bridges, tunnels, airfields, and helipads around its borders for military movement and logistics support since the stalemate began in 2020.

India's infrastructure development has focused on improving troops' living conditions and amenities, as well as protecting weapons and equipment in forward regions. This border infrastructure drive has been fueled by greater investment and the rapid implementation of important projects to assist military operations.

In 2023-24, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) completed 125 infrastructure projects totaling ₹3,611 crore, including the Sela tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh. The developments at Pangong Lake coincide with new images indicating increased Chinese military activity at Shigatse air base, a dual-use high-altitude airport in the Tibet Autonomous Region's second largest city, and the disputed Doklam tri-junction, the site of a 73-day standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in 2017.

While satellite photographs from earlier this year showed roughly half a dozen Chengdu J-20s, China's most sophisticated stealth combat fighter, at the Shigatse facility, a BlackSky image dated May 30 showed six J-20s parked next to eight Chengdu J-10 multi-role combat jets on the centre apron.

The Shigatse facility is around 300 km from the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Hasimara base in West Bengal, which contains a squadron of Rafale combat planes. Experts think China's deployment of J-20s is aimed at combating the IAF's Rafales, which are among its most modern aircraft.

While some J-20s have been deployed in Xinjiang, the majority of these planes have been stationed in China's coastal and interior regions, and their deployment in Tibet signals a significant shift, according to analysts. A more recent satellite image from June 30 showed at least two J-10 planes on the centre apron of the Shigatse Air Base.

Satellite photographs of the Doklam plateau show China maintaining an extensive network of roads that connect military equipment near the disputed boundary with India. A large number of military vehicles were discovered in a satellite photograph from April, both in the rear base and forward

Chinese crews drill through Xinjiang glacial area for 'super-long' highway tunnel

06 July 2024, [SCMP](#), Coy Li

Huge boring machine to cut passage for crucial north-south link providing vital connection to Central Asia.

A Chinese construction team in charge of excavating a tunnel in one of the longest mountain ranges in the world has embarked on the most challenging part of the mega project – slicing several kilometres through a glacial area.

The 15.7km (9.8 mile) long West Tianshan Super-long Tunnel is part of a major highway connecting southern and northern areas of China's vast western Xinjiang region. It is expected to help boost trade and tourism and provide a vital link to Central Asia under the Beijing-led Belt and Road Initiative.

The construction team on Wednesday launched a domestically built tunnel boring machine (TBM) to drill the main passageway for the tunnel, state news agency Xinhua reported.

G219 Zhaosu-Wensu Highway Project

The 1,800 tonne machine, dubbed "Wensu", was designed and developed by the state-owned China Communications Construction Company. It is 235 metres (771 feet) long and has a diameter of 8.83 metres, making it the widest such machine in use among the tunnel boring projects currently under way at Tianshan, according to Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily.

About two-thirds of the 2,500km Tianshan range – which stretches into Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in Central Asia – is located in Xinjiang. Its average altitude is about 4,000 metres (over 13,000 feet).

The West Tianshan tunnel will be China's first to cut a straight path through a glacial area. More than three-quarters, or nearly 12km, will run through rock under 1km of ice, with some sections under as much as 2.4km of ice.

Wensu is also the most advanced TBM to traverse the Tianshan range, a seismically active region with average temperatures of about minus 23 degrees Celsius (minus 10 Fahrenheit) in the winter. The geological conditions present unique safety and environmental challenges for tunnel boring, including water inrush, rock bursts and variable ground temperatures, Xinhua reported in April.

Construction on the tunnel started in September and is scheduled for completion in 2026. The project is the most important segment of the 237km Zhaosu-Wensu or G219 highway, connecting Zhaosu county in northern Xinjiang to Wensu county in the south, according to People's Daily.

Due to open to traffic in 2027, the highway will be part of a major transport route linking China to Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, as well as a key connection between Xinjiang and Tibet.

China has started work on several highways and tunnels in Xinjiang in recent years, including the Tianshan Shengli tunnel – a crucial section of the 1,300km Urumqi-Yuli Expressway linking the regional capital to Yuli county in central Xinjiang.

The 22.1km passage will be the world's longest such tunnel when the highway opens to traffic late next year.

Poised along the Indian border, Chinese troops are there for the long haul

02 July 2024, [ANI](#)

The bloody combat operations occurring in Ukraine and Gaza, plus the tensions heating up in the South China Sea, dominate news headlines and make it easy to forget that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) - China's armed forces - continues to strengthen its position along China's southern border with India.

In the Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community, published earlier this year, border tensions between China and India merited only a single paragraph amidst all the other conflicts, threats and tensions that currently abound in the world. Nonetheless, the report assessed that "The shared disputed border between India and China will remain a strain on their bilateral relationship." It continued, "While the two sides have not engaged in significant cross-border clashes since 2020, they are maintaining large troop deployments, and sporadic encounters between opposing forces risk miscalculation and escalation into armed conflict."

In April this year, the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College published an in-depth report examining PLA activity along the mountainous border in Aksai Chin opposite India in 2020-21. The author, Dennis Blasko, primarily considered how the PLA rapidly moved troops into the region as violence flared between Chinese and Indian troops in Galwan Valley on 15-16 June 2020. However, Blasko, a former US defence attache in Beijing and Hong Kong, also provided a useful assessment of current and future conditions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

He assessed, "Barring negotiations with the Indian military and government to withdraw out-of-area combat troops, the PLA appears ready to maintain its deployments near the LAC in Aksai Chin and on the border at Doklam indefinitely." He continued: "In the case of Aksai Chin, due to the challenges of transporting large mechanized units over long distances, rotations of units into and out of the region will likely occur after a prolonged tour of duty (perhaps six months to a year or more). The situation has taken the form of PLA border operations against Vietnam following the 1979 war until 1987, albeit with fewer troops and less actual combat and artillery bombardment."

He pointed out that the Chinese army's "extended border reinforcement operations serve both political and military purposes, and provide the units and staffs in the Western Theater Command with real-world operational and logistics experience that cannot be achieved through routine peacetime training". Unfortunately, little is known about how PLA units prepare for, assemble and travel to and from their home bases to the LAC. Once in position, these units are sustained by supply depots more than 1,600km away. Incidentally, the Western Theater Command defends nearly half of China's landmass with just a quarter of the PLA ground force's total troops. The theater command possesses two group armies, plus the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Districts, which are equipped unlike any other PLA provincial military district.

Blasko made heavy use of Google Earth satellite coverage of the Aksai China area in his research for the US Army War College, and because some imagery is not up to date, he could not provide a reliable assessment of current deployments. He said, "Although China's state media continues to report on units on the 'front line' or in 'battle positions' in the Karakoram region (without specifying Aksai Chin), it has done so without revealing the total number of troops deployed or their exact locations." Nonetheless, the former US officer assessed that "enough fortified positions were constructed in the various PLA-controlled sectors since the spring of 2020 to support a full division-size deployment - or roughly

10,000 personnel - on top of the two border defence regiments (approximately 5,000 personnel) already assigned to the region. Further, these units are reinforced by engineer, artillery and support elements (probably numbering several thousand more personnel)."

In all, he calculated the PLA has approximately 20,000 soldiers arrayed over 400km front in Aksai Chin, in a zone reaching back more than 32km from the LAC. Furthermore, "This number may be higher during the period in which an out-of-area unit that has spent time on the LAC rotates out and is replaced by a fresh unit entering the area. Nonetheless, the 20,000 figure is a considerably smaller estimate of PLA personnel deployed in the disputed region than the 40,000-60,000 frequently asserted in non-Chinese media." Perhaps comfortingly, Blasko concluded that 20,000 troops scattered across such a broad front is "inadequate to conduct a large-scale offensive across the difficult terrain delineated by the LAC". Any offensive would necessitate a build-up of units and supplies if the PLA were to attempt a substantial incursion beyond the border. For defensive operations, PLA doctrine recommends a divisional front that is 15-20 km wide and 20-30 km deep. For offensive operations, that front would sharpen to be some 5-8km wide and 4-8km deep. Obviously, the disposition of Chinese troops along the LAC is nowhere close to that at present and, even at the peak of tensions in mid-2020, the front was in fact some 160km wide from Galwan Valley to Rechin La. At that time, the PLA's combined-arms regiment deployed to Galwan was lined up in a valley less than quarter of a mile wide, and separated by more than 50km from the nearest combat unit. Likewise, two combined-arms regiments in the south deployed over a 40km front, separated by Pangong and Spanggur Lakes, so they could not mutually support each other via land manoeuvres.

Of course, the terrain in that rugged, high-altitude part of the world does not favour large-scale armored or mechanized combat operations. This is because mountains and valleys channel advances and prohibit lateral movement.

Asked about the terrain, Blasko told ANI: "I just don't think they want to pack too many troops and vehicles into such bad terrain, because they'd just make lucrative targets if fighting actually starts - lucrative to air, missile or artillery attack. In a prolonged conflict, this is light infantry terrain where people will be trying to gain control of ridges, hilltops and areas for long-range observation. In most areas, the new tanks and armored personnel carriers and everything else would really be constricted. This is a very, very tough place to operate, even when you have air and artillery support."

Blasko also pointed out in his detailed report that

"PLA units have been positioned to consolidate and hold territory, to conduct patrols and protect construction projects, and to create 'facts on the ground', similar to the reef expansion operations in the

South China Sea a decade ago." Indeed, the PLA is "prepared to stay in the region for as long as it takes for the two governments to negotiate a solution." Actually, there are many similarities between China's aggressive modus operandi along the Indian border and its nefarious reef-building and territory-grabbing activities in the South China Sea.

Speaking of which, the confrontation between the China Coast Guard (CCG) and the Philippines near Second Thomas Shoal on 17 June came precipitously close to armed conflict. It was the most serious confrontation ever recorded between the two sides, as CCG personnel attempted to prevent resupply of the Philippine military garrison on the beached BRP Sierra Madre vessel there. Chinese personnel operated extremely close to the grounded ship at Second Thomas Shoal, and then proceeded to wield knives and an axe, and ram a Philippine boat in an action that resulted in a Philippine sailor losing a thumb. China seized a Philippine rubber dinghy and confiscated firearms during the confrontation. China claimed that the CCG exercised restraint and acted "professionally and reasonably" in this skirmish, despite extremely contrary video evidence released by Manila. China's violent actions so close to the Sierra Madre, just short of boarding it, demonstrate how it is escalating tensions and testing Manila's red lines. In fact, its seizure of another military's boat could perhaps legally be construed as an act of war. Earlier this year, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr warned that the Philippine-US Mutual Defense Treaty could be invoked if a civilian or serviceman is killed in these fiery exchanges in the South China Sea. Beijing is presently flirting with that possibility.

The Philippine personnel under attack on 17 June were from the Naval Special Operations Command, and they could easily have fought back against the lesser-trained CCG. The Philippines thus exercised remarkable restraint, and its troops also refrained from firing warning shots. This is because Manila is wary of China baiting it into escalatory behavior. On 23 June, Marcos told personnel watching over the South China Sea that the Philippines is "not in the business to instigate wars".

Unfortunately, however, this whole incident reinforced to Beijing how Manila is reticent about escalating tensions, and that the US is reluctant to get more heavily involved. China's probes are discovering that Philippine red lines are quite stretchy and flexible. Of course, China uses the same probing tactics along the LAC, but India has demonstrated that only

ongoing and robust action can dissuade China from its bullying provocations.

Doklam along the Sino-Indian border was another site where Indian and Chinese troops clashed in 2017, and Blasko highlighted how the situation there exhibited similar, but smaller, characteristics. The American observed: "Based on my analysis of Google Earth imagery, the Tibet Military District light combined-arms brigade located in Yadong County has established protected positions to reinforce border defence units stationed along the border with Bhutan. But likely only one reinforced combined-arms battalion at a time of the combined-arms brigade is deployed on about a one-mile-wide front at Doklam to a depth of about three miles. Forward-deployed units are supported by the brigade's artillery battalion operating from newly built hillside bunkers to the rear." After the Galwan Valley clash, units from the Xinjiang Military District reinforced the two border defense regiments already stationed in Aksai Chin. Over the next six months, the PLA established fortified defensive positions along the LAC. The latter activity was known as the 506 Special Mission, and since then has involved ongoing rotational deployments. Blasko shared: "Until a negotiated political settlement is reached, the Western Theater Command is prepared to sustain the rotation of units into and out of the region in the largest near-combat deployment since the end of the border conflict with Vietnam in 1987." China has been feverishly beaver away on creating new infrastructure, such as two bridges it put across the narrowest part of Lake Pangong. One bridge is estimated to be 6m wide and the other 11m wide, able to support the movement of troops, equipment and supplies. China has also been building a road from the bridge to the Moldo garrison and PLA base camp behind Lake Spanggur, which would facilitate faster tactical deployments of troops. To better prepare troops for living in such high-altitude areas, the PLA Tibet Military Command and the Department of Highland Military Medicine of the PLA Army Medical University launched a pilot program for low-pressure hypoxia cabin acclimation training for recruits before they deploy. According to Chinese media, this training has improved acclimatization and permitted operational deployments in shorter periods of time. The PLA has even created "vegetable factories" at altitudes as high as of 5,270m to provide border defence troops with fresh greens.

Asked earlier whether further border confrontations could happen along the Sino-Indian border, Blasko told ANI, "Yes, I think there's a possibility of conflict, especially as small units come into close proximity with each other. There are probably a lot of low-level people on both sides looking for a fight." (ANI)

CHINA IN THE REGION

China - Hong Kong

Hong Kong probes scandal of fake degree certificates from China

11 July 2024, [RFA](#), Alice Yam and Ha Syut

Educational recruitment agencies are able to produce fake documents exactly like the real thing, an official says.

Authorities in Hong Kong are probing allegations that mainland Chinese students are using fake academic credentials to enroll in a prestigious MBA program, sparking fears of falling standards in the city, whose officials are keen to attract migrants from mainland China in the wake of a mass wave of emigration.

As many as 30 applicants to the University of Hong Kong Business School have been found to have used fake documents supplied by a higher education agency, some of them for American universities, Business School Dean Cai Hongbin told the financial news site Caixin in a recent interview.

The revelations come amid growing concern that official willingness to encourage inward migration from mainland China to boost the city's economy could be having a negative impact on the reputation of its colleges and universities, which has already been hit by a compulsory patriotic education program.

"As fraudulent academic qualifications seriously affect student admission by local higher education institutions and Hong Kong's hard-earned international reputation, the [government] and all sectors of the Hong Kong community deeply resent such acts and have zero tolerance towards the matter," Hong Kong's Secretary for Education Christine Choi told the city's legislature in a recent statement.

While police arrested a man and a woman on June 26 and July 3 on suspicion of using fake documents, the university is now asking students to resubmit their academic qualifications, as HKU Business School Dean Cai warned that the fake degrees were mostly found in applications that used a "guaranteed admission" service from an academic agency.

At least 30 students are believed to have used fake documents as part of the "guaranteed admission" service that costs applicants 500,000 yuan apiece, Cai told Caixin.

"Their ability to make fake academic qualifications is astonishing," the July 4 article quoted Cai as saying. "The University of Hong Kong has carried out spot checks as part of this review of academic qualifications."

Cai said many of the fake documents weren't distinguishable from the genuine article, right down to letterhead, envelope, paper quality and other details.

An online search for the keyword "guaranteed admission" in Chinese found several companies offering such services, including a website called Gabroad, which offers "Guaranteed admissions to Top 20 schools" including Harvard, claiming a 100% success rate.

The same site also offers such services for universities in Hong Kong, including the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Full refunds are offered to anyone who isn't offered a place, regardless of grades and test scores.

Falsifying or supplying fraudulent academic qualifications carries a maximum jail term of 14 years in Hong Kong.

Any violations will result in "decisive disciplinary action" against the students concerned, including expulsion, while offenders will also likely be prosecuted, Choi said in a June 26 written reply to the Legislative Council.

Education and immigration

The HKU Business School is a highly competitive school, receiving more than 24,000 for taught postgraduate programs in 2023, and only awarding places to 2,600 of them, according to Caixin.

All masters students at the school are now being required to resubmit undergraduate degree certificates, transcripts and other materials, the article said.

Year-long taught masters are particularly sought after by mainland students, because they are a quick way to secure the right to remain in the city for at least a year and look for work, offering a pathway to permanent residency.

Hong Kong's Chuhai College of Higher Education, which once struggled to recruit enough bachelor's degree students to balance the books, had more than 1,500 students in September 2023 after launching a range of taught, one-year masters courses and promoting them aggressively on mainland social media platforms like Xiaohongshu, according to an investigation by RFA Cantonese.

"Chuhai College in Hong Kong is known as a master's mill, because a lot of middle-class people from mainland China come here to take a one-year master's ... during which they can get a Hong Kong ID card for their kids," according to one video circulating on Xiaohongshu in recent weeks.

"A lot of influencers and agents promote the college as a one-stop shop for education and immigration," the video says.

While Chuhai College once had close ties with the government of Taiwan, it has recently repackaged itself as a "red" school, setting up a research institute to study ruling Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's influence and infrastructure program known as the Belt and Road.

Taiwanese national security researcher Shih Chien-yu said he once worked as a lecturer at Chuhai College for many years, and confirmed that it has a reputation for not being too picky about who gets admitted.

"Chuhai College doesn't check very carefully whether applicants meet admission criteria," Shih told RFA Cantonese in a recent interview. "There is strict training and guidelines regarding assessment of student performance, but I don't think it gets implemented in accordance with those standards."

Chuhai College is now on track to upgrade to university status, if it can attract similar numbers of students next academic year.

The College hadn't responded to inquiries about its strategy or admissions policies by the time of writing.

However, a statement on its website says the school "has always followed the principles of fair selection, transparent procedures and merit-based admissions when recruiting for both undergraduate and master's courses."

Rich Chinese return to Hong Kong as Singapore steps up scrutiny

09 July 2024, [The Business Times](#)



The Chinese territory is expected to welcome about 200 high-net-worth individuals this year after five years of millionaires skipping town. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

HONG Kong is winning back wealthy Chinese by rolling out the red carpet for the rich while rival Singapore scrutinises foreign money.

The Chinese territory is expected to welcome about 200 high-net-worth individuals this year after five years of millionaires skipping town, according to data provided by intelligence firm New World Wealth and immigration consultancy Henley & Partners, thanks to initiatives including family office tax concessions and visa and residency programmes.

At the same time, the fallout from a blockbuster S\$3 billion money laundering case has put the city's family offices and wealthy immigrants under the microscope. It's a shift from the pandemic years when Hong Kong's strict quarantine and political upheaval led to mainland Chinese flocking to Singapore. Now, private

bankers, service providers and insurers are saying Hong Kong business is picking up, while Singapore's stepped-up money laundering rules are putting some customers off.

Hong Kong's assets under management grew 2.1 per cent to HK\$31 trillion (S\$5.4 trillion) in 2023. Driven by a strong performance of private banking and wealth management, net fund inflows jumped more than three times to nearly HK\$390 billion last year, Financial Secretary Paul Chan wrote in his blog this month. In 2022, private banking and wealth fund inflows slumped about 80 per cent.

Private bankers and service providers who spoke to Bloomberg News requested not to be named because the information discussed was private.

Under a microscope

In Singapore, the fallout from the money-laundering case means some banks are re-doing their know-your-customer process, and rich Chinese in Singapore are under a microscope, according to two private bankers. Their clients are frustrated with the process and the questions being asked, they said.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore in April introduced a digital platform to share customer information to combat money laundering. Since then, a service provider in Hong Kong said it received more than 15 inquiries from wealthy Chinese seeking to move or set up family offices in the city. Half those inquiries already resulted in actual business, they said. "For many of the mainland billionaires, because they don't like the arbitrary government interventions or government checks or threats to their personal wealth, that's why they wanted to move money out of China," said Zhiwu Chen, professor of finance at the University of Hong Kong. "If Singapore would do as many checks and tighter regulations as the mainland, then why would they want to go there?"

Chen said he knows billionaires who have "warmed up" to basing more of their family office business in Hong Kong as their enthusiasm for Singapore has waned.

In Hong Kong, business at the China desks of private banks has picked up while the pace of growth at the same groups in Singapore has slowed, meaning less money is moving to Singapore, according to two senior private bankers.

Pull, capital

Hong Kong has benefited from the reopening of its borders in 2023. The city has efficient connections to Shenzhen and the surrounding Greater Bay Area via its high-speed rail line. That's attractive for wealthy Chinese who want to be able to closely monitor onshore businesses.

"Despite the political changes in Hong Kong and a number of challenges associated with that, there remain meaningful reasons for wealth and business owners to develop and maintain connections to Hong

Kong," said Philip Marcovici, who consults with global families and financial institutions on wealth and taxation.

The city's introduction of the top talent visa programme targeting high-income earners and university graduates is paying off, with more than 68,000 applications approved since its introduction in 2022. 95 per cent of those are from mainland China, according to government data.

One of the recipients is Wang, a tech worker from Chongqing in southwest China. Having a Hong Kong identity card allows him to travel more easily to the US and other places for work, he said.

Many of his friends were worried about the future direction of Chinese government policy during Covid and sought residence elsewhere, looking for more neutral ground amid rising geopolitical tensions. While there's a narrative that Hong Kong is becoming more like China, he said it remains more open, particularly for capital flows.

"Hong Kong is still a good place for business people," he said, particularly "if you want to travel a lot or move your money freely."

Pick up

According to the two senior private bankers, revenue in Hong Kong already grew by double digits this year, driven by Chinese clients. Most clients have assets of US\$5 million to US\$10 million and are not in the ultra-rich category, another private banker said.

It's still difficult for Chinese nationals to move money offshore and billionaire wealth creation is hampered by a sluggish market for initial public offerings in Hong Kong.

But Chinese money that was going to Singapore is now headed to Hong Kong, another senior banker said. That's supported by data including sales of insurance products popular with wealthy Chinese from the mainland, which jumped 63 per cent to HK\$15.6 billion in the first quarter compared to the same period in 2023.

In June 2021, the government set up the Family Office Hong Kong team to encourage the growth of the city's wealth management industry. Since then, about 64 family offices have been established or expanded their business, with 49 coming from the mainland, according to government data.

Money laundering

Still, revelations from Singapore's money laundering scandal are also triggering concerns in Hong Kong that some of the new arrivals have something to hide.

A plan that offers residency to people who invest HK\$30 million in Hong Kong has attracted over 250 applications since its March launch through May month-end. According to official data, nearly 200 are from from Guinea-Bissau and Vanuatu, countries where cash for residency programmes have been used by financial criminals.

Chinese nationals holding passports from Vanuatu, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Turkey were among those convicted in Singapore's money laundering scandal. "It creates doubts about money laundering," said Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief economist for Asia-Pacific at Natixis.

Hong Kong's financial secretary Chan wrote in his blog in July that more than 340 applications have been received for the residency plan since launch and if approved, they are likely to bring more than HK\$10 billion to Hong Kong.

Migrations

To be sure, Singapore remains a popular destination for migrating millionaires. It is forecast to welcome a net 3,500 millionaires this year, the third most globally, according to Henley & Partners.

But Hong Kong's population of millionaires is finally forecast to rebound after losing about 500 to migration in 2023, according to Andrew Amoils, head of research at New World Wealth, Henley's research partner.

"Despite a tough past decade, Hong Kong is still one of the world's top millionaire hubs," said Amoils. There is "definitely a turnaround there", he said.

China grants 5-year travel visa for Hong Kong, Macau residents; all details here

01 July 2024, [Times of India](#)

Non-Chinese permanent residents of Macau and Hong Kong will soon be able to apply for five-year travel permits to enter mainland China starting from July 10, as announced by Beijing.

This move is expected to encourage foreign companies and talent to settle in these cities. The National Immigration Administration stated on Monday that permit holders would be able to use self-service clearance at control points after completing procedures such as fingerprinting.

These multi-entry permits will allow entry into the mainland for short-term purposes including investment, tourism, visiting relatives, seminars, business, and exchanges. Permit holders can stay for up to 90 days per visit, though they are not permitted to work, study, or engage in news gathering activities. As per the reports, applications are open to all eligible residents, regardless of nationality or occupation, through China Travel Service (Holdings) in Hong Kong and Macau. Successful applications will result in permits being issued within 20 working days.

The application fee is HK\$260 (US\$34), while renewals or replacements on the mainland will cost 230 yuan (US\$32). The central government aims to facilitate people-to-people exchanges between Macau, Hong Kong, and the mainland, thereby supporting the

integration of both cities into the broader national development framework.

Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu emphasised that this new policy, announced on the 27th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule, showcases the country's support for Hong Kong. Lee highlighted that many non-Chinese permanent residents have deep roots in Hong Kong and are eager to take advantage of the opportunities presented by China's rapid development.

Lee expressed confidence that this permit would provide significant convenience for international talent working in Hong Kong, allowing easier northbound travel. He noted that the lack of restrictions on nationality or occupation shows Hong Kong's unique status under the 'one country, two systems' principle and enhances its international character and diversity. This, in turn, is expected to attract companies and talent from around the world.

This new travel permit is part of a series of more liberal visa measures granted by Beijing to Hong Kong since early 2023. Other measures include launching and expanding the Greater Bay Area exit endorsement for talent in Beijing and Shanghai, extending business visit durations in Hong Kong from seven to 14 days, and introducing multiple-entry 'northbound' visas for foreign employees in the city.

China- Nepal

As China drags feet on key project, Nepal says: 'No, thanks. Will fund it ourselves'

24 July 2024, [Money Control](#)

Nepal has decided to upgrade Araniko Highway connecting Kathmandu with Kodari itself after the Chinese government delayed the release of an economic and technical package for the project promised nine years ago.

According to a report in The Kathmandu Post, Nepal has finally said "no, thanks" to China and is using its own money to upgrade the crucial highway.

In 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping had promised then-Nepal President Ram Baran Yadav that Beijing will provide over 900 million RMB (\$123 million) during their meeting in Hainan.

The Chinese assistance would have helped upgrade the 115-km highway that connects Nepal with China. According to the report, a major chunk of the Araniko Highway was built by the Chinese government in the 1960s.

However, several sections of the highway were damaged by the April 2015 earthquakes.

Nepalese lawmaker Madhav Sapkota told The Kathmandu Post that China did not release the funds despite multiple reminders.

“This particular Chinese aid was renewed every year by the International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance, but despite numerous calls, requests and meetings, we haven’t received the fund,” he said.

He added that Nepal is allocating Rs 3.6 billion from its own budget to carry out maintenance work along a 26-km stretch of the highway and manage landslides based on a detailed project report prepared by the Department of Road.

Sapkota mentioned that he has dedicated much of his parliamentary career to advocating for the full reopening of the Tatopani border and facilitating cross-border movement of goods and people. “Recently, China seems to have recognized that the Tatopani border point is more advantageous for trade than Keyrung,” he said. “The true potential of the Tatopani border will be realized once the highway leading up to it is repaired to prevent occasional flooding and landslides.”

He also noted that post-Covid automation by four large Chinese companies operating in Nepal, along with the use of loaders and machinery, has led to significant job losses for Nepalis.

Will Nepal’s new coalition government tip the scales of India-China rivalry?

21 July 2024, [SCMP](#)

Nepal will continue its delicate balancing act between India and China, according to observers, after political manoeuvrings saw a new government coalition formed and a new prime minister sworn in this week. The changes bring a parliamentary shift away from the previous communist-dominated rule, after the Communist Party of Nepal – Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) left its alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal -Maoist to form a coalition instead with the centrist, India-leaning Nepali Congress – previously the largest opposition party.

As the new coalition now holds the balance of power, the move meant a change of leader. So Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli of the (CPN-UML) took office on Monday – the fourth time he has served in the position – in place of Pushpa Kamal Dahal, head of the Maoists.

For Nepal’s neighbours, this means a shift from a government that was pro-Beijing to one that holds a mixture of allegiances between Beijing and New Delhi. However, observers say that shift is unlikely to fundamentally change the status quo, as Kathmandu has economic and security dependencies on both Asian powerhouses.

According to Professor Lin Minwang, deputy director of the Centre for South Asian Studies at Shanghai’s

Fudan University, Nepal’s foreign policy is one of “pragmatism”.

“In fact, no matter who becomes Nepal’s prime minister, Kathmandu’s policy towards China and India is very unlikely to change,” Lin said.

“Nepalese diplomacy in the past has always been a balance between China and India, which is one of its basic lines. There might be slight differences between India-leaning or China-leaning in different governments, but they would definitely not offend the other one just because they are more friendly to one country.”

He added that Nepal’s constantly shifting political landscape, with its frequent leadership changes, also made it difficult to nurture any significant policy changes.

“This round of political change in Nepal is quite normal. Nepal hasn’t seen a full-term government for a long time,” he said. “Currently, Nepalese politicians have become less concerned with promoting their ideologies and more concerned over their party’s interests.”

In the past 16 years, Nepal has seen 14 such power shifts. Oli has been prime minister four times in 10 years; Dahal was prime minister three times.

Dr Amit Ranjan, a research fellow with the National University of Singapore’s Institute of South Asian Studies, said that while Nepal could not afford to cross swords with either country, its pro-China and pro-India governance would be “interesting to watch”.

“[The Nepali Congress] is considered to be pro-India and Oli is considered to be pro-China. So it will be interesting to see how they are moving,” Ranjan said. The landlocked South Asian country has long been considered by India to be part of its sphere of influence. India borders Nepal on three sides and Kathmandu is heavily dependent on Delhi in terms of trade and energy supply.

India was also a key player in helping to end the Nepalese Civil War, which ran from 1996 to 2006 after Dahal’s Maoists attempted to overthrow the Nepalese monarchy. It was Delhi that helped to strike a peace deal that saw the country successfully integrate communist parties into its political system.

Ranjan said that, historically, Nepal had been more dependent on India, with long-held close ties that China could not compete with.

But when Oli first became prime minister in 2015, he angered Delhi over a new constitution that split the country into seven states, resulting in protests by the Madhesi group, mostly of Indian origin, who said they were not getting enough territory. As a result, India imposed an economic blockade on Nepal, stopping medicines and other supplies getting into the country. Oli is known as a friend of China and also expressed Nepal’s willingness to cooperate with Beijing under

the Belt and Road Initiative, a global infrastructure project that Delhi has been critical of.

While Nepal joined the initiative in 2017, no belt and road projects have been started as Kathmandu has yet to sign the implementation agreement with Beijing. The possibility of Oli signing the plan is Delhi's main worry, according to The Times of India.

But Ranjan doubted that Oli would make any aggressive moves, given his new alliance with the India-leaning Nepali Congress.

"This is an unnatural alliance, as the two parties are completely different. They're polar opposites. They are not ideologically or politically aligned; they have fought against each other. So it's very difficult to manage," he said.

Under the former government and the China-leaning Dahal, there were significant moves to align Nepal with China, with both Dahal and his foreign minister visiting Beijing.

According to Ranjan, while there was no problem with such actions under the previous alliance of two communist parties sharing the same ideologies, under the new coalition with the Nepali Congress, those days are now over.

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communist parties sharing the same ideologies, under the new coalition with the Nepali Congress, those days are now over.

Chinese Ambassador meets Prime Minister Oli, discusses strengthening bilateral ties

16 July 2024, [Online Khabar](#)

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, met Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Monday, congratulating him on his recent assumption of office.

During the meeting, Ambassador Chen and Prime Minister Oli discussed ways to further strengthen the friendship and enhance cooperation between Nepal and China.

"We have agreed to expedite practical cooperation to further deepen our friendship," Ambassador Chen wrote on social media after the meeting.

This meeting marks an important step in the diplomatic relations between Nepal and China, highlighting both countries' commitment to bolstering their partnership.

KP Sharma Oli, the leader of the CPN-UML parliamentary party, was sworn in as Prime Minister on Monday, marking his return to office.

Outgoing Nepal PM Approved China Rail Deal Ahead Of Trust Vote: Report

12 July 2024, [NDTV](#)

Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' lost the vote of confidence in Parliament on Friday after coalition partner Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) withdrew support.

A day before Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' lost a vote of confidence in Parliament, he gave a nod to an agreement to connect the Himalayan nation with China by rail under Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative.

Quoting government sources, the MyRepublica news portal said this decision carries more operational than political significance and aligns with Nepal's participation in Chinese President Xi Jinping's multi-billion-dollar pet infrastructure project.

"The Cabinet meeting held on Thursday decided to approve the 'Strengthening the Development Cooperation in Building the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network' agreement between Nepal and China," the report quoted Communication Minister and the government's spokesperson Rekha Sharma as saying.

However, a minister downplayed its immediate impact, stating, "This is an initial decision; details of project implementation and BRI modalities are yet to be finalised."

'Prachanda' lost the vote of confidence in Parliament on Friday after coalition partner Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) withdrew support for him, a development that will lead to the formation of a new government led by ex-prime minister K P Sharma Oli.

Prachanda received only 63 votes in the 275-member House of Representatives (HoR) and there were 194 votes against the motion. At least 138 votes are needed to win the vote of trust.

A total of 258 HoR members participated in the voting while one abstained.

Prachanda's move, made just before he departed from office, is viewed not only as progress towards implementing BRI projects but also crucial for initiatives like the Kerung-Kathmandu railway and broader infrastructure development along the Nepal-China border, the report said.

Earlier, ahead of signing a power-sharing agreement with UML, the Nepali Congress had resolved to "only accept grants and not loans under the BRI project". The government was also set to decide on implementing the 2017 BRI agreement with China, which has been pending at the cabinet.

The BRI has raised global concerns over China's debt diplomacy of extending huge loans to smaller countries for unsustainable infrastructure projects. The Hambantota port, which was funded by a Chinese loan, was leased to Beijing in a 99-year debt-for-equity swap in 2017 after Sri Lanka failed to pay off the debt.

Storms trap more than 130 near China's Tibetan border with Nepal

10 July 2024, [Reuters](#)

More than 130 people including tourists were trapped in Tibet near China's rugged Himalayan border with Nepal on Wednesday after incessant rains unleashed landslides and floods, severing road links, according to Chinese state media.

Many sections of a major highway leading to the remote Tibetan town of Zhentang were either washed away by floods or blocked by landslides amid continuous rainfall since Sunday, Chinese state media reported.

So far, 342 stranded people have been evacuated to other towns by rescuers.

But at least 130 including tourists are still stranded in the vicinity of Zhentang, which lies at an altitude of about 2,000 metres (6,562 feet), due to blocked roads, rains, and "a lack of physical strength" because of the long distances that the stranded would need to traverse, according to state media.

Storms in the area through Thursday will create "a degree of difficulty" in rescue work, state media warned.

Moderate to heavy rainfall is expected in southwest China including parts of Tibet, Sichuan and Yunnan, according to national weather forecasters.

Nepal: Activists protest at China-built Pokhara Airport, denounce BRI as intervention tool

08 July 2024, [The Print](#)

A group of protestors comprising locals and activists protested in front of China-built Pokhara International Airport, denouncing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a tool to intervene in the Himalayan nation.

Over 200 people took part in the protest called by the Rashtriya Ekata Abhiyan or National Unity Movement, on Monday afternoon. The protest comes during the visit by a parliamentary committee to inspect and investigate claims of embezzlement at the time of construction of the airport which only operates domestic flights.

Rajendra Prasad Lingden, one of the members of the parliamentary committee met with the protestors at the site.

The protestors also organized a sit-in in front of the airport raising slogans demanding "Full operation of Pokhara International Airport", "Investigate the corruption during the construction of Pokhara International Airport", and "Convert the Chinese loan to grant" amongst others.

Binay Yadav, the chairman of the National Unity Movement, criticised China and alleged that the nation wants to capture the Pokhara International Airport. "China wants to capture the Pokhara International Airport as it did with the Hambantota port of Sri Lanka and Pakistan's Gwadar Port as this place has geological significance," Yadav said.

He added, "Nepal cannot pay back the pricy loans and interest. Embezzlement also needs to be investigated which were made during its construction."

The construction of Nepal's Pokhara airport, primarily funded and executed by Chinese companies, has raised concerns about the quality of work, the manipulation of oversight, and the burden of debt on Nepal.

Additionally, the airport's association with China's BRI has ignited diplomatic tensions with India, making it challenging for the airport to attract international flights.

The Pokhara airport serves as a stark example of the pitfalls associated with importing China's infrastructure development model, highlighting concerns about financial sustainability and transparency, all while fuelling geopolitical rivalries in the region.

On May 12, 2017, Nepal and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on bilateral cooperation under the framework of the Belt and

Road Initiative. The then Foreign Secretary of Nepal, Shanker Das Bairagi and Chinese Ambassador Yu Hong had signed the MoU.

Notably, on June 27, the lawmakers from the Nepali Congress warned the government against BRI loans and proceeded forward without consultation during the parliamentary meeting.

Opposition lawmaker and former foreign minister Narayan Prakash Saud, while addressing the house session, warned the government not to take loans under the BRI of China. The former foreign minister rather suggested the government accept the grants but in line with the provisions that Nepal has with other countries.

“In regards to BRI, we should be clear that we should accept the grant like we have been doing with other countries. Talking about the loans, there are priorities that determine the need to take them; there should be potential plans, management of the finances, and a feasible market. Until and unless no feasible market has been ensured, big projects shouldn't be taken forward depending on the loans, if we move forward with it, then it would be a trap for ourselves,” Saud said.

The former Foreign Minister also took a jibe at the government for recalling the ambassadors despite the dilute geopolitical situation and ongoing tension, claiming it has diluted the image of the nation. Lawmaker Saud also suggested the government make decisions about BRI only after holding consultations with the opposition and all the parties present in parliament. (ANI)

New round of China-Nepal customs exchange held for better cooperation

08 July 2024, [Xinhua](#)

China-Nepal customs cooperation is expected to deepen following the conclusion of the weeklong exchange of the two countries' border customs, which ended Monday in Lhasa, the capital of southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region.

A delegation of seven customs officers from Nepal, led by Ramesh Aryal, deputy director general of the customs department of Nepal's Ministry of Finance, started their visit on July 2. The event was the 33rd round of such mutual visits.

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and the joint statement issued by the two countries, the two sides will promote cooperation in optimizing the business environment at ports and strengthening the supervision over import and export food safety, among other fields.

Aryal said China is an important trade partner of Nepal, with their bilateral trade accounting for 17 percent of Nepal's total.

In 2023, China's foreign trade with Nepal reached 12.69 billion yuan (about 1.78 billion U.S. dollars), up 15.6 percent year on year. Among them, the value of trade between Xizang and Nepal stood at 2.77 billion yuan, representing over one-fifth of the total.

Nepal PM Dahal faces crisis as key ally drops parliamentary support

03 July 2024, [Reuters](#), Gopal Sharma

Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal faced a crisis on Wednesday after a key ally in his multi-party coalition withdrew support, pushing his government into a minority in parliament four months after the coalition was formed.

The liberal Communist Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) party, which withdrew support and was the biggest group supporting Dahal's government since March, also said eight ministers it had nominated to the coalition would resign.

Party officials said UML and opposition Nepali Congress party, the two largest groups in parliament, would unite to form a new coalition and replace the one headed by Dahal.

“The new alliance is for stability,” UML's Pradeep Gyawali told Reuters, without providing details.

Nepal, a natural buffer between China and India, has long been beset with factional fighting and politicians' egos that have prevented the formation of stable governments. There have been 13 since 2008, when Nepal became a republic and a 239-year monarchy was abolished.

Dahal, 69, a former Maoist rebel chief, has changed allies thrice since becoming prime minister after parliamentary elections in 2022.

His Maoist centre party said Dahal would not resign but would face a vote of confidence in parliament as required within 30 days.

Prakash Sharan Mahat, a spokesman for the Nepali Congress party, said UML chief K.P. Sharma Oli, 72, and Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, 78, would share the prime minister's post until the next election in November 2027.

China - Pakistan

PM orders swift implementation of agreements with China

21 July 2024, [Profit](#)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed the authorities to expedite the process of implementing the agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) made with the Chinese government and Chinese companies, saying that any further delay would not be tolerated.

“China is a time-tested friend of Pakistan who helped Pakistan in every hour of need, said Mr Shehbaz while chairing a review meeting regarding Pak-China cooperation at the PM House.

The prime minister pointed out that the transfer of the Chinese industry to Pakistan would help improve the country’s overall economy, increase Pakistan’s exports, and create new employment opportunities.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on the progress of different projects launched with Chinese cooperation.

The prime minister was told that the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway would be completed through a Public-Private Partnership.

It was informed that the plan to send 1,000 students for modern agricultural vocational training at government expense had been completed. The first batch of students was sent to China at the beginning of this academic year, while the next batch would be sent to modern Chinese agricultural universities after learning Chinese in Pakistan.

A comprehensive road map regarding the transfer of Chinese industries to Pakistan was presented at the meeting.

“Around 78 Pakistani companies have initially expressed deep interest in cooperation for the transfer of Chinese industries to Pakistan,” the meeting was informed. The Board of Investment also presented a comprehensive report on the progress and action plan which was appreciated by the PM.

nation. These actions have led to widespread destruction of homes and livelihoods. The Baloch people have faced forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and severe human rights abuses. Despite its rich natural resources, Balochistan’s benefits have been largely extracted by the Punjabi establishment, leaving the region with stagnated economic, cultural, and technological development. This systemic colonisation and exploitation have fuelled ongoing political movements and resistance among the Baloch people, who continue to demand an independent homeland. On the one hand, Pakistan vociferously calls for the independence of Kashmir and Palestine, while on the other, it is responsible for the deaths of thousands of fellow Baloch Muslims and the occupation of Balochistan.

The Pakistani government has received substantial funds from Western nations to tackle Islamic terrorism, ignoring the fact that Pakistan was and remains the only country in the modern era, apart from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), that was purely established in the name of political Islam.

Chinese involvement in occupied Balochistan has worsened the situation for the Baloch nation. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been developed on the suffering and bloodshed of the Baloch people. Both China and Pakistan are exploiting Balochistan’s rich resources with impunity, prioritising their strategic and economic interests over the welfare of the local population.

China has covertly supported Pakistan’s efforts to suppress the Baloch liberation movement due to its strategic interests in Balochistan. However, China is now openly demanding that Pakistan use its full might to crush Balochistan’s democratic national struggle against Pakistani colonisation. Pakistan has launched a new military operation under the pretext of targeting the Pakistani Taliban and Islamic terrorists. However, the international community is aware that Pakistan has fostered and protected armed Islamist elements. How can a country whose very existence depends on political Islam counter its ideological allies?

Pakistan’s current geography consists of three main areas: the former parts of India, such as Punjab and Sindh; the former independent state of Balochistan, which Pakistan colonised in 1948; and the former Afghan/Pashtun lands now part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Indian Muslims, Punjabis, Sindhis, and Urdu-speaking migrants have experienced an identity crisis and have embraced Islam as their core identity. However, the Baloch have resisted the occupation of their country from the beginning, and despite the Pashtuns’ religious conservatism, they have a strong cultural identity and historically see themselves as an extension of Afghanistan.

This is why the Pakistani state believes that the ethnic cleansing of the Baloch and Pashtun nations would

Operation Azm-e-Istehkam: Pakistan Acts at China’s behest

21 July 2024, [Balochwarta](#)



Since Pakistan’s occupation of Balochistan in 1948, the region has endured prolonged adverse treatment characterised by a series of military operations. Major military operations occurred in 1948, 1958-59, 1963-69, and 1973-77, and have been ongoing since 2004, resulting in thousands of deaths among the Baloch

cement its rule over occupied Balochistan and the Pashtun lands. It is time for the international community, especially Europe and America, to hold Pakistan accountable for its crimes and stop the Pakistani military aggression initiated by the Chinese order.

Pakistan releases new anthem honouring China's 97th PLA anniversary

21 July 2024, [The Tribune](#)

The song's lyrics poetically capture the essence of this friendship: "Oh Himalayas, your peaks seem insignificant compared to our bond, and your depths appear shallow next to the strength of our friendship. This musical tribute emphasizes that the friendship between Pakistan and China is a timeless journey—stronger than the Himalayas, sweeter than honey, and deeper than the sea. Both nations have consistently supported each other through every joy and hardship.

Fears rise of China supplying Pakistan dreaded chemicals for use against Baloch rebels

19 July 2024, [India Today](#), Pradip R. Sagar

The seizure by Indian customs of a dual-use chemical consignment covertly en route from Shanghai to Karachi has buttressed the suspicion.

In early May, customs authorities at the Kattupalli port in Tamil Nadu were stunned when they, based on intelligence inputs, seized a consignment shipped by Chengdu Shichen Trading Company Ltd, a Chinese firm, to Rohail Enterprises in Pakistan. It was the chemical Ortho-Chloro Benzylidene Malononitrile (CS), being carried by the vessel Hyundai Shanghai (sailing under the Cyprus flag) from Shanghai to Karachi.

CS gas, while commonly used in riot control, is regulated due to its potential use as a chemical weapon. Its dual-use (civilian and military) nature makes it particularly sensitive under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

The seizure of the CS consignment highlights China's role in the global proliferation network. Beijing has had a history of producing dual-use technologies that, while ostensibly for civilian use, can be repurposed for military applications. This is particularly concerning given China's penchant to bypass international regulations and export controls. The most shocking aspect of the seizure and the investigation that followed is the banned chemical's potential to be used against Baloch rebels by Pakistani law enforcement agencies. The covert supply indicates China's move to safeguard its interests in Balochistan, which is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Several CPEC projects in the region face

opposition from local nationalist groups, with several incidents reported in the recent past.

The CS consignment issue has also raised a pertinent question about how China bypasses laws to dump banned items into Pakistan and acts as a key player in global proliferation networks, particularly for sanctioned states. The incident reveals the extent of China-Pakistan cooperation, especially in the realm of security and counterinsurgency. It also points to China's willingness to support the Pakistani law enforcement apparatus even if that means supplying controlled or banned substances.

Multiple European and US agencies are closely monitoring dual-use technology trading by China and Pakistan. One of the incidents is of Ilya Kahn, a tri-national resident of Brooklyn and Los Angeles who was arrested for a long-term scheme involving the illegal export of semiconductors from the US to sanctioned Russian military-linked businesses by utilising a network of companies in China and elsewhere.

In April this year, the US announced sanctions against three Chinese and Belarusian companies allegedly supplying missile technology to Pakistan. China is the main supplier of weapons and defence equipment for Pakistan's military modernisation programme.

The 2023 report of Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution highlights illegal procurement efforts by countries like Pakistan, Iran, North Korea and Syria, involving bypass countries like China and Turkey. The annual report states: "It's an old power bloc re-emerging. Under the leadership of China, Russia and Iran are working closely together in the area of proliferation. North Korea, Syria and Pakistan, countries that also show efforts to proliferate weapons of mass destruction, are part of this new alliance. However, they play a subordinate role in the position of supplier. China acts as a global buyer to circumvent the sanctions imposed on Russia, Iran, North Korea and partly on Pakistan."

Similarly, the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence (DSN) of Austria released the 'Constitutional Protection Report-2023'. Reviewing the global security scenario, the report emphasised on China's role in sourcing dual-use goods for Pakistan through fake companies and dealer networks. It said China occupies a special position in global proliferation. While Russia concluded bilateral arms agreements with Iran and North Korea in 2023, primarily in the production of drones, China acted as a global buyer for sanctioned states in the European market and Austria.

Pakistan traditionally maintains good relations with China and often relies on front companies and dealer networks on the Arabian Peninsula for procurement of dual-use goods from Europe. China became an even-more important trading partner for Pakistan in this segment in 2023.

The Austrian report added that Pakistan's proliferation attempts are increasingly being carried out via intermediaries in China. This approach makes it more difficult to combat proliferation as China itself is not sanctioned and the intermediaries to whom Austrian companies supply are usually civilian companies. The passing on of exported goods by the intermediaries is usually no longer subject to de facto control by Austrian exporters. China is thus becoming the global hub for sanctioned goods.

One example of this is microchips, which aren't essential for the Russian military industry alone. Since the Russian Federation does not have any significant chip production, it is dependent on foreign countries. According to open sources, the country managed to import sanctioned microchips worth more than \$500 million via China, and in particular the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. As customs data shows, some of the imported goods come from the production of a German chip manufacturer that also operates a subsidiary in Austria.

"Particularly in dual-use technologies, China is making goods originally developed for commercial purposes usable for military purposes. In this context, even supposedly harmless research collaborations or 'joint ventures' between China and Austria represent a proliferation risk that cannot be ignored," the Austrian report pointed out.

COAS Asim Munir lauds Chinese army at PLA's 97th founding day

18 July 2024, [Dunya News](#)

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir said on Thursday Pakistan-China relations were exceptional and had always weathered the vicissitudes of strategic environment with mutual trust and unwavering belief in each other's support.

The army chief expressed the sentiment at the 97th anniversary of the founding of Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) of China, hosted at the GHQ on Thursday. Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong was the chief guest on the occasion. Maj Gen Wang Zhong, Defence Attaché, Chinese Embassy officials and officers from tri-services of Pakistan attended the event.

COAS Munir, while welcoming the Chinese guests, congratulated the PLA and praised its contribution to the Chinese defence, security and nation development.

"Relations between Pakistan Army and Peoples Liberation Army are strong and both militaries continue to engage in bilateral military cooperation, demonstrating the iron clad brotherhood between the two countries," the COAS said.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chinese ambassador thanked the COAS for hosting the event on the 97th anniversary of the founding of the PLA.

"Pakistani military has always been at the forefront of countering terrorism and has made great sacrifices for the peace and stability of Pakistan and the region," the Chinese ambassador remarked.

"We stand ready to work with our brethren to combat terrorism and firmly believe that no force can destroy the iron-clad friendship between China and Pakistan and the brotherhood between the two militaries," the ambassador said.

Pakistani entrepreneurs to attend China's int'l exhibition

17 July 2024, [Presnsa Latina](#)

Islamabad, Jul 17 (Prensa Latina) A 25-strong entrepreneurial delegation from Pakistan will take part in the 8th China South Asia Exhibition, to be held in Kunming, China, on July 23-28, officials informed on Tuesday.

Khurshid Barlas, director of the Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, told reporters that the group consists of representatives of light engineering, textile, pharmaceuticals, solar energy, and other sectors.

He added that memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements are expected to be signed with Chinese companies during the exhibition.

Barlas pointed out that the presence of Pakistani businesspeople and delegates from 80 other countries at the exhibition is one of the positive outcomes of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China.

Beijing reiterates calls for Pakistan to create 'safe' environment for Chinese workers and projects

15 July 2024, [Arab News](#)

Beijing has reiterated its calls for Islamabad to create a "safe, stable and predictable" environment for Chinese workers, projects and institutions operating inside Pakistan and crack down on militant groups working against Chinese interests in the South Asian nation, Beijing's ambassador said on Sunday.

China is a major ally and investor in Pakistan but both separatist and religiously motivated militants have attacked Chinese projects over recent years, killing Chinese personnel. In the most high-profile recent attack, five Chinese workers were killed in a suicide bombing in March. It was the third major attack on Chinese interests in Pakistan in a week.

In an interview to state-run Pakistani news agency APP, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said President Xi Jinping had discussed security challenges with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif when he visited China in June.

“President Xi Jinping made it clear that China supports Pakistan in firmly combating terrorism and hopes that Pakistan will continue to create a safe, stable and predictable business environment and effectively protect the safety of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in Pakistan,” the envoy said.

Sharif had “promised” that Pakistan would “resolutely crack down on and severely punish the terrorists involved” in recent attacks and take all measures necessary to ensure the safety of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan, Jiang added.

Speaking about Sharif’s visit, the envoy said its focus was on strategic and security cooperation and materializing an upgraded version of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in line with China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Under CPEC, Beijing has pledged over \$65 billion in investment in road, infrastructure and development projects in Pakistan as part of the Belt and Road scheme.

“Through Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s visit, the leaders of the two countries have drawn a blueprint, pointed out the path, and determined measures for the development of China-Pakistan relations in the new era,” he said, adding that the two leaders had agreed on cooperation in various sectors including mining, development of offshore oil and gas resources, clean energy, artificial intelligence, science and technology, finance and space cooperation.

Consensus had been reached, the envoy said, on accelerating the Main Line-1 railways and Karakoram Highway projects, the year-round operation of the Khunjerab Pass, development of Gwadar Port and supporting Chinese companies to invest and operate in Special Economic Zones.

“At present, China-Pakistan cooperation is facing important opportunities for quality improvement and upgrading,” Jiang said, “but also under the realistic pressure of climbing over obstacles.”

Chinese ambassador highlights enhanced cooperation with Pakistan under Global South Initiative

15 July 2024, [The Express Tribune](#)

Envoy shares region's global GDP share has increased from 24% to over 40% in 40 years.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong reiterated China's commitment to collaborate with Pakistan in actively implementing its Global South initiative aimed at common development and shared cooperation.

Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced a series of measures benefiting Global South countries, including the establishment of a Global South research center, offering 1,000 scholarships under the Five

Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Scholarship of Excellence, and providing 100,000 training opportunities over the next five years.

In an interview with APP on Sunday, Jiang expressed China's readiness to implement these measures for Pakistan and other countries. He emphasised that these initiatives demonstrate China's steadfast determination to foster development and revitalisation within the Global South.

Jiang underscored that China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence provide a framework to tackle global challenges and promote a shared vision of global peace, security, and prosperity.

He highlighted the significant economic contribution of the Global South, noting that its share in world economic growth over the past two decades has been as high as 80%.

Moreover, the region's global GDP share has increased from 24% to over 40% in the past 40 years.

Jiang emphasised that politically, the Global South countries are no longer merely silent participants on the international stage but are recognised as a pivotal force in transforming the international order.

He referenced President Xi's recent remarks at the Beijing Declaration of the Conference marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, urging the Global South to lead in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Pakistan's participation in this conference was noted, which saw high-level representation from over 100 countries.

The ambassador reiterated China's commitment to working with all nations to implement this initiative effectively, acting as a strong advocate for peace, development, and global governance. He stressed the importance of strengthening South-South and North-South cooperation to advance human progress.

Regarding China-Pakistan relations, the ambassador reaffirmed China's support for Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He highlighted the outcomes of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China, focusing on strategic and security cooperation and the enhancement of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The ambassador described Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit as achieving expected goals and fruitful results, providing a roadmap for enhancing all-weather strategic cooperation in the new era.

He outlined specific areas of cooperation agreed upon during the visit, including mining, development of offshore oil and gas resources, clean energy, artificial intelligence, science and technology, finance, and space cooperation. These initiatives, he noted, will

inject new momentum into practical cooperation between China and Pakistan.

Jiang further emphasised President Xi's personal commitment to advancing China-Pakistan relations, especially through major projects like the Main Line-1 railways, the Karakoram Highway, year-round operation of the Khunjerab Pass, and development of Gwadar Port.

He highlighted the importance of Sino-Pakistani cooperation at international forums, particularly with China's presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Pakistan's upcoming hosting of the SCO's Council of Heads of Government meeting, alongside its non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council.

Regarding security cooperation, the ambassador expressed confidence in the joint efforts of relevant departments from both sides to elevate security cooperation to new heights.

He underscored the importance of creating a safe environment for the development of China-Pakistan relations, particularly following the terrorist attack on the Chinese convoy at the Dasu Hydropower Project in March 2024.

The ambassador reiterated President Xi's assurance of China's support for Pakistan in combating terrorism and urged Pakistan to ensure the safety of Chinese nationals, projects, and institutions within its borders. He acknowledged PM Shehbaz's commitment to cracking down on terrorism and providing necessary security measures.

Pakistan to approach China to restructure its \$15 billion energy debt

09 July 2024, [Business Standard](#)

During the June 4-8 visit, Prime Minister Sharif requested President Xi Jinping to consider re-profiling the IPPs' debt and converting the imported-coal-fired power plants

Pakistan has decided to approach its all-weather ally China with a formal request to restructure its \$15 billion energy debt to help the cash-strapped country wriggle out of its financial woes.

"Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb would visit China this week," the Express Tribune newspaper quoted highly placed sources as saying.

"While Iqbal's visit was pre-planned, the finance minister is being sent as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's special messenger," they added. Iqbal is scheduled to attend the Global Development Initiative forum to be held in China from July 11 to 13.

"As the finance minister's visit was not scheduled earlier, Pakistan's ambassador to Beijing has been

instructed to arrange meetings with Chinese authorities," said the sources.

A Cabinet member, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the premier decided the issue of Chinese Independent Power Producers' (IPP) debt should be immediately taken up for re-profiling.

According to the sources, the finance minister will carry a letter from Prime Minister Sharif requesting debt restructuring.

During the June 4-8 visit, Prime Minister Sharif requested President Xi Jinping to consider re-profiling the IPPs' debt and converting the imported-coal-fired power plants. Aurangzeb will seek approval for a mechanism to proceed, though Chinese authorities have repeatedly refused to restructure these deals.

The delegation would also formally convey Pakistan's request to convert Chinese-imported coal-fired power plants to local coal. They said there is a proposal for the government to help Chinese investors arrange loans from local banks to convert these plants to indigenous coal. The sources added that Habib Bank Limited (HBL) is also engaged in the process.

China has set up 21 energy projects in Pakistan with a total cost of \$21 billion, including about \$5 billion in equity. Chinese investors obtained loans for these projects at an interest rate equal to the London Interbank Offered Rate (Libor) plus 4.5 per cent.

Against the remaining Chinese energy debt of over \$15 billion, payments by 2040 would total \$16.6 billion, according to government sources.

The proposal involves extending debt repayments from 10 to 15 years. This would reduce the outflow of foreign currency by about \$550 million to \$750 million per annum and decrease prices by Rs 3 per unit.

According to the existing IPP deals, the current power tariff structure requires debt servicing repayments during the first 10 years, leading to a significant burden on consumers who are paying the interest and principal of these loans through higher tariffs.

"However, due to the extended repayment period, the country will also have to make an extra \$1.3 billion payment to China," sources said.

The Cabinet member stated that Pakistan needs immediate fiscal space and some room for reducing prices, although the overall cost would increase in the long run.

The government's economic challenges have multiplied, and it has not yet been able to conclude the International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal or lower electricity prices.

To secure the IMF deal, the government imposed a record Rs 1.7 lakh crores in additional taxes on Pakistan's lower, middle, and upper-middle-income groups.

Electricity prices were also approved to increase by 14 per cent to 51 per cent to collect another Rs 58,000 crores from residential and commercial consumers.

However, the Ministry of Finance has not been able to give a firm date for the staff-level agreement with the IMF. Finance Minister Aurangzeb, a former banker, hopes the deal may be reached this month.

Despite raising average base tariffs by around Rs 18 per unit over the past two years, the Power Division told the prime minister on Saturday that as of end-May, the circular debt owed to power companies had again increased to Rs 2.65 lakh crores, Rs 345 billion higher than the level agreed with the IMF.

The government has neither been able to give a firm date for the IMF staff-level deal nor reduce the cost of electricity and the circular debt.

Pakistani sources indicated that China might not grant further concessions in debt until resolving their over Rs 50,000 crores outstanding dues and ensuring security for Chinese nationals in Pakistan.

IMF bailout packages have hindered Chinese energy deals due to restrictions on repayments.

If China agrees to debt restructuring, the repayment period will be extended to 2040, including interest payments. According to Pakistani authorities, repayment would be \$600 million less this year and can be reduced to just \$1.63 billion after restructuring. "For 2025, debt repayments would decrease from \$2.1 billion to \$1.55 billion a benefit of \$580 million," sources said. However, the upfront relief would result in more repayments from 2036 to 2040.

In April, Prime Minister Sharif ordered all imported coal-fired power plants, including three Chinese plants, to convert to local coal to save \$800 million annually and reduce consumer rates by Rs 3 per unit. The finance and planning ministers will request Chinese approval for this project and propose financing with HBL.

Pakistan, China enter new era of cooperation

07 July 2024, [The Tribune](#)

Focus on IT, minerals and mining, energy sectors to boost progress

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that a new era of cooperation with China commenced in the areas of information technology, communication, minerals and mining, and energy, which would boost economic progress, regional connectivity and bilateral ties.

Chairing a meeting to review the implementation of agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoUs) between the two countries reached during the PM's recent visit to China, the premier said that he would not tolerate any disruption in their implementation and would personally supervise the process.

Referring to the longstanding Pakistan-China friendship, he said that China had always supported Pakistan in difficult and hard times. "China has emerged as the strongest economic power and Pakistan can emulate its development," he added.

The PM observed that recently a delegation of Chinese shoe manufacturing companies visited Pakistan to discuss the relocation of their plants, adding that such companies had the capacity to invest about \$5-8 billion, the PM Office's media wing said in a statement. He said that the local shoe manufacturers' association was in constant contact with the Chinese companies in that regard.

Moreover, PM Sharif said about 12 renowned Chinese companies related to the agriculture sector would be taking very active part in the Food and Agri Expo in Pakistan.

He reviewed progress on sending 1,000 Pakistani students on government scholarships to China for getting latest training in the agriculture sector.

The PM gave directives for sending students from the backward areas of Balochistan on a priority basis, besides other students from the four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir on merit.

The meeting was apprised that owing to the agreements and MoUs signed during the prime minister's visit, more than 100 Chinese companies were in contact with their Pakistani counterparts for business and investment purposes.

The meeting was informed by the Ministry of IT on the progress made in imparting technical training, one-stop operation for business facilitation, smart governance and smart city project of Huawei.

The prime minister directed Wapda authorities for establishing a safe centre for foolproof security arrangements for the Chinese nationals working on Dasu and Diamer Bhasha dams. He asked for immediate implementation of all the directives.

The prime minister was apprised of the progress on different projects related to communication infrastructure, electricity and Gwadar.

Is China fueling Pakistan's nuclear ambitions against India?

04 July 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

A recent photograph from the 2023 Pakistan Day Parade rehearsals has provided new insights into Pakistan's advancing military capabilities. The image depicts a JF-17 Thunder Block II aircraft carrying what appears to be a Ra'ad-I air-launched cruise missile (ALCM). This marks the first public display of this specific configuration, signaling significant strategic developments.

China has played a crucial role in aiding Pakistan's military modernization. The JF-17 Thunder, developed

jointly by Pakistan Aeronautical Complex and China's Chengdu Aircraft Industry Corporation, is poised to take over from the aging Mirage III and V aircraft in Pakistan's air force. With over 130 operational JF-17s, this partnership underscores the deepening defense cooperation between the two countries.

FAS Confirms Nuclear-Capable Ra'ad-I Missile on JF-17

The **Federation of American Scientists** (FAS) analyzed the image and confirmed the missile as a Ra'ad-I, Pakistan's sole **nuclear-capable** ALCM. "Notably, this was the first time such a configuration had been observed in public," stated the FAS report. The identification was made by comparing the missile's 'twin-tail' design to the Ra'ad-II's 'x-shaped' tail, introduced in 2017.

Detailed Analysis and Comparisons

The FAS conducted a thorough comparison with previous versions of the Ra'ad missiles displayed in Pakistan Day Parades from 2017 to 2024. Using Photoshop's Vanishing Point feature, they measured the length of the missiles at approximately 4.9 meters. This measurement, along with the tail fin configuration, confirmed that the missile on the JF-17 is likely a **Ra'ad-I** rather than the newer Ra'ad-II or the conventional anti-ship variant, Taimoor. The report by Eliana Johns of FAS provided detailed insights into these findings.

Ra'ad-I vs Ra'ad-II

To ascertain the specific missile type, experts compared the observed Ra'ad configuration with past displays of Ra'ad-I and Ra'ad-II missiles. Notably, the Ra'ad-I features a 'twin-tail' design, distinct from the 'x-shaped' tail fin introduced with the Ra'ad-II in recent years. Using advanced tools like Photoshop's Vanishing Point, analysts estimated the Ra'ad missile's length at approximately 4.9 meters, consistent with previous Ra'ad-I specifications. This finding, combined with the tail fin configuration, strongly suggests the deployment of the Ra'ad-I ALCM on the JF-17 Thunder Block II.

Role of China in Pakistan's Military Advancements

China has played a crucial role in aiding Pakistan's military modernization. The JF-17 Thunder, developed jointly by Pakistan Aeronautical Complex and China's Chengdu Aircraft Industry Corporation, is poised to take over from the aging Mirage III and V aircraft in Pakistan's air force. With over 130 operational JF-17s, this partnership underscores the deepening defense cooperation between the two countries.

Strategic Shift and Modernization

The integration of the Ra'ad-I on the JF-17 represents a significant strategic enhancement for Pakistan. For years, Pakistan has relied on its Mirage aircraft for nuclear strike roles. However, budget constraints have forced Pakistan to repair and upgrade these aging planes. The induction of the JF-17, equipped with

Ra'ad-I missiles, is expected to replace the Mirage aircraft and bolster Pakistan's nuclear deterrence capabilities.

Regional Implications and Impact on India

This development comes amidst a broader nuclear arms competition in South Asia involving India, China, and Pakistan. As India inducts Rafale jets capable of carrying nuclear weapons and advances its missile technology with MIRVs on Agni-P and Agni-5 missiles, Pakistan's enhancements with the JF-17 and Ra'ad-I underscore the intensifying **arms race**. The heightened tensions and development of short-range, lower-yield nuclear-capable systems by Pakistan raise concerns about regional stability and the potential for escalation in a conflict with India.

China and Pakistan have been cooperating in matters of defense. Additionally, Pakistan is developing other short-range, lower-yield nuclear-capable systems like the **NASR** (Hatf-9) ballistic missile, aimed at countering conventional military threats from India below the strategic nuclear level. These advancements, coupled with heightened regional tensions, raise concerns about an accelerated arms race and the potential for escalation in a conflict between India and Pakistan. Islamabad currently holds 170 nuclear warheads as of 2024, and its nuclear warheads are stored separately from its missiles, assembling them only when necessary. This means that even if JF-17 jets are equipped with Ra'ad missiles, they are unlikely to carry nuclear warheads during patrols.

Pakistan's nuclear posture remains focused on countering India's conventional and nuclear capabilities. Unlike India, which has declared a No First Use policy, Pakistan emphasizes smaller, tactical nuclear weapons to counter India's superior conventional forces. Pakistan's warhead designs primarily use highly enriched uranium (HEU), produced at facilities in Kahuta and Gadwal, Punjab. The revelation of the JF-17 Thunder Block II's nuclear capabilities, supported by China, highlights Pakistan's strategic shift in modernizing its air force. The integration of Ra'ad-I missiles signifies a significant enhancement in Pakistan's nuclear deterrence, impacting the regional power balance. As South Asia witnesses an accelerated arms race, the implications for regional stability and potential conflict escalation remain critical concerns.

China-Taiwan

China pressures lawmakers from 6 countries not to attend conference in Taiwan

28 July 2024, [ABC News](#)

Lawmakers from at least six countries say Chinese diplomats are pressuring them not to attend a China-focused conference in Taiwan

Lawmakers from at least six countries said Chinese diplomats were pressuring them not to attend a China-focused conference in Taiwan, in what they described as efforts to isolate the self-governed island.

Politicians in Bolivia, Colombia, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and one Asian country that declined to be named said they were getting texts, calls and urgent requests for meetings that would conflict with their plans to travel to Taipei. China vehemently defends its claim to Taiwan and views it as its own territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

The conference begins Monday and is being held by the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, or IPAC, a group of hundreds of lawmakers from 35 countries concerned about how democracies approach Beijing. IPAC has long faced pressure from the Chinese government: Some members have been sanctioned by Beijing, and in 2021 the group was targeted by Chinese state-sponsored hackers, according to a U.S. indictment unsealed earlier this year.

But Luke de Pulford, the alliance's director, said the pressure from Chinese officials the past few days has been unprecedented. During past IPAC meetings in other locations, lawmakers were approached by Chinese diplomats only after they concluded. This year, the first in which IPAC's annual meeting is taking place in Taiwan, there appeared to be a coordinated attempt to stop participants from attending.

The Associated Press spoke to three lawmakers and reviewed texts and emails sent by Chinese diplomats asking whether they were planning to participate in the meeting.

"I'm Wu, from Chinese Embassy," read a message sent to Antonio Miloshoski, a member of parliament in North Macedonia. "We heard that you got an invitation from IPAC, will you attend the Conference which will be held next week in Taiwan?"

In some cases, lawmakers described vague inquiries about their plans to travel to Taiwan. In other cases, the contact was more menacing: One lawmaker told AP that Chinese diplomats messaged the head of her party with a demand to stop her from going.

"They contacted president of my political party, they ask him to stop me to travel to Taiwan," said Sanela Klarić, a member of parliament in Bosnia. "They're

trying, in my country, to stop me from traveling ... This is really not OK."

China routinely threatens retaliation against politicians and countries that show support for Taiwan, which has only informal relations with most countries due to Chinese diplomatic pressure. Klarić said the pressure was unpleasant but only steeled her determination to go on the trip.

"I really am fighting against countries or societies where the tool to manipulate and control peoples is fear," said Klarić, adding that it reminded her of threats and intimidation she faced while suffering through wars in Bosnia in the 1990s. "I really hate the feeling when somebody is frightening you."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

De Pulford called the pressure "gross foreign interference."

"How would PRC officials would feel if we tried to tell them about their travel plans, where they could and could not go?" de Pulford said, using the acronym for China's official name, the People's Republic of China. "It's absolutely outrageous that they think that they can interfere in the travel plans of foreign legislators."

Lawmakers from 25 countries were expected to attend this year's meeting, including Japan, India and the U.K., and IPAC said in a statement that some would meet with high-level Taiwanese officials. The Taiwanese Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Last week, Beijing criticized Taiwan for its annual Han Kuang military drills, saying that Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party was "carrying out provocations to seek independence."

"Any attempt to whip up tensions and use force to seek independence or reject reunification is doomed to failure," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters.

China has been peeling off the island's diplomatic allies, often with promises of development aid, in a long-running competition between the two that has swung in Beijing's favor in recent years. The Pacific Island nation of Nauru switched recognition to Beijing earlier this year, a move that reduced Taiwan's dwindling number of diplomatic allies to 12.

But China's at-times heavy-handed approach has also alienated other countries.

In 2021, Beijing downgraded relations and blocked imports from Lithuania, a member of both the EU and NATO, after the Baltic nation broke with diplomatic custom by agreeing that a Taiwanese representative office in its capital of Vilnius would bear the name Taiwan instead of Chinese Taipei, which other countries use to avoid offending Beijing. The following year, the EU adopted a resolution criticizing Beijing's behavior toward Taiwan and took action against China

at the World Trade Organization over the import restrictions.

The pressure over the IPAC meeting was also triggering backlash.

Bolivian Senator Centa Rek said she submitted a letter of protest after a Chinese diplomat called her and told not to go to Taiwan, saying the island was run by an “imposter president” and that the meeting was hosted by an organization “not accepted within the terms of the policy of mainland China.” When Rek refused, the diplomat said he would report her decision to his embassy, which Rek interpreted as a “veiled threat.”

“I told him that it was an unacceptable intrusion, that I would not accept an order or intrusion from any government,” Rek said. “These were personal decisions and that it seemed to me that he had gone beyond all international political norms.”

Most of the lawmakers targeted appear to be from smaller countries, which de Pulford, the alliance’s director, said was likely because Beijing “feels that they can get away with it.” But he added that the coercive tactics have only made participants more determined to take part in the summit.

Miriam Lexmann, a Slovakian member of the European Parliament whose party head was approached by Chinese diplomats, said the pressure underscored her reason for coming to Taiwan.

We want to “exchange information, ways how to deal with those challenges and threats which China represents to the democratic part of the world, and of course, to support Taiwan,” she said.

Taiwan jails citizen doing business in China for spying on Tibetans, independence activists

25 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In what is seen as an unusual case, a court in Taiwan has tried and jailed a citizen running business in China for spying on Taiwanese and Tibetan independence activists in his home country. Fang Hsiang, in his seventies, has served as the head of a business association in Hainan for Taiwanese businessmen in China and has been jailed with his associates, reported *newbloommag.net* Jul 24.

The report said Fang and his associates were accused of spying on associates of former president Chen Shui-bian, Tibetans in Taiwan, and Taiwanese government officials whose work pertains to Tibetans.

Fang was stated to have been recruited as a spy after becoming acquainted with a man surnamed Hou, the apparent director of the National Security Department of Hainan province, which is part of China’s Ministry of State Security. The ministry is the principal civilian intelligence, security and secret police agency of the People’s Republic of China, responsible for foreign intelligence, counterintelligence, and the political security of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Upon returning to Taiwan, Fang recruited several individuals. This included a man surnamed Chen working in the Mongolian and Tibetan Cultural Centre in Taipei, which is part of the Ministry of Culture. At one point, Chen recorded a conversation with the director of the centre to try and gain information on Tibetan groups in Taiwan and what coordination exists between the government and such groups as pertaining to refugee policy, the report said.

Associates of Fang were stated to have been flown to China to meet with Hou at various points.

Fang was sentenced to five and a half years in jail, while Chen was sentenced to three years in jail. However, Fang’s wife, a Chinese national, was not sentenced due to lack of evidence, the report said.

Fang and his associates’ case is seen as unusual because the most common Chinese espionage cases that one hears about in Taiwan involve former Taiwanese military officers who meet with Chinese counterparts. This may involve passing along details of Taiwan’s defence, or classified information. KMT lawmakers such as Legislative Yuan defence committee co-chair Ma Wen-chun have also been accused of leaking the details of confidential defence programmes to China, such as regarding Taiwan’s domestic submarine programme, the report noted.

It is actually not hard for the Chinese government to gain intelligence on Taiwan which is, after all, a free and open democratic society. Still, it is unclear to what extent civil society groups are surveilled or monitored, except that this does occur, the report noted.

China’s New Non-Military Offensives against Taiwan

24 July 2024, [Global Taiwan Institute](#)

Since the election of Lai Ching-te (賴清德) as the president of the self-governing democracy of Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC, 中華民國), Beijing has been turning the screws on the island-nation—and not just in the military domain. National security officials from Taiwan are now sounding the alarm about a noticeable shift in the Chinese multi-domain pressure campaign against the island democracy. Indeed, multiple indicators are pointing to a more aggressive turn in Chinese Communist Party (CCP, 中國共產黨) General Secretary Xi Jinping’s (習近平) approach to Taiwan in the months ahead.

While a change in Beijing’s strategy was already visible in the latter half of Tsai Ing-wen’s (蔡英文) second term—particularly in the military space—recent activities in the non-military space—in the areas of diplomatic/political, legal, information/united front, and economic measures—are perhaps most troubling. Additionally, they are broadly indicative of a comprehensive shift in Beijing’s overall approach from deterring Taiwan’s independence to compelling its

unification with the People's Republic of China (PRC, 中華人民共和國)—by military force if necessary.

Diplomatic and Political Pressure

On the diplomatic front, Beijing is currently going after Taiwan's 12 remaining diplomatic partners. Since 2016, Taiwan's international diplomatic presence has steadily diminished, from 22 diplomatic partners to only 12. Just days after Lai's unprecedented presidential victory—which represented the first time that a political party won three consecutive terms for president in Taiwan—Beijing flipped the small Pacific nation of Nauru.

Taiwan's last dozen diplomatic partners are vulnerable to PRC enticement and coercion to varying degrees. Although the current president of Paraguay—Taiwan's last remaining diplomatic partner in South America—has expressed strong personal support for continuing ties with Taiwan, Paraguay stands as a potentially acute reminder that many of these last remaining steadfast diplomatic partners are seemingly always one election away from switching recognition.

While Beijing's diplomatic successes against Taiwan are clear, Taipei has made important advancements in raising its international visibility and political engagement with other like-minded partners on the world stage with the support of like-minded friends. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Beijing is now putting more emphasis on not only enticing but pressuring Taiwan's non-diplomatic partners to downgrade political ties and support cross-Strait "reunification." Indeed, Beijing appears to no longer seek a political endorsement from other countries for its "One-China Principle" (一個中國原則), but is now pressuring other countries to take action that actively supports the PRC's position on "reunification."

In the past, some countries that maintain diplomatic relations with the PRC have been asked to have Taipei move its representative office from the capital to other locations, or to put pressure on Taipei's local representative offices to remove any reference to the Republic of China or Taiwan from the name of their *de facto* embassies. China has also continued to pressure countries with which it has diplomatic ties to deport Taiwan nationals accused of criminal activities to the PRC rather than back to Taiwan.

Countries that have recently established unofficial ties or have increased their political ties with Taiwan also find themselves increasingly in the cross-hairs of Beijing's diplomatic offensive—the cases of Lithuania and the Czech Republic are prime examples of this. Other pressure tactics could include applying sanctions against people and other entities for engaging with Taiwan, limiting the consular activities of Taiwan's foreign missions, and restricting government contacts with Taiwanese counterparts and supporters of Taiwan.

The fact that British lawmaker Conservative MP Tim Loughton from the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China was denied entry to Somalia in April 2024 is potentially instructive of Beijing's future tactics in this space. In such instances, not only are Taiwanese lawmakers and persons sanctioned or wanted by Beijing singled out, but also other lawmakers from third countries who have run afoul of Beijing's policies on Taiwan. Such persons could be potentially denied entry or surveilled in third countries, which are either allied or significantly influenced by Beijing.

Propaganda and United Front Work

In addition to diplomatic pressure, the CCP is also ramping up its political warfare activities, particularly in the areas of overt united front work and propaganda directed against Taiwan's central government and ruling party. This is particularly noteworthy in the CCP's attempts to co-opt Taiwan's key opposition parties. In addition to existing ties with the Kuomintang (KMT, 中國國民黨), the CCP showed interest in the Taiwan People's Party (TPP, 台灣民眾黨) throughout the presidential campaign—and particularly after the elections, in which the TPP walked away with a decisive minority of seats in the Legislative Yuan.

Since beginning his post as KMT vice chairman in October 2021, Andrew Hsia (夏立言) has led the official party channel for dialogue to China at least eight times. Notably, there has been a plethora of other cross-Strait exchanges headed by various factions of the KMT that began in 2024. The delegation that raised the most eyebrows is perhaps the one led by Fu kun-chi (傅崐萁)—an influential power broker among local factions of the KMT and the current caucus whip for the KMT. In April—just a month before the inauguration—Fu brought a delegation of local faction members to China. Local factions are instrumental in influence peddling during local elections. Although there have been insinuations of collusion because of the correlation in the timing between these visits and the controversial reform measures adopted by the opposition parties immediately after the inauguration, it should be noted that the authorities have not yet provided clear and convincing evidence of a conspiracy.

Chinese disinformation and propaganda also remain rampant in Taiwan's information space. Taiwanese national security officials are particularly concerned by AI-enabled efforts spreading disinformation on social media platforms, including Chinese-owned platforms like *Duoyin* (抖音, Tiktok) and *Xiaohongshu* (小紅書) that have large user bases in Taiwan. Additionally, so-called "local collaborators"—with the support of traditional media—are increasingly parroting the CCP's talking points, thereby increasingly blurring the line between

what may be legitimate political opposition and Chinese government propaganda.

Russian propaganda disinformation tactics and narratives used against Ukraine are also increasingly more visible in the Chinese approaches to Taiwan. This is indicative of the increasing cross-pollination of Chinese and Russian disinformation and malign influence tactics. One recent example was a disinformation case concerning the fabricated news carried by a major news outlet about US pressure on Taiwan to establish a biowarfare lab in Taiwan, which appeared intended to stoke American skepticism among the general public. As Chinese support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues and the Chinese-Russian "unlimited partnership" grows, there will likely be more sharing of tactics, techniques, and procedures in Chinese malign influence activities in Taiwan.

A New Feature: Lawfare

The most notable feature in the PRC's new multi-domain offensive against Taiwan is the use of a suite of lawfare measures, which include the application of law enforcement instruments intended to extend the claimed jurisdiction of Chinese authorities and constrain that of the Taiwanese authorities.

Extra-Territorial Applications of Domestic Law

Specifically, there are clear signs that Beijing is broadening the application of the *Anti-Secession Law (ASL, 反分裂國家法)*. Since its passage in 2005, the ASL was primarily used as a rhetorical instrument for the legal justification of China's use of military force against Taiwan. On June 21, based on the ASL and other legal measures, the PRC promulgated the "*Opinions on Punishing the Crimes of Splitting the Country and Inciting Splitting the Country by 'Taiwan Independence' Diehards*," (關於依法懲罰「台獨」頑固分子分裂國家、煽動分裂國家犯罪的意見), which could apply criminal punishment, even the death penalty to "secessionists" in absentia.

In particular, the guidelines specify actions that constitute the "crimes of secession" and "incitement to secession," including:

1. "Initiating or establishing organizations, plans, or programs aimed at promoting Taiwanese independence.
2. Attempting to alter Taiwan's status through legislative means or referendums.
3. Seeking international recognition of Taiwan as an independent entity.
4. Using one's job or influence, such as in government, education, or media, to misrepresent or falsify the history of Taiwan's status as part of China.
5. Consistently taking part in or playing a major role in activities that support Taiwanese independence."

This could be seen as Beijing's response to what it views as internationalization and increased external interference in the Taiwan issue in recent years. As written, the excessively broad law notably does not limit the application of these laws by geographical scope of citizenship, which could presumably include both ROC citizens and non-ROC citizens. These guidelines signal a new phase in the PRC's new multi-domain offensive against Taiwan and its supporters and represent an especially nefarious form of lawfare. As it stands, it could be a particularly gross application of transnational repression by plausibly justifying, under its domestic law, the forcible repatriation of persons to the PRC—and further signal the "Hong Kongization" of Taiwan in terms of the application of domestic law and regulations.

Legalization of its "One-China Principle" through UNGA Resolution 2758

In addition to the application of domestic legal measures to extend PRC jurisdiction over Taiwan and its administered territories, China has also been more aggressively forcing its distorted interpretation of UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 in an attempt to legalize its "One-China Principle." In its statement declaring the switch in its recognition of the PRC, the government of Nauru cited UNGA Resolution 2758 as a legal basis for supporting its decision. Moreover, civil society groups applying to join international organizations have been barred from admission due to the misleading application of UNGA Resolution 2758.

Hostage Diplomacy

As the PRC seeks to increasingly extend its laws and jurisdiction over Taiwan and its people, in a report delivered to the Legislative Yuan, Tsai Ming-yen (蔡明彥), the director of the National Security Bureau (NSB, 國家安全局)—Taiwan's premier intelligence agency—revealed how "in the past 12 months, 15 Taiwanese have been detained or undergone trials after entering China and the two special administrative regions, while 51 have been interrogated by border officers—and the number is increasing." The NSB director also noted with concern that the number of cases concerning national security investigations involving PRC covert influence has been increasing in recent years—raising the specter of potentially more extraordinary measures.

Maritime Law Enforcement and Civil Aviation for Contesting and Limiting Territorial Jurisdiction

Beijing is using the unilateral application of its domestic law and regulations as a form of lawfare to constrain the legal space of the Taiwan government—and deter other countries from engaging with it. These measures seem intended to limit the Taiwan government's agency, and represent Beijing's efforts to deny the existence of the ROC and the objective

reality that the ROC and PRC are two separate jurisdictions.

The Chinese authorities are not issuing new laws *per se* and Beijing's legal claims over Taiwan have not changed. Still, the PRC is beginning to enforce these claims—with implications for other competing claimants with territorial disputes with China. Similar to how the PRC has begun to suddenly and arbitrarily enforce certain regulations on Taiwanese companies operating in China for coercive political purposes, it is now increasingly utilizing the China Coast Guard (中国海警局)—a paramilitary force used for maritime law enforcement that is directed by the Central Military Commission (CMC, 中央軍事委員會), and increasingly deployed with the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN, 中國人民解放軍海軍)—in patrols around Taiwan—in order to enforce its maritime and territorial claims over Taiwan. Some of these activities by purportedly non-military vessels include increasingly encroaching upon the 12 nautical miles of territorial waters claimed by Taiwan, conducting maritime surveillance around Taiwan, detention of ROC citizens for alleged illegal fishing, forced inspection of civilian vessels, and PRC civilian intrusion into the harbors. Indeed, the PRC appears to be shifting from a previous stance of tacit acknowledgment that the PRC and ROC are two separate jurisdictions toward denying it.

Economic Coercion

In the economic sphere, Beijing leans heavily on coercive economic tools through a combination of targeted suspension of preferential tariff terms, selective bans of imported goods, expanded import restrictions on a range of products beyond just agricultural and aquatic goods, arbitrary regulatory enforcements targeting select companies for their political activities, and the sanctioning of individuals and organizations. Although such measures do not yet represent a significant departure from the PRC's longstanding strategy, Beijing will likely dial up these tactics to apply even greater pressure on Taiwan's new leadership in the years to come.

Conclusion

The intensification of these non-military measures is broadly indicative of a comprehensive shift in Beijing's overall approach from one of deterring Taiwan's independence to compelling its unification with the PRC, Beijing does not appear to have abandoned its desire for "peaceful reunification," and it would prefer to annex Taiwan without the use of military force.

However, in a review of the Chinese measures taken from 2016 to now, Beijing's current stance represents a departure from its prior stance of tacitly acknowledging the separate jurisdictions of the PRC and ROC, to now seemingly deny this objective fact.

Although these gray zone actions are non-kinetic by operational standards, if the PRC's actions to systematically erode the ROC's legal space with such activities go unchallenged and take on other more challenging forms—compounded by its aggressive military activities—the situation could escalate and become dangerous. It bears noting that such PRC lawfare tactics are likely intended to provoke a response (or inability to respond) from the United States and Taiwan. If not properly managed, these tactics could drive a wedge between Taiwan's new leadership and the United States. Going forward, clear communication between Washington and Taipei is essential and any response on either side must be carefully calibrated.

With the US election slated for November, Beijing is unlikely to dramatically scale up its actions in the coming months lest it raise the Taiwan issue into a national election issue. What is visible now is likely only a preview of the actions to follow. Vigilance is paramount.

The main point: While a change in Beijing's strategy was already visible in the military space during the latter half of Tsai Ing-wen's second term, recent activities in the non-military space (diplomatic/political, legal, information/united front, and economic) are troubling and broadly indicative of a comprehensive shift in Beijing's overall approach from deterring Taiwan's independence to compelling its unification with the PRC.

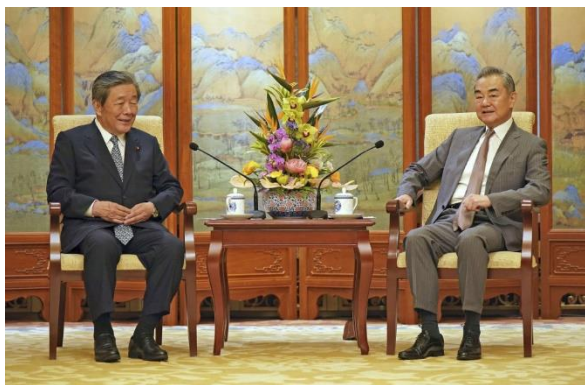
China's Wang complains about Japan lawmakers' visits to Taiwan

23 July 2024, [Kyodo News](#)

China's top diplomat Wang Yi complained Tuesday about Japanese lawmakers' visits to Taiwan, noting that more of them travel there than to the mainland, which claims the self-ruled democratic island, a senior Japanese ruling party member said.

Hiroshi Moriyama, a veteran House of Representatives lawmaker and chief of the Liberal Democratic Party's decision-making general council, told reporters that Wang expressed the concern to him during a meeting in Beijing.

The top diplomat also warned that the Taiwan Strait is "not a political showground," urging Tokyo to be cautious in its words and deeds and ensure that the Taiwan issue will not damage or shake the foundation of Sino-Japanese relations, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry.



Hiroshi Moriyama (L), chairman of the General Council of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi hold talks in Beijing on July 23, 2024. (Pool photo) (Kyodo) ==Kyodo

Moriyama, who made a five-day trip to China through Tuesday, said factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic have prevented many Japanese Diet members from visiting the mainland, but he believes "as many ruling and opposition lawmakers as possible should come to China" for in-person exchanges of views.

Wang said Japanese politicians, including young parliamentarians, are welcome to visit China frequently, the ministry said.

Only a handful of Japanese lawmakers have visited China since Beijing lifted COVID travel curbs in early 2023.

By contrast, a number of parliamentary delegations have traveled to Taiwan, including 31 Diet members who attended the May 20 inauguration ceremony of President Lai Ching-te. It was one of the largest delegations from Tokyo to have attended such an event there.

Wang also called for Moriyama's cooperation in resolving a bilateral dispute over Japan's release of the treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant, which began in August last year, prompting China to impose a total import ban on Japanese seafood, the senior LDP member said.

Wang pointed out that the top priority is to establish a long-term international monitoring mechanism to ensure the full and effective participation of China and other stakeholders, the ministry said.

On Monday, Moriyama agreed with Liu Jianchao, head of the Chinese Communist Party's International Department, to work toward restarting regular talks between the two countries' ruling parties at an early date, possibly later this year.

The last such talks were held in Japan in October 2018. China and Taiwan have been governed separately since they split in 1949 due to a civil war. Beijing opposes official interaction between Taiwan and countries with diplomatic relations with the mainland.

Von der Leyen is 'playing with fire' over Taiwan, China warns after her re-election

19 July 2024, [Euro.News](#), Jorge Liboreiro

Beijing has taken issue with the political guidelines of Ursula von der Leyen, which call for the status quo in the Taiwan Strait to be respected.

The re-election of Ursula von der Leyen as European Commission president has already triggered the first international spat: China has denounced the political guidelines of her second mandate for containing "gross interference" in the country's internal affairs.

"Playing with fire on Taiwan is highly dangerous," Wang Lutong, the director general for European affairs at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said on Friday, one day after the Commission chief clinched a majority in Strasbourg.

"Meddling and even trying to join forces is by no means a right choice for Europe."

Lutong's recriminations refer to a small passage in von der Leyen's re-election manifesto that commits her executive to work closely with Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Australia to address "common challenges in cyber, space and in the secure supply of critical minerals and technologies."

"This includes our collective efforts to deploy the full range of our combined statecraft to deter China from unilaterally changing the status quo by military means, particularly over Taiwan," she writes in her 30-page long document.

The reference adds nothing new and simply repeats von der Leyen's well-known stance: Beijing should refrain from any activity that can forcefully alter the decades-long stalemate in the Taiwan Strait, including a military invasion that many fear is inevitable.

But for China, any statement favourable to Taiwan is a red line that no country, whether ally or adversary, must cross.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) considers Taiwan, whose formal name is the Republic of China (RoC), as a breakaway province that needs to be reconciled with the mainland. Taipei rejects this view and argues the island, after years of building up its democratic institutions, is a *de facto* independent nation.

Taiwan's new president, [William Lai](#), has offered to resume bilateral contacts but insists the RoC and the PRC will never be subordinate to each other. His outspoken views have increased tensions with Beijing, which considers Lai an "instigator of war."

The EU does not recognise Taiwan and has no embassy in Taipei. However, the two sides conduct relations at a lower level on a variety of topics, such as renewable energy, security, research, data protection, human rights and, most importantly for Brussels, semiconductors, a crucial industry where the island enjoys an unbeatable edge.

These ties have intensified in recent years, partly in response to the sharp deterioration in EU-China relations, and are expected to expand during von der Leyen's next mandate.

In a statement, Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs congratulated the president on her re-election and "expressed appreciation for her high level of support and concern for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

"In the future," the statement says, "Taiwan will also further collaborate with the European Union to safeguard the rules-based international order and jointly open a new chapter in their friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation."

Taiwan's Blunt-Talking Leader Faces China's Backlash

16 July 2024, [The New York Times](#), Chris Buckley and Amy Chang Chien

The long-smoldering tensions between China and Taiwan have been entering a more precarious phase. In recent months, Beijing has threatened to severely punish Taiwanese citizens who challenge China's claim to the island. More Chinese jets have buzzed the skies near it. Chinese Coast Guard ships have sailed near Taiwan's outer islands.

And both sides have dug deeper into their opposing political positions.

When Lai Ching-te became Taiwan's president in May, he vowed to stick with the China policies of his predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen. Ms. Tsai sought to avoid confrontation even as she defended Taiwan's right to self-rule and rejected Beijing's assertion of sovereignty.

Yet Mr. Lai, while keeping Taiwan's basic policy toward China unchanged, has been blunter in rebuffing its demands. Ms. Tsai, a former trade law specialist, chose her words about China with care. Mr. Lai, who rose as a more plain-spoken politician, sees a need to more sharply lay out Taiwan's separate status.

"In his judgment, there's nothing to be gained from being ambiguous — the conclusion is that Beijing is going to press them, no matter what," said David Sacks, a fellow for Asia studies at the Council on Foreign Relations who analyzes relations between Taiwan and China.

"For decades, cross-strait relations really lay on ambiguities and not saying what you really think, but I think that a lot of that is being eliminated," Mr. Sacks said. "There's less room for maneuverability."

This shift does not mean that war or regional crisis looms. China's leader, Xi Jinping, is focused on fixing its economy and has indicated that he wants to keep tensions with the United States, Taiwan's security partner, in check. Chinese leaders also still hope to absorb Taiwan peacefully, and they have maintained

contacts with the island's opposition Nationalist Party, which favors closer ties with Beijing.

But China's pressure tactics are likely to present Mr. Lai with hard choices about how and when to push back or exercise restraint.

"In this new chapter, it's like the tensions become the norm," Chen Kuan-ting, a lawmaker from Mr. Lai's Democratic Progressive Party, said in an interview.

"Trying to contain us and squeeze us tighter, trying to get us like this," Mr. Chen said, bracing his arms into a tightening hold. "It's not a hug."

Taiwan's leader speaks his mind.

Mr. Lai is the second president in a row from the Democratic Progressive Party, which has turned to Western partners to hold China at bay.

A former mayor and lawmaker, Mr. Lai rose in the defiant traditions of his party. Even before Mr. Lai's election, Beijing reviled him for describing himself in 2017 as a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan's independence," words meant to signal that he would defend Taiwan's autonomy without pursuing formal independence.

Still, officials in Beijing seemed taken aback by how starkly he drew a line between Taiwan and China in his high-profile May inauguration speech, several analysts said.

In the speech, Mr. Lai asserted that dialogue with Beijing is only possible if the two sides negotiate as separate equals, not — as Beijing wants — based on the idea that each side accepts that it is part of one Chinese nation.

Past Taiwanese presidents have also said that China and Taiwan should treat each other as distinct equals. But Beijing took more umbrage this time, partly because he said so in his inauguration speech, a manifesto for his four-year term, said Bonnie S. Glaser, an analyst of Taiwan and China at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

"He just wanted to convey clearly that the two sides of the strait — they're two separate states," Ms. Glaser said. "He wants to, basically, begin his four years setting that as the base line, and telling the Chinese that they have to accept it."

In an interview with Time magazine, Mr. Lai set out his position: "According to international law, we are already a sovereign and independent country."

He wants Taiwan's military to be better prepared.

Mr. Lai's supporters say his clearer position is part of an effort to bring more urgency to building up Taiwan's resilience against threats from China.

His new defense minister, Wellington Koo, has signaled that he wants to shake up the armed forces. He started by putting an end to ceremonial formalities like goose-step marching in parades.

Mr. Lai has vowed to continue Taiwan's military buildup, and some experts argue that the island should lengthen conscription — already extended

recently to 12 months — to amass enough well-trained troops to deter Beijing.

Military exercises in Taiwan last summer. Mr. Lai has promised to continue Taiwan's military buildup. Credit...Lam Yik Fei for The New York Times While China's leader, Mr. Xi, has dismissed speculation that he has a plan to invade Taiwan in the coming years, many Taiwanese officials are convinced that their island will be vulnerable unless it quickly steps up preparedness. The upcoming presidential election in the United States adds another element of unpredictability to the tensions.

"The situation is heading in the direction of greater conflict," I-Chung Lai, the president of the Prospect Foundation, a think tank affiliated with the Taiwanese government, said at a seminar in Taipei this month. "Fundamentally, we can't see any final balancing point."

China is putting the squeeze on Taiwan.

More than 300 Chinese military aircraft flew near Taiwan in June, the second-highest monthly count since Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense began regularly issuing such data in 2020, according to PLATracker, a site that analyzes the data.

China has sent groups of coast guard ships into waters off Kinmen, a Taiwan-controlled island near the Chinese coast, more than 30 times in recent months, eroding a longstanding understanding against such incursions. The forays began after two Chinese fishermen died in the area in February, when their boat capsized as they tried to flee the Taiwanese Coast Guard.

Chinese military officials have said that they will not be letting up.

"If Taiwan independence tries to take one step forward, we'll take one step forward with our retaliatory measures, until full unification of the motherland is achieved," Senior Col. Wu Qian, a spokesman for China's Ministry of National Defense, said in a brief interview last month in Singapore.

For all that military swagger, Chinese leaders seem concerned that their warnings are not having the desired effect on opinion in Taiwan, said Lyle J. Morris, a senior fellow in the Center for China Analysis under the Asia Society. "I see increasing worry that Beijing's levers of influence over Taiwan are narrowing," he said, citing comments from Chinese officials.

That anxiety, Mr. Morris added, seemed to partly motivate China's release of legal guidelines last month that raised the threat of imprisonment — even execution, in extreme cases — for people deemed to be "Taiwan independence die-hards."

Taiwan Steps Up Alertness After Detecting Test-Firing by China's Missile Unit

14 July 2024, [Military.com](https://www.military.com)

In this image from a video released by Taiwan Coast Guard Administration, a Taiwanese Coast Guard Administration member calls out on the megaphone for a Chinese Coast Guard ship at left to leave from the area around Kinmen County, Taiwan, Thursday, July 11, 2024. Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration says they chased away four Chinese Coast Guard ships that were trespassing into the restricted waters near the outlying islands of Kinmen County. (Taiwan Coast Guard Administration via AP)

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said Saturday it was monitoring "waves of test-firing" by China's missile unit in a region more than 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) from the self-ruled island and that its air force stepped up its alertness.

China views the democratic island as a breakaway province that should be reunified with the mainland. It is not immediately clear whether the tests were related to China's harassment of Taiwan. In recent years, China has ramped up its military activities around the island, which is ruled by the Democratic Progressive Party.

In May, Taiwan's newly elected President Lai Ching-te said in his inauguration speech that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the island.

It is not immediately clear whether the tests were related to China's harassment of Taiwan. In recent years, China has ramped up its military activities around the island, which is ruled by the Democratic Progressive Party.

In May, Taiwan's newly elected President Lai Ching-te said in his inauguration speech that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the island.

China's military has displayed a strong show of force toward Taiwan since Wednesday, when the U.S. new top envoy to Taipei promised that Washington would help the island defend itself.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry said Thursday it had detected 66 warplanes around the island and that dozens flew across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, the de facto boundary between the two sides.

On Saturday, 30 warplanes were also detected around Taiwan over a 24-hour period, with 20 crossing the median line.

The U.S., like most countries, does not recognize Taiwan. But it is the island's main partner and is bound by U.S. laws to provide it with the means to defend itself. Less than a month ago, the U.S. State Department approved the sale to Taiwan of missiles and drones for an estimated \$360 million.

Meanwhile, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported that Russian warships arrived at a port in Zhanjiang city, in Guangdong province, on Friday for joint naval drills. The military exercise will include anti-missile exercises, sea strikes and air defense, CCTV said. It is expected to last until around mid-July.

The exercise aims to demonstrate the armies' capabilities in jointly tackling maritime security threats and preserving peace and stability regionally and globally, China's defense ministry said Friday. It would further deepen the strategic partnership of both sides "for the new era", it said.

Earlier this week, NATO allies called China a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine in their most serious rebuke of Beijing. They also expressed concerns over Beijing's nuclear arsenal and its capabilities in space.

The sternly worded final communiqué, approved by the 32 NATO members at their summit in Washington, makes clear that China is becoming a focus of the military alliance. The European and North American members and their partners in the Indo-Pacific increasingly see shared security concerns coming from Russia and its Asian supporters, especially China.

In response, China accused NATO of seeking security at the expense of others and told the alliance not to bring the same "chaos" to Asia. Its foreign ministry maintained that China has a fair and objective stance on the Ukraine issue.

Taiwan says record number of Chinese warplanes detected amid NATO summit

11 July 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Taiwan's Defence Ministry says 56 Chinese aircraft crossed sensitive median line as Beijing carries out military drills.

Taiwan has said it is watching China's military movements after detecting the most Chinese warplanes near the island in a 24-hour window so far this year, as Beijing conducts drills that are coinciding with the NATO summit in Washington, DC.

Taiwan's Ministry of Defence said in a statement on Thursday that "66 PLA aircraft and seven PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6am [22:00 GMT Wednesday] today".

Of those, 56 aircraft crossed the sensitive median line that bisects the narrow 180-kilometre (112-mile) waterway separating the self-governing island from mainland China, according to the ministry.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry also released two pictures of a Chinese J-16 fighter and a nuclear-capable H-6 bomber, which it said were taken recently.

"The military has a detailed grasp of the activities in the seas and waters around the Taiwan Strait, including of the Chinese communists' aircraft and ships," ministry spokesperson Sun Li-fang said.

On Wednesday, Taiwanese officials announced that China's Shandong aircraft carrier had passed close to the Philippines on its way to military exercises in the Pacific.

The Philippines military said it had received reports of a China-Russia exercise taking place in the Philippine Sea without directly referencing the Shandong.

Taiwan, which Beijing considers part of its territory, has complained of a sharp uptick in Chinese military activity in recent years as Beijing seeks to put pressure on the island's Democratic Progressive Party government, which has advocated strengthening Taiwanese identity and forging closer relations with the international community.

Beijing has labelled Taiwanese President William Lai Ching-te a "dangerous separatist" and said the island should be "reunified" with the Chinese mainland by force if necessary.

In a communique released on Wednesday, NATO leaders said China has acted as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine and poses systemic challenges to Europe and its security.

A spokesperson for the Chinese mission to the European Union accused NATO of "hyping up the so-called China threat" and said the declaration is full of "obvious lies and smears".

Taiwan soldier charged with leaking military secrets to China

09 July 2024, [The Straits Times](#)

A Taiwanese sergeant has been indicted for allegedly photographing and leaking confidential defence information to China, prosecutors said on July 9.

Beijing claims self-ruled Taiwan as its territory and has ramped up military and political pressures on the island in recent years.

The sergeant, surnamed Chen, worked at a navy training centre and was recruited by an unspecified number of people who "collected intelligence for mainland China" via messaging apps in 2022, said the Taiwan High Prosecutors' Office.

"Between April 2022 and February 2023, he photographed secret national defence information in (the counties of) Pingtung, Yilan and other places with his mobile phone," the office said in a statement.

"(He) sent the information four times via Line and Telegram... for a total illegal gain of NT\$170,000 (S\$7,060)."

The office said Chen was charged with violating the Criminal Code of the Armed Forces and the Anti-corruption Act.

When asked to comment on the indictment, Defence Ministry spokesman Sun Li-fang said the military had worked with national security units on the case.

"In recent years, the CCP's (Chinese Communist Party's) infiltration has indeed posed a very serious threat to the military. The threat is no less than... threats posed by missiles or aircraft and ships," he told reporters.

China maintains a near-daily presence of warships, drones and fighter jets around Taiwan, and earlier in 2024 had launched war games following the May 20 inauguration of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te.

Beijing regards him as a "dangerous separatist" due to his defence of Taiwan's sovereignty.

In pre-recorded footage for a military television programme that aired on July 9, Mr Lai warned soldiers at an air force base in central Taichung city to be vigilant.

"China's infiltration and spying will not stop," he said, dressed in military fatigues.

"You must always be vigilant, pay attention to your own information security, and do not fall into traps."

The sergeant's indictment was the latest in a recent string of spying cases.

In April, a father and son duo were jailed for eight years for collecting confidential military information and trying to develop a spying "organisation" for Beijing. AFP

Taiwan probes senior official who deals with China over bribery suspicions

06 July 2024, [Reuters](#)

Taiwan prosecutors said on Saturday they were investigating a senior official and member of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) who deals with China on suspicion of bribery. He said he had done nothing wrong.

Cheng Wen-tsan is head of the Straits Exchange Foundation under the China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council that deals with day-to-day issues like accidents involving Taiwanese in China. The foundation is technically private because the governments in Beijing and Taipei do not recognise each other or have any official relations.

Prosecutors in the northern Taiwanese city of Taoyuan, where Cheng was mayor from 2014–2022, said he had been summoned for questioning on Friday on bribery suspicions and that they had applied to a court to detain him.

It did not give details of the allegations against him.

Cheng, in a statement issued via his lawyer and released by the foundation, denied wrongdoing.

"I have not committed any illegal acts, and I will cooperate with the judicial investigation. I hope to

clarify the truth and prove my innocence as soon as possible," he said.

Taiwan's presidential office said it respects the judiciary and hopes investigators will clarify the matter as soon as possible.

Taiwan reports more Chinese military activity, calls for de-escalation

05 July 2024, [Reuters](#)

Taiwan on Friday reported renewed Chinese military activity nearby with another "combat patrol" as the government called on Beijing not to escalate tensions after the seizure of a Taiwanese fishing boat.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has stepped up its pressure over the past four years, both militarily and politically.

On Tuesday, Chinese officials boarded and detained a Taiwanese fishing boat for illegally operating in the country's waters, in what a senior Taiwan official said may be act of psychological warfare.

Taiwan's defence ministry said that starting just before 7 a.m. (2300 GMT) on Friday, it had detected 26 Chinese military aircraft, including J-16 fighters, carrying out a "joint combat readiness patrol" with Chinese warships.

The Chinese aircraft flew into airspace to the north, centre and southern part of Taiwan, the ministry said. Taiwan has detected at least 127 Chinese military aircraft operating near the island since the start of this month.

China's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Speaking to reporters earlier on Friday, Taiwan Premier Cho Jung-tai said fishermen should raise their alert level and not do anything that could be considered illegal.

"At the same time, I also want to ask the Chinese side not to escalate with any the use of any excessive measures, because this can easily cause tension and unnecessary confrontation which is extremely unnecessary," he added.

Firms weigh removing Taiwan staff from China after death penalty threat

04 July 2024, [Reuters](#), Laurie Chen

Some foreign companies are considering moving Taiwanese employees out of China after Beijing said it could impose the death penalty on "diehard" Taiwan independence separatists, said four people familiar with the matter.

The new guidelines have caused some Taiwanese expatriates and foreign multinationals operating in China to scramble to assess their legal risks and exposure, said the people, who include a lawyer and

two executives with direct knowledge of the discussions.

“Several companies have come to us to assess the risks to their personnel,” said the lawyer, James Zimmerman, a Beijing-based partner at the Perkins Coie law firm. He declined to identify the companies or industries for confidentiality reasons.

“The companies are still concerned that there may be some grey areas such as whether a benign social media post or voting for a particular political party or candidate in Taiwan elections could be interpreted as engaging in pro-independence activities,” Zimmerman said.

Reuters has previously consulted Perkins Coie on unrelated matters in China.

Some 177,000 Taiwanese were working in China as of 2022, according to the most recent Taiwan government survey. Taiwanese staff are employed by many multinationals in China, given their linguistic abilities and cultural familiarity with the country.

Many more work for the myriad Taiwanese firms that operate in China and have, by the Taiwan government’s estimate, invested more than \$200 billion since 1991, helping fuel China’s growth to become the world’s second-biggest economy.

Some foreign corporations operating in China have held meetings with employees on safety, said the two executives, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Another source, who was briefed on the matter, said some Taiwanese staff in China have received and accepted the option to leave the country.

‘EXTREME MINORITY’ SUBJECT TO DEATH PENALTY

China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory. Taiwan President Lai Ching-te rejects Beijing’s sovereignty claims, saying only Taiwan’s people can decide their future. He has denounced China’s new guidelines.

The June 21 guidelines criminalise 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”.

Also illegal are “other acts that seek to separate Taiwan from China” – phrasing that allows Beijing to interpret the rules broadly, according to legal experts. Among “the ringleaders or those who have committed serious crimes”, the guidelines say, “if the harm to the country and the people is particularly serious and the circumstances are particularly bad, they may be sentenced to death.”

The regulations do not further specify who might be subject to the death penalty.

Asked for comment on how companies and Taiwanese employees are reacting to the guidelines, China’s foreign ministry told Reuters in a statement: “Using criminal law measures to punish criminal separatist

elements and uphold the country’s core interests is a common practice for all countries.

“It needs to be emphasised that the relevant legislative document targets the extreme minority of diehard ‘Taiwan independence’ elements and their separatist activities, and does not implicate the vast majority of Taiwan compatriots,” the ministry said.

China’s Taiwan Affairs Office did not respond to a request for comment. Last week it said the vast majority of Taiwanese have nothing to worry about and can come “in high spirits”.

Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, which oversees relations with Beijing, told Reuters in a statement: “The government reminds Taiwanese businesspeople and Taiwanese employees in mainland China that they must pay more attention to their personal safety now. The risk is indeed increasing.”

Last week the council urged Taiwanese people to avoid all non-essential travel to China, Hong Kong and Macau as a result of the new regulations.

The council said last month that eight retired Taiwanese military and police officers had been detained in China over the previous year. Last year it warned that Taiwanese academics were being detained and interrogated upon entry to China, even if they were on formal exchange programmes.

‘REVIEWING THE RISK DAILY’

One of the executives who spoke to Reuters – a senior official who works with Taiwan investors in China – said his phone lit up after China announced the new guidelines as people discussed what they could mean for their work.

He said the guidelines add to the uncertainty of doing business in China, coming on the heels of such measures as China’s anti-espionage law and its national security law for Hong Kong.

The second executive, who works for a large multinational whose Taiwanese executives frequently go on business trips to China, said they had been having regular meetings with senior managers to assess the danger and whether to withdraw those working in the country.

“It’s not yet gotten to the stage of deciding not to send them there, but we are reviewing the risk daily,” the executive said.

Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Global China Hub, said the guidelines would force foreign companies to “either move their operations out entirely to keep Taiwanese talent or they stop hiring Taiwanese talent.”

That would mean that “even fewer Taiwanese will be working or living in China, thereby making Beijing’s attempts to win over their hearts and minds even harder,” Sung said.

Beijing condemns Taiwan’s Lai as a “separatist” and staged war games shortly after his May inauguration. Taiwan has complained 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.

Lai has repeatedly offered talks with China but been rebuffed.

China – Xinjiang

China executes 'slow-motion genocide' in Tibet, Xinjiang, conference told

25 July 2024, [The Washington Times](#)

Obliteration of two peoples' identities, cultures, is accelerating.

TOKYO — Dorjee Tseten is 41 but has never set foot on his home country's soil.

"My family escaped Tibet, but 1.2 million Tibetans have lost their lives over the last seven decades through military occupation, famine and while escaping," said Mr. Tseten, a member of Tibet's parliament in exile. "Every family has this kind of story."

It hits him hardest when he views TV news. "When I hear of the killing of innocents, it reminds me of what is happening in Tibet," he said.

Bloody conflicts raging in the Gaza Strip, Sudan and Ukraine generate loose talk of genocide. For those at the International Religious Freedom Summit Asia in Tokyo last week, the discussion was precise and the target clear in what many said was the Chinese communist regime's quiet, de facto policy of genocide in Tibet and Xinjiang.

"The term 'genocide' is sometimes misused to get attention," said Robert Rehak, the Czech Republic's special envoy for Holocaust issues, interfaith dialogue and freedom of religion. "It may not be the mass killing of a huge number of people, but if the long-term aim is to end a nation, you can call it genocide."

Conference sponsors included Freedom House, the Family Research Council and The Washington Times Foundation.

Though Beijing does not operate death camps or fill mass graves, the central government's policy toward the people of the two regions represents "slow-motion" genocide, experts say.

"Not every massacre or war crime is a genocide," said Marco Respinti, director of Bitter Winter, a magazine focused on religious liberty and human rights. "To have a genocide, you have to have the intention to destroy an entire portion of humankind, you have to make a project to do that and you have to make tools you need."

Chinese leaders angrily denounce the charge of genocide. They are particularly furious that the Trump administration and then the Biden administration formally declared Beijing's policies against the local ethnic Muslim Uyghur population of Xinjiang a genocide.

"There has never been so-called genocide, forced labor or religious oppression in Xinjiang," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2021. "Such inflammatory accusations are fabricated out of ignorance and prejudice. They are simply malicious and politically driven hype and couldn't be further from the truth."

Long, slow process

Neither a sudden event nor a shock policy, genocide usually builds over a long period.

Xinjiang, which many Uyghurs call Eastern Turkestan, was occupied by China in 1949. Tibet was annexed by force in 1950. Natives of both say the ruling Chinese Communist Party's policies of cultural liquidation have accelerated since President Xi Jinping took office in 2013.

In 2014, Mr. Xi was said to have expressed surprise and unhappiness on a visit to the Xinjiang city of Kahsgard. "Some reports said he asked, 'Why are Uyghurs still Uyghurs?'" said Omer Kanat, president of the Uyghur Human Rights Project. "He criticized officials ... and they decided to forcefully assimilate the Uyghur people."

Systemic assimilation policies "turned into genocide in 2017," Mr. Kanat said.

"One of the most current, pressing human rights issues" facing Tibetans – forced indoctrination of children – began to be enforced after 2016, Mr. Tseten said.

"The CCP is conducting three genocides," said Sam Brownback, the U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom during the Trump administration. He added a Han Chinese group to the Tibetans and Uyghurs.

Targeting the faithful

China's critics say that, just as the Nazis exterminated followers of Judaism, Beijing is targeting those with strong religious identities: Tibetan Buddhists, Uyghur adherents of Islam, and Chinese Falun Gong, which combines Buddhist and Taoist teachings with breathing and meditation exercises.

"It makes sense that authoritarian regimes fear faith," said Katrina Lantos Swett, co-chair of the Tokyo religious freedom summit. "What they need is control of their populations, but if people have acquired convictions, they are much harder to control."

According to Chinese regulations, "all religious venues should have permissions, all [religious] teachers should have certifications and have 'Xi Jinping

ideology,” said Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, the Dalai Lama’s representative for Japan and East Asia. “Where is the religion?”

Ethnic identities and religious practices are replaced with uniform identities and party-approved practices. Among the worst abuses are torture, disappearances and organ harvesting. More mainstream methods of control include heavy police presence and mass detentions in camps.

“The purpose of the camps is to break lineage, roots and connections to origins — to eliminate the Uyghurs as an ethnic identity in China,” said Mr. Kanat. He estimates that “tens of thousands” from all walks of life have been incarcerated.

Since 2016, Tibetan children as young as 5 have been wrenched from their families and placed in “colonial boarding schools.”

“When children come out, their connection with their families has changed,” said Mr. Tseten. “They can’t speak Tibetan, they forget their traditions and are not able to communicate with their families.

“Some of them even become critical of their grandparents,” he said. “They ask them, ‘Why don’t you know Chinese? Why are you not like other Chinese?’”

Technology and repression

To prevent free expression and free assembly, “authoritarian regimes have technologies they only dreamed of in the past,” Mr. Brownback said.

A security web that synchronizes high technologies, from CCTV camera networks to spyware embedded in personal digital devices, allows for ubiquitous and never-resting artificial intelligence monitoring of the population.

“Families cannot communicate with each other,” said Ilham Mahmut, chairman of Japan’s Uyghur Cultural Center. “People got skeptical about each other, even within the family.”

He said he speaks from personal experience. “The last time I communicated with my mother was in April 2017. She said, ‘Please don’t call me. I’ll call you if something happens.’”

Along with the human cost comes repression in the physical space. Structures central to religious culture, notably mosques and monasteries, are being destroyed or repurposed.

Speakers at the Tokyo gathering urged citizens to demand action from their governments. The U.N. Human Rights Office warned in 2022 that China may be committing crimes against humanity. The Dutch government has joined the U.S. in labeling Beijing’s policies genocidal.

Other countries need to add pressure, particularly from inside China’s region. “We’ve got to have strong Asian democracies stand up,” Mr. Brownback said.

Mr. Respinti said those who plan and implement the genocidal policies should be held to account, but the clock is ticking.

“In 10 or 20 or 30 years, you won’t have identifiable religious or ethnic groups, and it will be ‘mission accomplished,’” he said. “When they can’t practice their religion or can’t speak Tibetan or Uyghur or do not understand it, when it is just the standardized language and culture of China, what’s left?”

Mr. Tseten, born overseas, said he dreams of a Tibetan homeland he has never seen.

“I know where my village is and what it looks like. I live with the memory of Tibet through my parents and grandparents,” he said. “Deep down, I feel one day I will go, when the people in my village and across Tibet will be free from fear to practice what they want, to continue to do what their forefathers have done.”

Xinjiang authorities intensify reporting requirements for Uyghur visitors

23 July 2024, [RFA](#)

The measure allows Chinese authorities to monitor Uyghurs’ movements in China’s far-western region.

Authorities in at least two areas of Xinjiang have aggressively ramped up a requirement in recent months that Uyghurs report guests in their homes to police in as little as 10 minutes to two hours of their arrival, three Uyghur township government cadres told Radio Free Asia.

The requirement was first implemented in June 2015 and has been increasingly emphasized by the government of Ma Xingrui who took over as Communist Party secretary of Xinjiang in December 2021, they said.

The requirement is one of several draconian surveillance policies implemented by Chinese authorities to monitor Uyghurs’ movements amid ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang that the United States and some Western parliaments have said amount to genocide and crimes against humanity. China has denied the accusations.

Comments posted online by some Uyghur netizens attributed Chinese authorities’ concern about Uyghur gatherings to the government’s tyranny, while others say they believe the main reason is to conceal information about the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang.

A resident of Yengisheher county in Kashgar prefecture was detained at the Yapchan village police station with his wife for forgetting to report a relative from Ghulja who arrived for a visit earlier this month, said a person with knowledge of the situation, giving a recent example of the stepped-up measures.

The pair were released the next day after a night of interrogation, and their guest ended the visit earlier than planned and returned home, he said.

The guest said, "It's like this everywhere," implying that similar practices are in effect in Ghulja where he lives, the person added.

A local police officer contacted by RFA acknowledged the couple's arrest and release.

Police in Guma county of neighboring Hotan prefecture said the system of reporting newly arrived guests to police was being more rigorously adhered to than it was in the past.

A police officer in the county's Kokterak township said residents there must report out-of-town guests to authorities within two hours of their arrival and neighbors within one hour of their arrival.

An officer in the county's Choda township said residents must report guests to the police within 10 minutes, and that if they failed to report them within 30 minutes, they would be held responsible, though he didn't elaborate.

"If the guests stay for more than half an hour they need to be reported," he said. "It's the same for any number of guests. Starting from the beginning of this year, this policy has been strict."

Adult and teenage visitors as young as 14 must be reported, he added.

He said he didn't believe that any Uyghurs who failed to report visitors had been taken in for "re-education."

Uyghur rights organization bashes China for atrocities in Xinjiang

23 July 2024, [India Narrative](#)

The Uyghur community residing in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) has been facing atrocities inflicted by China for decades.

East Turkistan Svenska Uyghur Kommitten (SUK), a Uyghur rights organization, lamented China's brutality towards the children of the Uyghur community in a statement released on Sunday.

The statement also claimed that the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (CRC), a UN human rights law for child rights and protection, has not been able to protect the basic rights of over a million Uyghur children who still suffer in XUAR.

In a post on 'X', the organization said, "The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a cornerstone of international human rights law, intended to protect the fundamental rights of children globally. Yet, the ongoing atrocities faced by over a million Uyghur children under Chinese occupation, colonisation and genocide starkly expose the CRC's limitations and failures in enforcement."

The SUK statement further stated, "Over one million Uyghur children have been forcibly abducted by the

CCP from their families, who are detained in concentration camps or prisons. Stripped of their familial support, these defenceless children endure severe human rights abuses. They are subjected to physical and psychological torture, forced labour, organ harvesting, sexual violence, and systematic indoctrination designed to erase their cultural and religious identities and brainwash them into loyal Chinese citizens."

While referring to the laws of CRC to protect children, the SUK mentioned saying, "The CRC explicitly mandates the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and abuse, while safeguarding their rights to education, cultural identity, and familial bonds."

"The CCP's flagrant violations of these rights in East Turkistan represent a profound failure of the CRC to protect these vulnerable children. This situation demands urgent international attention and action to uphold the principles of the CRC and defend children from such egregious human rights abuses," it said.

"The international community's silence and inaction in the face of these atrocities constitute a grave moral and legal failure. The credibility of the CRC is at stake; without decisive action, it risks becoming a mere declaration of intent rather than a robust framework for child protection. Immediate and coordinated diplomatic, economic, and legal measures are essential to hold the CCP accountable and halt these violations" the statement further added.

The statement also urged that the global community must use its power to ensure that the rights and dignity of Uyghur children are restored and protected. Anything less is a betrayal of the CRC's core principles and an abdication of our shared responsibility to protect all children, irrespective of geopolitical considerations.

"The dire plight of Uyghur children demands nothing less than a united, powerful, and unyielding response from the international community," the statement read.

International pressure builds on China for human rights violations in Xinjiang, Tibet

21 July 2024, [Times of India](#)

Human rights advocates have stressed the need for solidarity and measures to ensure accountability for human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet, requiring urgent international attention and action. The situation in Xinjiang and Tibet is seen as a humanitarian crisis, and human rights activists have emphasised the need for support for independent investigations for human rights violations.

United Nations bodies, including the Human Rights Council, have repeatedly raised concerns and called on

China to allow independent observers access to Xinjiang to investigate allegations of human rights violations.

Governments and parliaments of various countries, including Canada and the United States, have made statements and passed resolutions condemning China's actions in Xinjiang and Tibet.

These actions underscore international concern and solidarity with affected communities. In 2009, the Canadian Parliament had also passed a non-binding motion declaring China's actions against Uyghurs in Xinjiang as genocide.

Recently, in a groundbreaking ruling, the Court of the Citizens of the World (CCW) delivered a verdict against China for its alleged perpetration of genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang (East Turkistan) and Tibet.

The tribunal, convened in the Hague, Netherlands, from July 8 to 12, marked a significant moment in international justice as it addressed accusations of systematic atrocities committed by Beijing. Representatives of the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE), speaking on behalf of the Uyghur and Tibetan communities, welcomed the tribunal's decision as a pivotal step towards accountability. ETGE underscored the historical context of East Turkistan as an area with aspirations of independence, now subjected to what they describe as Beijing's relentless campaign to suppress dissent and assimilate the region into a unified Chinese nation. ETGE took to X, and stated, "The Judge underscored that international law mandates the recognition of the right to self-determination. He concluded that China systematically planned and executed acts of genocide and crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples and Chinese dictator Xi Jinping is directly responsible for the crimes. The Judge further highlighted that the ongoing Uyghur Genocide is a "continuous vigorous attack aiming to completely annihilate the Uyghur community." During the hearings, harrowing testimonies from survivors and experts painted a bleak picture of life in Xinjiang, where reports of mass internment camps, forced labour, and coercive assimilation have drawn global condemnation. Similar accusations were levied against China's policies in Tibet, where Tibetan culture and autonomy have long been targets of Chinese state control. The findings of such tribunals can have significant moral and political weight, influencing public opinion, international diplomacy, and calls for accountability. While the CCW may not have the enforcement power of a national court or an international judicial body, its rulings can contribute to the broader discourse on human rights and potentially spur further action by other entities, including governments and international organisations.

On Eid Al-Adha, calls for action highlight Uyghur and Turkic Muslims' plight in Xinjiang

17 July 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

As Muslims around the world celebrate Eid al-Adha, organizations advocating for the rights of Uyghur and Turkic Muslims in East Turkistan (Xinjiang province of China) have issued poignant messages calling for global solidarity and action.

"On this sacred #EidAlAdha, we reflect on faith and resilience. We implore the global #Muslim community to stand with the #Uyghur/Turkic Muslims of occupied #EastTurkistan, who face genocide and are denied their faith. Unite in prayer and action for their dignity and independence," the message reads. Similarly, the East Turkistan National Movement also conveyed Eid Al-Adha greetings, urging the global community to remember those suffering under Chinese occupation.

"As you gather with loved ones to celebrate this sacred holiday, please remember and pray for the Muslims in occupied #EastTurkistan, who are facing colonization and genocide under Chinese occupation," the organization posted.

They further called for collective action, stating, "Stand with us in demanding an end to China's relentless persecution, and join us in our call for justice, liberation, and the restoration of the East Turkist people's dignity, faith, and independence." The East Turkistan National Movement has been at the forefront of efforts to end what it terms the "ongoing Uyghur Genocide," promoting democracy, political and human rights, and striving to restore East Turkistan's freedom and independence. Their messages on this significant Islamic holiday aim to mobilise support from the global Muslim community and beyond, emphasising the urgent need for international intervention.

The situation in East Turkistan, officially known as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region by China, has been a critical human rights issue. Reports of mass detentions, forced labour, and severe restrictions on religious practices have drawn widespread condemnation from human rights organisations and governments worldwide. Despite these efforts, the Chinese government has consistently denied accusations of genocide and human rights abuses, asserting that their actions in the region are aimed at combating extremism and promoting economic development. The Eid al-Adha messages from the East Turkistan Government in Exile and the East Turkistan National Movement serve as a stark reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by Uyghur and Turkic Muslims. As they celebrate this holy occasion, these organisations urge the international community to

unite in prayer and action to support their quest for justice, freedom, and the preservation of their cultural and religious heritage.

China bans Muslim Eid holiday rites for Uyghurs in Xinjiang

16 July 2024, [Genocide Watch](#)

Their aim was to promote the Sinicization of the Muslim group, observers say.



Men dance in front of the Id kah Mosque after Eid al-Fitr morning prayers in Kashgar, northwestern China's Xinjiang region, June 5, 2019.

On an important Muslim holiday last month, police and security officials in China's far-western region of Xinjiang set up camps to keep an eye on Uyghurs, took Uyghurs to see communist-themed films, and visited Uyghur homes to make sure they weren't practicing Muslim religious activities.

The moves around the Qurban Eid, also known as Eid al-Adha or the Feast of the Sacrifice, which fell on June 17 this year in Xinjiang — one of two official Muslim holidays in China — appeared to be attempts to undermine the observation of the Muslim holy day, outside experts said.

Chinese authorities are trying to weaken Uyghurs' ethnic and religious identity and forge their loyalty to the Chinese state and the Communist Party, while maintaining security, the experts said.

"It looks like they are trying to Sinicize Eid," said Erkin Ekrem, a professor at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey, and vice president of the World Uyghur Congress.

"The Chinese government is trying to change the Eid customs, prayers and traditions [by] making Uyghurs consume food along with Chinese people [and] adding Chinese elements to the Eid festivals, thereby removing the Muslim Eid elements," he added.

Before 2017, when the Chinese government started cracking down on religious activities in the predominantly Muslim region, men would observe the holiday by visiting mosques for special prayers,

cooking meals, spending time with relatives and welcoming guests to their homes.

Since then, authorities have also forbidden Islamic dress for women, beards for men, and Muslim names for children. They have also prevented Uyghurs from fasting during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and encouraged the consumption of pork and alcohol, which Islam forbids.

Chinese national consciousness

On the eve of Eid, Ma Xingrui, Communist Party secretary of Xinjiang, visited communities in Urumqi, the region's capital, and asked residents to strengthen Chinese national consciousness and insist on the Sinicization of Islam.

Public security officers celebrated the holiday with Uyghurs and other ethnicities in Xinjiang and promoted "the common consciousness of the Chinese nation," the *Xinjiang Daily* reported on June 19.

The Keriye County Public Security Bureau in Hotan invited teachers at area primary schools, students and parents on June 16 to participate in social activities at a police camp to "build strong Chinese national consciousness and celebrate Eid," the report said.

On the same day, police in Qitai county in the Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture invited Uyghur "relatives" with whom they had been paired up under a previous monitoring program to visit a museum to watch communist-themed films.

On June 17, members of the Public Security Bureau in the prefecture's Manas county visited Uyghur homes and danced with residents, who had no choice but to join in, the news report said.

"The police showed their concern for the public by their actions and also planted the seeds of national unity deep in everyone's hearts," it said.

Assimilation policies

Henryk Szadziewski, director of research at the Uyghur Human Rights Project, said public security agents interfere in Muslim holidays like Eid al-Adha to push assimilationist policies in Xinjiang.

Uyghur identification with Turkic culture along with a belief in Islam and related social and political values are considered a threat because they are outside the control of the Chinese state, he told Radio Free Asia.

"China's policies are intended to weaken those kinds of affinities outside which are beyond the borders of China and to ensure Uyghurs allegiances are pinned to the Chinese state and, of course, the Chinese Communist Party," Szadziewski said.

But the Chinese government separates Islam in China from Islam in the rest of the world, Erkin Ekrem of the World Uyghur Congress said.

"In China, the Sinicization of Islam is being carried out vigorously," he told RFA. "They are trying to create a nation away from Islamic beliefs and customs."

"Deemphasizing the religion adding in this secular Chinese national consciousness [is] meant to delink

Eid al-Adha from its religious origin,” he said. “That is one of the aims here.”

China destroying mosques, erasing Islamic identity from Xinjiang: Report

16 July 2024, [Indian Narrative](#)

Hundreds of mosques and Islamic shrines have been destroyed by China in recent years, as Beijing aims to erase the Islamic culture associated with the Xinjiang province and forcefully assimilate the Uyghurs with their Han Chinese culture, a report by The Economist stated.

World Uyghur Congress reacted to the report, citing the findings of the report.

“Since the 16th century most Uyghurs have practised Islam. But China has no interest in this later period. Instead, officials are trying to erase it. In recent years they have destroyed hundreds of mosques and Muslim shrines across [East Turkistan],” the WUC post on X read.

The report titled ‘China is using archaeology as a weapon’ elaborated how the state is unearthing ancient justifications for its rule over Xinjiang

China has destroyed hundreds of mosques and Muslim shrines across Xinjiang. The museum in Kashgar barely mentions Islam, save for signs claiming that it was forced on Xinjiang and that the Uyghurs “are not Muslim by nature”.

The report cited a Buddhist stupa in Kashgar, an oasis city in the far-western region of Xinjiang. The stupa and a temple next to it were probably built some 1,700 years ago and abandoned a few centuries later. Chinese archaeologists started excavating the site in 2019. They have dug up stone tools, copper coins and fragments of a Buddha statue.

The archaeologists also claim to have found clear proof that Xinjiang has been part of China since ancient times.

The report cited official statements, which claim that artefacts discovered at Mo’er temple are similar to those dug up thousands of miles to the east in areas dominated by the Han, China’s majority ethnic group. Parts of the temple were built in a “Han Buddhist” style. And its architectural features suggest that it was visited by a famous 7th-century monk from central China called Xuanzang. He is known for spreading Buddhism in the country.

“These claims may sound academic, but China’s government is using them to justify its brutal rule over Xinjiang,” the report stated.

China’s security campaign was at its peak in 2018-19, during which around a million Uyghurs and other Muslim residents of Xinjiang passed through camps where they were forcibly assimilated into Han Chinese culture. Critics accuse China of “cultural genocide.”

Officials say they are trying to stamp out religious extremism.

Moreover, if the inhabitants of Xinjiang have always been Chinese, then accusations of forced assimilation make no sense, the report added.

Last month China organised a conference in Kashgar that focused on the discoveries made at Mo’er temple and other sites.

Pan Yue, head of the state’s Ethnic Affairs Commission, said they prove that there is no separation between the culture of Xinjiang and Chinese culture. Those who criticise China’s policies in the region reveal their “ignorance of history” and are peddling “baseless narratives”, he added.

However, experts are of the opinion that actually it is China’s narrative that looks ‘dodgy’.

James Millward of Georgetown University, says the country’s ancient dynasties had an on-and-off military foothold in what is now Xinjiang. But from the 8th century to the early 18th century, they had little influence. Then in 1759 China’s final dynasty, the Qing, conquered the region and turned it into a colony. That is what the Communist Party inherited when it came to power in 1949.

Sites like Mo’er temple are fascinating, but do little to strengthen China’s claims. They demonstrate the globalising effect of the Silk Road, a network of trade routes that linked China with Central Asia and Europe. Just as money and commodities flowed along the road, so did religions such as Buddhism, picking up aspects of local cultures along the way. Many of the Uyghurs’ ancestors were indeed Buddhist. But that hardly means Xinjiang was culturally or politically part of China. After all, Buddhism originally came from India.

Since the 16th century, most Uyghurs have practised Islam. But China has no interest in this later period. Instead, Beijing’s officials are trying to erase it.

The ruins across Xinjiang are surrounded by buildings with sloping roof tiles and red doors, mimicking those of Beijing’s Forbidden City. The style is appropriate, said a Han construction worker. Buddhist culture is part of Han culture, he claimed, and Xinjiang has been part of China for thousands of years, the report added.

CCP’s Anniversary Marred by Outcry Over Xinjiang ‘Genocide’

12 July 2024, [Genocide Watch](#)

On the 103rd anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the party is facing severe criticism from human rights organisations and ethnic groups for alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang, also known as East Turkistan.

The Swedish Uyghur Committee highlighted the grim legacy of the CCP on social media, condemning what

they describe as the party's "ruthless invasion, occupation, and colonisation" of East Turkistan.

The committee's post on Twitter, now known as X, stated, "On #CCP's 103rd anniversary, remember their legacy stained by blood: Ruthless invasion, #occupation, and #colonisation of #EastTurkistan accompanied by their ongoing #genocide against Uyghurs/Turkic peoples."

The post further accused the Chinese government of subjecting millions of East Turkistani people, including Uyghurs, to severe human rights violations. These allegations include torture, execution, organ harvesting, starvation, indoctrination, sexual assault, and forced labour in concentration camps.

The committee also highlighted the forced sterilisation of pregnant Uyghur women, the killing of unborn children, and the abduction of over a million Uyghur children by the CCP for what they termed "horrific abuse," including organ harvesting.

The Swedish Uyghur Committee's post emphasised that the anniversary should not be viewed as a celebration but rather as a reminder of the "monstrous cruelty" perpetrated by the CCP and the "world's complicit silence."

The CCP, which has ruled China since 1949, often uses its anniversary to highlight its achievements and reaffirm its commitment to socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, the party's actions in Xinjiang have drawn widespread international condemnation. Numerous reports and testimonies from survivors have detailed the extent of the abuses, leading many to label the situation as genocide.

As the CCP marks its 103rd anniversary, the voices calling for justice for the Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in Xinjiang grow louder, demanding accountability and an end to the ongoing human rights abuses. (ANI).

Ancient Buddhist temple in Xinjiang stirs controversy

10 July 2024, [RFA](#)

Outside experts dispute Chinese historians' claims it's from the Tang Dynasty and shows Chinese influence.

Two earthen pillars, eroded by sand, in barren terrain are all that's left of an ancient Buddhist temple in the far-western Chinese region of Xinjiang.

Chinese historians and archaeologists assert that a 7th century Chinese empress ordered the construction of the Mor Temple — known locally as Mora, or "chimney" in the Uyghur language — one of the earliest Buddhist sites in the region.

The ruins show China's influence in shaping the history and culture of the region — home today to 11 million mostly Muslim Uyghurs — going back centuries, state-run media said.

"They are a powerful testimony to the diversity, unity and inclusiveness of Chinese civilization," according to a June 3 report by the China News Service.

But experts outside China dispute those claims, saying the Mor Stupa, or pagoda, and other temple structures were built in more of an Indian style.

And it's highly unlikely that Wu Zetian, empress from 690-705 CE during the Tang Dynasty, was involved in the construction of pagodas because it was hundreds of miles away from her court in central China, they say. Instead, the Chinese government-backed research may be driven more by Beijing's efforts to expand its cultural influence in the region, where it is actively seeking to Sinicize Uyghur culture and Muslim practices, they said.

"Empress Wu, the famous female emperor of that time, was avidly promoting Buddhism but not necessarily was she promoting it out in Xinjiang," said Johan Elverskog, a professor of history at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and author of the book *A History of Uyghur Buddhism*.

"There is no way that the Tang was involved in building things that far to the west," he said.

Before Islam

Before Islam arrived in China in the 7th century, Buddhism did flourish in what China today calls Xinjiang, or "New Territories" — but which the Uyghurs refer to as East Turkistan, the name of the Uyghur nation that briefly existed in the mid-20th century.

Western archaeologists and Buddhism researchers believe that Buddhism began to spread to Xinjiang during the Kushan Empire, which controlled the western and northern Tarim Basin in southern Xinjiang and ruled over parts of what is today Afghanistan, Pakistan and India between the 1st century BCE and the 3rd century CE.

Some historical documents show Buddhism spread to the region from Afghanistan and northern Pakistan, Elverskog said, while other documents indicate that the Kingdom of Khotan, in present-day Hotan, adopted Buddhism as the official state religion in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

Archaeological digs at the Mor Temple — about 30 kilometers (19 miles) northeast of Kashgar — since 2019 have determined that the original complex was built in the 3rd century, according to the China News Service report.

It said that elements of Chinese architecture appeared between the 7th and 10th centuries, indicating the prevalence of Chinese Buddhism.

Artifacts discovered around the site reflect Indian and Central Asian Buddhist traditions as well as the influence of the Central Plains, an area along the Yellow River that is believed to be the cradle of Chinese civilization, it said.

But Elverskog said that while there was a Chinese military presence in the region during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), no Buddhist temples were built.

'United' by Chinese culture

The idea that Uyghur culture, including its ancient Buddhist history and structures, should be supplanted by Chinese culture was summed up in a speech by Pan Yue, head of the State Council's National Ethnic Affairs Commission, at an international forum on Xinjiang's history and future held in June in Kashgar.

"Although Xinjiang's culture is diverse, it exists in unity, and the most important factor that unites them is Chinese culture," said Pan, who has been in his role since June 2022.

"Xinjiang should be studied from the perspective of the common history of the Chinese nation and the multipolar unity of the Chinese nation, and Xinjiang should be understood from the perspective of a region where many cultures and religions coexist and ethnic groups live together," he said.

Kahar Barat, a Uyghur-American historian known for his work on Buddhism and Islam in Xinjiang, said there was "absolutely no Chinese influence" in the Buddhist culture of places like Kashgar and Kucha, another city that once had many Buddhist temples.

He said Kashgar and Kucha were part of the Hindu-Greek Gandhara Buddhist culture that existed in present-day Pakistan from the 3rd century BCE to the 12th century CE.

"They call it the Gandhara art," he said. "It's the Gandhara culture created by the Buddhism developed in Kashmir and Pakistan. Therefore, the Buddha paintings and temples in Hotan, Kashgar, Kucha have the influence of Gandhara culture."

Furthermore, Buddhist temples during the Tang Dynasty were modeled after those in India, making it an exaggeration to say that the Mor Stupa and other temple structures reflected the architectural style of that era, he said.

"Pavilion-style construction is a style of India Buddhism," he told RFA. "Hence, all the pavilions in China are inspired by these styles. The building styles in the Han Dynasty were later influenced by Buddhist vihara-style construction."

Elverskog agreed that the Mor Temple was built in Indian style.

"It's obviously based on precedence in northwest India," he said. "That was the main source of the Buddhist culture in Hotan and particularly coming from India. ... So the Buddhism, the iconography, the artwork, was heavily based on northwestern Indian models."

Xia Ming, a political science professor at the College of Staten Island in New York, said China's interpretation of historical Uyghur Buddhism as part of Chinese Buddhism shows the tendency of the Chinese

Communist Party to seek its current legitimacy from Chinese dynasties dating back thousands of years.

"If you look at the thousands of years of Chinese history," he said, "you will see that the Chinese Communist Party will pick and choose any historical node and talk about it if it is useful to them."

China, UAE hold 2nd annual air force drill in Xinjiang

10 July 2024, [AA](#), Riyaz ul Khaliq

Falcon Shield-2024 joint training exercise to continue till late July, says Chinese Defense Ministry

China and the United Arab Emirates are holding the second annual joint air force drill in the Xinjiang region.

According to China's Defense Ministry, the annual Falcon Shield-2024 joint training exercise between the Chinese and UAE air forces has been ongoing in the northwestern Xinjiang province since late June and will continue until late July.

The training between the two air forces aims to "enhance mutual understanding and trust, deepen exchanges and cooperation, improve strategic cooperation, and achieve common goals and expectations of both sides," the ministry said on Wednesday.

Last year, the Falcon Shield-2023 joint training exercise was held in August in the same province.

Meanwhile, Chinese and Lao troops are holding the China-Laos Friendship Shield-2024 joint military exercise in the Lao capital Vientiane.

In another joint military exercise, Chinese troops Tuesday held an opening ceremony of the China-Belarus Eagle Assault-2024 drill in the southwestern city of Brest in Belarus, along the border with Poland.

Uyghur Muslim Genocide: ETGE slams, exposes PRC globally for 'barbaric' human rights abuses in Xinjiang

08 July 2024, [Organiser](#)

On the 15th anniversary of the Uyghur Muslim massacre in Xinjiang, the East Turkistan Government in Exile and its foreign minister along with the Swedish Uyghur Committee (SOC) have staged protests at an international level urging the government to pressurize China to place a complete halt on the ongoing genocide in western China.

The representatives of the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE) and the Swedish Uyghur Committee (SUC) on July 6, 2024, organised protests in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Stockholm and Sweden highlighting the increasing number of atrocities being perpetrated by the CCP authorities onto their Uyghur Community.

The protests by these Uyghur rights organisations were organised on the sidelines of the commemoration of Uyghur massacre. During the protests in Amsterdam's Dam Square, the Foreign Minister of ETGE, Salih Hidayar urged the Dutch government to put pressure on the Chinese government to immediately stop the ongoing genocide upon the Uyghur community.

"We urge the government to act against China's ongoing campaign of colonisation, genocide and occupation. We want them to support the people of East Turkestan to get their rights to independence and right to human dignity. The restoration of East Turkestan's independence is the only way to ensure that their human rights, their resistance and their human dignity are guaranteed," Hidayar said.

The minister further noted that China has refused to implement and respect the fundamental rights of the East Turkestan people. "Unfortunately, despite a lot of countries criticizing China and even the United Nations stating that China has been committing crimes against humanity and has refused to implement and respect the fundamentals of the East Turkestan people," he said.

The minister added that the only way to ensure our human dignity is by restoring independence. "By doing so, they have once again showed that they intend to continue pursuing objectives to completely eradicate the people of East Turkestan. Hence the only way to ensure their human dignity is by restoring their independence, he added.

In another protest led by the Swedish Uyghur Committee outside the Swedish Parliament, a protestor recalling the China's genocidal acts during the Urumqi Massacre of 2009, said, "On that unfortunate day, hundreds if not thousands of Uyghurs were massacred and tens of thousands were arrested across East Turkestan. Since then, the Chinese occupational forces have implemented an even more oppressive surveillance driven police state laying a groundwork of ongoing genocide.

The protestor further referred to Chinese so-called operation of Peoples War in the East Turkestan initiated in 2014 which has marked an even more systematic pattern of genocide.

The protestor lamented that the Uyghurs and other similar communities of the larger Turkestan homeland such as Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tajik in Xinjiang have been subjected to mass interment in concentration camps and prisons where they endure forced mitigation, indoctrination, torture, rape, organ harvesting and executions. "Many are enslaved in factories and forced labour camps under abhorrent conditions and the scope of the genocide is staggering.

During the 2016-17, the Chinese regime forcibly collected DNA voice prints and retina scans from over 36 million individuals aged between 12 to 65. They

have been forcibly sterilised and over a million Uyghur children have been separated from their families and have been placed in state run facilities to be raised as loyal Chinese citizens. The protestors continued that over 60,000 mosques and other cultural sights have been destroyed in an attempt to erase native Uyghur culture.

Uighur culture being erased as Beijing tightens grip on Xinjiang, 15 years after Urumqi riots

09 July 2024, [Asia News Network](#), Miho Tamura



Armed personnel stand guard from an armored vehicle at the entrance of a bazaar in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, in early June. PHOTO: THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN

A report released in February by The Jamestown Foundation, a U.S. research institute, said that authorities in the autonomous region were taking away farmland from Uighur smallholders and that "surplus laborers" were being transferred.

Friday marked 15 years since deadly riots involving Han Chinese and the Uighur ethnic minority in Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in western China.

In late June 2009, Uighur and Han laborers clashed at a toy factory in Guangdong Province, thousands of kilometers away in southeastern China, in an incident that left two Uighurs dead. When Urumqi residents protested on July 5, demanding to know the truth behind the incident, some of them clashed with police. According to Chinese authorities, 197 people died in the ensuing riots and at least 1,700 were injured.

Today, on the pretext of combatting terrorism, the Chinese Communist Party continues to tighten its grip over the region despite U.S. and European criticism that Uighurs are being used for forced labor. As a result of China's policy, the unique culture and customs of Uighurs are being erased.

Vast cotton fields could be seen on both sides of the road about one hour's drive west from Urumqi. As the stifling heat blazed down one day in early June, Uighur men wearing straw hats silently toiled away in the fields.

After driving for about another hour, I arrived in Shihezi. This city is a major base of operations for the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, a

paramilitary organization responsible for defending remote regions and bringing land under cultivation. The corps was established in 1954 as an organization of farmer-soldiers predominantly of Han ethnicity, and Han Chinese now account for about 90% of Shihezi's population.

Cotton has become one of the corps' most important industries. However, the United States blocked imports of cotton from the region in 2021 due to concerns that Uighurs placed in mass internment camps were being mobilized for cotton production. In the name of alleviating poverty, the administration of Chinese President Xi Jinping has promoted labor transfers in which Uighurs were moved to work as laborers, and some reportedly are engaged in such agricultural work as picking cotton.

A report released in February by The Jamestown Foundation, a U.S. research institute, said that authorities in the autonomous region were taking away farmland from Uighur smallholders and that "surplus laborers" were being transferred. The report also stated that forced labor had become "less visible" and "institutionalized."

A museum in central Shihezi that showcases the corps does not mention of the situation surrounding these labor transfers. The museum is filled with exhibits trumpeting the region's development and declares that the corps established cotton spinning factories and achieved great advances. Although the exhibition touches on "harmony" between the Han and Uighurs, visitors to the museum were mostly Han. Not a single Uighur could be seen.

Village names changed

Assimilation policies are moving forward in remote parts of the autonomous region. During a visit to Kashgar in the western part of the region in early June, a large, celebrated bazaar had been surrounded by a fence and its Islamic-style signs had been removed.

In 2022, authorities announced the bazaar would be relocated because the facility had become dilapidated. Even today, heavy machinery is still busily demolishing what remains.

"I've shopped at this place for many years," a Uighur man said. "It's such a pity."

The Chinese flag whips in the breeze above the famous Id Kah Mosque in Kashgar. Many Han tourists were around the mosque, which no longer has an air of religious solemnity.

Beijing, concerned that terrorists from Afghanistan or elsewhere might infiltrate the country, has strengthened policies like these in the remote regions. There is smoldering discontent with the oppressions in places such as Kashgar, where Uighurs make up about 80% of the population. The central government remains highly vigilant due to concerns that the remote regions could become hotbeds for terrorist organizations.

In June, the international human rights organization Human Rights Watch announced that the names of about 630 villages in the autonomous region had been changed by authorities since 2017 to reflect government propaganda. One such new name is Unity. The majority of these affected villages are in Kashgar and other districts, which are home to many Uighurs. The original names had religious or cultural meanings to Uighurs and, according to Human Rights Watch, the changes are part of a broader Chinese government effort to "erase culture and religious expressions" of Uighurs.

15 years after Xinjiang unrest, China fends off criticism of hardline rule

05 July 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Kenji Kawase

Beijing cements support from like-minded states, cushioning West's condemnation.



Uyghur women protest in front of policemen in Urumqi on July 7, 2009. The unrest, which started two days earlier, prompted a harsh crackdown and led to much stricter governance in the Xinjiang region. © Getty Images

Fifteen years ago in Urumqi, the capital of China's northwestern Xinjiang region, thousands of ethnic Uyghurs took to the streets to demand equal treatment and rights as those enjoyed by Han Chinese. Xinjiang would never be the same.

The protests, which erupted on July 5, 2009, ended in what is considered one of the most severe crackdowns by Chinese authorities. By the end of three days of unrest, 197 people were dead, mostly Uyghurs, according to the official account.

The uprising prompted Beijing to adopt a much tougher line in governing Xinjiang -- a hardening that reverberates to this day in the government's international relations.

The July 2009 protests originated as a plea against the perceived failure of the authorities to seriously investigate an earlier incident, in which a false rumor triggered an attack against Uyghurs by Han Chinese at a factory in the southern province of Guangdong. Several ethnic Uyghurs were killed in that dispute.

Dolkun Isa, president of the Munich-headquartered World Uyghur Congress, released a statement on Thursday, calling the suppression of the protests a

"massacre" that "stands as one of the darkest episodes in the history of the Uyghur people." He added that Beijing's "harsh crackdown on the protest marked a pivotal turning point, intensifying the repression of the Uyghur people," which he described as a "genocide" against the mostly Muslim group.

China has long denied such allegations. But the violence a decade and a half ago forced the Chinese government to scramble to contain the fallout, as photos and footage spread worldwide, drawing unwanted international scrutiny of its treatment of ethnic minorities.

At the time, then President Hu Jintao aborted a tour in Italy, skipping a meeting with the G8 countries, which had not yet booted Russia over its illegitimate annexation of Crimea in 2014. China had been invited to Western leaders' annual gathering as a dialogue partner.

The state-owned Xinhua news agency reported rather candidly that Hu had to "cut short his stay in Italy ... due to the situation in northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region." The Portugal leg of Hu's trip was also canceled.

Fast-forward 15 years, and China remains haunted by charges of human rights violations in Xinjiang and attempts to strip away the region's Uyghur identity. But it has also found support from certain segments of the international community in fending off criticism, while it claims credit for promoting Xinjiang's economic development.

In late June, China convened the eighth China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi, showcasing 6,000 products. On Tuesday, the expo's secretariat said the fair had attracted nearly 250,000 visits, leading to 395 contracts worth 615.55 billion yuan (\$84.67 billion).

Meanwhile, current President Xi Jinping is on the road to two of the three former Soviet republics that directly border Xinjiang -- Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.

Both states have dismal human rights records of their own, but China has built friendly ties on shared economic interests and mutual political needs. This was on full display in the joint statement between China and Kazakhstan on Wednesday, signed by Xi and his counterpart President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit.

"Both sides stressed that the significance of maintaining political security is grave," the statement says. The two governments are "staunchly opposed to external forces interfering in internal affairs and politicizing human rights issues and applying double standards." The duo confirmed they would strengthen their "eternal comprehensive strategic partnership."

In the SCO's Astana Declaration, adopted Thursday, all members reaffirmed their determination "to strike against terrorism, separatism and extremism." The summit also churned out a separate document

outlining a three-year action plan among member states to coordinate in fighting these three forces, from 2025 and 2027.

Most SCO members have similar low rankings on the Cato Institute's latest human freedom index of 165 countries and regions. China sits at 149th, while Kazakhstan is in 104th place and Tajikistan in 139th. Kyrgyz Republic, the other direct Xinjiang neighbor that Xi skipped this time, ranks 90th.

China has long justified its hardline policies in Xinjiang as a fight against terrorism, especially since Xi took the helm.

Xi in 2014 implemented the so-called "Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism" in the region, while expanding the notion of "national security" by introducing the concept of a "holistic approach" including 20 elements, from defense, economic and finance to culture, science and technology. The crackdown escalated in 2017 when internment camps were established in the name of countering extremism.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights published a report on Xinjiang in 2022, concluding that Beijing's stated drive against terrorism and extremism "may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity."

The latest communique by G7 leaders gathered in Italy last month once again said the seven Western democracies "remain concerned by the human rights situation in China, including in Tibet and in Xinjiang."

The Chinese government categorically rejects the criticism and describes the internment facilities as "reeducation centers."

Elaine Pearson, Asia director at Human Rights Watch, praised the publication of the U.N.'s report two years ago as a "landmark moment for highlighting the gravity of human rights violations in Xinjiang," while adding that it is up to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk to "make full use of that report to improve the situation for Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang."

Sarah Brooks, China director at Amnesty International, said that this year's "second anniversary of the report's release should be an opportunity to build momentum for an independent international mechanism to monitor, report on and investigate allegations of severe human rights violations, including crimes against humanity in Xinjiang."

Brooks stressed, "No state, no matter how influential, should be shielded from accountability for human rights violations."

Turk, at the opening of the 56th session of the U.N. Human Rights Council on June 18, said he has "continued to engage with China on a range of human rights issues, including the serious concerns my office identified in the Xinjiang region."

He revealed that his staff recently visited Beijing "to discuss, among other things, problematic provisions in China's counterterrorism and criminal laws." Turk expressed hope that such dialogue "will contribute to concrete improvements in all human rights."

Yet China continues to push back, insisting the Xinjiang issue is "in essence about safeguarding the national sovereignty, security and unity." In a report submitted to the U.N. council, Beijing said it had gained support from close to 100 countries and, without naming names, urged "certain countries to abandon ideological bias and to stop politicizing and weaponizing human rights issues."

The document was adopted by the council's working group on Thursday in Geneva, with 98 mainly Western recommendations rejected. The proposals that were denied included implementing the 2022 high commissioner's Xinjiang report, which Beijing calls "completely illegal and void."

The World Uyghur Congress, in its statement on Thursday, once again called on the international community to hold China accountable. "The failure of the international community to scrutinize the Chinese government's actions [allows] for China to continue to implement policies that perpetrate crimes against humanity and genocide in East Turkistan," it said, using its term for the region.

China's Xinjiang Communist Party chief urges 'unwavering' terror crackdown

06 July 2024, [SCMP](#), Kinling Lo

Party secretary Ma Xingrui's call for sustained 'high-intensity crackdowns' follows latest military-police joint exercise in western border region.

The Communist Party chief of China's Xinjiang region has called on security personnel to "unwaveringly" uphold the authorities' "high-intensity crackdown on terrorism".

The call from Ma Xingrui came as the western border region completed its latest military-police joint exercise.

"Social stability must be at the forefront" of "strengthening stability and boosting development", Ma told police officers in Xinjiang on Friday.

"[Our] approach towards high-intensity crackdowns has to remain unwavering," Ma was quoted as saying by Xinjiang Daily, an official newspaper.

"[We] have to eliminate all terrorist threats at the initial stage, and push forward with normalising counterterrorism work."

Ma also called for stronger border security and a "society-wide" ability to control risks. Eliminating political, economic and ideological "risks" were important to ensure the prevention of "structural risks", he said.

The Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region is home to nearly 26 million people, more than half of them from ethnic minority groups, including the mainly Muslim Uyghurs and Kazakhs.

China's years-long crackdown on extremism among Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang has sparked allegations of human rights abuses and sanctions from the United States and other countries. Beijing denies accusations of repression and has hailed its policies in managing ethnic conflicts, combating terrorism and relieving poverty as successful. However, it has continued to step up security measures as part of a campaign to normalise counterterror work.

The latest military-police drills took place in "southern Xinjiang", in the Kunlun Mountains bordering India and Pakistan, according to Xinjiang Daily. The specific location or dates of the exercise were not reported.

Around 3,000 security personnel took part, the report said, including those from the People's Liberation Army, the paramilitary People's Armed Police, the quasi-military Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, and immigration control and public security agencies.

Helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as armoured and assault tanks were used in the exercise, according to state media.

During the drills, personnel practised arresting targeted terrorists, preventing the return and infiltration of terrorists, and combating terrorism in high-altitude regions, footage broadcast by Xinjiang Television showed.

In 2016, Beijing imposed security measures in Xinjiang that it said aimed to crack down on terror attacks following decades of ethnic tensions and unrest. But the measures led to allegations of widespread human rights abuses, including that at least 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities were held in mass internment camps.

Beijing maintains the centres are for "vocational training".

The Xinjiang government has in recent years focused on promoting economic development, especially trade links with its neighbouring Central Asian countries, and also sought to improve its international image.

During a visit to the regional capital Urumqi in August, President Xi Jinping doubled down on "social stability" as a top priority for Xinjiang, calling for greater efforts against terrorism and religious extremism while also pushing economic development.

'Western misinformation regarding Xinjiang' addresses allegations of a genocide

04 July 2024, [WLNS](#)

Recent discussions and reports on the situation in Xinjiang have sparked global debate and divergent viewpoints. The United Nations Human Rights Report of August 31, 2022, has categorized the events in Xinjiang as "crimes against humanity," a classification that notably does not meet the stringent criteria for genocide under the UN Genocide Convention. This stance echoes an earlier assessment by Amnesty International in 2021, which similarly refrained from labeling the situation as genocide.

Despite these nuanced distinctions, the issue has remained contentious, particularly fueled by ongoing assertions from some Western nations and media outlets. The United States, for instance, has been vocal in affirming allegations of genocide in Xinjiang, a stance that aligns with previous US State Department reports and statements from President Biden. These claims have persisted amidst broader geopolitical tensions and strategic interests.

Critics argue that the narrative of genocide in Xinjiang is selective and based on cherry-picked evidence, disregarding countervailing facts such as China's assertions in its White Paper that a significant number of Uyghur detainees have been released, efforts to provide vocational training within detention centers, and the implementation of de-radicalization programs in line with international norms.

Moreover, global opinion on the matter reflects a stark divide between Western countries and those in the Global South, including numerous Muslim-majority nations. While Western nations have predominantly endorsed the genocide narrative, a substantial portion of the international community remains skeptical, viewing the issue through geopolitical lenses rather than purely humanitarian concerns.

Significantly, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), representing 57 member states, has expressed support for China's efforts in Xinjiang, including visits to rehabilitation facilities, reflecting a divergent perspective from Western assertions of genocide. Amidst these debates, critical voices have emerged questioning the underlying motives and agendas driving the genocide narrative. Some analysts argue that geopolitical strategies, including efforts to contain China's influence, play a significant role in shaping international perceptions of Xinjiang. These perspectives highlight broader geopolitical dynamics and selective prioritization of human rights issues on the global stage.

It is essential to approach discussions on Xinjiang with a commitment to factual accuracy and transparency, avoiding sensationalism and political manipulation.

The complexity of the issue underscores the importance of balanced dialogue and comprehensive understanding, respecting diverse viewpoints within the global community.

This press release aims to provide a balanced perspective on the Xinjiang issue, acknowledging divergent global viewpoints while emphasizing the need for factual accuracy and transparency in discussions.

Committee to Protect Journalists demands release of two Kazakh journalists in Xinjiang

03 July 2024, [The Print](#)

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has demanded Chinese authorities release Kazakh journalists – Kairat Domalin and Kuandyk Koben, who have been arrested from Xinjiang region and stop harassing members of the media fraternity.

In a statement, the CPJ said that the Chinese authorities arrested Domalin and Koben in Urumqi a city in Xinjiang in April this year, and the arrests were reported in June by the Atajurt Kazakh Human Rights, a human rights organization based in Kazakhstan. Both of the journalists were employed at the local state-run television network Xinjiang Television in Urumqi.

According to the statement, CPJ has not yet received any information regarding the charges that resulted in the arrest of Domalin and Koben. However, the arrest of Koben might be linked to his work related to historic buildings of Xinjiang that have been intentionally ignored by the Chinese government.

While raising the same matter, Iris Hsu, CPJ's China representative stated, "Chinese authorities must free Kazakh journalists Kairat Domalin and Kuandyk Koben. It's time for China to cease its campaign of harassing and arbitrarily detaining press members of the Muslim ethnic minorities and release all imprisoned journalists."

Domalin was a TV presenter for the program "Zholaushy" (Traveler) on the Xinjiang Television network, and Koben produced, directed, and presented Kazakh-language documentaries and more than 20 award-winning television programs, the CPJ statement claimed. In addition, the call of CPJ to the Public Security Department of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region regarding the safety of the journalists had also gone unanswered.

Previously, CPJ in a report released in 2023 found out that China remains the worst place when it comes to arresting journalists, especially from ethnic minorities. According to CPJ's latest annual prison census, with at least 44 behind bars as of December 1, 2023. Many journalists held were ethnic Uyghurs from Xinjiang.

Meanwhile, international human rights organisations, the United Nations, and several governments of the

state have blamed China and its authorities for its severe crimes against humanity and ongoing genocide in the Xinjiang region, particularly for repressing the region's Muslim ethnic groups. (ANI)

No Uyghurs from Xinjiang went on Hajj pilgrimage, data shows

02 July 2024, [RFA](#), Gulchehra Hoja

The apparent lack of participation is another example of China's repression of Uyghurs, experts say.

No Uyghurs from China's far-western region of Xinjiang were among the Muslims from China who went on this year's Hajj, according to data from the Islamic Association of China and a Uyghur living abroad who went on the pilgrimage to Mecca.

All told, more than 1.8 million people participated in this year's Hajj, which fell between June 14-19, according to Saudi Arabian officials, including 1.6 million foreign pilgrims.

Muslims in China need government permission to make the pilgrimage, which as one of the Five Pillars of Islam is required of all Muslims once in their lives, if health allows.

As of early June, 1,053 pilgrims – 769 from China's Gansu province and 284 from Yunnan province – were registered to go on the Hajj, according to the website of the Islamic Association of China. No Uyghurs or other Muslims from Xinjiang were included in the tally. Last year, 386 pilgrims from Ningxia province and other places in China participated, but none from Xinjiang.

The last time any pilgrim from Xinjiang was reported by the association was in 2016.

Abdusalam Teklimakan Haji, a Uyghur in Turkey who went on the Hajj this year and is a member of the board of the International Union of Eastern Turkistan Organizations, said he saw no Uyghurs from Xinjiang among the Chinese delegation, although he did see some ethnic Hui Muslims carrying Chinese flags.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, which oversees the pilgrimage, allows about 1,000 pilgrims per million people from each country around the world, he said. With an estimated population of 11 million Uyghurs in Xinjiang – which Uyghurs prefer to call East Turkistan – at least 11,000 Uyghurs should be allowed to perform the Hajj.

Radio Free Asia tried contacting the Islamic Association of China and other departments in Xinjiang administering the relevant affairs for comment, but received no response.

Repressing religion

The apparent lack of Uyghur participation suggests Chinese authorities are not permitting any Muslims from Xinjiang from going on the pilgrimage,

and reflects Beijing's wider repression of Uyghur culture and religious practice, activists and experts say. Since 2017, China has severely restricted most religious practices among Uyghurs, including praying in mosques, reciting the Quran and fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, in the name of squelching religious extremism and terrorism.

"The Chinese government's targeted restrictions and repression on Uyghur people's religious activities, such as pilgrimage, prayer and fasting, are part of its genocidal policies against Uyghurs," said Ma Ju, an analyst of Islam based in New York City.

"Although China is giving opportunities to a small number of Hui Muslims to perform Hajj so that they can attract the attention of the world, especially the Muslim world, we know that their religious freedom is also restricted," he said.

"There is no religious freedom for any citizen in China," Ma said.

Just before the start of this year's Hajj season, the Chinese government boosted its propaganda campaign for the Muslim world, experts said.

At the beginning of June, the Chinese Consulate General in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and the Xinjiang Overseas Friendship Association jointly organized a music night in Dubai called "Xinjiang is a Good Place."

China has held similar events in Kuwait, Turkey, Egypt and other Muslim-dominated countries, emphasizing that they respect the freedom of cultural and religious belief in Xinjiang.

Although the events featured Uyghur dancers and singers, no Uyghurs were a part of the Chinese delegation to Mecca.

Chinese authorities arrest 2 ethnic Kazakh TV journalists in Xinjiang

02 July 2024, [CPJ](#)



Armed police officers stand guard on a street in Kashgar in China's Xinjiang region on May 4, 2021. CPJ called on Chinese authorities to release ethnic Kazakh journalists Kairat Domalin and Kuandyk Koben, who were arrested in the region in April 2024. (Photo: Reuters/Thomas Peter)

Chinese authorities must immediately release ethnic Kazakh journalists Kairat Domalin and Kuandyk Koben, who were arrested in China's Xinjiang region, and cease harassing members of the press, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Tuesday.

Chinese police arrested Domalin and Koben in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang region, in April, according to the U.S. Congress-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA). The arrests were first reported by Atajurt Kazakh Human Rights, a human rights organization based in Kazakhstan's biggest city, Almaty, in June.

They both worked as Kazakh-language television journalists for the local state-run television network Xinjiang Television in Urumqi.

CPJ was unable to confirm what, if any, charges the pair face or other details about their arrest. According to RFA, Koben's arrest may be linked to his work on a historic building in Xinjiang that the government has intentionally neglected.

"Chinese authorities must free Kazakh journalists Kairat Domalin and Kuandyk Koben," said Iris Hsu, CPJ's China representative. "It's time for China to cease its campaign of harassing and arbitrarily detaining press members of the Muslim ethnic minorities and release all imprisoned journalists."

Domalin was a TV presenter for the program "Zholashy" (Traveler) on Xinjiang Television network, and Koben produced, directed, and presented Kazakh-language documentaries and more than 20 award-winning television programs.

CPJ's call to the Public Security Department of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region went unanswered.

Serikzhan Bilash, founder of Atajurt Kazakh Human Rights, told CPJ that Koben's brother asked the organization to remove a May 10 YouTube video asking for information from the public about Koben's arrest, fearing that the video would "complicate" Koben's detainment.

According to the RFA report, "several" Kazakh journalists for the state-owned newspaper Xinjiang Daily, along with a few Kazakh editors from different magazines, were also arrested. CPJ could not independently verify these arrests.

China was the world's worst jailer of journalists, according to CPJ's latest annual prison census, with at least 44 behind bars as of December 1, 2023. Many journalists held were ethnic Uyghurs from Xinjiang.

Human rights groups, the United Nations, and foreign governments have accused Chinese authorities of crimes against humanity and genocide in the Xinjiang region as authorities harshly repress the region's Muslim ethnic groups.

CCP's anniversary marred by global outcry over Xinjiang 'genocide'

01 July 2024, [The Print](#)

On the 103rd anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the party is facing severe criticism from human rights organisations and ethnic groups for alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang, also known as East Turkistan.

The Swedish Uyghur Committee highlighted the grim legacy of the CCP on social media, condemning what they describe as the party's "ruthless invasion, occupation, and colonisation" of East Turkistan.

The committee's post on Twitter, now known as X, stated, "On #CCP's 103rd anniversary, remember their legacy stained by blood: Ruthless invasion, #occupation, and #colonisation of #EastTurkistan accompanied by their ongoing #genocide against Uyghurs/Turkic peoples."

The post further accused the Chinese government of subjecting millions of East Turkistani people, including Uyghurs, to severe human rights violations. These allegations include torture, execution, organ harvesting, starvation, indoctrination, sexual assault, and forced labour in concentration camps.

The committee also highlighted the forced sterilisation of pregnant Uyghur women, the killing of unborn children, and the abduction of over a million Uyghur children by the CCP for what they termed "horrific abuse," including organ harvesting.

The Swedish Uyghur Committee's post emphasised that the anniversary should not be viewed as a celebration but rather as a reminder of the "monstrous cruelty" perpetrated by the CCP and the "world's complicit silence."

The CCP, which has ruled China since 1949, often uses its anniversary to highlight its achievements and reaffirm its commitment to socialism with Chinese characteristics. However, the party's actions in Xinjiang have drawn widespread international condemnation. Numerous reports and testimonies from survivors have detailed the extent of the abuses, leading many to label the situation as genocide.

As the CCP marks its 103rd anniversary, the voices calling for justice for the Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples in Xinjiang grow louder, demanding accountability and an end to the ongoing human rights abuses. (ANI)

China-US

Chinese envoy calls out US 'political correctness' of taking tough line on China

20 July 2024, [SCMP](#)

Sister-city relations offer room for the two countries to advance relations, Xie Feng tells conference in Washington state.

"Grave challenges" confront Sino-US ties, Beijing's envoy to Washington said on Friday as he called out the "political correctness" in the United States of being tough on China.

Addressing a conference in Tacoma, Washington state via video link, Xie Feng called for deeper subnational exchanges, saying it would offer a more solid foundation for ties and "greater room" to move relations forward.

But there are fresh challenges in the way of these more local exchanges. "In recent years, the so-called political correctness of being tough on China has been spreading in the United States, casting a chilling effect on sister-city cooperation and subnational interactions," Xie said.

However, setbacks in US-China ties would not change the "fundamental wish of our peoples for friendship and cooperation", he added.

"The China-US relationship is still facing grave challenges. We need to pool strength from all to get the relationship better," he said in a transcript of the speech posted on the embassy's website.

Xie made the comments at the sixth US-China Sister Cities Summit co-sponsored by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, an agency under China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote exchanges with other countries.

According to Xie, the event was the first on China-US subnational exchanges held in the US in five years.

Tacoma, a port city that Chinese President Xi Jinping visited in 2015, became sister cities with the southeastern Chinese city of Fuzhou in 1994.

In his address, the Chinese envoy said sister-city relationships between China and the US had flourished, with 286 pairs already established.

"Serving as bridges for mutual understanding and trust, they have nurtured goodwill between the two peoples, and injected vigour into China-US relations," he said.

Xie noted that since the start of last year, more than 30 delegations from Chinese provinces and cities had visited the US, and these exchanges had helped to "stabilise" US-China ties.

He expected greater exchanges and visits "so that, drop by drop, we can thaw the ice of

misunderstanding, and ultimately form a vast ocean of friendship between our two peoples".

China and the US have sought to ease their strained ties, including with the closely watched meeting between Xi and US President Joe Biden in November.

There has been more engagement since then, including on climate change and artificial intelligence.

But in June, US ambassador to China Nicholas Burns said Beijing had made people-to-people exchanges "impossible", including by preventing Chinese nationals from taking part in American government programmes.

Xie, in his speech on Friday, also said that subnational cooperation between Chinese and American cities had brought benefits to both sides, noting that China was the top export market for three US states and in the top three markets for 32.

He urged American firms to seize opportunities brought by China's "openness and development", and called for an expansion in cooperation between sister cities.

"A brighter future for the 1.7 billion people of our two countries cannot be achieved without a healthy and stable China-US relationship," he said.

"It is our sincere hope that our sister-city relationships will continue to be a fountain of strength, giving strong and sustained impetus to the broader bilateral relationship, so as to keep it surging forward."

Tacoma mayor Victoria Woodards said in her speech that sister-city ties between the US and China had allowed the two countries to "build bridges of friendship and cooperation that transcends borders".

"I truly believe that if we can work together to address all the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, we can and we will create a future that is bright and prosperous for every one of our communities," she said.

China halts nuclear arms talks with US over Taiwan support

18 July 2024, [Aljazeera](#)

Beijing said the US's weapons sales to Taiwan has 'compromised the political atmosphere' for continued talks on nuclear non-proliferation.

China has suspended negotiations on nuclear non-proliferation and arms control with the United States in protest against Washington's arms sales to the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

The US called Beijing's decision on Wednesday "unfortunate", while analysts said the move deals a potentially serious setback to global arms-control efforts.

China and the US began nuclear weapons discussions in November as part of a bid to ease mistrust ahead of a summit between Presidents Xi Jinping and Joe Biden.

Further dialogue had not been publicly announced since, with a White House official in January urging Beijing to respond “to some of our more substantive ideas on risk reduction”.

A spokesperson for China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday said the US’s arms sales to Taiwan, a territory that it claims, had “seriously compromised the political atmosphere for continuing the arms-control consultations”.

“Consequently, the Chinese side has decided to hold off discussion with the US on a new round of consultations on arms control and non-proliferation,” Lin Jian, the spokesperson, told a regular news briefing in Beijing.

“The responsibility fully lies with the US,” he said.

Lin added that China was willing to maintain communication on international arms control, but said the US “must respect China’s core interests and create necessary conditions for dialogue and exchange”.

The US switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979 but has remained Taiwan’s most important partner and biggest arms supplier, sparking repeated condemnations from China.

Taiwan has protested for the past four years about stepped-up Chinese military activity near the island, including almost daily missions by Chinese warplanes and warships.

Arms-race risks

US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller slammed China’s move, saying Beijing has chosen to follow Russia’s lead by asserting that arms-control engagement cannot proceed while there are other challenges in the bilateral relationship.

“We think this approach undermines strategic stability. It increases the risk of arms-race dynamics,” Miller told reporters.

Arms-race risks

US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller slammed China’s move, saying Beijing has chosen to follow Russia’s lead by asserting that arms-control engagement cannot proceed while there are other challenges in the bilateral relationship.

“We think this approach undermines strategic stability. It increases the risk of arms-race dynamics,” Miller told reporters.

“Unfortunately, by suspending these consultations, China has chosen not to pursue efforts that would manage strategic risks and prevent costly arms races, but we, the United States, will remain open to developing and implementing concrete risk-reduction measures with China,” he said.

The Biden administration advocates a policy of “compartmentalization”, in which nuclear arms control talks are segregated from other contentious Sino-US issues.

The Chinese decision comes just over a month after the Biden administration said the US may have to

deploy more strategic nuclear weapons to deter growing threats from Chinese and Russian arsenals.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association advocacy group, told the Reuters news agency that the US, Russia and China are legally bound as signatories of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty – the cornerstone of global arms control – to “engage in talks to prevent the arms race”.

“The only way they can accomplish that is through serious dialogue and Russia’s refusal to do so and China’s decision to do so are very serious setbacks,” he said.

The US has a stockpile of about 3,700 nuclear warheads, of which roughly 1,419 strategic nuclear warheads were deployed. Russia has about 1,550 nuclear weapons deployed and according to the Federation of American Scientists, a stockpile of 4,489 nuclear warheads.

Washington meanwhile estimates that China has 500 operational nuclear warheads and will probably have more than 1,000 by 2030.

US officials have expressed frustration that Beijing has shown little interest in discussing steps to reduce nuclear weapons risks. But Beijing has long argued that the US already has a much larger arsenal.

U.S pursuing visa restrictions on Chinese officials involved in human rights abuses in Tibet and East Turkistan

18 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The United States State Department is taking action to impose visa restrictions on Chinese officials involved in human rights violations in Tibet and East Turkistan.

In a statement issued on Friday, July 12 by Mathew Miller, the United States State Department spokesperson stated, “The United States continues to promote accountability in the defence of human rights in China. Today, the State Department is taking steps to impose visa restrictions on People’s Republic of China (PRC) officials for their involvement in the repression of marginalized religious and ethnic communities.

The PRC has not lived up to its commitments to respect and protect human rights, as demonstrated by the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, the erosion of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, persistent human rights abuses in Tibet, and transnational repression around the world. We call on the PRC to abide by the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to accept the many recommendations made this year during the Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record, including unconditionally releasing PRC nationals it has arbitrarily and unjustly detained”.

On June 11, 2024, the UN released the Chinese government's response to the recommendations from the latest Universal Periodic Review (UPR) conducted in [January 2024](#) revealing that China would accept 290 out of 428 recommendations, partially accept 8, note 32, and reject 98. However, these accepted recommendations exclude addressing the concerns raised by UN member states regarding severe human rights abuses in Tibet and East Turkistan, such as crimes against humanity, torture, forced disappearances, and the persecution of human rights defenders and journalists.

The Chinese government's approach to the UPR review, consistent with its tactics in previous reviews in 2009, 2013, and 2018, involved submitting misleading information and preventing domestic civil society groups from contributing to the state report or the review process. Additionally, through a vigorous lobbying campaign, China influenced several states to pose benign questions, make vague recommendations, and praise its human rights record. This strategy resulted in many weak recommendations that the Chinese government could easily accept, thus creating a facade of compliance while avoiding substantial reforms.

Despite the heavy pressure, some countries took a principled approach, raising concerns, and making recommendations, based on the growing body of evidence of abuses compiled by NGOs, UN special procedures, treaty bodies and the UN Human Rights Office.

US to sanction Chinese officials for alleged ongoing human rights violations

14 July 2024, [Jurist News](#), Nada Wilson

The US announced Friday that they will be imposing visa restrictions on People's Republic of China officials due to continuing human rights violations against minority groups. The decision is underpinned by US legislation, namely Section 212 (a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The alleged ongoing human rights violations include "the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, the erosion of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, persistent human rights abuses in Tibet, and transnational repression around the world." The US has called upon China to amend its human rights policies, stating they must:

abide by the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and accept the many recommendations made this year during the Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record, including unconditionally releasing PRC nationals it has arbitrarily and unjustly detained.

On the same day, the Chinese government also announced sanctions against six US defense companies for selling arms to Taiwan, in addition to five senior management officers from the sanctioned companies. Within this year, the Chinese government announced sanctions against American defense companies repeatedly for engaging in arms trade with Taiwan, allegedly breaching the "One China" principle.

The genocide in Xingjiang against Uyghur Muslims has been reported as an attempt at cultural erasure from China. Uyghur people from 630 villages have been "detained [and] tortured" such that they have been "beat[en] with sticks, [had] fingernails pulled off, some are shackled by heavyweights, immobilized for months on end. Detained women and men have been raped and starved."

China has also reportedly attempted to isolate Tibet from foreign nations by limiting its capacity to interact or communicate with foreign entities. Relatedly, US President Joe Biden signed into law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" which broadens the definition of Tibet to cover not only the Tibet Autonomous Region but also the Tibetan areas of other provinces. In response, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson decried that the law "grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs" by encouraging "Tibet independence." The spokesperson further claimed that the TAR enjoys "social stability and harmony," with prosperous economic development and robust wellbeing protection.

In Hong Kong, the international community is concerned with the development following the enactment of the 2020 national security law and another local national security legislation in 2024, both of which have compromised the autonomy of Hong Kong and undermined the freedoms and rights of Hong Kong people.

Last month, the EU similarly expressed concerns about "very serious human rights situation" in China Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong in the 39th session of the Joint Human Rights Dialogue.

China Threatens To Retaliate Over US Resolve Tibet Bill

14 July 2024, [Bharat Shakti](#)

China strongly opposed U.S. Tibet Dispute Act and vows to defend its interests

China strongly opposed a U.S. law signed by President Joe Biden that urges Beijing to address Tibet's demands for autonomy, vowing to "firmly defend" its interests. On Friday, President Biden signed the Tibet Dispute Act into law. This is a significant step in urging Beijing to hold talks with Tibetan leaders. These talks,

which have been stalled since 2010, aim to secure a negotiated agreement on the Himalayan region and address the aspirations of the Tibetan people regarding their historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

The law, according to China's foreign ministry, 'grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs, undermines China's interests, and sends a severely wrong signal to the 'Tibet independence' forces.' This potential impact is a cause for concern for China.

Although Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the law appears to question that position, analysts say. The U.S. has long supported the rights of the Tibetan people to practice their religion and culture, accusing China of human rights violations in the remote region bordering India.

"The U.S. must not implement the Act," the China's ministry said. "If the U.S. continues down the wrong path, China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests."

There has been considerable attention on Tibet-China issues, particularly regarding the Dalai Lama's recovery from a medical procedure and his recent 89th birthday. The exiled spiritual leader has stated that he intends to address questions about his succession ar

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Remarks on the US Signing into Law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act"

13 July 2024, [Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America](#)

Q: On July 12 local time, US President Joe Biden signed into law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act." The Act gives recognition to the so-called notion of "Greater Tibet" made up by the Dalai group, and asks the US government and the United States Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues to counter "disinformation about Tibet" from the Chinese government. President Biden said in a statement that the Act "does not change longstanding bipartisan United States policy to recognize the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China as part of the People's Republic of China." What's China's comment?

A: The so-called "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" violates the US government's long-held position and commitments and the basic norms governing international relations, grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs, undermines China's interests, and sends a severely wrong signal to the "Tibet independence" forces. China firmly opposes it and has protested to the US side.

Xizang has been part of China since ancient times. Xizang affairs are China's internal affairs which brook

no interference by any external forces. Xizang today enjoys social stability and harmony, with sound economic performance and people's well-being well protected. Xizang is making fresh progress in effectively running its society, maintaining social stability, and achieving high-quality development. No one and no force should ever attempt to destabilize Xizang to contain and suppress China. Such attempts will never succeed.

We urge the US side to take concrete actions to honor its commitments of recognizing Xizang as part of China and not supporting "Tibet independence." The US must not implement the Act. If the US continues down the wrong path, China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests.

China blasts US Tibet-China dispute bill, vows to defend its interests

13 July 2024, [Reuters](#)

China expressed strong opposition on Saturday to a U.S. law signed by President Joe Biden that presses Beijing to resolve a dispute over Tibet's demands for greater autonomy, vowing to "firmly defend" its interests.

Biden signed, opens new tab into law on Friday the Tibet dispute act, which seeks to push Beijing to hold talks with Tibetan leaders, stalled since 2010, to secure a negotiated agreement on the Himalayan region and spur China to address the Tibetan people's aspirations on their historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

The law "grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs, undermines China's interests, and sends a severely wrong signal to the 'Tibet independence' forces," China's foreign ministry said.

Although Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the law appears to question that position, analysts say. The U.S. has long supported the rights of the Tibetan people to practice their religion and culture, accusing China of human rights violations in the remote region bordering India.

"The U.S. must not implement the Act," the China's ministry said. "If the U.S. continues down the wrong path, China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests."

Attention has focussed on Tibet-China issues as the Dalai Lama, recuperating from a medical procedure, turned 89 last week. The exiled spiritual leader has said he will clarify questions about his succession around his 90th birthday, while China insists it will choose his successor.

China's top political advisory body strongly opposes U.S. signing of Xizang-related act

13 July 2024, [Xinhua](#)

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee on Saturday expressed strong indignation at and firm opposition to the United States on its signing into law of the so-called "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act."

At a symposium held Saturday, members of the Committee of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the CPPCC National Committee slammed the act as full of extremely erroneous views and provocative remarks, adding that it was blatant interference in China's internal affairs under the guise of "ethnicity," "religion" and "human rights."

The act fully exposes the United States' sinister intention of interfering in China's internal affairs and containing China's peaceful development, the committee members said, describing the act as a serious betrayal of the U.S. government's commitment to acknowledging that Xizang is part of China and not supporting "Tibet independence."

They said Xizang has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times and the people of the Tibetan ethnic group are members of the Chinese nation. This is a fact recognized by the world and will not change at anytime, they added.

Since ancient times, Xizang has forged unbreakable bonds with the rest of China in geographical, consanguineal, political, economic and cultural terms, they said.

The U.S. side and the Dalai clique audaciously distorts history and brazenly denies the fact of China's sovereignty over Xizang. This is a typical act of U.S.-style bullying, they added.

In the 65 years since the democratic reform in Xizang, great historic changes have taken place, they said, adding that since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, Xizang has entered a period of best development and greatest changes, during which the people have benefited the most.

China is a unified multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. China has maintained ethnic unity, religious harmony and social stability for years, which prove that its policies on ethnic and religious affairs are completely correct, they said.

Tibetan Buddhism has a glorious tradition of patriotism and has a complete set of religious rituals and historical norms governing the reincarnation of Living Buddhas that has been respected and upheld by the Tibetan Buddhist community, the committee members said.

The Chinese government implements the policy of freedom of religious belief, respects and protects

religious traditions, and manages religious affairs in accordance with the law, rendering U.S. interference completely unwarranted, they said.

The process of building a new, modern socialist Xizang that is united, prosperous, civilized, harmonious, and beautiful is unstoppable by any force, they added.

US sanctions more Chinese officials for 'genocide and crimes against humanity' in Xinjiang

13 July 2024, [SCMP](#), Robert Delaney

State Department announcement caps week of sharp rebukes over Beijing's alleged human-rights abuses and support for Russia against Ukraine.

US President Joe Biden's administration on Friday said it would impose sanctions on more Chinese officials for an "ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity", capping off a week of sharp rebukes over Beijing's alleged human-rights abuses and support for Russia's war against Ukraine.

The US State Department announced it was "taking steps to impose visa restrictions on People's Republic of China (PRC) officials for their involvement in repression of marginalised religious and ethnic communities".

"The PRC has not lived up to its commitments to respect and protect human rights, as demonstrated by the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, the erosion of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, persistent human-rights abuses in Tibet, and transnational repression around the world," it said.

In March, the State Department criticised Hong Kong for its passage of a new domestic national security law, claiming vague language in its provisions created uncertainty for some of the city's residents.

At the time, the State Department said it was "analysing" the law to understand what risks were involved for American citizens.

Hong Kong lawmakers unanimously passed Hong Kong's domestic national security law just hours earlier, at the end of a marathon session, in which they fast-tracked the constitutionally mandated legislation. Biden, with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, included accusations of human-rights abuses in their condemnation of China during the just-concluded annual Nato summit, which the US leader hosted in Washington.

Nato's stern language about China during the summit followed many years of pressure from Washington for the transatlantic security alliance to officially portray Beijing as a threat to the rules-based global order.

Human-rights concerns were highlighted by Nato along with closer economic engagement with Russia,

which, it said, keeps Moscow's troops fighting in Ukraine.

China's government reacted quickly, arguing that its policies in all areas cited by the State Department had brought social stability and economic development. Beijing vowed to "respond in kind".

"The so-called 'transnational repression' was invented by the US side through fabricating and piecing together 'evidence' to prosecute public-security officers and other Chinese government officials, engaging in large-scale political manipulation and playing up the threat to China," said Liu Pengyu, a spokesman for Beijing's embassy in Washington.

"China urges the US to stop smears against China under the pretext of issues related to Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and 'transnational repression' and lift its illegal unilateral sanctions against Chinese officials," he added.

"If the US refuses to change course, China will not flinch and will respond in kind."

In an earlier round of sanctions based on accusations of human-rights abuses in Tibet, in 2022, the Treasury Department froze the US assets of and blocked transactions with Wu Yingjie, the Chinese government's top official in Tibet from 2016 to 2021, and Zhang Hongbo, identified at the time as the Tibetan region's police chief since 2018.

Last year, the State Department announced it was imposing visa sanctions on Chinese officials pursuing "forced assimilation" of children in Tibet.

Friday's announcement, which did not identify which individuals would be denied visas or say how many would be added to the blacklist, adds to the pressure that the White House and the US Congress continue to heap on China on this front.

US lawmakers have made Beijing's treatment of the country's religious minorities including Tibetans and Uyghurs a priority, leading to recent laws like the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act.

A report released by the US State Department in April accused Beijing of continuing to "dismantle" Hong Kong's political freedoms and autonomy in violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

The report highlighted authorities' enforcement of the 2020 national security law, including its retroactive application and the denial of bail to activists in national-security cases.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Remarks on the US Signing into Law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act"

13 July 2024, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China](#)

Q: On July 12 local time, US President Joe Biden signed into law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-

China Dispute Act." The Act gives recognition to the so-called notion of "Greater Tibet" made up by the Dalai group, and asks the US government and the United States Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues to counter "disinformation about Tibet" from the Chinese government. President Biden said in a statement that the Act "does not change longstanding bipartisan United States policy to recognize the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China as part of the People's Republic of China." What's China's comment?

A: The so-called "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" violates the US government's long-held position and commitments and the basic norms governing international relations, grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs, undermines China's interests, and sends a severely wrong signal to the "Tibet independence" forces. China firmly opposes it and has protested to the US side.

Xizang has been part of China since ancient times. Xizang affairs are China's internal affairs which brook no interference by any external forces. Xizang today enjoys social stability and harmony, with sound economic performance and people's well-being well protected. Xizang is making fresh progress in effectively running its society, maintaining social stability, and achieving high-quality development. No one and no force should ever attempt to destabilize Xizang to contain and suppress China. Such attempts will never succeed.

We urge the US side to take concrete actions to honor its commitments of recognizing Xizang as part of China and not supporting "Tibet independence." The US must not implement the Act. If the US continues down the wrong path, China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests.

China slams US for spreading disinformation

11 July 2024, [China Daily](#)

China firmly opposes the continued spread of ungrounded false information by the United States about Russia's so-called "defense industrial base fueled by China," Foreign Ministry spokesperson [Lin Jian](#) said on Thursday.

Lin's remarks came after US Secretary of State [Antony Blinken](#)'s accusation at the 2024 NATO Public Forum.

"We express strong dissatisfaction with and firm opposition to the erroneous remarks made by the US side," Lin told a daily press briefing.

China urges U.S. not to support "Tibet independence" forces: spokesperson

08 July 2024, [Xinhua](#)

China urges the United States to stop supporting or endorsing in any way the "Tibet independence" forces and their anti-China and separatist activities, foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Monday.

Lin's remarks came after U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a press statement extended best wishes to Dalai Lama on the occasion of his 89th birthday, and reaffirmed U.S. commitment to supporting efforts to preserve Xizang's linguistic, cultural and religious heritage.

Lin told a regular press briefing that the position of the Chinese government on Xizang-related issues is consistent and clear. Xizang affairs are China's internal affairs which brook no interference by any external forces.

"Over the years, Xizang has enjoyed a booming economy, social harmony and stability, and sound preservation of its cultural heritage. The rights and freedoms of all ethnic groups in Xizang, including the freedom of religious belief and the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, are fully protected," Lin said, adding this is a fact and seen by many in the international community.

As many people know, 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, the spokesperson said.

"We urge the United States to fully understand the gravity and sensitivity of Xizang-related issues, truly respect China's core interests, be fully aware of the Dalai group's anti-China and separatist nature, honor the commitments the United States has made to China on issues related to Xizang, and stop supporting or endorsing in any way the 'Tibet independence' forces and their anti-China and separatist activities," Lin said.

US-China ties may have hit a wall since Xi-Biden summit, noted Chinese commentator warns

08 July 2024, [SCMP](#), Orange Wang

'Fundamental distrust' must not prevail, or 'another crisis' cannot be ruled out, US-China relations expert Da Wei tells Beijing forum.

Moves to stabilise China-US ties may have reached their "limit" since a summit eight months ago, a leading Chinese political scholar has warned.

Da Wei, director of the Centre for International Security and Strategy (CISS) at Tsinghua University, said both countries needed to make their intentions and goals more clear and convincing to each other.

This was crucial to preventing "fundamental distrust", Da told an international security forum in Beijing on Sunday.

He also warned of "negative development" in bilateral ties, particularly on Taiwan, and technological and economic issues, noting that recent remarks from senior officials on either side had been marked by impatience, frustration, anxiety and disappointment.

"This tendency is not good," the US-China relations specialist told a panel at the World Peace Forum, which was jointly hosted by Tsinghua and the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, a government-run policy group.

"Another crisis or some kind of confrontation" could not be ruled out if the present trajectory continued, he cautioned.

The summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Joe Biden in California last November was followed by several positive signs for the bilateral relationship after months of extreme tensions.

The two countries have resumed high-level dialogue, including military-to-military talks, launched several working groups, held negotiations on trade, finance, and climate and counternarcotics action, and also restarted cooperation on deporting illegal Chinese immigrants from the US.

But tensions continue to build on a number of fronts, most notably over US trade tariffs and moves to hobble China's hi-tech access, its relationship with Russia and what the US and its allies see as Beijing's growing regional assertiveness.

Uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the US presidential election in November has further added to worries about the future of the relationship.

In a phone call with US deputy secretary of state Kurt Campbell on June 27, Chinese executive vice-foreign minister Ma Zhaoxu urged Washington to respect Beijing's concerns.

Washington should take concrete actions on its commitment to not support Taiwanese independence, stop interfering in China's internal affairs relating to Tibet, halt support for Philippine "provocations" in the South China Sea and refrain from "smearing" what was "normal" Sino-Russian trade, Ma said.

Campbell said US commitment to the Philippines under their 1951 mutual defence treaty was "ironclad", while reiterating concerns over China's alleged support for Russia's defence industrial base, an issue US Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised again earlier this month when he said China was helping to sustain Russia's war in Ukraine.

Wu Xinbo, dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University and on the same panel as Da, said that the China-US relationship still "lacked reciprocity" and was "uneven".

“China has tried to accommodate US concerns on artificial intelligence dialogue, military-to-military relations, fentanyl, and so on. But on the US side, the Biden administration has been very reluctant to address China’s concerns,” he said.

“The Taiwan issue or sanctions or tariffs, [on] all these kinds of things, there has not been much progress.”

Others on the panel were Susan Thornton, former US acting assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; and Douglas Paal, former director of the American Institute in Taiwan, Washington’s de facto representative office.

Da said that the process of stabilising bilateral relations was “slowing down”, adding: “We have probably picked the low-hanging fruits already.”

China and the US had taken a bottoms-up approach to creating trust over the past eight months, which had been “effective”, Da noted.

“But there is a limit,” he said. “I think we are reaching that limit. Because if you have fundamental distrust [of] the other side, I think these negative sentiments will prevent us from having very meaningful cooperation or even coexistence.”

Both sides were still very suspicious of the other’s sincerity on stabilising relations and continued to view each other through a “very negative” lens, he added.

“We need to understand the basic motives and the purpose of the other side,” he said. “Following that, we need to clean up our house to remove the policies that are inconsistent with [our main goals].”

Da also called on the US to take some actions to convince Beijing that its goal was not containment of China.

For instance, he said, the White House should publicly state that new Taiwanese leader William Lai Ching-te’s words and actions did not align with Washington’s “one-China” policy.

Beijing sees Taiwan as part of China to be reunited by force if necessary. The US, like most countries, does not recognise Taiwan as an independent state, but is opposed to any attempt to take the self-governed island by force and committed to supplying it with weapons.

Da also called on the US and China to work together on Ukraine and the Middle East, as “we have some shared interest there, rather than veto each other at the United Nations. That’s meaningless.”

Referring to his conversations with Russian intellectuals about how the US and Russia had missed opportunities to build trust over the past two decades, Da said the same scenario should not play out for Beijing and Washington.

He also dismissed concerns that the wait for the US election results meant ties had entered what in American sporting parlance is called “garbage time” – when the proceedings become perfunctory.

“We need to be on the same page, understanding each other’s goal clearly and from the bottom of the heart, then we maybe can ... have real stability in the next four years.”

US House probes Harvard’s handling of students protest during Chinese ambassador speech

06 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



(L-R) Harvard students Cosette Wu and Tsering Yangchen after the protest on April 20, 2024 (Photo_Coalition of Students Resisting the CCP (Photo/SFT))

The US House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party initiated an investigation on Monday into Harvard University’s response to student protests during Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng’s speech at the Harvard Kennedy School on April 20. Members of the Coalition of Students Resisting the CCP and Students for a Free Tibet were forcibly removed by an unidentified individual in a dark suit during the event.

Student activists Cosette Wu and Tsering Yangchen interrupted Xie Feng’s address, shouting slogans and condemning China’s human rights record. Following the incident, one of the students was approached by an alleged event organizer who sought the names of those who had challenged the ambassador, according to the House Committee.

“This incident raises serious questions regarding possible transnational repression by the Chinese government and the involvement of international students from China at Harvard in acts of harassment and intimidation condoned by the Chinese government against its critics,” wrote Chairman John Moolenaar.

Chairman Moolenaar further noted a troubling trend of Chinese students infringing upon their peers’ freedom of expression, citing a recent case in which a former student from the Berkeley College of Music was sentenced for threatening and harassing a fellow Chinese student who had posted pro-democracy fliers on campus.

The speech by Ambassador Xie was organised by the Kennedy School's Greater China Society as part of its two-day Greater China Conference. During Xie's opening remarks, six protesters from Students for a Free Tibet and the Coalition of Students Resisting the CCP disrupted the event, holding Tibetan flags and banners denouncing China's human rights abuses. Harvard University has yet to comment on the incident.

China makes mock dill of destroying US F-35 and F-22 fighter jets. Is PLA preparing for war with US? Details here

05 July 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

Can you imagine the People's Liberation Army exploding and destroying US fighter jets worth £78,000 each when the two countries are not at war? Not exactly. There is no US-China war and the Chinese Army has not bombed the US Air Force. What they have done is taking mock drills of exploding jet fighters as a part of their training exercise. According to 'Express', Airbus and Google Earth have captured the images showing destroying US F-35 and F-22 fighter jets in a remote desert area in northwest **China**. The satellite pictures suggest that the Chinese military destroyed these dummy aircraft with a nearby runway displaying scorch marks and bomb blast craters.

Potential China-US war scenario?

These images also show that China is taking a possible war scenario seriously and is getting ready to target and destroy the US fighters if such a situation emerges in real terms. The seriousness and preparedness of the PLA can be understood by the fact that the landscape in the images is dotted with various types of aircraft models. In the images several hangars and radar towers can be seen, indicating a comprehensive and realistic training environment for Chinese forces.

Mock drill by the Chinese Army

The mock drill by the Chinese Army has come after North Korea test-fired its two ballistic missiles after Pyongyang vowed "offensive and overwhelming" responses to a new US military drill with South Korea and Japan. It cannot be said that China and North Korea are working in tandem, but they are certainly making preparations to meet any challenge from a common enemy.

North Korea's missile tests

According to 'Express', the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the North Korean Army confirmed that the missiles were launched 10 minutes apart in a northeasterly direction from the town of Jangyon in southeastern North Korea.

If media reports are to be believed, the first missile flew 600 kilometers or 370 miles, and the second missile was 120 kilometers or 75 miles. North Korea

generally test-fires its missiles toward its eastern waters.

FAQs:

Have the Chinese Army destroyed US fighter jets?

Not exactly. The People's Liberation Army has carried out a mock drill in which dummy jet fighters were targeted, bombed and destroyed somewhere in Northwest China.

How serious is China over a potential war with the US?

The seriousness and preparedness of the PLA can be understood by the fact that the landscape in the images is dotted with various types of aircraft models. In the images several hangars and radar towers can be seen, indicating a comprehensive and realistic training environment for Chinese forces.

US deports 116 Chinese migrants in first 'large' flight in 5 years

03 July 2024, [AP](#), Rebecca Santana

The Department of Homeland Security said Tuesday that it sent 116 Chinese migrants from the United States back home in the first "large charter flight" in five years.

The flight, which happened over the weekend, comes as Chinese immigration has become the subject of intense political debate in the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

"We will continue to enforce our immigration laws and remove individuals without a legal basis to remain in the United States," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement.

The department said it was working with China to "reduce and deter irregular migration and to disrupt illicit human smuggling through expanded law enforcement efforts." It did not respond to questions about how long the migrants had been in the U.S.

In recent years, the United States has had a difficult time returning Chinese nationals who do not have the right to stay in America because China has resisted taking them back. Last year, the United States saw a drastic surge in the number of Chinese immigrants entering the country illegally from Mexico.

U.S. border officials arrested more than 37,000 Chinese nationals on the southern border in 2023, 10 times the number during the previous year.

Chinese migration has increasingly become a rallying cry for Republicans and former President Donald Trump who have raised suspicions about why Chinese migrants are coming to the U.S.

Asian advocacy organizations are concerned that the rhetoric could encourage harassment of Asians, while migrants themselves have said they're coming to escape poverty and repression.

Earlier this year, the U.S. and China resumed cooperation on migration issues.

The Chinese government has said it is firmly opposed to “all forms of illegal immigration.” In a statement in May, China’s Embassy in the U.S. said the country’s law enforcement was cracking down “hard on crimes that harm the tranquility of national border, and maintained a high pressure against all kinds of smuggling organizations and offenders.”

Homeland Security said they are working with China on more removal flights in the future but did not give a timeline for when the next one would happen.

Earlier this year, a charter flight carried a small but unknown number of deportees to the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang, according to Thomas Cartwright of Witness at the Border, an advocacy group that tracks deportation flights.

Homeland Security officials did not say how many people were on that March 30 flight, but the Gulfstream V aircraft typically has a seating capacity of 14. It also made a stop in South Korea before heading back to the U.S., Cartwright said.

The announcement of the large charter flight comes after Ecuador cut off a key route used by Chinese migrants to get to the Western Hemisphere. Ecuador was one of only two mainland countries in the Americas to offer visa-free entry to Chinese nationals and had become a popular starting point for Chinese migrants to then trek north to the U.S.

As of July 1, Ecuador has effectively reinstated visas for Chinese nationals after the South American country said it had seen a worrying increase in irregular migration.

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

Tensions raised as China expands military presence along India's vast northern border

29 July 2024, [Black Sky](#)

The unprecedented arrival of China's most advanced fighter jets in Tibet is just one example of how the Chinese military's continued expansion along India's contested northern border raises tensions in a decades-long standoff high atop the Himalayas. With the ability to monitor the most important national security and economic locations and events at scale, BlackSky recently provided a revealing look into how China is asserting its military posture in this vast, mountainous region.

Published in the Hindustan Times, BlackSky's rare, time-diverse satellite imagery and AI-driven analytics show the first presence of Chinese J-20 stealth fighters parked at a Tibetan airfield, advanced artillery and defensive infrastructure north of Pangong Lake and a winding network of roads giving China access across Bhutan's disputed Doklam plateau. These images were captured as recently as May 31.

The region's latest developments fuel long-standing disagreements over competing territorial claims that led to the 1962 China-India war. The still unresolved conflict resulted in a 3,380km (2,100 miles) contested border where the nuclear-armed countries collectively maintain an estimated 100,000 troops. Occasional violent skirmishes between the two militaries, the most recent of which occurred in 2022, have caused deaths on both sides. The unforgiving terrain, ranging in elevation from 3,600 to 6,400m (12,000 to 21,000 feet), and extreme cold temperatures, reaching minus 40 C in winter, make security a unique challenge.

Tibet's Shigatse Air Base



BlackSky imagery and automated detection identified six Chinese Chengdu J-20 stealth fighters parked adjacent to eight Chengdu J-10 jets on the central apron at Tibet's Shigatse Air Base on May 30. The base is less than 150km from India's northern border in Sikkim. Introduced in 2017, the J-20 is a dual engine, multirole fighter featuring low radar observability and precision strike capabilities designed for air superiority.

Bhutan's Doklam Plateau



China maintains an elaborate network of roads connecting military infrastructure across the Doklam plateau in territory dually claimed by Bhutan that also borders northern India. Military vehicles detected by BlackSky’s automated analytics are positioned at various locations along the plateau, including China’s tri-junction border post, base of operations and forward position. In 2017, Chinese and Indian troops engaged in a 72-day standoff over China’s Doklam road construction.

Sirijap, Pangong Tso, Ladakh



Nestled among the mountains along the northern shore of Pangong lake in the disputed Indo-Chinese border region of Ladakh, China’s Sirijap military complex hosts an expanse of armored vehicle storage facilities, test ranges and fuel and munitions storage buildings. Sirijap’s current state of development features artillery and other defensive positions reinforced by large berms and connected by a wide-reaching network of roads and trenches that are not visible on publicly available mapping applications. The Sirijap complex is located 126 km southeast of the Galwan Valley, the site of a lethal 2020 skirmish between Indian and Chinese soldiers.

The Hindustan Times quotes an unnamed former Indian Army commander on the military rationale for China’s construction of underground facilities.

“In today’s battlefield, everything can be pinpointed using satellites or aerial surveillance platforms. We have no such underground shelters on our side. Tunneling is the only way out to create better defences,” he said. “Without underground shelters, weapons and stores are sitting ducks for air strikes with precision-guided munitions. The Chinese are pioneers in tunneling activities and no hi-tech is required for these structures, just civil engineering

skills and funds. Otherwise, we have to invest in more air defence equipment,” he added.

This collection showcases the power of BlackSky’s real-time monitoring of multiple sites over an entire region, delivering actionable insights from dynamic change at scale to enhance situational awareness.

India–China relations under the Modi 3.0 government

23 July 2024, [IISS](#)

India is gambling that it can both steal a page from China’s playbook, earn China’s consideration and maintain stability on favourable terms.

On 4 June, Narendra Modi was re-elected as prime minister of India for a third consecutive term – unprecedented in 62 years. By reappointing his foreign minister and national security advisor, Modi has signalled his desire for continuity in India’s statecraft.

However, among India’s key bilateral ties, those with China will merit significant attention and possibly adaptation. As the relationship between Asia’s largest nuclear-armed militaries and economies by 2025 appears increasingly distant and tense, where is it headed? Mutually exclusive prosperity and security India–China ties are troubled by an unsettled border, an unequal trade relationship, China’s strategic ties to Pakistan, and a broadening political-strategic disagreement over each other’s perceived rightful place in Asia and beyond. The relationship has suffered from a lack of strategic trust since a June 2020 border clash, which unmade much of the letter and spirit of the border-management regime that had been patiently negotiated, designed and agreed to over a generation. The war in Ukraine has brought China closer to Russia, India’s historic defence partner. The result is a complex relationship which tends towards tension over cooperation. This has not always been the case. During the course of the 1990s and until 2013, India and China agreed to set aside their differences on the border and focus on their economic development, each involving the other on secondary issues such as terrorism or Afghanistan. Despite sharing the goal of avoiding another border war akin to that of 1962, national interests began to diverge. Coinciding with lower economic growth prospects, President Xi Jinping pursued an assertive foreign-policy and security agenda by focusing on promoting global technology champions and its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as well as acquiring advanced dual-use technologies and securitising its economy at home. This created insecurity for India.

India has concurrently considered itself a rising global economic force able to leverage its strategic

partnerships in Asia and beyond. Since the end of the coronavirus pandemic, India has gained confidence from its status as the world's fastest growing major economy, while China's own economic prospects defied optimism. India's ambitions evolved from seeking to be the 'plus-one' of multinationals' China-focused strategies to being a preferred, 'trusted' middle-weight supplier in global supply chains in order to ride the 'decoupling' trend that is partly hollowing out China's prosperity. India's 'Make in India' policy epitomises its ambitions to grow its services and industry, using foreign capital to eventually boost exports.

Breaking the deadlock

Thus, India under Modi, who as leader of Gujarat State once cited China's Guangdong province as an example for achieving growth, appears increasingly to be trying to outdo China at its own economic and strategic game. This is designed to change China's perception of India without becoming 'revisionist'. India seeks leverage by showing its strength: setting conditions for dialogue based on the pre-2020 border conditions; restricting official contacts and visas; renaming localities in disputed territory; investing in border infrastructure and defence; limiting dependency on Chinese imports to fuel its own rise, to the benefit of supply chains with the Quad and other countries; strengthening its nuclear second-strike capability; and letting select irritants develop. India hopes the sum of these calibrated and restrained actions will pressure China to recognise India's global rise, while staying below China's threshold for an adverse, counter-productive response.

China, for its part, is focused on its rivalry with the US. China often sees India as having diminishing international agency of its own, as a result of that contest. The existence in Washington of a bipartisan consensus on both China and India, the relevance of Modi's warm relations with Donald Trump, and the fact that US Indo-Pacific strategy hinges on India's support for Washington's objectives in the region all drive much of the thinking in Beijing about India. China is paying particular attention to US-India cooperation on emerging and disruptive technologies, as well as naval logistics. India's now larger population and promising economy are attractive to Chinese exporters, but may also worry China. The GDP gap between India and China continues to grow in the latter's favour, feeding its belief that its terms alone can direct the relationship.

Exceptions to India and China's zero-sum rivalry are few and shrinking. Suggestions of 'India-China-plus-one' projects appear out of date as both compete for the Global South's attention. Both countries are investing in national technological capacities to enhance their prosperity and security in space, cyber

and underwater maritime domains, leaving little room for cooperation. This carries global implications. Their convergence within BRICS on promoting their currencies is challenged by India's rejection of the BRI and New Delhi's consideration of a US-led sanctions policy on Ukraine. Dissuading Russia from using nuclear weapons in Ukraine or combatting climate change also appear as rare areas of agreement. Meanwhile, third countries feel they have to choose between India and China, undermining both countries' claims to a benign rise. Other risks abound. The militarising border remains unstable and incident prone. Accidents in the Indian Ocean or South China Sea could occur as long as there is no dialogue or agreement to prevent or manage such incidents. The rise of technology ties with Taiwan, which India is increasingly displaying as a symbol of its independent statecraft, is becoming a major area of misunderstanding. Meanwhile, both countries are building up domestic expectations for their national-development goals set for 2049 for China and 2047 for India.

Strategic communication and understanding

Amid these tensions and wider geopolitical uncertainty, as well as both optimism and distrust of some dialogues with China, the two countries need to find a format for establishing and maintaining dialogue – to set and update expectations – without seeing this as an undue reward for the other. Xi and Modi held two highly personalised informal summits in 2018 and 2019. But Xi declined to attend Modi's 2023 standout G-20 summit. After a hiatus of over two years, their two top national-security officials met in 2022, 2023 and July 2024, but the meetings are unlikely to have been proportionate to the relationship's needs, not least because 'disengagement' at two border points is still a pending objective.

China needs to better understand how India's conduct reflects its motives for engaging, competing, balancing and deterring China. India wants China to show more sensitivity to its interests. One Indian official has explained that there is little point 'aiming for the moon while we remain in a ditch'.

Modi's lack of attendance at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in July 2024 does not close the door to future engagement with Xi. Xi's failure to send his personal congratulations upon Modi's re-election may be the latest clue that managing any 'loss of face' matters most to the two leaders who have never criticised each other in public. Yet Xi's reference to India in a June 2024 speech on cooperation could be a conciliatory response to Modi's own display of optimism during his re-election campaign. India and China have an interest in maintaining strategic communications to avoid any inadvertent flare-ups which could distract them from their peaceful rise. One possible route is to establish new confidence-

building measures. Only the two countries, between themselves, can make that determination of the need – or not – for any form of new ‘guardrails’, before relaying this to the rest of the world.

Arunachal lawmaker raises serious concern over China’s mega dam construction in occupied Tibet

20 July, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

A state lawmaker of Arunachal Pradesh has on Jul 19 warned New Delhi that China’s ongoing building of a mega dam in neighbouring occupied Tibet’s border area of Metog posed grave potential hydrological threats to India. The river could be diverted and the flow of its volume machinated to cause floods in India, Ninong Ering, a BJP MLA and a former union minister, has said.

Yarlung Tsangpo is known as Siang after it enters Arunachal Pradesh and Brahmaputra in the neighbouring state of Assam. The main channel of this river is the Jamuna, which flows through Bangladesh before joining the Bay of Bengal, noted the [economicstimes.com](#) Jul 20.

Participating in the motion of thanks to the governor’s address in the state assembly, Ering, a former union minister of state for minority affairs, has said, “We cannot trust our ‘neighbour’. You never know what they can do. They can either divert the entire river flow drying up our Siang or release water at once causing unprecedented floods havoc downstream.”

He has added that the construction of the 60,000-megawatt dam could also affect the other downstream country Bangladesh.

The MLA from Pasighat West assembly constituency has expressed support for India’s construction of dams with storage capacity to check floods in the region and noted that there is no water treaty between India and China so far.

Pointing out that “hydropower is Arunachal Pradesh’s only resource,” Ering has called for those opposing the construction of dams in state to be consulted beforehand so that the interest of the affected people could be taken care of.

Earlier, the state’s Chief Minister, Mr Pema Khandu, had in September stated that New Delhi had proposed to construct a large barrage on the Siang river to keep the area secure in view of the potential threat from the huge dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo river being built by China in occupied Tibet.

“In case of release of excessive water, we need to have big structures to protect ourselves from floods. The Centre, too, has expressed concern about the position of the Siang river once the Chinese project is completed. We have to keep Siang alive. If there is diversion of water by China, massive land erosion will take place,” Khandu had said.

Reuters reported earlier this month, on Jul 9, that India was planning to spend \$1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in the state.

China responded the next day by claiming India’s development activities in the area were “illegal and invalid”. It calls the state ‘Zangnan’ (South Tibet) on the basis of its baseless claim of sovereignty over occupied Tibet. The state is the birthplace of Tibet’s 6th Dalai Lama. The current territory of Arunachal Pradesh was delineated as part of India in a 1914 convention at Shimla involving representatives of British India, Nationalist China and Tibet. Communist China rejects this convention, while India has recognized Tibet as an autonomous region of China since 1954.

Take up China’s under-construction mega dam issue with Centre: Ering

20 July 2024, [Arunachal Observer](#)

Former Union Minister and sitting BJP Pasighat West MLA Ninong Ering on Friday expressed concern over under-construction mega dam by China near Arunachal Pradesh border and urged the state Govt to take up the issue with the Centre.

Participating in the motion of thanks to the governor’s address in the Assembly, Ering said that the dam might pose serious threat of a flood-like situation in Arunachal Pradesh, located down stream.

“Not only India, the construction of the dam might also affect Bangladesh,” Ering said, adding “People cannot trust China. We never know what they can do. They may either divert the entire river flow drying up Sian River feeding the Siang belt or release water all of a sudden causing unprecedented floods and havoc downstream.”

Ering, who quit the Congress and joined the BJP earlier this year, said that with the motto of ‘Nation First’, people’s interest and their safety and the country’s security cannot be negotiated.

Noting that there is no water treaty between India and China, Ering suggested that it was high time for a proper water treaty with the neighbouring country to protect downstream section and flood plains of the state in particular and other downstream states of the country in general.

“Hydropower is key resource of this state and it would help the country to a great extent in fulfilling energy security,” he said.

China has announced to build a mega dam on Yarlung Tsangpo River in Medog, near the international border, According to various reports,.

Tsangpo River is known as Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and Brahmaputra in Assam and Jamuna in Bangladesh and it flows through the neighbouring Bangladesh before joining the Bay of Bengal.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu had in September last year proposed to the Centre construction of a large barrage on Siang River to keep the area secure in view of the potential threat from the huge dam on Yarlung Tsangpo River.

Lawmaker Ering is right as highlighted in Beyond the Horizon Column on July 13 edition of this daily- China plans super-dam on Brahmaputra River: Will it spell water disaster for India and Bangladesh?

“China built one of its biggest projects ever: The Three Gorges Dam in 2003. While this monumental undertaking was steeped in controversy, many argued that its ability to deter routine catastrophic floods along Yangtze River, known as Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh and generate clean energy resulted in an overall net good for the nation.

China is embarking on yet another ambitious project now to construct the world’s first “super-dam” on Yarlung Tsangpo River, which is a high-altitude section of the Brahmaputra that flows through China-controlled Tibet to India and Bangladesh. This colossal undertaking aims to capitalise on the Tsangbo’s deep canyons – measuring more than twice the depth of the colossal United States’ Grand Canyons – to provide an estimated 60 million kilowatts of hydropower. This is more than three times the hydroelectric power generated by the Three Gorge power stations!

However, while some tout the super-dam as an excellent clean energy solution, many others express concern about the environmental and social costs surrounding the project. The Three Gorges Dam itself led to the woeful displacement of nearly 1.5 million riverbank residents, and created significant regional ecological disruptions.

Impact on India: Unfortunately, the new project’s location on the Brahmaputra River, flowing downstream to India and Bangladesh, adds another layer of tension to the subject. Both India and Bangladesh rely heavily on the Brahmaputra’s water and are thus anxious about leaving the flow of the river in China’s control.

Considering that the Brahmaputra accounts for nearly 30% of India’s freshwater resources, many have raised concerns about China’s tinkering with the Yarlung dam upriver. And it certainly does not help that China’s intent to divert a portion of Brahmaputra’s water to arid parts of North China has remained a well-known point of contention between the two nations in the past.

Reports have also indicated that a “twin disaster” may be looming for India if the new dam is actually built. As the super dam engulfs the flow of Brahmaputra River, some assert that India could stand to face acute shortages due to weakened flow in the winter season. Conversely, if China releases excess water from the structure during its monsoons, future flash floods

could become a more frequent sight for India downriver.

China had made history by unveiling the Lianghekou mega hydroelectric power plant, almost the size of Eiffel Tower and the highest in the country. It is a gigantic construction that boasts an average altitude of 3,000 meters, putting it above all other power plants in China. It is located on the Yalong River in Garzê, in the southwest of the country. Moreover, its total planned installed capacity is three million kW.

This construction started almost 10 years ago in October 2014 and those in charge of it finished it only in 2023. Going by the numbers, the approved investment is around 66.5 billion yuan, equivalent to 9.449 billion euros. The design of the reservoir allows it to reach almost 11 billion cubic meters (m³), specifically 10,800, as reported by Yalong River Hydropower Development Company Ltd (YLHDC), the breakwater dam at the highest point rises 295 meters, bringing it to the very level of the Eiffel Tower (which stands at about 300 m excluding the antenna). The hydroelectric power plant integrates, among other things, spillways, a ventilation tunnel and a subway power plant.

The state news agency Xinhua reports that the hydropower plant will be a turning point in the supply of Sichuan and development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt and the Chengdu-Chongqing economic circle.

India Considers Easing Visa Restrictions for Chinese Technicians

17 July 2024, [KNN](#)

In a significant shift from its stringent stance following the 2020 Himalayan border clash, India is reportedly considering a relaxation of visa restrictions for Chinese technicians.

This move comes as the country grapples with mounting economic losses and delays in manufacturing sectors heavily reliant on Chinese expertise.

Sources within the Indian government reveal that the trade ministry is spearheading efforts to expedite visa approvals for Chinese technical personnel.

The foreign ministry, despite initial reservations stemming from the four-year diplomatic chill between the two nuclear-armed nations, is said to be viewing the proposal "positively."

The potential policy shift is driven by domestic industry concerns and aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious plans to boost local manufacturing.

According to industry estimates cited by the Economic Times, the electronics manufacturing sector alone has suffered production losses of approximately USD 15

billion over the past four years due to visa-related delays.

The proposed fast-track visa process aims to reduce approval times from the current one-year wait to less than a month. This would particularly benefit 14 key sectors covered by a USD 24 billion scheme to enhance high-tech electronics production.

The new visas would allow Chinese technicians to stay for up to six months, primarily to operate and maintain Chinese-made machinery in Indian factories.

Government data indicates that between November 2023 and April 2024, India received nearly 1,600 visa applications for Chinese technicians, underscoring the urgent need for their expertise in industries ranging from telecommunications to steel production and solar panel manufacturing.

This potential thaw in visa policy represents a delicate balancing act for India. While seeking to protect its economic interests and manufacturing goals, the country must navigate the complex geopolitical landscape that has defined Sino-Indian relations since the 2020 border tensions.

As the situation develops, observers note that this move could signal a broader reassessment of India's approach to Chinese engagement, potentially paving the way for increased economic cooperation while maintaining strategic caution.

The Indian government has yet to make an official announcement, and spokespersons for the trade, home, and foreign ministries have not responded to requests for comment at the time of reporting.

China's continued blocking of Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage in Tibet violates bilateral agreements

15 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

For the fifth consecutive year since 2020, both the official routes for the holy Kailash-Mansarovar pilgrimage for Indians has remained closed. And the private route through Nepal, which was re-opened last year by China, is also practically unavailable to Indians due to onerous rules that especially targets them, as reported earlier by the Nepali media.

Covid-19 rules remain the ostensible reason for the suspension of the pilgrimage to Mt Kailash, the holy abode in western Tibet of the Hindu God Lord Shiva. However, the reason for the continued closing of the pilgrimage routes in a world free of Covid restrictions could only be attributed to the souring of bilateral relations since Galwan Valley clash in eastern Ladakh between Indian and Chinese border troops.

India signed two agreements with China, in 2013 and 2014, to open two official routes for Indian pilgrims. Both make it clear that China cannot unilaterally terminate the agreements without prior notice, noted *news18.com* Jul 15, citing copies of the

agreements obtained from India's Ministry of External Affairs in response to a RTI application.

The first one, dated May 20, 2013, was signed between then Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid and Wang Yi, then Foreign Minister of China. This opened the Lipulekh Pass route for the yatra. The second agreement was signed by Sushma Swaraj as Foreign Minister with Yi on Sep 18, 2014 to start the Nathu La Pass route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

Both the agreements were valid for a period of five years, and to be automatically extended for a further period of five years at a time. Either side could give a notice to the other in writing, six months ahead of the date of expiry, if it intends to terminate the protocol.

The first agreement permits Indian pilgrims to visit Mt Kailash and Mansarovar through Lipulekh Pass, a Mt Kailash-viewing point in Uttarakhand state, by commercial tour operators and travel agents. "The Chinese side agrees to provide necessary facilities and support to these pilgrims as well in accordance with its domestic laws and regulations," the agreement was quoted as saying.

The second agreement allows Indian pilgrims, who go through tour operators and travel agents, to enter or exit "China" through the Nathu La Pass from Sikkim. The implementation of modalities of this route was through diplomatic channels.

The third option for Indians was to enter Tibet from Nepal through private operators there. China opened its borders from the Nepal side last year, but tightened rules for foreigners, especially Indians, and put multiple restrictions, including hiking the fee, making it practically impossible for Indians to go to Mt Kailash through Nepal. Nepali tour operators have expressed dismay that the virtual ban on Indian pilgrims had ruined their business.

In all cases, Indians needed visas from China to visit Mt Kailash and Mansarovar, a requirement which did not exist when Tibet was free until the first half or so of the last century.

This year in January, 38 Indians were the first to take a chartered flight, 'Kailash Mansarovar Darshan Flight', from Nepalgunj in Nepal to get aerial darshan of Mt Kailash from 27,000 feet in the air, the report said.

And now, India has also developed a spot in its territory at Lipulekh peak in Dharchula of Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, from where Mt Kailash can soon be clearly viewed from a distance of just 50 km.

Earlier this month, the Uttarakhand government announced that pilgrims would be able to view Mt Kailash from this spot from Sep 15 this year. This will involve a vehicle drive up to Lipulekh and a trek of about 800 metres on foot to reach the vantage point to view the holy spot.

China objects to India's Arunachal dam projects with 'South Tibet' claim

11 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has claimed Jul 10 that India had no right to carry out development projects in the latter's Tibet-border state of Arunachal Pradesh, claiming it is Zangnan (South Tibet) and part of its territory.

The remark has come from China's Foreign Ministry in response to a *Reuters* report on New Delhi's plans to speed up hydropower projects in the border state.

"South Tibet is China's territory," *Reuters* Jul 10 quoted a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman as saying in a statement.

India's development activities in the area "illegal and invalid", *devdiscourse.com* Jul 10, likewise, quoted the strongly worded statement as saying.

The previous *Reuters* report said Jul 9 that India planned to spend \$1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in the northeastern Himalayan state. The territory was delineated as part of India in a 1914 convention at Shimla involving representatives of British India, Nationalist China and Tibet.

Communist China rejects this convention while India has recognized Tibet as an autonomous region of China since 1954.

Indian and Chinese diplomats to meet soon as border dispute continues to freeze bilateral ties

11 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

With each side looking for the other side to make concessions, the Sino-India border dispute along Chinese occupied Tibet, and, as a result of it, the turbulence in overall relations between India and China appear to be set to remain prolonged.

Still, diplomats from India and China will soon meet to make yet another attempt to reach an agreement on mutual withdrawal of troops from the remaining face-off points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, reported *deccanherald.com* Jul 4. The stumbling block remains China's stubborn refusal to withdraw its troops from their 2020 incursion areas, claiming the territory belongs to it on the basis of its claim over occupied Tibet.

The decision followed a meeting between India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sideline of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Astana, Capital of Kazakhstan, on Jul 4 when they agreed that the bilateral Working Mechanism on Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs should hold another meeting soon.

The report cited a press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi as saying the two

ministers also agreed the military commanders of both sides would continue to meet to take forward discussions to "resolve the remaining issues" along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

However, India has effectively reiterated its rejection of China's oft repeated insistence that the two sides normalize bilateral ties while talks for the settlement of the heavily deployed border standoff continues with no apparent end in sight.

"Discussed early resolution of remaining issues in border areas. Agreed to redouble efforts through diplomatic and military channels to that end. Respecting the LAC and ensuring peace and tranquillity in the border areas is essential," Jaishankar posted on X (formerly Twitter) after meeting Wang, adding: "The three mutuals – mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, and mutual interest – will guide our bilateral ties."

Though protracted negotiations have led to mutual withdrawal of troops from some of the face-off points along the LAC, like Galwan Valley, the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso, Gogra Post, and Hot Springs, the stand-off could not be resolved completely so far.

Herders in Ladakh have complained that as a result of the already agreed withdrawals of troops, swathes of grazing land over which they had freely roamed for ages with their herds had become off-limits as they had been declared demilitarized zones.

Besides, the report noted that Chinese PLA troops deployed in Depsang, well inside the territory of India along the LAC, were continuing to block the Indian Army's access to Patrolling Points 10, 11, 12, 12A, and 13. It added that a face-off is also continuing in Demchok.

China's position thus far is that the mutual withdrawal of troops by the Chinese PLA and the Indian Army from Patrolling Point 15 (Gogra-Hotsprings area) in Sep 2022 marked the restoration of normalcy along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

The claim seen as an attempt by China to subtly build up pressure on India to accept the "new normal" in the Depsang and Demchok areas. The report said Wang reiterated this during his meeting with Jaishankar.

However, India has refused to budge, insisting that China must vacate its troops from these areas to restore the pre-2020 status quo.

In this matter, India's China policy and its stance on the boundary issues have remained unchanged in the past few years, and there are no major adjustments or substantial changes from the Indian side to be seen at present, China's official *globaltimes.cn* Jul, 5 cited Long Xingchun, a professor at the School of International Relations at Sichuan International Studies University, as saying.

"India has been demanding that China make concessions regarding the border issues," Long has asserted.

China says India has no right to develop contested border region

09 July 2024, [VOA](#)

India has no right to carry out development in the area China calls South Tibet, China's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday in response to a Reuters report on New Delhi's plans to speed up hydropower projects in the border state.

"South Tibet is China's territory," a foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement.

It said India had no right to carry out development there and the establishment of what India calls Arunachal Pradesh on Chinese territory is "illegal and invalid."

Reuters reported on Tuesday that India plans to spend \$1 billion to expedite the construction of 12 hydropower stations in the northeastern Himalayan state.

India's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on China's statement.

India says its remote state of Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the country, but China says it is a part of southern Tibet, and has objected to Indian infrastructure projects there.

Last week, India Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Kazakhstan where the two agreed to intensify efforts to resolve issues along their border.

Satellite Images show China building infrastructure in area which it is illegally occupying since Nehru's time

08 July 2024, [Organiser](#)

Setting the information right for the Congress leaders and those spreading fake news, it is important to mention that China's build up at the LAC is taking place in that area, which it has been illegally occupying since the time of then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Recent satellite imagery has unveiled significant military infrastructure development by China in the area surrounding Pangong Lake in eastern Ladakh, an area it has illegally occupied since the era of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) base at Sirjap, situated amidst mountains on the northern shore of Pangong Lake, serves as the headquarters for Chinese troops in the vicinity. It resides in an area claimed by India, approximately 5 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Until the standoff on the LAC began in May 2020, this area was nearly uninhabited.

Constructed during 2021-22, the base features underground bunkers for storing weapon systems,

fuel, and supplies, as revealed by satellite images from BlackSky, a US-based firm. An image from May 30 distinctly shows eight sloping entrances to a sizable underground bunker and a smaller bunker with five entrances. The base also includes large buildings for headquarters operations and hardened shelters designed to protect armored vehicles from air strikes using precision-guided munitions.

An analyst from BlackSky, speaking on condition of anonymity, noted, "The base hosts an expanse of armored vehicle storage facilities, test ranges, and fuel and munitions storage buildings." The current state of development includes artillery and other defensive positions reinforced by large berms, interconnected by an extensive network of roads and trenches not visible on publicly available mapping applications.

The base is situated approximately 120 km southeast of Galwan Valley, where a fierce clash in June 2020 resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese troops.

A former Indian Army commander, who served in the Pangong Lake region, commented, "In today's battlefield, everything can be pinpointed using satellites or aerial surveillance platforms. We have no such underground shelters on our side. Tunnelling is the only way out to create better defenses."

He added, "Without underground shelters, weapons and stores are sitting ducks for air strikes with precision-guided munitions. The Chinese are pioneers in tunnelling activities, and no hi-tech is required for these structures, just civil engineering skills and funds. Otherwise, we have to invest in more air defense equipment."

Since the standoff began in 2020, India has significantly enhanced its border infrastructure, constructing roads, bridges, tunnels, airfields, and helipads for military mobility and logistics support. India's infrastructure development has focused on better living conditions and improved facilities for soldiers, as well as the protection of weapons and equipment in forward areas. This push has been propelled by increased spending and swift execution of strategic projects, with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) completing 125 infrastructure projects valued at Rs 3,611 crore in the fiscal year 2023-24, including the Sela tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh.

The developments at Pangong Lake coincide with increased activity by the Chinese military at the Shigatse air base in Tibet and the contentious Doklam tri-junction. Satellite images from earlier this year showed about half a dozen Chengdu J-20 stealth combat jets at Shigatse, and a more recent image from June 30 revealed at least two J-10 jets on the central apron.

The Shigatse base, approximately 300 km from the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Hasimara base in West Bengal,

houses a squadron of Rafale combat jets. Experts believe China's deployment of the J-20s aims to counter the Rafales, among the IAF's most advanced aircraft. The shift of J-20s from China's coastal and inland provinces to Tibet underscores the strategic importance of the region.

On the Doklam plateau, satellite imagery reveals China's maintenance of an intricate network of roads linking military infrastructure along the disputed border with India. A significant presence of military vehicles was observed at both a rear base and a forward position in an April satellite image.

In light of these developments, it is crucial to clarify that China's current build-up at the LAC is in an area it has been illegally occupying since the tenure of then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. This historical context is vital for setting the record straight amidst misinformation and political discourse.

PLA Readies for Extended Conflict with India as Global Crises Intensify

04 July 2024, [Republic](#), Yuvraj Tyagi

The US Intelligence Community's Annual Threat Assessment highlights the ongoing strain in Sino-Indian relations.

Despite the world's focus on Ukraine, Gaza, and the South China Sea, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to fortify its position along China's southern border with India. The Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community acknowledges the persistent strain in Sino-Indian relations due to their disputed border, albeit briefly amidst global conflicts. The report noted that significant cross-border clashes have not occurred since 2020, but large troop deployments on both sides remain. The potential for sporadic encounters raises the risk of miscalculation and escalation into armed conflict. In April 2024, the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College published an analysis of PLA activities in Aksai Chin during 2020-21, providing insight into the ongoing military standoff.

The PLA rapidly deployed troops to Aksai Chin following the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020. Dennis Blasko, a former US defence attache, assessed that the PLA is prepared to maintain its deployments near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) indefinitely. This strategy serves both political and military purposes, offering real-world operational experience that routine peacetime training cannot match. However, the PLA faces sustaining its forces in the remote, high-altitude region. Supply depots are located more than 1,600 km away, requiring complex and prolonged logistical efforts. The Western Theater Command, responsible for nearly half of China's landmass, oversees these

operations with a fraction of the PLA's total ground forces.

Strategic Significance of PLA's Border Operations

The PLA's fortified positions along the LAC support a significant deployment, estimated at 20,000 troops across a 400 km front. This force includes additional engineers, artillery, and support elements. Despite the substantial presence, Blasko argues that the terrain's rugged nature and logistical constraints limit the PLA's ability to conduct large-scale offensive operations.

The PLA's border operations serve as a deterrent, creating "facts on the ground" and reinforcing China's territorial claims. Similar to its activities in the South China Sea, these operations are designed to consolidate control and maintain a long-term presence. The PLA's construction of infrastructure, such as bridges over Lake Pangong, underscores its commitment to enhancing mobility and readiness along the border.

Parallel Tensions in the South China Sea

The South China Sea remains a flashpoint, exemplified by the recent confrontation between the China Coast Guard (CCG) and the Philippines near Second Thomas Shoal. This incident, which saw the CCG seizing a Philippine boat and injuring a sailor, highlights China's aggressive tactics. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. warned that the Philippine-US Mutual Defense Treaty could be invoked if such provocations lead to casualties.

China's assertive actions in both the South China Sea and along the Sino-Indian border reflect a broader strategy of territorial consolidation. The PLA's activities in Aksai Chin mirror its island-building campaigns, demonstrating a willingness to escalate tensions to secure strategic advantages.

Implications for Sino-Indian Relations

Blasko's analysis suggests that while the PLA is not positioned for a large-scale offensive, the risk of localized skirmishes remains high. The PLA's presence serves as a constant reminder of the unresolved border dispute, complicating diplomatic efforts. Both India and China must navigate this precarious situation, balancing military readiness with the need for dialogue.

In conclusion, the PLA's fortified positions along the LAC represent a significant challenge for India's strategic planning. The ongoing military buildup, logistical complexities, and potential for conflict underscore the importance of sustained diplomatic engagement. As global attention remains divided, the Sino-Indian border will continue to be a critical focal point in regional security dynamics.

China has been feverishly working on new infrastructure, including two bridges over Lake Pangong. These bridges facilitate the movement of troops, equipment, and supplies, indicating a long-term commitment to maintaining and potentially

escalating its presence. The construction of a road from the bridge to the Moldo garrison and PLA base camp behind Lake Spanggur further enhances their logistical capabilities.

Additionally, the PLA Tibet Military Command and the Department of Highland Military Medicine of the PLA Army Medical University have launched a pilot program for low-pressure hypoxia cabin acclimation training for recruits before deployment. This training has improved acclimatization, permitting operational deployments in shorter periods.

Sustainability Measures for High-Altitude Deployments

To sustain troops in high-altitude areas, the PLA has established "vegetable factories" at altitudes as high as 5,270m to provide fresh greens to border defence troops. These measures demonstrate the PLA's commitment to ensuring the well-being and operational efficiency of its forces in challenging environments.

Blasko's report highlighted the PLA's preparedness to maintain these operations indefinitely. Until a negotiated political settlement is reached, the Western Theater Command is prepared to sustain the rotation of units into and out of the region in the largest near-combat deployment since the end of the border conflict with Vietnam in 1987.

Blasko acknowledged the possibility of future border confrontations, especially as small units come into proximity with each other. The challenging terrain favours light infantry operations over large-scale mechanized combat. This environment complicates large-scale offensive operations, making defensive posturing and territorial consolidation more feasible for the PLA.

India, China foreign ministers agree to work on border issues

04 July 2024, [Reuters](#)

India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Thursday in Kazakhstan where the two agreed to step up talks to resolve issues along their border, New Delhi said in a statement.

India and China share a long Himalayan border, much of it poorly demarcated, and relations between the two countries have been sour since a military standoff in July 2020 when at least 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops were killed.

India said Jaishankar met Wang on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Astana where they agreed that "prolongation of the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side."

The two agreed to enhance meetings between their diplomatic and military officials "to resolve the remaining issues at the earliest," the Indian foreign ministry said in a statement.

China and India should properly handle their differences and ensure relations advance on a stable track, a Chinese foreign ministry statement quoted Wang as saying during the talks.

"We must maintain a positive mindset, properly handle and control the situation in the border areas on the one hand, and actively resume normal exchanges on the other hand," Wang said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who began his third straight term last month, said in April that the two countries should urgently address the "prolonged situation" on their border.

Both countries have fortified positions and deployed extra troops and equipment along the border since 2020. The nuclear-armed nations have been uneasy neighbours for decades after a bloody border war in 1962.

"He (Jaishankar) reaffirmed the importance of fully abiding by relevant bilateral agreements, protocols, and understandings reached between the two governments in the past," New Delhi's statement said. The two countries have previously agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels.

At SCO Summit, PM Modi's speech takes a veiled swipe at China, Pakistan

04 July 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

Jaishankar, delivering a speech on behalf of PM Modi at SCO Summit, highlighted the issue of combating terrorism, which was one of the "original goals" of SCO **NEW DELHI:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) should address issues such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-discriminatory trade rights in the context of connectivity projects, India said on Thursday in a thinly veiled swipe at China.

Delivering a speech on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the SCO Summit in the Kazakhstan capital of Astana, external affairs minister S Jaishankar pointed to mutual respect for territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and non-use of force being the basis for the foreign policies of the nine members of the bloc.

The remarks came against the backdrop of India's opposition to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) since a key part of it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), and its concerns about China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Indian officials have pointed in the past to the lack of a level playing field in projects under the BRI.

The text of Modi's remarks to the SCO Summit noted that economic development requires robust connectivity, which can facilitate trust between societies. "Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is essential for connectivity and infrastructure projects. So too are non-discriminatory trade rights and transit regimes. The SCO needs to deliberate seriously on these aspects," the text said.

The SCO is a principle-based organisation and consensus drives the approach of its member states. It is "particularly noteworthy that we are reiterating mutual respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of use of force as a basis for our foreign policies", the text added.

The speech also highlighted the issue of combating terrorism, which was one of the "original goals" of the SCO. "Many of us have had our experiences, often originating beyond our borders. Let us be clear that if left unchecked, it can become a major threat to regional and global peace," the text said, in an apparent reference to India's concerns about cross-border terror from Pakistan.

The world community must isolate and expose countries that harbour terrorists, provide safe havens and condone terrorism, and cross-border terror requires a "decisive response" and terror financing and recruitment must be resolutely countered.

The speech also referred to challenges such as climate change and the proper use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. India is working towards a committed reduction in emissions, transition to alternate fuels, adoption of electric vehicles and building climate-resilient infrastructure. It is also among countries to formulate a national strategy on AI and is working within the SCO framework on a roadmap for AI cooperation.

The Indian side expressed its condolences at the recent death of Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash while congratulating Iran on attending the SCO Summit as a member of the bloc. It also congratulated President Aleksandr Lukashenko on Belarus becoming a new member of the SCO.

The SCO, which was established in June 2001, includes Belarus, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India was represented at the summit in Astana by Jaishankar following Modi's decision to skip the meet.

COMMENTARIES

A Shift in the China-Tibetan Dispute

July 2024, Robert Barnett

Since the late 1970s, the Dalai Lama of Tibet and his supporters have been trying to persuade China to agree to give his former country some degree of meaningful autonomy. Their method has generally been based on strident criticisms of China's human rights record in Tibet. This has not worked. The Chinese have not agreed to formal talks for 14 years, have said that they will never discuss the question of autonomy, and have embarked on policies in Tibet and other ethnic areas that are all but indistinguishable from assimilation. Given the rise of China as a global power, and the increasing failure of Western governments regarding their own claimed values, the prospects of success for a values-based approach to diplomacy with Beijing are vanishingly small.

In recent months, however, there have been signs of a new approach within the exile Tibetan leadership that replaces moral critique with a more considered calculus – one that exploits emerging contradictions in China's Tibet policies. In particular, Beijing's stated aims regarding the Dalai Lama's succession and China's historical claims to Tibet are starting to look hard to realise absent the imprimatur of the Dalai Lama. Seen from this perspective, China has boxed itself into a strategic cul-de-sac from which it cannot easily extricate itself without reaching a deal with the Tibetans.

Signs of this new approach underlay the visit by Nancy Pelosi and six other US congressional representatives to India to meet the Dalai Lama in mid-June. The speeches of the US visitors were filled with the usual claims of ideological combat and moral superiority, but the delegation carried with them the text of a bill just passed by Congress that pointed to the basic parameters of the exiles' new approach. Currently awaiting presidential assent, the "Resolve Tibet Act" repeats the exiles' demand that China hold unconditional negotiations with the Dalai Lama about his call for cultural autonomy in Tibet. But the real purpose of the bill is not to do with culture, human rights, or abuses in Tibet. As the Chinese media immediately realised, it is to remind China that its claim to sovereignty in Tibet is weak. If China continues to impose preconditions on talks with the Dalai Lama, the bill implies, the US Congress will push the US government to recognise that the legal status of Tibet "remains to be determined."

Sovereignty and Succession

Unlike human rights criticism, that threat addresses a core sensitivity for China. Its primary objective on the Tibet issue in the last 40 years had nothing to do with rebutting criticisms of its record on human rights. Those were never more than background noise for

Beijing. Instead, China's primary objective has always been to get all governments to state that Tibet is part of China. It took China just short of a century to achieve that goal – it was only in October 2008 that the British government renounced its 1914 treaty-based recognition of Tibet as a distinct political entity, making it the final nation in the world to recognise Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. The Resolve Tibet Act suggests that the US Congress could put that achievement in doubt if China fails to hold unconditional talks with the Dalai Lama.

On one level, this is just another instance of US interference in China's affairs and a threat to its security. But it reflects a conceptual shift on the part of the Tibetan exile leadership. That shift, associated with the current Tibetan prime minister, Penpa Tsering, no longer sees Tibetans as desperate to get China to hold talks with the Dalai Lama, now 89 years old and in declining health. Instead, the new approach assumes that it is the Chinese, not the exiles, who urgently need talks to start. If so, it is China that is running out of time to get that deal.

On the succession issue, for example, China has said that its major target regarding Tibet is to have sole control over the selection of the next Dalai Lama. It did not need to claim that power – there are myriad other ways to defang a so far unknown person who might or might not emerge as the leader of the minute community in exile in the distant future. But for China to appoint its own candidate as the 15th Dalai Lama is an extraordinarily difficult goal for it to achieve (in the past, even Tibetans have found it hard to do without major internal disputes and controversy). The opposition of the US government on this issue will surely not deter China on this issue, but support by the majority of Tibetans in Tibet will be crucial. And China has never succeeded with appointing proxy figureheads as religious leaders in Tibet in the past.

It set up the former 10th Panchen Lama as the leader of Tibet in 1959, but he ended up under house arrest or in prison for much of the next two decades after criticizing China's policies in 1962; before his death in 1989, he again made major criticisms of China's role in Tibet. In 1992, China tried to establish another leading lama, the Karmapa, as its proxy in Tibet, only for him to flee abroad seven years later. Beijing has been trying since 1995 to get Tibetans to accept a Beijing appointee as the 11th Panchen Lama, but there are no signs that Tibetans freely revere him – video footage of him visiting Tibet this week show a noticeably tepid response from the public. That suggests that the only way for China to install a credible successor would be to get endorsement from the current Dalai Lama for its right to appoint one. Reports circulating within the exile community in India say that China is already trying to wrest such a concession from the Dalai Lama today.

This is why the surprise announcement by the exiles in April this year that China has been involved in back-channel talks with them for over a year differs from such reports in the past. Under the new exile leader, Penpa Tsering, the talks process is seen as necessary, but without any presumption of a productive outcome. As he put it, "we have no immediate expectations". This change in Tibetan views is a consequence of Beijing's own strategy over the last four decades of never giving Tibetans any gain from previous talks, despite major concessions given by the Tibetan side. Beijing continues that approach, saying recently that it will only talk about terms on which the current Dalai Lama and his circle could return. That can be seen as another own goal by Beijing, repeatedly reducing incentives for Tibetans to give yet more concessions. But more significant was Penpa Tsering's comment about which side initiated the new contacts: "They [the Chinese] are reaching out to us, it's not us reaching out to them." This claim presents China as under pressure to cut a deal with the Dalai Lama, rather than the other way around.

Shifting Dates

The second emerging vulnerability in China's Tibet policies concerns China's legitimacy for its presence in Tibet. China never obtained a referendum or mandate from the Tibetan people for its absorption of their country into China. It therefore rests its claim to sovereignty solely on a historical claim according to which Tibet became part of China in the past. This claim is problematic – Tibet was certainly part of empires in the past that were centered in China, but it was never part of a country called China, was not directly ruled by Beijing until the 1950s, and never became a Chinese province. But the critical weakness in China's historical claim – and this is the main point of the "Resolve Tibet Act" delivered by the US delegation to India last month – is much more serious: China keeps changing the date when its sovereignty over Tibet is said to have begun.

Before the 1950s, many Chinese scholars said Tibet came under Chinese (they meant the Manchu Qing) rule in the 18th century. Since the late 1950s, however, Beijing has said that Tibet was formally incorporated into China in the 13th century. But in 2011, Beijing declared that what had happened to Tibet in the 13th century was only the "formal incorporation" of Tibet within China. Tibet, China now said, had already been part of China "since ancient times". This referred, it said, to cultural and genetic ties, not to any form of Chinese administration in Tibet. In April 2015, it changed that view again: a government White Paper announced that "since ancient times" meant that Tibet had become "a local government of ancient China" in the 7th century. This was an unprecedented claim for which Beijing has produced little argument or evidence.

This revisionism is central to the negotiation issue. China's primary pre-condition for talks with the Dalai Lama was always that he must declare that Tibet is part of China. The Dalai Lama assented to that demand shortly after it was made in 1979 and gave up calls for independence. Behind the scenes, Beijing then quietly changed the terms of this precondition. It began requiring that the Dalai Lama must also say that Tibet was part of China in the past. He has declined to change his views on Tibetan history, saying that historical questions should be left aside and not be part of any talks (ironically, Beijing insisted on the same position in talks with the Tibetans in the 1980s). Now, even if he had agreed in the past to say that Tibet became part of China in the 13th century, he would have to revise that date to at least six centuries earlier. The Tibetans' new stance towards negotiations appears to see this goalpost-shifting by Beijing as a political opportunity. The Resolve Tibet Act thus accepts China's sovereignty in Tibet (as does the Dalai Lama), but only as a consequence of its "effective control" there since the 1950s, not because of a pre-existing historical claim. Instead, the Act notes that the US has never recognised China's claim that Tibet has been part of China "since ancient times" ? it could hardly have done so, since that claim has only just been made. Hence, the Act implies, it would not be hard to get Western governments to confirm that they have not endorsed China's claim to ownership of Tibet "since ancient times".

Unforced Errors

There are two other factors implied by the new Tibetan strategy. These too are unforced errors by Beijing, and unlike the other issues, in these cases we know there were voices in Beijing that long ago warned China's leaders to avoid them. The first of these errors is the most obvious, and for the same reason, has almost never been noticed abroad: the Chinese government never needed to switch to a policy of personally insulting the Dalai Lama. Beijing made this decision at a policy meeting in July 1994, against the advice of many of its own Chinese experts on Tibet. Popular resentment among Tibetans against that decision already led to major protests across the Tibet plateau in 2008. It is likely to lead to greater resentment when the Dalai Lama dies, unless China has brokered a reasonable agreement with him before that time. China appears concerned about a risk of serious unrest at that time, judging from the fact that it has sent 20,000 cadres in teams of four or more to live in every village in Tibet, apparently to prepare for such an outcome. A last-minute deal with the Dalai Lama would remove that risk.

China's second unforced error is brinkmanship. Between 2002 and 2010, China's leaders delegated the talks process to an agency called the United Front, whose officials basically stalled the talks process by

impugning the intentions of the Tibetan side (they are still doing so), irrespective of concessions by the Tibetans. It became hard not to conclude that China's strategy was to wait for the Dalai Lama to be at his weakest and oldest in order to maximise the concessions that it could get from him. But now, as the Tibetan leadership sees it, the window of opportunity for China is closing, and it is China, as much as the exile leadership, that is under pressure to start talks.

Prompting Reassessment

This display of political jujitsu by the Tibetan exiles is a major conceptual adjustment, but it is not a shift in political realities or power. China still holds all the cards, and even if the US government became openly involved, it could not force China to yield on this issue and would probably have the reverse effect (more significant will be India's role, which in turn will depend on whether it resolves its current disputes with China). The significance of this shift in approach is not that it might lead to visible change in China's negotiating stance, but that behind the scenes, it might strengthen those advisers within Beijing who warned their leaders 30 years ago that a policy of insulting the Dalai Lama, and of delaying talks until just before he dies, would damage China's own interests. Already, China's former Party Secretary in Tibet is under investigation, allegedly for corruption, an unprecedented development in the Tibetan context. The likely cause for the investigation is not corruption but some form of factional debate or struggle, rumored to relate to China's Tibet policy. If such debates could be stimulated by the Tibetan exiles' shift in approach. That may not in itself lead to change in China's policies, let alone concessions. But, by focusing on China's objectives and their contradictions rather than on values or ideology, the new approach to the dispute could prompt reassessment by both sides of their strategic options before the final opportunity for a negotiated resolution is lost.

Empowered Together: Our Journey at ITYF 2024

31 July 2024, [FNVA](#), Tenzin Lhatso and Rinzin Namgyal

Within a year of its launch in 2023, the International Tibet Youth Forum has become a "must-go" event for advocates of the Tibetan movement for freedom. We consider the forum as a carnival of Tibetan advocacy and a marketplace of ideas where we can delve deeper into, deliberate and discuss the Tibet movement for freedom. The widespread and in-depth advocacy of the Tibetan movement among the global community is the major vision and hallmark of the 16th Kashag, led by Hon. Sikyong Penpa Tsering, who has prioritised the inclusiveness of all sections of our community in the Tibetan freedom struggle.

We were honoured to receive an invitation to the second International Tibet Youth Forum 2024, held in Dharamsala from 3rd to 5th July, followed by the celebration of His Holiness's birthday. The conference brought together over 100 Tibetan youth from more than 13 countries, representing diverse educational and professional backgrounds. This prestigious forum aimed to provide a platform for Tibetan youth to exchange ideas, express their concerns, and collaboratively discuss the way forward. It also aims to nurture the already widespread and fragmented Tibetan advocacy efforts throughout the world into a well-coordinated movement. It seeks to connect advocates from different places, cultures, languages, and geographies, and unify them with the vision of Tibet advocacy.

Attending the ITYF 2024 was a transformative experience for us. The forum, which began with an enlightening CTA Tour, offered us an invaluable perspective on the governance and administrative efforts of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. This tour was particularly captivating as it provided a unique insight into the workings of a government we had long heard about but never had the opportunity to explore deeply. We are extremely grateful to the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile for organising this conference and providing us with a platform.

Click [here](#) to read more.

America's Resolve Tibet Act and India as Third Polarity in Sino-Tibetan Negotiations

29 July 2024, [CTA](#)

If negotiations take place, Tibetans should add India as a third polarity as in every case, India will remain Tibet's neighbour

-by Claude Arpi for Firstpost

It was an interesting coincidence that the book—*Imperial Games in Tibet*—of former ambassador, Dilip Sinha, appeared on the market at the time the bipartisan *Resolve Tibet Bill*, titled *Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act*, was signed into an Act by the US President.

Dilip Sinha served earlier as the head of the United Nations delegation at a time when India had a seat in the Security Council; he was also posted as Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, where he was elected Vice President of the Human Rights Council and Vice Chairman of the South Centre.

Though never posted in China, his diplomatic experience gave him the background to study the 'Great Game' over Tibet, as he soon realised the deep injustice inflicted on the Dalai Lama and his people, especially after the Lhasa government took Tibet's plight to the UN in November 1950.

After going deeper into the old records, Sinha concluded: "Tibet's current plight is the result of a combination of miscalculation and misfortune. Its misfortune was that Britain and Russia left it in the Chinese empire, refusing to support its bid for independence even after the collapse of the Manchu dynasty. Had either of them annexed it at that time or earlier, Tibet would be a free country today. Instead, neither supported Tibet's appeal to the UN, leaving it to India and the US. The absence of international support left Tibet at China's mercy."

The Resolve Tibet Bill

On February 15, 2024, the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted for the bipartisan Resolve Tibet Bill. The House's approval of the bill seemed a major achievement for Tibetans, as it demonstrated strong bipartisan support for Tibet and the Tibetan cause. Among other things, the bill reaffirmed the US policy of supporting direct dialogue between the People's Republic of China and representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama without any preconditions.

Under the present repressive regime in Beijing, it is a doubtful proposal, though it is a reminder to Beijing that the world has not forgotten the Land of Snows.

And as noted in an earlier column, the Act mentioned that the "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". The Act rightly asserts that officials of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party "are historically inaccurate in claiming that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times". This is exactly what Ambassador Sinha has demonstrated in his well-researched book.

Dilip Sinha's argument is important because it analyses, in scholarly language, the 'Great Game(s)' which cost Tibet its independence in the 1950s; it has serious implications for the today-disputed Indo-Tibet border. [Click here](#) to read more.

Xi's economic, political headaches

28 July 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Srikanth Kondapalli

Yet, Xi's hold over the party will become increasingly tenuous if he does not address China's mounting economic problems. It is not without reason that Xi has had the names of his predecessors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao erased from the party document. This has been recent practice, one intended to ensure that Xi, and Xi alone, is glorified.

The just-concluded Third Plenum of the Communist Party of China was viewed as a "landmark event" by the party, with China's media depicting it as "pivotal" and "epoch-making". But others depicted it as a damp

squib as the pressing problems of the Chinese people were not addressed.

The Third Plenum, held July 15-18 at Beijing, was attended by 364 Communist Party Central Committee and alternate members. The meeting deliberated on the report of party General Secretary Xi Jinping and an "Outline" and a "Resolution" were released at the end of the session that identified 300 reform measures to be undertaken. A new ambitious target of completing these reforms has been set for 2029, the 80th anniversary of the People's Republic and two years after the next party congress in 2027.

The main task of the Plenum was "further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernisation". This has become urgent due to sagging economic growth, the real estate crisis, the stock exchange meltdown that wiped out \$6 trillion, mounting local debt, ageing of the society, stagnant domestic consumption, widespread domestic political protests, geopolitical pressures through US and European Union sanctions and ongoing technological disruptions.

China's economic growth rate has been falling, especially after the debilitating lockdowns during the Covid pandemic and restrictive policies on the private sector. While China maintained impressive growth rates averaging about 9% after the reform programme began in 1978, in recent years, the country has been losing steam with 3-5% growth rates mentioned officially. However, the Rhodium Group estimates that China is actually growing at about 1.5%.

If China does not lift its sagging economic outlook, the first consequence is that it will be stuck in the "middle income trap", besides popular discontent and ensuing instability. Last year, China stated that its per capita income reached more than \$12,000, approaching the World Bank figure of \$13,845 to become a "developed" country. It could get stuck below the latter figure, a fate that has befallen many other economies.

China intends to make the steep climb it confronts by "promoting high-quality development", by increasing total factor productivity, stressing efficiency and utilising "new quality productive forces" like automation, AI, IoT, new energy, aerospace, new materials, quantum computing and others. The current total factor productivity of China is just above 1% and it needs to scale this up for higher growth rates by bringing in "revolutionary breakthroughs in technology" and "innovation in key generic technologies, cutting-edge technologies, modern engineering technologies, and disruptive technologies", revamping the market mechanism and enhancing educational standards. China wants to complete this arduous task by 2029.

The 2029 deadline is interesting as the 21st party congress is due in 2027, which is likely to be politically

stormy for Xi Jinping not only because of the economic problems but also because of political headwinds. At the 20th party congress in 2022, Xi decimated rival political factions, including the formidable Communist Youth League, whose leader Hu Jintao was shown the door. Other factions like the military have been contained through Xi's anti-corruption drive.

Yet, Xi's hold over the party will become increasingly tenuous if he does not address China's mounting economic problems. It is not without reason that Xi has had the names of his predecessors Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao erased from the party document. This has been recent practice, one intended to ensure that Xi, and Xi alone, is glorified.

While the Third Plenum meetings since the 11th party congress (1978) stressed on economic issues, the current plenum on the other hand mentioned prominently external balancing, with a focus on national security and foreign policy as well. In the light of the speculations about China's plans to increase the nuclear stockpile, nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles, the following direction that "we will speed up the development of strategic deterrence forces and strive to develop new-domain forces with new combat capabilities" is alarming.

The most amusing passage in the Plenum's resolution, though, is the one invoking a Lincolnian phrase, saying that China's Communist Party intends to "make our reform measures highly responsive to the call of the people, so as to ensure that reform is for the people and by the people". With hundreds of thousands of Chinese people participating in "mass incidents" every year and popular discontent spreading, one wonders how the 98 million-strong Communist Party could control 1.4 billion people without effective democratisation. On the other hand, the Plenum's resolution that it wants to pursue "progress while ensuring stability" indicates that more draconian measures are due.

REPORT: Pro-Han bias, tension at India-borders hamper China's new economic development policy in Tibet

28 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The focus of China's new development plans in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), which includes the establishment of New Economic and Technology Development Zones (ETDZs), are on pockets of the Han populated areas. Already, the Tibetan economy is largely under Han control (except for in the agriculture and livestock sectors), and Han people constitute the majority group in many of Tibet's urban centres, noted a [jamestown.org](#) report Jul 26.

Besides, the potential for exports, a major thrust of the development plans, cannot be realised due to the

continuing border tension with India, the report added.

The zones have been set up by the TAR government to import practices from elsewhere in the People's Republic of China (PRC) and shift the region's economy away from traditional sectors and toward export-oriented industries, construction, and even high-tech manufacturing.

In June, TAR's Party Secretary Wang Junzheng, made an inspection tour of the Lhasa ETDZ in the regional capital's Doilungdêqên (Tibetan: Toelung Dechen) District. While there, he instructed officials to improve various aspects of the zone to help boost businesses such as cross-border e-commerce and support Tibetan products to "go out," creating a new source of growth for the region's foreign trade, the report said, citing *Lhasa Daily*, Jun 13. The readout of Wang's visit reflects a concerted focus on ETDZs and expanding overseas trade as local growth drivers.

The report noted that although the region has registered growth rates above the national average since the 1990s, this has largely been fuelled by massive subsidies and transfer payments by the central government.

Since 2008, the government has focused on developing the tourism, mining, and construction industries, but their potential to help shift to indigenous growth remains limited. Provincial policymakers therefore have launched an array of initiatives that broadly replicate the growth model of inland provinces, hence the establishment of the ETDZs to attract investments, promote exports, and incubate industries as a key feature of the emerging strategy.

The policy of setting up ETDZs has been articulated and endorsed politically at higher levels, underscoring their significance in overall economic planning, the report noted. The provincial-level ETDZs have been established in Chamdo City in 2013, Lhokha in 2018, and Shigatse near the border with Nepal, and Nyingchi (Tibetan: Nyingtri) near the border with India in 2019. Before these, China's State Council established an ETDZ in Lhasa in 2001.

The new ETDZs seek to promote industrialization, help reduce the urban-rural gap, and pursue other policy objectives through encouraging urbanization, export-oriented industries, commercialization of agro-pastoral products, and tourism.

ETDZs are designed to create functional linkages with local industrial parks and rural commercial enterprises like farmers and herders' cooperatives. Both industrial parks and ETDZs aim at incubating more "non-public economic organizations" to increase local tax revenue. In the long run, the flourishing of such enterprises is also intended to incentivize Han private entrepreneurs to invest in the region, the report noted.

Industrial parks are a portion of the city that are specifically reserved for industrial use. These zones are not for the use of commercial or residential needs. They generally include ports, oil refineries, distribution centres, warehouses, and factories.

The TAR has 74 industrial parks, three-quarters of which are based in Lhasa city, followed by Nyingchi, Shigatse, and Lhokha. Besides, Nagqu (Nagchu), Chamdo, and Ngari each have one industrial park. This geographic distribution reflects the economic focus of the government on the "central economic zone", a term used in previous regional planning documents.

TAR has also launched a related set of initiatives under the umbrella of "Five Cities and Three Hours Economic Belt", centering on Lhasa and Lhokha prefecture-cities and creating linkages with Shigatse in the west and Chamdo in the east. This regional integration plan, begun in 2018 and set to complete its second phase of implementation in 2025, will improve railway connectivity by completing the Lhasa-Nyingchi line of the Qinghai-Tibet railway, as well as road and air transport infrastructure.

At the regional planning level, these interrelated projects and initiatives are crucial for creating local sources of revenue and growth. Lhasa and Lhokha, whose combined populations equate to 41% of the TAR's total, contribute 48% of the region's GDP and 58.8% of total revenue. This population has grown significantly since 2016 due to the massive relocation of farmers and herders from Nagqu to Lhasa, Nyingchi, and Lhokha, the report said, citing *Human Rights Watch*, May 21.

The report cites the development of strategic border towns facing Nepal, India and Bhutan as another important policy, as referenced in the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan for the TAR. These include Shiquanhe (Sengge Khabab) and Burang (Purang) town in Ngari Prefecture, Yadong (Yatung or Dromo) in Shigatse city-prefecture, Longzi (Lhuntse) Town in Lhokha city-prefecture and Mainling in Nyingtri city-prefecture, among others. As part of this urbanization push, the government has upgraded several county-level administrative units to city (urban) status since 2013 to facilitate further devolution of resources and administrative power to local governments.

Currently, the PRC has five land border ports in this Tibetan region, namely Zhangmu (Dram) in Nyalam County, Gyirong (Kyirong) in Gyirong County, Riwu (Ra'og) in Dinggye (Tingkye) County in Shigatse on the Nepal border, Burang in Ngari on the Indian border, and Yadong in Shigatse on the India-Bhutan border.

Being an extension to the TAR of key pillars of the PRC's economic strategy that began in coastal regions in 1978, the provincial leadership has pursued central directives in attempting to develop the region's foreign trade profile over the last decade.

However, the report cites the heavy subsidization, Han control of the Tibetan economy (except for in the agriculture and livestock sectors), and the marginalization of ethnic Tibetans as potential causes of problems for both the local economy's prospects. And the government's more recent initiatives could simply exacerbate the problems, particularly as the new parks and zones are focused on pockets of the rising Han population.

Ma Rong, a sociologist of population in Tibet, has noted that the TAR's Han population has increased overall but especially in certain pockets. Gar County in Ngari had a Han population ranging from 10% to 30%, Nyalam and Yadong in Shigatse had between 5 and 10% of total population from the 1990s up to the early 2000s.

However, these estimates, at best, underestimate the Han population by excluding or undercounting the "floating population" of Han temporary migrants and small businesses. The latest official socio-economic survey statistics suggest that Han people now constitute a majority or close to a majority of the population in specific urban centres like Bayi District in Nyingchi (around 39%) and Gar County in Ngari (around 57%), the report said.

ETDZs are designed in part to support exports, but the TAR's external trade is currently limited to Nepal, due to ongoing border tensions with India. Meanwhile, infrastructural challenges hampering the development of the Sichuan-Tibet railway or national highways connecting the TAR with other provinces suggest that further integration with the rest of the PRC remains some way off, the report concluded.

Amitabh Mathur on the Tibetan Struggle, Post-Dalai Lama Scenario, and the 'Tibet Card'

27 July 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Sudha Ramachandran

"There is nothing like the Tibet card. And it would be deeply offensive to the Tibetans to think they are mere pawns on the diplomatic chessboard."

When a delegation of U.S. Congressmen met the 14th Dalai Lama at Dharamshala in India in June 2024, it triggered speculation over whether the Indian government was signaling a new tough position on the Tibetan question vis-à-vis China. The meeting comes at a time when Sino-Indian and Sino-U.S. relations have frayed significantly. Days later, the Dalai Lama underwent knee surgery and on July 6, he turned 89, underscoring the Tibetan spiritual leader's declining health and advancing age, and that the Tibetan movement is nearing enormous changes and challenges when he passes on.

In an interview with The Diplomat's South Asia Editor Sudha Ramachandran, Amitabh Mathur, co-founder of DeepStrat, a think tank in New Delhi, shares his

insights into the complex processes involved in finding the successor to the 14th Dalai Lama. Following his retirement in October 2014 as special secretary of the Research & Analysis Wing (India's external intelligence agency), Mathur was appointed adviser on Tibetan Affairs in the federal Ministry of Home Affairs (September 2015-September 2018). In this role, he forged a close relationship with the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government-in-exile and Tibetan religious and political leaders.

The democratic leadership of the Tibetans in exile should be supported, he said, and not for any geopolitical aims: "India's support to the Tibetans... is in the nature of its policy to help sustain and nurture the unique Tibetan culture and practice of Tibetan Buddhism, which China is trying to obliterate."

A delegation of U.S. Congressmen met the Dalai Lama at Dharamshala recently. Why did the Indian government allow them, especially when India's relations with China are tense?

The short answer to the question would be, as stated by the spokesman of India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), that His Holiness the Dalai Lama (HHDL) is a revered religious leader, an honored guest who has the complete liberty to meet anyone he wishes to. Visits by U.S. State Department officials, senators, congressmen and other notables from various countries have been taking place unimpeded for many years, often facilitated by the government of India. Different U.S. State Department Coordinators for Tibetan issues over the years have met the Dalai Lama at least six times in Dharamshala — the last being in May 2022, when Uzra Zeya called on him.

It does seem, however, that the visit of the bipartisan delegation of U.S. members of the Congress to meet His Holiness and elected leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamshala is a departure from routine visits of the past. The visit took place at a time when both U.S.-China relations and India-China relations are at a low point. Not only was the delegation officially hosted, but subsequent meetings with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval suggested a nod to the message the delegation came to convey. Some interpreted it as going beyond India's positions on matters pertaining to the Tibet issue.

The purpose of the delegation was to apprise the Dalai Lama of the "Promoting a Resolution of the Tibet-China Dispute Act," which had been passed with bipartisan support both in the Senate and House. Commonly referred to as the "Resolve Tibet Act," it was subsequently signed into law by [U.S.] President Biden on July 12.

Features of the act question Beijing's claim that Tibet was always a part of China and enjoin U.S. government public diplomacy to counter China's misinformation to

this effect. It calls upon China to initiate a dialogue, unconditionally, with the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community for a negotiated agreement on Tibet. The Act further endeavors to collaborate with other nations to achieve the negotiated settlement.

The visit seems to have been carefully choreographed. The composition of the bipartisan delegation was interesting. Led by Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Mike McCaul, it included among others, co-author of the act Congressman Jim McGovern and Nancy Pelosi, former speaker and a longstanding Tibet supporter and China baiter.

The delegation could easily have saved itself the bother of flying across to Dharamshala to meet the Dalai Lama and instead met him in the U.S. as he was in any case scheduled to reach New York in a few days for knee surgery. The impact perhaps then would have been much less than made by its highly publicized meetings and statements made in Dharamshala, the exile capital of Tibet.

Though a public platform was provided to the U.S. delegation, official statements on the meetings with Indian leaders merely referred to “discussions on bilateral strategic partnership.” Nevertheless, India is seen to have signaled its loss of patience with China’s intransigence in efforts to end the standoff along the Line of Actual Control as the disputed Sino-Indian border is known, following its unprovoked military incursion in 2020 into the Ladakh sector, and other pinpricks in Arunachal. The signal to Beijing seems to be that we will not respect your sensibilities if you do not respect ours.

Considering the stand taken of late by the Indian government on relations with Taiwan and the South China Sea dispute, it does seem to point to a more aggressive posture towards China and a more proactive stance on Tibet. The Tibetans seem to have interpreted it like that. Whether this indicates Indo-U.S. convergence on moves regarding Tibet remains to be seen.



Tibetan poet and refugee activist Tenzin Tsundue protests across from Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's hotel room in Bangalore, India, 2005.

Credit: Wikipedia/ Nick Gulotta

Is India using the Tibet card? Has it worked?

To my mind, there is nothing like the Tibet card. And it would be deeply offensive to the Tibetans to think they are mere pawns on the diplomatic chessboard.

India’s support to the Tibetans or the occasional public expression of it is in the nature of its policy to help sustain and nurture the unique Tibetan culture and practice of Tibetan Buddhism, which China is trying to obliterate. Right from the beginning, in the early 1960s, India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru recognized that the Tibetan struggle was a civilizational one and made available all facilities and assistance to the Dalai Lama in preserving it.

India does not believe in any such card and thus the question of using it does not arise.

Why has PM Modi not met the Dalai Lama?

It is not entirely correct to say there has been no meeting between Modi and the Dalai Lama. In an interview in July 2019 with the Indian magazine *The Week*, the Dalai Lama disclosed he had met the PM in 2014 itself. He went on to say he had written to congratulate Modi on his victory in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and received a “very good reply.”

Campaigning during the recent general elections, Modi revealed he frequently engages in discussions with His Holiness, who he describes as a “stalwart of our rich heritage.” Given his public greetings to the Dalai Lama on his birthdays and most recently to wish

him a speedy recovery from his knee surgery, one can say the Indian Prime Minister has not shied away from his contacts with the Dalai Lama.

It also needs to be known that there is constant communication between the government of India at the highest official levels with not only the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) but also with His Holiness and his key aides.

Central ministers and chief ministers especially of the northeastern states, who are also practicing Buddhists, meet the Dalai Lama and frequently engage with the CTA. In the Indian Parliament, there is an inter-party parliamentary group that engages with CTA and members of the Tibetan parliament in exile.

However, I do agree that there could be more public meetings between the Dalai Lama and top Indian political leaders. Honoring and respecting religious leaders is part of our cultural tradition. It would also send the right signal to those Tibetans, very few to my mind, who from time to time need reassurance that there has been no dilution of India's support to their cause.

Who will succeed the 14th Dalai Lama is a very important matter that will determine the future of the Tibetan movement. Yet there is no clarity on the selection process. Why? What process is the Dalai Lama and the CTA considering?

The single most important question in every Tibetan's mind is what will happen after the 14th Dalai Lama is no more. The Dalai Lama was historically both the spiritual and the political head of Tibet. Although he gave up his temporal responsibilities in 2011 to a democratically elected government, he is still perceived by the rest of the world to be its leader, and indeed the embodiment of the Tibetan government. As such, he continues to be the driving force for the Tibetan government, both in India and in the wider world.

All hopes and aspirations of the Tibetans in Tibet and in exile are centered around the exceptional personality of the Dalai Lama. Devotion and loyalty to him is because of the Tibetans' deep faith in the institution of reincarnation, unique to Tibetan Buddhism, and the religious preeminence of the Dalai Lama. Naturally, there is anxiety as to what will happen to the institution, the future of the Tibetan community in India and the Tibetan struggle. The anxiety is further compounded by China's declaration that it will select the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama is yet to clear the air on the subject of his succession or reincarnation. He has spoken of various possibilities, from discontinuing the "feudal anachronism," to reincarnating in a free country, to being reborn as a woman, or opting for emanation (manifesting in another body) in his lifetime, rather than reincarnation.

Dalai Lama's most authoritative statement remains the one made in 2011 when he warned China against meddling in the subject of his reincarnation. He declared that at the age of 90 (he has just completed 89) he would consult with High Lamas of Tibetan Buddhism, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism. More importantly, the Dalai Lama said that if it is decided that the institution must continue and there should be reincarnation, it would be the responsibility of the Gaden Phodrang Trust to follow his written instructions and carry out the search and recognition, which should be as per tradition.

It is not in the public domain whether the Dalai Lama has given such instructions on the search process and related matters. Given the fact that China will anoint its own protegee in the Potala Palace, it is important that the processes are formalized in a manner to withstand manipulation and interference by the Chinese government and others with vested interests. In 2019, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Karmapa and head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, wrote an open letter saying the Chinese policy on the Dalai Lama's reincarnation and its repercussions must be investigated. He expressed worry about attempts being made from within and outside Tibet to arbitrarily recognize the reincarnation of Lamas without any regard for traditional Tibetan systems and adopting dubious means.

Interestingly, however, the process of consultation that the Dalai Lama has spoken about seems to have been done in 2019. There were separate meetings of (a) past and present CTA officials, (b) representatives of Tibet's support groups and (c) religious leaders of all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, important lineages including the *Bön*. All unanimously resolved the Dalai Lama must reincarnate.

What do you foresee happening after the passing of the current Dalai Lama?

China is waiting for the Dalai Lama to die. It seems to have a strategy in place to deal with his death, both inside and outside Tibet. It will use the occasion to assert its right to choose the next Dalai Lama through a lottery using the Golden Urn as prescribed by Chinese emperors, thereby affirming its claim that Tibet has always been under China. The method was introduced after Nepal invaded Tibet in 1791, and Tibetans sought help from the Chinese emperor to drive them out.

The Chinese claim is dubious, as barring the case of the 11th Dalai Lama, in all other cases, the choice was made through traditional religious methods. In any case, it is solely the decision of a person to decide when and where he will be reborn. This cannot be decided by atheist communists who do not even believe in the unique concept of reincarnation.

Having selected its candidate, China can be expected to have him recognized by its own Panchen Lama, and ensconce him in an elaborate ceremony on the throne in the Potala Palace. To sow division amongst Tibetans, the choice will in all likelihood be endorsed by some Gelugpas, the Dalai Lama's school of Tibetan Buddhism, who worship the Dorje Shugden deity, a practice that the Dalai Lama has disallowed. Of the many important monks in this group is the reincarnation of Trijang Rinpoche, the junior tutor of the Dalai Lama, who actively supports the activities of the Shugden Group.

China also expects, in the absence of the towering personality of the Dalai Lama, the head of the CTA will not be able to draw the same international support or even unite the Tibetans in exile. It anticipates, in the changed circumstances with drying up moral, political, and financial support, the CTA will become ineffective, and should it become so, it will turn into a liability for the Government of India.

Thus, it is important to have a strategy for strengthening the democratically elected political leadership.

Despite some shortcomings, the CTA has established itself as the political representative of the Tibetans the world over. It has also successfully coordinated with Tibet advocacy groups in recent years to engage with the world. Credit for the enactment of the Resolve Tibet Act can rightly be given to the synergy between the International Campaign for Tibet and the CTA. The more difficult challenge before it would be to keep the Tibetans united and pursue an agreed political line. At the moment, however, it looks unlikely the Chinese government will agree to engage with it.

Via its Tibet Support and Policy Act 2019, the U.S. has declared that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is his business and that of the Tibetan religious leadership. Anyone interfering in the process would be sanctioned. All eyes are now expectantly looking to New Delhi to make a similar statement.

The other important aspect to be remembered is that there is likely to be a substantial gap between the death of the current Dalai Lama and the installation of the next, who will even then only be a child. And the gap will become longer by the time he comes of age. He will need the support of all heads of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism and high-ranking lineage holders. In the vacuum that will follow it is imperative that the heads of such lineages are united and on board. In this, crucial will be the role of the 41st Sakya Trizin, a revered religious leader, and Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Karmapa.

The young Karmapa, who fled to India from Tibet in January 2000, left India in 2017, unhappy at the way he was treated. Unlike prominent young *tulkus* born in exile, he was born in Tibet, recognized by the Chinese and the Dalai Lama, and enthroned in his traditional

seat in Tsurphu, Tibet. Unlike others, he has also lived in Tibet. The 17th Karmapa is loyal to the Dalai Lama, is charismatic, and his popularity cuts across sectarian lines. His presence in India would be of great advantage to all concerned and all efforts should be made to convince him to return to India.

Tibet and Xinjiang: The US increases pressure on China

26 July 2024, [The Times of Israel](#)

While this week will be known for China gathering 14 Palestinian groups in Beijing to unite terrorists under a "Beijing declaration" and trying to get Palestinian groups such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas into the PLO, the last weeks were about the US administration trying to increase pressure on China on Tibet and Xinjiang.

US President Joe Biden's administration said it would impose sanctions on more Chinese officials for an "ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity", capping off a week of sharp rebukes over Beijing's alleged human-rights abuses and support for Russia's war against Ukraine. This came around the time that President Biden signed into law the Tibet Resolve Act. Less noticed but equally important was the judgement by Argentina's Federal Court reviving a complaint that alleged that China had committed genocide and crimes against humanity and the Uyghur people.

Meanwhile, one finds that the US State Department has also announced that it intended to impose visa restrictions on Chinese officials for their repression of religious and ethnic minorities, meaning thereby the Uyghur and Tibetans. The US has long stood by the Tibetans through bipartisan legislations, it is time for Washington to stand up for the Uyghur peoples also.

Turning to the Tibet Bill which US President Joe Biden signed into law (12 July) it must be said that it was had been anticipated and in reality, not a new bill, but improves upon the Tibet Policy Act of 2002. Titled rather ambitiously, "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" this Act gives a fillip to America's Tibet policy through further amendments to the Act of 2002 and seeks to facilitate the resolution of the longstanding conflict between Tibet and China. Coincidentally, a few days earlier, Tibet and China held secret back-channel talks. Sikyong Penpa Tshering while announcing the holding of talks said the Tibetan people did not expect anything from President Xi Jinping adding that the long-term view being taken was for the day after Xi! These talks are part of the ongoing episodic conversation that takes place between Tibet and China, but without any concrete results. It remains to be seen if the US Bill will bring

any pressure on China to actually 'talk' to the Dalai Lama. The act rightly asserts that People's Republic of China (PRC) government and the Communist Party of China (CPC) wrongly claim historically Tibet as a part of China. It is for this reason that the act specifies that public diplomacy initiatives should actively combat disinformation propagated by China concerning Tibet, including disinformation and propaganda about the history of Tibet, its people, and the Dalai Lama. This point is significant as the Chinese narrative about Tibet (called Xizang by China today) is completely skewed. Declaring the US administration's stand, President Joe Biden said, "...I share the Congress's bipartisan commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage. My administration will continue to call on the People's Republic of China to resume direct dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet." Notably, the Act looks at both sides doing things to improve the prospects for dialogue that could lead to a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

It is in this context that one should see the US State Department's announcement it was "taking steps to impose visa restrictions on PRC officials for their involvement in repression of marginalized religious and ethnic communities". Basically, America has said that China has not lived up to its commitments to respect and protect human rights, as demonstrated by the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and the persistence of human rights violations in Tibet.

However, the State Department does not restrict itself to Tibet and Xinjiang, it speaks of the erosion of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong and raises the bar by talking of Chinese "transnational repression around the world". Interesting turn of phrase for it echoes the Chinese repression of ethnic minority and Chinese citizens living overseas.

A step back shows that in 2022, the US Treasury Department had frozen the US assets of and blocked transactions of two top Tibetan officials. The first was Wu Yingjie, TAR Communist Party Secretary from 2016 to 2021, while the other is Zhang Hongbo, the Tibetan region's police chief since 2018. In 2023, the State Department imposed visa sanctions on Chinese officials pursuing "forced assimilation" of children in Tibet. The latest announcement adds to the pressure that the US continues to put on China through legislation and other legal measures. Tibet and its people is the only region where US lawmakers have made an issue of.

They have also passed laws like the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act. The State Department had

earlier criticized Hong Kong for passage of its new national security law, claiming that the vague language in its provisions created uncertainty in the minds of the residents. A State Department report of April 2024 accused China of continuing to "dismantle" Hong Kong's political freedoms and autonomy. The enforcement of the national security law along with its retrospective application as well as the denial of bail to activists was cited by the US State Department as being central to China's disinterest in keeping Hong Kong's democratic system in place.

At the end of this analysis, it is necessary to understand the importance of the recent judgement of the Argentinian Court of Cassation. It recently ruled that the Court of Appeal of Buenos Aires' decision to shelve the original complaint filed by several international organizations supporting the Uyghur cause, lacked sufficient justification. It noted that the appealed ruling did not provide legal and political reasons for restricting the victims' rights and refusing to exercise universal jurisdiction. Notably, the judgement stated that Argentina's judicial system possessed the necessary resources to ensure victims of international crimes could access jurisdiction for their cause. Consequently, the court ordered the prosecutor to open an investigation, mandating that the judge to commence investigatory stage of proceedings. On 16 August 2022, a criminal complaint had been filed in Buenos Aires under Section 118 of the Constitution of Argentina, which permits the prosecution of international crimes regardless of where they occur. The legal campaign in Argentina was launched by the World Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur Human Rights Project in the courts of Argentina in relation to the international crimes of genocide being committed against the Uyghur.

The foregoing narrative shows the wide net cast by the US against China. This includes legislative action and imposition of sanctions. Thus, different wings of the US government act to send out a strong signal on the need to protect the rights and identity of ethnic minorities in China. The pivotal Tibet Act 2024 strengthens America's policy following other such significant acts, like the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2019 and the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018. On the 65th Tibetan Uprising Day in March 2024, a resolution was introduced in the US Congress reaffirming support for the Tibetan people. Other countries can take a leaf from the US handling of Tibet and Xinjiang which serves to put pressure on the PRC. It could be argued that some of these Acts do not go far enough, but the fact that they are in place and in force serve to send a signal, which by itself carries a lot of weight.

As China's economy spirals, the Communist Party tightens its grip

26 July 2024, [The Hill](#)

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has just concluded the Third Plenary Session of its 20th Central Committee, emphasizing continued reform and opening up.

Phrases like “reform will not pause, and opening up will not stop,” and “the market plays a decisive role in resource allocation,” suggest a commitment to these principles. However, Xi Jinping’s definition of reform diverges significantly from the Western interpretation rooted in Deng Xiaoping’s era, which leaned towards a market economy and some political liberalization.

Under Xi, the term “reform” has been redefined. Xi has clarified that moving towards Western “universal values” and political systems is a misinterpretation. The Third Plenary Session reaffirmed that reforms must maintain the CCP’s leadership, adherence to Marxism, socialism with Chinese characteristics and the people’s democratic dictatorship.

This version of reform, according to Xi, “will neither take the old closed and rigid path nor the erroneous path of changing flags and altering banners.”

Under this premise, the party must constantly “reform,” or in other words, adapt to the times, adjusting policies for governing the country and managing the economy to best serve the ultimate goal of maintaining and strengthening party rule.

Reform is not an adjustment made for special circumstances or in a specific direction but a routine action for governing the country. In fact, the “reform” that the CCP discusses in the economic sphere today is another way of saying “planned economy” at the highest level.

That said, Xi Jinping’s planned economy is different from Mao Zedong’s. Mao’s planned economy had no “opening up” and no market mechanism. In Xi Jinping’s planned economy, opening up and a partial market economy are allowed, provided that they need to be under the supervision and control of the party.

In “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,” Adam Smith coined the term “invisible hand” to describe the unseen forces that move the free market economy. That hand in China’s controlled market economy is the Communist Party, and it is visible, although it has started showing signs of dysfunction recently.

Developments in China’s economic landscape suggest that the Chinese economy may be slipping out of Xi Jinping’s control. After unsuccessful attempts to revive the economy, the signs are that Xi is pivoting towards a deeper planned economy to solve these problems.

On June 3, the State Council prohibited central government-owned enterprises in non-financial

sectors from holding shares in financial institutions to mitigate financial risks. This “withdrawal from financial sector order” signals anticipated financial turmoil.

In July, the Chinese central bank, the People’s Bank of China (PBOC), began borrowing national bonds and planned on selling them in the secondary market. While this action can increase bond yields and stabilize the RMB exchange rate, it can also have severe consequences.

The Ministry of Finance, which issues bonds, and the central bank, which prints money, are controlled by the CCP. This allows the Ministry of Finance to issue unlimited bonds. If it can’t repay them upon maturity, the central bank will print more money. The central bank’s borrowing of national bonds will also lead to unanchored money printing, causing significant inflation.

Two weeks later, the PBOC unexpectedly lowered interest rates again to further increase liquidity, despite inflation risks. These moves reflect China’s dire financial situation: a severe lack of liquidity and nobody has money. Similar issues are evident in other economic areas under Xi’s administration, as significant stimulus efforts in electric vehicles (EVs), real estate, and the stock market in the first half of the year have all been ineffective.

China’s EV sector, a key focus for Xi, faces setbacks with high U.S. and European Union tariffs, limiting market access. The Chinese stock market remains unstable. The government has used measures such as reducing the stamp duty and investing significant funds to prop up the stock market.

While the index briefly rose above 3,000 points, it primarily benefited state-owned enterprises. Private small and medium-sized enterprises continued to decline. The real estate market is in a slump, with developers and consumers refusing to invest due to China’s gloomy economic future, financial difficulties and population decline.

Overall, Xi Jinping’s economic rescue attempts have failed. In response, he appears to be shifting towards a deeper planned economy to address these issues and mitigate the CCP’s authority crisis.

This is exemplified by the new Law of the People’s Republic of China on Rural Collective Economic Organizations. This law reaffirms that all rural land belongs to the country and that the use and management rights of land and other rural resources are centralized under party organizations at various levels. This reverses the rural reforms in the late 1970s, which rendered the farmers great autonomy in managing lands and receiving profits accordingly.

This Third Plenary Session also pledged to strengthen, optimize and expand state-owned capital and enterprises — another indication of a shift towards deeper planning in economic matters. Transitioning to

a deeper planned economy aims to consolidate CCP rule and will impact foreign policy, especially regarding Taiwan. The dire economic situation may limit China's ability to take Taiwan.

However, if Xi is determined to take Taiwan, a deeper planned economy could be advantageous. By focusing on internal circulation, such an economy would reduce the impact of sanctions on China.

Why Chinese TikTok is being accused of deleting Tibetan content

26 July 2024, [The Observers](#), Thais Chaigne

It's not new for the Chinese Communist Party to censor any social media content about Tibet that has a political bent. However, in recent weeks, Tibetan users of Douyin, China's TikTok equivalent, have said that any and all content in the Tibetan language is being censored, whether it is political or not. We spoke to a Tibetan woman in exile who also works for an NGO fighting to defend the human rights of Tibetans.

"Aren't all ethnic groups supposed to be equal? Why, then, is the use of our language, Tibetan, being restricted?" asks a TikTok user who goes by Youga Ga in a video in Mandarin published on the Douyin video platform. The video quickly disappeared from the platform before being republished on other social media sites not censored by the Chinese Communist Party and accessible from abroad.

The Chinese Communist Party has a long history of censoring any political content about Tibetans and other ethnic and religious minorities. At the same time, the Party encourages what might be called cultural content about tourist-friendly things like music, dance and cuisine.

"They were using Douyin for non-political purposes"

However, in recent weeks, Youga Ga is far from the only person to complain about Douyin's so-called "ban" on content in the Tibetan language. But like Younga Ga's video, these posts were quickly removed by the platform.

Douyin hasn't made a public declaration about banning the Tibetan language, but many posts in Tibetan have been deleted – as have posts about Tibetan culture, according to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), an NGO based in Dharamsala, India, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile. Tenzin Dawa, the executive president of the TCHRD, spoke to the Observers about what is happening online:

A huge number of Tibetans active on Douyin have expressed their frustration that they suddenly cannot use Douyin the way they used to. Some of them make a living from the platform, and are now facing sudden restrictions.

Many of them spoke about things that were strictly non-political. It's just that they were using the Tibetan language. Doctors, entrepreneurs, monks, or content creators, they were using Douyin for non-political purposes - for example, to teach Tibetan to non-Tibetans. Or in the case of doctors, to communicate with people in areas such as remote villages where they only speak Tibetan.

It's a huge platform. In most cases, the posts are not removed immediately, but a few days after they are published. But any live-streamers speaking in Tibetan get banned and removed within minutes.

Douyin isn't the first platform to ban Tibetan. Talkmate, a language-learning application, deleted its content in Tibetan, as did the video streaming platform Bilibili. In 2022, a video sharing app called Kuaishou, which is very similar to Douyin, started deleting videos in Tibetan.

A "folkloric" image of Tibet

The links between ByteDance, the company that owns the video platform Douyin, and the Chinese Communist Party are widely documented (such as in this report by an investigative committee of the French Senate). And like all social media platforms in China, Douyin is supervised by Party censors. In the past few years, for example, Douyin has been censoring content linked to the Uighur Muslim minority. The only content about the Uighurs that remains online is cultural in nature and paints a picturesque portrait to bring in tourists.

Videos in Mandarin that promote Tibetan culture have also met certain success in China, like those made by Tenzin Tsondu. The young shepherd reached near-celebrity status after a video of him wearing traditional garments went viral on Douyin in 2020.

Historically, the Chinese Communist Party tends to like this kind of cultural content, and the Tourism Board of Litang recruited Tsondu as an "ambassador".

"The Communist Party sees the culture of ethnic minorities as a threat"

What looks like a concerted effort to remove the Tibetan language from social media would be aligned with the political drive for cultural assimilation. Since Xi Jinping came to power in 2013, his government has pushed for minorities to assimilate to the Han ethnic majority. Historically, these assimilation measures have targeted the most autonomous ethnic groups like the Uighurs, the Mongols and the Tibetans. Even just speaking Tibetan can be seen as an act of defiance, says our Observer:

The Communist Party often talks about "ethnic harmony" and "ethnic unity". In China, there are 56 ethnic minorities. "Ethnic unity" is used as a euphemism to assimilate other groups that are not ethnically Chinese to one Chinese nation, by which they mean one language, one nation. The Party sees the

culture of ethnic minorities as a threat, as a form of subversion.

The aim is to eradicate other languages, cultures and religions. One of the reasons is because in Tibet we had widespread peaceful protests in 2008, which got a lot of international attention. In order to avoid a repeat of that, the Party is trying to erase our language and culture, and assimilate the younger generation of Tibetans so there is no criticism from inside.

A number of dissidents reported that the government goes after people who try to protect Tibetan culture and that some young Tibetans are pushed to go to boarding schools to learn Mandarin.

Opinion: Hopes and Dangers of new Tibet-China dialogue- A friendly warning

26 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Vijay Kranti

Beijing's record of conducting dialogue and establishing contacts with others throughout its history has never been happy for the other side. Skeptics point out that whenever Beijing showed interest in a 'dialogue' with Dharamshala, the Chinese leaders used it only to buy time for further fortifying their grip on Tibet or to cool down the growing international pressure on matters related to Tibet — or both. Now sudden interest shown by President Xi Jinping's China in starting a fresh dialogue with Dharamshala calls for a deep clinical scrutiny of what prompted President Xi Jinping to restart these negotiations?

Repeated claims by the senior most Tibetan exile leadership about 'back channel' talks being in progress with Beijing are an indication of a new round of Dharamshala-Beijing dialogue taking shape to settle the seven decade old conflict between the two sides. In his recent media statements Penpa Tsering, the 'Sikyong' (Tibetan title for the elected 'President' of the exiled Tibetan diaspora) has revealed that some behind the scene talks are being held with the Chinese leaders with the help of a third country. It's understandable that the Sikyong refused to divulge either the name of the 'third country' or the identity of officials involved from either side. But his claim that these talks started with the initiative of the Chinese side deserves serious attention and calls for a deep clinical scrutiny of what prompted President Xi Jinping to restart these negotiations after having rejected every single point on which the Dalai Lama side has been resting its case for settlement of the Tibetan issue with Beijing.

Since the last official contact between Dharamshala and Beijing ended abruptly in 2010, Dalai Lama's establishment in Dharamshala has been calling upon world governments to push Beijing to restart the dialogue — a demand which the Chinese side has been

brushing aside with full contempt all these 14 years. Although the ruling elite among the 'Central Tibetan Administration' (CTA), also known as the 'Tibetan Government-in-Exile', looks enthusiastic over this new development about a fresh dialogue, many independent thinkers among the diaspora and the skeptical section among Tibet supporters are smelling a rat in this sudden change of mind on the part of Chinese leadership. The latter point out that China has never been sincere in its dealings and contacts with the Dalai Lama since Mao assimilated Tibet into China in 1951 through a forcibly signed '17-Point Agreement.' China had signed this controversial 'Agreement' in Beijing with a visiting Tibetan delegation who, according to the erstwhile Dalai Lama establishment in Lhasa, was never authorized to sign any treaty or agreement on his behalf with Beijing. To the annoyance of the 16 year old Dalai Lama the signing of this 'Agreement' led to assimilation of Tibet into China without the knowledge or approval of his Lhasa government. Citing history of all subsequent contacts between Dharamshala and Beijing the skeptics claim that whenever Beijing showed interest in a 'dialogue' with Dharamshala, the Chinese leaders used it only to buy time for further fortifying their grip on Tibet or to cool down the growing international pressure on matters related to Tibet — or both.

'Dialogue'- a tool of deception.

Another historic example of this Chinese art of deception in the name of holding 'dialogue', though unrelated to Tibet, was late Chairman Mao's invitation to a wide set of Uyghur leaders of East Turkistan who were violently resisting China's takeover of their country in 1949. After most of these leaders agreed to go to Beijing in an airplane, specially arranged by Mao, the plane mysteriously exploded in the midair and the entire Uyghur resistance leadership was wiped out to pave way for converting a free 'Republic of East Turkistan' into China's new colony 'Xinjiang'.

The last 2002-2010 dialogue too, which Beijing started with a big bang, unfortunately proved to be just a Chinese façade and ended up into a whimper. The Chinese leaders dragged it on for eight long years without moving an inch in any direction in spite of Dharamshala's high hopes on it. It is worth noting that before this dialogue started in 2002 the Chinese side had consistently remained indifferent for decades to Dalai Lama's appeals and offers for a dialogue. It was only because of the rising international pressure that Beijing finally agreed to talk to Dharamshala. In its resolution on Tibet on 6th July 2000 (text-0326) the European Parliament had put a three-year embargo on the Chinese government and had asked the EU governments to ***"give serious consideration to the possibility of recognizing the Tibetan Government in exile as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people if, within three years, the Beijing authorities***

and the Tibetan government in exile have not, through negotiations organised under the aegis of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, signed an agreement on a new Statute for Tibet....”.

Similarly the US Congress’ decision to add the famous ‘Tibet Policy Act of 2002’ (TPA-2002) to its agenda too had shaken the Beijing leaders. As the EU Parliament embargo date started approaching and the US Congress started discussing TPA-2002, Beijing started its so called ‘Dialogue’ in 2002 and an over enthusiastic Dalai Lama’s side joined it without involving the UN Secretary General or any other independent international agency. True to the Chinese nature, the dialogue remained a non-starter till its last day in 2010.

Behind the walls of ‘Dialogue’

It took Dharamshala eight years to realize that while it was confident about some big breakthrough and was busy in bragging about the dialogue as its great achievement, the Chinese side was busy using these crucial years to fill up all such major gaps which stood in their way of foisting its final colonial grip over Tibet. To name a few: by agreeing to sit with the Tibetans for a ‘dialogue’ the Beijing leaders successfully deflated the growing European, American and most of other international anger over the non-resolution of Tibetan issue and the ever worsening human rights situation inside Tibet. On the material side, some major critical successes of Beijing during these years included completing the strategic target of spreading the Chinese infrastructure like roads and military network to the farthest corners of Tibet; developing a vast chain of new and modern cities and towns across Tibet to facilitate migration of millions of new Han settlers with the aim of reducing the Tibetans into a nearly meaningless minority in their own homeland. And, more than everything else, the Chinese government used this period to achieve the most unthinkable and technologically difficult target of connecting Tibetan capital Lhasa and the other major city Shigatse to China through its bullet train. This train has proved to be the final tool for making Tibet hospitable for the new Han settlers and a fast and reliable transportation mode for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to transport hundreds of its tanks, armored vehicles and any number of military personnel to Tibet on any day of the year.

How China manipulated the Dalai Lama

Besides these achievements inside Tibet, the Beijing leaders also proved smarter than Dharamshala outside Tibet where Dalai Lama had laboriously developed a massive international network of Tibet supporters and Tibet Support Groups (TSG) across almost all continents over his five decades of his exile. It goes to the credit of Beijing leaders that they could successfully use the dialogue bonhomie to manipulate Dalai Lama and his CTA establishment to defuse the

Tibet support movement across the world. The Chinese side also succeeded in creating deep friction and divisions among the Tibetan diaspora which already stood fragmented following Dalai Lama’s decision to scale down his demand for ‘Independence’ of Tibet from the Chinese colonial rule to just ‘genuine autonomy’ for Tibet.

As the massive network of Tibet support groups across the world started making international news headlines by stopping or disrupting the Olympic-Torch’s journey towards Beijing for the forthcoming Beijing-Olympics-2008, the Chinese leadership proved smart enough to convince the Dalai Lama to use his influence and charm to stop his supporters from their anti-China demonstrations in order to let the Beijing Olympics happen successfully. The anti-China sentiments among the Tibetan people living inside Chinese controlled Tibet too were so high at that time that anti-China demonstrations and riots erupted inside Tibet, months before the Beijing Olympics-2008 started. World was surprised to note that these Tibetan demonstrations spread to more than 54 cities and towns of Tibet. Interestingly, 52 of these 54 places belonged to those areas of original Kham and Amdo provinces of Tibet which China does not recognize as ‘Tibet’. After occupying Tibet in 1951 Beijing had scooped out these areas out of original Tibet and had assimilated them into adjoining Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai through a reorganization of Tibet in 1965.

A great Tibetan blunder

What came as a shock to many Tibetans and Tibet supporters was that in his enthusiasm to win the Chinese leaders’ smiles and success for his ongoing dialogue with China, the Dalai Lama personally appealed to the Tibetan people inside Tibet as well as Tibet supporters across the world and persuaded them to stop their anti-China demonstrations. It was during this anti Beijing Olympics-2008 movement that the international Tibet support movement had recorded its highest popularity and efficacy by forcing the International Olympic Committee to abandon its traditional practice of carrying the Olympic Torch from Greece to the host country in an open international marathon. But in the checkered history of Tibet support movement the Tibetan leadership’s over enthusiasm to please their Chinese dialogue partners also proved to be the watershed point when the movement started losing its steam and went on a path of demoralization and decline following the 2008 Beijing Olympics .

China’s U-turn

And here comes the anti-climax. As soon as the Beijing Olympics ended successfully, the Beijing leaders were back in their original colours. They suddenly put a full stop at the ongoing Tibet-China dialogue and asked the delegation of Dalai Lama’s representative to come

back with a written statement of their expectations from Beijing in this dialogue. The community of Tibet watchers and sympathizers was shocked to realize that over first six years of the 'dialogue' the Chinese had not let the Tibetan side to even tell them what were their expectations from this 'dialogue'.

The 'dialogue' finally crashed with a loud thud two years later in 2010 when the Tibetan delegation was invited to Beijing to present its memorandum. The Chinese delegation took only a few minutes to reject the memorandum out rightly and closed the dialogue saying that the Tibetan memorandum was unacceptable because it is nothing but asking for separation of Tibet from China. Since the sudden death of this dialogue Dharamshala has been desperately trying to restart the dialogue despite Chinese rejections.

However, it is not also true that the Dalai Lama and Dharamshala have been always on the losing side in their direct dealings with Beijing. In late 1970s and early 1980s when late Deng Xiaoping was busy opening China to the outer world and gave impression that he was serious about settling the Tibetan issue with Dalai Lama but without the idea of 'Tibetan independence'. It was at that time that Dalai Lama succeeded in convincing the Chinese leaders to allow his representatives to freely visit Tibet to have a first-hand assessment of the situation. But the process was abruptly stopped by China and sent back Dharamshala's fifth delegation in the middle of its visit. The Beijing masters of Tibet were shocked to see Tibetan peoples' overwhelming welcome and support for Dalai Lama's representatives. While this experience gave a big impetus to the Dalai Lama's hopes about Tibet, it gave a good reason to the Chinese side to revise their strategy for taming its Tibetan subjects. Massive international propaganda generated by Dharamshala on the basis of these visits also further infuriated Beijing and made it highly skeptical about further links with Dalai Lama.

Is it a 'change of heart' in Beijing?

If Sikyong Penpa Tsering's claims about a 'back channel' contact and Beijing's own initiative for this new edition of dialogue are correct, then it is worth analyzing why Xi Jinping and his communist establishment are suddenly getting so keen about fresh negotiations with the Dalai Lama? There is no shortage of people among functionaries of CTA and those from the personal establishment of Dalai Lama who must be looking at this 'change of heart' on President Xi's part as his vulnerability to the American and European pressure on Tibet just like what happened in 2002. But knowing the present state of power balance between China and its Western foes, this euphoria has hardly any base to sustain itself. Today's ground reality is that power equations between China and the entire western block put

together are just opposite of the conditions prevailing in 2002. In 2002 Beijing was still a rising power; was vulnerable to international opinion and pressures on issues like Tibet and; its grip over Tibet was still less than complete. In sharp contrast to the 2002 situation Dharamshala will now have to deal with an aggressive, arrogant and an all mighty Xi who is at the helm of a new China which is armed with an unprecedented financial, military and international clout. The vice like control of China on today's Tibet through its PLA; the Gestapo like Public Security Bureau (PSB) and; a massive network of digital and electronic surveillance system which controls every moving sentient thing, including poor Tibetan people inside today's Tibet, would leave hardly any meaningful elbow room for the Dalai Lama side in its negotiations on the dialogue table.

Hopes of the Dalai Lama

In my personal meetings with the two supreme Tibetan leaders during initial days of the 2002 dialogue His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself and Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, who happened to be the most popular elected 'Kalon Tripa' (Prime Minister) of present day Tibet, both looked confident of positive results from the Dharamshala-Beijing dialogue. In my separate meetings, both of them told me more than once that their minimum expectation from this fresh contact with Chinese leadership was that the Chinese leadership will stop the ongoing process of destruction of Tibetan identity and that this new bonhomie between the two sides, aided by the international support for the Tibetan people, will force the Chinese leaders to ease the suffocating human rights situation being faced by the Tibetan people inside Tibet. But unfortunately, the ground situation on both counts went in just opposite direction and life of ordinary Tibetans inside Tibet went from bad to worse throughout the fateful eight years of the dialogue. Things look far worse today when President Xi has declared an open war against the Tibetan identity of Tibet and the people of Tibet living under his colonial control.

Dharamshala's appeals to Tibetan people inside Tibet and Tibet supporters on the international forums to stop their 'anti-China' demonstrations, especially against the visiting Chinese Presidents and other senior leaders have finally proved to be a serious diplomatic mistake. In my personal discussions with some very senior functionaries of the CTA I was told that a common complaint of the Chinese side during the dialogue process was that Dharamshala was playing double game by talking to the Chinese on one side and supporting the anti-China demonstrations by Tibetan people inside Tibet and the Tibet supporters outside Tibet on the other. The Chinese side refused the Tibetan argument that as people's democratic rights in India and other countries the Tibet support

movement was self-initiated and was out of Dharamshala's command area. I was told that in response to this logic of Dharamshala the Chinese side told the delegation that it simply meant that the CTA was not the sole representative of the Tibetans and hence there was no point in talking to Dharamshala about whole of Tibet. As one of these senior leaders told me, Dharamshala's stand against such anti-China movement, especially its appeals to the TSGs to stop such demonstrations, was aimed at meeting this Chinese demand in order to keep the dialogue going. Ever since President Xi took over control of China and Tibet the Dalai Lama and the 'Sikyong' (elected President) of CTA have been publicly expressing fears about imminent total destruction of Tibetan identity inside Tibet. Xi's open call to the communist cadres in Tibet for establishing 'Tibetan Buddhism with socialist character' has started a replay of Mao's same dreaded 'Cultural Revolution' which had led to destruction of every single Buddhist symbol from the public and private life of Tibetan citizens. Destruction of Buddhist statues across Tibet by the communist administrators today has revived the memories of the notorious 'Bamyas Act' of the Taliban in Afghanistan. China's new law which makes it mandatory to have written and paper-stamped approval of the local Chinese Communist Party office for every new incarnate Lama; Xi's draconian decision to snatch every Tibetan child, above age of 4, from their families and lodging them into jail like secluded Communist Party schools for communist brainwashing and pure Han upbringing and; rules like seven-year jail for possessing a photo of Dalai Lama in today's Tibet will hardly encourage any Tibetan or Tibet supporter to share hopes and enthusiasm of the pro-dialogue lobby of Dharamshala.

Dharamshala's shrinking elbow room

Even outside Tibet too, China's ever spreading tentacles over the Tibetan diaspora and his influence over international institutions is successively reducing the scope for the Tibetans and their supporters to force Xi to settle for an agreement which meets at least minimum expectations of Dalai Lama and the people of Tibet. For example, Tibetans, escaping from China controlled Tibet and joining the Dalai Lama establishment in exile as new refugees used to be the biggest source of a committed, dedicated and united human source to keep the Tibetan movement going. Since Dalai Lama escaped from the Chinese grip in Tibet in 1959 over 120 thousand Tibetans managed to escape from Tibet. In past decades somewhat around 2000 to 3000 Tibetans used to escape each year from Tibet via Nepal to reach India. A gentleman's agreement between the Nepal government, Indian government and the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) worked smoothly for decades to help the Tibetan escapees reaching India after scrutiny and debriefing by the

Indian embassy in Kathmandu. But China's ever increasing influence over the Nepal government, especially during past few decades, has encouraged the Nepalese army, police and bureaucracy in the border areas to oblige their China friends by catching the escaping Tibetans and handing them back to the Chinese army.

As a result of change in Nepal's approach on this issue the annual outflow of Tibetans has now drastically reduced from a few thousands to just single digits for over a decade now. This has almost completely dried the lifeline of Dalai Lama's exile establishment. Akin to bleeding a human body to near white, this refugee drought has severely affected the Tibetan diaspora, especially the CTA in Dharamshala. This change is now more than visible in the functioning of the vast network of Tibetan schools and monasteries across India. The situation is so serious that even national ranking Tibetan monasteries like Drepung, Sera and Ganden at Karnataka in southern India are now forced to cater mainly to monks and students from Indian Himalayan states of Ladakh, Himachal and Arunachal Pradesh and Buddhist countries like Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The craze among the younger Tibetan refugees to migrate to greener pastures like USA, Canada and Europe has further added to the problems of CTA which is now feeling new challenge of attracting new youths among the diaspora and difficulty in holding on to its talented staff.

To make things worse for the Tibetan diaspora, Xi's communist establishment has found a good strategic use for the database the previous Beijing governments have been building up on the exile Tibetans. In past decades when the Dharamshala-Beijing contacts made things easier for the Tibetan refugees to visit their families back home, the Chinese authorities have been diligently building up a database of the refugee's family links inside Today's Tibet. There have been hundreds of instances when activist Tibetan exiles have complained about the Chinese authorities threatening and using their family members to force them return to Tibet or to stop their anti-China activities in exile. During my three yearlong series of international webinars on Tibet and China I personally had to deal with situations when some brilliant Tibetan activist or a scholar would express his or her inability to join the public discussion in the webinar for fears of safety of their family members inside Tibet.

Keeping in mind all these advantages in the hands of Xi's China it is imperative to see why Xi has suddenly become interested in talking to Dalai Lama? Also, what makes the CTA leaders so enthusiastic about the back door contacts and what results they are hopeful about the new edition of the Dharamshala-Beijing dialogue? As far as Dharamshala is concerned the Dalai Lama side has good reasons to be elated by the recent unanimous (almost) passage of Tibet related Acts in

the US Congress in 2020 and 2024 which were also promptly signed into new laws respectively by President Trump and President Biden. While both of these laws call upon Beijing to settle the disputes with Dalai Lama through a dialogue they also categorically support and underline all those vital assertions of the Dalai Lama side which China has been rejecting outright and even broke the dialogue citing its objection to these points. For ordinary Tibetans too these new American laws have come as a great moral booster. To name some of these major points:

- Tibet is an 'occupied country' and Tibet is an 'unsettled' issue;
- China should settle the Tibetan dispute through negotiations with Dalai Lama, his representatives and the elected Tibetan leaders;
- Tibet was never a part of China in history;
- 'Tibet' means TAR plus all those areas of Tibet which have been assimilated in adjoining Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai— and not just 'TAR' as claimed by China;
- The selection and appointment of Dalai Lama's reincarnation is exclusively the right of Dalai Lama himself and the people of Tibet and that China has no role to play in this. If any Chinese officials is found to indulge into this process then the new US laws oblige the President of USA and other concerned agencies to take action against them;
- China must respect religious values of Tibet and human rights of Tibetan people inside Tibet;
- All US governments must ensure that the projects funded by US agencies inside Tibet must not damage Tibetan environment and must not work against Tibetan people's human rights; and
- Unless the Chinese government agrees to the establishment of the USA Consulate in Lhasa no new Chinese Consulate offices in USA can be permitted.

No wonder these new US laws have come as a fresh shot in the arm of Dharmshala, especially after having seen China rejecting each of these points over past many decades. But one also wonders how susceptible or vulnerable Xi's China is actually going to prove against these assertions or claims of America and other friends of Dharmshala? After all, it is one thing for the US Congress or other pro-Tibet forums like the EU Parliament to pass any resolution on Tibet and China within their own four walls and an altogether different game to make China dance on these musical notes.

Dialogue "doomed to fail"- Jimmy Carter's prediction

In real terms, the Chinese vulnerabilities look much farther from what is visible to the eye today because Dharmshala today holds practically no new card in its hands to play on the dialogue table. In his 'Five-Point Peace Plan' of 1988 the Dalai Lama has already made the offer to accept Tibet as a part of China under the Chinese constitution in return for 'genuine autonomy'

for Tibet. Since then this has remained the 'bottom-line' of his approach on dialogue with China. True to his great diplomatic skills (Late) Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, one of my best and lifelong friends among Tibetans, who was Dalai Lama's Special Envoy and the head of his negotiator team during the 2002-2010 Tibet-China dialogue, has described this vulnerability of Dharmshala through an interesting anecdote in his monumental book "THE DALAI LAMA'S SPECIAL ENVOY — Memoirs of a Lifetime in Pursuit of a Reunited Tibet" (Columbia University Press).

Lodi Gyari has given details of his meetings with former US President Jimmy Carter to seek his advice on the draft of Dalai Lama's 'Strassbourg Proposal' (more famous as Dalai Lama's 'five-Point Peace Plan'). In his typically diplomatic and respectable style President Carter pronounced Dalai Lama's approach as impractical and prone to failure unless it was suitably revised. Giving details of this meeting Lodi writes:

".....Finally he (Carter) put the document down and asked what the Dalai Lama's "bottom line" was. I responded: "Mr. President, this is His Holiness's bottom line." President Carter then replied that if that were true, we should begin by asking for something more. I explained to him that many of us felt the same way, but His Holiness remained adamant, declaring that he wasn't a politician but a Buddhist monk, and bargaining is not in his nature. His Holiness wanted to be straight forward and clear about what he was asking for. After listening carefully to my explanation, President Carter admiringly observed that if His Holiness's approach succeeded, it could revolutionize the field of negotiations....."

Time to be alert

Knowing China's history of handling negotiations with its foes and, more than that, keeping in view the aggressive and bullying style of President Xi's functioning, friends of Tibet like me would feel compelled to advise Dharmshala leaders to seriously look for and probe the reasons which make Xi interested in starting fresh dialogue after rejecting it so many times in the past. More so, because, unfortunately, most of things concerning today's Tibet don't appear to be stacked in favour of Dharmshala and its ageing leader, the Dalai Lama. Frankly speaking there are not enough signs on the Tibetan horizon which can assure one that Dharmshala has enough of skills, tools and advantages to squeeze out any meaningful favours or concessions from Xi's China?

Xi's design on the Dalai Lama

Dharmshala leaders today cannot afford to ignore the fact that unlike Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao in whose time the previous dialogue was initiated in 2002, President Xi today heads a China that is too powerful and influential to care for even an iota of international niceties or rule of law. After having succeeded in putting entire occupied Tibet under his iron vice the

last goal of President Xi now is to mollify the ageing Dalai Lama and lure him to the Chinese umbrella. Once the Dalai Lama side accepts Chinese assurances it would remove the last hurdles in his way of imposing the next incarnation of Dalai Lama of CCP's choice on Tibet. In such a situation the chapter of Tibet for the international community is bound to be closed for ever.

And to achieve this goal on the dialogue table we can expect Xi to promise and offer anything to the Tibetan side — even the moon and the sun. The living generation of the world community, including the Tibetans in Dharamshala and Lhasa, has already witnessed the levels of sincerity of China and its communist leaders about their own promises and assurances on Hong Kong. Unfortunately the world has already experienced the levels of courage and guts (or lack of both?) on the part of world powers and the rest of world when none could dare ask Beijing leaders to deliver on their promises they had made to the people of Hong Kong while taking over the colony from the British. After firsthand experience of how China has manipulated and mutilated its own promises on 'n' number of occasions since the Tibetan delegation signed on the '17-Point Agreement' with China in 1951, the latest example of Hong Kong should have been enough to make Dharamshala and its pro-dialogue advisors to understand the level of sincerity of Chinese leaders.

Friends or Enemies?

One word of caution which every friend and well-wisher of Tibet would like to share with policy makers in Dharamshala is that they must remain cautious about such individuals, governments and groups who might be hunting for big personal gains by offering the present Dalai Lama to Xi's China on a platter. Such an unfortunate situation will, no doubt, solve China's Tibet problem for ever, but it will also push Tibet into an irretrievable situation for all times in its future history. Unfortunately, this warning is not without a base because Tibet has witnessed many such cases in its recent history when a Tibetan minister like (late) Nagapo Ngawang Jigme, rather than helping Tibet, preferred to trade off Tibet's interests in return for personal comforts and worldly gains.

There is also no shortage of governments, individuals and institutions which appeared to be strong supporters and friends of Tibet on their face, but took no time in shifting their priorities to winning favours from Beijing. The most glaring example has been of a prominent German foundation which spent tons of money on organizing series of international Tibet support conferences across the world. Once it established its credentials as a well-wisher of Tibetan diaspora, it took on itself a gigantic campaign of training Tibetan youth leaders on issues like 'autonomy' and 'democracy' through a long series of

five-star residential seminars and conferences. It was already too late for the Tibetan community before they realized that the entire campaign was aimed at brainwashing an entire generation of Tibetan youth leaders and weaning them away from their national agenda of 'independence' from China. But before the Tibetan diaspora could understand the real game of this organization it publicly shifted its loyalties to the government of China leaving Tibet and the Tibetans high and dry. The worst impact of this brainwashing campaign was that hitherto a highly united Tibetan diaspora got deeply fractured and divided between the 'Autonomy' (Umay Lam) and the 'Independence' (Rangzen) camps who could have otherwise coexisted without such a friction. It is also not a coincidence that this brainwashing campaign on Tibetan youth leaders severely damaged the Tibetan society's resolve to fight together for their country.

No hope from the international community

Tibetans cannot forget that the world community in general and the world powers in particular have remained so fearful of China's anger that ever since Mao sent his PLA first time in 1949 to invade Tibet they hardly went ahead beyond offering some verbal generosity to the suffering people of Tibet. Tibetans must also be wary of the fact that today when most countries, including the super powers, feel threatened by a far more powerful China and the danger of a world war is looming large over the world then it is all the more in the interest of international community to see a closure of the Tibetan issue on whatever terms — suitable to Tibetans or not. A publicly advertised settlement between Xi and Dalai Lama with a glaring photo-op ceremony might get front page coverage across the world media next day. But it will also seal the fate of Tibet and Tibetan people permanently. Once the photo-op is over and front page news headlines shift to other world issues then any complaints of Tibetans after that day are bound to be brushed off by the world community as a 'petty internal matter' of China.

The Tibetan Struggle at 70: Challenges and Opportunities

26 July 2024, [Australian Outlook](#), Dr. Sonika Gupta

On 6 July, the 14th Dalai Lama turned 89, having lived for the last 65 years in exile in India. The Dalai Lama is the physical embodiment of the Tibetan nation and his advancing age brings forth urgent questions for the future of the Tibetan struggle.

In 1959, His Holiness had to flee Lhasa under Chinese persecution and has never returned to Tibet. Since 1959, thousands of Tibetans have followed His Holiness into exile. This exiled population is estimated to be around 130,000, a fraction of Tibet's current

population, and has a crucial role in amplifying and keeping the Tibetan struggle alive.

With the help of the Indian government and other international donors, there exists an extensive infrastructure of 40 Tibetan settlements in India that comprise monasteries, Tibetan schools, Tibetan medicine hospitals and dispensaries, cultural institutions for performing arts, handicrafts, and literary production. These settlements are sustained by agriculture, handicrafts, small businesses, and overseas remuneration of Tibetans resettled in western nations such as Australia, US, Canada, Switzerland, France, Japan, and others. In the settlements, Tibetans in exile have consistently strived to keep alive Tibetan Buddhism, language, and its cultural traditions under very challenging conditions. These settlements are governed by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamshala, a democratically elected Tibetan-Parliament-in-Exile, representing all Tibetans. The trajectory of Tibetan democratisation in exile, though faced with many challenges, speaks to Tibetan people's democratic aspirations and provides a stark contrast to Chinese authoritarianism.

However, the Tibetan cause has suffered from a lack of international political support in addressing the issue of the Chinese occupation of Tibet. A 2023 Freedom House report identified Tibet as the "least free country in the world." Chinese religious and political repression and ethnic discrimination in Tibet is well documented, though has yet to produce a commensurate global political response. Since the 1990s, Tibet's political fate has been held hostage to China's increasing economic and political accommodation in the international system. Consequently, since the 1990s, Tibet has largely been framed as a human rights issue or more recently as one of cultural genocide. While this brings attention to the increasing religious repression in Tibet, it skirts the question of Tibetan self-determination. As voiced by the Dalai Lama, as well as CTA, there is a persistent quest for "genuine autonomy" for all Tibetan people in all Tibetan areas under Chinese rule. At the same time, there are Tibetans all over the world who aspire to total independence of Tibet from China. A decision on either of these choices has to be made solely by the Tibetan people. The Chinese state at the moment offers no avenues of discussion on any possibility for resolution of the Tibet issue, claiming Tibet as an integral part of China and denying any repression.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, a window has opened with the US incrementally stepping up its support for Tibet. There have been a number of significant developments on the issue in the US with the potential to lay the groundwork for more robust international support for Tibet. One such development is the issue of the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai

Lama. It is certain that the 14th Dalai Lama's eventual succession will become a battle between China and the Tibetans for political and religious legitimacy, with long term implications for the future of the Tibetan struggle. Recognising this, in 2020, the US passed the Tibet Policy Support Act, unequivocally declaring that the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama is a religious issue, solely to be decided by the Tibetan people, brooking no involvement of the Chinese government. This Act goes beyond the US position of recognising human rights abuses in Tibet and acknowledges the religious agency of the Tibetans to decide their own affairs.

Historically, the lineages of Tibetan lamas have played an integral role in shaping the geo-politics of Tibet, Mongolia, and China. This is likely to be repeated on a much larger stage when the 14th Dalai Lama passes away. The 15th reincarnation will have an unprecedented political context far beyond the borders of China and Tibet, and will have foreign policy implications for US, India, Japan, Mongolia, Taiwan, Russia, Bhutan, Nepal.

The Dalai Lama has declared that he will not "reincarnate" in occupied Tibet. This leaves open the possibility of the 15th reincarnation in other areas where significant populations of Tibetan Buddhists reside. This includes Mongolia, Bhutan, Nepal, and the entire Indian Himalayan belt from Ladakh to Sikkim to Arunachal Pradesh. It is certain that the China will declare their own candidate for the Dalai Lama, as they did for the 11th Panchen Lama. In 1995, the Dalai Lama recognised six year old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. Within 72 hours of being identified, the Chinese authorities had kidnapped the boy and his family. China then introduced Gyaltsen Norbu as their choice for the Panchen Lama who continues to occupy the lineage.

Norbu is a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference that advises China's United Front Work Department tasked with intelligence gathering, influence operations, and co-opting elites in Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Xinjiang to neutralise political opposition to the Communist Party of China. The Chinese Panchen Lama enjoys little legitimacy among Tibetans. However, over the last three decades, China has worked systematically to tighten its grip on the system by passing multiple decrees stipulating that any "reincarnation" must be approved by the state. In this context, the 2020 Tibet Policy Support Act and the subsequent 2024 Tibet Resolve Act have become significant in shaping the US and possibly a global response to the next reincarnation.

The Resolve Tibet Act, signed into law by President Joe Biden on 12 July 2024 with overwhelming bipartisan support, promises enhanced US support for the Tibetan cause. The Resolve Act has three significant provisions worth noting. Firstly, it provides a statutory

definition of Tibet to include Tibetan areas outside of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China and in Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces. This aligns with the CTA's long-standing demand of recognising these areas as part of Tibet in any solution to the Tibetan issue. TAR was formed in 1965 by separating Central Tibet from Tibetan areas of present Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces. The Dalai Lama and the CTA have consistently rejected this fragmentation of Tibet by China. The Resolve Act territorially maps contemporary Tibet to its cultural and historic space in a substantive recognition of the Dalai Lama's position.

Secondly, the Resolve Act also acknowledges China's active disinformation campaign concerning Tibetan history, presenting Tibet as a part of China since ancient times. Recognising this, the Act tasks the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues to counter this narrative. Finally, the Resolve Act intends to build international opinion on Tibet towards a negotiated settlement and demands that China resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama that was suspended in 2010.

While it would be too ambitious to imagine that the Tibet issue may become a core issue in any future US-China diplomatic effort, the political support for Tibet in Congress can definitely be leveraged to create more institutional checks on China's repressive policies in Tibet, and greater international concert on support for the Tibetan community, both inside Tibet and globally can leverage this support for the crucial upcoming issue of reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama.

In the next few years, the Tibetan movement is poised for a transformative change as it negotiates the traditionally destabilising process of reincarnation. Global support recognising sole Tibetan agency in recognising the next Dalai Lama would be crucial to the future of the Tibetan movement and the Tibetan nation.

Inaction, or complicity? Chinese authorities turn a blind eye towards restrictions on Tibetan language

24 July 2024, [International Campaign For Tibet](#)

Tibetans inside Tibet are circulating videos objecting to the fact that Douyin, one of the most important streaming and social media platforms in China, is blocking Tibetan-language broadcasts. Chinese authorities have not responded to these objections, revealing a new aspect of the PRC's efforts to undermine the use of Tibetan and replace it with Mandarin.

Livestreaming has become the most popular online retail sales avenue in the People's Republic of China, but Tibetans are facing discrimination from platforms which, like Douyin, restrict the usage of Tibetan. The

list of these platforms includes major Chinese sites such as Kuaishou, Bilibili, and Talkmate.

Restrictions on spoken Tibetan

Tibetans use Chinese platforms that provide facilities for messaging, reels posting, playing music, ecommerce and livestreaming for discussion on topics that are seen not "sensitive" to the authorities; many of the major social media and streaming sites used in other countries are blocked in China. Younger Tibetan entrepreneurs have embraced livestreaming retail sales to capture the Tibetan market, selling items such as Tibetan garments, Dzi beads, and religious artifacts. Visitors who have traveled to Tibet recently reported that online business has been very lucrative for some of these Tibetan businesspeople.

Recently, however, videos have emerged on Tibetan-language social media in which Tibetans complain about Douyin preventing them from livestreaming in Tibetan. One such livestreamer is heard saying in an undated video, which has been subsequently posted on Youtube:

"Today, I have to mention that I am forced to speak out. Today, I want to ask whether our Douyin company holds more power or is it the nation, or whether Douyin company is more powerful than the legal system? Or does Douyin company have more power or does the government? What is it? For example, my question is, to give an example, our country's very good policies give protection for a nationality's cultural preservation and promotion of a nationality's language. The state really supports these, as does the legal system, and the government, too, supports them. Therefore, why is Douyin company blocking (the livestreaming) in our language when we speak in Tibetan? I want to ask this here. It will not do [for me] not to ask this. Now, the state is saying we must promote a nationality's language, so how can our nationality's language be promoted? Where should we go, residing in our villages and speaking our language?"

The Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy also mentions the plight of Tibetan medical practitioners who are unable to use Tibetan in their online consultations. A doctor who was forced to shut down online consultation is quoted as saying:

"I may be a small-time Tibetan doctor, but my medical expertise has never been in question. I encounter numerous patients who self-medicate for headaches and other illnesses with painkillers without seeking medical advice. Many seriously ill individuals and those with health issues seek my guidance. With the prohibition on using the Tibetan language, I am forced to use Chinese, and since my patients are Tibetan, especially the elderly and illiterate youth, including farmers and nomads, they struggle to understand me when I speak in Chinese. What purpose does speaking

Chinese serve if they cannot comprehend it? As a result, I have stopped my online broadcasts.”

In 2022, RFA Tibetan reported that multilingual learning app Talkmate and video streaming app Bilibili removed postings in Tibetan from their platforms. TCHRD also reported that Kuaishou imposed restrictions in Tibetan.

Sources inside Tibet were not able to confirm whether these videos circulating on social media outside of Tibet are recent or whether they are old postings, as the restrictions on the usage of Tibetan on online Chinese platforms have been in place for years.

Restrictions on written Tibetan

Beyond the restrictions on Tibetan-language streaming, Tibetan netizens have noticed restrictions on comments written in Tibetan as well.

In a comment in Chinese posted on the popular platform “WeChat public accounts” (公众号; “gong zhong hao”), one netizen (PiaoBoDZ) had written, “Although many comments are written in the mother tongue [meaning Tibetan], it is like throwing stone into the ocean.”



A message by “PiaoBoDZ” on a WeChat post complaining about not being able to post in Tibetan.

In March 2021, one Tibetan netizen posted a message on the Chinese platform Douban stating that Douyin had rejected an image as being “not suitable for the public”. The image was a picture of a Tibetan-language inscription of a popular poem by the sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso (b. 1683).



Screenshot of the image rejected by Douyin.

Tibetans have noted that even nicknames in Tibetan are not being approved by Douyin. In what seems to be a clarification from the platform in May 2024, in response to a question about why the platform rejects usernames with Tibetan characters Douyin says, “Our

technical team worked day and night, and after a lot of research and practice, we finally found the central solution for processing Tibetan. The new review strategy no longer regards Tibetan as sensitive information.”

Official inaction over abuse of Tibetan language rights

Tibetan netizens, even while objecting to the online platforms, are differentiating between the action of Douyin and other online platforms and the policies of the Chinese government, expressing hope that the authorities will intercede on their behalf because of their “good policies.” This rhetorical position may be necessary to protect them from being seen as critical of the Chinese government.

The regulation governing livestreaming is the one issued by the Chinese State Administration of Radio and Television on June 8, 2022, in which Article 12 of this Code of Conduct for Online Presenters says, “Online presenters shall use the nation’s common spoken and written language in accordance with standardized writing methods and meanings.”

However, Chinese officials have said that online presenters can use any language they want. At a press conference in Beijing on achievements and measures on ethnic unity and progress in the new era on August 29, 2022, Zhao Yong, then deputy director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, defended the Chinese policy of promoting Mandarin maintaining that it does not impact the promotion of non-Chinese languages. In response to a question on China “promoting the use of Mandarin in ethnic minority areas such as Xinjiang and Tibet” might be “detrimental to the development of ethnic minority languages and cultures,” Zhao said, “while popularizing Mandarin in accordance with the law, the Chinese government fully respects and protects the freedom of ethnic minorities to use their own languages, creating conditions for them to learn and use their own languages.”

He further said, “And as for how to protect the languages and cultures of ethnic minorities, I think supporting their use is the best method of protection” adding, “In short, there is absolutely no obstacle for ethnic minorities in learning and using their own languages in their work and lives.”

If this indeed is the official policy, then there is no implementation when it comes to the Tibetans. The authorities have been turning a deaf ear to the appeals being made by the Tibetan online presenters.

Livestreaming platforms fulfilling CCP’s political agenda

One reason for the Chinese government not protecting the rights of the Tibetans to use their own language on such online platforms is because these restrictions fulfill the Chinese government’s political agenda of undermining the study of Tibetan while

making Mandarin the dominating language even among Tibetans.

Indicating the anguish that Tibetans feel about the erosion of the Tibetan language and the mainstreaming of Chinese, several self-immolators have, in their last words or statements, referred to the importance of protecting their language. As he lay dying following his self-immolation in 2012, monk Ngawang Norphel said: "Every nationality needs freedom, language and tradition. Without language, what would be our nationality? [Should we then] call ourselves Chinese or Tibetan?"

The case of Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk having to undergo five years of imprisonment and even now continuing to face denial of his freedom, even after formal release is another example of denial of language rights. He is among a younger generation in Tibet who have prioritized protection of the Tibetan language.

Wangchuk was arrested in early 2016, two months after he was featured in a New York Times video and article in 2015 criticizing Chinese cultural and educational policies on Tibetans. He stood trial in January 2018, and was subsequently given a five-year sentence. In the New York Times video posted in November 2015, Wangchuk complained that Chinese "government authorities actively block the teaching and studying of the Tibetan language." He stressed the importance of Tibetans having access to education in the Tibetan language and his intention to file a lawsuit against the authorities for not enabling this. He further amplifies the thinking of the Tibetan self-immolators telling the New York Times, "They didn't just set themselves on fire because of some family issues or something. I believe they also saw culture disappearing and other cultural problems. But we don't have ways to solve these problems. I want to try to use the People's Republic of China's laws to solve the problem."

In its 2024 report, *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House reported, "The online censorship and monitoring systems in place across China are applied more stringently in Tibet, while censorship of Tibet-related keywords on apps like WeChat has become more sophisticated. The use of Tibetan language is banned on a range of social media apps, particularly ones that use streaming and live communication services."

Douyin is China's domestic version of the controversial TikTok, and both are owned by the Bytedance. In April 2024 Congress passed a legislation banning TikTok in the United States if Bytedance doesn't sell its stake by January of 2025. Earlier, in 2022, Senate had passed a bill that prohibits certain individuals from downloading or using TikTok on any device issued by the United States or a government corporation. Tiktok is suspected of being a tool in the Chinese Communist

Party's long arm of authoritarianism. TikTok reportedly "instructs its moderators to censor videos that mention Tiananmen Square, Tibetan independence," according to a 2019 report in *The Guardian* quoting leaked documents detailing the site's moderation guidelines. In one instance of Tiktok being used to harass Tibetans in diaspora, a young Tibetan American student received a series of derogatory comments within hours of posting a video of herself in Tibetan clothes on Tiktok. The posts ranged from standardized CCP propaganda to slurs, and more.

Echoes from the Tibetan Youth Convention: A growing experience

24 July 2024, [FNVA](#), Tenzing Dhamdul

I recall checking my inbox and receiving an email from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to attend the Tibetan Youth Convention in Dharamshala, as I had previously attended several of their events, including the Tibet Youth Day event last year. I was originally hesitant to join because I had already cancelled my participation at the International Tibet Youth Forum 2024 a few weeks ago because I had previously attended the forum in 2023, and on top of that, I had several commitments at Foundations for Non-violent Alternatives (FNVA) to fulfil. However, when I discussed this invitation with my trustees at the Foundation for Nonviolent Alternatives (FNVA). They insisted on my participation because two of our research interns, both V-TAGgers, were also scheduled to attend the International Tibet Youth Forum in Dharamshala and saw this as an opportunity where I would learn and grow. I was curious to learn more about the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), also known as the Tibetan Government in Exile, which was one of the main topics of the youth conference. For the entire text, click [here](#).

Can the US 'Resolve Tibet Act' Make a Difference?

24 July 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Marie Miller and Tenzin Lhadon

The act takes a landmark step in challenging the CCP's historical revisionism. But the U.S. should be prepared to offer concrete support to the Tibetan community, which is already beginning to feel the CCP's retaliation. It's a narrative that's all too familiar: Nationalist world leaders claiming historical sovereignty over territory, weaponizing revised history to justify invasion. In 1950, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) acted upon its self-declared inheritance over Tibet, imposing a treaty that officially annexed the region. Following the 1959 Tibetan uprising against the CCP, and the escape of the Dalai Lama to Dharamshala, India, the iron fist only tightened. The Tibetan government-in-

exile estimates that in the 20 years following the uprising, 1.2 million Tibetans died as a result of China's policies, while still many more languished in prison.

Historic revisionism is the basis for the same predatory rhetoric Xi Jinping's government uses today as it builds entire villages in Bhutan, claims ownership over northern India's Arunachal Pradesh as "South Tibet," and threatens Taiwan with militaristic drills and mock missile strikes. Revisionist history is laden with propagandistic undertones – and it's a threat to self-determination, culture, and human life.

Today, with the ink of President Joe Biden's signature drying on the Resolve Tibet Act of 2024, the United States has an opportunity to explicitly – and officially – set the narrative straight. His signature marks a testy politicization of the Tibetan cause by the executive branch. As this law is implemented, however, the U.S. should be prepared to offer concrete support to the Tibetan community, which is already beginning to feel the CCP's retaliatory crackdown.

The CCP portrays an image of China as diverse-yet-"blended," contained by borders it claims are inherited from "ancient times." By 1950, however, the Tibetan government had enjoyed 37 years of declared independence from Qing rule. Floundering for territorial security and fearing the same fissured fate of the Soviet Union, the CCP implemented assimilationist policies in claimed territories. This included the shuttering of local Tibetan schools and the rise of monolingual state-run residential education for Tibetan children as young as four, the destruction of monasteries, and mass arrests of those – including monks – who protested environmentally damaging policies. Authorities took aim not only at ideological dissidents but at the very ethnic and religious identities of the Tibetan community.

Undoing the methodical rewriting of history is no easy feat, especially as U.S. policy on Tibet has been historically arrhythmic: Since the 1960s, when Tibetan lamas first won the hearts of the American public as counselors to counterculture protesters, the executive branch frequently criticized congressional support for the Tibetan cause.

In spite of then-President George W. Bush's assertion that his administration had the right not to implement multiple provisions of the law, the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 was eventually included in appropriations law. Amid the COVID-ridden tension of China-U.S. relations, the Tibet Policy Act of 2020 promised to slap Magnitsky sanctions on all officials of the Chinese government meddling in the selection of the next Dalai Lama. Both landmark policies called for dialogue between the CCP and the Dalai Lama, yet the meat of the legislation lay in specific funding programs for the Tibetan communities-in-exile, including support for uncensored news outlets and scholarships for cultural preservation.

Until now, China's territorial claims have officially been left unchallenged by the United States, for fear of risking increased tension between Washington and Beijing. Marking a quiet transition from the previous precedent of unspoken acquiescence to CCP-defined borders, however, the State Department's 2023 human rights report has dropped previous affirmations that Tibet is part of China.

Congress now seeks a definitive political re-write. Bolder than its predecessors, the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act – also known as the "Resolve Tibet Act" – makes it official U.S. policy that the CCP's claim to Tibetan territory as "part of China since ancient times" is "historically inaccurate." One scholar noted the political weight of U.S. leadership in affirming self-determination – it could encourage India to speak up against the CCP's territorial claims to Tibet. In the wake of the bill's passage, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Representative Michael McCaul traveled to India to meet with the 14th Dalai Lama, followed by engagements with a newly re-elected Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This visit was met with strong condemnation by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, which declared that China will take "resolute measures" to protect its sovereignty. In response to the passing of a truly "strong policy supporting Tibet," first promised during Biden's 2020 campaign, Chinese authorities have intensified their crackdown: As Biden signed the Resolve Tibet Act into law, CCP authorities responded by ordering the closure of Jigme Gyaltsen Vocational High School, for "undisclosed reasons." This school, reputed for its specialized Tibetan language studies, maintained a rich repository of Tibetan literature.

When the U.S. politicizes human rights, it will not always feel the repercussions. However, the imprisoned community will. The Resolve Tibet Act must take their fate into consideration as well. For example, concerned voices of the Tibet Policy Institute pointed to the bill's lack of substantive policy response to urgent issues such as the dramatic increase of forced relocation of rural Tibetans.

The CCP relies on the distortion of history to infringe upon Tibetan self-determination and justify its ethnonationalist project. An act of political affirmation is necessary to challenge a historical narrative that justifies a predatory status quo. Yet challenging is only the first step – as China begins to enact its "resolute measures," the U.S. must be prepared to take responsibility for the reactions it is stirring, offering substantive support to the Tibetan community it is inadvertently putting in harm's way.

China's Leaders Just Held a Third Plenum. So What?

23 July 2024, [Foreign Policy](#)

On July 18, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) concluded the Third Plenum of its 20th Party Congress. Held in a secured military conference hotel on the western outskirts of Beijing, proceedings closed with a ritual appearance by top leader Xi Jinping. Third Plenums, so called because they're the third meeting of the party's five-year cycles, cover economic policy; outcomes are scrutinized by cadres and global businesses alike.

This Third Plenum duly addressed the economy but also broke from precedent: When the conclave wasn't scheduled during the accustomed time last fall, speculation swirled around delays due to party purges and economic headwinds. With the session finally finished, we can now parse speeches and documents for insights into Beijing's economic thinking—and gauge how CCP institutions have fared under Xi's norm-bending rule.

One recurring catchphrase this session has been “reform and opening up”—a term with a rich history but invoked today in circumstances starkly different from the time of its original coinage. In 1978, paramount leader Deng Xiaoping was picking up the pieces after Mao Zedong's chaotic rule. Deng sought to create stable conditions for economic growth. He sidelined Maoist cadres advocating “class struggle” and promoted reformers keen on economic experimentation. The 1978 Third Plenum keynote speech was Deng's victory lap. In his clipped Sichuanese accent, speaking at the same military hotel, Deng called for China to open itself to foreign capitalists and overseas manufacturing firms. This new “reform and opening up” policy drove decades of growth, lifting the masses from poverty and integrating the People's Republic with the global economy.

While official meetings were erratic under Mao, Deng sought a steadier rhythm. The terrors of the Cultural Revolution were subsiding; cadres found a certain solace in bureaucratic rituals. The headline event of the party calendar is the National Congress; in the pattern set after Mao's death, it is held usually in October of years ending with 2 and 7. (Xi, for instance, ascended as CCP general secretary in 2012, gained a second term in 2017, and an unprecedented third in 2022.) At a full Congress, thousands of delegates convene in Beijing to ratify decisions about leadership and ideology, while 99 million party members look on.

After the Congress concludes, subsidiary plenums are called over the ensuing five-year span until the next full session. These intermediate meetings typically convene a few hundred CCP bigwigs and selected

experts and have historically been held five to nine times (most commonly seven) before the following Congress half a decade later. Plenums typically cover party appointments (First Plenum), government personnel (Second), economic reform (Third), party-building activities (Fourth), fixing a new Five-Year Plan (Fifth), management of culture and history (Sixth), and a closing summation (Seventh) before the next Congress. Each meeting also disposes of sensitive party business arising in the interim. Since the Second Plenum in early 2023, several members of Xi's top team—including ministers of defense and foreign affairs—have vanished into the CCP's disciplinary apparatus, snared in graft and other indiscretions. At this plenum, their fates were finalized. Some offenders, stripped of party membership, now face criminal trial. Others got off more leniently: Last week, former Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who was disappeared for a year, formally lost membership of the elite Central Committee. But in an official document, he kept the appellation “comrade”—demotion without total disgrace. Such individual intrigues ultimately matter less than the overall tone: the “party line” and “main melody” of propaganda. In earlier eras, plenum themes reflected a more collective leadership. Today, that agenda closely follows the will of Xi himself.

Ever since Deng's 1978 breakthrough set the template, observers have eagerly watched Third Plenums for portents of change. Results have always varied. Over the 1980s, one Third Plenum widened economic reforms from the countryside to the cities, but, with inflation rising, the next Third Plenum tightened statist wage controls and commodity price caps. After the Tiananmen Square crackdown in June 1989 froze political reforms, the 1993 Third Plenum signaled that economic reforms would continue: The communiqué made rhetorical room for capitalism by advocating a “socialist market economy.” This turn of phrase translated into epochal change: the dismantling of many state-owned enterprises and the end of “iron rice bowl” welfare security for more than 20 million people. The Third Plenums in 2003 and 2008 were, in hindsight, milquetoast: missed opportunities to update China's growth model and rectify an unruly (and sometimes greedy) party apparatus.

When Xi took over in 2012, he had a mandate from his colleagues to secure the CCP's future by taming corruption and enacting structural reforms. Xi's first Third Plenum as leader—in November 2013—was met with high expectations. The conclave announced big changes: a plan to end the one-child policy and a determination to let market forces take a “decisive” role in the economy. Outside observers, squinting to see China's economic modernization tracking toward convergence with the

West, hailed the plenum as a masterstroke and Xi as a bold “reformer.”

The one-child policy was duly scrapped after several years. But the CCP soured on market mechanisms after Chinese stocks swooned in 2015, threatening the stability of the broader economy. The state responded with heavy-handed measures: strong-arming equity sales and detaining financial reporters. Meanwhile, party institutions grew more visible in everyday life and acted more assertively toward private businesses. Crackdowns snared rights lawyers and journalists; government regulators humbled China’s booming tech sector. Politics took priority—and command—over economics.

By 2018, Xi had decided to abolish term limits for the presidency of the People’s Republic, a post held concurrently with the more important role of CCP general secretary. Though the position is a state title—technically outside the party bureaucracy and calendar—this move seemingly disturbed the regular rhythms of party politics. The Third Plenum in 2018 fell early, landing in February rather than the fall. Unusually, that meeting focused on personnel rather than economic issues.

Today, a look back on Xi’s inaugural Third Plenum in 2013 shows the limitations of prognosticating based on that or any other party meeting. Some plans were implemented. In other cases, unexpected events may have overtaken the best intentions. But whatever the rhetoric, more than a decade later, the reality is trending toward more government intervention in the economy rather than less. A reformer Xi has been—but rarely in the direction Western observers might have hoped. Since Xi took power and held his inaugural Third Plenum at the expected time, two subsequent Third Plenums have fallen outside their usual season. Xi is now in power indefinitely, having amassed more formal titles and personal influence than any leader since Mao.

At the recently concluded Third Plenum, Xi and his comrades affirmed the expected themes with range of slogans, with some—such as “reform and opening up” and “Chinese-style modernization”—reflecting Deng’s legacy. Documents highlighted security and control while also calling for “high-quality development” in key sectors, such as green tech and semiconductors, believed to be crucial to future growth. Some perennial problems have resurfaced again after being mentioned in past Third Plenums but never faced.

In 2003 and 2013, communiqués suggested a property tax to raise local government revenue for health and welfare spending, but no comprehensive policy resulted. Now, a crumbling real estate sector threatens to tip into crises in local government debt and the economy at large. In 2024, the CCP sounds more tepid today toward market

forces than in 2013, reprising the 1993 slogan of a “socialist market economy” while calling for “market order” and making scant mention of the private sector. Even in 1978, the important politicking actually happened behind the scenes before Deng’s inaugural Third Plenum. In Deng’s keynote speech ending the session, even as he exhorted his comrades to “liberate [their] thinking” and “look forward,” he made no mention of the phrase “reform and opening up,” instead quoting from Lenin and praising Mao. Deng framed his new initiatives through Mao’s language, saying that to pursue true Marxism, cadres must “seek truth from facts.” Deng’s call for a foreign investment law came last in a list of draft legislation covering routine topics such as forestry, factories, and labor. The radical impact of Deng’s reforms only became apparent over time, through actions rather than words.

So it may have been with the Third Plenum in 2013, when Xi framed his ambitions in the language of his immediate predecessors. Whatever is said at the dais, Chinese policymaking ultimately depends as much—or more—on personalities, and the pressure of events, as on showpiece meetings of party or state.

This year’s arrhythmic Third Plenum has, so far, yielded a 5,000-word communiqué and a “decision” document, along with a profusion of records, commentary, and clarifications to elucidate the CCP’s will. These hail Xi’s “comprehensively deepening reforms” but have offered few specifics so far. Whatever the future of China’s politics and economy, Xi’s continuing central role in guiding both appears ensured.

When Tibet Sought China’s Help Against “Napoleon of India” – The Incredible “Twist In Tale” From Today’s Scenario

22 July 2024, [The EurAsian Times](#), Shubhangi Palve

India recently showcased the ‘Zorawar’ light battle tank, designed for high-altitude warfare. Jointly developed by the DRDO and Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Limited, Zorawar is tailored to meet the Indian Army’s needs in the eastern Ladakh sector, addressing Chinese deployments across the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

This is India’s first indigenously designed and developed light tank, intended to counter China at high altitudes. In both mobility and firepower accuracy, it is expected to surpass the Chinese Type 15 tanks deployed along the Ladakh border.

The name ‘Zorawar’ translates to ‘strong and powerful,’ embodying the essence of formidable strength and resilience.

The Threat Of China & Project Zorawar

The clashes between India and China on the Line of Actual Control in Galwan in June 2020, which resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and at least four Chinese soldiers, significantly strained relations between the two nations.

During this period, the Indian Army encountered challenges with the rapid deployment of tanks. The existing tanks were too heavy, complicating their airlift to the frontline.

Additionally, these tanks were not suited for the high-altitude terrain of Ladakh. Compounding the problem, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) had deployed numerous advanced lightweight tanks in the region, putting Indian forces at a disadvantage.

To address these issues, the Indian Army required a tank weighing no more than 25 tonnes, capable of being easily airlifted to forward positions in Ladakh, and well-suited for the challenging conditions. Consequently, the Indian government approved 'Project Zorawar' in March 2022.

Drawing from the lessons of the Indo-China standoff in Galwan, the tank was named "Zorawar" to honor the 19th-century Dogra warrior and military strategist General Zorawar Singh Kahluria.

Revered as the "Napoleon of India" and the "Conqueror of Ladakh," General Zorawar led numerous successful campaigns in Ladakh and Baltistan.

General Zorawar Singh Kahluria

General Zorawar Singh Kahluria, often revered as a valiant warrior and military leader, played a significant role in the history of the Dogra region, particularly in the early 19th century.

Born in 1784 (though some sources claim 1786) in the Kahlur region, present-day Bilaspur district in Himachal Pradesh, India, Zorawar Singh belonged to the Kahluria clan of Rajputs.

Zorawar Singh began his military career in the service of Raja Sansar Chand II of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. His bravery, strategic acumen, and leadership skills quickly propelled him through the ranks. One of his most notable achievements was his extensive military campaigns to expand the borders of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the founder of the Sikh Empire.

Conquest Of Ladakh & Western Tibet

Zorawar Singh is renowned for his bold expeditions into Ladakh, then part of the Tibetan Empire. In 1834, he led a campaign to conquer Ladakh on behalf of Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. Over the following years, he carried out multiple campaigns in the region, successfully capturing crucial towns and fortresses.

In 1834, the Raja of Timbus sought Raja Gulab Singh's help against the Ladakhi King. Seizing the opportunity, Raja Gulab Singh ordered his capable commander, Zorawar Singh, to march into Ladakh.

As the General of Jammu, Zorawar Singh launched Trans-Himalayan campaigns starting in April 1834 with an army of 5,000 men. Within eight years, he conquered Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Western Tibet. Zorawar's campaigns faced numerous challenges due to the harsh terrain, extreme weather conditions, and resistance from local rulers. Despite these obstacles, he displayed exceptional leadership and determination.

In the spring of 1835, he defeated an army of 22,000 troops led by General Kahlon and marched his victorious forces to Leh. The panic-stricken King sued for peace.

According to the agreement, he was retained as King, with Ladakh becoming a vassal state of the Dogra Kingdom. Shortly after the peace agreement, the Chief of Sod rose in arms against the Dogras. General Zorawar Singh swiftly suppressed the revolt and triumphantly returned to Jammu at the end of 1835. This is considered one of General Zorawar Singh's greatest victories.

Tibet Sought China's Help

Having consolidated his reign in Gilgit-Baltistan, Raja Gulab Singh revived an ancient Ladakhi claim over Western Tibet. In May 1841, he dispatched General Zorawar Singh to enter the highlands of Tibet with 5,000 men. Leading a diverse army of Dogras, Ladakhis, and Baltis, Zorawar swept across the roof of the world.

Sweeping aside all resistance along the way, Zorawar Singh passed Mansarovar Lake and converged at Gartok. The Tibetan commander fled to Taklakot, and Zorawar Singh stormed Taklakot Fort in September 1841, capturing the strategic city.

Envoys from Tibet and Nepal met the General at Taklakot to negotiate peace. Unexpectedly, in November, a composite army of 10,000 Chinese and Tibetans marched to Taklakot to drive the Dogras from Tibet.

This turned out to be Zorawar Singh's final expedition into Tibet in 1841. Unfortunately, during this campaign, Zorawar, who was 57 years old at the time, encountered severe hardships, including shortages of supplies and extreme weather conditions. He was unable to receive reinforcements from Leh or elsewhere due to heavy snow blocking all the passes. Temperatures had fallen to minus 50 degrees Celsius due to sweeping blizzards. Despite these conditions, the Dogras put up a tough fight. However, in December 1841, Zorawar Singh was fatally wounded in the Battle of Toyo by the combined forces of Tibetans and Chinese.

The death of their commander decided the outcome of the battle. Living up to their bravery, the Dogras executed the enemy General to avenge their commander's martyrdom.

Although this great conqueror fell during the campaign, his efforts were not in vain. In September 1842, a treaty was signed between representatives of the Chinese and Lhasa governments on one side and the Khalsa Darbar and Gulab Singh on the other. This treaty extended the Sikh, and subsequently Indian, frontiers to their current international boundary, thereby incorporating all of Ladakh into Indian territory.

A Legend That Endures

Today, Zorawar Singh's memory lives on in ways both grand and unexpected. In Tibet, a memorial stands where pregnant women pray for sons as brave as the Indian general.

In his book *Kailash – Jewel of the Snows*, Rajinder Arora describes the Kailash Yatra and highlights that Zorawar Singh's Samadhi remains at the site of his death. Remarkably, even today, Chinese soldiers are acquainted with his name.

And now, a tank bears his name, ready to defend the very lands he once conquered. The "Zorawar" light tank, nimble yet powerful, stands as a modern incarnation of the warrior's spirit – a testament to India's resolve to protect its Himalayan frontier.

From the 19th-century battlefields to the 21st-century arms race, the legacy of 'Zorawar' continues to shape the destiny of nations atop the world's highest battlefield.

Golog, Qinghai: After 30 Years, a Prestigious Tibetan School Is Liquidated

22 July 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Lobsang Gurung

The Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational High School was praised even by Communist authorities. But that it preserved Tibetan culture could not be tolerated.

The Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational High School in Golog (also spelled Golok) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province, has been liquidated by the Chinese authorities on July 12. More than 90% of the inhabitants of Golog Prefecture are Tibetans and the area is part of historical Tibet, even if China assigned it to Qinghai province.

Jigme Gyaltzen was not any school. It was established in 1994 by a famous Tibetan teacher, Ragya Jigme Gyaltzen, and went on to win awards from the Chinese administration itself. It grew from the original 86 of 1994 to more than 1,000 students. Of the 2,559 students who graduated there in thirty years, 742 went on to college and 13 became tenured university professors. Alumni of Jigme Gyaltzen published more than 300 books and hundreds of articles in peer-reviewed journals. The school was featured as a model educational institution in several Chinese TV shows.

However, in the eye of the Chinese authorities Jigme Gyaltzen had an original sin. While proud of its courses in computer science, engineering, and medicine, the school taught pupils in both Tibetan and Chinese language, offered courses in Tibetan culture, had monks as teachers, and counted among its alumni distinguished monastic administrators. It thus became a victim of the Chinese effort to eradicate Tibetan culture from Qinghai.

It all started with the legal prosecution of the founder and principal, Ragya Jigme Gyaltzen, on trumped up charges of taking bribes, and of some students accused to use the symbols of Tibet's national flag, which are banned in China. Earlier this year, the principal was found not guilty, yet he was excluded from the Tibetan Nationalities Council, of which he was a member. An investigation was launched to determine whether among pupils there were monks and nuns who had taken their monastic vows before turning 18, which is illegal under Chinese law.

Although investigations were inconclusive, on July 12 the authorities announced that the school had been liquidated, just days after what turned out to have been the last graduation ceremony, held on July 8.

In a social media post dated July 14, Ragya Jigme Gyaltzen captured the general mood of sadness, and what the institution was all about: "To Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational School of Golok: even if you are only thirty, you are still young and healthy, so what a pity. But what is impermanent is never permanent. It is the inevitable law of impermanence that things change from moment to moment. We believe in rebirth and that education through a series of lives is the most important thing. Why not pray for education in future lives? If death cannot be revived, what is the use of wailing? Therefore, it is best to pray for a perfect body in future lives. Please do not be sad but take responsibility for your future."

China's controversial boarding school policy for Tibetans explained

21 July 2024, [RFA](#), Lobsang Gelek

Officials say the system is the best way to educate a scattered population. Critics call it forced assimilation. The Gangjong Sherig Norbu School has long been a source of pride for ethnic Tibetans in China's Qinghai province. Known for its rigorous curriculum, the school counted leading Tibetan scholars as members of its faculty; its graduates have gone on to excel in fields like engineering, education, medicine and religion.

"It was there that I truly understood the significance of Tibetan language and identity," Tenzin Woesser, a Tibetan songwriter who attended the school in the 1990s, told RFA.

So it was with tears in their eyes that students marked the last graduation Gangjong Sherig would ever hold after Chinese authorities closed the school in July, making it one of a growing list of Tibetan educational institutions that have shut. Subsequently, RFA learned two more Tibetan Buddhist institutions -- the Ngaba Kirti and the Lhamo Kirti monasteries in Sichuan province -- were also closed this summer.

Chances are that most of the students at these schools will now be sent to a Chinese-run boarding school that minimizes instruction in Tibetan in favor of a Mandarin-heavy curriculum that promotes party loyalty. The story of how Tibetans are educated has attracted international concern and reflects a tension between cultural preservation and national integration.

What is China's education policy?

Tibetan students in the first half of the century were typically educated at home or in the hundreds of monasteries that dominated Tibetan culture and traditions. Some Tibetan children still attend schools where the medium of instruction is Tibetan.

But the vast majority are thought to now go to schools where the lessons are in Mandarin, with Tibetan courses limited to a single language class.

The Gangjong Sherig Norbu School and the two Sichuan monastery schools are among dozens of Tibetan institutions that have closed in recent years. Others include the Sengdruk Taktse School in Amdo Golog, Qinghai province, and the Drago Monastery in Kham Karze, Sichuan province. According to a Human Rights Watch report, the number of non-Tibetan-speaking teachers jumped in areas with ethnic Tibetan students. One goal, according to the report, appears to be to quiet restive regions through assimilation with the majority Han culture.

Visitors say young children who attend Chinese boarding schools are unable to easily communicate with older relatives who grew up studying Tibetan, creating a generational rift and worries about the loss of a unique Tibetan identity.

What do other governments think about China's boarding schools?

China has come under increasing international criticism for its educational policies both in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and in Tibetan areas in the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan.

A panel of experts advising the United Nations human rights office said as many as 1 million Tibetan students now attend boarding schools and risk an "erosion of their identity."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in August 2023 that China's "coercive policies seek to eliminate Tibet's distinct linguistic, cultural and religious traditions among younger generations of Tibetans."

What's China's response to the criticism?

China bristles at the complaints. Officials note that much of the Tibetan population remains scattered, leaving boarding schools as the only effective way of ensuring students have access to quality teachers and educational resources.

Beijing says Tibetans aren't forced to attend and many also include instruction in Tibetan language and history.

Officials also point to figures that show the number of Tibetans who can read and write (in Mandarin or another language) has increased dramatically, although official statistics are hard to verify and other surveys show varying literacy rates.

What are the concerns about Chinese-run boarding schools for Tibetans?

Gyal Lo, a Tibetan activist and sociologist who studied the boarding school system in China before fleeing into exile in Canada, told RFA that the schools serve to sinicize Tibetans, including children as young as 4-years-old.

At that age, it's easy to overwhelm the Tibetan language the students use at home with the Mandarin instruction they are bombarded with every day in school. Attendance is compulsory in everything but name, as families that don't send their children to the schools may be cut off from government benefits or job opportunities, he has said.

"The Chinese government has repeatedly tried to convert Tibetans into Chinese by eliminating the Tibetan way of life and identity. Now they are educating the youngest members of society to eradicate Tibetan identity," Gyal Lo said. "This is the most dangerous policy."

The Vibrant Villages Programme: A Response to PLA's Salami Slicing through Xiaokang (小康) villages

19 July 2024, [ORF](#), Atul Kumar

The VVP's effective implementation will help these Indian villages connect to the national mainstream, participate in India's growing economy and, in return, enhance security for the state

On 12 July 2024, the Rural Development and Migration Prevention Commission of India's Uttarakhand State reported that 11 villages along the India-Tibet border in the Chamoli, Pithoragarh, and Uttarkashi districts had been abandoned. The Commission's survey of 137 villages in the previous year revealed that three villages in Chamoli, six in Pithoragarh, and two in Uttarkashi were deserted. This finding underscores the significance of the Indian government's Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP), launched in July 2023, aimed at preventing such occurrences. The VVP seeks to provide essential services, including social goods, livelihood

opportunities, healthcare, infrastructure, and communication facilities to encourage the repopulation of these border villages.

This initiative is particularly crucial in light of China's establishment of Xiaokang villages near the Indian border. The settlement of entirely new villages close to the border, often within contested territory, surpasses the People's Liberation Army's (PLA's) previous forward patrolling and road-building activities. This action violates multiple treaties that China has signed with its neighbours, disregards decades of border negotiations, and mirrors the tactics China used in the South China Sea to seize smaller islands and construct new ones.

Importance of Xiaokang

Xiaokang (小康) is an ancient Chinese social concept first mentioned in the "Shi Jing" (Book of Poems) nearly 2,000 years ago. It signifies China's national aspiration to develop into a society characterised by "modest happiness and comfort" for the common people. Over the years, the term evolved, and China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, described Xiaokang as a stage of economic development marked by a per capita income of US\$ 800. China achieved this target in 1997, and by 2024, its per capita income has risen to approximately US\$ 13,136.

In 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping invoked the Xiaokang concept to address poverty and measure the quality of life in villages, ensuring that no one would be left behind in the pursuit of development. He emphasised the importance of health, infrastructure, and cultural and environmental progress, alongside income equality, to signify the attainment of a modestly prosperous village. This policy shift led to increased efforts to develop border villages, aiming to enhance the living standards of border populations and improve border management and security.

In 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping invoked the Xiaokang concept to address poverty and measure the quality of life in villages, ensuring that no one would be left behind in the pursuit of development.

Therefore, as part of the Xiaokang village construction programme in 2017, China began developing 628 villages, primarily near its borders, with some even in disputed territories. Gyalaphug, deep within Bhutan's Beyul region, is an example. In May 2023, news reports further highlighted China's construction of Xiaokang villages near Uttarakhand State's Barahoti region, just 11 kilometres from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Middle Sector. These villages have been established to support strategic road networks and sustain China's military outposts in rugged, mountainous areas. Chinese authorities encourage their residents in these villages to see themselves as "soldiers without uniforms," turning each village into

a fortress and each household into a watch post, primarily to guard China's borders.

Situation Inside Xiaokangs

The actual population of these villages is often higher than reported in official figures. This includes mostly temporary residents, primarily Chinese and occasionally Tibetan, such as construction workers, technical advisors, and security agents, who reside there for a year or more. A special unit of the border police is also stationed in or around the village, with the primary task of intercepting Tibetans attempting to flee to India or Nepal. Village residents are required to form a joint defence team with the border security police to patrol the neighbouring mountains. Consequently, PLA border patrols, which previously occurred once every three months or seasonally, now arrive approximately every fifteen days due to the presence and development of these villages.

Additionally, a village-based cadre work team resides here, with its members rotated every year or more. This team guides the village committee and the local Communist Party branch, providing political education to villagers and assisting with practical needs such as greenhouse building and management, and mushroom growing techniques. These various regulatory agencies ensure that the residents of these villages remain under strict surveillance and control.

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The Xiaokang villages represent a sophisticated strategy for extending de facto and de jure control over borders. The PLA enhances its security infrastructure and support system, following its often-professed philosophy of civil-military collaboration in logistical supply. Furthermore, these villages have become popular tourist destinations, contributing to the region's financial development and strengthening Chinese control over the frontier.

Additionally, the establishment of village political units, along with the introduction of postal networks, broadband connections, and permanent administrative apparatus, helps China bolster its legal claims to these areas in the international arena. Since bilateral territorial negotiations typically avoid disturbing settled populations in disputed territories, these Xiaokang villages have become a quasi-legal instrument for the Chinese state. India and Bhutan, in particular, have been adversely affected by these incremental Chinese advances.

The Indian context: Vibrant Villages Programme

India must devise countermeasures to address China's salami-slicing (Can Shi 蚕食) tactics in territorial acquisition. One countermeasure is to define and

announce red lines, then defend them with a serious commitment to deter the adversary. Another is to cultivate a reputation for unpredictability or occasional overreaction; irregular aggressive responses can shape adversary behaviour and maintain deterrence. The third countermeasure is the "swallowing as a whale" (Jing Tun 鯨吞) strategy, where small territorial nibbles by the adversary are countered with significant territorial gains, negating their efforts and creating space for negotiation.

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The most robust response to these Chinese villages is an equally effective, focused, and determined border development strategy that India's Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) intends to achieve. This development initiative aims to repopulate frontier regions, expand state presence, and attract tourists, thereby bolstering India's territorial claims.

The Indian government must maintain its commitment to the VVP, ensuring it does not succumb to bureaucratic inefficiencies. Often, ineffective monitoring and lack of accountability lead to fund diversion and consequent slow or lack of progress in development schemes in far-flung regions. Even in 2024, some villages along the India-Tibet border still require days of travel on foot or by pony to reach. Therefore, the VVP's effective implementation will help these Indian villages connect to the national mainstream, participate in India's growing economy and, in return, enhance security for the state. Repopulated villages along the border can become the most important sustainment factor for Indian troops deployed along harsh mountainous terrain.

Finally, there are crucial differences between Indian border villages and Chinese Xiaokang villages. In India, border populations abandon their villages due to a lack of facilities and livelihood opportunities, therefore, providing basic amenities would likely encourage them to return and reinhabit their homes. In contrast, Xiaokang villages are forcibly established, with the local border population compelled to remain and support the Chinese state and its agencies. This distinction can be a significant advantage for India. Proper planning, adequate support, and effective monitoring are crucial to leverage this advantage.

Tibetan Buddhist Nuns: An Overlooked Pillar of the Four-fold Sangha

19 July 2024, [BDG](#), Ani Wangmo Tenzin

Scriptures state that the Buddhadharmā will exist as long as the fourfold sangha exists, meaning *bhikshus*, *bhikshunis*, *upasakas* and *upasikas* (ordained monks, ordained nuns, laymen, and laywomen). The Buddha ordained the sangha at the beginning of his teaching journey and didn't pass into *parinirvana* until the fourfold sangha was firmly established and flourishing.

For the Dharma to flourish, we need the balance of the four parts of the sangha. The Buddha taught monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen alike how to study and practice, yet, after passing to *parinirvana*, Buddhist teachers focused mostly on monks; their approach wasn't balanced. This resulted in a weakening of the female monastic community. Consequently, when an extremist Muslim invasion destroyed the monastic community in northern India, laypeople did not know how to study and practice and so became Hindus or Muslims.

Fortunately, the Buddhadharmā was preserved in other Asian countries, such as China, Thailand, and Tibet.

Today, we face an imbalance in the fourfold sangha once again. If we focus on Vajrayana Buddhism, we can see that in Western countries and non-Himalayan regions in general, the Dharma is focused mostly on lay practitioners: Dharma centers are led by laypeople to serve the needs of mostly lay practitioners. This is good and benefits many people—except that in this framework, monasticism is often deemed unnecessary. For the first time in the history of Buddhism, much of the ordained sangha is not supported by laypeople, who are encouraged to send money abroad, to support the various projects, monasteries, and activities of the famous, often very well-off head lama. This results in a large majority of lay support being sent overseas—either to Bhutan, Nepal, India, or Tibet, while many practitioners' own sanghas remain overlooked.

Donors often think that Tibetans are in dire need of support, and in some cases this may be true. But generally speaking, they are one of the best-situated refugees, while at the same time, many the non-Himalayan nuns are alarmingly unsupported. According to several estimations, about 80 per cent of non-Himalayan monastics disrobe in a few years due to lack of different forms of support, from financial to social, spiritual, educational, psychological, medical, and so on.

Of the fourfold sangha required for the survival of the Dharma, nuns are the least supported, in particular non-Himalayan nuns. They are often left with no

choice but to disrobe and join the workforce to support their lives, despite their strong desire to live as monastics. Within the fourfold sangha, they are the endangered species that most needs your attention.



Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and Tsunma Gakyi in Jamyang Choeling nunnery. Photo by Tsunma ND Dolma. Image courtesy of the author

Decades ago, when Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo came from the cave and began to advocate for Himalayan nuns, people were surprised: “Oh, nuns! We never hear about the nuns. We know the male teachers and their monasteries, but where are the nuns?”

It took some time and several people to raise awareness, but by the power of her clear vision and the dedicated, diligent work of many people, today Tibetan Buddhist nunneries are thriving and nuns are excelling in education and meditation alike.

What looks impossible becomes possible when we engage in skillful action.

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, together with Geshema Kelsang Wangmo and Tsunma Tenzin Sangmo who founded Thosamling nunnery, established the Alliance of Non-Himalayan Nuns (ANHN) to support nuns from non-Himalayan regions. Recognized as a US-based non-profit organization earlier in 2024, the Alliance of Non-Himalayan Nuns, Inc. is governed by its board of directors, which includes representatives from all four major traditions: Kagyu, Gelug, Nyingma, and Sakya. Its supporters include also other luminaries, such as Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Bhikshuni Thubten Chodron, and Venerable Robina Courtin, to name a few.

In March 2024, 38 nuns from 17 countries and five continents congregated in Thosamling Nunnery in Dharamsala, India, at the first ANHN Gathering to meet, to learn from renowned teachers and each other, to practice together, and to simply enjoy each other’s company, seeing that they are not alone.

Tibetan Buddhist nuns from non-traditional Tibetan Buddhist cultures have a unique set of skills and encounter a unique set of challenges in upholding their vows and robes. These skills are a great advantage if they are noticed. While Himalayan monastics enter monasteries at a young age and have

almost no experience of the world outside the monastery, non-Himalayan nuns are often highly educated, accomplished in different careers, such as healthcare, education, finance, the arts, and mental health. They have led companies, acquired soft skills, worked in demanding environments, and have been mothers raising children.

Small children entering a monastery cannot renounce much; often they are just sent there. Meanwhile, these non-Himalayan nuns have often seen worldly success, yet renounced it all to pursue the Dharma and benefit others in a deeper, more far-reaching way. Nonetheless, they remain without the support that the Himalayan monastics receive.

This is shortsighted, since they can significantly benefit Buddhist communities, not only through the sincerity of their practice, but also through the various skillsets they bring from their lives before ordination. This is so often overlooked. They know the world outside the temples and their skills can be utilized for the Dharma to flourish. Many nuns show great resilience and a deep dedication to the Dharma, and continue to serve despite the difficulties they are facing. Without greater support, this is not sustainable.

ANHN was established to support non-Himalayan nuns and at the first gathering discussed above, the nuns have started to organize themselves in mutual support. Even so, we will need a collaborative effort on the part of all four parts of the sangha to tackle the challenges that non-Himalayan nuns face: not being a part of a monastic sangha, staying alone and isolated, and not receiving enough support from the lay community and, sometimes, also from teachers. There needs to be a conscious effort to reframe this situation as a unique opportunity for the Dharma to manifest in non-traditional cultures. It is essential that laypeople are informed about how they can provide greater support.

At the same time, several teachers have expressed their support, among them: His Holiness the Dalai Lama; Mingyur Rinpoche; Khamtrul Rinpoche; Serkong Rinpoche; Geshe Dorji Damdul from Tibet House; and Geshe Ngawang Tenzin, the abbot of Dolma Ling nunnery; together with its leading *geshemas*. At the recent gathering, there were also heartwarming meetings with fellow nuns from Dolma Ling and Dongyu Gatsal Ling nunneries, and a genuine sisterhood has started to form among the NHNs, inviting more and more nuns to join.

Pema Tseden's Other Legacy

18 July 2024, [Sixth Tone](#), Cai Xin



The Tibetan filmmaker was also a prolific writer of short stories.

Last May, the author, translator, and filmmaker Pema Tseden died of a sudden heart attack in Lhasa. While the news came as a shock to all who knew him, myself included, the events of the past year prove that he has not been forgotten. His last film, “Snow Leopard,” released posthumously, won the Grand Prix at the 36th Tokyo International Film Festival last November before premiering in cinemas on the Chinese mainland in April.

But Pema Tseden’s films are only one part of his legacy — he was also a prolific writer who produced 46 short stories in both Tibetan and Chinese.

The last two of these — the fiction collection “Fresh Scent of Pine Wood” and a compendium of translated folklore “Tales of the Golden Corpse: Tibetan Folk Tales” — finally hit stores this May, on the one-year anniversary of his death. Their publication was something of a pet project of mine: my way of paying tribute to a great, if sometimes overlooked, literary talent.

Pema Tseden’s career defies easy categorization. An auteur who wrote and directed his own scripts, he was equally at home writing screenplays and novels. And he did so in two languages — Tibetan and Chinese — often translating his own work from one to the other. Although Pema Tseden grew up in a Chinese-speaking environment and was in third grade by the time his region revived education in minority languages and scripts, Tibetan was his mother tongue. His grandfather, a monk in the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism, raised and educated him, taught him Tibetan, and helped him recite the scriptures. Their loving relationship would prove the foundation of Pema Tseden’s creative life.



The cover of “Fresh Scent of Pine Wood” and “Tales of the Golden Corpse.” CITIC Publishing Group

After graduating from junior high, Pema Tseden was admitted into a high school in the northwestern province of Qinghai. It was there that he met the famous Tibetan poet and writer Dondrub Gyal, and under his guidance began his literary journey. Highly influential to the generation of Tibetans who came of age in the 1980s, Dondrub Gyal was the quintessential bad boy poet: Eschewing custom, he wore his hair long, donned sunglasses and a long trench coat, and smoked in class. He could recite epics like the “Ramayana” and spoke endlessly about poetry.

But Pema Tseden didn’t just draw influence from Tibetan literature: In addition to Tibetan classics like “The Life of Milarepa,” he immersed himself in work like the 17th-century classic “Dream of the Red Chamber,” Russian literature, and popular romances. He also read many of the realist novels and avant-garde writers who emerged in China in the late 1980s, including Yu Hua, Yan Lianke, Ge Fei, Su Tong, and Can Xue.

Their influence can be seen in his first published story, “Men and Dog,” which came out in the Tibet Literature magazine in 1992, when he was just a freshman in college. The narrative is simple: A dog lives on a mountain inhabited by three households of shepherds. One night, one of the households witnesses a marriage, another has a member who falls ill, and in the third, a child is born. A wolf arrives, and the dog vigilantly guards the herds of sheep, barking and shrieking. The people, feeling ill at ease about the sound, beat the dog to death with a staff. The next morning, they realize that the strange sounds they heard the night before were from a fight between the dog and a wolf.

“It was my debut piece, and it basically set the tone for all my other work,” Pema Tseden later told his biographer. “What remains is really only one emotion, a slight pessimism.”

In 1991, after four years spent as a primary school teacher, Pema Tseden was admitted into the Tibetan Language and Literature major at Northwest Minzu

University in Gansu province; he would eventually receive a master's degree in Tibetan-Chinese Literary Translation from the school. As part of his degree, he needed to translate a text from Tibetan to Chinese; he picked the "Tales of the Golden Corpse," a compendium of classic folktales from the region.

"I needed to get some practice translating, so I translated the 'Tales of the Golden Corpse,' which greatly influenced me when I was young," he recalled. "The narratives and dialogues in those stories were very simple, but they inspired me."

Indeed, both his short stories and scripts were greatly influenced by folk literature and Tibetan literary traditions. Pema Tsenden listened to many folktales growing up, and later on he would retell these stories to others, giving him an ear for concise language and structure. In 2009, he published a full Chinese translation of the "Tales of the Golden Corpse," affixing "Tibetan Folk Tales" to the title. That same year, he completed work on his first feature film, "Soul Searching," part of his graduate thesis at the Beijing Film Academy. It would go on to win the Jury Grand Prix at the 12th Shanghai International Film Festival.

But Pema Tsenden believed that writing fiction allowed for more self-expression than filmmaking, and the pleasure and satisfaction he derived from writing was greater than that for the films he made. When he wrote short stories, he tried to work quickly, going from inspiration into text in a single bound. He would liken writing to dreaming. A common trope in Tibetan literature is for the storyteller to abruptly enter different states: When reciting "The Epic of King Gesar," for example, the storyteller must channel completely different voices. They themselves might be illiterate, but through the story, their language can become beautiful and sophisticated. If uninterrupted, these recitations could last for several hours. Pema Tsenden always hoped that his own works could mimic such a state — dreamlike, trancelike.

"Searching, but ultimately not finding — the theme of loss runs through all my writing," Pema Tsenden said. He used stories to reconstruct his own understanding of the Tibetan world he grew up in, even as that world changed and grew more distant.

His posthumously released short story collection, which I had the privilege of working on, was compiled by his son, himself a filmmaker, Jigme Trinley. The pieces are presented in backward chronological order, from his last novel to his debut. In addition to "Fresh Scent of Pine Wood," the last story he completed before his death and the one that gives the book its name, it includes some of his other most representative works, such as "Men and Dog," the novel from which "Soul Searching" is based off. One standout is "A Red Cloth," which tells the story of two people's experiences across a single day. One is blindfolded and ends the day unchanged; the other

goes through an entire lifetime, aging, falling ill, and eventually dying.

It's a curious fable — the orphaned legacy of an artist gone far too soon.

Translator: Matt Turner; portrait artist: Wang Zhenhao. (Header image: A portrait of Pema Tsenden (right) taken in 2016, and a collection of his fiction. Courtesy of Liu Dayan and CITIC Publishing Group)

Tibetan exiles are on the move again

18 July 2024, [Prospect](#), Pippa Crawford

They first fled their homeland in the fifties. Now a new generation of Tibetans is emigrating thousands of miles away

Above the lakeside city of Pokhara, Nepal, there stands a small settlement of houses, brightly painted in pastel yellow, brick red and blue. This is Tashiling, one of the oldest camps for Tibetan refugees in the country. Behind Tashiling rises the double summit of Machapuchare, or "Fishtail", a Himalayan peak that has never been climbed. Beyond Fishtail is the border with China, over which thousands of Tibetans have fled since their homeland was occupied by Chinese forces in 1959.

The first refugees who settled here in 1962 hoped Tashiling would be a temporary shelter. Just over 60 years later, there are shops, a school, a carpet workshop, a Buddhist monastery and a population of 476. Nepal took in more Tibetans than any other country except India; the country was home to 20,000 at the peak of Tibetan immigration.

Yet times are changing for this fragile community. Local industries that employ Tibetans are struggling. Nepal has stopped issuing new refugee cards to Tibetans, blocking anyone born after 1990 from getting a passport, or opening a bank account in the country. Beijing is tightening its grip on Kathmandu, with recent aid packages from China to much poorer Nepal coming with the understanding that the government will increase its surveillance of Tibetans. In April, I took a taxi from Pokhara to Tashiling camp, and asked residents about their lives there. Most were cautious about talking, but on the condition that I change her name, one woman pulled me up a stool beside her shop.

Lhamo* is part of the generation who has never seen Tibet. "I was born here, in the camp, in 1975," she told me. "My parents came in 1965." Lhamo has brought up her two daughters in Tashiling, and earns a living making and selling traditional souvenirs: jewellery, statues, and silver cymbals used in prayer.

The designs are Tibetan, passed down between generations, but Lhamo explained that it is no longer possible to bring the raw materials into Nepal from

Chinese-occupied Tibet. “We had to find new routes,” she said. “Peddlers bring us silver and turquoise from Burma and Afghanistan.”

I asked if the changes were connected to the recent crackdown by the Chinese government. Lhamo pressed a finger to her lips. “I can’t say openly. But yes, things have been difficult... with China, and with the rules and regulations of Nepal. Last year we wanted to celebrate Uprising Day [the anniversary of the Tibet rebellion]—we were going to march in Pokhara town and shout: Free Tibet! But we weren’t allowed. We marked the day at the camp instead, with praying and singing.”

“We are in touch with people back home,” she whispered, “But it’s getting harder. They listen to phones.”

Tibetans who can speak more freely have similar stories. As Lobsang Lungtok, a Tibetan community leader now based in Australia, has written: “the Chinese government taps the phone conversations of Tibetans who have family members in exile; the only way for us to stay in contact is by avoiding topics on politics and the Dalai Lama. Phone and internet connections are cut when a protest breaks out.”

Lhamo explained that Tibetan children are taught separately at the camp. Though their parents encourage them to play with Nepali children, the community is guarded and protective. “We want them to be like brothers and sisters...but we hope that they will choose Tibetan husbands and wives. We have to stick together.”

Politics aside, Tibetans and Nepalis coexist peacefully. Tibetan Buddhists are free to practise their religion in Hindu-majority Nepal, where it’s not uncommon to see temples with elements of both Buddhism and Hinduism.

A 10-hour bus ride from Pokhara, in Nepal’s capital, Kathmandu, is Utse, the district’s oldest Tibetan restaurant and hotel. A chalkboard gives the day’s specials: peanut masala; egg-drop soup, tea with yak butter. There are framed portraits of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s 89-year old religious leader, who is exiled in India. A successor has yet to be chosen; some in the diaspora fear they will lose protection after the Dalai Lama’s death.

Utse is run by three generations of the same family. When I arrived, Rinchen*, the matriarch, was standing in the lobby in slippers and an embroidered dress, checking in a large party of Belgian mountaineers. “Yes, this is my place,” she told me, “I opened it after we lost our country. It was 1971. I was a young woman then, I’m 77 now! I wanted it to be for everyone, not just Tibetans.”

Is it still for everyone? Rinchen glances over her shoulder. “Yes. People come from all countries.” I ask about China, and Rinchen makes the same gesture as Lhamo, a single finger pressed to the lips.

“Yes, yes, we have many visitors from China. Business is business. But we feel all the time that they are watching us.”

China denies that repression is taking place against Tibetans, at home or abroad. “Since Tibet’s peaceful liberation and democratic reform in the 1950s, the southwestern autonomous region has made great strides in preserving and developing Tibetan culture, with the government investing heavily in education and cultural preservation,” reads a recent article on the state-run news site Tibet.cn.

Available data indicates a second wave of emigration of young Tibetans to Australia—overwhelmingly from the generation born after 1990 and no longer eligible for refugee cards in Nepal—though data is scarce. Most Tibetans do not have passports, and others have falsified their ages in order to enter another country. It’s also difficult to pinpoint the diaspora population; the Australian census, for example, asks “which country were you born in?” rather than “with which nationality do you identify” meaning that second and third-generation immigrants can slip through the net. In 1990, the US began accepting 1,000 Tibetan refugees a year following the introduction of a Diversity Immigrant Visa that prioritised educated migrants from countries that didn’t already have large immigrant communities in America. Language data from the US census shows a steady rise in the Tibetan languages, from 188,000 residents speaking these languages at home in 2000, to over 300,000 in 2020. Australia and Canada also launched their Tibetan quotas in the nineties.

Diana Hewitt, a researcher at Williams College, argues that the decline of the carpet industry—which employed 1.2m Tibetans and Nepalis in Nepal at its peak—drove the descendants of the first settlers overseas. “It used to be [Nepal’s] largest earner of foreign currency, but there just isn’t the demand for these kinds of carpets anymore. The younger generation can’t rely on the income anymore,” she said in a phone call.

The balancing act of Nepali government policy is another factor, with the partial rights granted to Tibetan settlers affecting some generations more than others. “Tibetan children can go to school in Nepal, and be educated to degree level. But any job in Nepal that requires a university education also requires citizenship, which most Tibetans still don’t have. So they have to go abroad, and send money home to their families,” Hewitt added.

While it is also common for young Nepalis to emigrate to find better jobs abroad, Tibetans cannot always follow the same routes. Hundreds of thousands of Nepalis head to Saudi Arabia or the UAE for work every year, but this requires documents which Tibetans don’t have. Thus, they are travelling further, to Australia, the US and Canada, to countries that will

accept them. Geopolitical factors are at play here too; as China courts Nepal and India, with visa-free travel and joint military drills, the west is opening doors for those who ran from China—and are still running.

Dee Why near Sydney is home to a community of at least 800 Tibetans. Last year, the demand for Tibetan books was so high that Dee Why library opened a Tibetan section, the first of its kind in Australia. A spokesperson for the mayor of the Northern Beaches council told me the library has loaned out 780 books since launching, and has just started a bi-weekly Tibetan storytime session for children.

Australia's Gold Coast is as distinct from Himalayas as can be imagined—and the new landscape brings new challenges. Many Tibetans born and raised in landlocked Nepal have never learned to swim, or even seen the ocean. There is now a swimming club especially for the Dee Why Tibetans.

Western help for the Tibetan émigrés may be part of a wider political strategy, but the communities that have sprung from it are growing year on year. In the foothills of Machapuchare, Lhamo is looking to the future. "Life here in the camp is neither good, nor bad," she said. "All I hope for is a happier life for my children and grandchildren."

*Names have been changed

India sees US 'Resolve Tibet Act' as driven by great power rivalry?

18 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

As focus grows on it to take a political stand on the issue of Tibet in consonance with Sino-Tibetan ties before the 1950's, India's former national security adviser (NSA) Shivshankar Menon has claimed that the primary driver for the recent US adoption of 'Resolve Tibet Act' was its "rivalry with China", not any concern for Tibet, reported the *economictimes.com* Jul 17.

On the other hand, US House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, who played a leading role in the Act's passage, said in a statement Jul 17 that the legislation was meant to help the Tibetan people against China's undermining and erasing of their culture and the stripping of their right to self-determination. The Act also dismisses as false China's claim that Tibet has been part of it since ancient times.

Speaking at the launch of former diplomat Dilip Sinha's book 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty' on Jul 16, Menon has argued that there were "clear limits" to America's commitment to Tibet and they were waving the flag of Tibet today in its own interest.

Justifying the lack of any move in India's policy on the political issue of Tibet, Menon has said: "I would be

very careful to say 'Oh! the world is changed, they (the US) have passed an act'. I think you need to look at the basic correlation of forces and the balance of forces, and the actual strength of the people and what is the interest of the great powers and how they see it at this time."

Menon, who has served as India's foreign secretary from 2006-09, has also noted: "Today, the Americans see it as in their interest to at least wave the flag of Tibet but this doesn't extend to recognising Tibet... It is driven not by the concern for Tibet, the primary driver here is the rivalry with China."

Though clear that Tibet cannot rely on great power rivalry to solve their problems, Menon, 75, has lauded India's effort in ensuring that the Tibetan culture, civilization and identity "stays strong". He has said Tibetans, too, like Armenians, could have been another "lost people" otherwise.

"They are not lost. Part of it because of His Holiness, his personality and what he has done. But also because I think of what India provided, and that we shouldn't forget and should never give up on," he has added.

Menon has praised Sinha's book as an "honest account" of what happened – be it the great power rivalry, how it affected Tibet or how it affected India.

The book claims to offer a thorough exploration of Tibet's historical and contemporary geopolitical significance. It critically examines the ongoing impact of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet – whatever that may mean – amidst persistent citizen protests and global calls for freedom.

The discussion at the launch event has covered various topics from the book, including a brief history of Tibet, its complex geopolitical entanglements, the rise of Tibetan Buddhism, and its annexation by China in 1950. Apart from Menon and Sinha, well-known Tibet-China expert Claude Arpi has also taken part.

Significantly, at the book's launch event, Sinha, a former Indian ambassador, said China has not been able to assimilate or absorb Tibet and it has not been able to win the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people, noted the *ANI* news service Jul 17.

Biden's Tibet Stance Draws Criticism Despite Signing Landmark Act

18 July 2024, [The Tibet Express](#), Tsering Choephel

The New York and New Jersey Chapter of the Tibetan National Congress has written to US President Joe Biden in protest of his reiterating the US policy that recognises Tibet as part of China while announcing the passage of the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" on 12 July.

Expressing disappointment, the letter reads: "We appreciate your signing of S. 138, the Promoting a

Resolution Act. However, we were disheartened by your subsequent statement. Although you expressed support for freedom, democracy, and human rights for Tibetans, your recognition of Tibet as part of China contradicts these values. Tibet has never been a part of China, and we continue to struggle for our freedom from communist China.”

The Resolve Tibet Act, now a law, is a milestone victory for years of advocacy efforts led by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the International Campaign for Tibet, and other organisations. While Tibetans celebrate Biden’s signature, which embeds the bill into US law, his subsequent statements stating that “The Act does not change longstanding bipartisan United States policy to recognise the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China as part of the People’s Republic of China” have aroused disappointment and discussions among Tibetans.

CTA held a ceremony on Wednesday in the Sikyong Hall at Gangchen Kyishong to celebrate the US government’s adoption of the bill into law. As multiple online posts and reports on Tibet.net show, Tibetan communities in various parts of India, including Shimla, Gangtok, and Varanasi, among others, also held celebratory functions at their locations.

A Tibetan netizen said in an Instagram post, “I don’t know how to greet or celebrate this development,” in an apparent disappointment as the bill was lauded as a game-changer before it went to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

Another Tibetan netizen declared it a great achievement and, in a post on Facebook, thanked all the individuals and organisations for working tirelessly, as well as the bipartisan support from the US Congress. However, he called out President Biden for “his unnecessary comments in the press statement, seemingly to appease China,” saying it “unfortunately discredited the new law.”

Tibetan Exile President Ups Ante In Nomenclature War – OpEd

18 July 2024, [Eurasia Review](#)

The Tibetan exile government says it will “strongly counter” Beijing, which has been renaming Tibetan places with Chinese names.

Penpa Tsering, Sikyong or President of the Central Tibetan Administration (Tibetan Parliament in Exile) or CTA, told Indian media that the “Sinification of Tibet must stop.”

“We will create a map of Tibet that will carry names of all places in Tibet in Tibet language. Chinese official position on Tibet underplays Tibet’s own rich and distinct history as it projects Tibet as part of China since the ancient era. We have to put an end to it,” Tsering said.

“Chinese renaming of Tibetan places will not erase Tibet’s unique culture and identity, because we have been an independent entity for much of our history. China forcibly occupied Tibet by sending its army and that historical fact is acknowledged by the world,” Tsering said.

He said China calls Tibet as Xizang.

“But now we are researching every name in Tibet and we will have a map of Tibet that will show all the original Tibetan names of all the places in Tibet,” he said.

Recently, the information warfare division of Indian Army released a list of 30 places in Tibet with traditional names. Tibet experts in the Calcutta-based Asiatic Society helped prepare the list. Experts say this might be a tit-for-tat move to counter China’s naming many places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh with Chinese names. China challenges Indian control over Arunachal Pradesh and says it is South Tibet, an extension of the Chinese province of Tibet.

Penpa Tsering asserted that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama will be determined by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans, saying, “It is the reincarnation of His Holiness Dalai Lama and not reincarnation of Xi Jinping.” That will surely irk Beijing.

Tsering arrived in Delhi from the hill town of Dharamsala on his way to USA, almost immediately after the enactment of the Resolve Tibet Act in the US Congress.

Tsering arrived in Delhi from the hill town of Dharamsala on his way to USA, almost immediately after the enactment of the Resolve Tibet Act in the US Congress.

The Resolve Tibet Act has also raised the issue of self-determination for Tibetans declaring, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” Sikyong Tsering interpreted the “self-determination” as the right to hold plebiscite in Tibet and added, “Self-determination means plebiscite. The question is whether China will allow plebiscite in Tibet.” Mr. Tsering expressed gratitude to all stakeholders in the U.S. for ensuring the passage of the Resolve Tibet Act and said he will likely meet all sides, including the Republican party’s leading members as the election season is heating up in the U.S.

Tsering also that CTA was “having back-channel negotiations with the Chinese side.” He insisted that the talks were started with initiative from Chinese side.

“We do not have any expectation from these talks but we have to keep the engagements going as these are part of our long term plans. We met in the first week of this month and the talks are being held with the help of a third country,” said Penpa Tsering.

But he did not name the “third country” that got the talks going or the level of Chinese officials involved in the talks.

China has been silent on the “back channel talks” with the Tibetan exile government. India, where the CTA is based, is also tight lipped on the issue.

Tsering came to Delhi from Dharamshala before leaving for Washington DC where he will meet with U.S. politicians of different parties as the Resolve Tibet Act received bipartisan support.

President Biden signed the text of the Resolve Tibet Act on July 12 that is aimed at initiating “meaningful dialogue” between the People’s Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or “his representatives,” which prompted the Central Tibetan Administration to welcome the move.

Sikyong Tsering described the Tibetan issue as a “conflict” saying that terms like “Tibetan issue” or “dispute” do not convey the substance of the problem. “Tibet continues to be an unresolved conflict and its resolution has to be based on international law,” said Mr. Tsering. The Resolve Tibet Act has used “dispute” to describe the Tibetan issue, but Mr. Tsering said, “Tibetan conflict is the term to give it a proper status as the real issue is the Chinese occupation of Tibet.” He pointed out that while countries of Europe and the West often talk about violation of human rights and religious rights in Tibet these fails to convey the real problem.

He further pointed out the new act promulgated by the U.S. Congress will help in countering Chinese official position on Tibet that he characterised as a “misinformation campaign”. Chinese official position on Tibet, said Mr. Tsering, often underplays Tibet’s own rich history as it projects Tibet as part of China since the ancient era. He also took a strong stand on the renaming of various places of Tibet saying that renaming will not erase Tibet’s unique culture and identity.

“Nowadays Beijing has started calling Tibet as Xizang but now we are researching every name in Tibet and we will have a map of Tibet that will show all the original Tibetan names of all the places in Tibet,” said Mr. Tsering.

He also said that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama will be determined by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans, saying, “It is the reincarnation of His Holiness Dalai Lama and not reincarnation of Xi Jinping.”

The Resolve Tibet Act has raised the issue of self-determination for Tibetans declaring, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

Penpa Tsering said, “self-determination” for Tibetans would mean the right to hold plebiscite in Tibet but doubted whether China will ever allow that to happen.

Tsering expressed gratitude to all stakeholders in the U.S. for ensuring the passage of the Resolve Tibet Act and said he will likely meet all sides, including top Republicans in the US election season.

US' rivalry with China primary driver for 'Resolve Tibet Act': Former NSA Shivshankar Menon

17 July 2024, [The Economic Times](#), Shivshankar Menon

The primary driver for the US recently passing the 'Resolve Tibet Act' is its "rivalry with China", not any concern for Tibet, claimed former national security adviser (NSA) Shivshankar Menon. Speaking at the launch of former diplomat Dilip Sinha's book "Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty" on Tuesday, Menon argued that there are "clear limits" to America's commitment to Tibet and they are waving the flag of Tibet today in its own interest.

"I would be very careful to say 'Oh! the world is changed, they (the US) have passed an act'. I think you need to look at the basic correlation of forces and the balance of forces, and the actual strength of the people and what is the interest of the great powers and how they see it at this time. "Today, the Americans see it as in their interest to at least wave the flag of Tibet but this doesn't extend to recognising Tibet... It is driven not by the concern for Tibet, the primary driver here is the rivalry with China," said Menon, who has also served as the foreign secretary from 2006-09.

US President Joe Biden has recently signed into law a bill that enhances American support for Tibet and promotes dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama towards a peaceful resolution of the dispute over the status and governance of the remote Himalayan region.

China, on the other hand, had opposed the 'Resolve Tibet Act', describing it as a "destabilising" Act. The Act enhances US support for Tibet - empowering State Department officials to actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government.

Though clear that Tibet cannot rely on great power rivalry to solve their problems, Menon, 75, lauded India's effort in ensuring that the Tibetan culture, civilization and identity "stays strong". He said the Tibetans, too, like Armenians, could have been another "lost people".

"They are not lost. Part of it because of His Holiness, his personality and what he has done. But also because I think of what India provided, and that we shouldn't forget and should never give up on," he added.

After a failed anti-Chinese uprising in 1959, the 14th

Dalai Lama fled Tibet and came to India where he set up the government-in-exile at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh.

From 2002 to 2010, the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government held nine rounds of dialogue that did not produce any concrete outcome. Praising the book, Menon said it is an "honest account" of what happened -- be it the great power rivalry, how it affected Tibet or how it affected India.

"The nice thing in the book is that this is not a partisan historical account. It is a straightforward account based on what actually happened," he added. "Imperial Games in Tibet" claims to offer a thorough exploration of Tibet's historical and contemporary geopolitical significance.

It also sheds light on the 14th Dalai Lama's escape to India and the resultant Sino-Indian tensions, critically examining the ongoing impact of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet amidst persistent citizen protests and global calls for freedom.

The book, published by Pan Macmillan India and priced at Rs 599, is currently available for purchase across online and offline stores.

China Calls the US Resolve Tibet Act a "Sinister Farce"

17 July 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Lopsang Gurung

It took only 24 hours to mobilize China's pro-CCP establishment, including its Three-Self and Catholic branches, to repeat the usual anti-Tibetan lies.

On July 12, President Joe Biden signed into law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act," known as the Resolve Tibet Act. The historical law explicitly states that CCP's claims that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times are false and calls for the US diplomacy to counter Chinese disinformation and propaganda. It also states that the problem of Tibet should be solved through international dialogue from which China cannot exclude the Dalai Lama and his representatives.

It took only twenty-four hours for the CCP to answer and quickly assemble a symposium condemning the Resolve Tibet Act.

On July 13, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) held a symposium "strongly condemning" the Act. It was chaired by Zhang Yijiong, the Director of the Nationalities and Religious Affairs Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, and attended by Deputy Directors Jiang Jianguo, Bian Bazaxi, Li Shan, Li Guangfu, Yang Faming, Xu Xiaohong, Yan Jue and more than twenty CPPCC National Committee members, sixteen members of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, representatives of the ethnic minority communities. The leaders of the government-

controlled Buddhist, Taoist, Islamic, Catholic, and Protestant groups also spoke.

In short, the CCP mobilized against the Resolve Tibet Act the whole pro-Party religious establishment. Those in the West who maintain a "dialogue" with the Three-Self Church, the Patriotic Catholic Church, and the other pro-CCP religious bodies should reflect on the fact that these organizations are willing to endorse immediately even the most obnoxious CCP claims.

The speakers called the Act "sinister," "a farce," and an interference in China's internal affairs. The final press release insisted that "Tibet has been an inseparable part of China since ancient times, and the Tibetan people are members of the Chinese nation. This has long been determined by history, supported by the people, and recognized by the world. This will never change and cannot change at any time... The US and the Dalai Lama group have willfully distorted history and openly denied the objective fact that Tibet's sovereignty belongs to China, which has greatly hurt the feelings of all Chinese people, including the Tibetan people. This is a typical American bullying behavior."

No doubt, "useful idiots" and "fellow travelers" will start being mobilized abroad too against the Act, parroting the same Chinese propaganda lies against the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama. The reaction, on the other hand, shows that this time the CCP has been hit where it hurts.

China's Grip on Tibet: Struggles and Sovereignty Explored

17 July 2024, [Devdiscourse](#)

Dilip Sinha's book 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty' discusses China's inability to assimilate Tibet, underscoring the region's geopolitical significance. The book's launch saw discussions with prominent figures, highlighting Tibet's history, China's tactics, and India's stance.

China has not successfully assimilated or absorbed Tibet, nor has it won over the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people, former Indian ambassador Dilip Sinha remarked at the launch of his book 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty'. The book was unveiled at the India International Centre in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Sinha's work underscores Tibet's role as a battleground for global geopolitical ambitions and speculates on the future of the region's pursuit of statehood. He highlighted China's reliance on force to control Tibet, a method he argues is rejected by the Tibetan populace, leading to ongoing resistance against Chinese rule.

The event featured a panel discussion including former Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and Tibetologist Claude Arpi. They explored Tibet's complex history, its geopolitical conflicts, the influence of Tibetan Buddhism, and China's annexation in 1950. Menon praised the book for its honest recounting of Tibet's past and its impact on India, while Arpi criticized China's involvement in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation process, contrasting it with India's non-interventionist stance.

Hope of Returning Home Springs Eternal in the Breasts of Tibetan Exiles in Dharmshala

17 July 2024, [Politics Today](#), Karen Dabrowska

China is like a tiger in a zoo. When it comes out of its territory, it does not know how to hunt. The atrocity of silence is worse than the atrocity itself". This statement by the makers of the BBC documentary *Murder in the Snow*, which shows the shooting of Tibetan refugees as they attempted to flee across the Himalayas into Nepal, captures the feelings of Tibetans in the north Indian state of Himachal Pradesh about the plight of their country, which has been occupied by China since 1950.

The 2006 documentary, the first recorded footage of Tibetan refugees trying to cross the border, was screened at the Hope and Stories Café in Mcleodganj, home to the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, and the Tibetan government-in-exile. The town of 11,000 – many of them saffron-robed monks and refugees – is a mini Tibet with the large Tsuglagkhang complex. At its heart lies Namgyal Monastery, the personal retreat of the Dalai Lama. It is a magnificent structure that houses a community of dedicated monks. The melodious chants and rhythmic sounds of ceremonial instruments that echo through its walls offer a glimpse of the deep spiritual practices that have flourished here for centuries.

Kundang Tenzin, a Tibetan photographer who founded the Hope Café in 2017, is a man with a mission: to preserve and promote Tibetan culture and to record, document and expose the oppression of the Tibetan people by the Chinese government. He calls his café Hope because he came to India with the hope of returning to Tibet.



Kundang Tenzin founder of the Hope Café Photo by Karen Dabrowska

"I still have that hope," the soft-spoken, gentle man with an engaging smile told Politics Today. "We always talk about harmony, humility, peace, love and compassion. Our cause [freedom from Chinese oppression and respect for the human rights of the Tibetan people] is based on these ideals".

The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for promoting peaceful solutions based on tolerance and mutual respect to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of the Tibetan people. "The nonviolent movement works," said Tenzin with confidence and pride. It is not just a fairy tale. Most of the news is about war, terrorist attacks, robbery and rape. The younger generation may think that violence works, but the awarding of the Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama shows that non-violence works.

Following China's communist revolution in 1948, it invaded Tibet in 1950. Overwhelmed, Tibet was forced to surrender its independence. After a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama – Tibet's political and spiritual leader – fled into exile in Dharamshala, India, followed by tens of thousands of Tibetans. Since 1959, the Chinese government has exercised total political control over Tibet, using all means of repression, including forced abortion and sterilization, to deter and punish Tibetan resistance.

When asked, "Just because you don't eat a tiger doesn't mean the tiger won't eat you," Tenzin replied: "Non-carnivores can live with the tiger. Tibetans are all over the world. China is like a tiger in a zoo. When it comes out of its territory, it does not know how to hunt.

The Hope Café, which started life as an office, is located on the long, narrow, winding main street of Mcleodganj, where pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, rickshaws, cars and four-wheel-drives compete for space. The walls are tastefully decorated with Tenzin's paintings, which speak a thousand words about the suffering of his countrymen, books, Tibetan handicrafts, including the famous and most widely used peace mantra, om mani padme hum.

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, it is revered as a powerful tool for spiritual transformation. The mantra is sung, written and engraved on prayer wheels, prayer flags and even mountainsides, symbolizing the desire to spread compassion and peace throughout the world. There are also prayer flags. Tibetans believe that the wind will carry the prayers and mantras around the world to benefit all beings.

Tenzin's dog, the café's mascot, enjoys pride of place on a bean bag. The café has donation boxes for charities, including the street dogs that roam the streets of Mcleodganj uncared for and hungry.

In this haven of peace, a tireless, dedicated team of five run a weekly program. Monday is the day for sharing stories. Nyima Samdup described his hometown of Meto Junga, near Lhasa in Tibet. "It was where the mountains touched the sky. I lived there with my two sisters and my parents. My father had a small bicycle and he went to Lhasa to look for work to feed the family. He did some cleaning, but there was no steady work, so we decided to flee with a kettle, a blanket and some clothes. I was five years old. It took us six months to walk to Nepal.

On Wednesdays, visitors to the café can spend a day living as a Tibetan. Each morning, Nyima Samdup leads a fascinating walk through Tibetan culture, starting with donning a traditional costume and visiting the Dalai Lama's monastery, where the 89-year-old leader gives public lectures. Near the monastery is a chilling photo exhibition of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire in protest at the Chinese occupation. According to the Free Tibet Campaign, more than 150 people have set themselves on fire inside Tibet since March 2009. The number dropped in 2012 when the Dalai Lama said he did not condone the practice but praised the courage of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice for Tibet.

Friday is the day of documentaries and discussion. Tenzin and his colleagues are handing out leaflets about the event in Mcleodganj and have a personal message for those who come to the café in support of Tibet. *Murder in the Snow* tells the story of more than 70 young people who travelled for three nights in the back of a lorry as it climbed into the mountains. The refugees then walked for another 10 nights, with inadequate clothing and limited food and water, to the foot of the infamous 6000m Nangpa Pass, an ancient trade route to Nepal. As they made their way up the snow-covered pass, a group of mountaineers from a nearby camp watched in horror as Chinese border police opened fire on the refugees. The story went global when American mountain guide Luis Benitez emailed his account of the shooting to a popular climbing website. In 2006, about 100 Tibetans a month were fleeing their country. Today, only about ten a year are able to make the treacherous journey, as the

Chinese have stepped up surveillance following demonstrations against their rule in Tibet in 2008.

Like the flight over the mountains, preserving Tibetan culture is an uphill struggle against seemingly insurmountable odds, but Tenzin is undeterred. "Good things are difficult to achieve," he says philosophically, stressing that preserving the Tibetan language is essential to keeping the culture alive.

In August last year, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, citing a recent UN report on the 'forced assimilation' of one million Tibetan children forced into Mandarin-speaking state boarding schools far from their homes and families, called on China to stop trying to erase Tibet's distinct identity. In December, the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on China to immediately abolish the boarding schools. According to reports in various Tibetan-language news media monitored by ChinaAid, an international human rights organization working to promote religious freedom in China, students in Tibetan regions will be required to take full Mandarin Chinese classes from March 2023.

In his first address to the US Congress, Penpa Tsering, the head of Tibet's government-in-exile based in India, known as the Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), said his country was dying a 'slow death' under Chinese rule. "We are often asked why we don't hear about Tibet anymore," Tsering said. He blamed this silence on China's "Orwellian gridlock system, using all means of artificial intelligence to monitor people, control the flow of information and close Tibet to the outside world".

The Chinese government continues to spread disinformation about Tibet through official statements and propaganda, paid online commentators and even fake social media accounts.

The United Nations has repeatedly challenged China over human rights abuses in Tibet, including finding that Tibet is the worst area in China for child malnutrition. In 2023, the watchdog group Freedom House again ranked Tibet as the least free country in the world, tied with South Sudan and Syria. It was the third year in a row that Tibet was at the bottom of Freedom House's rankings, with an overall global freedom score of 1 out of 100.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2024 Annual Report, released on May 1, highlights the deterioration of religious freedom in Tibet due to the Chinese government's intensified repression and "Sinicization" of Tibetan Buddhism – a policy aimed at bringing Tibetan Buddhism under the control of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Chinese government has consistently objected to the Dalai Lama's visits to other countries, particularly his trips to Arunachal Pradesh, a north-eastern Indian state over which China claims territorial sovereignty.

Countries that host the Dalai Lama often face repercussions from China. When he visited Mongolia in 2016, Beijing responded by imposing an economic blockade on the landlocked country. It also unsuccessfully pressured Sri Lanka not to invite the Dalai Lama in April this year.

Although King Charles held an informal meeting with the Dalai Lama during his European tour in June 2012, the Dalai Lama did not attend the coronation. In light of this, senior Conservative MPs have described the presence of China's Vice President as 'outrageous'.

From chanting 'Tibet needs freedom' in the streets to participating in protests and political lobbying, Tibetans around the world are resisting China's policies despite 70 years of occupation. The voice of the Tibetan people is carried to the outside world by a number of vocal pressure groups such as the Free Tibet Campaign.

Every morning at Hope Café, Nyima Samdup writes a thought for the day on the blackboard. On day 23 of the year 2024, he wrote "If there is no enemy inside, the enemies outside cannot hurt you."

Tenzin sees independence for Tibet or genuine autonomy as two lines of thought. "If we can live our lives in freedom and our human rights are respected, both are acceptable." But he admits that his dream of returning to Tibet has little chance of coming true unless there is a regime change in China.

"We want the Chinese government to see what we are doing [in Dhamarshala]," says Tenzin. "The Tibetan government in exile provides education and health care. Parents make sure their children speak Tibetan. We will always stand up for Tibet.

Hope has an address. The Hope Café on Joigwara Road in Mcleodganj.

Can Modi 3.0 end tensions with China? What Experts say

17 July 2024, [India Today](#), Shashank Mattoo

India's biggest threat has advocated for a fresh start between the two countries. As the Modi government rings in a new term, will the Modi government finally put an end to clashes or will it stand on ground? India's relationship with China has been both stagnant and pivotal in the past decade.

The General elections 2024 confirmed a comeback for prime minister Narendra Modi's government, infamously known as Modi 3.0. The new government, despite winning for a third consecutive term, has not had it easy.

With growing tensions at the border and across the country, the centre of attention is the government's foreign policy, amid a new closeness between Russia and China.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy on China has swung between talking and fighting for a decade. During his first term in 2014, Modi tried making peace with China but the relationship now stands tattered, as territorial and diplomatic clashes between the two countries, combined with the deadly Galwan Valley clashes that killed 20 soldiers, have only increased in the past decade.

A decade of tensions

In 2020, Chinese troops began the most brazen border violation by China in decades as they coordinated a campaign to move into disputed territories across the Line of Control that divides India and China. The troops began to occupy territories across the northern sector of the LAC that India had claimed and were soon in a standoff with the Indian Army. This lasted for two months, concluding with the deadly Galwan clashes that claimed the lives of 20 Indian jawans. The Galwan clashes effectively broke India's relationship with China.

It did not take long for the territorial tensions to take an economic turn.

India took several measures to cut its economic exposure to China. It aimed at creating everything China provided, locally. A series of bans happened, including Chinese companies and apps, most notably social media platform TikTok. The movement also barred Chinese companies from investing in some Indian firms, stopped them from bidding for road projects, and blocked a \$3 billion import of power equipment.

The Present

In 2024, not much has changed. While the border crisis has eased in several hotspots, tens of thousands of troops remain deployed there. India has embarked on a major campaign to improve its infrastructure on the border with China. The country has been making serious decisions regarding tensions with China and the country has remained unpopular within the nation. Political dialogue has also been stalled since India has made it clear that China has to solve the border crisis before things can improve on our end.

A steady future?

Interestingly, there are signals that India may be considering a change in its approach to China. In an interview in April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's relations with China were "important and significant." Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also called for good relations with neighbours and stated that border talks with China were going well. There have been diplomatic developments on China's end too, as China finally appointed an ambassador to India.

A number of experts also argue that reducing tensions and engaging with China might actually be a good idea as China has also repeatedly called for improvement in ties with India. However, China's proposal to fix

relations isn't all in good taste, as China wants India to focus on other issues like economic and climate change instead of persisting over the border issue.

On the economic front, despite several attempts to reduce dependence on China, trade with China has bloomed. In 2022, India-China trade crossed USD 136 billion, which made Beijing India's second-largest trade partner. Trade in electronics, pharmaceutical ingredients, textiles and chemicals has continued to bloom as India's economy still isn't full self-reliant on China. China is also the top supplier of goods to India's most important industrial sectors. The Modi government's efforts to block some of these imports have been met by protests from Indian businesses that need Chinese products

Meanwhile, India's electronics sector has pushed the government to allow more Chinese investment and joint ventures with Chinese firms. The industry has even asked for easier visa norms to allow Chinese technicians to help Indian electronics companies. They argue that if India is to become a developed country by 2047, its major industries will need investment and know-how from China.

And from a diplomatic perspective, India is not alone in having tensions with China. The countries, however, have not isolated China. Clearly, India is not gaining much from being the only power that has isolated China. Both President Joe Biden of America and PM Albanese of Australia have met China's Xi Jinping.

Experts Say

On resolving issues with China, many of India's best experts have a nuanced answer. While they say that India has done well in holding its ground against China, it has also made clear again and again that China cannot break the rules and get away without consequences. Thus, these experts believe India's policy of holding back a full normalisation of relations until China behaves itself on the border is a sound strategy.

China has a policy of undermining India in South Asia and has good relations with Indian rivals like Pakistan. Considering this, the experts also believe that India-China rivalry isn't going anywhere, despite more engagement or cooperation.

'China fails to win hearts and minds of Tibetan people': Former envoy

17 July 2024, [ANI](#)

China has not been able to assimilate or absorb Tibet and it has not been able to win the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people, former Indian ambassador Dilip Sinha said during the launch of his book titled 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty'.

The book 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty' authored by Sinha was unveiled at the India International Centre in the national capital on Tuesday.

Sinha, in his book titled 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty', highlighted how Tibet became the playground for global geopolitical ambitions and what the future may hold for this region fighting for statehood. Dilip Sinha, the author of the book, stressed that China is doing what they do best, which is to try and control them by force.

"China has not been able to assimilate or absorb Tibet and the Tibetan people; it has not been able to win the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people. So China is doing what it does best, which is to try and control them by force, and that is not acceptable to the Tibetan people, which is why we have a movement. But the very fact that China has to impose all kinds of restrictions shows that there is a lot of resentment against Chinese rule," Sinha told ANI. The book is a deep dive into Tibet's past and future, based on several documented events, international records, archives, and documents. It provides the reader with an analysis of how Tibet became the playground for global geopolitical ambitions and what the future may hold for this region fighting for statehood.

The event also featured a brief panel discussion between Dilip Sinha, India's former Foreign Secretary, Shivshankar Menon, and Claude Arpi, a renowned author and Tibetologist.

The discussion covered various topics from the book, including the brief history of Tibet, its complex geopolitical entanglements, the rise of Tibetan Buddhism, and its annexation by China in 1950. Shivshankar Menon, calling the book 'an honest account' of Tibet's history, said, "The strength of the book is that it is an honest account of what happened--the Great Power Rivalry, how it affected Tibet and how it affected us (India). And it is not only about the great powers, as the Tibetans also had a say, they had agency in their future.' He further said that it is a straightforward account based on the accounts of what happened in the region.

"It is not partisan historiography; it is a straightforward account based on the accounts of what had happened. It shows you how these things work and how they have worked in the past and it triggers fresh thinking about how you approach the question (Tibet)," Menon said.

While speaking to ANI, Claude Arpi shed light on China's tactics for Tibet's cultural assimilation.

Referring to China's intervention in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, Arpi said, "It is very strange, as they are a communist nation and what do they know about the

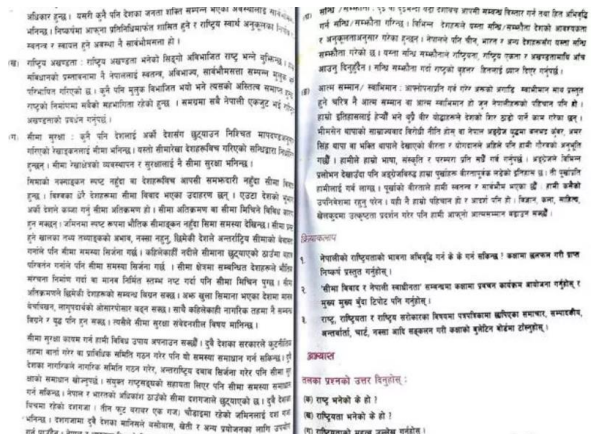
reincarnation! And China as a state should not intervene in such matters. Moreover, it's a private decision of His Holiness Dalai Lama to reincarnate or emanate, whatever he decides," Arpi said. Praising India as it has never intervened in the matter, he said, "And in this matter, India is much wiser, as Delhi has always said that it will not intervene, and if the 15th Dalai Lama comes to India, he will be welcomed, just like the 14th Dalai Lama had been welcomed."

During the discussion, when Claude Arpi was asked about how Tibet has its own identity, the Tibetologist said that Tibet was indeed independent as it had its own currency, passport, flag and representatives. "Tibet had its currency, its passport, its representatives, and their flag. So Tibet was indeed independent. But I see something else also in the tragedy of the Tibetan people, His Holiness, but it is also a tragedy for the Indian border," he said. (ANI)

Textbook case of bad textbooks

17 July 2024, [Nepali Times](#), Chandra Kishore

Grade 9 Social Studies textbooks present a toxic interpretation of the open Nepal-India border



A chapter on 'Nation and Nationalism' in Grade 9 Social Studies has the following lines: "An open border opens up the possibility of increased human trafficking and drug smuggling. In fact, an open border can poison relations between people and even lead to war."

As the well-known adage goes: you can choose your friends but not your neighbours. There is no alternative to learning to live together. Relations between neighbours in a housing estate or nation states is (or should be) dependent on long term bilateral interest, not instantaneous calculations. Nowhere is relations between nations become more of an everyday issue than in the borderlands. And how multidimensional relations between countries are managed and nurtured should be the message in school textbooks. Afterall, the foundations of knowledge and values are laid in school and in the books used to teach them. In

most countries the content of textbooks is determined by the state, in fact it is an official document reflecting a country's position on various facets of citizenship. Textbooks determine a person's views on a cross border state.

I have recently been leafing through the Social Studies textbooks for Grades 9 (pictured, below) and 10 published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's Curriculum Development Board at Sano Thimi.

Imagine my astonishment when in the Grade 9 chapter on 'Nation and Nationalism' was this sentence in the section titled Border Security (translated from Nepali): 'An open border opens up the possibility of increased human trafficking and drug smuggling. In fact, an open border can poison relations between people and even lead to war.'

Similarly, a section titled 'Nepal's Friends and Agencies' talks about Nepal being a landlocked country situated between India and China, without indicating that these two neighbours of Nepal are global economic heavyweights.

Whatever the text book may say about the dangers of an open border, all national frontiers should be as open as the one between India and Nepal. Nepal has had a similar open border with Tibet for centuries.

Officially, a country's relation with its neighbour is marked by when diplomatic relations were established. But there is no such date with which we can pinpoint how long Nepal's relations with India and Tibet (now an autonomous region of China) has existed.

Nepal's school textbooks fail to impart on students the importance of the country's relations with these two vast and powerful neighbours. Instead of establishing a narrative that an open border is the ultimate symbol of strong and close ties between countries, Nepali textbooks give it an unhelpful negative connotation.

By contract, Nepal's trans-Himalayan border with China is limited and controlled. Citizens of both countries need passports and visas to enter the other. From time to time, some Tibetans do enter Nepal bypassing official checkpoints.

The Nepal-India border on the other hand is open because of mutual agreement, friendship, good neighbourliness, religious and cultural diversity, social cohesion, family relations, and common geographical features on both sides.

These economic, cultural, political and historical aspects of the open border should have been incorporated into Nepal's text books. On the other hand, the books should also have explained the reason why the Nepal-China border has not been open since the annexation of Tibet 65 years ago.

The content of the Social Studies text book reflects state neglect. A border is not the result of the wishes

of a country on one side, it is the common meeting point of nations.

Because the examination system requires students to memorise and regurgitate content of textbooks, a teacher cannot deviate from what it says even if it is incorrect. A secondary school teacher regards the textbook as the curriculum.

A text book's content therefore does not just impact the point of view of students, but also teachers. More than disinformation on social media, it is the half-truths and false notions in text books that are more dangerous.

In fact, textbooks read like the declaration of the political party in power. This is a result of the curriculum drafters not being inclusive and representative of Nepal's diversity.

This can bring about a tectonic shift in the thought process of young Nepalis, evoke a sense of animosity towards neighbours and 'others'. In a country where political polarisation, ideological divide is already wide, such assertiveness by the dominant community can be sensitive.

Textbooks cannot be propaganda, they cannot be a vehicle to establish a political narrative. They should heal and unite.

Students need to learn and understand Nepal's fragile geopolitical circumstance, and not be exhorted to rock the boat. There is a common socio-cultural milieu that is transboundary because of our shared history and politics.

Nepal's youth need to have a moderate and balanced view of the history, geography and cultural links of the borderlands so they can contribute to cooperation and coexistence.

Global Watch | China's Weaponisation of Water Resources is a Grave Threat to South Asia

17 July 2024, [News18](#), Arun Anand



As a non-signatory of transboundary water treaties, Beijing operates without accountability, leveraging its upstream position to control rivers vital to

downstream nations. This disregard for international norms risks catastrophic environmental and humanitarian consequences.

Since the annexation of Tibet in 1950, China has been exploiting Tibet's rich natural resources, especially water, along with violating the human rights of the Tibetan population. Known as Asia's Water Tower, Tibet is the world's largest freshwater reserve outside the polar regions. Tibetan plateau and the Himalayas are also the primary sources of some of the major river basins in South and Southeast Asia such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Meghna, Indus and Mekong. Most of these rivers are transboundary in nature and flow through many South and Southeast Asian nations. This inevitably makes these low-riparian nations dependent on transboundary rivers.

To give a clearer picture, Bangladesh has over 57 transboundary rivers, while it shares 54 of them with India. These river basins, thus, are vital not only for meeting the economic needs, but also for the preservation of the ecosystem and biodiversity of the lower riparian nations.

With Tibet under Chinese control, water resources have emerged as China's new weapon to achieve hydro-hegemony. Pertinently, China has undertaken substantial hydroelectricity projects as hydroelectricity is Tibet's second largest energy source for China, after coal. China's hydro-hegemonic ambitions, however, are coming in the way of lower riparian countries' reliance on transboundary rivers flowing through these countries and their increasing demand for water in the face of rapid climate change. China's hydro hegemonic ambitions are reflected in its big dam construction projects, aimed at water diversion and the use of artificial rain projects to regulate rainfall in barren areas of the Tibetan plateau. China's mega dam construction projects are rooted in its motive of meeting the country's large energy demands, accounting for about 31 per cent of global hydropower as per 2022 data. The development of hydropower based on the Yarlung Tsangpo River finds mention as a 'priority' in China's current 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25). Because of its dominant position as an upper riparian nation and in order to cater to its increasing hydro-energy demands, the development of China's infrastructure on upper riparian rivers has had a significant impact on water flow, adversely affecting the Mekong and Yarlung Tsangpo rivers.

Meeting energy demands, however, is not China's only interest here. Beijing's control of water flow and river diversion through the operationalisation of mega dams aims to have influence and exert dominance over its neighbouring lower riparian nations. In order to understand this game, it is important to see the flow of upper riparian rivers in China; the Yarlung Tsangpo and Mekong, are both known to be major transboundary rivers. Yarlung Tsangpo River, the

world's highest river, originates in the Manasarovar Lake in Tibet that eventually flows through the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh (as Siang River) and Assam (as Brahmaputra) and bordering country Bangladesh before draining into the Bay of Bengal. The Mekong River, which also originates in the Tibetan plateau of the upper Mekong Basin, flows through six nations in Southeast Asia before flowing out to the South China Sea. This makes Mekong Southeast Asia's largest river basin.

The announcement of China's plan to build the world's biggest hydropower dam (50-metre high with a capacity of 60 GW power production) on the lowest reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river, in Medong country bordering India's Arunachal Pradesh, is a case in point. Believed to be three times the size of China's Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest dam presently, the "Super Dam" on the Brahmaputra River is claimed to strengthen China's water security and meet its clean energy goals. However, the location of this new mega-dam construction has raised suspicion for its neighbouring countries.

Accounting for 30 per cent of India's freshwater resource, Brahmaputra River is significant not only for India, but is equally important for Bangladesh. Around 70 per cent of the Bangladeshi population reside in the Brahmaputra River basin. China's opaque approach in its river diversion plan, through this new mega-dam construction, thus risks affecting both countries.

With India, China is already engaged in disputes along the borders and on infrastructure projects. The relationship, in this context, has witnessed further deterioration since 2020. Once constructed, the "Super Dam" is likely to trigger floods in India's Northeast regions during monsoons and cause severe water shortages during the winter season. Moreover, the construction of dams on the Brahmaputra River would also lead to the consolidation of China's baseless territorial claims over the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

The satellite images revealed last year that China has been implementing a dam construction project since 2021 that is close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC). China had also withheld hydrological data during the Doklam Standoff in 2017, violating legally binding accords. This also added to New Delhi's difficulties in managing annual floods affecting its Northeastern states. It is a reflection of how China has been weaponising water resources. Another similar case was witnessed in 2019 when China regulated the water flow of the Mekong River through its 11 large hydropower dams operational along the river basin. The Chinese actions had led to the worst drought witnessed in decades by lower Mekong countries; Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam the following year. It had adversely affected millions of

people in these countries whose source of livelihood and food were dependent on the Mekong River.

Last year, Bangladesh's *Daily Asian Age* had reported that China's approach toward water resources, reflected in its rampant dam construction projects, had adversely impacted environmental conditions, and caused large displacement of people and huge debt to low riparian countries in South and Southeast Asia.

China is not only exploiting its neighbours by leveraging its upper riparian status but also using it as an excuse to consolidate its claim over Tibet. The weather modification programme to induce artificial rain over barren plateau is one such example, causing disastrous effects on the climatic conditions of the Tibetan plateau. China's major artificial rain experiment, the Sky High or Tianhe Project plan (2018), aims to boost extra rainfall over the plateau region through the process of fuel-burning chambers that will induce artificial rain. More than 500 of these fuel-burning chambers were reported to be installed across Tibetan mountains in 2018 itself.

The \$19 million project witnessed further expansion in 2020, covering an area of over 5.5 million square kilometres (to be developed by 2025). In 2022, drones and rockets launched for the purpose of cloud seeding were seen over China's Sichuan province. This was done to induce rainfall over more than 600 square kilometres of land witnessing extreme heatwaves and drought. Interestingly, now these areas have been witnessing their worst flood conditions for the past two years after the experiment. The artificial alteration of weather through use of cloud seeding technology is controversial for many reasons, as it directly affects the ecosystem. The Tianhe Project, covering such an expansive area, not only endangers Tibet's environment, but also China's neighbouring countries, especially India. China, through its dam construction projects and weather modification programmes, seem to be weaponising water for its geostrategic interest.

China's recent unilateral decision to donate 3,000 tonnes (1,500 tonnes donated in March and 1,500 tonnes in May) of potable glacial water from Tibet to Maldives, at the latter's request, is the latest example of China's exploitation of Tibet's water resources for geopolitical gains. However, this act of Chinese benevolence had also raised concerns among the Tibetans in Tibet. Apparently, China's water conservation regulations that set the limit on water usage in the Tibetan region were unveiled barely a week prior to the first consignment of water being dispatched to Maldives in March 2024.

Reportedly, Tibetans themselves are facing water shortage in Tibet due to decades of water management and conservation campaigns run by China for the exploitation of Tibetan water resources

throughout the plateau. This, along with the dam construction projects, has paved the way for frequent displacement, including, the forced displacement of Tibetans from their ancestral land. Not to mention, Chinese water exploitation has been endangering the climate, flora and fauna of the Tibetan plateau as well. Being a non-signatory of any transboundary water treaty, China seems to be exploiting Tibetan transboundary water sources as its own sovereign resources, demonstrated by its unilateral and belligerent actions. By leveraging its upper riparian status, China is using water as a weapon, raising environmental and livelihood concerns not only for its neighbouring countries, but also for the Tibetan plateau itself, the source of this “water weapon”.

China's border dispute with India

17 July 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Khedroob Thondup

The Sino-Indian border dispute remains one of the most complex and enduring border issues in the world. Unlike China's borders with Russia and Vietnam, which have seen conflicts, but eventually led to settled agreements, the border with India, particularly the region of Arunachal Pradesh, remains a point of contention. This op-ed explores the historical and geopolitical nuances that contribute to this unresolved border dispute.

The crux of the Sino-Indian border dispute lies in the differing interpretations of historical boundaries. The McMahon Line, established by the 1914 Simla Convention, was accepted by British India and Tibet, but never recognized by China, which argues that Tibet was not a sovereign state capable of entering into international agreements. This line demarcates what India considers the boundary of Arunachal Pradesh, a region China refers to as South Tibet.

China has historically shown a willingness to engage in warfare to resolve border disputes, as evidenced by the Sino-Soviet border conflict of 1969 and the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979.

These conflicts, although violent, eventually led to negotiations and settled borders. The resolution with Russia was finalized in 2003, and with Vietnam, despite ongoing tensions, there has been a formal demarcation of the border.

In contrast, the Sino-Indian border remains unsettled. Several factors contribute to this impasse:

The region holds significant strategic importance for both nations. It serves as a buffer zone and is crucial for the security of India's northeastern states and China's sensitive Tibetan region.

Both countries view the control of the disputed area as a matter of national pride and territorial integrity. China's claim over Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet is rooted in its assertion of sovereignty over the

historical region of Tibet. Both nations have been competing to build infrastructure along the border, which exacerbates tensions and leads to frequent standoffs.

The stalemate persists due to a combination of historical grievances, nationalistic sentiments and geopolitical strategies. Unlike its settled borders with Russia and Vietnam, where pragmatic diplomacy eventually prevailed, the Sino-Indian border is mired in a complex interplay of history and politics. The lack of a mutually recognized legal framework, such as the McMahon Line for India, and China's insistence on historical claims complicate the dispute.

For a resolution to be reached, it will require sustained diplomatic engagement, mutual respect for each other's concerns and a willingness to compromise. The resolution of the Tibet issue, as suggested by the Tibetan government-in-exile, could potentially pave the way for a broader settlement of the border dispute. However, this would necessitate a significant shift in China's stance on Tibet, which seems unlikely in the near future.

The Sino-Indian border dispute over Arunachal Pradesh stands out as an unresolved issue in China's border history due to its unique historical, cultural and geopolitical complexities. While China has settled its border disputes with other nations through war and subsequent diplomacy, the path to resolution with India remains fraught with challenges that go beyond the mere demarcation of a boundary line.

Researcher explains how Uighurs are exploited in Xinjiang forced labor regime

16 July 2024, [Eurasianet](#), Erkin Damolla

Western companies benefit from opaque system.

Uighur activists and human rights defenders often contend that major Western electronics and apparel manufacturers profit from the use of slave-like and coerced labor in China, including work done by Uighurs confined in camps in western Xinjiang Province. Mediazona Central Asia discussed the various forms of involuntary labor in Xinjiang with Rune Steenberg, an anthropologist and researcher at the University of Olomouc in the Czech Republic who has long studied the Uighur population in Xinjiang. He and his colleagues rely on an approach they call “remote ethnography” to form a picture of what is transpiring in Xinjiang. This method relies on anecdotal evidence from those who have direct experience in Xinjiang, as well as close analysis of written accounts and economic data, to compensate for the lack of access for foreign experts to the region.

MZ: How did you collect information about forced labor in Xinjiang?

Steenberg: I worked with German journalists on issues of forced labor, cotton picking, and clothing production in Xinjiang, and also interviewed people who were in a “re-education” camp and forced to work there. So, I have an insider idea of how the system works. I also know a little about labor transfer programs in Xinjiang.

MZ: Please tell us more about the involuntary/coerced labor regime in Xinjiang.

Steenberg: There are three different types of forced or involuntary labor in Xinjiang, each having different degrees of coercion. The most forced and difficult labor occurs in prisons. In Xinjiang prisons, prisoners can be forced to work for decades. Often it is very hard work, physically difficult work in terrible conditions, and no pay, nothing.

Then we have a situation where people are forced to work in the camps, or are transferred from a camp to closed factories, which also operate according to the principles of the camps, where they sew clothes, produce food and various other things. They aren't paid for this either, but the conditions are not as harsh as in prison.

There are also those who have been interned in a camp but are given an opportunity to move from the camp to a factory. This can be described as “liberation.” All this camp forced labor, as well as prison “slave” labor, takes place in Xinjiang itself, next to the camps and prisons. People who have had a chance to be released from the camp to work in factories are sometimes transferred to inland China. There, they are given a contract, they sign an agreement, and they are paid some kind of salary, albeit a very low one. Moreover, they work in conditions that are not as bad as those in camps or prisons. I don't know exactly how many people have gone through all this.

A fourth category is the so-called labor transfer programs. This involves people who have not been arrested or detained. They are directly “recruited” to work in various factories, fields, etc. Some people are sort of forced into it because in their village – or wherever they are – they are told that they need to bring so many people to a certain place, for example, to pick cotton.

This practice is not new. It is, in fact, a form of forced labor as well. If someone refuses, there are consequences. But many also sign up for these labor transfer programs voluntarily, to receive a salary, although not very high, and with certain conditions that they can also leave if they want. The reason why many of them sign up for these programs is because they have no alternative, otherwise they will not be able to find a job. Getting a job in Xinjiang is now very difficult, especially for Uighurs who lack education. Many Chinese companies simply do not hire Uighurs,

considering that officials say they are terrorists, suspicious, problematic.

Also, as I found out, when many men are detained in “re-education” camps, their wives, sisters and daughters can be sent to factories in so-called new special economic zones in Kashgar and Ghulja. I've heard stories of people who were directly involved, who worked in these newly opened factories. For their work they received a modest salary, but the government, at its own expense, arranged for transport to and from villages. It wasn't entirely voluntary either – if you didn't show up or didn't agree to participate, you could get in trouble.

MZ: An important part of the modern Uyghur discourse in the West is to talk about how the forced labor of Uighurs not only benefits Chinese companies, but also some Western firms. How do we know about this?

Steenberg: Of course, it [forced labor] is not used directly by these companies, but by someone in their supply chains. Because of the way the capitalist system is structured, supply chains, as you can imagine, are very long and opaque. So, it's very difficult to understand where the raw products actually come from. Many of these companies hide behind the fact that they don't know anything, they just get ready-made products. But the reason why they do this, the benefit they get from it, is that they simply, through forced labor, get very, I repeat, very cheap products. Many of these companies operate factories and supply chains where there is no certainty that they are “clean” and where there is a high probability that forced labor is used. Besides cotton there is also polysilicon for solar cells, which is used by many large companies.

China is not just a market economy, but a state-controlled market economy. Therefore, many of these [Western] companies may have been involved in these labor transfer programs. Some of them may even have directly benefited from forced labor in prisons or camps, or have connections to factories where people were brought either after being in a camp, or which has workers who are wives of prisoners. Until companies and factories open up to transparent inspections, we will be forced to suspect that similar forms of forced labor exist throughout the region.

MZ: You have conducted research on cotton from Xinjiang? Can you discuss your research methods?

Steenberg: It was about a year and a half ago. We interviewed people who worked in the Xinjiang cotton industry, and they told us about the use of forced labor during harvesting and early processing. That is, to extract the seeds from cotton, as well as to clean it, extracting the oil from it, before it can be turned into threads, from which they will then sew fabric, and from it – clothes. So, we researched companies that could source cotton from Xinjiang, bought clothes

from them, and tested them in a laboratory. As a result, based on the isotopic analysis of the clothing, we were able to say with a very high degree of confidence that these clothes contained cotton from Xinjiang. Where exactly this cotton was harvested, what kind of cotton, in what field, and so on, of course, is difficult to determine in this way, but this is at least something that we can say for sure.

We also analyzed satellite images of cotton fields, which show the speed of harvest. The Chinese government says that most of the cotton is picked by machines, but if you pick it by machines, they pick it all at once. If you collect it manually, it takes longer. Therefore, satellite images show how quickly a photograph of a field turns from white to dark. This is an indicator of how much of the crop is harvested by machine and how much by hand. Moreover, harvesting is not the only place where forced labor is used. At cotton gins, raw cotton is treated with chemicals, and this is quite hard and in many ways dangerous work, the voluntariness of which we also cannot measure.

Our understanding of forced labor needs clarification. Our ideas about it do not quite correspond to the situation in Xinjiang. As I already said, many people there have contracts, they sign up for work, they are paid a salary, but they are under political pressure to go and do the work, and they have no alternative. Therefore, I believe that this could still qualify as forced labor, and maybe even coercion. So, we need to think more deeply about the terms we use and how we define them, as well as the legal framework that surrounds them. The Xinjiang case can help us take a closer look at this and, I hope, create better tools for analyzing these types of labor.

Chinese soldiers gear up for winter warfare

16 July 2024, [The Strategist](#), Anushka Saxena

China is putting great effort into developing its soldiers' ability to operate in high-altitude and cold environments, increasing its military capacity relative to India. Skills as simple as shovelling snow have become part of combat training exercises. Equipment, facilities and procedures are being improved in what appears to be a highly systematic approach to mitigating the challenges of moving and fighting in the Himalayas and adjacent areas.

Since 2015–16, under the leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping, the People's Liberation Army has undergone significant reforms. Those reforms have concentrated on enhancing combat readiness in the information age, transforming the PLA into a joint, network-centric fighting force by integrating its services, arms and systems. The PLA Western Theatre Command (WTC) has been particularly active in

adapting to what the PLA calls 'informatisation' and 'intelligentisation', focusing on securing China's southern and southwestern borders, preparing for both conventional and unconventional warfare and training its soldiers to operate in the challenging terrains and high altitudes of Xinjiang and Tibet.

Terrain and altitude training is a central pillar of the WTC's jointness capabilities, as the ability to achieve interconnected goals in complex environments would shape the results of conflict. Moreover, given that it is the largest theatre command by area and covers both the arid northwestern deserts of Xinjiang and the high-altitude areas of Tibet, along the border with India, adaptation to terrain and altitudes determines the ability of soldiers to fight protracted conflict and conceal postures without disrupting the sustainable flow of everyday resources to combat bases.

Further, because the Indian border is one of the principal operational directions assigned to the WTC, the outcome of any contest between the Chinese and Indian militaries will be determined not just by the quality of weapons systems and combat doctrines, but also by the logistical superiority and adaptation tactics of the soldiers on both sides. In this regard, the WTC's focus on terrain and altitude training is an attempt to gain advantage over the Indian soldier's adaption to fighting in the Himalayas.

WTC's terrain training work includes combat and non-combat tasks. Radar stations in the WTC, for example, are experimenting with ways to ensure a continued supply of tap water, since the detachments of trucks that supply water to base units are often irregular or snowed in. The new measures require investment of intensive resources. Soldiers in the WTC are laying water pipelines and ensuring replenishment of water tanks. A successful case study is that of a radar station under a WTC air force brigade based on a snow-covered plateau in Tibet, which, in February last year connected soldiers' dormitories with running-water supply.

Similarly, shovelling snow in the Tibetan mountains or in the high-altitude desert areas of Xinjiang is a core non-combat task required of WTC personnel. While it is a non-combat task, it has significant applications in combat work. For example, a CCTV report from January 2023 highlighted the significance of practising snow-shovelling for a Xinjiang border detachment. The detachment, based at the foot of the Barluk Mountains, faced 200 days of gale-force winds in the new year period that led to snow accumulation, estimated to be as high as 2–2.5 metres and extending as far as 60 metres from the detachment's base. So, when members of the detachment undertook a border observation patrol and encountered severe snow accumulation, they demonstrated snow-shovelling skills. Then they had to reach the final patrol point on foot.

Combat tasks are also designed to account for challenging terrain and high-altitude conditions. For instance, earlier this year, an army brigade from the WTC engaged in snowfield training to improve combat readiness in cold, high-altitude and low-oxygen environments. This approach aligns with the PLA's standard of effective training, in which combat scenarios are accurately simulated and tasks are assigned to test various components of joint and integrated operations.

Further, WTC soldiers posted along the Kunlun Mountains (extending into Xinjiang and Tibet) have begun building army command posts concealed near snowlines at altitudes of over 4000 metres. The goal has been to continuously lead troops to conduct effective on-site research, planning and training in high-altitude zones. Officers in the command posts formulate measures for high-altitude training and preparedness and conduct concealment tests for soldiers, vehicles and tents, sometimes changing locations every few months. Then, soldiers are required to pursue other combat-preparedness tasks, such as testing of marching speed over several hundred kilometres, as well as practising live-fire shooting to determine ballistic performance of artillery at various altitudes. From the Indian perspective, this is significant because, over time, some of those concealed positions and tactical arrangements have come to restrict Indian forces' access to key patrolling points along the de facto border, the Line of Actual Control.

Finally, since August 2022, border defence companies in Xinjiang have been testing a new 'integrated individual system', which includes a new-type helmet, multifunction night-vision goggles, a portable computer, an individual load carrier and an assault rucksack. The challenge will be to integrate adaptation to hypoxic conditions with the ability to carry heavy loads that come with this new integrated system. (The material load seems to be about 30kg). This indicates that the next step in combat altitude training in the WTC is for individual soldiers to become more independent and resilient.

Overall, as Indian and Chinese soldiers gear up for long winters along the border, India has much to look out for in relation to the WTC's efforts in terrain and altitude training. At the same time, the challenges that personnel of the WTC encounter while operating in hypoxic conditions are intense and may require intensive investment in training and resource management to overcome.

Anti-Cult Propaganda in Ulugqat County, Xinjiang—Where There Are No “Cults”

15 July 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Zeng Liqin

For thirteen years a “horseback anti-cult police squad” has visited herders who have never met a “cult.” Why?

Ulugqat County, Xinjiang, is one of the two westernmost counties in China. It is also one of the most impervious, with inhabitable mountains and deserts accounting for more than 99% of its surface. 88% of the scarce population (around 60,000) is made out of ethnic Kyrgyz, many of them herders living at altitudes of 3,000 or 4,000 meters who have never left their pastoral area in their lives.

It looks like an unlikely region to be targeted by the xie jiao, a Chinese word translated in English by the CCP itself as “cults” but in fact indicating since Imperial times organizations spreading “heterodox” teachings. It is thus with some surprise that “Bitter Winter” has learned that one Jiakupuwali Baikeyaoli, deputy director of the Bostanterak Police Station of the Wuqia County Public Security Bureau, is being promoted in Chinese media as one of the best anti-xie-jiao fighters in the country. The police officer reported that he and his “horseback anti-xie-jiao police squad” have visited remote villages bringing there anti-xie-jiao propaganda for thirteen years.

What makes the story as told by Chinese TV networks and media unique is that, admittedly, in all these years the Bostanterak police officers have found in their area no xie jiao at all. This is confirmed by the herders who appear in the propaganda videos and articles to thank Jiakupuwali for his good work. “Although I have never come into direct contact with a xie jiao, I have always heard of cases of harm caused by xie jiao,” one herder said. The herder lives in a grazing site at an altitude of 4,000 meters and at 200 kilometers from the nearest township. He has never visited a large city and has rarely met people from outside his pastoral area in his life, except the police officers and other government bureaucrats who periodically visit the site.

The question the propaganda does not discuss, thus, is why exactly thirteen years of anti-xie-jiao propaganda were needed in a remote area where there are no xie jiao. By examining the propaganda carefully, one can find some answers. While ostensibly the propaganda targeted the religious groups banned as xie jiao, in fact the brochures distributed and the talks given by the police officers warned more broadly against “illegal” religion, “superstition,” and “anti-scientific and anti-government ideas.”

The fight against the xie jiao is a pretext to promote materialism, atheism—and loyalty to the Communist Party. Prominent in the propaganda about the

“horseback anti-xie-jiao police squad” is a herder introduced as “Uncle Mamtsulaiman Jiaketu, a 30-year-old party member of the Kyrgyz ethnic group.” He reported on the effect on him of the indoctrination against the xie jiao: “I want to play the vanguard and exemplary role of a Communist Party member and tell my family, relatives and fellow villagers that for resisting the xie jiao you should always follow the Party and listen to the Party,” he said. The old herder has never seen a xie jiao—but he perfectly understands what the propaganda is all about.

Bhuchung D Sonam - “Human experience is as deep as it is vast”

15 July 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Chintan Girish Modi

Dharamsala-based Tibetan poet, translator and publisher Bhuchung D Sonam talks about the role of literature in the Tibetan freedom struggle and about editing *Under the Blue Skies: A Tibetan Reader*, an anthology of fiction, poetry and non-fiction

How do you view the role of literature in the Tibetan freedom struggle?

Acts of storytelling are crucial for a small exiled community such as ours because we are fighting against Chinese colonial power that has a humongous state propaganda machinery continuously churning out untruths. Literature also deepens our sense of identity and connection since Tibetan refugees are scattered around the world.

Your book *Under the Blue Skies: A Tibetan Reader* aims to offer “a fresh and an alternative window to the individual and collective Tibetan psyche”. What kind of stereotypical or jaded representations are you looking to challenge? Whom do you hold responsible for the way in which Tibetans have been represented in literature?

For many centuries Tibet and the Tibetan people have been written about by outsiders. Although Tibet has a very rich repository of Buddhist literature, we did not invest much in producing secular literature based on human experience. There are a lot of misperceptions about us which are a consequence of writings done by others, primarily Western travellers, missionaries, diplomats and fantasy-seekers.

Since we were forced into exile in the aftermath of China’s occupation of Tibet, Tibetans have started to write in English and other languages. Today, there is a new generation of Tibetans who have linguistic skills to articulate their deepest thoughts and opinions. As a result, non-Tibetans have access to Tibetan writing, which is based on lived experience and hence free of stereotypes.

Tell us about the fresh and alternative voices and perspectives that you have chosen to highlight. What

sets them apart from earlier writing? How did you find them?

My own writing, and in fact writings of most contemporary Tibetan writers, are based on our first-hand experience as people who are forced into the space of others. We write about loss, anger, frustration, loneliness as well as hope that things will change for the better. A new generation of Tibetan writers like Lekey S Leidecker, Kaysang, Tenphun and others have unique voices reflecting their realities. There is a generation of Tibetans attuned to the tenet that, as Kaysang writes, “Living does not mean not dying” and, as Tenphun writes, “Tibetans who have a small store of Hindi vocabulary siphoned off from barmaids, taxi drivers and barbers”. Their lives are, as Kalsang Yangzom writes, “an intersection of many selves, pilgrimage to an ancestral home, India or Tibet?”

The Own Voices movement in literature draws attention to the importance of authentic representation and marginalised people taking control of their narratives but also gets criticised for limiting the scope of literature by telling writers that they should stick to writing about their lived experience and not appropriate other people’s stories. What do you think?

I think human experience is as deep as it is vast. With any writer from any community, particularly those who are/have been historically marginalised, exploring his/her own innermost thoughts, wisdom and silence, the story is bound to be unique to his/her own self/community. When a person honestly articulates his or her deepest emotions, they will echo universal human sentiments.

The question of appropriation arises when people I call “story-hunting tricksters” travel to remote places spawning exotic tales spiced up with mysticism and their own preconceived ideas, and then sell these tales as original stories or accounts of a people and a culture they didn’t even try to understand. This has happened to many marginalised communities, including Tibetans.

The book has three sections: fiction, poetry and non-fiction. What made you decide on this structure instead of grouping writers based on the subjects they write about?

Although we have been writing and producing works of literature for several decades in exile, there hasn’t been an anthology containing all three categories in one title. I thought it would be both useful and interesting for outsiders to have Tibetan fiction, poetry and non-fiction in a single edition – a kind of an entryway to the world of Tibetan literature. The other, and perhaps more important, reason was that *Under the Blue Skies* was to be a supplementary textbook in Tibetan refugee schools, where the students have always been taught Indian and foreign literature in

English. How wonderful it would be if Tibetan children are introduced to and taught Tibetan writing in English!

Given the stature and the popularity of the Dalai Lama, several non-Tibetans assume that most Tibetans are Buddhist and the diversity is often overlooked. In the process of putting together *Under the Blue Skies*, did you seek out Muslim, Christian, atheist and agnostic voices from the Tibetan community? What were the challenges that you faced?

It was the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century who granted a site in Tibet's capital city for the Muslims, who were mostly a merchant community, to build the first mosque. There is also a small number of Tibetan Christians in eastern Tibet. As far as I know, there has never been interreligious disharmony in Tibet although we had witnessed disputes within the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In exile, the Dalai Lama has played a crucial role in the survival of the Tibetan struggle as well as continuation of its culture and spiritual traditions. His charisma and visionary leadership are recognised throughout the world, and consequently Tibet is viewed through this lens.

I am not aware of Tibetan Muslim or Christian writers who produce secular literature, which was what I was looking for in *Under the Blue Skies*. Tibet and its people have been typecast, by and large, through a Buddhist perspective, which is not an entirely accurate representation of Tibet. The country has many different shades, some of them are subtle and yet important. Therefore, I wanted the anthology to be free from religious didactics and prevalent stereotypes.

The book is published by Blackneck Books, an imprint of TibetWrites. How does your publishing model work? Is it based on grant funding or does it depend entirely on book sales?

We have an advisory group of prominent Tibetan writers, who read sample chapters of our proposed titles. Based on their advice and feedback, we make our publication decisions. TibetWrites operates entirely on a voluntary basis. None of us get paid for what we do. Our primary goal is to promote secular creative Tibetan writing. We do get some funding for our publication projects from The Tibet Fund.

What similarities and differences do you notice between creative writing among the Tibetan diaspora living in India, Bhutan, Nepal, USA, Canada, and other countries?

I am neither a scholar nor have I done any research or studied literature for that matter, and therefore I am not in a firm position to comment on this. But some common themes displayed in their writings are exile, loss, hope and an uncertain sense of identity as they are forced to negotiate two or sometimes even more social, political and cultural realities in their daily lives.

Tenphun, who was born in Tibet and grew up in exile, writes: *"I forgot my roots / I wish, I only wish to go back to my childhood sailing paper boat"*. Lekey Leidecker, born and raised in the West, writes: *"in a long history of using / brown people at convenience / I recite Tibetan phrases / foreign to my English-immersed tongue as theirs, / At a local Quaker meeting"*. Tenzing Rigdol, born in Nepal, grew up in India and living in USA, writes: *"When I wake up, / May I find all my past to be / Just a dream – / A poetic error, A bad handwriting / A terrible comedy"*. Their writings are as different as their backgrounds, and yet a deep sense of dislocation and out-of-placeness bind them.

Being an editor of an anthology is an entirely different experience from being a poet. What do you love most about both these roles?

I like to read and write. Editing is working with words, and writing is playing with words. Editing maybe a little more logical and writing more emotional, but both are fundamentally the same vocation.

Tell us about the other projects that you are working on.

Blackneck Books published four titles last year, a novel in Tibetan called *Murder of Tenzin*, a non-fiction book called *The Tragedy of the Modom House* and two volumes of poetry – *Carrying Memories* and *Learning Tibetan*. We have two titles to be published in 2024 — a memoir and a book of poems. We have offers for a Hindi anthology of Tibetan poetry and a Spanish one too. We will have to see how they go. Otherwise, we receive proposals for individual poems that people want to translate into other languages. These are mainly for online publications and sometimes for magazines as well.

Interview with Rinzin Namgyal on Life, Tibet and the Dalai Lama

14 July 2024, [Ij- Reportika](#)

Can you share your/family's journey of moving to India and how it has influenced your professional and personal life?

I am Rinzin Namgyal, born and raised in the Phuntsokling Tibetan refugee settlement in Odisha. Our settlement comprises five camps, and both our professional and private lives are significantly influenced by societal factors rather than merely family factors, as we live in a Tibetan-concentrated refugee settlement. However, in my case, my family has played a crucial role.

My grandparents fled Tibet and entered Indian territory through Bomdila (Arunachal Pradesh border), working as road construction workers in the Kullu-Manali region. Like many early Tibetan refugees, they toiled in such jobs for their livelihood. This instilled in me a profound understanding of the hardships they

endured, as the Tibetan community started from the ashes. Their resilience remains a source of pride and inspiration for me. Additionally, my father served in the Indian Army's Special Frontier Force, a Tibetan guerrilla force established to counter the Chinese in the high Himalayan mountains. His dedication to Tibet, despite residing in India and dreaming of returning one day, has been a tremendous catalyst for me. It inspired me to pursue studies related to China, driven by a desire to contribute to my own identity and honour His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama, who is the sole leader responsible of what we are today.



How has your experience living in India shaped your views on Tibet and its geopolitical significance?

For many Tibetans entering Indian universities, identity issues often arise due to the differences from native Indian students. My perspective on Tibet has recently evolved, prompting questions such as: What if His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama were not with us tomorrow? What if the Indian government revoked our refugee status? Where would we go? Is the current Central Tibetan Administration truly self-reliant? These questions instill a sense of urgency for having our own land.

For many Tibetan students, the geopolitical significance of Tibet has recently shifted. Chinese aggression at the Indian border, environmental crises, and the consequences of irresponsible Chinese development across the Tibetan plateau—known as the world's third pole—highlight Tibet's strategic importance. This has helped forge an understanding of

Tibet's geopolitical significance, positioned at the centre of South and Central Asia, serving as a vital bridge.

EDUCATION

What motivated you to pursue an MA in East Asian Studies at Delhi University?

Since childhood, I have felt a strong sense of duty to repay what His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has given us. Privately, I have always had a keen interest in History, Politics, and International Relations. Consequently, I pursued a Bachelor's degree in History, delving into Chinese history. As I progressed to my Master's, I realised that this course (M.A EAST ASIAN STUDIES) would most appropriately serve my identity, interests, and aspirations. I also plan to pursue a PhD in China Studies in the near future.

How has your education helped you in your current roles at All India Radio and the Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives?

As a research intern at the Foundation of Non-Violent Alternatives, a public policy organisation focused on the objective study of Tibet, Tibetan affairs, and their security implications for India, I find my work both convenient and motivating. I cover topics related to Tibet, China, and Xinjiang, including recent developments in these areas since this area is also my Master's level study. FNVA provides an excellent environment for learning and growth, with colleagues who have extensive experience and insight into these fields. Moreover, I work as a Tibetan translator and announcer for All India Radio, which kept me informed about daily developments in Tibet. Overall, my work and education align perfectly, allowing me to broaden my understanding, deepen my knowledge, and continually improve.

Tibet

What are your thoughts on the current situation in Tibet, especially in light of recent developments vis a vis China-Philippines tussle in South China Sea, Taiwan issue and India-China standoffs?

The question itself implies an answer. The issues mentioned are recent developments that have come into the spotlight, yet the situation in Tibet stands in stark contrast. Since the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959, Tibet has faced a serious existential threat and is on the brink of a complete genocide of Tibetan identity through Beijing's programmes, such as colonial boarding schools, aimed at assimilating Tibetan younger generations into mainstream Han culture. However, the China-Philippines tussle, the Taiwan issue, and the India-China standoffs provide a perfect example of what Tibetans have been warning about for the past seven decades: do not feed the dragon (China) through trade. China's plan is one of expansionism and establishing a Beijing rule-based international order. The situation in Tibet is fundamentally a civilisational, sovereignty, and human

dignity issue, rather than merely a human rights issue. Given these standoffs with major Asian economies, it seems unlikely that the situation in Tibet will improve in the foreseeable future, as it clearly indicates Beijing's prioritisation of national security and expansionism.



Second International Tibet Youth Forum 3-5 July, Dharamshala

How do you see the role of international advocacy groups and policies, such as the US Resolve Tibet Act, in shaping the future of Tibet?

This is an intriguing question, as the current 16th Kashag Sikyong (President) Penpa Tsering of the Central Tibetan Administration places significant emphasis on raising awareness and forming advocacy groups. As a member of Delhi V-TAG (Volunteer Tibet Advocacy Group), we strive to raise awareness about the challenging situation in Tibet. Recently, we hosted our second International Tibet Youth Forum, aimed at educating V-TAG members worldwide on effective campaigning, lobbying, and global awareness strategies. I view such advocacy groups as the genesis of the Tibetan freedom movement, given that they consist largely of educated young people exposed to diverse cultures.

Historically, such advocacy groups have played a tremendous role in enacting legislation like the Tibet Policy and Support Act 2020 and the US Resolve Tibet Act 2024 in the United States through relentless lobbying with Congressmen. However, in Europe and India, while we continue our efforts, the level of response is lower than in the United States. These advocacy groups not only advocate but also educate on the Tibet issue, which is crucial for Tibet's future. I consider the US Resolve Tibet Act a milestone in our struggle. Firstly, it explicitly states that Tibet and China are distinct entities, reaffirms that the Tibet issue remains unresolved, and recognizes Tibet's historical regions like Gansu, Yunnan, Qinghai, and Sichuan as integral parts of Tibet. This stands as a direct challenge to the One China Policy. Such legislation has placed the Tibetan issue on a completely different platform, allowing us to advocate for both complete independence and genuine autonomy, which is our official stance. The Act has been immensely helpful in advancing our movement.

Geopolitics

What are your thoughts on the broader geopolitical dynamics involving China, Tibet, and other ethnic regions like East Turkestan?

The Chinese occupation of Tibet and East Turkestan holds significant geopolitical implications. As early as the 1950s, Indian intellectuals and statesmen like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and V.D. Savarkar warned about the profound geopolitical shifts and consequences for India. Firstly, Tibet is rich in natural resources, including critical minerals like lithium and freshwater. The Sanjiangyuan National Park in the Amdo region of Tibet (Qinghai Province) is known as the "water tower of China."

Secondly, in terms of trade, East Turkestan serves as a gateway to Central Asian countries and thereby to Europe. Beijing's strategic maneuvers through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative underscore the geopolitical significance of this region.

Thirdly, within China, there is a belief that safeguarding the peripheries (Tibet and East Turkestan) ensures the security of the core (Mainland China). Losing control over these regions would be a substantial setback for China.

How do you foresee the future of Tibet-Sino and Indo-China relations evolving in the coming years?

I firmly believe that Beijing's approach and the root of unrest in Tibet hinge solely on two factors: **INTENTION AND METHOD**. Their aim is to assimilate us and turn us into robots of the CCP, which is utterly incompatible with our centuries-old culture. Their intention is to impose uniformity rather than celebrate diversity, and their method involves harsh assimilation through the sinicisation of Tibetan population, neglecting the rights guaranteed by both the Chinese Constitution and laws on ethnic autonomy.

Our future security depends on aligning intentions and methods to reflect mutual aspirations for diversity and genuine respect. In my view, the future of Tibet-China relations rests on the CCP's intentions and methods. Correcting these can lead to the Great Unity described in Chinese classics.

The ongoing Indo-China issue is largely rooted in Tibet, as China has employed salami-slicing tactics and border aggression towards India. This situation underscores two key points: Firstly, the current border standoff reveals that historically, Tibet was an independent country, and thus, India and China did not traditionally share a border. Consequently, Chinese claims over territories stem from a lack of historical territorial understanding.

Secondly, this issue is alarming for India, prompting a reevaluation towards supporting Tibet's independence based on historical truths. Without a permanent resolution to the Tibet issue, there can be no lasting solution to India's and Bhutan's border concerns with China.

The Dalai Lama

What are your thoughts on the future of the Dalai Lama's institution, particularly concerning the selection of the next Dalai Lama?

Firstly, there is currently a span of more than 15 years since His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama himself stated, "I will live for 113 years." Additionally, many great Tibetan scholars and yogis prophesied that the 14th Dalai Lama would have the longest lifespan among all Dalai Lamas.

The continuity of the Dalai Lama institution in the future hinges entirely on the Tibetan people's desire for a 15th Dalai Lama, a sentiment frequently expressed by His Holiness himself, who is regarded as the manifestation of Tibet's patron saint, Avalokiteshvara.

Regarding the selection of the 15th Dalai Lama, it presents both a challenging and straightforward situation. Firstly, China's State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5 (July 2007) stipulates that the CCP holds the responsibility for selecting the next Dalai Lama, despite the Communist Party's atheist stance. This issue is of significant concern as it threatens the sanctity of the Dalai Lama lineage.

However, it is also straightforward because His Holiness himself stated, "If I pass away in exile (India), I will definitely be reborn in the free world (outside of Chinese-controlled territory)," emphasizing that the sole authority rests with the Dalai Lama's wishes and the Tibetan people. [Next year, as His Holiness](#), the supreme holder of the Shakya lineage, turns 90, it has long been anticipated that he will convene a conference involving high-level Tibetan Buddhist masters and bureaucrats. During this event, there will be a declaration on the next 15th Dalai Lama, accompanied by clear instructions and protocols signed by the current 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyaltso. Regarding the reincarnation process, there are two systems: one where the successor is born before the current Dalai Lama's passing (Med-Dey Tulku), and another where they are born afterward. Given the current situation in Tibet, I believe the 15th Dalai Lama will follow the Med-Dey Tulku system to ensure continuity during the regency period.

However, US legislative acts, including those concerning the 15th Dalai Lama, are a positive step in preserving the sanctity of the Dalai Lama lineage and other democratic countries should follow.

Bilateral diplomacy is a never-ending tightrope walk for India and China

14 July 2024, [The Week](#), Satarupa Bhattacharjya

Observers say Beijing and New Delhi barely talk these days.

DIPLOMACY

Sino-Indian diplomacy has seen good and bad days over the past seven decades. The bilateral relationship had experienced an intense freeze for 15 years, following the 1962 war. It plunged to a new low after Indian and Chinese soldiers were killed in a clash in the Galwan river valley in June 2020. More skirmishes, though nonfatal, have taken place since then, amid a troops build-up, in their thousands, and partial pullback. Despite a series of military meetings, the standoff in certain parts of the border continues, with major implications for foreign policy.

Diplomacy is struggling. The lack of direct flights, suspended four years ago, is an indication. Indian observers of Sino-Indian relations said Beijing and New Delhi barely talked these days. Chinese analysts said back channels of communication should be opened.

In his message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 11 to congratulate him on his election victory, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said, "China is willing to work with India to push forward bilateral relations in the right direction." India wants to talk about "border issues" with China, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told the media after the new government was formed.

Diplomacy is struggling. The lack of direct flights, suspended four years ago, is an indication. Indian observers said Beijing and New Delhi barely talked these days.

China views the decades-long dispute as a "leftover problem" of British colonialism and wants to go about business as usual in other areas such as trade, where it exports a lot more than it imports (India's trade deficit was nearly \$85 billion in 2023-24). India wants a return to status quo—as things were before mid-2020—along the Line of Actual Control. China's new ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, arrived in April. The 18-month delay in his appointment was the longest for the post since relations were normalised after the war. "The boundary question won't be settled overnight. We need to talk, but China needs to undo its attempt to change facts on the ground," said Ashok Kantha, who was India's ambassador to China from 2014 to 2016. Ma Jiali, director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at China Reform Forum, a Beijing think tank, said boundary was not the only issue, and that China and India could discuss economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, and finding common ground on international issues, such as energy security, climate

change and regional peace. “Disengagement or deployment depends on the ground situation, but also on political relations.”

India’s concerns include the very uneven economic relationship. Trade deficit aside, a reliance on Chinese imports and the limited market access for Indian companies in China are other concerns. Post-pandemic, the global supply chain issues have shown that “you can’t be too dependent on one country”, said Kantha. Added to that are current concerns about the Chinese economy and geopolitics.

India has been working on the securitisation of its economic interests. The government changed India’s foreign direct investment policy in April 2020. Now, prior approval for foreign investments from countries sharing a land border with India is mandatory. While India shares land borders with several countries, the measure impacts China the most. Chinese investment in India has declined in recent years alongside the government crackdown on businesses. Chinese smartphone companies were sponsoring cricket in India not so long ago.

Andy Mok, senior research fellow at the Beijing-based Centre for China and Globalisation, said trade was a bright spot, despite the challenges. “Tackling market access barriers and ensuring fair regulations can cultivate a better trade relationship.”

A ‘Leading Small Group’ is a body of the Communist Party of China that directs foreign policy. Such groups tasked with policy recommendations have become prominent during President Xi Jinping’s tenure. The ministry of foreign affairs follows the guidelines in managing policy. In India, the parliamentary standing committee on foreign affairs, with MPs from different political parties, has a substantial say in foreign policy, while the ministry of external affairs runs the show in coordination with the prime minister’s office.

“Unlike India, the Chinese system is opaque in terms of the implementation of foreign policy,” said Srikanth Kondapalli, professor of China studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Revelations seldom come even years later if Chinese leaders publish their memoirs. They rarely share personal anecdotes from their time on the job or opinion on policy.

China’s foreign policy at the moment is defined by expansive territorial claims that it is pushing hard to secure, said Ian Chong, who teaches Chinese politics at the National University of Singapore. China and India are major geopolitical actors. “To the extent that their interests diverge, there will be friction, as indeed we have seen over disputed parts of their border,” said Chong.

The foreign policy objectives for both, as with many other countries, are dealing with the effects of de-globalisation, tensions in US-China relations and the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. “India and China are trying to keep their moorings intact, while putting

their national interests in the forefront,” said Alka Acharya, professor of East Asian studies at JNU. China has criticised the Quad, or the quadrilateral security grouping of the US, Japan, Australia and India, as a bloc aimed to contain its rise. For India, China’s power assertions in South Asia and its closeness with Pakistan have been hard to ignore.

Beijing and New Delhi want the relationship to stabilise, but they must talk and negotiate, said Qian Feng, director of research at the National Strategy Institute, Tsinghua University, Beijing. “Chinese decision-makers definitely see India as a power.” The growth of the Indian economy is not the only reason. Singapore, for instance, has been economically strong for long, but it is a city state and enjoys good relations with China, said Qian. India is a country of 1.4 billion people and its foreign policy is perceived to be autonomous.

Kantha said Quad was not an Asian version of NATO. Besides, India is a major player in groupings with China, such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. “China is not supportive of India’s rise,” he said. A permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has been scuttling India’s bid for a seat at the table. The other four—the US, France, Britain and Russia—have offered India their support.

Both a common and a complex factor in India-China relations is Russia. China and Russia share what they call a “limitless partnership”, more pronounced since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and cemented further following western sanctions against Russia for invading Ukraine in 2022. “This is the new international model,” Qian said of Sino-Russian relations.

India-Russia relations go back in history. India has diversified its defence imports over the years, yet trade with Russia has continued in other sectors. China and India have emerged as the biggest importers of Russian oil. India, which has a smaller trade deficit with Russia, is wary of at least one aspect of the China-Russia relationship. “India is against the transfer of strategic technology from Russia to China. It could be passed on to Pakistan,” Kondapalli said. These include the S-400 air defence system, which is among the world’s most advanced technologies.

Russia supplies weapons to India, China and some other countries. China is Pakistan’s main supplier. At its peak in 2005, China accounted for 60 per cent of all Russian deliveries of major weapons. But that share has fallen to 10 per cent since 2010. After difficult negotiations, Russia and China moved to a new level of arms trade in 2015, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute that tracks defence export and import around the world. “We have concerns about Russia-China relations and the sale of arms to Pakistan. China is aware of our concerns,” Kantha said.

Sino-Russian relations have come a long way since the Sino-Soviet split, but are not without questions. China has given an old Chinese name to the Russian far eastern city of Vladivostok, and other Chinese names to seven Russian locations near its border, in its official documents. "President Vladimir Putin doesn't protest because he needs Xi's blessings," Kondapalli said. Chinese presence has also increased in the vast resource-rich Russian region of Siberia.

In the early 1990s, China and Russia began to demilitarise their shared border and resolved the disputes within the next decade. "Emulating the China-Russia model of overcoming historical tensions could be similarly advantageous for India," said Mok. "But it requires pragmatism."

It's time for India to revise its voice on Tibet

14 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

This is a quick rebut of the article 'It's time for India to reclaim its voice on Tibet' by Suhasini Haidar published in *The Hindu* on June 27, 2024. For the unenlightened, the article was a polemic on the US delegation that arrived at Dharamsala on Jun 18. Given that it was written after a lapse of some days of the event, the piece sure is a well-meditated one. However, one could not, try as hard as one may, fail to go away with the feeling that the structuring of the arguments and articulation of the narrative is dilettantish. The following scrutiny of selected arguments put forward in the article would prove it so.

The US taking centre stage in India on the issue of Tibet is not a reflection of weakness on India's part. If at all, it shows the strength of India in allowing the US to do it. And as for the US, coming to Dharamsala is the only path to take. They cannot go to Tibet for obvious reasons and Dharamsala is where the instrumentalities of the exiled Tibetan political system are located. As for the 'carefully calibrated foreign policy narrative on Tibet', the author is missing the wood for the tree. It is easy to see that the whole exercise is laid out to spin the narrative out of control while still retaining control.

What is more surprising is that a seemingly seasoned political commentator is choosing to equate humanitarian aid with political aid. Indeed, there is no other country in this world more gracious and grandfatherly to the Tibetan people than India. However, India has been tone-deaf when it comes to countless pleas for political support as is known to all and sundry.

As for the claim by the author that India has formulated its stand on the Tibet issue informed by its sensitivities on sovereignty and territorial integrity, India never had any compulsion to condone the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the first place. On the contrary, it had all the strategic reasons to not allow a

Chinese advance on Tibet. It is one of the greatest mysteries of modern geo-politics as to why India looked the other way while its small neighbour was ravaged. Even worse, after recognising Tibet as a part of China subsequently, India unwittingly ceded or at least created grounds for ceding the erstwhile sphere of influence of political Tibet to China. The claims on parts of Arunachal Pradesh and some areas in Ladakh by China are on behalf of Tibet. China never had any border with India throughout history until the Faustian bargain was made.

And the fear that India is being relegated to the backseat in the Tibet issue is unfounded. When you are either not in a condition or inclined to drive the car, having a good driver take over is not such a bad idea. The obtained geo-political stands and standings necessitate such a manoeuvring. As a political commentator, the author should have known this unless she has chosen not to. As for the charge of superfluosness of the event, the delegates have come to interface with the elected leaders of the exile government, meeting His Holiness is a courtesy call in an official capacity and spiritual quest in the personal capacity of the members of the delegates.

Lastly, the argument that India is getting 'bigfooted' by the US because the US is being readily accommodative and obliging to Tibetan people is disingenuous at so many levels. The 17th Karmapa was left with no option but to move to the US in the aftermath of the currency notes episode. As for the succession issue, this is an issue that His Holiness and the Tibetan people would tackle when they get to that bridge. The best that the rest of the world can do is cheerlead the process. Moreover, the larger US-China contestation would be at the forefront of global geopolitics for the foreseeable future. There is hardly anything to be gained by being envious of it.

Last-gasp bid to use Dalai Lama to destabilize China

14 July 2024, [China Daily](#), Yan Yongshan

On Friday local time, US President Joe Biden signed a controversial bill related to Xizang, continuing the United States' practice of using domestic legislation to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. This new legislation, however, goes further than previous efforts by introducing the claim that Xizang's sovereignty is unresolved, denying the historical fact that Xizang has been part of China since ancient times. This move raises serious questions about the US' commitment to the rules-based international order it claims to uphold. Why has the US, disregarding historical facts and international consensus, decided to flagrantly violate its own longstanding position on Xizang?

First, the US aims to use this unresolved sovereignty narrative as a strategic tool to revitalize its failing strategy of using Xizang to pressure China. Historically, Western powers like the United Kingdom and the US have manipulated issues like Xizang to serve their colonial interests. The so-called Xizang issue emerged from this colonial context. Even today, the West clings to the illusion of separating Xizang from China, using it as a tactic to tarnish, accuse and destabilize China. As China's peaceful development continues, the traditional US strategy of using Xizang against China is proving increasingly ineffective. Hence, in a desperate move, the US has unveiled this new narrative, directing its administrative bodies to promote it, revealing its ambition to intensify pressure on China and coerce other nations to join its stance.

Second, the US is seeking to extract the last remnants of value from the Dalai Lama and his followers. As the Dalai Lama ages and his clique's influence wanes due to internal divisions and the increasing fragmentation of the "Tibetan independence activists", the push for "Tibet independence" is weakening. Both the West and the Dalai Lama's clique see this as a last-ditch effort. Biden's timing of signing the bill during the Dalai Lama's visit to the US for medical treatment underscores this is the final pitch to use the Dalai Lamato serve US interests.

Third, the US is hoping to use this narrative to undermine China's unity and stability. The malign nature of the unresolved sovereignty claim lies in its intention to deconstruct the historical reality of China. The West avoids acknowledging its own history of coveting, instigating division, and even militarily invading Tibet, instead fabricating various falsehoods about its historical status as part of China. These falsehoods are intended to sow confusion and division. This strategy of inciting regional secession was previously used to destabilize the Soviet Union and is now being attempted against China.

The facts are clear: the West talks about the "Tibet issue", but they have never genuinely cared about the Tibetan people.

Xizang has been a part of China since ancient times, a fact that is supported by the historical evidence. The US disregards these facts to serve its own agenda. But history cannot be rewritten, and the truth is more powerful than repeated lies. Xizang's historical status as part of China is undeniable and cannot be negated by any country's legislation.

The integrated development of the Chinese nation demonstrates that Xizang's historical status as part of China is irrefutable. China's historical records clearly delineate its territorial integrity. The close genetic, archaeological and linguistic ties between the Tibetan and Han peoples further affirm this. Historical documents, such as the inscriptions at Jokhang Temple, vividly capture the longstanding unity

between Xizang and other provinces in China. These historical facts are unassailable.

The historical relationship between successive central governments and Tibet's local authorities underscores its unquestionable legal status as part of China. From the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) onwards, various central governments have exerted effective administration over Tibet in different ways. Historical documents, in both Tibetan and Chinese records, provide unequivocal evidence of this relationship.

The continuous interactions and integrations among the various ethnic groups within China have formed an inseparable national community. Throughout history, the Tibetan people have stood alongside other Chinese ethnic groups, showcasing unity and resilience against foreign invasions and contributing to the nation's collective strength. This unity cannot be invalidated by any foreign legislation.

In conclusion, the recent US legislation related with Xizang is not only a blatant interference in China's internal affairs but also a misguided attempt to rewrite history and destabilize China. But the historical and factual reality of Xizang as an integral part of China stands firm, beyond the reach of any external political maneuvering.

The Resolve Tibet Act and Its Implications for Tibet-China Relation

13 July 2024, [Tibet Rights Collective](#)

In a significant development enhancing U.S. support for Tibet, President Joe Biden signed into law the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" (S. 138), commonly known as the "Resolve Tibet Act," shortly after Nancy Pelosi's visit to Dharamsala. This legislative move underscores the United States' commitment to advocating for human rights and preserving the distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage of Tibetans, amidst longstanding geopolitical tensions with China.

Background and Legislative Journey

The Resolve Tibet Act represents a bipartisan effort to address the Tibet-China dispute. Passed by the House of Representatives in February and clearing the Senate in May, the Act signals a robust legislative response to the Tibetan plight. Despite China's vehement opposition and its characterization of the Act as destabilizing, the U.S. has proceeded with this significant policy shift.

Key Provisions and Strategic Implications

The Act does not alter the established U.S. policy recognizing the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, it substantially enhances U.S. support for Tibet by empowering State Department officials to actively counter Chinese disinformation about Tibet.

The legislation unequivocally rejects the Chinese narrative that Tibet has been an integral part of China since ancient times. Instead, it advocates for direct, unconditional negotiations between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, emphasizing the need for a peaceful resolution.

Historical Context and Diplomatic Efforts

The Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 and established a government-in-exile in Dharamshala, India, has long been at the center of the Tibet-China dialogue. Between 2002 and 2010, his representatives engaged in nine rounds of dialogue with the Chinese government, which failed to yield any concrete outcomes. The Act's provision for renewed dialogue aims to rekindle these efforts and foster a negotiated settlement.

China's Stance and International Response

China's reaction to the Act has been predictably hostile. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian warned against destabilizing actions and reaffirmed China's resolve to defend its sovereignty. Concurrently, the U.S. State Department imposed visa restrictions on several Chinese officials implicated in the repression of marginalized religious and ethnic communities, citing ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Tibet.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller emphasized that the PRC has not upheld its commitments to respect human rights, as evidenced by documented abuses in these regions. The U.S. continues to call for China to adhere to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to unconditionally release arbitrarily detained individuals.

Conclusion

The Resolve Tibet Act represents a pivotal moment in U.S. foreign policy towards Tibet. By reinforcing support for Tibetan rights and calling for renewed dialogue, the Act seeks to address a long-standing geopolitical conflict through peaceful means. This legislative measure not only enhances the U.S.'s strategic posture but also aligns with broader international human rights advocacy, positioning the United States as a key player in the quest for a just and negotiated resolution to the Tibet-China dispute.

Will Tibet Be Independent One Day?

11 July 2024, [The Citizen](#), K.P. Fabian

China moved its troops into Tibet in October 1950. The author conceived 'Imperial Games In Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty' eight years ago and delivered it over a period of five years, as I learnt from him during a morning walk. He is blessed with lucidity of style and brevity, a rather rare combination these days.

I read the book practically non-stop despite the names of places and persons in China, rather difficult for many non-Chinese readers to recall easily. The central thesis is that Tibet deserved independence as a state and lost it because of the imperial games played by China, Britain, and Russia- Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union. The role played by independent India also comes under scrutiny. The introduction is followed by 12 chapters, with the last termed appropriately an epilogue. The historical overview in the introduction recounts briefly the genesis of "The Great Game" between Russia and Britain played out in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tibet. As far as Tibet was concerned London wanted to prevent Russia from gaining any undue influence there. Therefore, London invented 'suzerainty' of China over Tibet and later asserted that China had sovereignty over Tibet. Lord Curzon as Viceroy had a different approach, but London practically overruled him.

The author narrates the rather complex history of Tibet in chapter 1 titled "Tibet: Monastic Heights". In Tibet they call their country "Bod". The word 'Tibet' comes from 'Tubbat', a term used "by Tibet's "neighbors -the Turks, Iranians, and Arabs", possibly derived from 'To Bo' which can be translated as Upper Tibet.

The Chinese call it 'Tufan' and Indians call it 'Tibbat'. The reader would appreciate the meticulous approach of the author. The Tibetan calendar starts from 127 BCE, the date of accession of the first king-Nyatri Tsembo. Buddhism was introduced by King Songtsen Gampo who attacked northern India and defeated King Arjuna of Kannauj. Arjuna had succeeded Harshavardhana, a famous patron of Buddhism. During Harshavardhana's reign the famous Chinese Buddhist scholar Xuanzang, known in India as Hiuen Tsang, had come as a pilgrim to India. Arjuna was antipathetic to Buddhism and during his reign Wang Hiuen-Tse, a Buddhist scholar sent by the Chinese Emperor and a 31-member team were killed. That was the provocation for King Songtsen Gampo's attack. We conclude that Buddhism reached Tibet in the 7th Century CE. Tibet's contact with China also occurred in the 7th Century CE by way of a matrimonial alliance. While Tibetans acknowledge that Buddhism came from India, we should note that the Chinese claim that it was a princess from China married into the Tibetan royal family who brought it to Tibet. China claims to have had contacts with Tibet from time immemorial, even though proper evidence is lacking. Chapter 7 "Britain and Tibet: Forcing Trade" starts with the skirmishes between British India and Bhutan, after the 1757 Battle of Plassey. Tibet claimed that Bhutan was its tributary state. Thus started the interface between British India and Tibet. Governor General Warren Hastings sent his Scottish

private secretary George Bogle to Tibet primarily to explore trade possibilities. He met the Panchen Lama who promised to transmit the proposal for trade to the emperor in Beijing as China had forbidden Tibet from dealing directly with foreign powers. Panchen Lama went to meet the emperor, caught smallpox, and died in China. We do not know whether he got permission to do trade with British India. Chapter 9 "An Independent Tibet" gives an in depth account of the 1913-1914 Simla Conference that begat the McMahon line, named after Lt. Col Henry McMahon who as foreign secretary led the delegation of British India. The reader would note that despite Tibet's determined efforts neither Britain nor China took seriously Tibet's claim to Independence. If recognition by peers is an essential ingredient of Independence, Tibet was not independent even though the Chinese had been expelled in 1912 following the fall of the Manchu dynasty. The most interesting part of the book is how independent India addressed the crisis in Tibet following the attack by the People's Republic of China. There is a general impression that Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru could have done more to help Tibet retain its independence. The author does not fully support that impression. China moved its troops into Tibet in October 1950. The author draws attention to the internal discussions in Delhi and the famous letter dated 7th November 1950 from Deputy Prime Minister Patel to Nehru. Patel described China's action as "little short of perfidy" and pointed out that India had let down Tibet. Nehru wanted to sit down and discuss the matter with Patel. Unfortunately, Patel breathed his last on 15th December 1950 before they could meet. Much has been made of this letter in the literature on India's foreign policy in the Nehru years. The gist of the criticism of Nehru's policy has been that he was a starry-eyed idealist whereas Patel was a sturdy realist with a firm grip on the ground realities. Let us listen to Foreign Secretary Maharajkrishna Rasgotra who joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1949. He was present at the creation of the service. In his book, *A Life in Diplomacy*, he says that a good deal of what Nehru did about Tibet had to be kept secret, not even put on file, and if Patel had known all that Nehru was doing, "perhaps the latter's famous letter" would not have been written. Rasgotra believes that the letter was drafted by Sir Girija Shanker Bajpai, Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs. This reviewer was personally told by Sir Girija's son, Ambassador Katyayani Shanker Bajpai, that his father drafted the letter. It is well known that India did not support Tibet's application to join the United Nations as a member-state. What is not generally known is that, as Rasgotra points out, Nehru had sent two special envoys to Tibet, the first immediately after India became independent, to persuade the members

of the Kashag- the ruling council- to apply for United Nations membership. The envoys spent weeks in Lhasa, to no avail. Nehru did not take into confidence India's representative in Lhasa, an Englishman. The key question is: What could India have done to save Tibet from China's aggression? Ambassador Vinod C. Khanna says in commenting on this book, "Debates will continue about the manner in which Nehru handled the problem but the question remains: Would any other decision by him have prevented the takeover of Tibet by the very determined and powerful China?" We all know that the Indian army defending Jammu & Kashmir was in no position to take on the People's Liberation Army. There is a record somewhere, I cannot recall right now, that when asked by Jawaharlal Nehru, General Cariappa, the Army chief, made it clear that he could not spare more than two battalions. Ambassador Sinha has made an irrefutably strong case for Tibet's right to Independence. Let us hope that this book will be read in China and that at least in the republic of letters there will be a consensus for Tibet to regain full autonomy, if not Independence. The imperial games at the cost of human rights and the right to self-determination of a people must be curbed. Who knows, one day Tibet might be independent.

Tibet And Its Position In The India-China-US Geopolitical Triangle

11 July 2024, [OWP](#), Sapna Suresh

On June 19, 2024, a bipartisan Congressional delegation went to India and met the Dalai Lama. The members of Congress included republican Michael McChaul and democrat speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. When addressing a crowd at the monastery the members insisted that their visit was part of the Resolve Tibet Act. Passed by Congress the week before, this act aims to promote dialogue between Tibet and Beijing for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

In response, the Chinese government criticized this visit and Lin Jian, the spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, said that the President must not sign the bill into law. He instead insisted that "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."

Tibet is a Buddhist-majority region, known as the "roof of the world" due to the region's high mountain peaks. China argues that Tibet has been an "inalienable" part of China since the 13th century when the Yuan Dynasty was in power. Crucially, the KMT (Chiang Kai Shek's party) shares the CCP's position on Tibet. Hence, it is worth asking that in the event the CCP is ousted from power and replaced with the non-communists (as many in Washington desire,) Xinjiang

and many issues related to territorial integrity and sovereignty would change.

However, by contrast, the Tibetans insist that during that time, China was under a Mongol dynasty (Yuan) or a Manchu dynasty (Qing), rather than a (Han) Chinese Empire, and that Tibet was merely a protectorate in which it was allowed considerable autonomy. In 1913, after the Qing state ended, Tibet declared independence and became a de facto independent state.

In 1949, Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China (PRC) and in 1950, the PRC asserted its claims on Tibet. A year later, the Tibetans signed the Seventeen Point Agreement with Beijing, in which it said that the Chinese government would respect local Tibetan religion and customs, but in exchange, China would have a military base in Lhasa – the capital of Tibet.

Nevertheless, despite the treaty, tensions have persisted between Tibet and Beijing and many Tibetans report experiencing severe cultural repression, with some deeming it a genocide akin to the Uyghurs. Consequently, the "Free Tibet Movement," a non-state civil society organization, has played a role internationally by criticizing China's human rights abuses, demanding more autonomy, and pressuring China by boycotting Chinese goods. This was the group that organized protests when Xi Jinping visited France in May 2024.

Perhaps most importantly, Tibet has played a critical role in shaping China's relations with India and the US. In 1952, the Indians recognized Tibet as a part of China. In 1954, India and China signed an agreement which restricted India's relations with Tibet which ceased trading and travelling without a visa. Since, Indian maps illustrate Tibet as a Chinese territory, reflective of a time when India sought to have cordial relations with Beijing during the early 1950s. However, in 1959, a rebellion arose in Tibet known as the Lhasa Rebellion. New Delhi gave asylum to the Dalai Lamas along with other Tibetan refugees. This move created a suspicion in Beijing that India had a role in the uprising and wanted to destabilize China. Also during this time, the C.I.A. funnelled money into the Dalai Lama to support activities against Beijing. The logic behind aiding Tibet was to gain access to developments inside China, reminiscent of how the U.S. spied on the Soviet Union by entering through Central Asia. Consequently, the Chinese accused the Indians of aiding the Americans in funding anti-Chinese activities in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama's fleeing to India only added to China's paranoia. Hence, many scholars and historians argue that Tibet was one of the many factors that led to the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

While most scholars agree that India was aware of this program, they differ on whether India actively aided the US. However, according to Bruce Riedel's (a

nonresident senior fellow at The Brookings Institution) book, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War*, it was Pakistan that provided support to the Americans. While aware that such a program existed, India did not provide any support to the Americans itself.

Nevertheless, despite the covert or overt support Washington and New Delhi gave to Lhasa, the priority for India and the U.S. has been to advance their interests, not the interests of Tibet.

In 1972, after the U.S. and China pursued normalization, the U.S. ended its support to the Tibetans and gradually, the U.S. reframed the Tibet issue as an issue of human rights abuses, rather than a demand for Tibetan independence. Additionally, in 2009, to maintain cordial relations with Beijing, Valerie Jarrett, a senior advisor for President Obama, went to China and emphasized that they wouldn't invite the Dalai Lama to the White House in Obama's first year. When he ultimately visited, he was given a downgraded treatment.

Later, during the Trump administration, an American official visited Tibet. However, this visit was less about the concern for the Tibetans (considering Trump's aversion to advancing "human rights") but rather, a politicization of the Tibetan issue at a time when US-China relations were fraught due to disagreement on trade issues. Likewise, despite the recent bill and the Congressional visit, the Tibet issue will eventually be sidelined when US-China relations stabilize.

This approach to Tibet is reminiscent of Washington's position towards the Iraqi Kurds. During the 1960s, the Americans (along with the Israelis and Iranians) gave secret support to the Iraqi Kurds to fight against Saddam Hussein's government. However, by 1975, as the Iranians eased tensions with the Iraqis, support ceased. Hence, as with the Tibetans, the U.S. has used the Kurdish issue to advance its geopolitical interests in the Middle East.

Likewise, Tibet has also been sidelined when New Delhi wants to reduce tensions with Beijing. In 2018, the Modi government issued a warning against any participation. This was to commemorate 60 years of the Dalai Lama's exile, a "sensitive time" in India-China relations. Two months later, Modi met Xi Jinping in Wuhan at a time when the BJP government sought to reduce tensions with China.

Recently, the Indian government publicly announced plans to rename approximately 30 sites in Tibet in retaliation to China renaming 62 locations in Arunachal Pradesh (or as China calls it "South Tibet.") According to an unnamed Indian analyst, this move had more to do with placating the public to look "tough" on China, rather than a substantive policy change.

Importantly, even with the recent Congressional visit, the Indian government reaffirmed its position that the

Dalai Lama isn't a political figure but a "revered religious figure." Interestingly, while the Chinese criticized the Americans, there wasn't any criticism of New Delhi, perhaps fearing further Indian cooperation with the Americans.

Going forward, the way to aid Tibetans is not to rely on the governments of Washington, New Delhi, or any other state official of another country. Rather, the best way to aid Tibetans is to increase people-to-people contact and to treat them as a human issue, rather than a (geo)political problem.

The Dalai Lama's revenge: the high fertility of Tibetans in China

11 July 2024, [Mercator](#), William Huang

The Tibetan struggle is one of the best-known resistance movements in the West, largely thanks to the fame of the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Ever since the Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa to India after the 1959 uprising, China has faced worldwide criticism of its myriad human rights abuses and colonising practices in Tibet. One of the most serious is allegations of ethnic cleansing, as ethnic Han migrants enter Tibetan majority regions and the demographic makeup changes.

However, one of the most important factors in demographic change, fertility, is seldom highlighted by outside observers of the Tibetan question.

In this article, using data obtained from the 2020 Chinese census and reported nowhere else, we look at how Tibetans are faring in the age of ultra-low fertility across China and East Asia, and why their relatively higher fertility levels may offer a rare light of hope in the region.

The TAR

Tibetans live in a large, sparsely populated area spanning millions of square kilometres in five provincial-level administrations of China. The core area, namely the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), or Xizang in Mandarin, only contains around half of the ethnic Tibetan population in China.

The other half of the seven million Tibetans currently residing in China are scattered in four other provinces: Yunnan, Gansu, Sichuan, and Qinghai.

When we look at fertility levels in this article, we will only examine the TAR as the writer has managed to obtain detailed statistics of the region's 2020 census results, and also because in the modern Chinese political sense, "Tibet" only refers to the autonomous region itself, not the other Tibetan majority areas.

Let us examine the Tibet Autonomous Region's data. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China's 2020 census data, Tibetans make up 86 percent of the autonomous region's total population of 3.648 million. Han Chinese only make up

around 12.2 percent and are heavily concentrated in a few major urban centres of the TAR, especially the capital, Lhasa, where half of all Han Chinese in Tibet reside.

This means that the rural fertility rate in Tibet would directly correlate with the rural ethnic Tibetan fertility rate, and the urban fertility rate of Tibetans would only be higher than the urban TFR of the region, since Han Chinese migrants are known to have lower TFR than the Tibetans.

Stark contrast

So, what is the fertility rate of the Tibetans? In 2020, the Tibet Autonomous Region had a total fertility rate of 1.926, which is the third highest in the nation after two other provinces with large ethnic minority populations, Guangxi and Guizhou. This is quite close to the replacement level of 2.1 and, by Chinese standards, is extremely high.

If we further break this down to rural Tibet, the 2020 census statistics indicate that rural Tibetans have a total fertility rate of 2.363. This should be regarded as a largely accurate reflection of ethnic Tibetan fertility, as they make up more than 95 percent of the rural TAR population. This high TFR level is in stark contrast to the TFR rate in urban areas of the TAR (largely dominated by Lhasa) of only 0.87 and the TFR in peri-urban/suburban town areas, which is 1.63.

In the TAR, 64 percent of the population still live in rural areas, therefore the rural fertility rate remains the key factor in deciding the TFR of the whole region. However, urbanisation is continuing in the TAR at a rapid pace, with the rural population percentage plummeting from 77 percent in 2010 to less than two-thirds in 2020. This urbanisation trend is largely encouraged by the Chinese government, and also spells trouble for the ethnic Tibetan fertility rate as rural Tibetans become urbanised and more assimilated, leading to further fertility declines.

We can further break down the Tibetan fertility statistics by the seven main prefectures of Tibet. As the capital, Lhasa is only 70 percent Tibetan and 27 percent Han Chinese, with more and more Han Chinese migrants arriving and diluting the ever-decreasing Tibetan majority. Since these Han Chinese migrants generally have much lower fertility, this means that Lhasa's fertility, at 1.06, is also the lowest in the whole of the TAR. Chengguan district, the Han Chinese-dominated central urban area of Lhasa, only registered a TFR of 0.772, which is on par with South Korea.

However, most of the other prefectures in Tibet have large ethnic Tibetan supermajorities, with Nagqu being 96.9 percent Tibetan, Shigatse 95 percent Tibetan and Changdu 93 percent Tibetan. These prefectures have double, if not triple, the TFR of Lhasa. In Shigatse, which by population is the second largest prefecture in the TAR, the TFR is 2.42, with several

counties within Shigatse bordering Nepal, such as Bainang and Tingri, having TFRs above 3. Nagqu's TFR is 2.59, with Lhari County, the birthplace of both candidates to the current Panchen Lama throne, registering an ultra-high TFR of 3.5.

Lhari County also has an extraordinary feat — the rural parts of this county have a TFR of 4.15, which is undoubtedly a record in present-day East Asia (and even South Asia).

This is unheard of in China and is presumably the highest TFR in the entire country. Changdu has a TFR of 2.3 and also has counties with TFRs above 3 or approaching 3.

Final bastion

What about the other Tibetan prefectures with smaller Tibetan majorities? Again, it is very noticeable how the Han Chinese migration and urbanisation affect and lower fertility.

Nyingchi, in Tibet's east and bordering India's Arunachal Pradesh, an area also claimed by China, has become heavily settled with Han Chinese migrants, as the Han Chinese percentage jumped from 17.3 percent ten years ago to 24.7 percent in 2020. Nyingchi had a TFR of 1.89, still very high by Chinese standards, but lower than the TAR average and also much lower than the Tibetan supermajority areas.

Based on these above statistics, it is clear that ethnic Tibetans, especially rural Tibetans, have some of the highest fertility and natural growth rates in the entire country. These rural people still form the majority of both the ethnic Tibetan and TAR populations and will become vital lifeblood to the demographic health and future of the Tibetans.

Moreover, as ethnic Tibetan refugee populations in India and Nepal continue to dwindle due to much lower fertility rates and high emigration rates to Western countries, ethnic Tibetans living in the motherland will form the last bastion of hope for the continuity of the Tibetan population. Currently they still maintain a fertility advantage double to triple that of the Han settlers, and this will continue for the foreseeable future. This is vital to ensuring that the TAR will continue to retain a Tibetan majority.

Ethnic Tibetans in the TAR are also performing much better than their cultural and religious brethren in neighbouring Bhutan, Sikkim and Ladakh. Bhutan, a country known for its happiness and mysteriousness, shares a cultural and religious heritage with Tibet. Its TFR has dropped to around 1.86 in 2023 and is now a major source of concern to its royal family.

Sikkim and Ladakh are faring far worse – in Ladakh for 2019-2021, the TFR is only 1.3, whilst Sikkim had a pathetic 1.1, and the government there is desperately trying to boost birth rates.

Despite all odds, ethnic Tibetans, especially the 2.5 million rural Tibetans in the TAR, continue to have above replacement rate TFRs and, in some cases, ultra-

high fertility rates. This is a very fortunate fact, and hopefully, the Tibetan people can continue to maintain this demographic advantage, which will help them greatly in their decades-long fight for freedom.

How a US act revived Sino-Indian confrontation over Tibet

10 July 2024, [The Daily Star](#), M Sakhawat Hussain

On June 12, 2024, both houses of US Congress passed a bipartisan bill called "Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act," better known as "Resolve Tibet Act." The act calls on China to find a "peaceful settlement" to the 65-year-old Tibet issue through dialogue with the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who is in exile in Dharamshala, India. The Dalai Lama was rescued from Lhasa to India in March 1959, when Chinese troops were about to take over the Tibetan capital. He still heads a "Tibetan Government in Exile," based in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, despite strong Chinese disapproval.

Almost six decades after the Sino-Indian war over the Tibetan border issue and the Dalai Lama's ambivalent stand on Tibet's sovereignty, the US' Resolve Tibet Act would certainly bring the issue out of historical obscurity. The issue was thought to have been frozen after the China-US rapprochement and the US' acceptance of the One-China policy in 1972, while India is also said to have reconciled with the claim that Tibet is an integral part of China.

The issue was settled to an extent when China reconciled with India's takeover of Sikkim, considered one of the five fingers of Tibet, during the visit of India's late Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1979. But China never gave up its claim over outer Tibet including Aksai Chin, Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh—declared as one of the five fingers of Tibet by Mao Zedong—in the northeast.

Since its creation in 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has denied the outcome of the Shimla Convention of 1914, which was attended by representatives of autonomous Tibet and the Republic of China (ROC). Though the ROC attended the meeting, it refused to endorse the border agreement, claiming that the entire Tibet had historically belonged to China and would always remain an integral part of it.

The India-China dispute particularly centred on the western border in Eastern Ladakh, involving Aksai Chin—with there being controversy over the acceptance of the Macartney-MacDonald Line versus the Johnson Line. PRC claimed the Karakoram watershed line to be the correct dividing line, rejecting India's claim based on the Johnson Line further to the east. During his official visit to India in 1960, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai refused to adjust the border along the Karakoram Range in exchange for recognition of

the McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh. This refusal, despite efforts by then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, regarding the Tibet and Dalai Lama issue, dashed hopes for a peaceful settlement between the two governments.

The complex relationship soured not only over the border dispute but was compounded by the involvement of CIA, India and Pakistan in the Tibet uprising and the extrication of the Dalai Lama, primarily facilitated by India, which provided him refuge. As a result, what began as an exemplary third-world relationship between China and India soon turned bitter.

These issues were central to the 1962 Sino-Indian war, in which India suffered defeat in both Aksai Chin in the west and Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The events of the war remain ingrained in the Indian psyche and continue to influence its military strategy and geopolitics. China unilaterally withdrew from Arunachal Pradesh but retained control over Aksai Chin. And the Chinese claim over outer Tibet in Arunachal Pradesh remains a contentious issue.

During that war, India faced significant supply and troop deployment issues on the northeast through the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the Chicken's Neck. East Pakistan at that time stood in the way of any alternative supply route to the Chicken's Neck. And it's worth noting that China was increasing its presence at Nathula Pass in Sikkim and the Namka Chu Pass in Tawang region, posing a threat to the Siliguri Corridor between Tetulia, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

India learned an important lesson about its strategic handicap, vis-à-vis Arunachal Pradesh, which could be a flashpoint in any Sino-Indian conflict. But things have changed drastically since 1962, and both countries are now nuclear powers. And yet, reports indicate that both have heavily militarised along the McMahon Line, especially after the Sino-Indian Doklam standoff on the Sikkim-Bhutan border.

Chinese presence in Doklam makes it easier to threaten the corridor in the event of a wider conflict. Therefore, India's strategic pursuit of alternatives, such as the Kaladan route, is insufficient due to its longer and more perilous journey. And so, the other obvious alternative being talked about in many leading Indian newspapers is through Bangladesh.

While the US was in the process of enacting the Resolve Tibet Act, China issued a new official map showing the entire Arunachal Pradesh as being a part of Tibet, changing its name to Xizang. What is interesting is that, within a week of the Act passing on June 18, a bipartisan seven member US Congressional delegation visited Dharamshala and met with the Dalai Lama.

Moreover, the act says 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." And that, "United States public diplomacy efforts should counter disinformation about Tibet from the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party, including disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama." It further calls on China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama's government in exile.

After meeting the Dalai Lama, the US delegation also visited India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fact that the Indian PM decided to meet with the US delegation sends a clear message to China as regards to India's position. Predictably, the delegation's visit drew angry responses from the Chinese authorities, who view the act as interfering with China's internal matters.

Given these circumstances, it's important to ask where Bangladesh stands in regards to the geostrategic tensions between China and India. Bangladesh also needs to seriously think about the implications of allowing Indian logistical routes to bypass the critical Chicken's Neck for potential military-logistical buildup, perhaps against China in the future. Thus, it is essential to clarify whether India is seeking transshipment, transit, or a corridor through Bangladesh—which India has been trying to get since the time of Bangabandhu's government.

As Violence Surges, Can Pakistan Protect Its Chinese Projects?

10 July 2024, [The New York Times](#), Zia ur-Rehman and Christina Goldbaum

In a busy port city along Pakistan's southwestern coast, a newly built security barrier and hundreds of new checkpoints safeguard Chinese workers.

Farther down the Arabian Sea coast, in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, officials added hundreds of police officers to a special unit charged with protecting Chinese-funded development projects. And in the capital, Islamabad, officials created a new police force specifically to protect Chinese nationals.

Across Pakistan, authorities are hurrying to bolster security for Chinese workers after a surge in militant violence targeting Chinese-funded megaprojects. The attacks have threatened infrastructure, energy and trade projects that have kept Pakistan's economy afloat through a dire economic crisis.

That investment in Pakistan, which began in 2015 as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, involves around \$60 billion of planned projects. Tens of thousands of Chinese workers are thought to be in Pakistan, though estimates vary widely. Chinese investment has proved critical since support from the

United States tapered off after the war in neighboring Afghanistan ended in 2021.

The Chinese-funded projects struggled with security challenges from the start. But over the past three years, as militant groups have resurged across Pakistan and the number of terrorist attacks has soared, Chinese investments — or even just projects perceived to have some connection to China — have become increasingly vulnerable.

A series of attacks this spring highlighted that threat. In late March, armed fighters targeted the Chinese-built and operated port in Gwadar along the southwestern coast of the Arabian Sea, killing two Pakistani security officers. Days later, militants attacked the country's second-largest air base, citing opposition to Chinese investment to extract the region's resources.

The day after the air base attack, five Chinese workers died after a suicide bomber rammed an explosive-laden truck into their vehicle. The next month, five Japanese workers were the object of a suicide attack in Karachi after being mistaken for Chinese workers, according to the police. (The Japanese escaped unharmed, but a bystander, who was not a foreigner, was killed.)

"The bottom line is that one of Pakistan's closest allies and most important donors is now the foreign entity that is the most vulnerable to terrorism in Pakistan," said Michael Kugelman, the director of the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute.

"Pakistan's economy is in a very precarious state," he added. "Islamabad can't afford to have one of its most critical donors feel that level of vulnerability. The stakes are very high."

Already, the security situation appears to have dampened Beijing's confidence in investing in Pakistan. Last month, Pakistan's prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, visited Beijing and met with China's leader, Xi Jinping, in an effort to secure an additional \$17 billion in funding for energy and infrastructure projects. But the visit ended with no firm pledge for future investments from Beijing.

There was a "vague promise to enhance economic cooperation, but these outcomes fell short of the substantial agreements Pakistan had hoped for," said Filippo Boni, an academic specializing in China-Pakistan relations at the Open University in Britain.

Since the start in 2013 of China's Belt and Road Initiative — \$1 trillion of infrastructure development programs in roughly 70 countries — Pakistan has been the program's flagship site. Beijing has planned billions of dollars in megaprojects in the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and it has started on several, including the deepwater port in Gwadar.

Along the way, China has also lent more and more to Pakistan as the country has faced a major economic

downturn, with inflation hitting double digits and joblessness soaring.

For years, the megaprojects have faced security threats from militant groups operating in Pakistan, including the Islamic State affiliate in the region; armed separatists; and the Pakistani Taliban, an ideological twin and ally of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Many harbor grievances against China, experts say. The Islamic State and Pakistani Taliban seek revenge for Beijing's repression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. In recent years, both groups have begun collaborating with the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a Uyghur organization that China has long accused of inciting unrest in Xinjiang, according to a United Nations Security Council report released in January.

Others, like the Baluch Liberation Army, an armed separatist group in Baluchistan Province, oppose outsiders — including Pakistan's central government and China — benefiting from the province's natural resources.

"They view Chinese development efforts as reinforcing Pakistan's central government, which they perceive as oppressive," said Iftikhar Firdous, an expert on armed groups with The Khorasan Diary, an Islamabad-based research platform.

Over the past three years, violence from those groups has surged, an increase that many experts attribute to the Taliban seizing power in Afghanistan. Pakistani officials have accused the Taliban government of offering safe haven to some groups, like the Pakistani Taliban, which they say has allowed violence to flourish.

The Afghan government has denied those claims, and it has cracked down on other terrorist groups within the country, including the Islamic State. But one result of that was to push militant fighters into Pakistan, experts say.

As violence has rebounded across Pakistan, so, too, have attacks on Chinese workers and projects.

Seeking to rebuild Beijing's confidence, in recent months Pakistani authorities have bolstered the ranks of a dedicated security division within the police and military established in 2015 to safeguard Chinese Belt and Road Initiative projects. They have discussed additional fencing around the port in Gwadar, the centerpiece of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. But the country's law enforcement is already overstretched, officials say. Police and army officers are ill-equipped to confront militants, many of whom are armed with American-made weapons procured from Afghanistan after U.S. troops withdrew. More focus on protecting Chinese nationals could come at the expense of protecting Pakistanis, they warn.

Chinese officials have urged Pakistan to let private Chinese security contractors protect its projects in the country, an idea Pakistani authorities have rejected.

The countries have also been at odds about other approaches to coping with the threat from the Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, or T.T.P., said Asfandyar Mir, a senior expert at the United States Institute of Peace.

Pakistani officials have sought to pressure the Afghan government to act against T.T.P. fighters. At times Pakistan has directly attacked them, officials say, firing airstrikes into Afghanistan and expelling Afghan refugees.

China has taken a more collaborative approach, Mr. Mir said, effectively offering to normalize relations with Afghanistan in the hopes of persuading Taliban officials to negotiate with the T.T.P. on Beijing's behalf. Pakistani officials have faced resistance from their own citizens over the recent increase in security measures for Chinese workers.

In Gwadar, hundreds of residents have poured into the streets in recent months to protest the government's digging a trench to separate the compound where the Chinese live from the rest of the city.

The trench was the latest security measure. Checkpoints line major roads, where every few miles police and army personnel scan identification cards and search vehicles. Hundreds of police and army officers roam the streets. There has been talk of walling off the Chinese-built portion of the city entirely with a new fence.

"Living in Gwadar already feels like living in a security zone," said Mumtaz Hout, 29, a university student. "Now these new trenches, and the talk of future fencing, are further restricting our movement and violating our basic rights."

Tibetan Dilemma: Uncertain Future Without The Dalai Lama

10 July 2024, [The Times of India](#)

The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, turned 89 this year, a milestone celebrated by hundreds of exiled Tibetans in Dharamshala, India. Since fleeing Tibet in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule, the Dalai Lama has resided in this hillside town, making it the center of the Tibetan government-in-exile. The celebrations were marked by traditional dances, songs, and the cutting of a three-tiered cake, but the Dalai Lama himself was absent, recovering from knee surgery in the United States.

The Dalai Lama's advanced age and ongoing health issues have intensified concerns among Tibetan exiles about the future of their movement and leadership. China has stated its intent to control the selection of his successor, further complicating matters. This scenario has raised significant questions about the political and cultural fate of Tibetans in exile and in their homeland.

Why are Tibetans concerned about their future without the Dalai Lama?

The Dalai Lama has been a unifying figure for Tibetans, advocating for substantial autonomy and the preservation of Tibetan culture. His absence raises fears about the continuity of these efforts. As Penpa Tsering, president of the Tibetan government-in-exile, stated, "Post-fourteenth Dalai Lama we don't know what will happen."

What is the significance of the Dalai Lama's birthday celebrations?

The birthday celebrations in Dharamshala are not only a tribute to the Dalai Lama's leadership but also an expression of cultural and spiritual solidarity among exiled Tibetans. They serve as a reminder of their ongoing struggle for autonomy and the preservation of their heritage.

What are the concerns regarding the succession of the Dalai Lama?

Beijing's claim that it will appoint the next Dalai Lama has caused significant concern among Tibetans. Historically, the Dalai Lama is believed to reincarnate, and the current Dalai Lama has hinted he will clarify succession matters around his 90th birthday. The fear is that China will install a rival leader to assert control over Tibet, undermining the legitimacy of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

How has the international community responded to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan issue?

Recently, a group of US lawmakers, including former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, met with the Dalai Lama, reiterating support for Tibetan autonomy. This meeting, along with a bill passed by the US Congress urging China to resume talks with Tibetan leaders, has been viewed as a significant step. Pelosi emphasized, "This bill says to the Chinese government: things have changed now, get ready for that."

What is the "Middle Way" approach advocated by the Dalai Lama?

The "Middle Way" approach seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution. It aims to preserve Tibetan culture, religion, and identity while acknowledging China's sovereignty. This approach has been a cornerstone of the Dalai Lama's advocacy, but its future is uncertain without his guiding presence.

How does India factor into the Tibetan dilemma?

India has been a host to the Dalai Lama and Tibetan exiles since 1959. While it recognizes Tibet as part of China, India remains a critical support base for the Tibetan cause. Observers suggest that India's role could become more prominent post-Dalai Lama, especially in balancing its diplomatic relations with China.

What are the potential scenarios for Tibetans after the Dalai Lama?

There is a concern that the movement could lose momentum or become more radical. The Tibetan Youth Congress, for example, has voiced aspirations for full independence, contrasting with the Dalai Lama's Middle Way. Penpa Tsering mentioned, "If every country keeps saying that Tibet is part of the People's Republic of China, then where is the reason for China to come and talk to us?"

The future without the Dalai Lama is fraught with uncertainty for Tibetans. The spiritual leader's advanced age and China's assertive stance on his succession have amplified fears of a leadership vacuum. Nonetheless, the global Tibetan community remains steadfast in their cultural and political aspirations, drawing strength from the Dalai Lama's enduring legacy.

Could Taiwan's 'separatists' face death penalty in China?

09 July 2024, [Deutsche Welle](#), Yuchen Li

Beijing has unveiled new guidelines against what it says is "a very small number" of "diehard" advocates for Taiwanese independence — but others say these laws could apply to nearly everyone in Taiwan.

Some of the legal changes, however, are not easily dismissed. Beijing courts can now pass sentences, including life imprisonment or the death penalty, to "Taiwan independence" supporters who are convicted of conducting or inciting secession.

China says its new guidelines are targeting a "very small number of diehard 'Taiwan independence' separatists."

What are the guidelines?

This might include politicians like Chen, or other outspoken independence leaders such as Taiwan's current Vice President Hsiao Bi-khim and former Foreign Minister Joseph Wu.

But the 22 guidelines seem to intentionally employ vague language, with analysts describing them as legally ambiguous.

They list five "accurate identification of crimes," which include "attempting to alter Taiwan's legal status as part of China" and "advocating for Taiwan's participation in international organizations limited to sovereign states," but the last item on the list simply described the offense as "other acts aimed at separating Taiwan from China."

Penalties for "splitting the state" may include capital punishment if the crime causes "particularly grave harm" to the state and the people or "if the circumstances are particularly serious."

The guidelines also allow Chinese courts to hold trials in absentia for suspects not available in the country.

People who are already listed as Taiwanese separatists might not face immediate risk of arrest, Taiwanese

legal scholar and consultant to the Taipei-based Straits Exchange Foundation, Wu Se-chih, told DW. However, they could be tried in absentia and have bounties imposed against them.

Most Taiwanese could be at risk

Taiwan's **President Lai Ching-te, whom Beijing has publicly disliked** and called "a dangerous separatist," reacted by saying that "China has no right to pursue cross-border prosecution of Taiwanese people."

Wu told DW that, given the broad definition of the crimes, around 90% of Taiwan's population could potentially be criminalized — a figure Lai also reportedly shared with his party's central committee during a meeting.

"Before the 22 measures, the target for [people advocating] Taiwan independence was broad. Now it's even broader," Wu said.

Wu warned that retired members of the Taiwanese military, its government personnel, employees of sensitive high-tech companies as well as educators are all among the high-risk groups, based on new laws and previous cases.

Such cases include Beijing charging Taiwanese activist and vice chairman of the Taiwanese National Party with "secession" last year after the official was detained in China for nearly eight months.

China dismisses travel concerns

Taiwanese authorities responded to the new laws by raising the alert level for travel to China. At the same time, foreign companies in China are considering relocating Taiwanese employees, according to the Reuters new agency.

In response to the travel alert, Beijing accused Taiwan's Lai administration of "maliciously smearing judicial documents" and issued a statement reassuring that most Taiwanese had no reason for concern and could visit China "in high spirits."

Will Beijing go after Taiwanese 'separatists'?

Beijing was already capable of punishing "Taiwan independence" advocates with the existing laws, according to Chao Chien-min, director of the Graduate Institute for National Development and Mainland China Studies at the Chinese Culture University in Taiwan.

However, Beijing chose to unveil new measures one month after Lai took office — which indicated its intention of targeting "more radical pro-independence individuals in the new government" rather than ordinary citizens, Chao said.

In addition, according to Article 17 in the guidelines, defendants or suspects abroad are to be handled by national and public security units instead of China's Foreign Ministry. Chao said this showed that Beijing was unwilling to "escalate the matter to an international level."

"Forcibly extraditing [suspects] to mainland China for trial would cause a huge international shock," Chao

added. "I think given China's current international situation and diplomatic status, they probably haven't considered going that far."

Lessons from Hong Kong

In recent years, the Chinese government has **passed or amended a series of national security-related laws**, including an anti-espionage law and a law on guarding state secrets. The 22 guidelines are considered part of Beijing's efforts to expand its "legal toolbox."

Wu Se-chih believes that the latest move is a clear attempt to "make Taiwanese people feel a certain degree of self-restraint in their speech and political expressions," hoping to replicate the suppression methods used in **Hong Kong**.

Beijing imposed a national security law on the former British colony in 2020. A large number of **pro-democracy figures, dissidents and journalists have been arrested since then**.

"Hong Kong is almost completely in a state of self-censorship over the past four years," Wu said.

Chen, the Taiwanese politician sanctioned by Beijing, said that what China did to Hong Kong was "a very tyrannical approach."

"I think Taiwanese people will feel more aversion [towards Beijing]," if the same methods are applied to Taiwan, she said.

Why the Panchen Lama Matters

09 July 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Antonio Terrone

The Panchen Lamas and Dalai Lamas consider themselves "spiritual friends," but the relationship between the two figures and their communities has hardly been smooth.

The 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, Chokyi Gyalpo, has been called many names in and outside China, including "fake," a "Chinese puppet," "Jiang Zemin's Panchen" and a "Chinese Panchen."

Many claim that his influence in Tibetan affairs is negligible. The reasons for these negative conceptions go back to the controversial way in which the People's Republic of China (PRC) selected him after disqualifying another boy that the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso had already recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama, Gendun Chokyi Nyima, because the process lacked the authority of the Chinese government.

The whereabouts of Gendun Chokyi Nyima have remained unknown since 1992.

Even so, dismissing the PRC-appointed 11th Panchen Lama Chokyi Gyalpo can be detrimental to the future of Tibetans in China and to the safeguarding of Tibetan cultural heritage. The wellbeing and interests of the Tibetan people in China depend not on forces and powers outside their land, but on those inside.

The two highest-ranking Tibetan lamas affiliated with the Geluk School of Tibetan Buddhism, which ruled Tibet prior to the invasion of the PRC, were the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. For at least the past three generations, there have been tensions between them over jurisdiction, territory, and taxation. At the same time, these two lamas have maintained a tradition of recognizing each other's reincarnation. It is not hard to see, then, why the current Panchen Lama, Chokyi Gyalpo, is so important right now — Chokyi Gyalpo is 34 years old and the Dalai Lama will turn 90 on July 6, 2025.

If the 14th Dalai Lama officially recognizes the PRC-appointed 11th Panchen Lama Chokyi Gyalpo, this could break the nearly 75-year-old Sino-Tibetan standoff and could even pave the way for his return to Tibet. A *rapprochement* between the current Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama could soften the Chinese government's hand in Tibetan areas, pacify restive movements among the Tibetan population in China, and offer some closure to long-standing traumatic events of the past decades. The Dalai Lama could follow the model set by Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh and return to his Communist-controlled homeland to live out his final days.

A Tibetan Buddhist Leader in China

Jetsun Lobsang Jamba Lhundup Chokyi Gyalpo Pelsangpo, or simply Chokyi Gyalpo (Ch. Queji Jiebu), was born Gyaltzen Norbu in Lhari County in the northern areas of the now Tibetan Autonomous Region in 1990 to parents from the pastoral region of Nakchu. His parents are members of the Chinese Communist Party and first met at a local test-prep school in 1986.

After the Chinese government decision to disqualify the Dalai Lama's recognition of Gendun Chokyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama, a government-approved Tibetan delegation led by a senior Gelugpa monk, Sengchen Chokyi Gyaltzen (1936-1998) searched for potential candidates. In 1990, in the presence of the Tibetan Autonomous Region Government Chairman Gyaltzen Norbu, State Councilor Luo Gan, and Ye Xiaowen, head of the State Council National Religion Affairs Bureau, Senchen Chokyi Gyaltzen extracted the name of Chokyi Gyalpo from a short list of finalist candidates contained in a Golden Urn officially proclaiming him the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet. The Chinese government bestowed upon Chokyi Gyalpo the responsibility of representing his fellow Tibetans and the Chinese government's interests in the betterment of Sino-Tibetan relations.

Since his early years, Chokyi Gyalpo has lived in Beijing, where he received a religious education in accordance with the Gelugpa tradition as well as a secular education, which included Mandarin Chinese, Chinese history, and Marxist-Leninism theory. Most of his studies were carried out at the Tibetan Advanced

Buddhist Academy of China, which his predecessor the 10th Panchen Lama Chokyi Gyaltsen established in Beijing in 1987.

Presently, Chokyi Gyalpo enjoys the highest Tibetan Buddhist clergy leadership rank in the People's Republic of China. He has direct access to Xi Jinping, the president of the People's Republic of China, and benefits from warm relationships with the Chinese Government and the large Chinese Buddhist community.

Just like his immediate predecessor, the current Panchen Lama is fluent in Mandarin Chinese, knowledgeable about Chinese politics and world affairs, and highly erudite in Buddhist doctrine and philosophy. Additionally, his cooperation with Chinese authorities is in line with his predecessor's regarding policies to prioritize education among Tibetans, Sinicize Tibetan Buddhism, protect Chinese territorial integrity, support the Chinese Communist Party, and deter separatist activities that disrupt interethnic harmony.

Nowadays, in his capacity to represent the interests of Tibetans and following the footsteps of his two predecessors, the young Panchen Lama is allowed to join high profile meetings and participate in national political conferences, thus gaining familiarity with state affairs and diplomacy firsthand. In 2010, he personally welcomed Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo to the PRC. On June 10, 2015, Xi held a formal audience with the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet in Zhongnanhai, the palace that serves as the headquarters of both the Chinese Communist Party and central government of China. Chokyi Gyalpo travels domestically and internationally (he visited Bangkok, Thailand, in 2019) to give speeches and offer spiritual teachings to Buddhist devotees. According to Tibetan Buddhist customs, he bestows blessings to devotees, grants audiences, offers teachings, and performs various rituals for both monastic and lay communities. He frequently gives political talks, addressing the necessity for Tibetans to accept a Sinicized form of Buddhism in Tibet in line with Socialist values, the Chinese legal system, and the core principles of a modern society.

A History of Rivalry

Although criticized by many in the world, the close relationship that exists between the Panchen Lama and the Chinese government should not be a surprise. Both previous Panchen Lamas, the 9th and 10th, were close allies of China under the Nationalist government (1911-1949) as well as the Communist government after 1949. They also had a controversial relationship with their respective Dalai Lamas, they lived and operated from China, had Chinese followings, and worked for the Chinese government. Just like his predecessor, the 10th Panchen Lama, Chokyi Gyalpo is a member of the Standing Committee of the National

Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, which is the top governmental organization in charge of handling Buddhist affairs in accordance with the Chinese law.

The two previous Panchen Lamas had interests incompatible with those of the previous Dalai Lamas, especially regarding the Panchen Lamas' control and management of their vast lands, taxation, and monastic administration in Central Tibet. They had a progressive agenda to modernize Tibet and welcomed political assistance and protection from China. They also lived out the end of their lives in Chinese cities, where they supported various religious and political initiatives and commanded Chinese followings.

The Panchen Lamas and Dalai Lamas consider themselves "spiritual friends," but the relationship between the two figures and their communities of followers and supporters have hardly been smooth. Their rapport has been characterized by turbulence and rivalry for much of the past century. Just like the 11th Panchen Lama, the 10th Panchen Lama was not recognized by the 14th Dalai Lama right away. The nomination of Gampo Tseten, the boy who later became the 10th Panchen Lama, was supported by the 9th Panchen Lama's monastery search committee and the Chinese Nationalist government of the Republic of China, but not by the Dalai Lama, who had another candidate in mind. Although the young Gampo Tseten was officially enthroned as the 10th Panchen Lama at Kumbum monastery in the summer of 1949, the Dalai Lama reluctantly conceded his recognition only several years later.

Reconciliation and Cooperation

As the Dalai Lama ages, journalists and analysts around the world speculate about the future of the institution of the Dalai Lama and the fate of Tibetans. In 2010, the Tibetan delegation paused its work with the Chinese government and talks have not reopened since.

For his part, the 11th Panchen Lama continues to build confidence among the Tibetan population in China to increase their welfare and prosperity. His influence could be substantially improved with the Dalai Lama's official support on his side, and his recognition as the legitimate Panchen Lama. If the Dalai Lama succeeded in opening a dialogue with the Panchen Lama to understand his vision and acknowledge his leadership in China, the Dalai Lama may have the chance to improve Sino-Tibetan relations, Tibetans' quality of life, and the safeguarding of the Tibetan language and culture. This could also help curtail the possibility of violent reactions to the future news of the passing of the Dalai Lama.

The traditional role of the Panchen Lama as a key figure in recognizing the incarnation of the Dalai Lama is well known among Tibetans and the Chinese officials

alike. The 14th Dalai Lama and the administration in exile could opt to continue the tradition of finding the next incarnation. However, it is extremely improbable that the Chinese government will allow the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama to be found within Tibetan areas of the PRC without the authority of the Chinese government. It is also very likely that the Chinese government and the Tibetan leadership within China will decide to select and recognize the Dalai Lama's successor in accordance with their own standards and laws, and with the participation of the current 11th Panchen Lama.

A Path Ahead?

The Dalai Lama has tried for decades to cultivate dialogues with Beijing, with limited success. However, there are a few final options he could pursue. The Dalai Lama could offer to formally accept and confirm Chokyi Gyalpo as the legitimate reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama. He could offer to cooperate with Beijing in the selection of his successor as the 15th Dalai Lama, if such a path is agreed upon. If these actions were to succeed, they would have considerable power to bring benefit to both parties. The Dalai Lama would be appreciated for acting responsibly and peacefully, while Beijing would have to seriously consider accommodating some of the Dalai Lama's wishes to improve the wellbeing and safeguard the cultural heritage of Tibetans in China. The Dalai Lama could even garner some leverage with Beijing to disclose information about and negotiate the release of Gendun Chokyi Nyima and his family. By recognizing the 11th Panchen Lama, the Dalai Lama would send a message to all Tibetans that it is time to move on, accept the situation, and welcome the 11th Panchen Lama as a legitimate leader acting in the interests of Tibetans.

Finally, the Dalai Lama could consider negotiating with Beijing for a possible return to Tibet to live his last years there, as Thich Nhat Hanh did in Vietnam. Considering the profound influence Hanh's Buddhist-inspired peace activism has had on him, the 14th Dalai Lama could model his final act on that of the Vietnamese Buddhist teacher, who passed away at Tu Hieu Temple in Vietnam at the age of 95 in 2022. The socially and politically active Hanh campaigned extensively in the 60s both in his country and abroad for a peaceful solution of the war in Vietnam. He reluctantly opted to live a life in exile in 1966, the year he publicly announced his "Five Point Proposal to End the War," fearing reprisals and incarceration or even worse murder upon his return to his country.

Despite that fear, however, toward the very end of his life he returned to Vietnam in 2019, ending his exile and fulfilling his wish to be in his homeland. If the Dalai Lama followed Hanh's lead and returned to live out his final days in Tibet, he too would be able to rest in the land of his people and bring closure to his long exile.

Tibet is now part of the PRC, but it is still Tibetans' ancestral land, and it could be spiritually supervised by a Panchen Lama under the blessing of his "spiritual friend" the Dalai Lama.

Tibet embodies larger issues of religious freedom in Asia

09 July 2024, [UCA News](#), Ben Joseph

The silence of world religious leaders on Tibetan Buddhism needs to end

Xi Jinping was a toddler when the 14th Dalai Lama was received by Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong in [Beijing](#) in 1954. The Dalai Lama had a special love for Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun, a politburo member of the Chinese Communist Party, and gifted him a Rolex watch.

The Tibetan spiritual head, now 89, gives sleepless nights to the 71-year-old Communist Party supremo, holding on to the theory of incarnation followed by ritualistic Tibetan Buddhism, a branch of the world's first proselytizing religion.

Tibetan Buddhists believe the Dalai Lama, at the moment of his death, will pass his spirit on to another human body, and that person will be reincarnated as the next Dalai Lama.

The Chinese Communist Party is looking to control the next Dalai Lama, the highest spiritual head under Tibetan Buddhism, to legitimize its 1950 occupation of Tibet, a remote land in the world's largest and highest plateau far removed from the banes and boons of tech-powered modernity then.

The Chinese Communist Party hijacked the whole process of finding a successor to the Dalai Lama by handpicking the Panchen Lama, the second highest authority in Tibetan Buddhism after the Dalai Lama. The Panchen Lama plays a significant role in naming the next Dalai Lama.

The current Dalai Lama recognized Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as Panchen Lama in May 1995. But three days later the Chinese government kidnapped the six-year-old boy and took his family into custody. The Chinese government also named Gyaincain Norbu as the Panchen Lama.

Most Tibetan Buddhists have rejected Norbu, but Nyima has never been seen publicly after he went missing in 1995.

The previous Panchen Lama (Lobsang Trinley Lhundrup Choekyi Gyaltzen) spoke out against Chinese rule in the 1960s. He died in suspicious circumstances in 1989 after spending more than eight years in jail.

[China](#) has already claimed the right to handpick the successor to the current Dalai Lama, whose birthday falls on July 6, and even enshrined this right into Chinese law.

To win over pastoral Tibetans, the Communist Party has pushed modern development activities. Reports show that tremendous changes have occurred in infrastructure due to the introduction of modern communications and information technology.

Under the ongoing 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), China will invest US\$30 billion to expand big-ticket infrastructure on the ecologically sensitive Tibetan Plateau.

For over a decade, the Dalai Lama, currently based in Dharamshala in India, kept a low profile and an impossible peace with the Communist Party. This ensured that nations worldwide developed a more negative attitude toward the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile.

By 2010, Western nations had almost abandoned the Tibetan cause after China began to make great strides in the global economy. Hollywood celebrities who once made a beeline to meet the Dalai Lama deserted one by one, citing a lucrative Chinese market.

China has reiterated that the next Dalai Lama must be reborn in Tibet and his successor must be approved by the Communist Party, which has raised many eyebrows in the US, which has passed three pieces of legislation on Tibet to seek a resolution to the China-Tibet dispute.

Though the US put the Tibetan issue on the backburner, the Biden administration revived it with the Resolve Tibet Act passed by Congress on June 12.

It authorizes the use of funds to counter Chinese disinformation about the Dalai Lama and urges China to engage in talks with him or his representatives.

The Resolve Tibet Act succeeds two acts that preceded it. After the Act was passed, the Dalai Lama underwent knee surgery in the US.

On June 18, a high-level bipartisan US congressional delegation, led by Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Michael McCaul, visited the Tibetan government-in-exile. The delegation included Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, known for her controversial visit to Taiwan.

Will the international communities, their systems and world religions come to the rescue of Buddhism, the mother of all religions in the world?

Whoever becomes the next Dalai Lama is crucial for the existence of Tibetan Buddhism because that would decide the measure of people's freedom to practice their traditional religion in Tibet.

After the Dalai Lama dies, a search will begin based on signs such as the direction he was looking in when he died, the flow of the smoke when he is cremated, and visions seen on Lhamo Latso, the oracle lake in Tibet. While most Dalai Lamas trace their roots to Tibet, one was born in Mongolia and another in India.

Will the Dalai Lama name a successor, abolishing the centuries-old incarnation theory, to hoodwink China? That is likely to lead to a situation of two Dalai Lamas vying for legitimacy — one nominated by the Dalai

Lama and the one anointed by the Chinese Communist Party.

Even if the current Dalai Lama dies without nominating a successor, the situation is unlikely to change — there could be two Dalai Lamas — one selected based on the systems of the ancient religion (sans Panchen Lama) and one chosen by the communists.

The silence of world religious leaders on Tibetan Buddhism needs to end. The Communist Party's attack on Tibetan Buddhism is only a precursor to the future of other religions in China and other nations that could come under Chinese influence, particularly in Asia.

Jaishankar-Wang Meeting: Why normalcy in India-China ties is likely to stay elusive

08 July 2024, [The Indian Express](#), Manoj Kewalramani and Vanshika Saraf

Complete disengagement and de-escalation in Eastern Ladakh can provide a starting point for steps to be taken in other domains. Achieving this requires sustained and often frustrating dialogue at multiple levels to devise a roadmap of action

On July 4, India's External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan. The post-meeting readouts from both sides demonstrate the distance between their respective positions and why normalcy in bilateral ties is likely to remain elusive.

The MEA's readout is a restatement of India's established position that "complete disengagement from the remaining areas in Eastern Ladakh" and restoration of border peace and tranquillity are prerequisites to the restoration of normalcy in ties. In addition, the statement talks about respecting the LAC, abiding by relevant bilateral agreements, protocols, and understandings, and maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas. What it does not mention as a goal is the restoration of the pre-May 2020 status quo.

In contrast, the Chinese readout stresses on "properly handling and controlling the situation in the border areas" while simultaneously "actively restoring and expanding normal exchanges." On the surface, this doesn't appear to be particularly different from earlier messages from Beijing. However, it is worth noting that Wang did not stress that the border issue should be put in an "appropriate position" in bilateral relations and not define overall ties. What was also different was Wang's comment that China was willing to "explore the correct way for two major neighbouring countries to coexist," entailing the need to "respect, understand, trust, and accommodate

each other, and help each other succeed.” This is a different formulation from the earlier, oft-repeated one around the two sides not being threats to each other but opportunities for each other’s development. Words are important. But actions are what truly matter. One must, thus, wait and watch whether Wang’s rhetoric materialises into tangible changes in Chinese policy, particularly around disengagement and de-escalation in Eastern Ladakh. That will be key to developing stability and predictability in the relationship, which is critical for both countries’ strategic ambitions. Unfortunately, without changes in Chinese policy, it would be strategically imprudent and politically difficult for the Indian administration to return to the normal track in ties.

India’s frustration with China is encapsulated in the framework of the three mutuals – mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests – which Delhi wants Beijing to adhere to. The primary expression of this has been in the context of Chinese military posture along the LAC. But there are also concerns around China’s deepening engagement in the Indian subcontinent and lack of appreciation for India’s expanding interests and stake across East Asia and the Global South and within multilateral institutions. Xi Jinping’s decision to skip the G20 summit in New Delhi in 2023 was an example of this.

Meanwhile, from Beijing’s perspective, there is growing annoyance with a spectrum of Indian policies. For instance, India continues to resist the resumption of direct flights between the two nations despite Chinese calls for normalcy. The visa approval process for Chinese scholars, travellers and talents continues to be rather challenging, despite it, on occasion, adversely impacting Indian industry. Delhi has also taken a series of steps cracking down on Chinese imports and alleged illegal activities by Chinese companies. Late last month, India’s Directorate General of Trade Remedies initiated an anti-dumping probe on glass fibre imports from China, Bahrain and Thailand after complaints from domestic manufacturers. Delhi has also been cautious and selective when it comes to approving Chinese investments.

On the foreign policy front, China remains particularly wary of India’s growing proximity with the US. In fact, the Chinese readout of the Jaishankar-Wang meeting reflects this persistent anxiety, with the Chinese minister calling on his Indian counterpart to work together to “oppose unilateral bullying, resist camp confrontation, safeguard the common interests of developing countries, and make due contributions to regional and world peace, stability, and development.” Beijing would have certainly noted, with some consternation, the recent comments by prominent RSS leader Ram Madhav stressing that the rise of China calls for “greater understanding and coordinated

action between the US and India,” the MEA’s remarks criticising the PLA’s actions in the South China Sea and the US Congressional delegation’s visit to Dharamshala.

Chinese officials, however, have chosen not to hype up any of these developments and lash out at India. Instead, the new Chinese ambassador, Xu Feihong, has been engaged in quiet diplomacy, meeting with key stakeholders, including Foreign Minister Jaishankar and former ambassadors. His statement condoling the deaths in the recent stampede in Hathras is also an example of softer public diplomacy from the Chinese side.

In sum, while the relationship between India and China will likely remain strained for the foreseeable future, there appears to be a faint crack in the door for some sort of a tactical adjustment. This will require meaningful actions by Beijing, and will not be easy given the political changes following the elections in India. Moreover, the underlying, structural issues are not likely to be easily addressed. Nevertheless, complete disengagement and de-escalation in Eastern Ladakh can provide a starting point for steps to be taken in other domains. Achieving this requires sustained and often frustrating dialogue at multiple levels to devise a roadmap of action. While continuing to prioritise its concerns on the border, India must not eschew such engagement.

Tibet back under the spotlight

08 July 2024, [ORF](#), Harsh V. Pant and Kalpit A Mankikar

The issue of Tibet is back onto the international centre-stage with the visit of a seven-member US Congressional delegation to Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, this month to meet the Dalai Lama and members of the Tibetan government-in-exile. During the visit, former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi lashed out at Chinese President Xi Jinping saying that the Dalai Lama’s contribution will live on in perpetuity while Xi Jinping will fade into obscurity. Pelosi had earlier made a trip to Taiwan, which China claims is a breakaway province, following which Beijing launched military drills around the island.

The American activism on Tibet comes close on the heels of the US clearing new legislation that pushes Beijing to re-engage with the Dalai Lama and elected representatives to resolve the standoff over Tibet’s future. The new law directs the US government to coordinate multilateral initiatives to bring about a negotiated settlement on Tibet. Importantly, it also stipulates funding by the US for the purpose of countering disinformation spread by the Communist Party of China on Tibetan history and traditional institutions like the Dalai Lama.

The new law directs the US government to coordinate multilateral initiatives to bring about a negotiated settlement on Tibet.

India has also begun to recalibrate its policy on Tibet, albeit slowly, over the past decade. For his swearing-in ceremony in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited the political head of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Lobsang Sangay, along with heads of state from neighbouring countries in South Asia.

The June 2020 clashes in Galwan were an important inflection point in relations between India and China, following which a tense standoff continues between the two armies along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to this date. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sent a senior representative to attend the funeral of a soldier from the Special Frontier Force (a clandestine unit comprising mostly Tibetans) who was martyred during military operations against the People's Liberation Army along Pangong Tso in August 2020. This was followed by Modi tweeting birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama in 2021.

In the current instance, the fact that the US delegation met Prime Minister Modi and foreign minister S. Jaishankar after the interaction with the Tibetan spiritual leader demonstrates that this was not a personal outreach by US lawmakers. The Indian foreign ministry also stated that the Dalai Lama was a religious figure and was at liberty to conduct his spiritual activities, while countering China's outburst over the Dharamshala interaction. This foray shows that there is close coordination between New Delhi and Washington on the issue of Tibet, thanks largely to convergent interests.

The 1951 Chinese annexation of Tibet led to the Dalai Lama seeking refuge in India. Over the years, China consolidated its hold over Tibet, resulting in the suppression of religious freedom there, and several Tibetans came to India as refugees, drawn by cultural affinity. The Indian government's Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy (2014) document puts the number of Tibetan refugees living in 45 settlements across the country at over 100,000 (as on 2009). Moreover, the government acknowledges that many Tibetans live outside these official settlements too. The Dalai Lama is revered by Tibetans and has acquired international stature. Given that the Dalai Lama is an octogenarian, the issue of succession looms large in the strategic calculus. As a large Tibetan population resides in India, there are apprehensions over how the community would be influenced in the future. Chinese propaganda has tried to smear the institution of the Dalai Lama, dubbing the current spiritual head a separatist. China will seek to assert itself on the question of succession. There is significant global awareness of China's designs. The US Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020, cleared by the Donald Trump administration, stipulates that only those

adhering to the Tibetan Buddhist faith must decide on the Dalai Lama's successor. Media reports suggest that the Indian government discussed the succession issue at the highest levels in 2021.

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To conclude, Xi's rise and consolidation within China has led to the nation stoking territorial disputes with neighbours like India, Japan and Taiwan. However, China may not be left unscathed by its project to redraw borders. India okaying the US delegation's meeting with the Dalai Lama also bursts the notion that a reduced majority in the Lok Sabha may lead to greater caution in Modi's foreign-policy dealings. On the contrary, by replying to the greetings of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te with respect to Modi 3.0, and reaffirming support to the Tibetan cause, India is pushing the envelope on China's red lines. Modi's decision not to attend the SCO summit this year in Astana was also aimed at avoiding a direct meeting with the Chinese leader.

The message from New Delhi seems to be categorical: If China does not respect India's sensitivities with respect to its core interests, India too should not be expected to be mindful of Beijing's red lines. And unless Beijing addresses India's core concerns on border clarity and national security, New Delhi is in no hurry to mend fences.

Tibet, not LAC, is the real issue

07 July 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Seshadri Chari

America's Tibet policy under several presidents has been ridden with flip-flops. Trade and commerce with Beijing dominated the decision-making process, which was at the cost of security perils for countries in China's proximity, especially India.

The official US State Department X/Twitter account of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs put out a tweet wishing His Holiness The Dalai Lama, "Happy 85th birthday to His Holiness @DalaiLama, who has inspired the world through his peace & kindness, and as a symbol of the struggle for Tibetans and their heritage. We thank India for hosting His Holiness and Tibetans in freedom since 1959 & wish His Holiness happiness", it read. In Beijing, officials were crowding over the tweet and discussing ways of damage control. The Xi Jinping dispensation has every reason to be worried.

America's Tibet policy under several presidents has been ridden with flip-flops. Trade and commerce with Beijing dominated the decision-making process, which was at the cost of security perils for countries in China's proximity, especially India. The human rights

violations, mass killings of Tibetan Buddhist monks, self-immolations by senior monks and wanton destruction of holy relics and other historical records did not seem to draw the attention of the White House resident at crucial times. But in recent times, pro-Tibet voices and organisations have succeeded in highlighting the plight of Tibetans living in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other areas annexed by China using brute force since the late 1940s.

Former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi met with Dalai Lama in Dharamshala and strongly reaffirmed congressional support for the people of Tibet and spoke out against the China's oppressive human rights record. Her comment aimed at Xi Jinping -- "Dalai Lama's legacy will live, you'll be gone" -- has drawn sharp criticism from Beijing.

China's occupation of Tibet has not only made it our immediate neighbour but has seriously impacted our security on the western border, too, with Pakistan having gifted a big chunk of occupied land to China, thus severing our link with Central Asia. It is strategically imperative for New Delhi to not only regain Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir but also to re-establish our ancient trade route through Central Asia. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has outlined his government's priorities in the region and emphasised resolving the vexed India-China 'border issue' through dialogue and diplomacy. But seven decades of dialogue and diplomatic engagements have not made any difference to the hegemonic objectives and actions of Beijing. It is time to face this reality and amplify efforts to add ourselves as a force multiplier in the dynamics of regional geopolitics. That Prime Minister Narendra Modi skipped the SCO summit in Astana not only signals a downgrading of the forum in India's calculus, but also his proposed visit to Moscow adds a new dimension to India's policies and strategy for regional stability.

External Affairs Ministry officials would be well aware of a new Tibet-related bill introduced by prominent Republican and Democratic lawmakers and passed recently by the US House of Representatives. The 'Resolve Tibet Act', awaiting presidential assent, calls for enhancing US support for Tibet and "pushing for negotiations without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community." Besides empowering State Department officials to counter Beijing's disinformation on Tibet, the US will work with likeminded governments and multilateral efforts to reject false claims of Tibet being a part of China since "ancient times".

The real issue between India and China is not the so-called Line of Actual Control and the settlement of the border dispute as much as it is about Tibet's freedom and its sovereignty. A large section of people in India

would like to have a friendly relationship with China and conduct trade under normal conditions. But this can be best done with an independent Tibet as a buffer between the two countries. Beijing is not serious about resolving any of the several issues with India, perhaps because resolving them would then bring the Tibet issue between them front and centre. New Delhi should impress upon the international community that a free and independent Tibet is the only solution to many of the global and regional China-induced flashpoints that could emerge as major conflict zones.

World Tibet Day Special | Tibetan struggle is on an upward swing despite its ups and downs: Amb Dilip Sinha

06 July 2024, [First Post](#), Vimal Harsh

The struggle has received a shot in the arm with the visit of the bipartisan US Congressional delegation to Dharamshala, their meeting with PM Modi, and the Dalai Lama's US visit, says the author of 'Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty'

The issue of Tibet has been undeniable in the matrix of India-China relations and remains a textbook example of Red imperialism. Ever since communist China invaded the country of monks — beginning with the invasion of Chamdo, when the Chinese People Liberation Army crossed the Jinsha River on October 6-7, 1950, to the El Salvador-sponsored draft resolution requesting global support against Tibet's invasion in November 1950, to the 17-point agreement on May 23, 1951 — Lhasa appeared abandoned by all the major powers.

Historically, Tibet had a 'patron-priest' relationship with China and strong intellectual linkages with India. But nowhere in its history has Tibet lost its autonomous identity. And after the Xinhai Revolution and the fall of Qing, a Manchu-led imperial dynasty, Lhasa was a de facto sovereign polity.

With the rise of China, as an economic as well as geostrategic power, the West, which once accepted the 'one-China' policy merrily to meet its Cold War demands, has now started raising the issue of Taiwan and Tibet. As any objective analysis of history would second, Tibet has been the focus of 'Great Games', whether it might be the rivalry of British and Russian empires in the 19th century, the Cold War in the 20th century, or emerging US-China bipolarity.

Exploring these issues, a new book on Tibet has just come. *Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty* by former ambassador Dilip Sinha is an 'authoritative', 'lucid', 'rich', and 'impressive' analysis of the global geopolitical ambitions that have practically left the spiritual bastion to the mercy of the Chinese Red aristocracy. As

we observe World Tibet Day on June 6, Amb Sinha answers some of the questions his book deals with.

Excerpts:

Q. Many people wonder if the Tibetan struggle for statehood and sovereignty is dying a slow death. Is this the case?

The Tibetan struggle has had its ups and downs, but far from dying, it is on an upward swing. It has received a shot in the arm with the visit of the bipartisan US Congressional delegation to Dharamsala, the meeting of the delegation with the Indian prime minister and the Dalai Lama's visit to the US.

Within Tibet, the struggle continues to be brutally repressed by China, but this itself is an indication of China's inability to win the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people. Currently, a million Tibetan children have been taken away from their homes and are being groomed in residential schools as Han Chinese, shorn of their own language, culture and religion. But the Tibetan people continue to resist their occupiers peacefully and stoically.

Q. The detailed analysis provided by the book helps readers gain a lot of information about China and Tibet. Don't you think the world, particularly Indians, should know more about them and their history, when these Asian giants have a disturbed frontier stretching for about 3,500 kilometres?

Yes. Indians need to know more about their largest and friendliest neighbour, Tibet, with whom they have very close historical ties. Tibet had long been an independent country. It was conquered by China in the eighteenth century, around the time Britain started its conquest of India. Early in the twentieth century, when Britain and Russia divided Central Asia between them, they agreed to keep Tibet as a part of the Chinese Empire, because neither wanted the other to seize it. Even when China's Qing dynasty collapsed in 1912, Britain and Russia refused to recognise Tibet's declaration of independence. When China invaded Tibet in 1950, Russia supported China and Britain stayed aloof, advising the US to do the same. This put the onus on newly independent India which was still struggling with the aftermath of the partition. India should have taken up Tibet's cause, at least diplomatically, and refused to recognise the annexation. But it didn't, and is now faced with a security nightmare on its northern border.

Q. Where do you think Tibet's case was lost, if it has been lost yet?

The cause is certainly not lost and will not be as long as the Tibetan people continue to resist Chinese rule. The refusal of the big powers to condemn China's invasion in 1950 was a serious setback for Tibet. But countries all over the world, led by India, have given shelter to Tibetans fleeing Chinese repression. Their support and the resistance of the Tibetan people will keep the cause alive.

Q. The book deals well with the kind of political ties Tibet historically had with China, but despite that, the passages show the strong ideational relationship that India and Tibet have shared in the past. Any comments from your side?

Tibet's ties with India have always been much closer than with any other country. It goes back even before Buddhism travelled to Tibet from India. Tibetans regard Nyatri Tsenpo as their first king. They believe that he belonged to a royal family related to the Buddha. Buddhism arrived in Tibet a few centuries later from India and its religious texts were translated from Sanskrit and Pali. India's ties became weak during the long period of Muslim rule in northern India. When the Nalanda university library was burnt by the invaders, its teachers and students rescued several books and took them to Tibet. There is thus a strong relationship of trust between the people of the two countries to come to each other's help.

Q. The book depicts Tibet as a victim of major powers; does that include India as well?

That is unfortunately true. Britain and Russia accepted Tibet as a part of China because they did not want the other to occupy it. The US helped Tibetans in the 1950s as part of its war against communism, but after the Sino-Soviet split it befriended China and ignored Tibet. Now that US-China relations are once again sour, the US is promoting the Tibetan struggle to weaken China.

India too attached greater importance to its relations with China than Tibet. In 1950, it wanted to lead, jointly with China, Asia's resurgence against European imperialism. It also felt that good relations with China would help in moderating Mao's aggressiveness and avert another world war.

Q. You have quoted BN Rau, India's then permanent representative to the United Nations, as saying that had Communist China been made a UN member, it would not have invaded Tibet. Now that the PRC is a member of the UN, do you think that this will act as an inhibitor to the Chinese designs in Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, or even Taiwan, for that matter?

India was naïve in believing that if Communist China was allowed to take the China seat in the UN (held by the Kuomintang party, which had lost in the civil war and withdrawn to Taiwan) it would start behaving responsibly and abandon its plans of attacking Tibet, Taiwan, Korea and other countries it claimed. Communist China did eventually become a member of the UN and a permanent member of the Security Council in 1971. Its first act was to veto Bangladesh's membership application to please Pakistan. Its aggressive policies abroad and repression at home continue unabated. Far from becoming more responsible, it has used its power to threaten its neighbours, repress its own people and support other dictatorial regimes.

Why the Himalayan Region Is Integral to a Rules-Based Order in the Indo-Pacific

06 July 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Jagannath Panda, Ryohei Kasai and Eerishika Pankaj

Chinese militarization and expansionism in the Himalayas remains a perennial concern not just for India, but for the United States – and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

In June 2024, former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi minced no words in criticizing the Chinese government and President Xi Jinping for the persecution of Tibetans, including attempts to erase their culture. Pelosi was part of a U.S. delegation that met with the 14th Dalai Lama in Dharamshala, India, where he has been living in exile since he was forced to flee Tibet in 1959 after an uprising against China's repressive rule was brutally suppressed. China considers the Dalai Lama a dangerous separatist, and seeks to prevent all diplomatic contact with him.

Pelosi's acrimony went beyond empty rhetoric. Building on the U.S. Congress' "Resolve Tibet Act," passed only days before her visit to Dharamshala, she heralded stronger U.S. support for the Himalayan region, which China is trying to rebrand as "Xizang," the Mandarin term for Tibet. Her remarks have yet again brought to the forefront the fact that Chinese militarization in Tibet remains a perennial concern not just for India, but for the United States – and its Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

For China, Tibet is perhaps the most critical, but not the only, aspect of its growing Himalayan troubles. Most notably, China has a long-standing border dispute with India, which has kept getting more hostile since Xi Jinping came into power – recall the 2017 Doklam stand-off, the defining 2020 Galwan Clash, and the 2022 Tawang skirmish, to name but a few prominent contentions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Concurrently, China has been pursuing its "salami tactics" strategy with the neighboring states, including the small land-locked nation of Bhutan. Then there is the question of China's increasingly unsustainable, "debt-trap"-inducing Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has already cast a dark shadow over economically weaker Himalayan states like Nepal and Pakistan. Most importantly, China's massive hydro-infrastructure constructions and upper-riparian-derived unilateral control of South Asian rivers that begin in Tibet have raised serious questions about the impact on Himalayan ecology and control of resources. Against such an overall bleak scenario, will the latest Pelosi visit engender greater geopolitical awareness and considered responses, beyond the human rights questions, in the West about China's tactics?

Importantly, can the Himalayas as a whole be featured as a primary focus of the Indo-Pacific strategies, not just as a byline to specific conflicts be it vis-à-vis India or Tibet?

Time to Talk About a Himalayan Liberal Rules-Based Order

Pelosi's remarks and meeting with the Tibetan Government in Exile evoke memories of her controversial 2022 visit to Taiwan, which intensified China's military maneuvers against the democratic island and precipitated the so-called Fourth Taiwan Crisis. Not just Taiwan, but most countries in the Indo-Pacific, including South Korea – where President Yoon Suk-yeol opted not to meet the then-U.S. House speaker – worried about the repercussions on the region's already fractious relations.

Yet that trip brought unprecedented global attention to Taiwan, whose democratic credentials weighed heavy against China's autocratic, disruptive rule, and the surrounding region, too. Such a tactic, in turn, has proved consequential for globally publicizing the Indo-Pacific's maritime concerns, including the South China Sea disputes. Greater awareness in the international media about the repercussions of Chinese interference in the Taiwan Strait or the South China Sea has further popularized the Indo-Pacific construct.

Yet much of the narrative has automatically assumed that a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific is primarily (and perhaps only) maritime in nature. This assertion is aided by the reality that the maritime trade routes would be directly affected by China's actions, in turn impacting European/Western security and prosperity. Yet, were China to become the "Himalayan hegemon," the consequences would be dire. The interdependent nature of the security dilemmas means that a rules-based order in the Himalayan region is imperative for the stability, security, and prosperity of the Indian Ocean, South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait.

A key reason why this connection has not yet been made as clearly is that the focus by the West on Tibet has remained limited to the human rights aspect, highlighting it as the central cause of concern in the Himalayas. Without taking away from the criticality of the human rights question, it is important to also connect the human rights violations to China's broader geopolitical agendas in the Tibetan plateau, which need to be closely examined.

Such a lens is critical for trans-Himalayan and Tibetan studies, wherein geopolitics has often come second to human rights and environmental debates, often missing the connection between these issues as grander security narratives. For instance, with respect to the succession of the 14th Dalai Lama, few studies have looked at the geopolitics associated with succession politics, which will directly impact the

bilateral relationship of countries across the world with China. This has meant that nations remain unprepared to deal with the strategic realities of such a question – a fact China relies on to work in its favor. More widely, issues of militarization and securitization in Tibet and adjoining areas, as well as weaponization of natural resources, need to be discussed in tandem with climate/ecological degradation and human security aspects in the Himalayas to preserve the Indo-Pacific's rules-based order.

Due to the interconnected nature of regional stability and security, the Himalayas are a critical strategic region influencing major geopolitical dynamics. Tensions here can spill over, impacting maritime and territorial disputes in the Indo-Pacific. A liberal rules-based order in the Himalayas ensures consistent principles of international law, mutual respect for sovereignty, and conflict resolution mechanisms. Without this, the broader rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific remains fragile and susceptible to power imbalances and regional conflicts. Therefore, integrating Himalayan security within the Indo-Pacific framework fosters comprehensive regional stability, enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of a rules-based international order.

Securitization of the Restive Himalayas

In the 2000s, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched its Western Development Strategy to offset the lack of economic growth in the western provinces, including the Buddhist-dominated Tibet and the Muslim-dominated Xinjiang, compared to the stupendous high-quality development in the eastern zones and the southern coast. Under this "Go West" policy, the Chinese government aimed its own funds, as well as foreign investment and development assistance in implementing the development of both coastal and inland areas, to replace perceived backwardness with modernization, including new infrastructure. Under Xi Jinping, large-scale development went on to incorporate eco-environmental protection ideals to further these aims "to achieve common prosperity for all the ethnic groups of the western region" – but more specifically the goal was to *consolidate* the frontier regions, often at the expense of the ecological needs of the region despite environment protection promises. For instance, China's extensive modern-day mega-dam building that began with the construction of the Three Gorges Dam has already disrupted biodiversity, as well as caused droughts, floods, earthquakes, and massive displacement of people.

In the more than two decades since the launch of the "Go West" campaign, the Chinese government has doubled down its pursuit of these aims, which remain laced with empty rhetoric. The main intent is to exploit the region's abundant natural resources while building

hard infrastructure to make civil-military logistics easier.

To securitize and militarize the areas, China has implemented unsavory measures such as resettlements, intrusive laws, internment camps, forceful induction into the People's Liberation Army (PLA), increased surveillance, and accelerated assimilation. Such tactics will not only help China's government repress separatist tendencies among minority groups and neutralize their own respective languages and cultures but also help fortify the regions around the Himalayas with infrastructure that can be utilized to expand territory.

Similarly, the unabated infrastructure development, including airports/helipads, highways, oil pipelines, rail networks, and reservoirs, aimed at improving land-sea linkages is mainly a tool to expand "dual-use" of infrastructure – that is, national security interests – in the garb of socioeconomic growth. For example, China's increase in railway construction in Tibet and "leapfrog development in general aviation" look to facilitate better access not just to neighboring provinces but also to land ports along the border areas for military purposes.

Already, the increase in stationed PLA troops and even nuclear weapons have raised concerns about the impact of hyper-militarization on the fragile Himalayan region. China has in the past been accused of "conducting nuclear-weapons research on the Tibetan plateau and dumping radioactive waste" and also of building an "immense military bastion with tactical missiles and intercontinental ballistic missiles."

Another vital geopolitical aim is to enable this region's active participation in the BRI, via initiatives such as the "Western Region Land-Sea Corridor" development announced in 2019. This would improve connectivity and integration between China's poorer, restive regions with both the well-to-do eastern and southern provinces and countries in Eurasia, Central Asia, and South Asia, as connected by the expansive BRI. Through avenues like the "Himalayan Quad" China has sought to establish with South Asian countries Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, where Beijing has immense economic clout, it has sought to further the geopolitically motivated aspects of BRI into greater intent.

Similarly, China's use of its position as the "upstream water hegemon" – with six major Asian rivers originating in the Tibetan Plateau flowing into nearly 18 downstream countries – has aimed at controlling access and prioritizing its own "water sovereignty." China has a history of weaponizing water to achieve its national interests as seen, during Doklam clash of 2017 with India.

Furthermore, China has been indulging in rewriting Himalayan territorial borders, e.g., by issuing "standard maps" (e.g., showing India's Arunachal

Pradesh and the disputed Aksai Chin plateau as Chinese territory) and by expanding into Bhutanese territories. These moves call into question Xi's stated aim of building a "community of shared future among neighboring countries."

Aiming Beyond Rhetoric

Optimistically, one can hope that the latest round of support for Tibet in the U.S. Congress and the U.S. delegation's visit to the Tibetan Government in Exile would usher in a new wave of international action and attention, including more foreign delegations, as happened with Taiwan in 2022. But more importantly, it should initiate a multiplicity of debates questioning not just China's long-standing repressive actions – from unfettered territorial expansion and instability to overexploitation and access to natural resources – but also the international community's tacit silence regarding Himalayan issues. For instance, the EU, which despite its focus on human rights in Tibet is only starting to recognize Chinese coercion globally, may also facilitate discussions in the European Parliament around the aforementioned Himalayan concerns with broader implications.

It is important to note that none of the major concerns regarding China in the Himalayas are new. For example, China has used Tibet and Xinjiang for nuclear bases since before 1964; the Tibetans have hence long worried about the militarization of the region. Old reports dating back to the 1980s highlighted how it is not just the Indian cities and industrial centers that are possibly within the range of China's nuclear strikes, but also "all the major cities of Central Asia," highlighting the interconnectedness of security debates.

Undoubtedly, in era of Chinese military modernization under Xi, the threat has only accelerated. For instance, satellite imagery in Bhutanese territory has confirmed China's aggressive push to change the status quo in the Himalayas.

If the United States and democracies in Asia and Europe such as the EU states, India, and Japan, are serious about the intent to preserve a rules-based order, then they must acknowledge that the threat from China is not limited to its so-called autonomous regions in the Himalayas or the neighboring states, but covers China's multidirectional expansionism, which has been going on for years. Given the current sliding geopolitical landscape and Xi's focus on achieving his "China Dream" goals, including national rejuvenation and integration, the Indo-Pacific democracies have no choice but to put impetus into examining and upending China's attempts at sinicizing the Himalayan (dis)order.

India mum on environmental losses due to China's Tibet policies: Academic

05 July 2024, [Deccan Herald](#)

Anand Kumar pointed to China's efforts to alter the courses of rivers originating in Tibet, seven of which flow through countries in South and Southeast Asia, under the guise of development. These actions pose significant environmental challenges for countries sharing natural resources with Tibet, he said.

Bengaluru: India, despite being the world's largest democracy and a champion of anti-colonial struggles, has not responded strongly to Tibet's environmental losses caused by Chinese encroachments, Anand Kumar, a sociologist and former professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, said here on Thursday. Kumar made these remarks while delivering a talk on Indo-Tibet Relations, Tibetan Plateau, and India's Climate Security at an event organised by Mount Carmel College in collaboration with the Central Tibetan Administration, South Zone, Bengaluru.

He pointed to China's efforts to alter the courses of rivers originating in Tibet, seven of which flow through countries in South and Southeast Asia, under the guise of development. These actions pose significant environmental challenges for countries sharing natural resources with Tibet, he added.

Environmental activist Soumyadeep Datta also addressed the lack of substantial regional language resources on Tibet's history of struggles, contrasting it with the vast resources in English. He called for including the histories of neighbouring countries in Indian curricula to underscore the impact of global warming, particularly on regions like Tibet.

Datta further said vast stretches of India's northeastern states are grappling with environmental degradation.

The discussions were part of the celebrations marking the 89th birthday of the Dalai Lama and included traditional prayers by Buddhist monks from Mundgod and a cultural dance performance by Gangjong Doegar, a troupe from Kalimpong, West Bengal.

Sino-Indian Conflict Is The Centerpiece Of India's Foreign Policy – Analysis

04 July 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), P.K. Balachandran

Jaishankar-Wang Yi agree to resume dialogue over border peace on the side lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan on July 4

The relationship between India and China has been fraught from the time of India's independence in 1947 and the birth of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC)

in 1949. But it was not the centre piece of India's foreign policy until much later.

Today, it is the main concern in policy making circles in New Delhi. Besides it is impacting countries in India's neighbourhood and causing resentment there. The conflict also shapes India's relations with world powers.

Recent moves in India's foreign relations stem from the antagonistic Sino-Indian relationship: Within days of assuming office as Prime Minister for a third time, Narendra Modi flew off to Italy to fraternize with the leaders of the anti-Chinese Western bloc at the G7 summit.

On June 19, to China's chagrin, India facilitated a meeting between a US Congressional delegation and the dissident Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, in Dharamshala.

Modi chose to be absent himself from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Kazakhstan on July 4. China happens to be one of the founders of the SCO. In all likelihood, Modi will stay out of the BRICS summit in Kazan (Russia) on October 22 also. China is a founder-member of BRICS and a leading player there.

India has made a number of anti-Chinese moves both in the Indian economy and India's neighbourhood. In the domestic sphere, it banned Chinese apps accusing them of snooping on Indians. It imposed high tariffs on imports from China. Chinese companies were banned from participating in highways, micro, small and medium industrial sector projects.

Applications for investments in the e-commerce and financial services sectors were viewed with suspicion. Steps were taken against money laundering and tax evasion. All this led to US\$ 6 billion in potential Chinese FDI being held up in 2022.

In India's neighbourhood, steps were taken to dissuade governments from giving projects to the Chinese, in some cases successfully. Neighbouring countries felt uncomfortable about being a venue for Sino-Indian tussles. International forums also saw India and China battling it out on one issue or the other.

China's Provocations

On February 4, 2022, government told parliament that China was in illegal occupation of about 38,000 sq.km of in Ladakh for the last six decades. Chinese troops killed 20 unarmed Indian soldiers at Galwan in Ladakh in June 2020.

China claims sovereignty over the entire Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh and gave new names to places in that State irritating India.

Chinese President Xi Jinping did not attend the G20 summit in India in September 2023, although it was Indian Prime Minister Modi's prestige project.

In 2008, China blocked India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). It also blocked its entry into the

UN Security Council as a permanent member. China has blocked India's bid to sanction terrorists at the UN. In short, China is loath to give India quarter in the multilateral sphere.

Relevance of Sino-US Relations

Writing for the Carnegie Endowment website, Former Indian Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to China, Vijay Gokhale, says that China judges India's actions from the stand point of its relations with the US.

From the 1940s, the Chinese have never seen India as an independent country with a foreign policy independent of the West. India has no independent status in China's policy landscape. India matters to China only to the extent that it has a role in the Sino-US conflict.

According to the Chinese, the signing of foundational agreements between the Indian and US armed forces in 2023 meant that India and the US were moving towards an alliance, disturbing the balance of power between China and the US.

Gokhale quotes Ye Hailin of the National Institute of International Strategy in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to say that China is convinced that India would lean to the US to derive benefits and that China would inevitably be the target of a joint Indo-US "China containment plan."

Line of Actual Control Issues

According to Gokhale, the escalating tension on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the Sino-Indian border since 2013 has to be seen from the Chinese perspective to understand why China is troubling India so frequently.

According to a recent study by Ms Ketian Zhang, Assistant Professor at George Mason University, China uses mild coercion on the LAC to warn India not to go for an all-out war with China.

Ms. Zhang submits that India's cooperation with the US has not yet reached a level that can compel the US to support India in case of a war with China, and that China's current strength and level of coercive actions along the LAC are adequate to unsettle India without provoking a serious backlash or full scale war.

In Gokhale's understanding, China regards India as being "unequal" to it, and therefore "unworthy" of being looked at as a stand-alone or independent power.

India becomes relevant to China primarily in the context of great power relationships, especially US-China relationship.

China expects India to treat China's concerns as "global" and therefore requiring immediate attention. It wants India to regard its own concerns vis-a-vis China as "localized problems" that should be managed bilaterally. In other words, India should be satisfied that China is not making these problems worse!

According to Gokhale, China's leaders believe that the nature of India's polity as well as the asymmetry of

power between the two countries do not require China to reshape its policy in a way that meaningfully accommodates Indian interests.

However, paradoxically, the Chinese think that India will never formally become a US ally. They also think that the US will not get directly involved militarily in an India-China war because this will be an intolerable burden.

There is also the view in China that India is hesitant to play the role of a junior ally of the US because it has a long tradition of pursuing a non-aligned foreign policy. According to Ms. Zhang, even QUAD has not changed China's view that the US and India will not form a military alliance. She therefore says that the probability of a geopolitical backlash to the continuance of the current level of coercion on the LAC, or even some increase in it, will be low.

China Underestimates India

In Gokhale's view, China is under-estimating India's potential. India is also building up its economy and its military power and is sticking to its stand on the border issue and normalization of relations.

China wants the border issue to be put on the backburner and the two countries to work on trade, economic cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels. But India insists that there can be normal bilateral relations until the situation on the border returns to normal, which means going back to the positions and the agreed conditions of engagement as of 1993. But China does not want to go back to the 1993 agreements.

War Unlikely

However, both sides seem to rule out an all-out war of the 1962 kind. In a TV interview, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar ruled out war saying it would be difficult to take on a country whose economy is five times that of the Indian economy.

War or even a big increase in Sino-Indian tension will result in China losing the big Indian market for its telecom, machinery and electronic goods sectors. China's share here in this is 30%, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). Bilateral trade is now US\$ 118 billion

Jaishankar-Wang Yi meeting in SCO Summit

The Foreign Ministers of India and China, S. Jaishankar and Wang Yi, met on the side lines of the SCO summit at Astana in Kazakhstan on July 4 and agreed that "the prolongation of the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side."

Jaishankar highlighted the need to redouble efforts to achieve complete disengagement from the remaining areas in Eastern Ladakh and restore border peace and tranquillity in order to remove obstacles towards return of normalcy in bilateral relations.

He reaffirmed the importance of fully abiding by relevant bilateral agreements, protocols, and

understandings reached between the two Governments in the past.

The Line of Actual Control must be respected and peace and tranquillity in the border areas always enforced, Jaishankar told Wang Yi.

Wang Yi's response is not mentioned in the Indian read out.

However, both ministers agreed to continue and step up meetings of the diplomatic and military officials of the two sides to take forward their discussions to resolve the remaining issues at the earliest.

To that end, they agreed that the Working Mechanism on Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) should hold an early meeting.

Is integration of Tibetan schools in exile the way forward?

03 July 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

Since the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 and the subsequent flight of Tibetan refugees to India, Nepal, and Bhutan, the provision of shelter and education for Tibetan children has been a pressing concern for the Tibetan government in exile. In these circumstances, schools emerge as pivotal institutions, serving as the bedrock for the preservation of Tibetan culture and language, the cultivation of knowledge, and more importantly, nurturing resilience within the community.

Over the next six decades, the Tibetan education setup saw four school institutions rise. The Central Tibetan Schools Administration (CTSA) established in 1961, which is now dissolved and part of the Sambhota Tibetan School Societies, Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) established in 1960, Sambhota Tibetan Schools Administrations (STSS) established in 1999, and Tibetan Homes Foundations (THF) established in 1963. These autonomous bodies took up the mantle of educating Tibetan youth, collaborating closely with the Department of Education of the Tibetan government in exile, known officially as the Central Tibetan Administration.

However, present challenges cast a shadow over the future. It's an open secret that Tibetan schools are grappling with a dwindling Tibetan student population. Once vibrant hubs of learning, these institutions now find themselves at a crossroad, contending with declining enrollment and the resultant strain on resources.

Decline of Tibetan students in exile schools

The primary hurdle facing Tibetan schools today is the dwindling number of Tibetan students. The President of the CTA Penpa Tsering reiterated in multiple speeches the challenge of diminishing demography of Tibetan students faced by all the Tibetan schools, citing factors such as the declining influx of Tibetans

from Tibet, the low annual birth rate in exile, and increasing migration to the West.

As of April 2024, enrollment figures in various Tibetan schools paint a concerning picture. In North India, STS Shimla, once boasting hundreds of Tibetan refugee students, has a total enrollment of 290 students, with only 32 Tibetans, 42 Himalayan students and 216 Indian students. For the year 2024 admission, only two Tibetan students were enrolled in the school. Sambhota Tibetan School in Mussoorie accommodates 382 students, among whom only 42 are Tibetan, 62 are of Himalayan descent and the rest are Indian students. STS Herbertpur has only 116 Tibetan students and the rest are Indian students out of 310 students in total. In East India, STS Kalimpong has 133 Tibetan students out of 365 students. STS Darjeeling has 119 Tibetan students out of 232 students.

Tibetan Homes School Gohrimafi in Rishikesh has seen a decrease in enrollment, with only 66 students compared to its previous count of 150. Gopalpur School in the Tibetan Children's Village has also experienced a significant decline in student numbers, dropping from 902 in 2020 to 629 in 2023. STS Dalhousie which used to be a senior secondary school has to close down because of fewer students. Currently, STS Dalhousie operates as a kindergarten and houses only 6 children.

The decline in the number of Tibetan students in North India is also concerning, with an average attendance hovering around a mere 10 per cent of the total strength. This downward trend is pronounced in north-Eastern Tibetan schools also, where the presence of Tibetan students dwindles to only 40 to 50 per cent of the total school students on average.

However, there is a stark difference in South and Central India, where Tibetan schools are experiencing a robust presence due to the cluster Tibetan communities there. STS Mundgod has 80 Tibetan students out of 82. All of STS Mainpat's total strength of 46 students are Tibetans. STS Bylakuppe has 96 Tibetan students out of 112 students.

The diminishing number of students poses challenges to the functioning of these educational institutions. Several schools have already closed, including STS Poanta Sahib in 2021, STS Dalhousie and recently Lower TCV school in Dharamshala. Some are on the verge of closing like THF Gohrimafi in Rishikesh.

The number of Tibetan students enrolled in CTA-affiliated schools in India and Nepal has declined significantly, especially since 2008. From 2000 to 2023, enrollment fell by 39 per cent, from approximately 25,700 to 15,700. Additionally, from 2016 to 2023, the number of schools directly or indirectly affiliated with the CTA contracted from 71 to 66. To stabilise the student population, Tibetan educational institutions have admitted thousands of non-Tibetans from

Himalayan communities that share the Tibetan Buddhist cultural heritage.

Sikyong Penpa Tsering while speaking to Tibetan Youth convention participants on July, 2024 in Dharamshala stated that "The Himalayan regions are developing rapidly, and soon they will establish quality schools within their communities. Once these schools are in place, families are likely to send their children there rather than to Tibetan schools".

Tsewang Rigzin, former Deputy Director of the Tibet Fund and co-author of the recently published article titled "South Asia's Tibetan Refugee Community Is Shrinking, Imperiling Its Long-Term Future," told Phayul that "In my opinion, the most pressing issue facing the Tibetan exile community today is the dwindling enrollment of Tibetan children in Tibetan schools, whether they fall under the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) or operate independently. This is a significant cause for concern, as the prosperity of the Tibetan exile community hinges on the strength and vitality of its institutions, such as the CTA and various other bodies. The primary workforce that sustains these institutions comprises the children who emerge from these schools".

Kashag's vision to streamline the exile educational institutions

The 16th Kashag's decision to streamline educational institutions reflects a multifaceted approach aimed at enhancing efficiency, coordination, and service delivery within the Tibetan education system. At the core of this vision is the decision to [appoint](#) Education Kalon as the Chairman for prominent institutions like Tibetan Children's Village (TCV), Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF), and Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society (STSS). This decision has sparked both commendation and controversy, highlighting the complexities and challenges involved in restructuring educational governance.

Proponents of the decision argue that establishing uniformity in governance structures across these institutions will increase efficiency and coordination. By standardizing the appointment of the Chairman, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) aims to create a more cohesive educational system. Additionally, the emphasis on aligning departmental roles and leadership underscores a commitment to addressing systemic inefficiencies within the education system.

However, critics raise concerns that centralizing the appointment of the Chairman under the Education Kalon may compromise the autonomy and independence historically enjoyed by these educational institutions. These institutions have operated with a degree of autonomy, allowing them to cater to the unique needs of their student populations. Consolidating power in the hands of the Education Kalon raises the risk of stifling innovation and local

decision-making processes that have contributed to the success of these institutions in the past.

Speaking to Phayul, Sikyong Penpa Tsering justified the decision to centralize the chairmanship of prominent educational institutions, framing it as a necessary structural change aimed at improving service delivery within the Tibetan education system. "This is not necessarily a consolidation, it's more of structural change that we are trying to make to the institution....., when the structure is not right then the system becomes faulty. Traditionally the role of the education minister is to take care of all the autonomous institutions".

Tsering highlights the disparate arrangements within the governance of institutions such as Tibetan Children's Village (TCV), Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF), and Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society (STSS) as evidence of the need for reform. He points out that while the Education Kalon chaired the board of TCV, the chairmanship of THF was held by the Sikyong.

Meanwhile, STSS exhibited further complexity with two distinct boards; one chaired by the Education Kalon for schools directly managed by Sambhota and another chaired by the bureau representative in Delhi for schools formerly under the Central Tibetan Schools Administration.

This diversity in governance structures, according to Tsering, led to inefficiencies and inconsistencies in decision-making processes, hindering the effective delivery of educational services. By consolidating the chairmanship under the Education Kalon for all these institutions, Tsering claims to have established homogeneity in the governance structure, thereby simplifying decision-making processes and promoting greater coordination and coherence across the educational system. However, it's crucial to critically assess whether centralization under the Education Kalon truly addresses the underlying challenges faced by these institutions.

While uniformity in governance structure may streamline administrative processes, it also raises concerns over the concentration of power and potential loss of institutional autonomy and issues arising due to consolidation of authority. Moreover, the extent to which this structural change translates into tangible improvements in service delivery remains uncertain and necessitates evaluation based on concrete grassroots assessment.

The idea of integration of schools

During an interview with Phayul, Sikyong Penpa Tsering emphasized the need to integrate Tibetan schools to ensure their long-term sustainability aiming to streamline administration, enhance facilities, and optimize resources for students. Tsering acknowledged the complexity of school integration, highlighting concerns such as the dismantling of staff structures or the necessity of providing alternative

employment if schools are closed down. He stated "In terms of integration of schools, there are lots of questions on how we have to do it, one of the ideas that I floated was can we do it zone-wise, starting from northeast because northeast doesn't have Homes schools and TCV school, it's all Sambhota sets of schools. We have to see how do we ingrate the schools for sustenance of these institutions over the long run and then in Central North including District Sirmour with Tibetan Homes Foundations. In Himachal Pradesh, most of the schools are TCV schools and Ladakh is also TCV. So we have to resolve the issue by talking with each other about how to integrate the schools because integration is not an easy job, there is lots of detachment and if we close down one school the whole staff structure has to be dismantled or provide alternative employment of a golden handshake, the idea is to reduce the administrative cost and increase the facilities to the students."

Tsering further emphasized the importance of considering statistical data, particularly regarding the declining birth rates and subsequent implications for school enrollment. He stressed the need for strategic planning to address the evolving educational landscape, including the provision of adequate facilities for both students and teachers. "We have to keep the statistics in mind, there are only about 500 new births in a year, in the years to come we are looking at only about 6000 Tibetan children from grade 1 to 12 if we look at the average. Considering these numbers, in the next 5 years who do we manage? How do we organise ourselves? How many higher secondary schools do we need to be able to provide the right education with the right facilities even increasing the facilities for teachers if possible".

He pointed out that schools like TCV face challenges such as administrative costs rising while student numbers decline. He urged proactive measures, warning of the increasing financial burden associated with delayed integration efforts. Sikyong Tsering advocated for the development of a comprehensive blueprint to guide the integration process over the next five to ten years. "TCV is seeing a huge challenge with so many schools, the administrative cost is going up and numbers of students are going down, they will have to strategize on how they want to do it or follow a complete structure that the education department and Kashag guides them to do it. The longer it takes to consolidate the schools, it's going to be more miserable, it'll cost a lot more drain on the finances. So before that happens, if we can develop a blueprint as to how things might change and what steps we need to take in the next 5 to 10 years for the complete integration of schools."

Having the same concern as the Sikyong, Tsewang Rigzin, told Phayul "The consolidation of Tibetan schools is a necessary step due to the declining

number of Tibetan students. Maintaining a larger number of schools is costly and inefficient if the student population is decreasing. This consolidation is more of a compulsion rather than a choice. In the early days, these schools had to look after and educate a large number of students, which was a challenging task. Nowadays, with fewer students, the focus should shift to improving the quality of education.

“Recent CBSE exam results have shown that Tibetan schools are performing well, but it’s important to remember that passing an exam requires only 33 per cent. If a student aspires to attend a good college, they need to achieve high marks. Therefore, focusing on the quality of education rather than the quantity of students is crucial”.

However, Tsering’s proposal to integrate schools zone-wise encountered technical hurdles, as highlighted by Tsering Dhondup, Director of the Sambhota Tibetan Schools Administration. Dhondup, told Phayul, citing concerns regarding the potential impact on funding: “If schools that are transferred from the Central Tibetan Schools Administration (CTSA) to Sambhota Tibetan Schools Societies, like STS Mussoorie and STS Herbertpur, were transferred to autonomous institutions like the Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF). Such transfers might jeopardize funding from the Indian government, which currently supports these schools. If schools in Himachal were to be looked after by TCV, there would be ramifications for schools like STS Shimla, which currently receives funding from the Indian government”.

Dhondup also shared concerns about whether autonomous institutions would be willing to assume the responsibility of administering these schools. These technical and logistical hurdles underscore the complexity of implementing Tsering’s proposal. He further stated that “there have been two meetings between Sikyong and key stakeholders, including TCV, THF, and STSS, and no substantial decisions have been reached regarding school integration”. The meetings have brought to light the complexity of the issue and the need for careful consideration of technical, administrative, and financial implications.

What lies ahead

In light of the myriad challenges and transformations facing the Tibetan schools in exile, it stands at a pivotal crossroads, demanding thoughtful strategies and decisive actions for its continued existence and sustenance. The journey from the aftermath of the Chinese occupation to the present scenario, characterized by declining enrollment numbers and institutional restructuring, underscores the resilience and adaptability of the Tibetan community in exile.

The dwindling enrollment figures in Tibetan schools, particularly in the northern regions of India, raise urgent concerns about the sustainability of these institutions. Factors such as demographic shifts,

migration patterns, and changing birth rates contribute to this complex issue, necessitating comprehensive interventions to reverse the downward trend. The closure of some schools and the impending risk faced by others underscore the gravity of the situation and the imperative for immediate action.

Amidst these challenges, Kashag’s vision to streamline educational institutions represents a bold step towards enhancing efficiency and coordination within the system. The decision to centralize the appointment of Chairpersons under the Education Kalon reflects an ambitious effort to standardize governance structures and promote coherence across educational institutions. While this move holds promise for administrative efficiency, it also sparks debates regarding the potential erosion of institutional autonomy and responsiveness to local needs.

Furthermore, the proposal to integrate schools zone-wise highlights the complexities inherent in such endeavours, ranging from logistical hurdles to financial implications. Despite the recognition of the need for strategic planning and proactive measures, the path forward remains fraught with uncertainties and technical challenges.

In navigating these complexities, it is imperative to adopt a holistic approach that balances the imperatives of standardization with the imperative of preserving the unique identities and needs of individual institutions. Any structural changes must be accompanied by rigorous evaluation and consultation with stakeholders to ensure that they align with the overarching goal of providing quality education to Tibetan children in the exile set up.

India playing Tibet card to prick China

03 July 2024, [O Heraldo](#)

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”.

Beijing’s reaction highlights the sensitive nature of the Tibet issue in China-US relations.

The American lawmakers’ visit to India was part of a broader effort to support Tibetan rights. They met the

Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, in Dharamshala. The visit aligns with Washington's long-standing support for Tibetans and their cultural and religious practices, which have faced repression in China.

The US House of Representatives recently passed the Resolve Tibet Act, which aims to pressure China into resuming dialogue with Tibetan leaders. This dialogue has been stalled since 2010. The bill seeks a negotiated agreement on Tibet's future, addressing aspirations related to its historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

China considers the Dalai Lama a separatist. The Dalai Lama, however, seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet rather than independence. Beijing insists on approving the Dalai Lama's successor to strengthen its control over Tibet.

The question that comes to one's mind is about what makes US diplomats for this sudden visit to India, meeting Dalai Lama at this point of time? At the same time, India must carefully analyse the repercussions of such sudden move.

The present meeting directly involves three countries: US, Tibet and India. While physically US is very far from the epicenter, Tibet is a part of China's main contenders; therefore, any physical clash will be between China and India. Sino-Indian border dispute is an ongoing territorial dispute over the sovereignty of two relatively large, and several smaller, separated pieces of territory between China and India which are being claimed and counter claimed. Besides India being vulnerable in the India-China Northern border, threat from the eastern border through Myanmar and the Indian Ocean cannot be ignored. At the same time, India has to broadly see the issues of Tibet, Taiwan, Xinjiang, Hong Kong - from their perspectives - that combine the kind of broader view that India has to take.

Besides, direct dispute between China and India on the Tibet issue will call for direct conflict, whereas US has no physical stake but only a political one.

While it is also difficult to fathom at what level the US-China relationship will get ignited in case of Tibet issue, conflict with Taiwan is going to be a major issue in worsening the US-China relationship. In case of US getting directly involved in the China-Tibet issue, it is likely to compound Sino-China issues too.

India has also initiated a strategic response to China's renaming of places in Arunachal Pradesh by planning to rename over two dozen places in Tibet. This move comes as part of a broader effort to counteract China's territorial claims and assert India's own historical and geographical narratives. India aims to assert its own narratives and strengthen its position on the global stage.

It is a warning shot for China and its president Xi Jinping. India is essentially signaling 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 be allowed being 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 takes up the issue of Tibet's autonomy so aggressively.

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.

However, to achieve such a balancing act, India must strengthen its economy and the defence sector very powerfully. After immense provocation, if China responds with aggression, India should be able to ward off the threat.

THE TIBETAN DILEMMA

03 July 2024, [Lt General M K Das](#)

"His Holiness Dalai Lama, with his message of knowledge, tradition, compassion, purity of soul and love, will love 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." - Nancy Pelosi, former US House Speaker

A7-member US Congressional delegation, led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, which also included Nancy Pelosi, former US House of Representatives Speaker visited Dharamshala (HP) and New Delhi from June 16 to 20, 2024. The visit of the delegation to Dharamshala, the home of His Holiness Dalai Lama on June 18-19 assumes significance from the foreign policy perspective on Tibet. The powerful delegation from the US called on HH Dalai Lama on June 19. The visit comes after the US Congress recently passed the Resolve Tibet Act. It would become a law once the US President Joe Biden formally signs and approves it. The visit was a clear message for China after China strongly objected to the visit of the US delegation by urging the US to "fully recognise the anti-China and separatist nature of Dalai clique and refrain from any contact with it." We need to understand the background of this important issue which also has serious implications on Indo-China relations. Tibet is often called the "roof of the world" and it is a high-altitude plateau and mountain region with an average height of 14,000 feet.

Located to the south-west of China, this massive area of 25,00,000 square km is bordered by Nepal, India

and Bhutan to its south. Before 1950, it was a remote area and it was an autonomous region. China gained Independence on October 1, 1949 and immediately staked its claim over Tibet citing ancient linkage with the region. China forcefully annexed Tibet in 1951 and since then it has been under the administration of People's Republic of China (PRC). After the Tibetan uprising in 1959, the spiritual leader of Tibetans had to fled to India and HH Dalai Lama established a Tibetan government in exile in Mussoorie on April 29, 1959 and thereafter it shifted to Dharamshala in 1960. Though India recognised Tibet to be part of China in 1954 itself, the existence of Government in exile in India has not been taken kindly by it. The One China Principle of China maintains that PRC and the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has sole legitimacy over Tibet, Hongkong and Taiwan. On the other hand, One China Policy of US accepts Tibet and Hongkong to be under the PRC and the US officially has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan. But the US has supported the call for genuine autonomy for the Tibetans from the autocratic China. In pursuance of this stated policy, the US Congress passed the Resolve Tibet Act in June 2024 to enhance US support for Tibet and promote dialogue between China and Dalai Lama. As expected, China has reacted very strongly and has asked the US to shelve the bill. US and China share a tumultuous relationship when it comes to democratic and just rights of the Tibetans. But the timing of the act is interesting. Modi 3.0 Government has assumed power on June 9, 2024. The elections for the US presidency are due in November this year and championing the cause of democracy in Tibet does benefit President Biden in his reelection bid. Another way of looking it may be US reshape the One China Policy and leverage more from China in the next term. The US can afford to annoy China below the threshold of diplomatic tolerance at least till the formation of the new Government. The US delegation also met Prime Minister Modi and officially the meet was to congratulate Mr. Modi on winning the third term in office as also further strengthening Indo-US relations. India also reaffirmed its support to HH Dalai Lama in his position as the spiritual leader of the Tibetans to conduct "his religious and spiritual activities." Though this has been the public position of India, the timing of the visit of the US delegation would have China thinking. Compared to the US, these developments pose much serious Tibetan dilemma to Indian foreign policy mandarins. With the situation in and opposite Eastern Ladakh not having changed much after the Galwan crisis of June 2020 in the last four years, any further aggravation of the situation elsewhere is something we can ill afford as of now.

Therefore, our response has to be carefully calibrated in tune with the ground realities. Given the advanced age of HH Dalai Lama (89 years) and his failing health,

the key issue would be his 15th successor to the Tibetan heritage. China certainly would like to have a successor attuned to their thought process. The US has said that it would not accept a Beijing-appointed Dalai Lama. India would have to tread carefully here. One thing is sure. China is going to react very strongly if they fail to appoint the successor and may be President Xi Jinping would try to prove Nancy Pelosi wrong. The critical decision from the foreign policy perspective would be India's stance on continuing with the Tibetan government in exile functioning from India. While we may continue to support the just rights of the around 70,000 Tibetans living in India, the US should be offering the Tibetans a government in exile on their soil. That would give some seriousness to the much touted Reshape Tibet Bill/Act. Based on how the 15th Dalai Lama is enshrined, India's foreign policy must have the options ready. One obvious option is to settle border dispute with China and their claim over Arunachal Pradesh. Militarily, while we improve our strategic relations with the USA, in a conflict with China in the immediate or mid- term, the Americans won't be of much help. With a majorly Russian origin military hardware with Indian Armed Forces, it would take decades and a huge dollar bill to have compatible arsenal. The only option is to quickly become 'Aatmnirbhar' and our defence industry has to match up to this challenge. The defence infrastructure projects have also to be pushed further. Modi 3.0 Government may have to confront the Tibetan dilemma in its third term. While we should continue to support the Tibetan cause as inherited, the future beckons a more pragmatic response, not necessarily bound with the existing moral dilemma.

Boycotting Xinjiang cotton: What does it mean for environmental and labor justice in Central Asia?

03 July 2024, [Global Voices](#), Shahida Yakub

In recent years, the international community has boycotted cotton sourced from Xinjiang, a vast region in northwestern China, due to concerns over human rights violations. Under the leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Beijing has subjected Xinjiang's Muslim minorities to arbitrary detention and forced labor. Some global cotton buyers, in response, have turned to other regions to fulfill cotton demands.

The boycotting of Xinjiang cotton has created something of a ripple effect in other parts of the world, where cotton harvesting is associated with environmental challenges and human rights abuses. One of the most glaring examples of this is Uzbekistan, where cotton production contributed to one of the biggest environmental catastrophes in the

world, the drying out of the Aral Sea, as well as decades of forced labor practices.

The Xinjiang cotton industry under scrutiny

Situated in northwestern China and bordering Central Asia, Xinjiang is home to approximately 12 million Uyghurs, a Turkic-speaking ethnic group that is predominantly Muslim. The region began to see large-scale cotton production in the 1950s when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) placed its economy under the control of a paramilitary institution known as the Production and Construction Corps (or *bingtuan* 兵). Researchers and human rights organizations have found that the *Bingtuan* forced members of local communities and prisoners — potentially more than half a million people — to work in mining, construction, manufacturing, and cotton harvesting under harsh conditions. Today, Xinjiang is pivotal in China's cotton production, accounting for over 85 percent of the country's output and 20 percent of the global supply. The *Bingtuan* is still responsible for around one-third of Xinjiang's cotton production.

The cotton industry in Xinjiang has historically relied on manual picking. Despite the Chinese government's claims of significant progress in machine harvesting, 60 percent of cotton harvesting in southern Xinjiang, remains a manual effort, according to Chinese state media and government statistics. In recent years, human rights organizations and international news media have uncovered evidence of systematic forced labor programs that coerced Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities to work in cotton fields and factories.

According to Chinese state media, the cotton textile industry in Xinjiang employs close to a million workers, although Beijing denies allegations of forced labor. These labor programs are part of Beijing's broader strategy to maintain political stability in Xinjiang, international organizations say. The US government first banned Xinjiang cotton imports before subsequently passing a law to ban nearly all imports from the region in 2021. Brands like Nike, H&M, and Burberry have also publicly severed ties with Xinjiang cotton suppliers — moves that drew condemnation and boycotts from Chinese consumers.

This widespread international backlash has not only affected Xinjiang but also led to scrutiny of the cotton supply chain worldwide, as nations and companies reevaluated their dependencies on China.

Shifting tides of cotton sourcing

In recent years, many industries including textile and clothing have shifted operations from China to countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Turkey, in order to avoid increased labor costs in China and the West's heightened regulatory scrutiny for Chinese products. However, paradoxically, in some cases, this increased demand for a more just cotton supply chain

is exacerbating local environmental issues and worsening labor rights conditions.

Cotton is one of the most resource and labor-intensive agricultural commodities in land, water, and labor. In developing countries and regions, the cotton industry has long grappled with labor abuses and environmental issues, such as the depletion of water, soil contamination, and overuse of pesticides. In Uzbekistan, Central Asia's top cotton producer, an estimated 60 percent of agricultural water is wasted yearly due to mismanagement and obsolete technologies. The country is also known for labor exploitation in cotton production. Since 2011 Uzbekistan's cotton products faced global boycotts because of the use of child and forced labor. Over 330 international brands and retailers supported this boycott. International pressure forced the Uzbek government to commit to agricultural reforms and eradicating forced child labor during the cotton harvest, which resulted in the lifting of the boycott in 2022.

However, experts believe that the labor risks are still very high. In an interview with Global Voices, Umida Niyazova, director of Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization based in Germany said:

Uzbekistan is still not willing to change its anti-market rules of regulation of its cotton industry. The central government and local authorities are still operating on a quota basis, whereas every region of the country has to produce a certain amount of cotton and assigns land to farmers specifically to grow only cotton.

The persistence of this quota system and the associated administrative pressures became evident during a video conference wherein the Deputy Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan Shukhrat Ganiev directly threatened farmers: "I don't care what you do but you must deliver 11 thousand tons of cotton. Don't play with it, don't play — otherwise, it will end very badly for you and for the regional governor."

The lifting of the boycott on Uzbek cotton in 2022 coincided with sanctions being imposed on cotton from Xinjiang. Uzbek officials looked to take advantage of this situation, even as many textile brands were wary of partnering with Uzbekistan in light of its unresolved environmental and human rights violations. Brands' hesitation to move their production chain from Xinjiang to Uzbekistan didn't stop the Uzbek president from announcing his ambitious plans to turn his country into a textile hub and increase the production of yarn up to 100 percent by 2027. In order to stimulate this strategy, the Uzbek government intends to create textile production zones and release them from taxation until 2027.

Due to a combination of political, geographic, and social factors, Uzbekistan is especially vulnerable to the climate crisis, with environmental

watchdogs ranking it 96th out of 181 countries in 2020 for climate risk. To mitigate this, Uzbekistan signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement in 2015, as well as the United Nation's Europe Protocol on Water and Health, which aims to protect human health and well-being through better water management. However, despite the pledges made by the Uzbek government, the lack of progress in agricultural reforms and tight control over farmers makes experts skeptical about the progress

China was and still remains one of the key foreign investors in Uzbekistan. Since 2017, the scale of China's investments in the country increased fivefold and amounts to USD 11.1 billion, according to Uzbek Minister for Trade and Investments, Laziz Kudratov. One of the key areas of China's investment is textiles and agriculture. Though partnership with China is hailed by the Uzbek government, human rights defenders are concerned about transparency in observing labor rights and care for the environment. In an interview with Global Voices, Umida Niyazova, director of the Uzbek Forum for Human Rights said.

When we talk about Chinese-owned textile factories or cotton clusters, we need to forget about any sort of advocacy. When we carried out our campaign to boycott Uzbek cotton, Western companies were signing up for this, but Chinese companies didn't care. They continued to buy Uzbek cotton and they didn't care about human rights violations or environmental justice. It would be much better if Western companies came to Uzbekistan, because they follow very strict regulations when it comes to labor or environment. We don't see this happening with Chinese companies.

Relocation Of Chinese Industries To Pakistan: Strategic Move For Economic Growth – OpEd

03 July 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Sehr Rushmeen

In a significant development reflecting the strengthening ties between Pakistan and China, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has approved the relocation of Chinese industries to Pakistan as part of joint ventures between companies from both nations. This decision marks a strategic effort to bolster Pakistan's economy through enhanced foreign investment and industrial collaboration. The move is set to pave the way for increased economic activity, job creation, and technological transfer, positioning Pakistan as an attractive destination for global investors.

Chairing a meeting to discuss matters related to the Board of Investment (BoI), Prime Minister Sharif emphasized that promoting both local and foreign investment is a top priority for his government. He underscored the importance of creating a business-friendly environment to attract traders and investors.

This initiative is seen as a step towards realizing the government's commitment to fostering economic growth and stability.

The prime minister directed relevant authorities to submit a comprehensive report on the follow-up of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed between Pakistani and Chinese companies in Shenzhen during his recent visit to China. This directive highlights the government's proactive approach in ensuring that agreements translate into tangible economic benefits.

In light of developments from his visit to China, Prime Minister Sharif called for a review of the draft law for the Special Economic Zones One-Stop Shop. The aim is to streamline processes and make it easier for businesses to operate within these zones. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are critical in attracting foreign investment, and the government's focus on improving the regulatory framework reflects its commitment to providing a conducive environment for industrial growth.

The relocation of Chinese industries to Pakistan is expected to cover sectors such as textile, leather, and footwear, among others. The prime minister highlighted the potential benefits of this relocation, noting ongoing efforts to facilitate the process. By attracting these industries, Pakistan aims to boost its manufacturing capabilities, create employment opportunities, and increase exports.

Plans were also revealed to enlist Chinese experts to establish a Business Facilitation Centre in Islamabad. This center will play a pivotal role in assisting foreign investors, ensuring smooth operations, and addressing any challenges they might face. The draft of the 'Easy Business Act' will be forwarded to the Cabinet Committee for Legislative Cases, further emphasizing the government's resolve to simplify business regulations.

In a separate meeting focused on petroleum and Thar coal, Prime Minister Sharif stressed the importance of promoting alternative energy sources, particularly solar energy. Pakistan, despite having a minimal carbon footprint, ranks among the top five countries vulnerable to climate change. Therefore, the government is taking measures to mitigate the impact of climate change by promoting products based on alternative energy.

During the briefing, it was highlighted that a strategy for Thar coal gasification is being developed. This initiative aims to leverage the country's coal reserves for cleaner energy production, thereby reducing reliance on imported fuels and enhancing energy security.

A comprehensive strategy to enhance the production of tight gas and the installation of smart meters to curb gas and oil theft was also discussed. These measures are part of a broader effort to improve efficiency and

reduce losses in the energy sector. Additionally, a policy is being formulated to promote electric bikes, vehicles, and domestic electric appliances. These steps are in line with global trends towards sustainable energy solutions and reducing carbon emissions. Proposals for deregulating the petroleum sector and digitizing petrol and gas exploration are underway. The Petroleum Division is taking steps to enhance competitiveness in the sector, promote bio-fuels, and increase local production of oil and gas. These initiatives are expected to attract investment, foster innovation, and improve the overall efficiency of the energy sector.

The meetings chaired by Prime Minister Sharif reflect a multi-faceted approach to economic revival. By fostering industrial relocation, promoting alternative energy, and enhancing competitiveness in the energy sector, the government aims to create a robust economic framework that supports sustainable growth.

The relocation of Chinese industries to Pakistan is particularly significant. It not only strengthens the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China but also positions Pakistan as a key player in the regional industrial landscape. The anticipated influx of Chinese investment and expertise is expected to boost the local economy, create jobs, and facilitate technology transfer.

Moreover, the government's focus on creating a business-friendly environment and simplifying regulatory processes underscores its commitment to making Pakistan an attractive destination for global investors. The establishment of the Business Facilitation Centre and the introduction of the Easy Business Act are steps in the right direction, aimed at providing seamless support to businesses operating in Pakistan.

The emphasis on alternative energy sources and climate change mitigation highlights the government's forward-thinking approach. By promoting solar energy and developing strategies for coal gasification, Pakistan is taking significant steps towards energy security and environmental sustainability. These efforts are crucial in addressing the long-term challenges posed by climate change and reducing the country's carbon footprint.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent initiatives, including the relocation of Chinese industries and the promotion of alternative energy sources, reflect a strategic vision for Pakistan's economic future. By fostering industrial collaboration, simplifying business regulations, and addressing energy challenges, the government aims to create a robust and sustainable economic framework. These efforts are expected to position Pakistan as a key player in the regional and global economic landscape, paving the way for long-term growth and prosperity.

As Pakistan continues to navigate its economic challenges, the proactive steps taken by the government provide a promising outlook. The collaboration with China, in particular, offers significant opportunities for industrial and economic development, marking a new chapter in Pakistan's journey towards economic revitalization.

Is there going to be an India-China deal?

02 July 2024, [Brookings](#), Tanvi Madan

Four years ago, a fatal military crisis at the India-China border took their relationship to a new low where it has largely remained. In recent months, however, there has been a debate in India about the desirability of a Sino-Indian reset, i.e., whether New Delhi should make a concerted effort to resume political dialogue or resolve differences with Beijing. Given the potential impact on India's willingness to cooperate with countries to balance China, the possibility of such a change has been a subject of interest for India's partners.

There are reasons why the Modi government might seek to stabilize ties with China, or at least set a floor for the India-China relationship. These include conflict prevention, geopolitical uncertainty, partners' parleys with Beijing, and economic drivers. However, a tactical thaw is more likely than any structural shift away from Sino-Indian rivalry.

This is because there *has* already been a reset in Sino-Indian ties—to a more competitive level. And, even if there is some reengagement, the relationship will remain there due to the range of divergences that persist between India and China.

The potential for a tactical thaw

Speculation about a shift in India's approach got a fillip from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comments in April that relations with China were "important and significant." Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh subsequently stated that India wanted "good relations with all our neighbors." He also remarked that border talks with Beijing were "progressive and satisfactory," and "no fresh tension" had arisen. Moreover, fiery rhetoric against China was largely absent on the campaign trail.

The new Chinese ambassador's arrival in India after 18 months only further fueled speculation, as did the relatively mild Chinese condemnation of Modi's post-election tweet acknowledging Taiwanese leader William Lai's congratulations. Beijing also did not publicly criticize India for hosting a U.S. congressional delegation that lambasted Beijing while visiting the Dalai Lama in India. There has also been an uptick in think tank exchanges, with Beijing touting its facilitation of Indians' travel to China.

Both Singh and Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar have denied that India's approach has changed. But there are several reasons why it won't be surprising if a third-term Modi government seeks to put relations with China on a more stable footing.

For one, New Delhi does not want another escalation at the border, where the four-year-old military standoff continues. Conflict could disrupt India's economic growth and other objectives and would have an uncertain outcome given the Sino-Indian capabilities gap.

Second, geopolitical uncertainty. Indian policymakers have already been grappling with the fallout of several global and regional crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the border clash with China, the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the Israel-Gaza conflict. Then there are the tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.

These crises will shape New Delhi's thinking about a potential escalation with China. They have absorbed India's and its partners' bandwidth and resources which are needed to balance Beijing. These partners include the United States, which provided India with fast-tracked or leased military supplies, intelligence, and diplomatic support during the 2020 Sino-Indian crisis.

Meanwhile, the Russia-Ukraine war has disrupted India's defense imports and led to greater Russian dependence on China—not ideal for an India that still deploys considerable Soviet/Russian-origin equipment on its frontline with China. On the maritime front, piracy and Houthi attacks have absorbed the Indian Navy's attention.

The U.S. elections add another element of uncertainty—specifically, the prospect of another Trump administration. One way it might shape Indian calculations is the impact on India's own options. New Delhi appreciated the Trump administration's competitive approach to China. But there was some uncertainty around President Donald Trump's praise of Xi Jinping. Candidate Trump's shift on a TikTok ban will have raised similar questions about the consistency of his view of China. India might also assess that Beijing's own concern about a second Trump term could result in a Chinese tactical rethink on India (as it seemed to in fall 2017 when China sought to stabilize ties with India and Japan).

A third reason New Delhi might consider selective engagement is concern that its partners' recent China dialogues and deals leave India vulnerable to Chinese pressure. Given historical concerns about a "G2"—a Washington-Beijing condominium—U.S.-China interactions have received particular attention. A former foreign secretary even linked the postponement of the Quad summit earlier this year to Washington's desire for stability with Beijing. Indians

would have also warily watched high-level Australia-China visits, European leaders' engagements with Xi, and the revival of China-Japan-South Korea talks.

While these interactions would concern India, they could simultaneously suggest to New Delhi that Beijing might be ready for a rethink too—since the United States rather than India is China's primary rival. The Modi government might want to test whether Beijing, under pressure from Washington and facing economic headwinds, could seek to ease tensions on its India front and stall the deepening of India's ties with China's rivals.

A fourth reason might be the desire in some quarters in India for economic reengagement with China. The debate within government on this between the security-firsters and the economy-firsters is not new. Yet a new element in it is the assessment that India will need certain imports from China as it seeks to become a manufacturing hub—and part of global supply chains or China-plus-one/diversification strategies. Some constituencies outside government have also advocated for easing imports and investment restrictions. And some Indian corporations are keen to strike deals with Chinese companies in the telecommunications, retail, and electric vehicle spaces.

Finally, some officials and analysts might press for a China rethink due to their skepticism of the United States and concern about New Delhi getting too close to Washington. They might believe that a better equation with China would alleviate the need for alignment with the United States and other Western partners. A milder version of this motive would be outreach to China serving to remind India's Western friends that the Modi government has options and should not be taken for granted.

The improbability of a strategic shift

The extent and outcome of such an Indian exploration with China is uncertain. There was similar speculation in spring-summer 2023 about a breakthrough, but it did not materialize.

Even a tactical thaw wouldn't be easy, as one or both sides would need to budge from their existing, conflicting positions. India's stance has been "border before broader," i.e., broader ties could not return to normal if the border remained "abnormal." China's stance has been "broader before border"—as reflected in the new Chinese ambassador's insistence that "the boundary question is not the entirety of the relationship."

A thaw could also be perilous for New Delhi. Any asks from Beijing that curb India's balancing efforts—building its domestic capacities and foreign partnerships—would be strategically risky. They could advantage China, which has greater capabilities, with no guarantee that Beijing will respect any commitments it makes.

There is also some political risk. The Modi government has dismissed opposition accusations that it has accepted Chinese gains and a new normal at the border. But domestic critics will continue to scrutinize any claims of a “return to peace and tranquility” (the government’s stated metric) and whether concessions are made in the search for stability. There might also be some backlash from labor and/or sections of Indian business from any easing of economic restrictions on China, given concerns about Chinese overcapacity among other issues.

If there is movement despite these obstacles, possible outcomes could involve increased engagement between more senior officials or ministers, including perhaps at the forthcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit. They could involve tactical adjustments at the border, discussions about updating the border agreements, reviving the idea of border delimitation, or selective economic reengagement and renewed civil society interactions.

What they are unlikely to involve, however, is a grand bargain or, at least for now, a leader-level summit. Modi probably feels twice bitten because his previous summits with Xi in September 2014 and April 2018–October 2019 did not preclude border crises.

Even if new agreements are negotiated, New Delhi is likely to take a “don’t trust, verify” attitude given the lack of faith in China respecting them. There might be further disengagement at the border, but de-escalation of the much-more-militarized border areas or dismantling of dual-purpose infrastructure will be harder to pull off. If anything, reports indicate that China and India are continuing to take steps to bolster their territorial claims and military capabilities.

Moreover, even beyond the border, India has a range of differences with China. These include asymmetry in economic ties and technological exposure, giving rise to a sense of vulnerability; China’s deep ties with India’s other rival, Pakistan; its expanding strategic footprint in almost all of India’s neighbors and in the Indian Ocean; its desire to set the terms in Asia as the dominant power; and its efforts to hinder India’s role and interests in the global order. And these have only been intensifying.

Thus, India is unlikely to ease its efforts to compete with and deter China, especially by strengthening its capabilities and partnerships. Moreover, Modi will not want Beijing to believe that he is weaker after the Indian election.

So, could there be an Indian effort to see whether a more stable dynamic with China is possible? Yes. Modi could try—as he did in 2014, 2018 and 2019. But his government is bound to embark on any such outreach while keeping in mind the limits of those previous initiatives, and with the understanding that there has been little let up in Sino-Indian competition across several domains.

Forced Relocation in Tibet: The Downside of China’s Poverty Reduction Strategy

02 July 2024, [IARI](#), Ilaria Manganiello

As a result of China’s relocation programs, Tibetans’ cultural identity is at risk, but according to the Chinese government, these programs are imperative to eradicating poverty. PCC’s strategy, however, should be cautious if Xi wants to prevent a “quarrel” with his neighbors.

Over the past 40 years, the Chinese government has carried out several programs to reduce and eliminate extreme poverty in the Country. On 25 February 2021, the National media announced that extreme poverty had been almost eliminated in China. There were, however, many issues that came up along the way.

The road so far

From 1949 to 1976, under Mao’s leadership, the Chinese government defined poverty as an ideological, more than an economic problem. The poverty issue was addressed by eliminating private ownership of the means of production and redistributing land from landlords to peasants. Redistribution policies were supported by agricultural and educational reforms, together with policies of involuntary mass relocation, mainly for urban construction. By the end of the 1970s, China’s government launched the Reform and Opening Up policy. In the first years, the agricultural sector was the main driver of economic growth and, consequently, of poverty reduction in rural areas.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the government began to develop a second mode of relocation as a strategy for poverty alleviation in areas where geographical conditions were considered unable to sustain farming or other forms of livelihood. This mode of relocation was called “ecological migration”. The Chinese government moved over three million villagers to areas where the geographical conditions were more suitable for agriculture. Based on increases in rural income among the relocatees and other factors, the government declared this program a success.

Since then, the Chinese government has constantly renewed its poverty alleviation programs focusing more and more on the poorest areas of the country. In 2001 the “ecological migration” strategy was expanded to other areas, which included Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet. In 2013, the Party launched a new strategy specifically for these areas, called the “Targeted poverty alleviation” program.

Targeted poverty alleviation program

The Targeted Poverty Alleviation (TPA) program was officially implemented in 2015, it was structured to follow the whole process: from poverty identification to poverty exit. Within the TPA, China has introduced the use of five indicators to identify who needs to be

lifted out of poverty, referred to by the slogan “one income, two assurances, and three guarantees”. So, the first indicator is income; the two assurances are food and clothing, and the three guarantees are basic medical services, safe housing with drinking water and electricity, and free and compulsory education.

After the first identification phase, TPA developed five core methods to lift the poor out of poverty: industry, relocation, ecological compensation, education, and social assistance. Despite its innovative approach to eradicating extreme poverty, TPA methods have some harsh side effects, especially for ethnic minorities.

Relocation and human rights

As said previously, the relocation strategy is not new to the Chinese government. However, after launching the TPA, it was mainly directed toward regions where most people belong to China’s ethnic minorities. Tibet is one of the regions where the mass relocation programs are more controversial, mainly because of the numerous human rights violations perpetrated by China’s government against Tibetans since the creation of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1951.

Indeed, mass relocations in Tibet should be set in the region’s political and historical context. The presence of PCC’s cadres in Tibet is overwhelming and Tibetans are placed under intense pressure to demonstrate their “loyalty” to the Party, which sees Tibet, along with Xinjiang, as politically suspect and a security threat.

To respond to this security need, the PRC is carrying out a “Sinicization” campaign whose objective is to eradicate any trace of Tibetans’ autonomy’s desire. Mass relocation programs are part of this strategy, even if the government maintains that it is the most effective strategy to reduce poverty and, at the same time, to stop environmental degradation. In the case of Tibetans, however, there is no clear and detailed evidence that these areas cannot support human life, and many of the Tibetan households relocated as part of the relocation programs are not even registered as poor.

The last report of Human Rights Watch focuses on the relocation of Tibetans and its consequences. One of the aspects that the report highlights is that Tibetans are moved to locations where they cannot continue their former livelihoods or lifestyles. Often, for example, herders are moved to farming areas and farmers are moved to urban areas where they will be entering the labor market without the experience to do so. Part of the TPA indeed is to provide relocated people with initial subsidies and social assistance to facilitate their adjustment to new lifestyles, but for what concerns Tibetan herders, this kind of assistance is not enough.

Secondly, the report maintains that if villagers do not agree to relocate, PCC’s cadres are allowed to exert

different forms of pressure that range from intrusive home visits to implicit threats. After the relocation, the Chinese government takes extreme measures to prevent people from returning to their homes: it requires them to demolish their former homes once they have been relocated. Depriving relocatees of the possibility of returning to their homes if relocation proves unsatisfactory is allowed by the National Regulations but contravenes international standards. Indeed, the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement provides that states should, when circumstances allow, prioritize the rights of restitution and return.

Of course, this is not China’s first time being accused of human rights violations and it is simple to imagine what kind of reaction China could have: it could either invoke the principle of non-interference or justify its actions as a countermeasure against terrorists, secessionists, or any other political threats. The Chinese government has plenty of data showing how effective its forced relocation programs have been in reducing extreme poverty in Tibet, so other countries or NGOs have little chance of stopping them.

In the future, however, the downsides of the relocation programs will be heavier since Vietnam, Thailand, and other countries are replacing China in the GVCs and China’s economic system is not prepared to welcome new waves of rural migration. Thus, the labor market is becoming stricter and more competitive, and relocated Tibetans will have more difficulties finding a job or resolving work-related problems.

Relocation as a means to control the borders with China’s neighbors

In recent years, the relocation of Tibetans has been accurately directed towards villages along the contested territories between China and its neighbors. In July 2017, the TAR issued the “Plan for the Construction of Well-off Villages in the Border Area of the Tibet Autonomous Region”. It involved building 628 border villages called “well-off border defense villages” which were selected for their remote location, very sparse population, and poor conditions. For China’s government, these villages have multiple objectives: reduce the poverty rate in the country, and keep an eye on the movements of populations and activities across the border. Moreover, the location of these villages, and the development of bridges and railway lines in the same regions, should be viewed as a way to gain leverage in its border disputes with its neighbors.

China is particularly concerned about one of its neighbors: India. Although trade between the two nuclear powers surpassed \$136 billion in 2023, relations between Beijing and New Delhi remain tense. China reclaims large parts of Indian territory, including the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh which

was recently renamed “Southern Tibet” by China’s government. The response of the newly elected National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was the renaming of 30 places in Tibet, signaling its willingness to confront China, at least theoretically. Indian and Chinese troops stationed along the border regularly engage in conflict, sometimes resulting in casualties. As China focuses more on border defense and security in Tibet, the situation between India and China at the borders is likely to escalate and possibly result in more clashes. China is investing heavily and strategically in border-related infrastructure and in relocating and re-educating residents. The Indian Government may follow suit and bolster its borders by investing more, securing them, and ensuring their safety.

For India, the Himalayan problem is a bilateral affair, but recently Modi seems more willing to let China know that he is looking for new allies. Modi thanked Lai Ching-te, the newly elected President of Taiwan, for his message of congratulations after being re-elected. Nevertheless, the Taiwan-India relationship remains unofficial, and their political connections seem to be directed at deepening economic cooperation.

It is possible that Modi’s third term could widen the rift between the two members of BRICS, signaling the beginning of India’s shift toward an even more anti-China sentiment. However, the Chinese and Indian governments are keen to avoid any other conflagration that could cause casualties like the episode that happened in 2020 in the Galwan Valley. In light of these scenarios, India’s relationship with China will likely become increasingly complex and sensitive.

A new dawn in Tibetan diplomacy

02 July 2024, [The Pioneer](#), Prafull Goradia



A seven-member American delegation led by US House Representatives met with the Dalai Lama, indicating a shift in the US stance on Tibet

A seven-member American delegation led by Michael McCaul, and Nancy Pelosi, both leading lights of the US House of Representatives, recently met the Dalai Lama at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh; this is a particularly significant event. They delivered a clear message that the USA no longer accepts Tibet as a part of China; and the US Congress will be soon passing an Act to be made into a law, called the “Resolve Tibet-China Act”. The delegation told the Tibetan spiritual leader that “things have changed now”. This American message has unmistakably resonated in Chinese ears. This US delegation first called on His Holiness at Dharmashala, indicating they were calling on the Tibetan government-in-exile, calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi only thereafter. The Government of India has not hesitated to welcome the delegation. Xi Jinping may have forgotten that Mao Zedong’s regime had first claimed ‘suzerainty’ over Tibet.

Before long, it asserted that Tibet was a Chinese province, before attempting to erase Tibet’s culture, heritage and language. These events have their roots in what happened towards the end of World War II. By allowing Stalin’s Red Army to enter Berlin first and occupy it, the US made the Russians believe that they were the prime victors of WWII. In 1949, the Soviet Communist regime, by hook or crook, acquired the atom bomb. This made them believe even more they were now a superpower. Eco-militarily though, the Soviet Union was no ‘super’ but only a Eurasian power, as it had historically been.

Similarly, the US overestimated the Communist Chinese as well. Compared to Chiang Kai Shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) on the mainland, the Maoists were much more committed. That, however, was no reason to dump the KMT as well as Formosa, now Taiwan from the UN as an official member. In fact, India should have been the correct replacement, but the Nehru government was insistent on giving the right of way to Red China, believe it or not.

The USA, or at least its State Department continued to believe for years that the Soviets and the Chinese were a single communist bloc. The extent of the animosity between the two was fully realized only after the Sino-Soviet clash along the Ussuri River in 1969.

It was only thereafter that President Nixon decided to call on Chinese Premier Mao Zedong in 1972, which brought a great deal of prestige to Dr. Henry Kissinger. The ultimate beneficiary of this resumption of relations was China, when Deng Xiao Ping introduced economic reforms, emphasizing manufacturing and exports. The surplus of trillions of dollars accumulated by China came largely through exports to America. The course of these events explains why the State Department of the USA until now ignored the treatment of the hapless Tibetans by successive Chinese regimes over the last seven decades, beginning in 1959. The question is: is this because of

repeated provocations over Taiwan, or could there be some larger reason unknown to us? The intentions should become clearer with the unfolding of time. India's stand has also been important. Unfortunately, the Leftists and communists in the country had clamoured for the (then) newly formed Red Chinese regime, which had requested its recognition within a few days of its winning the civil war. Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel, on the other hand, was of the clear view that there was no hurry to recognize the new Chinese regime. In November 1949, Patel invited the American charge d'affaires Donovan to verify if there was an urgency in the recognition of Red China.

Knowing the Sardar through his long correspondence with Jawaharlal Nehru on the subject of China, uppermost in his mind must have been the concern that the Sino-Indian border should be mutually recognized. But Jawaharlal Nehru was in a hurry and without consulting the Sardar, informed the Chinese of India's decision to recognize their regime in the December of that year itself.

While expressing its delight at Nehru's message, China also laid down a few preconditions. India would pass on to the new regime all properties and assets of China. Secondly, India would not recognize any members of the KMT. Thirdly, India should support the expulsion of Nationalist China from the UNO, as well as its replacement by the communist regime. China's perfidious intentions can be gauged from the fact that its communist regime announced the 'liberation' of Tibet as the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) task just one day before the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Tibetans had expelled the Chinese Amban, although he had been a Kuomintang government appointee.

The Chinese blamed India for it, abusing Nehru as "a lackey of British imperialism" and complicit in the British humiliation of China, which Mao sought to reverse. The People's Daily of China in an editorial denounced the concept of suzerainty as feudal and oppressive—the very thing China demanded over Tibet. It even called on the UNO to examine India's relationship with Bhutan. The reality, which the Nehru government chose to ignore despite even Ambassador K.M. Pannikar's warnings was that China was eyeing Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan too. But India's first prime minister, a votary of international peace and brotherhood was oblivious to this. The sufferers were from Tibet and India.

Tibet In The Spotlight – OpEd

02 July 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Ahmad Ali Haral

A bipartisan delegation of seven US lawmakers, led by Rep. Michael McCaul and former House Speaker Rep. Nancy Pelosi, travelled to India to meet with the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan leader in exile. This meeting took place just weeks after the US Senate unanimously passed a bill urging the Chinese government to engage in dialogue with the Tibetan leaders to resolve the longstanding China-Tibet dispute.

The Tibet-China Dispute Act, while lacking concrete measures, holds significant symbolic value. Its passage underscores the US support for Tibet and signals China that the issue remains a priority for American policymakers. This move is symbolic of the multifaceted approach the US is taking in its rivalry with China. In addition to trade tensions and support for Taiwan, American initiatives concerning Tibet add another layer to the complex geopolitical chessboard. Washington's support for Taiwan and initiatives regarding Tibet can be viewed as part of a strategy to counterbalance China's growing assertiveness in the region.

These developments raise questions about the consistency of the US' adherence to the One-China policy, which has been a cornerstone of Sino-American relations. The One-China policy recognizes Beijing's claim over Taiwan and Tibet, yet recent actions by the US suggest a more nuanced and, at times, contradictory stance.

In response to the recent developments, Chinese government vowed to take "resolute measures" if Washington fails to honour its commitment to recognize Tibet as part of China. This rhetoric is consistent with Beijing's longstanding position that any foreign involvement in Tibet is a violation of China's sovereignty. The Chinese government views the Dalai Lama not just as a religious leader but as a separatist figure who threatens national integrity.

This incident highlights the managing act that the US must perform in its foreign policy. On one hand, it seeks to uphold human rights and democratic values by supporting figures like the Dalai Lama and endorsing Taiwan's self-governance, on the other hand, it needs to navigate the diplomatic tightrope of maintaining stable relations with China, an economic powerhouse and crucial player in global affairs. The symbolic gestures of support for Tibet and Taiwan are thus dilemma: they reaffirm US commitment to certain principles while simultaneously risking further escalation of tensions with China.

Furthermore, this development should be analysed within the context of the broader US strategy in the Asia-Pacific. The US has been strengthening alliances

and partnerships across the region, from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) to increased military presence and defence cooperation agreements. These moves are aimed at countering China's expanding footprint in the region. The Tibet issue, though historically contentious, is being re-contextualized as part of this larger strategic framework.

In conclusion, the recent meeting between US lawmakers and the Dalai Lama is more than a mere diplomatic formality; it is a calculated manoeuvre within the intricate and high-stakes game of international relations. As the US continues to assert its influence in the face of China's rise, the interplay between symbolic gestures and concrete policy actions are critical in shaping the future dynamics of US-China relations. The implications of such meetings extend beyond the immediate diplomatic fallout, potentially influencing the strategic landscape of the Asia-Pacific.

Pinching the dragon's tail on future of Tibet

02 July 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Dilip Sinha

The recent visit of a bipartisan US Congressional delegation to Dharamshala raises the question – how far will India go with the US?

The recent visit of the United States (US) Congressional delegation to Dharamshala and the Dalai Lama's visit to New York have catapulted Tibet to newspaper headlines. The seven-member US Congressional delegation led by representative Michael McCaul was remarkable in several respects. A bipartisan delegation at a time of sharp polarisation in American politics, it included Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi and chose to visit Dharamshala even though the Dalai Lama was due to leave for the US in a few days. The visit coincided with the US Congress passing a bill, "Promoting a Resolution of the Tibet-China Conflict Act", or the Resolve Tibet Act, which has since gone to the president for his assent. On its return to New Delhi, the delegation was received by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, signalling that the Indian government is not uncomfortable with the US choosing Indian soil to pinch the dragon's tail.

In the past, the US generally followed the old British line of recognising Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. It provided training and assistance to the Khampa rebels in the 1950s, but in the years of the grand camaraderie of President Nixon and Henry Kissinger with Mao Zedong, Tibet was largely forgotten. The downswing in their relations started in the Trump presidency. Trade disputes, technology theft, China's aggressive build-up in the South China Sea, threats to Taiwan and now the military assistance to Russia in the Ukraine War have

soured relations and ushered in a new cold war. Tibet was an issue waiting to be reopened by the US.

The first US Tibet Policy Act of 2002 had been a mild articulation of the need to protect Tibet's water security and its environment, promised assistance to Tibetan refugees and urged China to engage with the Dalai Lama. The next act, in 2020, defined the US government's stand on the Dalai Lama's succession, calling it a purely religious matter to be decided by his followers and threatening any Chinese official interfering in the process with sanctions. It also declared that China would not be permitted to open another consulate in the US unless it allowed one in Lhasa.

The new US Tibet bill is a quantum jump from the two earlier acts. It defines the territory and international status of Tibet, marking a qualitative change in US policy. It states that the territory of Tibet extends beyond the Tibetan Autonomous Region and includes Tibetan areas in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces; that the conflict between China and Tibet is unresolved and Tibet's legal status is to be determined according to international law. It calls upon the US government to counter Chinese disinformation about Tibet's history and institutions, such as China's outlandish claim that Tibet has been a part of it since ancient times. McCaul told the media that the bill reaffirms America's support for Tibet's right of self-determination.

Little wonder that China is rattled by the visit and has launched a vitriolic tirade against the "separatist Dalai Lama clique" as it calls it, accusing him of indulging in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion and warning the US not to play the Tibet card in violation of the one-China policy. A foreign office spokesperson urged the US not to sign the bill into law or support Tibet's independence and warned that China would take resolute measures.

How does all this affect India? China's repression in Tibet and escalating claims on Indian territory have belied the expectations on which India had framed its stand in the 1950s. China has never missed an opportunity to counsel India on Kashmir. Despite such provocations, hostile actions and broken promises, India has clung to its policy of recognising Tibet as a part of China.

India has paid a heavy price for giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and the thousands of Tibetan refugees who run the Central Tibetan Administration, the putative government-in-exile. Tibet is a sensitive issue for China since it claims it as its imperial legacy and now exploits its water and other natural resources. India contends that the presence of the Tibetan government-in-exile should not annoy China and that Tibet is not an issue in India-China relations. But with the US raising matters of concern to the Tibetan people, India faces a dilemma. Should it let the international discourse on

important questions concerning Tibet slip into America's hands? One of these is the ageing Dalai Lama's succession, on which the US has taken a very strong stand. It is time for India to give some sage counsel to China and recover the initiative on Tibet.

There will be no dearth of Indians questioning the advisability of India taking the cue from the US to change its Tibet policy. America's unreliability is well known, as are the risks of provoking China. But Tibet accounts for a considerable length of India's border with China and who rules it will always remain critical to India's well-being and security. The current US-China confrontation is an opportunity for India to assert its interests and develop its Tibet policy in its logical progression.

India's relations with China have been cold since Galwan and there is little chance of a thaw in the immediate future. By not going to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit and receiving the US delegation in New Delhi, PM Modi has made his leanings explicit. The external affairs ministry rejected China's protest, reiterating India's stand on the Dalai Lama being an honoured guest who is free to conduct his religious activities in India. It remains to be seen if India will now take the next logical step of telling China not to interfere in the process of the Dalai Lama's succession. This would be a good beginning towards a more assertive Tibet policy.

The Past (and Future) of the Territorial Swap Offer in the China-India Border Dispute

01 July 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Ameya Pratap Singh

Twice, China and India had chances to settle their disputed border through a "package deal," but domestic politics got in the way. Is such a solution still possible?



From left: the Dalai Lama, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1956 in India, at the UNESCO Buddhist Conference in Ashok Hotel, New Delhi.

Disputes over territory are perhaps the largest contributors to interstate conflict, as the recent examples of the Israel-Palestine and Russia-Ukraine conflicts have evidenced. The most insurmountable

entry in this category, at least in terms of the length of the disputed boundary, is the 2,100-mile long disputed Sino-Indian border.

But boundary disputes of such magnitude are not set in stone, either. Just as the ebbs and flows of the China-India rivalry over the years have proffered moments of tension and war, they have also created opportunities for political entrepreneurs to craft *détentes* – and occasionally, even consider the possibility of a settlement.

The use of territorial swaps to settle boundary disputes is assumed to be taboo, owing to the immutable properties of a state's territorial holdings. Domestic publics generally view any compromise of a state's territory as a surrender of national prestige, ideology, and even the nation's *raison d'être*. However, in certain moments, such concessions are proposed and seriously deliberated upon. Two such moments took place in Sino-Indian relations in the Nehru-Zhou and Rajiv-Deng periods.

This is unsurprising if one considers the larger historical register. Despite a significant number of outstanding territorial claims, China has also resolved boundary disputes with neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. India too has resolved its share of boundary disputes, most notably through the exchange of enclaves with Bangladesh in 2015.

The two Himalayan rivals came close to a "package deal" on the Sino-Indian border too (twice!), but the proposals did not materialize. Do these failed attempts offer hope for an eventual resolution or portend the inevitably ruinous future of diplomatic attempts to solve the issue?

In 1960, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, accompanied by Foreign Minister Chen Yi and a 31-member Chinese delegation, arrived in Delhi to negotiate a final settlement of the disputed Sino-Indian boundary with his Indian counterpart, Jawaharlal Nehru. The boundary was a vestige of British colonial rule, and had been in dispute for longer than the existence of the Republic of India as well as the People's Republic of China.

The British Empire had purposefully maintained Tibet as a "buffer state." This allowed them to claim territorial largesse when the need arose, while continuing to deny Britain's great power competitors a foothold in the region. The British Empire could countenance such an expedient arrangement with the Chiang Kai-shek-led Nationalist China. But this would only hold aspirational value for an independent India faced with Communist China on its northeastern border. The Indians were mere spectators as the Chinese annexed Tibet in 1949, making the two postcolonial states neighbors on a historically contested and undemarcated border.

Both the Indians and the Chinese knew of the disputed nature of the border but neither side wanted to raise alarm until they had militarily secured their status and legitimacy in border areas. When the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” were chronicled through a bilateral trade treaty on India’s commercial rights in Tibet in 1954, Indian and Chinese interlocutors deliberately and carefully avoided mentioning any disputed parts as trade posts.

Isolated stand-offs in feeding pastures along the Himalayan border had also begun to creep up as early as 1954 in areas in the Central Sector such as Bara Hoti. Historically, these boundaries were highly fluid and had been used by agrarians on both sides. However, the imposition of nation-statehood now demanded territorial exclusivity. Despite this, both India and China did not choose to directly address the boundary issue, opting instead to build a stronger negotiating position before showing their hand.

However, their position was forced when the Tibetan Revolution broke out in 1957. People’s Liberation Army (PLA) forces from China, chasing Tibetan rebels, entered disputed border areas, often provoking confrontations with Indian border patrols. Since there was no formal demarcation of the boundary, the armed forces of both sides found themselves in a highly unenviable situation.

In 1959, in the Western Sector (Aksai Chin Region), a clash at Kongka Pass led to the death of nine Indian soldiers – the first casualties of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. This forced Nehru and Zhou’s hand. Leaving the boundary ambiguous was no longer tenable.

Meanwhile, Chinese conduct was being heavily criticized by Soviet Union. In a meeting on October 2, 1959, Nikita Khrushchev unequivocally asked Mao Zedong and Zhou to settle the dispute in order not to alienate India from the Communist bloc. Begrudgingly, the latter committed that they would respect the “McMahon Line” in the Eastern sector and soon bring the issue to an end.

In a nutshell, this was the “package deal” – a status quo solution. The Chinese would accept India’s claims in the Eastern Sector, which was more critical for the security of India’s Northeast, in exchange for Indian acceptance of Chinese sovereignty in the Western Sector of Aksai Chin, which was the region that housed the arterial road that connected Chinese forces to the Tibetan plateau via Xinjiang.

For his part, Nehru too had been preparing the grounds for this “package deal.” In Parliament, he repeatedly mentioned Aksai Chin as inhospitable terrain. This provided some defense for India’s inability to prevent Chinese encroachments. The Indian side had long been willing to trade Chinese presence in the Aksai Chin region for China’s formal recognition of the McMahon Line in the Eastern Sector.

However, public opinion in India would not countenance such a deal in 1960. The Chinese could navigate the pitfalls of public diplomacy over a complex border issue much better than the Indians. Once the death of Indian soldiers on the border, and the scale of Chinese territorial claims, became public knowledge, Nehru’s room for maneuver had diminished significantly. Accepting the status quo meant the vindication of Chinese aggression on India’s borders, and was thus considered intolerable.

Despite the Chinese being the militarily stronger power, they proposed the “package deal.” And despite this arrangement being acceptable to India’s political leadership earlier, it was declined as this simply could not be justified to the Indian people or Parliament. This is why the talks between Nehru and Zhou failed in 1960.

The “package deal” was revived in 1979, when Deng Xiaoping proposed it to then-Indian Minister of External Affairs Atal Bihari Vajpayee during his China tour. Once again, the proposal was rejected by the Indian side, as they continued to insist on a detailed historical study to resolve the border in each sector.

In 1986-87, the intractability of border talks eventually led to a military stand-off in the Sumdorong Chu Valley in the Eastern Sector. A weak coalition government led by Morarji Desai, which only lasted in office for two years, did not have the ability to push through such a settlement. The deal was offered to Desai’s successor and Nehru’s daughter, Indira Gandhi, in 1984. But her assassination curtailed any serious consideration.

The deal was offered once again by Deng to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988. Deng wanted India to make minor territorial concessions to the Chinese on the Eastern Sector for Beijing’s acceptance of the McMahon Line (which was to be renamed). Similarly, minor Chinese territorial concessions to India in the Western Sector would be offered for India’s acceptance of Chinese sovereignty in the Aksai Chin region.

Chinese Diplomat Yang Wenchang recounts the exchange as follows:

As a diplomat in late 1980s, I witnessed a chance to solve the problem with Prime Minister Rajiv and Deng, who was also a strong man. We do some compromise on west wing, you do some on the east wing, then we can have a new border. We offered, but Prime Minister Gandhi didn’t have a response. After that I felt very sad we lost the chance.

Rajiv Gandhi had the parliamentary mandate required to formalize a “package deal.” But he too chose not to jeopardize his political future, settling instead for confidence building measures on the border to ensure “peace and tranquility.”

Twice, political compulsions and domestic weaknesses have compelled Chinese leaders to offer a “package deal” to their Indian counterparts to settle the border

once and for all. But in both cases, the pulls and pushes of parliamentary democracy in India have made “managing the dispute” more palatable than its resolution.

Now, the scales have changed significantly. At least since 2017, in light of China’s sustained economic growth and newfound military strength, especially relative to the Indian side, the Chinese no longer want a “package deal” solution based on the status quo. Instead, they have proposed a [new](#) “package deal” that disproportionately demands concessions from India in the Eastern Sector, particularly in the populated region of Tawang. While Deng’s proposal in the 1980s too required a concession in the Eastern Sector, this was relatively minor and was to be reciprocated by Chinese concessions in the Western Sector. If a much more favorable “package deal” couldn’t pass muster in the past, Xi Jinping’s new proposal is highly unlikely to do so.

But ultimately, it is in the interest of both states to achieve a final settlement of the border and some variation of the “package deal” is most likely to prove fruitful in this respect. Unlike Taiwan for China or Kashmir for India, the Sino-Indian boundary dispute does not concern key pillars of national identity. Neither do the concerned border territories offer any particular advantage in terms of natural resources or larger strategic advantages beyond the rivalry. Therefore, the revival of a package deal would be favorable to India’s growth prospects as well China’s global ambitions.

Until the conditions for such a solution are arrived at, China and India should find ways and means of enhancing other important aspects of their relationship and managing conflagrations at the border. More so than the South China Sea, it is the resolution of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute that will determine if “Asia” will be a term that geopolitical experts will use as a reference of power, or to signify an arena of unending conflict and violence in the emerging world order.

Modi 3.0: How India is setting the course for relations with China

01 July 2024, [Organiser](#), Ameya Kulkarni

As India embarks on a new governmental term under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, the complex and evolving relationship with China remains a paramount concern.

A strange paradox plagues the status of India-China ties. For such a consequential relationship that may make or mar India’s rise, the debates around it are largely myopic, set across the political and ideological faultlines. India certainly cannot afford not to constantly evaluate and debate threadbare the terms

of the relationship, more so as a new government in New Delhi begins another innings with a fresh mandate.

Since 2020, dealing with China has been the most debated topic of Indian foreign policy. That the old bilateral framework has irretrievably fractured because China violated a basic principle – non-use of force in resolving disputes – is not in doubt. The debate is about the way forward in building a new relationship based on the current realities.

The new framework will be built in circumstances that are very different from 1990. Then, the economies of India and China were comparable, and their respective military capacities were fairly balanced. Now, China’s GDP is more than four times ours, and the two militaries are not evenly matched on paper. Nor is it likely, even by optimistic growth projections, for India to significantly reduce this gap in the next 10 years. And the common challenges are outweighed by geopolitical differences that are unlikely to subside as China expands its global footprint.

Will the third iteration of Narendra Modi government prefer continuity, or a new approach? Given that bilateral ties have hit a deadlock in the backdrop of an ominous military buildup across the ill-defined Himalayan borders, creating a dangerous flashpoint between two of the world’s most powerful armies, the urgent question is the current state of the bilateral framework.

It is clear that the terms of the framework that were drawn up in the 1990s have collapsed. Owing chiefly to the power imbalance, an inordinately more powerful China now wants to redraw the provisos of the relationship in its own terms, and that involves creating new realities along the 3,440km-long LAC. So far, all of India’s efforts at persuading China not to use force to unilaterally change the status quo at the LAC have failed, and New Delhi has also been unsuccessful in coaxing China to revert to pre-2020 status quo, even at the cost of considerable bloodshed.

Even more worryingly, both militaries – armed to the teeth – are locked in a confrontationist posture at the LAC. Failure to achieve a détente could lead to an eventual catastrophic conflict, led by miscalculation even, if not intent. The question of a new bilateral framework that may prevent such an eventuality gains added significance but with China adopting a maximalist position, leaving India with an onerous choice between acceptance or aggression, the roadmap to a new framework isn’t clear.

To get a shot at a new framework, therefore, the deadlock needs to be broken. There must be sufficient incentives for both sides to engage with an earnest intention of breaking the deadlock. So far, 21 rounds of military-level talks have achieved some progress. But it has not been enough. The onus lies on India, unlike China that wants the “boundary issue” to be

boxed in “an appropriate place” for resumption of normalcy because “China-India ties should not be defined by any single issue or area”. In other words, China is not interested in resolving the crisis.

New Delhi, in response, is creating deterrence to discourage China from further deployment of grey-zone tactics. The Modi government is furiously building and upgrading critical infrastructure at the border to improve its logistics capabilities. It is also exploring the option of external balancing by gravitating closer to the US and its regional allies.

None of it, however, has given India the requisite leverage to force China to climb down from the cliff, ‘manage’ the crisis and reduce the risk of violent escalation. Some voices are urging a resumption of political-level dialogue.

It is important to posit the question as to whether the ‘break’ in the political dialogue since 2020 has addressed Indian concerns over the steady militarisation of LAC by the Chinese. By various accounts, this may not be the case. China appears to have augmented its military capacity, including air-power, along the entire front. It remains obdurate on reeling back its forward posture in two areas in eastern Ladakh. Despite more than 20 rounds of talks between the two militaries, the status quo still prevails.

Commendable work is being done in building deterrence against adventurism. Aside from the augmentation in men and materiel, the idea of strategic risk is being re-defined. Deployment patterns are being altered to send the clear signal that there is no tolerance for grey-zone warfare tactics by PLA. The breach of trust triggered by the Chinese behaviour in Galwan requires clear and tangible counter-displays of goodwill, and remedial action by China along LAC, before trust can be re-built.

But is deterrence in itself an adequate policy response? At the height of the Cold War, the two superpowers never halted political dialogue. Mechanisms were built to prevent nuclear war, and mutual understandings were reached on managing competition and limiting the prospect of accidental conflict. An important lesson from the Cold War was that dialogue and deterrence were not mutually exclusive.

In the past four years, there has been no direct bilateral engagement between the executive heads of Indian and Chinese govts (aside from fleeting conversations in Bali and Johannesburg), and a single bilateral meeting between the foreign ministers when Wang Yi visited India in March 2022. Nor have the defence ministers or national security advisers of both sides visited each other.

A few ‘pull-asides’ or ‘meetings in the margins’ at multilateral conferences may not allow for the sort of discussion that is required when a new framework for the relationship needs to be built.

Writing in *The Times of India*, author and former Indian foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale observes, “What objectives might a resumption of the political dialogue serve? To begin with, it might allow for an in-depth understanding at a political level of each other’s positions. Such dialogue might, hopefully, permit both sides to find some common ground to start building a new framework. It might benefit risk management, not simply in terms of minimising unintended conflict, but also in terms of modernising the 1993 and 1996 agreements in order to make them relevant to contemporary needs.”

While the restarting of dialogue process at the highest political level may help in breaking the deadlock, it is worth noting that Chinese incursions have occurred even when two leaders have met. Xi Jinping’s visit to India from 17-10 September, 2014, was marked by a standoff between Indian soldiers and the PLA in the Chumar and Demchok region of Ladakh.

While political dialogue has its usefulness, it isn’t clear how dialogue will help when China is using power disparity between two nations to redraw the *modus vivendi*. In March 2023, when India’s external affairs minister S Jaishankar had met then Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang on the sidelines of the G20 FMs’ summit, the Chinese interpretation of the meeting indicated the widening gulf between the two sides.

S. Jaishankar, India’s external affairs minister, has emphasized the potential to strengthen India’s relationship with Taiwan in the technology sector, specifically in the important semiconductor sector, which is a growing focus of global competition. Taiwan is a major power in this domain, accounting for over 90 % of advanced chip production. Meetings between Indian and Taiwan government officials, as well as industry leaders such as Foxconn Technology Co. and others, exemplify the potential for and developing the technology partnership that both India and Taiwan have openly discussed, much to China’s censure.

Amid strained and deteriorating cross-strait relations, Taiwan has continued apace with its economic and technological engagement with India, and vice versa. While their interactions and lucrative pursuits have already had a negative impact on China-India relations, expansion in this direction will present both opportunities and challenges. Still, Modi has moved beyond mere gestures, explicitly saying that India will pursue the opportunities further.

Nevertheless, the Taiwan-India relationship remains unofficial, and their political connections continue to play a major role in deepening economic cooperation, despite numerous advancements. Taiwan’s Indo-Pacific strategy is an important area in which both have prioritised mutual interests, even when clashing with China’s.

The India-China-Taiwan relationship triangle also converges with India and China’s space ambitions,

their geostrategic rivalry, and the crucial semiconductor and technology sector, in which Taiwan plays a key role and is arguably a survival guarantor. Semiconductor technologies play a crucial role in the exploration of space, enabling spacecraft, satellites, and space instruments to operate.

While both India and China are Global South leaders and powers, they have a shared identity as rising space powers. Space power is an essential part of geopolitical competition, but being a space power requires satellites and communication to support military, security, and economic goals, as well as to dominate the battlefield. For example, Beijing's advancing space activities and capabilities enable it to maintain regular surveillance of India's military positions and operations along LAC without violating Indian territory. India, reportedly, has had to receive intelligence assistance from the United States to keep apprised of China's movements

Scholar Antara Ghosal Singh of ORF, who pores over Chinese media commentary and analyses for reaction, writes of the Chinese perspective that "the mainstream Chinese discourse post the meeting was that 'China needs to prepare for the worst at the LAC'. From a Chinese perspective, India did not show a positive attitude during the meeting and did not reciprocate China's so-called 'goodwill gestures' such as it seeking to explore common grounds between the two countries beyond the border dispute or participating in defence exchanges and cooperation with India under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, etc. It was argued that the meeting only lasted for 45 minutes, in which Jaishankar made 'a big fuss' about the border issue."

While India holds that ties may improve only if there's disengagement at the border and that overall relations cannot be separated from the military standoff, China insists that India cannot bring any conditionality to the table during talks. In this game of one-upmanship, Chinese and Indian leverages for peaceful resolution have cancelled each other out for an enduring stalemate, leaving China, the superior military and economic power, in a state of advantage.

China has used the situation deftly, indulging in a series of cartographic and nomenclature aggression to buttress its overarching territorial aggrandizement, and is doing everything from building dual-use facilities and villages along the LAC, expanding infrastructure and is even beefing up offensive air force capabilities by deploying advanced stealth fighters along the border.

What could be India's response? Modi 3.0 has given a few indications. Some notable developments show an attempt by New Delhi to create more leverage.

The Diplomat reported that India plans to 'rename' 30-plus places in Tibet, "reclaiming from historical records their ancient names in Indian languages." The

magazine claims to have witnessed a list of the places to be "renamed", and quotes Indian army officers involved in the exercise, as saying that media trips are being organized to disputed border areas "to speak to locals who fiercely oppose Chinese claims and say they were always part of India" with an aim to "push through the Indian counter-narrative on the disputed border through regional and global media."

If renaming of places, a move that is yet to materialize, is 'playing the Tibet card', the message got louder with India hosting a bipartisan US Congressional delegation that had just passed a bill, Resolve Tibet Act, that empowers the US "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,' pushing for negotiations without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community, and affirming the State Department's responsibility to coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet."

The American lawmakers (both Republicans and Democrats) who passed the bill that pushes for 'free Tibet', landed in New Delhi, met the Dalai Lama, and issued a scathing attack on Xi. Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who was part of the delegation, stated that while "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."

And then the delegation met Prime Minister Modi the next day, having been hosted by Jaishankar the previous night. Interestingly, the Tibetan spiritual leader has left for the US for medical treatment, so the meeting could well have been held on American soil. The fact that India played host to the American lawmakers who had an explicit agenda on Tibet, and the prime minister granted them an audience the next day says all that is to be said about India's messaging. Modi's move came right after the newly elected prime minister, in his third consecutive stint, had responded warmly to a congratulatory message from Taiwanese leader William Lai Ching-te and vowed to build "closer ties as we work towards mutually beneficial economic and technological partnership". The deliberate nature of the public response that triggered an acerbic reaction from China, left little space for doubt that this is part of a calibrated pushback, aimed at leveraging the partnerships. That Modi is using the US and its allies in sending across messages won't be lost on Beijing.

New Delhi is also refusing to resume direct civilian flight service between India and China, that has remained suspended for the last four years since the

outbreak of the pandemic, despite several requests from Beijing – tying it with restoration of normalcy at the border.

Modi has also decided not to visit the upcoming SCO summit at Astana, Kazakhstan. The official excuse is ongoing Parliament session that ends on July 3, but it is hard to ignore the impression that avoiding running into Xi has been an equally strong motivation. Any Russian displeasure at Modi's absence will be taken care of by the prime minister's quick dash to Moscow for a standalone visit for the India-Russia summit on July 8.

Faced with a *fait accompli* at the border, Modi's attempts are focused on creating leverage by expanding the horizons. The overarching goal remains stability in relationship while breaking the deadlock and forcing Xi into a meaningful engagement. India has been forced into this balancing act because China is unwilling to reverse the new 'facts on the ground' or make any more concessions.

To China, India has no real clout or ability to alter the new reality and no option but to accept it. From this vantage point, China calls India's earnest efforts to tie normalisation of relations with the resolution of border crisis "arrogance" and "sky-high price".

Chinese scholar and strategist Hu Shisheng — the director of Institute for South Asian Studies at CICIR, an influential Chinese think tank on foreign policy and security affairs that comes under the direct supervision of CCP's Ministry of State Security (MSS) and whose research influences and represents the mainstream voice of the Chinese party-state system, in a recent piece on Indian foreign policy, calls the diplomacy of Modi government "dynamic" and "tension-filled".

Hu's essay, reproduced in *Sinification* (machine translation), observes that though Indian diplomacy has "flourished" under Modi due to "indulgence from the West", and even though India-US ties despite "latent mistrust" are "set to deepen", "in recent years, the Biden administration has focused much of its efforts on the Western Pacific region, promoting unilateral security cooperation mechanisms with its allies. This indicates that the US has lowered its expectations of India in its strategy to contain and blockade China."

Hu also observes that "considering the significant disparity in power between China and India, New Delhi will neither want to break relations with China completely nor will it be willing to serve as 'cannon fodder' for the West's containment of China. In future, Sino-Indian relations may continue to be characterised by "cold hostility" [冷暴力] or "non-violent, non-cooperative" coexistence."

To the extent that Hu's views represent the prevalent Chinese thinking, it appears that Beijing has come to a conclusion that India's options in getting China to do

its bid are becoming increasingly more constricted. China remains aware of the significant power discrepancy between the two nations, and this awareness is making China more adventurous, imbuing it with a greater appetite for risk-taking including implementation of force to achieve its objectives – secure in the belief that India, as a lesser power, will ultimately be forced to back down.

This is not to suggest that Beijing is spoiling for a violent escalation, but it seeks to use force, or threat of force as a leverage to demand obedience from India, and it wants New Delhi to accept Beijing's primacy and admit its secondary status in Asia.

From our perspective, it might provide political platforms to express our concerns, as well as to find solutions, over unfair Chinese trade practices. Dialogue is also a logical step in building multi-alignment diplomacy.

Only government can ultimately decide what is the right policy. But a healthy debate on the question is now needed more than ever because public participation in foreign policy is an important requisite for citizens who aspire to make India into a global powerhouse.

In this context, PM Modi's recent moves assume greater significance. A battle of nerves lies ahead. External balancing and a fast-growing economy are India's best options, but in the short term, a lot may depend on the outcome of US presidential polls.

Building Bridges: Impact Of PM Shehbaz Sharif's Historic Visit To China – OpEd

01 July 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Hammad Baloch

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent five-day visit to China stands out as a landmark event, underscoring the robust and dynamic nature of Pakistan-China relations. This visit has not only cemented existing ties but also opened new avenues for cooperation across various sectors. The outcomes, including the signing of 23 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), signify a comprehensive and forward-looking partnership that promises to deliver significant benefits to both nations.

The visit featured high-level interactions, most notably an extensive three and a quarter hour meeting between Prime Minister Sharif and President Xi Jinping. This lengthy discussion emphasized upgrading the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), highlighting the strategic importance both countries place on this initiative. The Prime Minister made it a point to advocate for the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) in all his meetings, receiving encouraging responses from Chinese officials. Furthermore, a dedicated committee has been set up to advance the Main Line One project, alongside the signing of 32

business-to-business agreements, marking a significant step forward in bilateral cooperation.

Economic Milestones and Future Opportunities

One of the most notable achievements of this visit was the signing of 23 MoUs spanning multiple sectors, including transport infrastructure, industry, energy, agriculture, media, health, water, and socioeconomic development. These agreements are poised to enhance Pakistan's economic landscape, creating new trade and investment opportunities. The Pakistan-China Business Conference, attended by 500 business personalities, underscored the economic potential of this partnership. China's commitment to training 200,000 Pakistani youth in IT is particularly noteworthy, as it is expected to significantly boost Pakistan's IT exports. Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar highlighted the positive economic indicators emerging from this visit, such as increased IT exports, a reduced current account deficit, rising foreign exchange reserves, and a stable currency. These developments suggest a promising trajectory for Pakistan's economy, driven by strategic partnerships and international cooperation.

Addressing Security Challenges

Security concerns have been a critical aspect of the Pakistan-China relationship, especially following recent attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan. Prime Minister Sharif's visit, accompanied by the army chief, Gen. Asim Munir, underscored Pakistan's serious commitment to addressing these security issues. The Prime Minister assured the Chinese leadership of enhanced security measures to protect Chinese nationals working in Pakistan. Both sides agreed on the importance of combating terrorism, particularly preventing militants from using Afghan territory for attacks against Chinese interests.

Overcoming Criticisms and Challenges

Despite the positive outcomes, the visit has faced some criticisms and highlighted challenges. Observers note that improving the economic partnership with China is hampered by Pakistan's economic policies. The country owes over \$7.5 billion in project debt to power plants established under CPEC and nearly \$2 billion in circular debt to Chinese power producers. Managing this debt burden requires careful financial planning and strategic economic management. Economist Ali Hasanain criticized Pakistan's approach to CPEC projects, arguing that the obligations in foreign currencies conflict with the country's domestic-oriented exchange rate and industrial policies. This misalignment has gradually narrowed Pakistan's fiscal space, leading to a debt crisis where new loans are sought to pay off previous debts. The much-delayed Mainline-1 (ML-1) project, costing approximately \$6.8 billion, exemplifies these financial strains, struggling to attract Chinese investment due to anticipated financial stress.

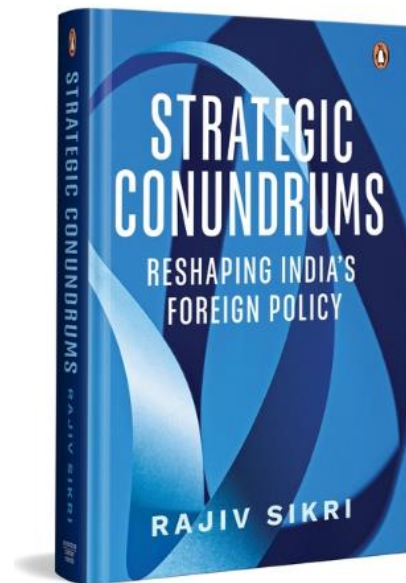
Strategic Vision and Future Prospects

Despite these criticisms, a strategic vision for the future of Pakistan-China relations is emerging. The renewed focus on CPEC 2.0 aims to optimize existing infrastructure and attract Chinese energy-intensive industries to Pakistan, utilizing surplus power and enhancing economic productivity. This phase emphasizes industrial cooperation, mining and exploration, and leveraging Pakistan's strategic location for economic growth. The joint statement issued at the end of the visit highlighted China's encouragement for companies to invest in Pakistan based on market and commercial principles. This cautious yet optimistic approach signals a pathway for sustainable and mutually beneficial investments in the future.

Conclusion

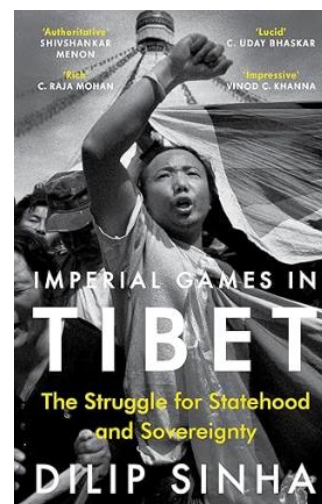
Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China has indeed been a historic and successful endeavor, reinforcing the enduring and exemplary friendship between Pakistan and China. The economic, strategic, and security agreements forged during this visit lay a solid foundation for future cooperation. While challenges remain, particularly in managing debt and aligning economic policies, the visit has demonstrated a strong commitment from both sides to overcome these hurdles and work towards a prosperous and secure future. The benefits of this visit are expected to reach the Pakistani public, enhancing economic opportunities, job creation, and overall socioeconomic development. The positive trajectory of Pakistan-China relations, as evidenced by this visit, reaffirms the enduring partnership between the two nations and sets a promising course for the future. The strategic vision and collaborative efforts displayed during this visit highlight the potential for continued growth and cooperation, ensuring that the Pakistan-China partnership remains robust and resilient.

Strategic Conundrums Reshaping India's Foreign Policy by Rajiv Sikri



Imperial Games in Tibet: The Struggle for Statehood and Sovereignty by Dilip Sinha

Publications



The Sunday Funnies

14 July 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

THE SUNDAY FUNNIES

Two political prisoners; a Chinese and a Tibetan, are sentenced to death and granted a final meal of their choosing.

"A large bowl of rice piled high with roast pork," says the Chinese. They give him his meal, execute him, and then turn to the Tibetan.

"Before I die I want to taste a big red peach," says the Tibetan.

The prison warden is astonished and yells, "And where the hell do I get a peach in the middle of winter?"

"Oh please don't worry, comrade Warden," says the Tibetan, "I can wait."



མིང་དོན་བཅོམ་པ་གཉིས་ཡོད་པ་ནས་གཅིག་ནི་རྒྱ་མི་དང་གཅིག་ནི་
བོད་པ་རེད། ཁོང་གཉིས་ལ་སྲིག་ཐོག་གཉིས་པ་བཏང་པར་བཞིན་ཁོང་
གཉིས་ཀྱི་འདོད་པ་བཞིན་མ་ཤི་གོང་གི་ཆས་མཐའ་མ་འདི་གདམ་བརྟུག་པ་རེད། རྒྱ་མི་འདིས་བཤད་པར།
ང་ལ་འབྲས་མོང་པ་ཆེན་པོ་གཅིག་དང་ཕག་ཤ་བཟུག་པ་ཞིག་དགོས། ཁོང་ཆོས་ཆས་འདི་ནས་སྤྲད་ནས་
སྲིག་ཐོག་བཏང། རི་ནས་བོད་པ་དེའི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་སྐྱབས་སྐྱབས་བཤད་པར། ང་མ་ཤི་གོང་ཁྲམ་བུ་དམར་པོ་
ཆེན་པོ་ཞིག་གི་མོ་བ་སྤོང་འདོད་འདྲ་གྱེ། བཅོམ་སྤང་བ་ཏང་མངས་ནས་བཤད་པར། ད་ལྟ་ནས་དུས་དགུ་ཁ་
ཡིན་དུས་ཁྲམ་བུ་ག་པར་ཡོད། བོད་པ་འདིས་བཤད་པར། བཅོམ་སྤང་བ་སྐྱོམ་སྐྱོན་ལགས།
མེས་ཁྲམ་མ་གཞན། ངས་སྐྱུག་བྱུག་པ་འདྲ་གྱེ།

The Laughing Yak

'Never Forget Tibet: The Dalai Lama's Untold Story' releases on his birthday

07 July 2024, [CTA](#)

