

TIBET DIGEST

AUGUST 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- August Tibet Digest

In August, Tibet faced continued cultural suppression and Sinicization efforts, with China emphasizing ethnic integration and intensifying its campaign against the Dalai Lama. Cataract incidences in the region highlighted ongoing health challenges, while Xi Jinping called for accelerated reforms impacting Tibet. Environmental concerns grew with the discovery of ancient viruses in melting glaciers and warnings of increased extreme weather risks on the Tibetan Plateau. International advocacy remained strong, with Tibetan monks touring the U.S. to share their culture. This month's Digest also covers military developments, Sino-Indian relations, and expert commentaries on Tibet's future.

CCP's Tibet Policies

Cataract Incidences in Tibet: The incidence of cataracts in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is 60% higher than in the rest of China due to factors like high altitude and UV exposure. A lack of medical facilities exacerbates the situation, making cataracts the leading cause of blindness. A Shanghai medical team provided free eye care in TAR, highlighting the need for more social support and awareness about eye health.

China's Top Political Advisor Calls for Ethnic Integration in Tibet: Wang Huning, a top Chinese official, emphasized promoting integration among ethnic groups and strengthening national identity in Tibet. This aligns with China's broader goal of Sinicization, which seeks to align ethnic minority regions, including Tibet, with the Chinese identity and socialism. The remarks were made during a conference marking 30 years of the paired-up assistance program, which has involved significant investment and talent from other Chinese regions to support Tibet's development.

Xi Jinping on Reform Implementation: Chinese President Xi Jinping called for intensified efforts to implement the country's reform tasks during a meeting of the Central Commission for Deepening Overall Reform. He stressed the importance of leveraging past achievements, maintaining centralized leadership, and ensuring the proper pace of reforms. The meeting also reviewed plans for major reform measures and guidelines for upgrading pilot free trade zones, focusing on institutional innovations and risk prevention in China's modernization efforts.

China Intensifies Surveillance in Tibet During Shoton Festival: In August 2024, Chinese authorities heightened surveillance in Lhasa, Tibet, by increasing police presence, deploying food delivery workers as auxiliary police, and enforcing stricter social media regulations. These actions, aimed at suppressing Tibetan culture and dissent, coincided with the Shoton Festival and reflect China's ongoing efforts to tighten control over the region.

China's Forced Relocation of Tibetan Villagers as 'Border Guardians': China has forcibly relocated thousands of Tibetan villagers to settlements near the borders with India, Nepal, and Bhutan, labelling them as "border guardians." These villages, while civilian in nature, also support military activities and strengthen China's control over disputed borders. However, the economic viability of these settlements is questionable, with residents heavily reliant on government subsidies and lacking sustainable livelihoods. The relocations, which disrupt traditional nomadic lifestyles, are seen as a form of social engineering aimed at assimilating Tibetans and solidifying China's territorial claims.

China's Economic Policies in Tibet Marginalize Tibetans: China's efforts to boost the economy of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) through the expansion of economic and technology development zones (ETDZs) primarily benefit the growing Han Chinese population, while Tibetans face increasing marginalization. The government's focus on urbanization and export-oriented industries excludes many Tibetans from economic opportunities, leading to social tensions. Tibetans are often shut out of government and construction jobs, and

business opportunities are predominantly given to Han Chinese. The economic policies, meant to modernize Tibet, have deepened inequalities, leaving Tibetans with limited prospects, and increasing dependence on government subsidies.

China's Ethnic Policy Chief Urges Minority Artists to Emphasize National Unity: Pan Yue, China's top ethnic policy official, criticized ethnic minority artworks for focusing too much on their own cultural narratives and not enough on the national identity. He highlighted a Tibetan-language film that, according to him, failed to give credit to the Communist Party for infrastructure development in Tibet. Pan stressed that ethnic literature and art should strengthen the sense of community within the Chinese nation and avoid divisive narratives influenced by Western multicultural theories. He called on minority artists to align their work with the national narrative promoted by the Communist Party, emphasizing unity over ethnic differences.

Tibetan Language Ban on Chinese Social Media Sparks Outrage: Chinese social media platform Douyin has banned content in the Tibetan language, prompting strong condemnation from Tibetans globally and the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD). The ban has severely impacted Tibetan netizens, hindering their ability to create content and earn a living. TCHRD Director, Tenzin Dawa, highlighted the contradiction between this ban and China's constitution, which guarantees minority language rights. Despite widespread discontent, this ban reflects broader efforts by the Chinese government to suppress Tibetan language and culture, both online and offline, under Xi Jinping's assimilation policies.

Beijing Prioritizes Road Construction in Tibet for Political Stability: The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is the only provincial-level region in China where road construction is entirely funded by the central government, highlighting Beijing's focus on political stability and border security. From 1953 to 2023, the central government invested 325.1 billion yuan (approximately \$45.6 billion) in road construction in TAR. The region now boasts 123,300 km of roads, providing access to townships and villages. The Chinese government continues to prioritize infrastructure development in TAR, reflecting its strategic importance in maintaining control and connectivity across the region.

Buddhism

Beijing-Appointed Panchen Lama Intensifies Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign: Gyaltzen Norbu, the Beijing-appointed 11th Panchen Lama, continues to push the Chinese government's agenda in Tibet by promoting the "Three Consciousness Campaign," which aims to align Tibetan Buddhism with socialist values and suppress separatist thoughts. At a symposium in Nagchu, he urged monks to distance themselves from the Dalai Lama and embrace national unity under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Despite Chinese efforts, Norbu remains widely unaccepted among Tibetans, who continue to recognize the abducted Gendun Choekyi Nyima as the legitimate Panchen Lama.

Tibetan Monks Tour U.S. to Share Culture and Raise Funds: Monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery will visit Ohio as part of their U.S. tour, sharing Tibetan culture, Buddhist practices, and rituals for healing and compassion. The tour also serves as a fundraiser to build a new dormitory at the monastery, which was re-established in India after China's invasion of Tibet. The funds will help improve living conditions for the monks, who currently face overcrowding in their existing accommodations.

China to Host Sixth World Buddhist Forum in October: China will hold the sixth World Buddhist Forum in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, this October. The forum, a major event for international Buddhist exchange, aims to promote world peace and cooperation among global Buddhist communities. With participants from a round 70 countries, the forum will focus on the essence of Buddhism and its practical values, contributing to the broader goal of building a shared future for humanity.

China-Appointed Panchen Promotes Sincization During Nagchu Visit: During his visit to Nagchu, the 11th Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu, appointed by Beijing, led a symposium on the "Three Consciousnesses" campaign. Launched in 2022, this campaign aims to re-educate Tibetans, particularly monks and nuns, to align with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) values, including national loyalty, legal consciousness, and opposition to separatism. Norbu emphasized that Tibetan Buddhists should integrate their religious practices with CCP policies

and support the Party's leadership. He also highlighted the importance of adapting Tibetan Buddhism to fit within a socialist framework and called for greater unity among ethnic groups under Xi Jinping's leadership. The visit underscored the ongoing efforts to enforce CCP control over Tibetan religious and cultural life.

China Demolishes Historic Atsok Monastery for Dam Construction: Atsok Monastery, a 135-year-old Tibetan Buddhist site in Dragkar, Tibet, was demolished by Chinese authorities to make way for the Yangkhil Hydropower Plant. Despite its previous status as a protected cultural heritage site, this status was revoked by the Chinese government, which justified the demolition by declaring the monastery's structures as modern imitations rather than true heritage sites. The monastery, which housed 160 monks, was destroyed to facilitate the construction of a hydroelectric dam intended to generate electricity for Henan province. The project will displace thousands of local Tibetans and has led to widespread destruction of Tibetan cultural and religious sites. Local resistance to the demolition was dismissed, with Tibetan monks and communities opposing the move.

China Coerces Kirti Monastery Students into State-run Schools: In Ngaba County, Sichuan Province, Chinese authorities have seized Kirti Monastery School and mandated that over 200 students, out of 900, be enrolled in state-run boarding schools. This follows the closure of Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery School, which also saw over 300 students forced into state-run education. Authorities have prohibited the reopening of these monastery schools and have enacted policies to increase state-run school enrolment, including taking children from their parents under the guise of health check-ups. This move is part of a broader effort to replace Tibetan Buddhist education with state-run curricula, furthering the Sinicization of Tibetan culture.

State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau

Ancient Viruses Discovered in Tibetan Glacier: Scientists have uncovered over 1,700 virus genomes, dating back 41,000 years, in the Guliya Glacier on the Tibetan Plateau. This discovery significantly expands the known collection of ancient viruses. The viruses vary between colder and warmer eras, potentially linking virus evolution with climate change. While these ancient viruses mostly infected microbes and pose no immediate risk to humans, their release due to melting glaciers could introduce new risks. Researchers emphasize the importance of studying these viruses before glaciers disappear.

Extreme Weather Risks Rising as Tibetan Plateau Gets Hotter: Researchers have reported that the Tibetan Plateau is experiencing increased warmth and humidity, leading to a significant loss of glacier mass and rising lake levels by the end of the century. This warming trend is expected to enhance vegetation but also cause shifts in monsoon patterns, potentially leading to more extreme weather events. Effective water management and disaster preparedness will be essential to mitigate the impacts on downstream regions.

Over Half of Tibetan Plateau's Glaciers May Melt by 2100: Scientists predict that by the end of this century, more than 50% of the glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau could disappear due to rapid warming. The plateau has experienced a temperature increase of about 0.4°C per decade, more than double the global average. This warming trend has led to accelerated glacier melting, particularly at lower elevations. The loss of glacial mass could impact the plateau's ecosystem and increase the risk of glacial lake outburst floods. While rising lake levels might enhance water resources, they could also exacerbate extreme weather events and flood risks in downstream regions.

Scientists Drill Record Boreholes in Tibetan Salt Lake for Climate Insights: An international team of scientists has drilled record-depth boreholes in Lake Namco (Namtso), the world's highest saltwater lake in northern Tibet. The drilling, conducted from June to July 2024, reached depths of over 500 meters, allowing the recovery of sediment cores that provide a glimpse into Earth's climate history over the past million years. The research aims to enhance understanding of past climate changes and improve future climate models. The sediments will be analysed to gain insights into historical climate patterns, life development, and Earth's magnetic field changes.

Rapid Increase in Glacial Lakes in Tibet and Himachal Pradesh Poses Risks: The rapid melting of glaciers due to climate change has led to a significant increase in moraine-dammed lakes in Himachal Pradesh, India, and the Tibetan region. The number of glacial lakes in the Satluj river catchment area has nearly doubled from 562 in

2019 to 1,048 in 2023. Many of these lakes are small, but there are concerns about the potential dangers they pose, such as glacial lake outburst floods. The rising number of lakes, particularly in the Tibetan Himalayas, poses risks to downstream communities and infrastructure, highlighting the need for monitoring and management to mitigate potential disasters.

Flash Flood and Mudslide in Tibetan Area of Sichuan Province: On August 2-3, 2024, two severe mudslide incidents struck a Tibetan area in Sichuan province, China. The first disaster hit Ridi village in Kangding City, causing at least two deaths and leaving twelve people missing. The second incident occurred on August 3 when a mountain flood and mudslide collapsed a bridge on the Yakang expressway, sending three vehicles off the road. This led to five missing persons. Rescue operations involve hundreds of people and equipment. Concerns have been raised about the quality of infrastructure construction, with calls for scrutiny of "tofu-dreg projects," a term for poorly built structures.

China Initiates Land-Atmosphere Interaction Experiment in Mount Everest Region: China has launched a new observational experiment in the Mount Everest region to study land-atmosphere interactions, crucial for understanding ecological and climate systems. Conducted by the Aerospace Information Research Institute, the study uses unmanned aerial platforms to collect data on radiation flux and other variables at an average altitude of 4,200 meters. This research aims to better understand the impact of climate change on the Tibetan Plateau and its broader effects on global climate systems. The initiative follows previous studies highlighting significant glacier thinning around Everest and the region's rapid climatic changes.

Tibet in Exile

Human Rights Group Reports Ongoing Repression of Tibetans by China: On August 31, 2024, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) highlighted severe human rights abuses by China against Tibetans, including enforced disappearances and cultural suppression. The TCHRD reported 63 cases of enforced disappearances in Tibet over the past four years and criticized China for legalizing such practices through amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law. The organization urged international action to end these violations and support Tibetan rights. Notable cases include Tibetan singer Gegjom Dorjee and monk Pema, who remain missing after detention.

SFT Awards Tibetan Activists on 30th Anniversary: On August 24, 2024, Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) presented its 30th-anniversary Lhakar Awards in New York. The awards honoured Dege protestors for resisting forced relocations in Tibet, Thupten Chonyi for his year-long vigil in Philadelphia, and Tsela Zoksang for high-profile protests, including raising the Tibetan flag during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visits.

China Promotes Ethnic Integration in Tibet Amid Sinicization Efforts: China's top political advisor, Wang Huning, has advocated for increased ethnic integration and a strengthened sense of national identity in Tibet. Addressing a conference in Lhasa, Wang highlighted achievements and future goals of a paired-up assistance program aimed at promoting Beijing's Sinicization policies. The initiative focuses on improving living conditions and fostering loyalty to the Chinese state, marking a continuation of efforts to align Tibet's ethnic and cultural landscape with mainland China's objectives.

Dalai Lama Returns to Dharamshala, Resumes Teachings After Surgery: The Dalai Lama has returned to McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, after undergoing knee surgery in New York. Welcomed by large crowds, he will resume religious teachings next month, including initiations and lectures. His recent visit to the US included a long-life prayers ceremony and meetings with US officials. The Dalai Lama is scheduled to offer teachings and receive long-life prayers from various Tibetan and international groups throughout September and October.

UNHRC Report Raises Serious Concerns About Human Rights in Xinjiang and Tibet: The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report highlights ongoing human rights abuses in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region. Spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani reported that despite dialogues with Chinese authorities, problematic laws and policies remain. The UN has called for thorough investigations into these issues and urged China to release arbitrarily detained individuals. The UNHRC also criticized China's rejection of

recommendations from its Universal Periodic Review and highlighted difficulties in accessing information and fears of reprisals against those engaging with the UN.

UN Rights Chief Reports Limited Access and Continued Human Rights Violations in China: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has expressed concerns about limited access to information and reprisals against activists in China, focusing on Xinjiang, Tibet, and other areas. Despite previous reports of serious human rights violations, including potential crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, the Chinese government has not implemented recommended reforms. The OHCHR called for a review of China's laws and policies and urged Beijing to allow unrestricted access for UN experts and cease reprisals against individuals engaging with the UN. The UN continues to advocate for meaningful reforms and monitoring of the human rights situation in China.

US Coordinator Urges for Climate Data Sharing and Highlights Tibet's Role in Global Water Security: Uzra Zeya, the U.S. special coordinator for Tibetan issues, emphasized Tibet's crucial role in global water security during her remarks at the World Water Week 2024 conference in Stockholm. She called for greater transparency and information sharing about environmental changes in Tibetan areas, highlighting how climate change is affecting the Tibetan Plateau's glaciers, which are vital sources of major Asian rivers. Zeya pointed out that China's hydropower and water diversion projects in Tibet have negatively impacted the Brahmaputra, Indus, and Mekong rivers. She also discussed how industrial activities, deforestation, and mining are harming Tibet's water sources and causing glacier melt and evaporation.

Karmapa and Dalai Lama Meeting: The 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje and the Dalai Lama met in Zurich on August 25, 2024, marking their first meeting in over seven years. The Karmapa, who has been living in exile since 1999, was visiting Zurich during the Dalai Lama's stopover en route from New York City to New Delhi. The meeting has rekindled hopes for the Karmapa's return to India, where he has a significant following. His return to India has been a long-standing issue, with discussions ongoing between Indian officials and the Karmapa's supporters.

Dalai Lama's Zurich Visit: The Dalai Lama addressed a large gathering in Zurich on August 25, 2024, during a long-life prayers offering. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of cultivating bodhichitta, or the awakening mind, and highlighted Tibetan Buddhism's solutions to modern problems. He also spoke about the negative effects of climate change on Tibet's glaciers and the need for global cooperation to preserve these vital water sources.

Senator Rubio's Criticism of China: U.S. Senator Marco Rubio has condemned China's increased surveillance and oppression of Tibetans. Reports from Radio Free Asia indicate that China is intensifying its control over Tibetans through enhanced police presence, social media suppression, and covert surveillance. Rubio has called for international action against China's treatment of Tibetans and criticized the CCP's broader human rights abuses, reflecting his ongoing antagonism toward the Chinese government.

Dalai Lama's Long-Life Prayer Ceremony in New York: On August 22, 2024, 17,000 attendees gathered at UBS Arena in New York for a long-life prayers ceremony for the Dalai Lama. Recovering from knee surgery, the Dalai Lama expressed confidence in his longevity and reaffirmed his commitment to Tibetan culture and Buddhism. He highlighted the global interest in Tibetan Buddhism and emphasized the importance of cultivating compassion and religious harmony.

Chinese Protest Over US-Dalai Lama Meeting: Following the August 21 meeting between US official Uzra Zeya and the Dalai Lama, China lodged a formal protest with the US. China criticized the meeting as interference in its internal affairs, labelling the Dalai Lama as a political exile rather than a purely religious figure. China demanded that the US cease contact with the Dalai Lama and respect China's sovereignty over Tibet.

China Warns US Over Dalai Lama Meetings: On August 22, 2024, China issued a stern warning to the US, demanding that it prevent the Dalai Lama from engaging in what it calls "separatist activities" during his visit. This came after the Dalai Lama met with senior US officials, including Under Secretary Uzra Zeya and Kelly Razzouk, in New York. China labelled the meeting and the appointment of a US special coordinator for Tibetan issues as interference in its internal affairs, insisting that the US halt any contact with the Dalai Lama and adhere to commitments on Tibet-related issues.

Dalai Lama Chair Established at Panjab University: On August 20, 2024, Panjab University signed an MoU with the Dalai Lama's Foundation for Universal Responsibility to establish the Dalai Lama Chair in the Department of Gandhian and Peace Studies. The chair aims to advance Indo-Tibetan heritage, promote the Dalai Lama's teachings, and encourage the study of Buddhist philosophy, Tibetan texts, and Buddhist art. It will focus on integrating these teachings into contemporary issues and enhancing philosophical and ethical discussions.

China's Tibetan Medicine Centre to Open in Manila: The Tibetan Traditional Medicine Centre in Zhongshan, Guangdong Province, plans to establish a satellite facility in Manila by July 2025. The centre will offer health analyses, a museum of traditional Chinese medicines, and showcase Tibetan art. The initiative, part of a global expansion, aims to provide Filipino patients with Tibetan medical services and promote Tibetan culture.

Tibetan Actress Wins Award at Locarno Film Festival: Thinley Lhamo won the Boccalino d'Oro Prize for Best Acting Performance at the 77th Locarno Film Festival for her role in the film *Shambhala*. The film, directed by Min Bahadur Bham, features a Tibetan cast and explores themes of spirituality and self-discovery. This recognition highlights the growing influence of South Asian cinema on the global stage.

Schrucker Fellowship for the Arts Launched: The International Campaign for Tibet announced the Schrucker Fellowship for the Arts, aimed at supporting Tibetan artists in contemporary visual arts, creative writing, film, and theatre. Opening September 1, 2024, the fellowship will provide grants ranging from \$500 to \$3,000, with a total funding amount of \$20,000 for 2024. The fellowship is designed to support Tibetan creatives navigating challenges and preserving cultural heritage. Applications will be accepted until October 14, 2024, with final selections and grants distributed in December 2024.

Solidarity Campaign for Tibetan Rights: Exiled Tibetan families in Switzerland continue their solidarity campaign for Tibetan rights, which began on Human Rights Day in 2012. They hold monthly protests in front of the UN Office in Geneva to honor the 1.2 million Tibetans who died under Chinese rule and to address ongoing suffering in Tibet. The Tibet Solidarity Movement emphasizes issues like forced boarding school enrolment, cultural erosion, environmental destruction, and political repression. They call for the implementation of UN resolutions, international support for the Dalai Lama's return, and a UN fact-finding mission to address these concerns.

Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) Annual Meeting: The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) concluded its 54th Working Committee Meeting on August 10, 2024, in Gangtok, Sikkim. Around 200 representatives from 38 chapters, including those from Nepal and India, attended. The meeting resulted in 23 resolutions reaffirming TYC's commitment to Tibetan independence and global advocacy. The TYC plans to collaborate with Tashi Lhunpo Monastery to mark the Panchen Lama's enforced disappearance and to seek international support for the recent forced closure of schools in Tibet. They also expressed gratitude for the "Resolve Tibet Act" and plan to issue a formal condemnation of China's cultural policies in Tibet.

Toronto Tibetan Activist Completes Third Bicycle Rally: Sangyal Kyap, a Toronto-based Tibetan activist, has completed his third bicycle rally across Canada to raise awareness about the Sino-Tibet conflict. Starting in Victoria, British Columbia, and ending in Toronto, Ontario, Kyap covered 4,182.8 kilometres over 54 days. He arrived at the Chinese Consulate in Toronto on August 14, 2024, where he was met by supporters. Throughout his journey, Kyap distributed information about Tibet's situation and presented six demands to the Canadian government and international community, including the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the renewal of Sino-Tibet dialogue, and the release of Tibetan political prisoners.

Dalai Lama Reflects on Exile in First Post-Surgery Speech: In his first public speech since knee replacement surgery, the Dalai Lama reflected on the benefits of his life in exile. Speaking at the Dalai Lama Library and Learning Center in Ithaca, New York, he noted that his exile allowed him to spread the message of Buddhism globally and connect with many people. He emphasized his commitment to serving the Tibetan people and preserving Tibetan cultural and religious heritage. The center, which opened in September 2023, includes a vast archive of his teachings and Buddhist artifacts. The Dalai Lama is currently recovering from his surgery and will soon return to India via Switzerland, following a collective long-life prayer event in New York on August 22.

Central Tibetan Administration Commemorates Indian Independence Day: On August 15, 2024, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) marked the 78th Indian Independence Day with a ceremony at Gangchen Kyishong. The event was attended by key figures including Sikyong Penpa Tsering, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, and

other CTA officials. Sikyong Penpa Tsering unfurled the Indian national flag and sang the national anthem, offering congratulatory remarks to India. He expressed gratitude for India's support of Tibetan refugees and highlighted the irony of Tibet's continued struggle for independence despite India's liberation in 1947. The celebration served as both a tribute to India's freedom and a reflection on the ongoing quest for Tibetan self-determination.

Petition by Tibetan Scholars to UN High Commissioner: On August 14, 2024, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) reported a petition submitted to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk. The petition, signed by 100 Tibetan scholars, calls for an end to China's forced assimilation policies in Tibet, particularly the closure of Tibetan schools and the suppression of Tibetan language and culture. The petition highlights recent school closures, such as the Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School in Ragya, and urges the UN to protect Tibetan educational institutions, end the boarding school system, and hold China accountable for human rights violations. The scholars stress the importance of preserving Tibetan culture and education in the face of Chinese assimilation efforts.

Former Ambassador Dilip Sinha Discusses "Imperial Games in Tibet": On August 14, 2024, Former Ambassador Dilip Sinha spoke about his book "Imperial Games in Tibet" at an event hosted by the Tibet Policy Institute in Dharamshala. The book, released a month earlier in Delhi, explores Tibetan history and contemporary issues with China. Sinha emphasized India's support for the Tibetan community and its autonomy while addressing the historical context and current challenges. The talk was attended by Tibetan intellectuals, activists, and CTA officials, highlighting the importance of understanding Tibet's past and present for future relations.

Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Reviews Parliamentary Procedures: On August 13, 2024, a committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile concluded a review of the 'Rules and Regulations for Parliamentary Procedures and Conduct of Business.' Chaired by Parliamentarian Dorjee Tseten, the committee examined and compared the rules with those of other countries. The updated report on these regulations was submitted to Secretary-General Sonam Dorjee, focusing on the removal of dignitaries from the Central Tibetan Administration.

Department of Education Distributes Storybooks: On August 11, 2024, the Department of Education (DoE) of the Central Tibetan Administration began distributing storybooks published between 2023 and 2024. The initiative aims to improve reading proficiency among students in Tibetan schools across India. The distribution includes translated international children's books and new publications, with 29 significant storybooks released for the academic year 2023-2024.

Dalai Lama's Succession and China's Challenges: On August 11, 2024, in an interview with StratNews Global, Sikyong Penpa Tsering discussed the Dalai Lama's succession strategy and its implications for China. He emphasized that China's inability to handle unpredictability complicates the situation, as the Dalai Lama's approach to his reincarnation is intentionally open-ended. Tsering also addressed various issues, including India's Tibet policy, the U.S. Resolve Tibet Act, and the Central Tibetan Administration's plans. He highlighted the need for India to be proactive and strategic in its support for Tibet.

Re-launch of All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet: On August 10, 2024, the All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT) was re-launched in the new Indian Parliament. The forum, first established in 1970, aims to support Tibetan rights and promote dialogue between China and Tibetan representatives. Arunachal Pradesh BJP MP Tapir Gao was appointed as co-convener, and the forum's re-launch aligns with recent U.S. legislative efforts like the Resolve Tibet Act. The forum's activities will focus on supporting Tibetans and countering China's policies.

Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Advocacy in India: On August 9, 2024, a Tibetan parliamentary delegation led by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel met with key Indian leaders to advocate for Tibet. The delegation, including MPs Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten and Tsaneytsang Dhondup Tashi, met with several prominent figures, including Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar and Lok Sabha MP Kethi Reddy Suresh Reddy. They presented a 12-point appeal letter addressing critical issues in Tibet, including the forced placement of Tibetan children in boarding schools and the self-immolations of Tibetans protesting Chinese policies. The meetings aimed to garner continued support for the Tibetan cause from Indian leaders.

Persecution of Tibetan Human Rights Defender Tsering Tso: On August 8, 2024, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy condemned the ongoing persecution of Tsering Tso, a Tibetan human rights defender. Tso,

who was recently detained for her advocacy against racial discrimination by Chinese authorities, has been arrested multiple times over the years. Her latest detention followed her efforts to expose discriminatory practices against Tibetan monks. The report highlights the broader issue of arbitrary arrests and human rights abuses faced by Tibetan activists under Chinese rule.

Choeying Kyi's Olympics Performance: On August 7, 2024, Tibetan athlete Choeying Kyi competed in the race walk mixed relay marathon at the Paris Olympics. Although her team finished 14th and was out of medal contention, Kyi expressed satisfaction with her participation. Known for being the only Tibetan to win an Olympic gold, Kyi emphasized the importance of her role in inspiring future Tibetan athletes rather than just focusing on medals. Despite not achieving a podium finish, her performance was celebrated by Tibetans around the world, who saw her as a symbol of inspiration and pride.

Wang Shujun's Espionage Case: Wang Shujun, a 76-year-old Chinese-American academic, was convicted on August 6, 2024, for acting as a foreign agent for China. Wang, who presented himself as a pro-democracy advocate, was found guilty of illegally gathering information on critics of China, including Tibetans and Uyghurs, and passing it to Beijing. He faces up to 25 years in prison, with sentencing set for January 9, 2025. The case is part of a broader US crackdown on Chinese espionage and transnational repression.

Bharat-Tibet Sahayog Manch Meeting: The Bharat-Tibet Sahayog Manch (BTSM) held its National Council meeting on August 3-4, 2024, in Haryana, India. The meeting, attended by key figures including Kalon Dolma Gyari from the Central Tibetan Administration, focused on several resolutions addressing issues in Tibet and Sino-Indian relations. BTSM condemned China's policies in Tibet, including attempts to control the Dalai Lama's reincarnation process and the systematic erasure of Tibetan culture. The meeting also declared 2025 as the "Year of Compassion" to celebrate His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, emphasizing global peace and Tibetan cultural preservation.

American Bar Association Calls for Investigation into Tibet Human Rights Violations: On August 5, 2024, the American Bar Association (ABA) adopted Resolution 502, calling for a comprehensive investigation into human rights violations in Tibet. This resolution marks the ABA's first formal stance on Tibet, urging the US Department of State and the UN Human Rights Council to address potential genocide and crimes against humanity in the region. The resolution received unanimous support and was proposed by the ABA's International Law Section. It reflects growing international concern and aims to promote justice and accountability for Tibetan human rights issues.

Tibet House Japan Starts Tibetan Language Class: On August 3, 2024, Tibet House Japan launched a three-month Tibetan language and culture class. This initiative, led by Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya, offers both in-person and online options for learning Tibetan language skills, as well as insights into Tibetan religion and culture. Participants include locals from Tokyo and surrounding areas, as well as those joining online from distant regions. The program aims to preserve and promote Tibetan cultural heritage among interested learners.

Lower TCV Opens Residential School for Overseas Tibetan Students: On August 4, 2024, Lower TCV, a Tibetan school in India, inaugurated its first residential school for Tibetan children from overseas. This initiative seeks to preserve Tibetan identity and culture among children living abroad by offering a blend of Tibetan education and modern schooling. Although enrolment numbers were initially low due to visa issues, the school aims to provide a robust educational experience. The program emphasizes the importance of maintaining Tibetan cultural values in a globalized context.

Richard Gere Producing Documentary on Dalai Lama's Message: Hollywood actor Richard Gere is co-producing a documentary titled *Wisdom of Happiness*, which explores the Dalai Lama's message of peace and kindness. Gere, alongside producer and director Oren Moverman, will serve as an executive producer for the Swiss film. The documentary aims to offer an in-depth look at the Dalai Lama's philosophical insights and is set for global release in fall/winter 2024. Gere, a prominent Tibetan Buddhist and activist, is known for his advocacy on Tibetan issues and has faced professional repercussions for his stance on Tibet.

Sikkim MP Dorjee Lepcha Clarifies Border as Tibet's: Rajya Sabha MP Dorjee Tsering Lepcha has made a statement clarifying that the border from Arunachal Pradesh to Sikkim should be referred to as the Tibet border, not the China border. This declaration has been well-received by the Tibetan community, which sees it as a

recognition of Tibet's historical and cultural significance prior to Chinese occupation. Lepcha's statement challenges the current designation of the border and advocates for a change in terminology to reflect Tibet's historical status. The Tibetan Association and various Tibetan groups have expressed their gratitude for Lepcha's support and bold stance.

Protests, Detentions and Other News from the PRC

China's Economic Protests Give President Xi Jinping a Headache: China is experiencing a rise in protests linked to economic issues, with a reported 18% increase in dissent in the second quarter of 2024 compared to the previous year. Economic grievances, particularly concerning labour and real estate issues, account for nearly two-thirds of these protests. Common triggers include stalled housing projects, company closures, and wage payment issues. While protests in China are generally small and do not directly challenge President Xi Jinping, they pose significant challenges for local officials and highlight the broader economic difficulties facing the country. Recent disappointing earnings from major companies and a slowdown in living standards are exacerbating these issues, complicating Xi's efforts to manage the economic downturn.

Tibetan Woman Arrested for Spreading Rumors About School Closure: A Tibetan woman named Zomkyi has been arrested by Chinese authorities for allegedly spreading rumours about the closure of the Ragya Sherig Norbulung school. The school, a significant Tibetan educational institution established in 1994, was closed by Chinese authorities on July 14, 2024. Zomkyi, a relative of a former student, was detained for her comments on social media about the school's closure. She had been previously detained and restricted by local police. The closure of the school, which faced legal and political pressures, has caused disappointment among Tibetans. The founder of the school, Jigme Gyaltzen, was acquitted of corruption charges related to his other roles.

Feds Accuse Tiananmen Square Pro-Democracy Activist of Secretly Working for China's Intelligence Agency: Federal prosecutors in New York have charged Yuanjun Tang, a Chinese dissident and Tiananmen Square protester, with acting as an agent for China's Ministry of State Security. Tang, who had previously fled to Taiwan and the U.S., is accused of spying on pro-democracy groups and providing information about them to Chinese intelligence. Allegations include passing details about Tiananmen Square commemorations and a Congressional candidate's campaign. Tang reportedly received payments and travelled to China for meetings with intelligence officers. Evidence against him includes data from his phones and communications with the intelligence officer. Tang faces charges of acting as a foreign agent and making false statements.

Another Chinese Young Man Confronts CCP, Calls for Xi Jinping's Resignation: A young Chinese man, identified as Yan Zhongjian, has gained attention for his public protest against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Using a Wi-Fi router, Yan broadcast messages calling for Xi Jinping's resignation and opposing internet censorship. His activism, which includes previous attempts to dismantle the Great Firewall, led to his arrest and seizure of his equipment. The video of his protest, shared by Su Yutong, a Chinese writer in Germany, highlights his demands for freedom of speech and equality. The authorities have labelled Yan a "political criminal" and have been actively pursuing him. Yan's actions are part of a broader trend of dissent against the CCP.

The First Known Survivor of CCP's Forced Organ Harvesting Speaks Out in Washington, DC: Cheng Peiming, a 58-year-old Chinese man from Northeast China, has become the first known survivor to publicly speak about the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) forced organ harvesting program. Speaking at a forum in Washington, D.C., Cheng recounted his experience of having organs forcibly removed while he was imprisoned for practicing Falun Gong. Cheng, who escaped to Thailand in 2015 and later to the U.S., revealed that he was subjected to organ removal surgeries in 2004 and 2006. He only realized he was a victim of this practice after learning about it in 2006. Cheng's testimony supports findings from international bodies condemning the CCP's human rights abuses. Recent legislation like the Falun Gong Protection Act aims to address these abuses.

Activist of Hunan Bridge Banner, White Paper Movement Missing: Fang Yirong, known for his bridge protest in Hunan Province demanding freedom and condemning President Xi Jinping, is currently missing. On July 30, Fang displayed a banner with slogans similar to those used in the October 2022 Sitong Bridge protest. He subsequently posted a video on August 2 expressing defiance against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and detailing his persecution by the National Security Department. Fang claimed he faced severe harassment and surveillance. A

letter translated by journalist Jennifer Zeng further detailed his experiences of political suppression. The disappearance of Fang Yirong is part of a broader trend of dissent and suppression in China, especially following the 'Zero COVID' policy.

Fate of Drepung Monastery Monk Remains Uncertain After 17 Years of Disappearance: Kunchok Nyima, a monk from Drepung Monastery, has been missing for 17 years after his arrest on April 11, 2008, for participating in a peaceful protest. He was reportedly sentenced to 20 years in prison, but the Chinese authorities have not disclosed his whereabouts or status since then. Despite repeated inquiries from his family, authorities have maintained secrecy. Kunchok Nyima was involved in a protest commemorating the Tibetan National Uprising, which led to a crackdown by local military and police forces. His case highlights ongoing issues of enforced disappearances and lack of transparency in Tibet.

Protest Banner in Hunan Criticizes Xi Jinping, Calls for Freedom: On August 1, 2024, a banner appeared on an overpass in Hunan, China, demanding freedom, democracy, and criticizing President Xi Jinping as a "dictator." This act of dissent is notable given China's strict controls on free speech and recent public unrest, including protests against COVID-19 measures and historical crackdowns such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

CCP's TIBET POLICY

Cataract incidences in 'Tibet' 60% higher than in rest of PRC amid lack of medical facilities

31 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)



At 14.6%, the incidence of cataracts is 60% higher in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) vis-à-vis the rest of the People's Republic of China (PRC) due to high latitude, long-term exposure to harmful ultraviolet rays, and a lack of medical facilities, reported *shine.cn*, the website of the official *Shanghai Daily* newspaper, Aug 30.

Citing a team of local Shanghai eye experts who conduct a medical aid programme in TAR, providing free diagnosis and treatment there, the report said the disease is also the leading cause of blindness in the region.

The report also said eye diseases are more common in TAR than elsewhere in the PRC.

A team of 14 medical professionals from Guangzheng Eye Hospital Group travelled to Shigatse city in southern TAR to provide free screening and eye surgery to special school students, Tibet-aiding volunteers, and residents, the report said.

It was stated to be the seventh time the hospital had organized doctors' trips to TAR to provide medical care to the locals.

Dr Feng Fei, vice president of Shanghai Xinshijie Zhongxing Eye Hospital, which collaborated with the ZEISS company and the Shanghai Chenguang Charity Foundation on this mission, has said that overall eye health was a matter of concern among people living on the Tibetan Plateau and needed more social support and awareness.

The experts were stated to have screened teachers and children at Shigatse Special School. Ten children with vision disorders needed further examinations and assessments. Follow-up assistance will be provided to these children so that they can receive medical care in Shanghai or Chengdu, the group has said.

Dr Feng has also said: "During this mission, we performed 20 complex eye surgeries. The majority of patients were elderly and needed cataract or fundus surgery. They were unable to undergo early treatment for a variety of reasons and had to live with eye problems for a long time, which had a significant impact on their lives and jobs."

China's top political advisor calls for 'integration among all ethnic groups' in Tibet

30 August, 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Giving a fillip to President Xi Jinping's Sinicization of ethnic minority regions drive, China's top official on ethnic affairs has on Aug 27 called for the promotion of exchanges and "integration among all ethnic groups" and the strengthening of the "sense of identity with the motherland" while addressing a conference in Tibet's capital Lhasa.

It is in this context that Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, has urged efforts to deliver solid paired-up assistance for Xizang Autonomous Region toward the goal of building a modern socialist new Xizang, using the Chinese name for Tibet.

"Efforts should be made to promote exchanges and integration among all ethnic groups, improve people's livelihoods, rally people's support, and strengthen the sense of identity with the motherland, the Chinese nation, the Chinese culture, the CPC, and socialism with Chinese characteristics among officials and people of all ethnic groups," China's official *Xinhua* news agency Aug 29 quoted Wang as saying.

Addressing the fourth work conference on paired-up assistance for Xizang, and marking the programme's 30th anniversary, Wang has hailed "the notable achievements in the paired-up assistance work for Xizang over the past three decades," and "urged efforts to promote targeted, systematic and long-term assistance for the region, and elevate the comprehensive benefits yielded by the assistance work."

"Targeted, systematic and long-term assistance" obviously refers to reinforcing Beijing current renewed campaign and goal for the Sinicization of Tibet with regard to its ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity. For this purpose, Wang has emphasized, "It is imperative to improve the work regarding officials and talent dispatched to assist Xizang and strengthen the organization and leadership of the paired-up assistance work."

The conference was also stated to have awarded honorary titles to exemplary individuals who had participated in the paired-up assistance for Xizang, which totalled nearly 12,000 over the period of 1994 and 2022, dispatched in 10 batches at three-yearly intervals.

The programme was stated to have involved the participation of 17 provinces and municipalities as well as dozens of ministries and state-owned enterprises of China, "bringing substantial investment,

practical technology and essential talent to Xizang," said another *Xinhua* report Aug 28.

Xi demands all-out efforts to carry out reform tasks

29 August 2024, [The State Council](#)

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday demanded all-out efforts to ensure the implementation of the country's reform tasks.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks while presiding over the sixth meeting of the Central Commission for Deepening Overall Reform, which he heads.

Noting that the further comprehensive deepening of reform enjoys a solid foundation and favorable conditions, Xi urged making good use of the existing reform achievements and experience.

"We must free our minds, seek truth from facts, move with the times, and take a realistic and pragmatic approach," Xi said.

The meeting was attended by Li Qiang, Wang Huning and Cai Qi, all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and deputy directors of the Central Commission for Deepening Overall Reform.

The meeting reviewed and adopted a plan for central Party and state departments to implement major reform measures set in a key resolution adopted last month at the third plenum of the 20th CPC Central Committee, and a guideline on upgrading pilot free trade zones.

The resolution put forward more than 300 reform measures spanning sectors such as the economy, culture and ecology, as the Party aims to further deepen reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization.

Thursday's meeting underscored the importance of upholding the CPC Central Committee's centralized, unified leadership over reform, and ensuring the proper order, pace and timing of reforms.

Efforts must be made to accelerate the implementation of landmark reform measures, enhance the consistency of reform policy orientation, and actively assess the impact of reform on economic and social development, according to the meeting.

It stressed enhancing investigation and research on major reform tasks, formulating implementation plans and strengthening the supervision, inspection and evaluation of work related to reform.

Highlighting the milestone and pioneering institutional innovations introduced by the country's 22 pilot free trade zones since the 18th CPC National Congress held

in 2012, the meeting urged pursuing high-standard opening up and focusing on institutional innovations. It encouraged carrying out pilot reforms and conducting groundbreaking, integrated explorations in this regard.

The meeting also stressed fine-tuning policy mechanisms to facilitate trade, investment, capital flows, transportation and travel, as well as the secure and orderly flow of data.

Efforts are required to ensure both development and security and improve risk prevention and control capabilities, according to the meeting.

3 ways China is ratcheting up surveillance of Tibetans

17 August 2024, [RFA](#)

Authorities are hiring food delivery workers as auxiliary police to monitor Tibetans.

Since early August, Chinese authorities have dramatically boosted surveillance of Tibetans in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa by putting more police on the streets, cracking down on social media users and – in a new wrinkle – hiring food delivery workers to serve as auxiliary police officers, sources inside Tibet say.

The increased monitoring activities coincided with the start of a major annual festival, the Shoton Festival, on Aug. 4. Also known as a yogurt festival, it is observed when monks complete their annual religious retreats and involves the unveiling of a 500-square-meter thangka painting, performances of Tibetan opera and huge picnics.

“The government has been taking various measures to tighten its vigilance in response to sensitive situations in Tibet, but this August, it has suddenly taken even more drastic measures,” said one source from inside Tibet.

Authorities are calling it a “summer public security crackdown and rectification operation,” the sources said.

The precise reasons behind the stricter measures – which continue – are not known, but Beijing has steadily tightened surveillance in Tibet over many years. One source said the measures were to ensure stability for the government’s commercial activities to stimulate economic growth.

That may be true on the surface, but comments from a senior security official point to a deeper motive. Zhang Hongbo, vice chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region and director of the Public Security Department told state media that security forces would focus on national unity and fight separatism or secession.

Tibet was once an independent country, but Chinese forces invaded in 1950 and have controlled the territory ever since. The Dalai Lama fled into exile in India amid a failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule.

Since then, Beijing has sought to legitimize Chinese rule through the suppression of dissent and policies undermining Tibetan culture and language.

Authorities are hyper-sensitive to any hints of protest against Chinese rule or resistance to those efforts.

Here are three ways that authorities are boosting surveillance in Lhasa:

One: Greater police presence on the streets.

This includes plainclothes officers, and an increase in the number of traffic and police inspection points.

Lhasa’s Public Security Bureau deployed more than 1,200 police officers, set up 65 inspection and traffic checkpoints and conducted inspections of more than 2,000 venues and 24,000 vehicles, according to a Chinese state media report on Aug. 5.

Two: Authorities have deployed civilians – mostly food delivery drivers – as auxiliary police officers.

Lhasa authorities launched a pilot program hiring delivery drivers from food delivery company Meituan to perform “voluntary patrol and prevention work,” Chinese state media reported on Aug. 8 – although sources say the workers are essentially forced to do the work.

They are helping police to keep an eye on ordinary residents, including serving at night watchmen in certain areas.

The measure suggests China is using Tibet as a testing ground for its surveillance tactics because they are similar to civilian-police integration efforts China employs in border areas, said Sripama Pathak, associate professor of China studies at the O.P. Jindal Global University in Haryana, India.

China has set up civilian-police integrated units in sensitive border areas of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region, both in the far western part of the country. The units comprise civilians, policemen, militiamen and government officials working with People’s Liberation Army soldiers to ensure security.

“China’s efforts to rope in delivery riders for surveillance is in line with the effort to further consolidate its grip in Tibet,” said Kalpit Mankikar, an expert at the New Delhi-based think tank Observer Research Foundation.

Hiring Meituan delivery workers for surveillance also signals a link between the Chinese government and private enterprises, showing how the government drafts companies to fulfill certain national objectives, Mankikar said.

Three: Crackdown on social media use among Tibetans.

In the past, Tibetans could sign up for social media with only a phone number.

But at the end of July, the government announced that social media users had to re-open their accounts and provide personal details, the sources said.

Re-registering involves providing a password connected to one's personal cell phone or identity card that is accessible to the government, one of the Tibetans said.

"If you do not have proper social media account registration, you will receive a summons from the government to re-register, and your phone will be examined," one of the sources said.

Authorities also began stopping individual Tibetans in Lhasa to check for use of virtual private networks, or VPNs, that allow users to get around China's internet restrictions, often dubbed "China's Great Firewall," two sources from inside Tibet said.

In early August, authorities in Lhasa arrested three people for using a VPN but released them with an administrative punishment, the Municipal Public Security Bureau said on its website.

The government said the latest measure was meant to protect personal data information, properly manage internet society and prevent telecommunication network fraud.

Lhasa police said Tuesday that it was inspecting the entire internet network and city streets for two days and nights to ensure public safety and security.

This comes on top of authorities' strict monitoring of Tibetans' use of social media, including Douyin, China's version of TikTok.

Authorities have banned Tibetans from using the Tibetan language on social media sites – part of an effort to undermine their language and assimilate into Chinese culture.

China has impoverished Tibetan villagers by force-relocating them as 'border guardians'

14 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China has moved thousands of people to new settlements on its frontiers, including in Tibet near the borders with India, Nepal and Bhutan, and elsewhere, calling them "border guardians." But their economic viability is highly questionable with the residents being dependent mostly on government subsidies and welfare, while some get paid a bit for border security-related jobs, according to a *nytimes.com* report Aug 10.

China's leader, Xi Jinping, calls such people "border guardians" and the villagers are essentially sentries on the country's front line. And the villages set up along Tibet's border give China's sovereignty a new, undeniable permanence along boundaries contested by India, Bhutan and Nepal, the report noted.

The build-up is seen as the clearest sign that Mr Xi is using civilian settlements to quietly solidify China's control in far-flung frontiers, just as he has with fishing militias and islands in the disputed South China Sea. The report has worked with the artificial intelligence

company RAIC Labs, which scanned satellite images of China's entire land border captured by Planet Labs, to arrive at its findings.

Mapping through use of satellite images and comparing them with historical records reveals that China has put at least one village near every accessible Himalayan pass that borders India, as well as on most of the passes bordering Bhutan and Nepal, the report said, citing Matthew Akester, an independent researcher on Tibet, and Robert Barnett, a professor from SOAS University of London. Both have studied Tibet's border villages for years.

While the outposts are civilian in nature, they also provide China's military with roads, access to the internet and power, should it want to move troops quickly to the border. Villagers serve as eyes and ears in remote areas, discouraging intruders or runaways, the report noted.

The build-up of settlements has fuelled anxiety in the region about Beijing's ambitions. The threat of conflict is ever present: Deadly clashes have broken out along the border between troops from India and China since 2020, and tens of thousands of soldiers from both sides remain on a war footing, the report noted



China has moved thousands of people to new settlements on its frontiers, including in Tibet near the borders with India, Nepal and Bhutan, and elsewhere, calling them "border guardians."

Of the new villages the report has identified in Tibet, one is stated to be on land claimed by India, though within China's de facto border, and 11 other settlements are in areas contested by Bhutan. Some of those 11 villages are stated to be near the Doklam region, the site of a prolonged standoff between troops from India and China in 2017 over Chinese attempts to extend a road.

A local government document reviewed by the report was stated to indicate that some villagers may be receiving around 20,000 Chinese yuan a year for relocation, less than \$3,000. Besides, one resident reached by phone has said he earned an extra \$250 a month by patrolling the border.

Still, it remains unclear whether the villages make economic sense. The residents become dependent on the subsidies because there are few other ways to

make a living, Mr Akester, the independent expert, has said.

Over the years, the government has pushed many nomadic Tibetans to sell their yaks and sheep, leave the grasslands and move into houses, but often without clear ways for them to survive. Instead of herding, residents have to work for wages, the report noted.

“The major problem is they are moving them from one lifestyle to another,” Barnett has said. “They end up with no capital, no usable skills, no sellable skills and no cultural familiarity.”

Residents were thus seen to have been forced to relocate, to be reduced to living in poverty. A documentary aired by the state broadcaster, CCTV, showed how a Chinese official went to Dokha, a village in Tibet, to persuade residents to move to a new village called Duolonggang, 10 miles from Arunachal Pradesh.

He encountered some resistance. Tenzin, a lay Buddhist practitioner, insisted that Dokha’s land was fertile, producing oranges and other fruit. “We can feed ourselves without government subsidies,” he has said.

The official criticized Tenzin for “using his age and religious status to obstruct relocation,” the report said, citing a state media article cited by Human Rights Watch in a report.

In the end, all 143 residents of Dokha moved to the new settlement, the report added.

Brahma Chellaney, a strategic affairs analyst based in New Delhi, has said that in quietly building militarized villages in disputed borderlands, China is replicating on land an expansionist approach that it has used successfully in the South China Sea.

“What stands out is the speed and stealth with which China is redrawing facts on the ground, with little regard for the geopolitical fallout,” Chellaney has said. “China has been planting settlers in whole new stretches of the Himalayan frontier with India and making them its first line of defence.”

Also, the villages serve as propaganda: a display of Chinese strength and superiority in the region, Jing Qian, co-founder of the Center for China Analysis at the Asia Society, has said.

The relocation policy is also a form of social engineering, designed to assimilate minority groups like the Tibetans into the mainstream. Images from the villages suggest that religious life is largely absent. Buddhist monasteries and temples are seemingly nowhere to be found. Instead, national flags and portraits of Mr. Xi are everywhere, on light poles, living room walls and balcony railings, the report noted.

China’s efforts to boost Tibet’s economy benefit Han population, report says

06 August 2024, [RFA](#), Lobsang and Tenzin Pema

But Tibetans believe the resulting economic marginalization could increase tensions in the region.



A road marker displays the 4,000-kilometer milestone along National Highway 318 which travels through western China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, Oct. 15, 2011.

A Chinese government measure to boost the economy and improve the business environment of the Tibet Autonomous Region will benefit the large and growing Han population there, while Tibetans face increased economic marginalization, according to a new think-tank report.

Chinese officials have doubled down on expanding existing economic and technology development zones, or ETDZs, in Tibet, says a July 26 report by the Jamestown Foundation, a Washington think tank.

The zones are in keeping with the government’s focus on urbanization, cross-border trade and a strategy to shift the Tibetan economy away from traditional sectors, such as agriculture and herding, and into export-oriented industries.

As such, the zones focus on urban centers such as Lhasa, Lhokha, Shigatse, Nyingtri and Chamdo — cities with large and growing Han Chinese populations. This means the Han will reap the economic spoils from the zones, while Tibetans are excluded, possibly straining relations between the two ethnic groups even more, the report says.

“Heavy subsidization, Han control of the Tibetan economy (except for in the agriculture and livestock sectors), and the marginalization of ethnic Tibetans could cause problems for both the local economy’s prospects and are likely to deepen social tensions,” Devendra Kumar, associate fellow at the Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies at the Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence in Delhi, India, wrote in the report.

“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,” Kumar added.

The report came around the time that the Chinese government announced that the Tibet Autonomous Region recorded economic growth of 6.1 percent during the first half of 2024, compared to over 8% during the same period in 2023.

Tibetans say Beijing’s measures to spur the autonomous region’s economy, such as the tech zones, have left them out in the cold because of ongoing economic marginalization.

Assimilationist policies

Tibetans have long been shut out of government and construction jobs, dominated by Han migrants. They are also hurt by Beijing’s assimilationist policies that disadvantages them when competing for urban employment opportunities.

Government restrictions on Tibetans banning them from travel inside and outside the region and onerous requirements for travel and business permits limit business opportunities, said several Tibetans from inside Tibet, including three businessmen.

“Major business opportunities are given to Chinese individuals, and Tibetans are only occasionally assigned minor and small businesses,” one of the businessmen said.

Han Chinese accounted for more than 12% of the population of 3.7 million people in the Tibet Autonomous Region, according to China’s 2020 census data.

But the Han constitute a majority or a near majority in certain urban centers. They make up about 39% of the population in Chagyib district of Nyingtri, a prefecture-level city known as Nyingchi in Chinese.

About 57% percent of the population in Gar county in Ngari prefecture, according to 2019 figures from China’s National Bureau of Statistics.

In June, Wang Junzheng, party secretary for the Tibet Autonomous Region, reportedly instructed officials at the Lhasa economic-technological development zone to support Tibetan products to be traded globally.

But with China’s ongoing border tensions with India and trade limited to Nepal, experts said this would be far from easy.

And traveling for business to neighboring Nepal, a pro-China nation, is difficult, Tibetans said.

“In reality, traveling from Lhasa is very difficult for Tibetans,” said a Tibetan businessman from Lhasa. “If Tibetans were allowed to freely export and do business, it would be beneficial.”

‘Labor work if they are lucky’

Instead, Tibetan businessmen serve as mere middlemen, buying from local Tibetans and then selling to Han Chinese businessmen in Tibet who export these products, the same businessman said.

For the past 15 years, the Chinese government has been trying to reset Tibet’s economy, which has until

now been driven largely by massive subsidies from the central government, Kumar said.

But the subsidies and large investment opportunities, which Chinese officials say are meant to improve the livelihoods of Tibetans, are mostly doled out to Han Chinese who live in Tibet, another Tibetan businessman from Lhasa told Radio Free Asia on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

“If a business opportunity or plan involving a 100,000-yuan [US\$14,000] investment is in place, a Tibetan will never receive that investment,” he said. “It will be given to Chinese individuals, and local Tibetans may only get employed for labor work if they are lucky.”

In the meantime, it will take a while before the establishment of the ET Dz as an economic strategy bears fruit, Kumar wrote in the Jamestown Foundation report.

“ET Dzs are designed in part to support exports, but the TAR’s external trade is currently limited to Nepal,” he said.

For the past 16 years, the Chinese government has focused on developing tourism, mining and construction industries in the Tibet Autonomous Region, “but their potential to help shift to indigenous growth remains limited,” Kumar said.

This is why provincial officials have embarked on initiatives that replicate the growth model of inland provinces, he said.

While tourism in Tibet might bring some temporary income to Tibetans, the cost of economic development far outweighs any minor benefit they receive, Lhade Namlo, an Australia-based researcher on Tibet and China, told RFA.

The likely negative impact of industrial development and mining activities on the environment and the long-term dangers posed to neighboring Southeast Asian nations, including India, cannot be ignored, he added.

China’s ethnic policy chief says minority artists must focus on common national identity

05 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

Pan Yue criticises one unnamed Tibetan-language film for not giving the Communist Party enough credit.

China’s top ethnic policy official has criticised “self-centred” artworks about ethnic minorities and said that they should focus on the common national identity.

As an example, he criticised an unspecified Tibetan-language movie for only focusing on the spiritual world while not giving Communist Party credit for building the region’s infrastructure.

Pan Yue, director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, made the remarks last month in a speech

at a meeting of the Junma (or Steed) Ethnic Minority Literary Awards.

The speech was published on Friday at China Minzu News, an official outlet focused on Beijing's ethnic policies.

Pan, who is ethnically Han, said he had observed a "disconcerting trend" in recent years where ethnic minority artworks were swayed by "Western multicultural theories".

He said: "This is evident in narrative models that isolate individual social groups for development, in constructing a closed historical lineage for a single ethnic group, in the binary oppositions of urban versus rural, modern versus traditional, and centre versus periphery, as well as in cutting off the close connection with the historic progress of the entire country, and generate self-centred and exaggerated expressions."

Pan criticised one film about a pilgrimage by Tibetan herders that illustrates how religious faith shapes their material and spiritual world.

"Did they not know that it is the Communist Party of China that has constructed the pilgrimage paths, repaired the Potala Palace and thousands of temples, as well as compiled the Tibetan Buddhist canon?" Pan said.

He did not name the film in question, but the content matches that of Zhang Yang's 2015 movie *Paths of the Soul*.

Although the director is ethnically Han, it is the highest grossing Tibetan-language movie ever released in China. It follows a group of Tibetan pilgrims on a monumental 2,000km (1,200-mile) journey to Mount Kailash, a sacred site in Tibetan Buddhism.

Pan also said: "The No 1 criterion for evaluating ethnic literature works is whether they contribute to strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation."

He also set out specific instructions on works related to different ethnic groups.

When writing about Tibet, it was acceptable to highlight its uniqueness, Pan said, but cautioned against portraying Tibet as an isolated "Himalayan cultural circle" adding that Tibetans had always "looked eastward".

Since 2014, policy towards ethnic minorities has been shaped around President Xi Jinping's slogan of the "community of the Chinese nation", which emphasises the wholeness of the nation rather than ethnic differences.

Beijing has been accused of widespread human rights abuses in regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang, but it says its policies there are designed to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Pan said divisive narratives promoted by the West had introduced erroneous historical perspectives, creating false opposition and misrepresenting various ethnic groups and regions.

These included the deliberate creation of oppositions such as "Han versus non-Han", "nomadic versus agricultural", and "inner Asia versus China", he said.

He criticised claims that groups such as the Manchus, Mongolians, Tibetans and Hui were not part of the Chinese nation, and criticised the portrayal of the southwestern provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi as "historically unclaimed lands" that "rebel against the country".

"It is vital to avoid narratives that stray too far from historical facts and the idea of unity," Pan said. "Importantly, it should be acknowledged that all ethnic minorities are co-creators of Chinese civilisation.

"Historical evidence shows that cultures fostering a sense of shared identity are well-maintained and developed, while those that undermine this unity tend to fade away over time."

Pan also said Western critics were twisting China's narrative of national unity into a notion of "ethnic assimilation".

He said efforts to modernise and improve areas inhabited by minorities had been mischaracterised as "resource exploitation", while attempts to preserve and safeguard folk culture were portrayed as "cultural eradication".

"If we fail to take action and develop alternative narratives, the true story of the Chinese nation may be forever overshadowed by these falsehoods," he said.

He called on filmmakers and authors within minority communities to craft compelling stories that resonated with both personal histories and the collective national narrative promoted by the Communist Party.

Chinese Social media platform bans Tibetan language, Tibetans condemn decision

04 August 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The Tibetans living in Tibet and other parts of the world have expressed their concerns as the Chinese social media platform Douyin banned all content in the Tibetan language. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) based in Dharamshala has strongly condemned this decision. Speaking to ANI, TCHRD Director, Tenzin Dawa, said that Douyin company's decision to ban content in the Tibetan language has made it impossible for Tibetan netizens who use these platforms to create content and make a living from these platforms.

Tenzin Dawa said, "Recently we came across several videos of Tibetan netizens inside Tibet expressing strong discontent over the recent ban by Chinese company Douyin in China. So, Douyin company has resorted to banning, removing and censoring all content that speaks in the Tibetan language and that

relates to Tibetan culture in general because of the recent ban a lot of Tibetan netizens who use these platforms to create content, share their lifestyles or run businesses and make a living from these platforms are now completely made impossible to continue what they have been doing so far on this platform."

She said that the Chinese constitution allows minority people to speak in their language and questioned the restrictions imposed against the language. Tenzin Dawa said, "The Chinese constitution guarantees the minority people to speak in their language but why it's suddenly restricted? Do they have an issue with us being Tibetan? We are even willing to pay the company some amount but want to continue in creating content in Tibetan language on its platform."

"So, these were some of the concerns that were being expressed through some videos that were shared among the Tibetan community. So, they are also saying if the company and the Chinese authorities don't allow Tibetans to speak in their language then they will collectively pool money and sue the company itself because the constitution itself guarantees Tibetan people speak their language and the actions that the company has carried out is illegal," she added. Douyin is not the only platform in Chinese cyberspace that has imposed a ban on the Tibetan language. Several other platforms like Bilibili or Talkmate where people can learn different languages have even banned the Tibetan language for quite some years. During the past couple of years, several other companies have made it difficult for Tibetans to share videos to showcase the Tibetan language, culture and traditions.

Tenzin Dawa said, "It's not happening with online platforms only but it's something that the Chinese government has been systematically doing especially under the guidance of Xi Jinping since he came to power with his aim to assimilate the restrictions on the Tibetan language as well as to completely eradicate Tibetan language and culture so it shows both offline Tibetans are being forced to speak Chinese." She further said, "Private Tibetan institutions are closed down and then online where people want to speak in their language are being censored so it clearly shows that there is a shrinking space for Tibetans inside Tibet."

Tibet is only provincial-region where road building is fully funded by Beijing

01 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) is the only provincial-level region in the People's Republic of China where road construction is fully funded by the central

government, underlying Beijing's top priority in ensuring political stability and border security there.

Given this reality, China's central government invested 325.1 billion yuan (about 45.6 billion US dollars) in road construction in TAR from 1953 to 2023, according to China's official *Xinhua* news agency Jul 31, citing the regional government's information office.

The total length of roads open to traffic in TAR currently stands at 123,300 km, with paved roads accessing 666 townships and 4,596 administrative villages, the report cited the information office as saying at a press conference.

TAR is the only provincial-level region in the PRC where road construction is fully funded by the central government, the report said.

"Over the past 10 years, Xizang has implemented 5,805 projects for rural road construction and built or renovated 58,700 km of rural roads," the report added, referring to the region by its pinyin name so as to give it a Chinese identity.

The report cited an official from the regional transportation department as saying the TAR will continue to promote the construction of the expressway network and accelerate the connectivity of all cities and key land ports.

BUDDHISM

Beijing-appointed Panchen Lama intensifies campaign against the Dalai Lama, promotes Xi's "rule of law"

31 August 2024, [Phayul](#)

The Beijing-appointed 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaltsen Norbu (Ch. Gyaincain Norbu), widely criticised as the "fake Panchen," "Chinese puppet," and "Chinese Panchen," recently led a "Three Consciousness Symposium" in Nagchu (Ch. Naqu) Prefecture within the so called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). This event, as reported by *Bitter Winter*, a magazine dedicated to religious liberty and human rights, marks another step in the Chinese government's efforts to assert control over Tibetan Buddhism.

While China's mainstream media covered his visit, they offered scant details on its true purpose. The symposium is part of the ongoing "Three Consciousness Campaign," initiated in Tibet in 2022. This campaign aims to re-educate Buddhist monks and nuns by promoting national consciousness, citizen consciousness, and the rule of law consciousness. In practice, these programs seek to enforce allegiance to Chinese rule in Tibet and to suppress "separatism" by compelling the monastic community to obey the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Central Committee, and President Xi Jinping without question. During the symposium, Gyaltsen Norbu urged monks and nuns to distance themselves from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, and to reject "separatist thoughts." He emphasised the need to promote "national unity" and to adapt Tibetan Buddhism to fit within a socialist framework.

In his keynote address, Norbu called on Tibetan Buddhists to study and implement the resolutions of the 20th National Congress of the CCP. This directive implies that Tibetan religious practitioners must align their spiritual beliefs with the political ideologies of the state, study Buddhism in a way that aligns with contemporary political responsibilities, and accept the "strict governance of religion"—which translates to the United Front's supervision of religious activities. Additionally, Norbu stressed the importance of Tibetan Buddhism playing a supportive role in CCP-led campaigns.

During his visit to the "Rural Revitalization Nagqu Progress" exhibition, Norbu praised the rapid development achieved under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, attributing this success to the cooperation of people from all ethnic groups who support the Party's policies. He also called for even closer unity among various ethnic groups under the leadership of Xi Jinping and the Party's Central Committee.

Following his visit to Nagchu, Gyaltsen Norbu concluded his tour with a visit to Nyingtri City on August 22 before returning to Lhasa on August 28.

Gyaltzen Norbu's appointment as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Chinese government in 1995 has long been seen as an attempt to control the selection of high-ranking Tibetan religious figures and to diminish the influence of the Dalai Lama. Despite years of efforts by China to gain legitimacy for Norbu among Tibetans, he remains widely unaccepted, with many Tibetans viewing him as lacking true religious authority.

The true 11th Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, was recognised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on May 14, 1995. Days later, Chinese authorities abducted Gendun Choekyi Nyima, and he has not been seen since. For Tibetans, Gendun Choekyi Nyima remains the legitimate Panchen Lama, while Gyaltzen Norbu is seen as merely a figurehead imposed by the CCP, of which he is a member.

Tibetan monks to visit Findlay

30 August 2024, [The Courier](#), Leah Alsept

Tibetan monks will stop in Northwest Ohio next week as a part of their national tour of the United States.

Four monks from the Gaden Shartse Monastery will visit Findlay, Bluffton and Carey to share Tibetan culture and heritage, Buddhist chants, rituals for healing and practices for inner peace and compassion. The tour also serves as a fundraising initiative to construct a dormitory, also called a "khangtsen," at the monastery.

The Gaden Shartse Monastery was founded in Tibet in 1409 by Tsongkhapa, creator of the Gelug school of thought in Tibetan Buddhism. Gaden is one of the three "Seats of Learning" Gelug monasteries of Tibet. The monastery was rebuilt in India after China's invasion of Tibet. The monastery is known for its study and practice of Buddhist Sutra and Tantra.

Phukhang Khangtsen, one of 11 dormitories in the Gaden Shartse Monastery, currently has 120 rooms for its 450 monks, requiring many monks to share limited space and facilities. The tour aims to raise awareness and funds to support the monks and ensure they have the necessary accommodations to continue their spiritual life. Funds raised during the tour will support building 60 new rooms to improve living conditions for the monks.

China to hold World Buddhist Forum in October

30 August 2024, [People's Daily Online](#)

The sixth World Buddhist Forum is slated to take place in the city of Ningbo in east China's Zhejiang Province this October, with an aim to promote world peace, improve the well-being of all individuals, and gather wisdom and strength for building a community with a shared future for humanity.

First launched in 2006, the triennial forum has successfully organized five editions, and evolved into the largest and most influential multilateral platform for international Buddhist-related exchange and dialogue initiated by China.

The event will extend invitations to Buddhists, experts, scholars and delegates from about 70 countries and regions around the world.

The upcoming forum aims to delve into the essence of Buddhism, as well as its ideological connotations and practical values, in the meantime, promote communication and cooperation with various Buddhist communities, academic circles, cultural sectors and individuals around the world, said Master Yanjue, head of the Buddhist Association of China.

China-appointed Panchen promoted 'Three Consciousnesses' Sinicization of Tibet drive during Nagchu visit

28 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Although China's mainstream media gave little information on its 11th Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu's recent visit to the prefecture-level city of Nagchu (Chinese: Nagqu), Tibet Autonomous Region, it has now been reported that in one event, he presided over a symposium on China's so-called "Three Consciousnesses" campaign. The campaign is a tool for re-educating the Tibetan people, especially monks and nuns, to think and act like a party-loyal mainland Chinese.

The campaign, launched in Tibet in 2022, seeks to promotenational consciousness, citizen consciousness, and legal consciousness. In Tibet, these are used as euphemisms for supporting the Chinese rule, condemning "separatism," and laws designed to implement them under the rubric of the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), its Central Committee, and General Secretary Xi Jinping.

Gyaincain Norbu toured Nagchu from Jul 31 to Aug 10, even as the fate of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Dalai Lama-recognized 11th Panchen Lama abducted by Beijing and whom he replaced in 1995, continues to remain unknown to this day.

In his keynote speech, Gyaincain Norbu has stressed that Tibetan Buddhists should study and implement the documents of the 20th National Congress of the CPC. This meant that the Tibetan monastics should "align their religious beliefs with political beliefs," "study Buddhism to match contemporary responsibilities," accept the "strict governance of religion" programme (ie, the United Front supervision of their activities), and play a supportive role in the CPC campaigns, [bitterwinter.org](#), the website of a magazine on religious liberty and human rights, Aug 28 cited Gyaincain Norbu as having explained.

What is more, the Chinese appointed Panchen was stated to have stressed that the “three consciousnesses” education should be linked with all daily religious activities at the monasteries.

And he has called on the Buddhist monks and nuns in Tibet to distance themselves from the Dalai Lama and oppose “separatist thoughts,” promote “national unity,” and “adapt Tibetan Buddhism to a socialist society.”

Also, while visiting the “Rural Revitalization Nagqu Progress” exhibition, he was stated to have congratulated “the swift progress due to the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the active efforts of people from all ethnic backgrounds who have chosen to support, appreciate, and follow the Party’s direction.”

He has “urged the various ethnic groups to unite even more closely around the Party’s Central Committee, led by Comrade Xi Jinping.”

The report, written under a pseudonym, did not cite a source for these information.

China misuses law to demolish historic Atsok Monastery for dam construction

16 August 2024, [ITC](#)

Until the beginning of this year Atsok Monastery, which was founded in 1889 in Dragkar, Tibet, was home to 160 monks. It has now been completely leveled on the orders of the Chinese government.

The Chinese government has demolished the 135-year-old Atsok (Ch: A’cuohu) Monastery in the northern Tibetan region of Amdo to make way for the construction of a hydroelectric dam. The monastery had previously enjoyed protected status as a cultural heritage site, but this status was unilaterally revoked by Chinese authorities in order to push the demolition forward.

Despite opposition by local Tibetans, work crews began to destroy the monastery in April this year and have now finished.

“We are deeply concerned about the destruction of yet another precious Tibetan Buddhist monastery. Atsok’s cultural heritage status reflected the history of the monastery and its importance to Tibetan Buddhists, and revoking that status in order to destroy it underscores what Tibetans have known all along: China’s attitude towards their religion, history, and culture oscillates from indifference to hostility,” said the International Campaign for Tibet.

From a protected site to a pile of rubble

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China, which officially approved the construction of the Yangkhil (Yangqu) dam in 2021, noted in the approval statement that the project had been suspended earlier after learning that it had

“started construction without approval.” It is being constructed in Dragkar (Xinghai) county in Tsolho (Hainan) prefecture.

The dam is reportedly the largest robot-built 3D-printed project of its kind. Upon completion, the 1200 megawatt Yangkhyil Hydropower Plant will reach 150 meters in height. It will provide the distant Chinese province of Henan with about 5 billion kWh of electricity every year, with China’s energy needs thus being fueled by the destruction of Tibet’s religious heritage and the displacement of Tibetan communities.

Efforts by the monks of Atsok Monastery and local Tibetans to resist the dam construction have been dismissed by the authorities. RFA reported that the monastic community there “have petitioned authorities to rescind relocation orders” for the past two years. Similarly, Tibet Watch reported that a Tibetan whose identity and whereabouts still remain unknown was taken away by the police following his social media post about the demolition.

In April 2023, the Chinese government revoked Atsok Monastery’s status as a county level cultural relic protection site in order to allow the demolition to proceed. In the public notice (see ICT translation below), Dragkar county authorities cited the People’s Republic of China’s Law on Protection of Cultural Relics and related regulations, claiming that the monastery’s main assembly hall and Maitreya Temple were modern imitations and did not qualify as true cultural heritage sites.

ICT could not find any evidence of prior consultations with the monastery before the decision. To the contrary, the Beijing-based Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser, in her social media posts, said the religious community criticized the revocation as a pretextual maneuver to facilitate the demolition of the monastery.

Neither China’s Law on Protection of Cultural Relics nor the Interim Measures for the Management of Cultural Relics Identification have provisions to revoke protected status.

ICT translation from Tibetan of the Dragkar County revocation of Atsok Monastery’s cultural relic protection site status



(Click for larger image)

Public Notice by the Dragkar County Bureau of Culture, Tourism, Radio and TV in invalidating the Relic Protection Division of Atsok Monastery

As prescribed by the “Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics” and “Interim Measures for the Management of Cultural Relics Identification”, through the process of inviting experts to investigate at the actual site, read the documents, to meet and interview monks, nuns, and the religious believing public, to seek views from the relevant offices, to convene investigation meetings, both the existing main Assembly building and the Jampa Temple are modern classic constructions and do not meet the requirements of being recognized as a definitive cultural heritage construction. The proposal has been made to invalidate the status enjoyed by Atsok Monastery as a county level cultural relic protection site.

The County Bureau of Culture, Tourism, Radio and TV investigated and reported to the 22nd standing committee meeting of the county government, and an agreement reached. The county level cultural relic protection site status of Atsok Monastery in Dragkar County is being invalidated. Now it is being publicized to the society at large. The publicization period is from April 15, 2023 to April 21, 2023. During this publicization period, if there are differing opinions, please convey them in writing to the County Bureau of Culture, Tourism, Radio and TV.

Contact Telephone: 8582068

Displaced monks and communities

Starting in December 2021, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and government officials began surveying the site for the “relocation” of the monastery and the displacement of Tibetan villages within the construction zone of the Yangkhil hydropower station. This station is being built at the junction of Dragkar County and Mangra (Guinan) County on the Machu (Yellow) River.

Alongside Atsok Monastery, 22 villages across seven towns in three counties—Dragkar, Beldzong (Tongde), and Mangra—are slated for complete displacement. According to the NDRC’s approval letter, dated November 29, 2021, the project will displace an estimated 7,573 people annually, clearing a total of 13,287 acres (80,691 mu) of land.

The plan dictates that Atsok Monastery will be relocated to a site approximately 3 to 4 kilometers away in the village of Khyokar Naklo. Despite the completion of the demolition, construction at the new site has not yet begun. Local Tibetans report that the monks are living in temporary shelters awaiting the monastery’s reconstruction at the new location, if it happens at all.

Atsok Monastery was by Atsok Choktrul Konchok, and it had previous faced Chinese government

interference when the enrollment of minor novice monks was prohibited in 2021.

Following the heritage status revocation the Chinese government held a ceremony for the monastery’s “relocation” and warned local Tibetans against photographing or sharing images of the demolition and hydropower station construction online. Tibet Watch reported the detention of an unidentified Tibetan for sharing such images on WeChat, along with a photo of the Dalai Lama. A foreign tourist, Vera Hue, who visited the site to observe the developments was monitored and expelled by the police.

In a letter to the Tibetan Review, Hue described the experience as “sad and disturbing,” highlighting the ongoing oppression and systematic silencing of Tibetan people under Chinese administration, which discourages foreign witnesses.

Hue’s letter to Tibetan Review based in New Delhi, India, is reproduced in full here.

Witnessing the dismantling of dam-displaced Atsok Monastery in Tibet a sad, disturbing experience

I read your article (TibetanReview.net, Apr 13, 2024) about the relocation of Atsok Monastery in Dragkar Dzong (Ch. Xinhai), Amdo. I happened to be traveling around there in the area and it was easy to go (unlike Wonto monastery in Dege where it is said to be inaccessible and in lockdown) so I went to see for myself what is happening.

I arrived in Atsok monastery without any problems. It is a beautiful, isolated, “antique” as it was described, monastery surrounded by red danxia landforms and snow-capped mountains. But just before getting there, one sees several blue tents (by “civil administration to rescue disaster”) stationed alongside the road and there is a lot of litter everywhere. I walked all over Atsok; it is not a big place anyway, and took many pictures to treasure this site that is not going to be here any longer. A small shrine was open; however, the main temple was unfortunately closed. I asked the monks if they could please open the door for me since, given the relocation, revisiting the place would be literally impossible, but I was told that the key-keeper was away. How heartbreaking, really. When I asked the monks if they had pictures on their phones from the temple interiors that they could perhaps show me, their reply was “the temple has regulations”, and that they are not allowed to take pictures from the monastery and share it. Somebody showed me an odd video (bad quality) with aerial views of the area and that was all. Is there any book I can buy to read about the monastery and its history? No. Is there a webpage where I can read more about the monastery? No.



Atsok Monastery's demolition in progress. (Photo: Vera Hue)

The place looked and felt unkept and abandoned and in a state of mess as people were dismantling houses and temples and loading stuff onto vehicles to be taken away. So where are they relocating to, I asked. To nearby Hainan (Tibetan Tsholo), was the reply.

After I finished my walk and was about to leave, I was suddenly stopped by five policemen who appeared in front of me out of the blue suggesting to follow them to the police station – which I refused to do. A stern-looking lama then came over and asked me in English who told me about Atsok Monastery and why I am there. They took pictures of my passport and me and my driver's car plates, and then called their leader and, thankfully, she told them to let me go. The police car followed us all the way back to the main road.

Then, upon returning to my hotel in Dragkar Dzong, 2 policemen and 1 policewoman came to my hotel room to interrogate me, as friendly as they could, about my visit to Atsok monastery and why I took pictures, asking not just a few questions to know more details about me, my background, my work and the purpose of my visit to Atsok monastery and how do I even know this monastery – as it is not on the map. And what am I doing in Xinghai? It's such a small place, how do I know

it?
They stayed for over an hour writing a 3-page report while recording the whole discussion with two cameras.

Excuse me, but what is all this questioning about anyway, it is not a restricted area.

"We are relocating", said a policeman.

"Oh, really? Why?" I asked, but I got no reply.

When they were finally done, they even recommended me to befriend one of them on WeChat in case I needed further help – a common practice nowadays while traveling in Tibetan areas is that police staff may ask foreign visitors to befriend them on WeChat and unless one doesn't really mind doing so, one needs to find a polite way to decline it.



Partial demolition of a structure of Atsok Monastery in Tibet. (Photo: Vera Hue)

When it was, at last, time for them to leave, they somehow tried to excuse themselves for taking up so much of my time and I smilingly showed them out saying "You are very welcome. See you later", because you see, foreigners staying in Dragkar Dzong must first register at the police station and afterwards go check in at a hotel, and then, later during the day, have the police staff pay them a visit in their hotel room for more paperwork and work-photos – at least that is my experience from all the times I've been to Dragkar Dzong.

Like in other Tibetan places, non-English speaking Tibetan and Chinese staff in police stations and hotels have hard time deciphering the details of my foreign passport and it takes them an awful lot of time to fill in a registration form. And so, here too, I filled in my registration form myself to save time.

My visit to Atsok monastery was a sad and disturbing experience. And yet another sobering and grounding eye-opener about the shocking reality Tibetan people are faced with on a daily basis in their own land under Chinese administration who doesn't really like foreigners anywhere near to witness it. To witness a normalised abuse, oppression and persecution that is systematically hushed, muted, dismissed out of hand altogether.

— Vera Hue, 2024

China coerces Kirti Monastery students into state-run boarding schools

05 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Chinese authorities in Ngaba (Ch. Aba) County, Sichuan Province, in the Tibetan region of Amdo, have reportedly seized Kirti Monastery School in July, following the closure of the Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery School, which had over 300 students enrolled in China's state-run boarding schools, according to *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*. The authorities have mandated that over 200 students out of 900, aged 6 to 14, enrol in state-run boarding schools. The remaining students, who were sent home, were also instructed to enrol in state-run schools instead of monastery schools.

Since May, authorities have prohibited the reopening of Kirti Monastery School and Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery School. Additionally, more than 300 students from Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery School were forcibly enrolled in state-run boarding schools.

A source inside Tibet told *RFA* that some parents, who avoid sending their children to monastery schools due to health issues, have been assured by officials that the state-run schools will provide assistance for their children's livelihoods and health problems. However, officials have also forcibly taken children from their parents, claiming they were only being taken for health check-ups.

On July 8, the Educational Development Conference was held in Bharkham, Ngaba, where local officials, including Shu Zhiwen, emphasised the necessity of reforming Ngaba's education system. They advocated for a strategic closure of more monastery schools to increase enrolment in state-run boarding schools. A message circulated in social media groups underscored this directive, highlighting that Tibetan children aged six and above must be enrolled in state-run boarding schools to comply with compulsory education laws. The message warned that parents who fail to fulfil their responsibilities under Article 16 of China's Law on the Protection of Minors would face punishment.

Since 1994, Kirti Monastery and Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery School in Ngaba offered classes on Tibetan Buddhism. However, in 2003, these institutions faced interference from the Chinese government, which led to the closure of Tibetan Buddhist studies. Subsequently, the government introduced joint textbooks into the curriculum of monastery schools. As part of the current sinicisation of Buddhism initiative, officials have banned monks from enrolling in monastery schools. Additionally, officials frequently attend religious events to deliver political education, continuously creating obstacles during classes.

STATE OF ECOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

Ghosts of the past: Global warming fears resurface as 41,000 years old viruses discovered in Tibetan glacier

28 August 2024, [Down to Earth](#)

A team of American and Chinese scientists has discovered as many as 1,705 genomes of viruses beneath the ice sheets in Tibet's Guliya Glacier. Many of these viruses are novel (like novel coronavirus) which means that their existence hasn't been chronicled in science so far.

With the latest discovery of glacial viruses in Tibet, the known collection of ancient viruses has skyrocketed.

"After years of persistence, we successfully extracted and sequenced approximately 1,700 genomes of species-level virus operational taxonomic units from the ice core, expanding the known collection of glacier-preserved ancient viruses more than 50-fold," the research article titled *A Decade-Long Journey into Glacier-Archived Ancient Viruses and Their Paleoclimatic Connections* noted.

Scientists have told the press that the viruses differed significantly between colder and warmer eras, noting that a distinct community of viruses formed during these climatic shifts, at the end of the last ice age some 11,500 years ago. "This at least indicates the potential connection between viruses and climate change," said ZhiPing Zhong of Ohio State University, lead author on the research.

Also, co-author Lonnie Thompson highlighted the importance of research, describing it as 'a new tool that can answer basic climate questions that we couldn't have answered otherwise'.

The Guliya Glacier, which is located above 20,000 feet in the northwestern Tibetan Plateau, has historically been an active site for paleoclimate research.

Risks involved?

From a health perspective, excavating prehistoric ice sheets usually don't pose hazards for present-day human populations. This is because these long-dormant viruses mostly infected other microbes rather than animals.

However, researchers have found that the adaptations of these viruses could have compromised their hosts' ability to survive harsh weather conditions.

Also, these viruses haven't disintegrated biochemically even after major shifts in Earth's climate over millennia. Thus, in an adversely changing environment, it is widely believed that the melting of ice sheets can release viruses that can mutate and adapt to contemporary conditions.

Extreme weather risks rising as Tibetan Plateau gets hotter and wetter, scientists warn

23 August 2024, [The Star](#)

Scientists have warned that the Tibetan Plateau is becoming warmer and wetter, raising the risk of extreme weather events.

The plateau is sometimes described as the “Asian water tower”, because it is the source of many of the continent’s major rivers including the Indus, Ganges, Mekong, Yangtze and Yellow River.

The researchers, led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, presented a summary of their findings from ongoing work on Sunday.

The plateau will enter a super warm and humid phase that will see more than half the glacier mass melting in some areas and lake water levels rising by more than 10 metres (33 feet) by the end of the century, according to the researchers.

They said global warming meant that the amount of grassland and forest had increased by 6 and 12 per cent respectively over the last 15 years – but warned that these changes also carried an increased risk of extreme weather events.

Although the increase in vegetation will help prevent desertification, in the long run it will cause a shift in monsoon circulation, resulting in more heavy rainfall during the summer. These changes “could lead to significant shifts in the Asian monsoon circulation, potentially increasing the frequency of extreme weather events in China”, Yao Tandong, the leader of the research team, warned.

In a paper published in *Nature* in 2022, Yao warned that the rise in water levels was primarily occurring in the northern inland areas, but southern outflow regions – including the Indus and Ganges river basins, which are vital for agriculture in India and Pakistan – were experiencing a decline.

The researchers said these changes meant that more effective water resource management would be needed in downstream countries in future.

The China Meteorological Administration has previously warned that the total glacier area on the plateau may fall by 40 per cent by 2050, increasing the risk of severe storms and floods in downstream areas. The researchers have also mapped the distribution of active faults that could trigger major earthquakes along critical transport corridors and developed a disaster risk assessment system to support the construction of major infrastructure projects in the region.

The team has also discovered more than 3,000 new species and evidence that suggests the earliest human activity on the Tibetan Plateau may date back over 190,000 years, according to state news agency Xinhua.

‘Over half of Tibetan Plateau’s glaciers may melt by 2100’

20 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Chinese scientists have warned that some low-elevation glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau may disappear permanently, which could significantly impact the plateau’s ecosystem. In fact, by the end of the current, 21st century, the loss of glacial mass in some regions of the Tibetan Plateau will exceed 50%, according to the scientists’ model predictions cited by China’s official *Xinhua* news agency Aug 20.

Over the past five decades, the plateau has witnessed rapid warming, with a temperature increase of about 0.4 degrees Celsius every 10 years, more than double the global average warming rate during the same period, the report noted.

Citing the example of Rongbuk Glacier at the foot of Mount Everest, Wu Guangjian, a researcher at the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), has said, “the length and height of it are both shrinking.”

Wu has added that global warming has caused the rate of glacier evaporation to exceed precipitation, and that small glaciers at lower elevations on the plateau are melting more rapidly and are likely to disappear in the future.

The researchers, led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, have presented a summary of their findings from ongoing work on Aug 18.

The seriousness of the scientists’ warning lies in the fact that the Tibetan Plateau is the region with the most glaciers outside the polar regions. “Data shows that the glaciers on the plateau holds over 8 trillion cubic metres of water, providing essential water resources for more than 2 billion people downstream,” the report noted.

“The model shows that lake water levels in some areas of the plateau might rise by over 10 metres at the end of the century, which could enhance the plateau’s overall water supply capacity,” Yao Tandong, an academician at the CAS and the leader of China’s ongoing second scientific expedition and research project on the Tibetan Plateau has said.

“However,” Yao has added, “it also increases the risk of glacier collapses and glacial lake outburst floods.”

The scientists have noted that global warming meant that the amount of grassland and forest had increased by 6 and 12% respectively over the last 15 years. However, they have warned that these changes also carried an increased risk of extreme weather events.

Although the increase in vegetation will help prevent desertification, in the long run it will cause a shift in monsoon circulation, resulting in more heavy rainfall during the summer.

These changes “could lead to significant shifts in the Asian monsoon circulation, potentially increasing the frequency of extreme weather events in China”, the *scmp.com* Aug 20 quoted Yao as saying.

In this project, Chinese scientists were stated to have used high-precision radar for the first time to obtain a continuous profile of snow and ice thickness at the summit of Mount Everest, as well as accurate measurements of its ice and snow depth.

Wu has warned that unless the world reaches a consensus on addressing climate warming and take action as soon as possible, “we will witness the disappearance of glaciers in more regions across the globe.”

Previously, the China Meteorological Administration had warned that the total glacier area on the Tibetan Plateau may fall by 40% by 2050, increasing the risk of severe storms and floods in downstream areas, noted the *scmp.com* report.

Scientists drill holes in world’s highest salt lake in Tibet for a glimpse into one million years of earth’s history

12 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

An international research team has successfully drilled record boreholes in the world’s highest saltwater lake located in northern Tibet over Jun-Jul 2024 to collect sediment cores to study the Earth’s history, including climate change, dating back about a million years. Studying these may help future climate forecast efforts, reported *uni-greifswald.de* Aug 2 and China’s official *Xinhua* news agency Jul 13.

Lake Namco (Tibetan: Namtso) is around 100 metres deep and lies at an altitude of nearly 4718 metres in Nagchu city-prefecture. Almost 1400 metres were drilled under the supervision of physical geographer Prof Dr Torsten Haberzettl from the University of Greifswald. The longest borehole reached a depth of over 500 metres.

The *Xinhua* report said the Namco drillingsurpassed the previous maximum depth of 153.44 metres in lake drilling on the Tibetan Plateau.

Namco is an enclosed lake that gathers information about rocks, soil, vegetation, rivers and human activities in the catchment, making the lake significant for environmental-changes research, it cited Wang Junbo, one of the leaders of the scientific expedition team, as saying.

The *greifswald.de* report said the sediments that are now available from these boreholes will be analysed and evaluated in detail by numerous international scientists over the coming years. The researchers from Greifswald hope to gain numerous insights into the climate of the past, the development of life in such a

remote region and changes in the Earth’s magnetic field.

Around 1400 metres of sediment cores were recovered from a floating drilling platform. These allow researchers to look back approximately one million years into Earth’s history. In order to obtain such information, the sediment cores are divided into small slices, which are then analysed in the researchers’ respective home laboratories – including in Greifswald, the report said.

The internationally funded drilling itself was stated to have mainly involved researchers from Germany, China, Switzerland and the UK, with the ideal drilling points determined in advance on the basis of seismic investigations funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation, DFG). The scientists hope that their research will help to improve forecasts of the future climate.

“Global climate change will have a major impact on Southeast Asia and therefore also on the people who live here. It is thus important to understand the climate of the past in order to make models about the future development of the climate more reliable. The sediment cores reveal which climate changes occurred in this region in the past, how quickly they took place and whether they led to changes in the ecosystems,” Prof Haberzettl has explained.

Fast multiplying Tibet-Himachal glacial lakes could threaten lives, infrastructure

11 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Glacier sizes are rapidly reducing due to the impact of climate change in recent years, resulting in a gradual rise of moraine-dammed lakes in Himachal Pradesh in India and the Trans Himalayan Region of Tibet, posing a potential threat to human life and infrastructure further downstream, reported *thehindu.com* Aug 10, citing a recent study.

Moraine-dammed lakes are formed by the melting of retreating glaciers whose deposits of earth, rock etc, had fortified to prevent the water from flowing out.

The number of glacial lakes in the Satluj river (Tibetan: Langchen Khabab) catchment area has almost doubled from 562 in 2019 to 1,048 in 2023, the report said, citing satellite data analysed in a recent study by the Centre on Climate Change of Himachal Pradesh Council for Science Technology-Environment (HIMCOSTE).

Of these 1,048 lakes, 900 are small, each spanning an area of less than five hectares, while 89 have an area between 5 hectares and ten hectares, and 59 are bigger than 10 hectares each, the report added.

The catchment area of the Satluj basin was studied from upstream of Jhakri in Shimla district of Himachal

Pradesh to the Mansarover Lake (Mapham Yutso) in Tibet in the Trans Himalayan Region from where the river originates.

“Over the years, the number of glacial lakes has been gradually increasing. In fact, as the frequency of small lakes with an area of less than five hectares has been rising, it indicates that the climate warming effects are more significant in the higher Himalayan region. The swift melting of glaciers and less snowfall during the winter could be reasons behind the rise in lakes,” Mr SS Randhawa, a co-author of the study, and the principal scientific officer at HIMCOSTE, has said.

Randhawa has said it could be inferred from the basin-wise analysis that the number of lakes is much higher in the Tibetan Himalayan Region or the Upper Satluj basin, in comparison to the Spiti and Lower Satluj basins, indicating that the Upper Satluj basin is more susceptible to glacial lake formations.

The study, which analysed multi-spectral satellite images, suggests that the rise in glacial lakes in Himachal Pradesh’s river basins can be disastrous downstream if the lakes burst their bounds for any reason, the report said. It was not clear from the news report whether similar danger existed on the Tibetan side of the Satluj basin where the number of such lakes is higher.

“Climate change has influenced the health of glaciers in the entire Himalayan region. As a result, the cryospheric cover over the Himalayan terrain is reducing. One of the ramifications of this is the development of high-altitude glacial lakes,” Sunil Dhar, Dean of the Department of Environmental Sciences at the Central University of Jammu, has said.

“The number of such lakes has increased over the years and these lakes have become unstable due to the increase in the volume of water or due to the calving effect of adjoining glaciers, [creating] avalanche either of snow or rocks. These lakes have a potential of bursting out, and depending on the volume of water, velocity and the outburst spread, it can pose a threat to habitations and infrastructure in the downstream region,” he has added.

2 dead, 17 missing after flash flood, mudslide in Tibetan area of Sichuan province

03 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Mudslide disasters have hit two nearby places in a Tibetan area of what is now part of China’s Sichuan province over Aug 2-3, resulting in deaths and people missing, necessitating the dispatch of hundreds of people and equipment in rescue efforts.

The first incident occurred on Oct 2 night in Ridi village in the province’s Kangding City when “a sudden mountain torrent and landslide” destroyed homes, killing at least two people and leaving 12 missing, state

broadcaster CCTV reported, quoting the Ganzi (Tibetan: Kardze) prefecture government. The disaster swept away part of the village.

The second disaster happened nearby at around 3.30am on Aug 3, when a sudden mountain flood and mudslide hit the Kangding-Luding section of the Yakang expressway, leading to the collapse of an expressway bridge between two tunnels.

Kangding (Dartsedo) is Tibet’s historical gateway to China while Luding (Chagzam) is within Tibet in Kardze prefecture.

The bridge disaster sent three vehicles carrying six passengers plunging down the mountainous terrain. One person was rescued while the remaining five were missing as of noon on Aug 3, state news agency *Xinhua* reported, citing the government publicity department of Sichuan Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

The Yakang expressway, connecting Ya’an in China in the east and Kangding in the west, opened in 2018. It shortens the car trip from provincial capital Chengdu to the resort city of Kangding by two hours, for a total journey of four hours. Bridges and tunnels make up 82% of the expressway.

While it remains to be determined whether poor quality of construction was responsible for the collapse of the Yakang expressway bridge, call for a crackdown on such projects have been growing recently in China.

“Three tragedies in a row! I was so shocked,” *scmp.com* Aug 3 quoted a user as writing on social media platform *Weibo*. “China should launch a crackdown on tofu-dreg projects.”

In Chinese, a “tofu-dreg project” is a phrase used to describe poorly constructed infrastructure. Such projects came under the microscope in 2008, when hundreds of students died in shoddily built school buildings during the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan. The third tragedy referred to the death of 38 people from the Jul 19 partial collapse of a highway bridge that plunged 25 cars into a rushing river in Shannxi province.

China is the world’s largest emitter of the greenhouse gases that scientists say drive climate change and make extreme weather more intense, noted the *AFP* Aug 3.

China begins observation experiment on land-atmosphere interactions in Mt Everest region

03 August 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

China has begun an observation experiment on land-atmosphere interactions in the Mount Everest Region in Tibet to study the interaction between the land surface and the atmosphere, a crucial component of ecological and climate systems. A research team from

the Aerospace Information Research Institute under the Chinese Academy of Sciences will conduct the observational experiment using unmanned aerial platforms at a site on the northern side of Mount Everest, called Qomolangma in Tibet, situated at an average altitude of approximately 4,200 metres (15,960 feet).

"In the Mount Qomolangma region, land-atmosphere interactions not only affect the climate of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau and its surrounding areas but also have the potential to influence the global climate through complex climate feedback mechanisms and atmospheric circulation," said Jia Li, a researcher at the Institute.

Studying the Tibetan Plateau becomes imperative given the exponentially changing climatic conditions leading to faster melting glaciers and snow.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), a regional intergovernmental organisation, brought out the 'Summary of the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment Report' in 2019 which stated there is ample evidence for elevation-dependent warming (EDW) in the HKH, especially in the Tibetan Plateau and its surrounding regions.

In 2023, ICIMOD also pointed out that 79 glaciers surrounding Everest have thinned by over 100 metres in just six decades, and the thinning rate has nearly doubled since 2009.

The state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Friday that the researchers from the Aerospace Information Research Institute will collect spatial distribution data on, among other things, the radiation flux between the land surface and the atmosphere in the Tibetan Plateau.

They will also integrate ground-station and remote-sensing satellite data to conduct multi-temporal and multi-spatial comprehensive observations, the report said.

However, this is not the first time that China has sent out a research team to the roof of the world. The Second Tibetan Plateau Scientific Expedition and Research carried out a ground-penetrating radar survey of snow depth along the north slope of Mount Everest in May 2022.

TIBET IN EXILE

Human rights body claims China subjects Tibetan people to inhuman treatment

31 August 2024, [India Blooms](#)

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) has said China is still subjecting Tibetan people to inhuman treatment due to their religious beliefs and cultural identities.

On the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, TCHRD said it stands in solidarity with the victims and families of those who have been subjected to unlawful, Chinese state-sanctioned repression through enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, beatings and torture.

In a statement, it said: "The Chinese government has flagrantly overlooked its consistent human rights violations and, in direct deflection of international criticism of its human rights records, has covertly legalised enforced disappearances through amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law. During the March 2012 annual session, China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC), approved changes that facilitated the continued use of enforced disappearances to target critics of government policies."

"Article 73 of the revised law authorises the secret detention of Tibetans charged with vague, trumped-up charges, 'legally' allowing the Chinese state to suppress dissent and criticism by detaining Tibetans deemed threats to the People's Republic of China's unity and stability," the statement said.

Further targeting China, the body said: "Tibetans continue to endure severe oppression and disappearances, and China shows no signs of halting its repressive practices. Instead, the human rights situation has worsened, with China aiming to erode Tibetan identity through the sinicisation of Tibetan religion by infusing it with Communist elements, depriving Tibetan children of education in their native language, and tearing apart Tibetan society and families through trumped-up charges and collective punishments, all amounting to gross human rights violations."

TCHRD said it has documented more than 63 known cases of Tibetans subjected to enforced disappearance in Tibet in the past four years.

"The relatively low number of registered cases highlights a disturbing trend of underreporting, which is often associated with fear of reprisals," the body said.

63 cases of enforced disappearances in four years, rights group calls China to end its unlawful practise

31 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

In observance of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Dharamshala-based rights group, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) reported 63 known cases of

enforced disappearances in Tibet over the past four years. In its statement, the TCHRD expressed solidarity with the victims and their families, urging China to put an immediate stop to this unlawful practice.

“The Chinese government has flagrantly overlooked its consistent human rights violations and, in direct deflection of international criticism of its human rights records, has covertly legalised enforced disappearances through amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law,” the statement read.

Among the documented cases is that of Tibetan singer Gegjom Dorjee, who was arbitrarily detained by authorities in Khyungchu County on February 12, 2024. His song, “Sad Song of Whirled Tears,” poignantly expressed the struggles of Tibetans under Chinese rule, referencing the absence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Tibet using the honorific title “Gyalwa.” The song also symbolically addressed the collective suffering of Tibetans, using the metaphor “red-faced.”

In March, Tibetan monk Pema from Kirti Monastery was arbitrarily detained and held incommunicado by local Public Security Bureau officers after staging a peaceful solo protest. He had held a portrait of the Dalai Lama on a road known locally as “Martyrs’ Road” in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) County. Following his detention, Chinese security forces reportedly intensified their control and restrictions in Ngaba, particularly in Soruma village and Kirti Monastery. Pema’s current whereabouts remain unknown.

“Despite international criticism and calls for accountability, China continues to target Tibetans. TCHRD urges the international community to press China to end these violations and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,” the organisation expressed.

Due to strict surveillance imposed by Chinese authorities, news of disappearances, incidents of deaths in custody or news in general are often significantly delayed or not able to be relayed outside Tibet.

SFT honours Dege protestors and activists with Lhakar Award on 30th anniversary

31 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

In commemoration of its 30th anniversary, Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), a network of young activists advocating for Tibetan freedom, awarded the 2024 ‘Lhakar Award for Resistance in Tibet’ to the peaceful protestors of Dege in Kham region of Tibet. The Lhakar Award for Dedication was presented to activist Thupten Chonyi, while the 2024 Lhakar Award for Activism in Exile was awarded to Tsela Zoksang.

The Lhakar Awards were presented during the Longsho Night event in New York on August 24. Nyima Lhamo, the niece of the late Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, accepted the award on behalf of the Dege protestors. The ceremony also honoured Ven. Golog Jigme, a former political prisoner, was present to receive his 2013 Lhakar Award for Resistance.

The peaceful Tibetan protestors of Kham Dege in February took to the streets to protest the Chinese government’s forceful relocation of thousands of local Tibetans from their ancestral lands. The government’s plan to construct a hydroelectric dam in Kham Dege, along the Driчу (Yangtze) River, threatened to displace thousands of residents from two villages and six monasteries. “When news broke of the massive protests erupting in Kham Dege earlier in February of this year, the world was stunned by the incredible scenes of resistance sent out by the residents of the Wongpo Tok region of Dege,” SFT stated. “Despite the hundreds of Tibetans arrested and beaten in the aftermath of the protests in Dege, Tibetans, and supporters in exile saw that the fighting spirit of the Tibetans inside Tibet remained defiant, proud, and unbroken.”

Thupten Chonyi, a Tibetan activist based in Philadelphia, is known for his unwavering commitment to the Tibetan cause. From March 10, 2023, to March 10, 2024, he led a year-long vigil for Tibet outside Independence Hall, demonstrating his dedication to raising awareness for the Tibetan struggle. Chonyi has also played a key role in leading the Philadelphia Tibetan Community during the annual U.S. Tibet Lobby Day for over a decade. “Thupten Chonyi has embodied dedication to the Tibetan Freedom Movement through his many years of organising and activism. In particular, his yearlong commitment to hold a daily vigil protest outside of Philadelphia’s Independence Hall every weekday from March 10th, 2023 until March 10th, 2024 has inspired generations of Tibetans to stand up for the cause of Tibetan freedom,” SFT said.

Tsela Zoksang, a student activist, gained international headlines when she unfurled the Tibetan national flag on a flagpole outside a hotel where Chinese President Xi Jinping was scheduled to meet the prominent US business leaders during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in San Francisco in November 2023. Just months later, in May, she displayed another striking display of dissent by raising the Tibetan flag in front of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, France during Xi’s visit to the French capital. “Tsela’s daring direct actions over the past year have inspired countless young activists across the world. Through strategic non-violent direct actions, Tsela has demonstrated to a generation of young activists that young people have the power to shatter narratives and change the track of history,” SFT remarked.

China's top political advisor calls for 'integration among all ethnic groups' in Tibet

30 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Giving a fillip to President Xi Jinping's Sinicization of ethnic minority regions drive, China's top official on ethnic affairs has on Aug 27 called for the promotion of exchanges and "integration among all ethnic groups" and the strengthening of the "sense of identity with the motherland" while addressing a conference in Tibet's capital Lhasa.

It is in this context that Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, has urged efforts to deliver solid paired-up assistance for Xizang Autonomous Region toward the goal of building a modern socialist new Xizang, using the Chinese name for Tibet.

"Efforts should be made to promote exchanges and integration among all ethnic groups, improve people's livelihoods, rally people's support, and strengthen the sense of identity with the motherland, the Chinese nation, the Chinese culture, the CPC, and socialism with Chinese characteristics among officials and people of all ethnic groups," China's official *Xinhua* news agency Aug 29 quoted Wang as saying.

Addressing the fourth work conference on paired-up assistance for Xizang, and marking the programme's 30th anniversary, Wang has hailed "the notable achievements in the paired-up assistance work for Xizang over the past three decades," and "urged efforts to promote targeted, systematic and long-term assistance for the region, and elevate the comprehensive benefits yielded by the assistance work."

"Targeted, systematic and long-term assistance" obviously refers to reinforcing Beijing current renewed campaign and goal for the Sinicization of Tibet with regard to its ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity.

For this purpose, Wang has emphasized, "It is imperative to improve the work regarding officials and talent dispatched to assist Xizang and strengthen the organization and leadership of the paired-up assistance work."

The conference was also stated to have awarded honorary titles to exemplary individuals who had participated in the paired-up assistance for Xizang, which totalled nearly 12,000 over the period of 1994 and 2022, dispatched in 10 batches at three-yearly intervals.

The programme was stated to have involved the participation of 17 provinces and municipalities as well as dozens of ministries and state-owned enterprises of China, "bringing substantial investment, practical

technology and essential talent to Xizang," said another *Xinhua* report Aug 28.

Dalai Lama back in D'shala after New York visit, to resume religious teachings

28 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Dalai Lama has returned to his exile home at McLeod Ganj, Dharmshala, this morning after being away since Jun 21, mainly for a knee-replacement surgery in New York city. He was welcomed by large crowds of Tibetans and other well-wishers in New Delhi and Dharamshala. He is to give a series of religious teachings next month and will be offered long-life prayer ceremonies as well.

Earlier, Dr David Mayman, MD, Chief of the Adult Reconstruction and Joint Replacement Service at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, said last month that the Dalai Lama was recovering well and expected to continue improving, with physical therapy, over the next six to 12 months.

During his stay in the US, the Dalai Lama was offered a long-life prayers ceremony in a capacity-packed UBS Arena in New York City on Aug 22 by Tibetans as well as Mongol and Himalayan Buddhists.

He was also visited by Under Secretary of State Ms Uzra Zeya, who is designated as the Biden Administration's Special Coordinator for Tibetan issues. The meeting was condemned by China as interference in its internal affairs and an encouragement of what it called Tibetan independence "separatists".

Ms Zeya was accompanied by Kelly Razzouk, Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Democracy and Human Rights.

Over the coming days, the Dalai Lama is scheduled to give religious teachings at three events in the Tsuglakhang, located just across his residence, next month.

Over Sep 6-7, His Holiness will confer the Avalokiteshvara Initiation (*chenresig wang*) and will be offered a long-life prayers ceremony by the Monpa Community from Arunachal Pradesh.

Over Sep 12 – 13, the Dalai Lama will teach on a yet to be decided topic at the request of a group from Southeast Asia in the mornings and there will also be a long-life prayers offering.

On Sep 18, the Dalai Lama will be offered a long-life prayers ceremony jointly by the Tibetan Women's Association, Ex-Students of CST Dalhousie and people from Lhasa Districts.

Then, over Sep 30-Oct 2, His Holiness will give teachings on Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* (*chodjug*) at the request of Taiwanese devotees and attend a long-life prayers offering to be made by them.

Report by UNHRC highlights severe concerns about Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region

28 August 2024, [The Print](#)

Ravina Shamdasani the spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Tuesday highlighted the human rights abuses persistent in China, especially in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region. The statement by Shamdasani came after a UN Human Rights team visited China in June this year. Additionally, the UN team had engaged in dialogue with the Chinese authorities, specifically addressing the counter-terrorism policies and the criminal justice system in the country.

The statement highlighted that the UN delegation during a dialogue with the Chinese authorities found out that in Xinjiang specifically, many problematic laws and policies remain in place which must be investigated and reviewed by the authorities from the human rights perspective. According to the same statement, the UN has also urged China and civil society members in the country to continue such interactions to seek tangible progress in the protection of human rights for all in China.

Additionally, the UN also expressed that it will be closely monitoring the current human rights situation in China even when difficulties are posed by limited access to information and the fear of reprisals against individuals who engage with the United Nations. The UN team during its visit to China also called on the Chinese authorities to take prompt steps to release all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty and to clarify the status and whereabouts of those whose families have been seeking information about them.

The statement highlighted that the UN has always advocated for the implementation of the recommendations made by this UN team along with those made by other human rights mechanisms and during the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process of China.

Previously, several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had slammed China for rejecting recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at UNHRC's 56th session intended to address the severe human rights issues of the country.

Reportedly, China had ignored calls to implement UN findings and dismissed all serious criticism of its human rights record, refusing to budge on the documented plight of Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kongers, and human rights activists.

During the 26th meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council's (UNHRC) 56th session, held in Geneva on Thursday the Chinese diplomats refused to adopt several major recommendations of the Universal

Periodic Review (UPR) intended to address the severe human rights issues of the country. Responding to the dismissal of the UPR recommendations, in a joint statement on behalf of 29 NGOs delivered at the Human Rights Council after China's remarks, the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) urged China to 'genuinely engage with the UN to enact meaningful reforms' in line with the recommendations from the UN's Xinjiang report, UN Treaty Bodies and UN Special Rapporteurs. (ANI)

China: two years after Xinjiang findings, UN Rights Chief reports 'limited access to information', 'reprisals' against activists

27 August 2024, [ISHR](#)

In a public statement on 27 August, the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) stressed its engagement and recommendations in areas where it has been pushing for responses and results from the Chinese government, including on Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and individual cases 'of particular concern' in mainland China.

This includes a renewed call on Beijing to 'take prompt steps to release all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty, and to clarify the status and whereabouts of those whose families have been seeking information about them.'

'I welcome Volker Türk's strong endorsement of the Xinjiang report. One day is a day too long for victims like my mother. This must be an urgent wake-up call for all countries to take concrete and swift action to hold China accountable for its long list of documented human rights violations, starting at the UN Human Rights Council.'

Ziba Murat, activist and daughter of arbitrarily detained Uyghur doctor Gulshan Abbas

Two years ago, on 31 August 2022, former High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet released a long-awaited report determining the possible commission of 'crimes against humanity' against Uyghurs and other Muslim peoples by Chinese authorities. While the UN report already concluded that conditions were in place for 'serious violations to continue and recur,' mounting documentation by UN expert bodies and civil society have confirmed the serious deterioration of the human rights situation in the Uyghur region and across China since 2022.

In today's statement, the OHCHR underscored that 'many problematic laws and policies remain in place' and that allegations of human rights violations, including torture, must be 'fully investigated'. The Office also called for a 'full review' with a human rights emphasis of the legal frameworks governing Chinese policies related to national security, counter-terrorism and minority rights. All of these have remained in

place despite extensive concerns, including in the 2022 report, that authorities have weaponised such tools to target Muslim individuals, but also Tibetans, human rights defenders and journalists, and to clamp down on civil society space across mainland China and Hong Kong.

The Chinese government also maintains widespread and systematic restrictions, including through laws, policies and practices described in the UN report, that severely impact the intergenerational transmission of culture, language and religion of Uyghurs and Tibetans.

Beijing has perpetually attempted to present the Xinjiang report to other countries as an isolated initiative. Yet, since its release, further findings by widely-respected UN expert bodies have confirmed and expanded on its findings. Two impartial UN expert committees have called for the report's full implementation: the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in their unprecedented November 2022 Urgent Action Decision on Xinjiang, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in their May 2023 review of China.

In December 2022, at least 15 UN experts also recalled numerous report findings in a strongly-worded letter to the government, laying out seven benchmarks for immediate action, yet expectedly rejected by Beijing.

'We welcome the High Commissioner's commitment to work with civil society and advocate for the implementation of all UN recommendations to China. Beijing does not get to cherry pick: UN human rights findings are indivisible and, altogether, chart the only genuine path forward for China to achieve meaningful human rights change. Any step away from it is deceitful and a proof of lack of willingness to be a responsible global actor.'

Raphäel Viana David, ISHR China Programme Manager

Crucially, the OHCHR stated it continues to 'follow closely the situation,' but reported 'difficulties posed by limited access to information and the fear of reprisals against individuals who engage with the United Nations.' The High Commissioner's Office also committed to advocating on behalf of victims and engaging with civil society 'to seek tangible progress in the protection of human rights for all in China.'

'After two years, High Commissioner Türk's update that the Office is committed to tangible change in China is heartening. Yet, China has not implemented any OHCHR recommendations, and independent investigations are still limited or blocked. Victims like my brother Ekpar Asat, who endured three years in solitary confinement, and families facing China's psychological warfare can't wait any longer. Türk's work and engagement with China must fully acknowledge these realities.'

Rayhan Asat, Uyghur human rights lawyer

Further evidence of the absence of good faith from Beijing in its engagement with the UN include an increased rejection rate of recommendations during its last UN human rights peer-review in January 2024 – including all related to the Xinjiang report and UN Treaty Bodies – and its unwillingness to provide unrestricted access to the whole territory for UN Special Rapporteurs listed in the Xinjiang report.

China also remains among the top perpetrators of reprisals against those cooperating, or seeking to cooperate with the UN, and has increased trans-national repressive tactics to try silencing activists and victims abroad. In June 2024, two UN experts condemned the continued enforced disappearance of Uyghur doctor **Gulshan Abbas**, recalling the Xinjiang report's findings of a pattern of reprisals 'against family members of Uyghurs in exile who had engaged in advocacy.'

'Beijing has done its best to discredit the report, even touring foreign officials through Xinjiang, avoiding substantial discussion about the UN's findings,' added Raphäel Viana David. 'The High Commissioner's message places the Xinjiang report at heart of his engagement with Beijing. The onus is now on China to take meaningful steps forward and on the Human Rights Council to closely monitor until it does so,' Viana concluded.

In June 2020, June 2022 and September 2022, over 40 UN experts jointly rang the alarm at China's human rights crisis, urging the Human Rights Council to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the country's rights situation.

Last June, ISHR and three rights groups jointly released translations of the Xinjiang report in the five remaining UN official languages.

ISHR urges:

The Chinese government to adopt a roadmap with a clear timeline for the implementation of recommendations from the OHCHR Xinjiang report and other UN human rights mechanisms, and for its meaningful reengagement with UN bodies, including by allowing unrestricted access to the whole territory for UN independent experts for adequate investigation and by putting an immediate end to all acts of reprisals as reported by the UN;

ISHR further calls on:

The Human Rights Council to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the human rights situation in China, with a view to uphold the integrity of its mandate and put an end to China's exceptionalism.

The High Commissioner to continue monitoring the human rights situation in China, to publicly report about it, including on the implementation of the Xinjiang report and any restrictions in accessing information, and to publicly advocate on individual cases.

US coordinator highlights Tibet's role as regional freshwater source

27 August 2024, [RFA](#)

A U.S. official who handles Tibetan issues has called for information sharing about environmental changes taking place in Tibetan areas of China to help scientists prepare for climate change.

Uzra Zeya, the U.S. special coordinator for Tibetan issues, emphasized the critical role of the Tibetan Plateau in advancing global water security in virtual remarks given on Saturday to the World Water Week 2024 conference in Stockholm.

Zeya highlighted the negative effects of the increase in Chinese hydropower and water diversion projects in Tibet, including their impact on the Brahmaputra, Indus, and Mekong rivers for South and Southeast Asian nations.

The projects have been carried out without input from the 6 million Tibetans living in China, she said as part of a panel of speakers on water security.

“Opaque governance institutions and infrastructure development without inclusive public input exacerbate the impact of warming temperatures,” Zeya said.

The glaciers, alpine lakes and waterfalls of the vast Tibetan Plateau are water sources for many of Asia's largest rivers.

But the region's warming climate is causing quicker melting and evaporation, threatening the plateau's freshwater reserves. Industrial activity, deforestation and mining have also affected the quantity and quality of Tibet's water sources.

These factors could lead to water scarcity in the future, scientists say.

Displaced by dams

Nevertheless, the Chinese government has increasingly sought to manage and control Tibet's water resources for its own benefit, building dozens of hydropower dams on rivers originating upstream in the Tibetan Plateau.

In some cases, the projects have been met with anger by Tibetans facing displacement and loss of agricultural and grazing land.

In February, over 300 Tibetans in Dege county of Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province staged a rare protest against China's plans to build the 1,100-megawatt Gangtuo hydropower dam on the Drichu River.

The project was expected to displace residents of at least two villages and destroy several monasteries with religious and historical significance, including the Wonto and Yena monasteries.

A video shared exclusively with Radio Free Asia by a source who recorded it in early July shows that nothing remains of the religious structure, with the

monastery's main prayer halls and the many stupas that surround it completely razed to the ground.

RFA was able to independently verify the authenticity of the video with two sources from Tibet and in exile.

In April, Chinese authorities began relocating another 19th-century Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Dragkar county, or Xinghai in Chinese, in Qinghai province due to the expansion of the Yangqu hydropower station on the Yellow River — known as the Machu River among Tibetans.

By July, authorities had demolished the Atsok Dechen Choekhorling Monastery, with video shared exclusively with RFA showing that nothing remained of the religious structure.

'Preserve these majestic glaciers'

Zeya, who is also U.S. under secretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights, highlighted the need for data sharing on climate changes taking place in Tibet.

“Scientists also struggle to obtain and verify data from Tibetan areas of China, which has vast implications for research and policy development,” she said in her address.

“Without transparent information on areas like snowpack melt, regional partners are hindered from preventing, preparing for, and adapting to our changing climate,” Zeya said.

Earlier this month, Chinese scientists warned that global warming is causing the rate of glacier evaporation in Tibet to outpace the rate of precipitation, and could result in the permanent disappearance of some low-elevation glaciers on the Tibetan Plateau.

“The Himalayan Region and Tibetan Plateau and their fragile ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to climate change,” Zeya said.

“As increased temperatures imperil this frozen cache of freshwater high in the mountains, we are reminded of the imperative to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions ... to help preserve these majestic glaciers,” she said.

Stretching across the southern border of the Tibetan Plateau, the Himalayan Mountain region includes over 100,000 square kilometers (38,600 square miles) of glaciers, is one of the largest stores of frozen water in the world, and serves as crucial sources of freshwater for those in the region as well as for over 1.8 billion people downstream, said Zeya, noting that the U.N. General Assembly has declared 2025 as the “Year of International Glaciers' Preservation.”

World Water Week 2024, which runs Aug. 24-29, explores the theme “Bridging Borders: Water for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future.”

The event highlights the critical role of water cooperation in fostering peace and security across communities and nations.

Karmapa calls on Dalai Lama in Zurich, their first meeting in seven years

26 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje, one of Tibet's most prominent religious figures, living in exile since Dec 1999, has called on the Dalai Lama in the Swiss city of Zurich on Aug 25 in their first meeting in over seven years, reported the *IANS* news service Aug 25.

It was the day on which the Dalai Lama, on a stopover from New York City to New Delhi, was offered a long-life prayers offering by Tibetans in Switzerland and Liechtenstein in a capacity packed Hallenstadion, Zurich.

It was not clear what transpired in their meeting.

The report said the meeting, the first since Jan 2017 during the Dalai Lama's 34th Kalachakra teachings, given in Bodhgaya, revived hopes among his followers that the Karmapa may return to India soon.

The Karmapa has a significant following in India, especially in Sikkim which had for long lobbied with New Delhi for his visit and eventual return. The Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim's Capital Gangtok is the Karmapa's exile seat.

Most recently, the state's Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang reached out to Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, in Delhi and held discussions regarding the prospect of bringing the 17th Karmapa to Sikkim.

The Karmapa fled Tibet in Dec 1999 at 14 years of age and sought refuge in India, citing lack of religious freedom under Chinese rule. He mostly lived at the Gyuto Monastery in Sidhbari near Dharamsala, with the Indian government treating him as an 'honoured guest'.

He left for the USA in 2017 to seek medical treatment and later took up citizenship of the Commonwealth of Dominica. He has since then been unable to visit or return to India.

The Karmapa is the head of the Karma (or Kamtsang) Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, of which he is the holder of the oldest lineage of reincarnations.

Dalai Lama emphasizes helping all sentient beings at Zurich long-life prayers offering

25 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

A capacity crowd of 15,000 Tibetans and others from across Europe filled the Hallenstadion in the Swiss city of Zurich to make a long-life (Tenshug) prayers offering to His Holiness the Dalai Lama this morning. Switzerland was among the very first few countries to resettle Tibetan refugees after China consummated its annexation of Tibet in 1959.

In his speech the Dalai Lama has told the audience what being a Buddhist religious person meant.

"Cultivating warm-heartedness is the essence of religion. Cultivating the awakening mind of bodhichitta involves the intention to bring happiness to all sentient beings. It enables you to fulfil the goals of others and yourself."

He has noted that even people who don't think of themselves as religious recognize that Tibetan Buddhism includes many solutions to the problems we face today.

People in the outside world are especially attracted by Tibetan Buddhism's instructions about the workings of the mind and emotions and ways to cultivate positive qualities within us. "Even in China faith and understanding of the Buddhadharma has grown," he has noted.

As he conducted a brief ceremony for cultivating the awakening mind of bodhichitta, His Holiness has suggested that the gathering think of all sentient beings as having been our kind mothers. In an effort to repay that kindness we should make a strong determination to bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings. And having generated bodhichitta we should call on all sentient beings as our guests at a feast of happiness.

"The awakening mind of bodhichitta is the key to fulfilling your own and others' goals. At the same time negative thoughts such as anger and pride subside," he has added.

His Holiness has also given the transmission of the mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni and Avalokiteshvara, the patron deity of Tibet, by asking those assembled to recite them after him.

After his knee replacement surgery in New York City on Jun 28, followed by a long-life prayers offering by a capacity packed UBS Arena there on Aug 22, the Dalai Lama landed at Zurich Airport on Aug 23 morning.

Mario Fehr, the representative of Zurich cantonal government; Yashbir Singh, the Government of India's Liaison Officer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama; Naveen Hooda, secretary of the Indian Embassy in Bern, had joined some 1,200 Tibetans for the Swiss reception led by Representative Ms Thinley Chukki of the Tibet Bureau, Geneva.

The Dalai Lama last visited Switzerland in Sep 2018 when he attended the 50th anniversary of the Tibet Institute in Rikon in Zurich's Töss Valley. On an earlier visit in Aug 2005, he held eight days of lessons in the Hallenstadion; some 30,000 people from 44 countries travelled to Oerlikon at the time, with around 270 journalists from Switzerland and abroad reporting on the event, noted *swissinfo.ch* Aug 24.

The Dalai Lama will arrive at New Delhi airport on Aug 26 evening and will be back in Dharamshala, his exile home, on Aug 28.

Rubio Sounds Alarm Over Chinese Abuse of Tibetans

23 August 2024, [Floridian Press](#), Mateo Guillamont

China is facing new political pressure from conservatives following reports it is employing draconian surveillance tactics to monitor Tibetans.

According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), China is persecuting Tibetan dissidents by increasing its police presence in Tibet, suppressing social media use, and employing surreptitious civilian surveillance officers.

US Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) publicly lamented Tibetans' oppression at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

China invaded Tibet in 1950 and has retained control of the country since then.

The US has historically sided with Tibetan rebels, who resisted Chinese authority in the years shortly after the latter's invasion to no avail.

The United Nations (UN), notwithstanding condemnations of China's human rights abuses in Tibet, has refused to recognize Tibet's self-determination rights.

Senator Rubio, a leading China hawk, called on the international community to respond to the CCP's persecution of Tibetans.

"Tibetans face harsh scrutiny and oppression by the occupying Chinese Communist Party," said Rubio. "The international community cannot remain as bystanders to these injustices"

Rubio has politically attacked the CCP extensively throughout this year.

From recommending the US deny Chinese companies IPOs to congressionally investigating investment funds engaged in Chinese markets, Rubio's animosity towards the CCP is palpable.

In June, Rubio sent a bipartisan letter to the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of MSCI Henry Fernandez after MSCI seemingly ignored the CCP's alleged abuse of Uyghurs.

MSCI upgraded Volkswagen standing within its network although the latter was discovered to be harnessing Uyghur slave labor in its factory in Xinjiang. Many have accused the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) of committing genocide against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang via forced labor and other genocidal acts.

Capacity crowd of 17,000 attend long-life prayers offering to Dalai Lama in New York

23 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

A capacity crowd of 17,000, overwhelmingly Tibetan, people filled the UBS Arena in New York City's outskirt on Aug 22 to offer a long-life prayers ceremony to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Recovering well from a knee surgery on Jun 28 and just a day before leaving the

United States, the exile spiritual leader of Tibet assured the huge gathering about his good health and his confidence to live well past 100 years of age.

Addressing the crowd at the ceremony, which included Himalayan Buddhists, Mongols, Chinese, Koreans, Taiwanese and numerous others as well, the Dalai Lama has said:

"Here we have Tibetans from all three regions of Tibet demonstrating how we are united. Tibetan culture can be of benefit to the whole of humanity. The Buddha, Shakyamuni, became enlightened and gave teachings that have been preserved in Tibet and the Himalayan region. These teachings are profound and deeply valuable. I have studied them since I was very young.

"The Buddha's teachings have influenced our way of life to the extent that the people of Tibet have been determined to keep them alive. I intend to live to be more than 100 years old and I will continue to do my best to help the Tibetan people.

"Chinese Communists may look down on Tibetan culture, but across the world we have friends who appreciate it. In Tibet we have the most complete transmission of the Buddha's teachings. As Tibetans have spread out across the world other people have become more aware of our traditions. We have many loyal friends who I'd like to thank. People around the world are taking an interest in Buddhism and even in China there are many curious to learn about Tibetan Buddhism."

The Dalai Lama also gave a short instruction on generating the awakening mind of bodhichitta. Explaining that he had followed the Buddha's teachings and generated the wish to become a Buddha in order to benefit beings over many lifetimes, he invited his listeners to make a similar commitment.

The Dalai Lama then gave transmissions of the mantras of Buddha Shakyamuni, Arya Tara, Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, Hayagriva, the Medicine Buddha and Guru Rinpoché.

As the Tenshug prayers began, representatives from each of the 30 Tibetan Associations in the United States and Canada as well as from the Kalmykia, Buryatia, Mongolian communities, besides from the Sherpa, Tamang, Hyolmo, Bhutanese, Limi, Mustang, Manangi, Nubri, and other Himalayan communities, and New York based Tibetan NGOs, walked in a procession past the stage in symbolic offerings of Khatags (ceremonial greeting scarves).

The Dalai Lama also spoke about the need for religious harmony and emphasized the principles of secular ethics — an ethics system that appeals to the religious and the nonreligious alike and is based on the cultivation of genuine compassion.

Dr Namgyal Choedup, Representative at the Office of Tibet, Washington, DC, expressed special gratitude to Carol and Sam Nappi for their generous help in coordinating the arrangements for the Dalai Lama's

successful knee replacement surgery and for their subsequent exceptional hospitality as he underwent over six weeks of physiotherapy in Syracuse. They were cheered by the crowd as His Holiness also personally thanked them. Hollywood star and Tibet activist Richard Gere was a notable presence at the ceremony.

China protests, foul-mouths Dalai Lama, after US envoy for Tibet meets him

22 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The top US official on Tibetan issues has on Aug 21 met with Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, in New York City, prompting China to make what it said was "serious protest" with Washington the next day. The Dalai Lama, 89, has been in New York since Jun 23 for knee replacement surgery. The meeting with the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Under Secretary Uzra Zeya, was his first meeting with a senior US government official during his current sojourn.

Ms Zeya, who is also the Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, was accompanied by Kelly Razzouk, Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Democracy and Human Rights.

"During the audience, she conveyed, on behalf of President Biden, best wishes for His Holiness's good health and reaffirmed the US commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage," said the Office of the State Department Spokesperson in a media note Aug 21.

"Under Secretary Zeya welcomed His Holiness the Dalai Lama's lifelong dedication to promoting nonviolence and compassion. The Under Secretary also took the opportunity to discuss with His Holiness Tibetan cultural preservation, the United States' ongoing efforts to address human rights abuses inside Tibet, and support for resuming dialogue between the PRC and His Holiness and his representatives," the note said

The Chinese criticism came in response to a question from the *AFP* during Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning's Regular Press Conference.

"China firmly opposes any country allowing the Dalai Lama to make visits under any pretext and opposes government officials of any country meeting with the Dalai Lama in any form. We've made serious protest with the US," the foreign ministry website quoted Mao as saying in her remarks.

She has sought to make the point that "the 14th Dalai Lama is not a pure religious figure, still less a figure promoting 'non-violence' and 'peace', but a political

exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion."

Mao has further said: "We urge the US to fully understand the gravity and sensitivity of Xizang-related issues, be fully aware of the Dalai group's anti-China and separatist nature, honour the commitments the US has made to China on issues related to Xizang, truly respect China's core interests and major concerns, not allow the Dalai Lama to engage in political separatist activities in the US, have no contact with the Dalai Lama in any form, and stop sending the wrong message to the world."

Xizang is China's name for Tibet Autonomous Region, which is roughly the western half of Tibet proper.

The Dalai Lama is to attend a long-life prayer ceremony being offered by Tibetans, Mongolians and people of Himalayan communities based in North America in the UBS Arena in New York on Aug 22. He will then leave for Zurich where the Tibetan communities in Switzerland and Lichtenstein will also make a long-life ceremonial offering to him in the Hallenstadion on Aug 25.

This is the Dalai Lama's first visit to the USA since 2017. He has been reported to be recovering well from his knee surgery and is expected to be back at Dharamshala, his exile home, on Aug 28.

Earlier, Dr David Mayman, MD, Chief of the Adult Reconstruction and Joint Replacement Service at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, said last month that the Dalai Lama was expected to continue improving over the next six to 12 months.

Other meetings with US leaders seem unlikely, given the fact that the Dalai Lama is leaving the US on Aug 23.

In 2020, Candidate Joe Biden criticized then President Donald Trump for being the only president in three decades who had not met or spoken with the Tibetan spiritual leader, calling it "disgraceful," noted *Reuters* Aug 21.

US official meets Dalai Lama to discuss Chinese 'human rights abuses inside Tibet'

22 August 2024, [WION](#)

Dalai Lama on Wednesday (Aug 21) met a Biden administration official in New York City as the India-based Tibetan spiritual leader continues with his effort for Tibetan self-rule decades after China took territorial control over 1.2 million sq km of landmass neighbouring India.

"On August 21, 2024, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues Uzra Zeya traveled to New York City, New York for an audience

with His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama," US State Department said in an official statement.



US State Department Under Secretary Uzra Zeya met Dalai Lama in New York Photograph:(Twitter)

The meeting takes place over a month after US President Joe Biden signed the 'Resolve Tibet Act', which enhances Washington's support for the Tibetan cause while aiming to promote dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama toward a peaceful resolution of the dispute over the status and governance of the remote Himalayan region.

The act rejects false claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times".

"Under Secretary Zeya was joined by Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Democracy and Human Rights Kelly Razzouk," the statement added.

"During the audience, she conveyed, on behalf of President Biden, best wishes for His Holiness's good health and reaffirmed the US commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage," it said.

"Under Secretary Zeya welcomed His Holiness the Dalai Lama's lifelong dedication to promoting nonviolence and compassion. The Under Secretary also took the opportunity to discuss with His Holiness Tibetan cultural preservation, the United States' ongoing efforts to address human rights abuses inside Tibet, and support for resuming dialogue between the PRC and His Holiness and his representatives," the statement added. The 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 and came to India, where he set up the government-in-exile at Dharamsala in the northern state of 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.

Dalai Lama Chair to be set up at Panjab University

20 August 2024, [The Tribune](#)

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Dalai Lama's Foundation for Universal Responsibility and Panjab University (PU) to establish the Dalai Lama Chair in the Department of Gandhian and Peace Studies.

PU Vice-Chancellor Prof Renu Vig said the main purpose of establishing the prestigious chair is to promote and preserve the Indo-Tibetan heritage for the dissemination of philosophical, historical and spiritual studies. The chair will disseminate the teachings and philosophy of the Dalai Lama and promote critical thinking and self-reflection among students, faculty and the wider community.

The chair will help, nurture and promote Buddhist response to contemporary issues, study of Tibetan and Pali Buddhist texts, Tibetan Buddhist art and architecture and Buddhist philosophy.

Department chairperson Prof Ashu Pasricha said the MoU will further explore Dalai Lama studies that discourses His Holiness' personal contribution on the important subject of ahimsa, social, ethical and emotional learning.

China's Tibetan Traditional Medicine Center eyes Manila satellite facility

20 August 2024, [Manila Standard](#), Othel V. Campos

The Tibetan Traditional Medicine Center in Zhongshan, Guangdong Province in China disclosed plans to set up a satellite facility in Manila, a part of its global strategy to widen the reach of traditional Chinese therapeutic techniques.

"We are exploring how we can bring the benefits of Tibetan medicine closure to Filipinos. In fact, there is an ongoing government-to-government [G2G] negotiation between the Philippines and China," said New Goldmines Tours and Travel president Ruben Co. If talks go as anticipated, a new and the 7th Tibetan Traditional Medicine Center is expected to rise in Manila by July 2025, Co said.

As part of the Tibetan culture, the center will be adorned with traditional Tibetan decorations straight from Tibet to showcase its ethnicity and uniqueness. While there is no estimate yet on the cost of the facility, the traditional Tibetan works of art that will be used to decorate the building will reach about CY50 million.

Among the services the center intends to provide is an initial analysis of one's health conditions, particularly underlying illnesses not evident to the naked eye.

The center will also house a museum of traditional Chinese medicines, detailing their origin and their benefits to the human body.

“Many Filipinos have sought the wisdom of Tibetan traditional medicine, particularly for those with serious health conditions such as cancer and internal organ failure,” said Co.

New Goldmines Tours provides a medical tour of the facility as part of a new tour package showcasing the cities in Southern China.

The traditional medicine segment targets mature markets who are into health longevity and therapy.

Tibetan actress wins Best Acting Performance at 77th Locarno Film Festival

18 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon

Thinley Lhamo, the lead actor in *Shambhala*, a film prominently featuring a Tibetan cast and directed by Nepalese filmmaker Min Bahadur Bham, has been honoured with the prestigious Boccacino d’Oro Prize for Best Acting Performance at the 77th Locarno Film Festival. The festival is held from August 7 to 17, 2024, in Switzerland.

In a press release issued on Saturday, the film’s team announced the honour, stating, “Shambhala team extends our heartfelt congratulations to Thinley and the entire team on this extraordinary accomplishment. This is a historic win and a first-of-its-kind recognition of a South Asian actor. Not only is this award recognition of Thinley’s exceptional performance but also a testament to the emerging Nepali talents. It highlights the region’s growing influence on the global cinematic stage.”



Thinley Lhamo at the 77th Locarno Film Festival (Photo/Shambhala Facebook)

Filmed entirely in Tibetan language, Thinley plays the role of Pema, the film’s protagonist, who is a pregnant woman living in remote Dolpo, Nepal. Pema is in a polyandrous marriage with Tashi and his two younger brothers. When Tashi fails to return from a trading trip, leaving the legitimacy of her unborn child in doubt, Pema embarks on a journey to find him. As she searches for Tashi, Pema’s journey transforms into a

profound spiritual quest for self-discovery and liberation, transcending the mere search for her missing husband.

The film was previously featured in the prestigious line up of the 74th Berlin International Film Festival, where it premiered in the Main Competition at the Berlinale Palast on February 23. *Shambhala* also won the Best Cinematography award at the Bishkek International Film Festival 2024 in Kyrgyzstan.

The Schrucker Fellowship for the Arts: Empowering Contemporary Tibetan Creatives

16 August 2024, [ICT](#)

The International Campaign for Tibet is pleased to announce the launch of the Schrucker Fellowship for the Arts. This fellowship is dedicated to supporting Tibetans working in the fields of contemporary art, creative writing, film and theater. The Schrucker Fellowship’s inaugural application cycle, set to open September 1, 2024.

Background

Tibetan society has undergone profound changes over the last 60 years, particularly as relates to displacement and shifts in cultural identity. Today, over 150,000 Tibetans live outside of Tibet, dispersed in communities across India, Nepal, Bhutan, North America, Europe and elsewhere. Despite significant challenges posed by China’s occupation of Tibet and its repressive cultural policies, Tibetan artists continue to create poignantly powerful works in the visual arts, film, music, and writings that speak to their experiences, aspirations, and responses to the pressures on their creativity. There is therefore an immensely vital need for greater support and recognition for Tibetan artists who are contributing to societal dialogue through their work.

Creativity and artistic expression are powerful tools for understanding and navigating complex societal issues in the best of times, but critically necessary for communities under siege. Amidst these complexities, the arts play a crucial role in both safeguarding cultural heritage and expressing contemporary realities.

The Schrucker Fellowship was inspired after a trip to Dharamsala in 2024 with ICT where the Schroeder and Pucker families were introduced to a burgeoning contemporary Tibetan arts and creative community in Dharamsala. The fellowship was established to nurture and support this burgeoning creative community, providing Tibetan artists with the resources they need to continue their important work.

“The Schroeder and Pucker families are delighted to advance contemporary Tibetan art in all its forms,” said members of both families.

The Schrucker Fellowship will be administered by ICT, but grants will be funded and selected by an Advisory

board consisting of Schroeder and Pucker family members.

Theme

The Schrucker Fellowship prioritizes supporting Tibetans in the contemporary fields of visual arts, creative writing, theater and film.

Grant Amount

The total grant amount in 2024 will be \$20,000. Projects can receive funding from \$500 to \$3,000.

Eligibility

Tibetans from any country are eligible to apply. Tibetans working for organizations may apply on behalf of the organization, provided that the applicant is central to the implementation of the project's work. Non-Tibetans are ineligible for grants from this fellowship.

Applicants will be selected based on the merit of their work, and a demonstrated ability to deliver on stated goals. The fellowship aims to support applicants' effort to reach new levels in their career, and all are encouraged to apply with current needs and ideas, irrespective of their status as emerging, mid-career, or established in their field of work.

Please note that this fellowship is not applicable for conferences, workshops, exhibitions, and app development.

Timeline: Grant Selection, Notification and Reporting Timeline

September 1, 2024: Application period opens

October 14, 2024: Application period closes

November 2024: Applications sent to Advisory Board

December 2024: Notification and Distribution of grant funds

July 2025: Mid-Year report from grant recipient

December 2025: Final grant report due

Application Details

Applications for the Schrucker Fellowship for the Arts will be accepted from September 1 through October 14 at 11:59pm EST. For more information on eligibility, application guidelines, and deadlines, contact schruckerfellowship@savetibet.org.

The International Campaign for Tibet supports the Schrucker Fellowship for the Arts and the Rowell Fund for Tibet.

Solidarity campaign for justice and protection of Tibetan rights

16 August 2024, [Awaz The Voice](#), Sumana

In a continued display of solidarity with the Tibetan people, a group of exiled Tibetan families residing in Switzerland has been tirelessly advocating for the rights and freedoms of Tibetans living under Chinese rule.

Their campaign, which began on Human Rights Day, December 10, 2012, persists with monthly protests in front of the United Nations Office in Geneva.

The campaign by the Tibet Solidarity Movement honours the memory of the 1.2 million Tibetans who lost their lives under Chinese domination and highlights the ongoing suffering of those still living in Tibet.

These activists stand in tribute to those who have committed the ultimate act of nonviolent civil disobedience--self-immolation--in protest against the political repression, cultural assimilation, social discrimination, and environmental degradation enforced by the Chinese government.

Under the guise of development and goodwill, the Tibetan people have been systematically deprived of their fundamental rights.

"Nearly a million Tibetan children, aged four to eighteen, are forcibly enrolled in colonial boarding schools, isolating them from their families, language, and cultural heritage. Simultaneously, Tibetan language schools are being shut down, further eroding the national identity of the Tibetan people", Tibet Solidarity Movement said in a statement.

The group has issued a series of urgent appeals, demanding international action to save Tibet.

They call for the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Tibet, adopted in 1959, 1961, and 1965, to restore freedom and peace in the region.

They also urge international bodies to support the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Activists are also demanding an end to the massive environmental destruction in Tibet, which includes deforestation, overgrazing, uncontrolled mining, and the dumping of nuclear waste.

They emphasise the need to protect Tibet's fragile ecosystem, often referred to as the "Third Pole" and "Water Tower of Asia."

Their demands also include the release of political prisoners, investigation into the suppression of religious and cultural freedoms, closure of colonial boarding schools, and the establishment of a UN fact-finding mission.

Additionally, they urge the Chinese government to engage in substantive negotiations with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to resolve the Tibet issue peacefully and respect the rights of all its citizens, including Tibetans, Southern Mongolians, and Uighurs, in line with international obligations.

The exiled Tibetan community in Switzerland remains steadfast in their commitment to this cause, emphasizing that the world can no longer turn a blind eye to the violence and lies of authoritarian regimes.

They urge the international community to act decisively before it's too late, to protect the children

of Tibet and preserve the unique identity and culture of the Tibetan people.

"Save Tibet before it's too late," their message resonates, as they continue their peaceful but determined campaign for justice and freedom.

TYC concludes annual meeting, reaffirms commitment to Tibetan independence and global advocacy

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

The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), the largest grassroots organization dedicated to the Tibetan independence cause, concluded its 54th Working Committee Meeting on August 10 in Gangtok, Sikkim. This gathering brought together around 200 representatives from 38 chapters, including from Nepal and India.

During the five-day meeting, both central and regional members of the organization engaged in extensive deliberations on nine key agendas, resulting in the adoption of 23 resolutions. The participants reaffirmed the overarching objectives of the TYC, emphasising the organisation's commitment to advancing the Tibetan independence movement among Tibetan youths and those living in Tibetan settlements. This includes organising workshops and discussions featuring discussions with former Tibetan political prisoners, and leveraging social media platforms to engage and inspire Tibetan youth across the diaspora to participate in the movement actively. The attendees expressed their determination to explore additional avenues for raising awareness about the ongoing atrocities in Tibet within the international community and among non-governmental organisations. They emphasised that Tibet has endured forced occupation for decades and reaffirmed their commitment to working closely with governments and NGOs to develop policies aimed at achieving Tibetan independence. The group also conveyed their gratitude to the United States for signing the "Resolve Tibet Act," expressing hope that other like-minded countries will enact similar legislation supporting Tibet.

The organization in their agenda also announced plans to collaborate with Tashi Lhunpo Monastery in the Bylakuppe Tibetan settlement, the spiritual and cultural seat of the Panchen Lama in exile, to mark the Panchen Lama's enforced disappearance in 2025. As part of this effort, they will send formal communications to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

On the final day, the participants in the meeting issued a statement condemning the Chinese Communist Party's ongoing cultural genocide in Tibet and reaffirmed their determination to draw international

attention to the recent forced closure of the Ganjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School in Rajya, Tibet. They emphasised the urgent need for international intervention and support. The group announced plans to seek backing through advocacy and political efforts, including issuing a formal condemnation of the ongoing closures of numerous schools and monasteries in Tibet. They also intend to submit an appeal to the international community and its leaders, particularly highlighting the violations of children's rights.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of 23 resolutions, following the unanimous decision to withdraw three regional chapters of the Tibetan Youth Congress in Bylakuppe, Hunsur Rabgyaling, and Kollegal Dhondelling, and from using the TYC title in their future endeavours. The meeting also involved a comprehensive review of the annual financial reports from the TYC central leadership and regional chapters. Additionally, there were in-depth discussions on the implementation of resolutions passed during the previous Working Committee Meeting.

Toronto Tibetan activist concludes third bicycle rally for Free Tibet

16 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup



Sangyal Kyap with his cycle in Toronto, Canada (Photo/Facebook)

Toronto-based Tibetan activist Sangyal Kyap concluded his third bicycle rally for Free Tibet across Canada on Wednesday. Kyap completed his rally, beginning in Victoria, British Columbia, and ending in Toronto, Ontario, to raise awareness and inform Canadians about the Sino-Tibet conflict.

He covered a distance of 4,182.8 kilometres and took 54 days. The rally started on June 21 and concluded on August 14 when Kyap arrived at the Chinese Consulate in Toronto. Upon his arrival, he was greeted by Tibetans and supporters who had gathered to join him in the cause. The rally traversed remote Canadian

provinces and made efforts to reach isolated areas. Throughout the journey, Kyap distributed brochures detailing the critical situation in Tibet and engaged in discussions about the urgent need for a resolution to the Tibet-China conflict.

Kyap outlined six demands to the Canadian government and the international community during this year's rally. The first demand is the immediate return of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to Tibet without conditions. The second demand calls for the renewal of Sino-Tibet dialogue to resolve the conflict in good faith.

The third demand involves the immediate release of the Panchen Lama, who was abducted by the Chinese government on May 17, 1995, at age six. Kyap also called for the release of Go Sherab Gyatso and all other Tibetan political prisoners. Additional demands include shutting down Chinese colonial boarding schools in Tibet to free one million Tibetan children, halting illegal Chinese hydropower dam constructions in Dege, Kham, and other parts of Tibet, and ensuring human rights and religious freedom in Tibet due to ongoing abuses by the Chinese government.

Sangyal Kyap began his activism for the Tibetan cause in 2018 with a solo protest outside the Chinese embassy in Canada. He has since completed five peace marches spanning hundreds of kilometers to protest Chinese rule and policies in Tibet.

Sangyal Kyap's first bike rally for Free Tibet began in Vancouver, B.C., on August 16, 2022, and concluded in Ontario on October 12, covering 5,000 kilometres. His second bike rally, dedicated to H.H. The 14th Dalai Lama and Free Tibet, took place across Canada from Ottawa to Nova Scotia and then to Vancouver in May 2023.

Central Tibetan Administration Commemorates 78th Indian Independence Day

15 August 2024, [CTA](#)

In commemoration of the 78th Indian Independence Day, the Central Tibetan Administration held a brief ceremony at the Gangchen Kyishong to mark the joyous day alongside Indian brothers and sisters.

The celebration was attended by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, Sikyong Penpa Tsering, Education Kalon (minister) Tharlam Dolma Changra, Security Kalon Dolma Gyari and Secretaries of the Central Tibetan Administration.

The proceedings began with Sikyong unfurling the Indian national flag and singing of India's national anthem. Sikyong then spoke to the media, offering congratulatory remarks to the government and people of India on this landmark occasion. "On behalf of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, we wish to extend

our warm greetings to the leadership and people of India on the 78th Independence Day celebration."

While acknowledging the sincere assistance that India has rendered to Tibetan refugees during the latter's worst period of history for the last more than sixty years, the Tibetan political leader expressed gratitude on behalf of every Tibetan to the government and people of India.

Sikyong further said, "It's ironical that India got its independence in 1947, and three years later we lost our independence. In fact, many countries around the world, particularly after World War II, gained independence from colonial rulers. But unfortunately, the wave of communism that enveloped the region also enveloped Tibet under the forceful occupation by China. We still remain as political refugees here, and we also take inspiration from India's independence that we too will get to return back to Tibet as a free nation, as a people who can practice its freedom in the preservation of and promotion of its identity in terms of language, culture, religion, and way of life, and particularly Tibet's environment, that's not only important for Tibet but for the whole world. So it is a joyous occasion for Indians to celebrate, but for us, as Tibetans, we enjoy it with you. At the same time, we also think about and long for the day when we also get to celebrate our freedom.

Petition by 100 Tibetan scholars to UN High Commissioner calls for an end to school closures and cultural assimilation policies in Tibet

14 August 2024, [ICT](#)

The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) welcomes a petition to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk calling for an end to China's forced assimilation policies in Tibet. In the petition 100 Tibetan professors, scientists and doctoral students in exile express their deep concern about the Chinese government's systematic closure of Tibetan monastic and public schools.

"This appeal by Tibetan scholars emphasizes the urgency of the situation in Tibet. The suppression of the Tibetan language and culture in everyday life through targeted school closures, indoctrination and propaganda in the educational sector are a core element of the Chinese government's assimilation policy. We expressly support the demands articulated in the petition. Tibetan students must have the opportunity to study at schools that celebrate their language and culture, Tibetan schools must not be closed, and the system of coercive boarding schools must be abolished," the International Campaign for Tibet stated.

The appeal was initiated by the [Tibet Times](#), which is published in Dharamsala, India.

Campaign of school closures

A recent example of the cultural assimilation policies in Tibet is the closure of the [Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling School in Ragya](#) in July 2024. The Norbu Lobling School was the first private Tibetan school in the Golog region's Machen county (Chinese: Maqin qian) and was particularly well known for promoting the Tibetan language and culture. After its foundation in 1994, it made a name for itself as a vocational school, primarily through its Tibetan language courses. Human rights organizations have been observing with growing concern how the Chinese Communist Party has been replacing Tibetan textbooks with Chinese ones in primary and secondary schools in Tibet. Content in Tibetan is being systematically replaced by Chinese as the language of literature and instruction. At the same time, more and more public schools run by Tibetan monasteries and individuals have been forcibly closed by the Chinese authorities in recent years.

The petition has been submitted to the UN High Commissioner on 29 July by 100 professors, doctoral students and academics from the Tibetan exile community, and has also been signed by scholars who are attached to Tibetan culture.

It urges the UN High Commissioner to:

- Urge for an end to forced school closures and ensure restoration; protect private and monastic schools for their continued existence throughout Tibet and enable the immediate reopening of all forcibly closed schools.
- Call for an immediate end of the boarding school system in Tibet.
- Raise his voice to protect the Tibetan language, culture and religion and speak out publicly on the human rights situation in Tibet.
- Press for accountability and urge the Chinese government to comply with international education rights standards, as China has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Urge those responsible for violations to be held accountable.

Petition text

The signatories of the petition have requested that their names not be made public. The UN High Commissioner has received an unredacted version of the petition. ICT publishes the petition text hereafter, without indicating the names of the signatories:

Your Excellency,

The human rights situation in Tibet has been severely deteriorating. The PRC's assault on Tibetan cultural identity is evident in its accelerated implementation of what it calls 'bilingual education'. This policy

undermines the Tibetan education system and uses the national curriculum to promote indoctrination and assimilation. In this context, we, the undersigned, express our deep concern over the Chinese government's systematic closure of privately-operated Tibetan schools.

Since 2010, the Chinese government's cultural assimilation policy has forced all schools in Tibet to use Chinese as the primary language, beginning from kindergarten. From primary school onward, all Tibetan students must take examinations in spoken Mandarin. In addition, colonial style boarding schools in Tibet separate Tibetan children from their families and communities, thus depriving them of their language, culture, and traditions from the grassroots level.

The recent closure of the reputed Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbuling School in Golog Machen County, Qinghai Province, Tibet, on July 14, 2024, is particularly disheartening and alarming for Tibetans both within and outside of Tibet. This school has faced relentless pressure from the Chinese government through various means, including false allegations that elements of their logo were symbols of the Tibetan national flag, and false allegations charges against its founder, Ven. Jigme Gyaltzen (charges that were later dismissed), among other political accusations.

The Chinese government's cultural assimilation policy is ostensibly meant to provide better and equal job opportunities for Tibetans. However, in reality, privately-owned Tibetan schools have offered greater benefits and opportunities for the Tibetan people in general. One such example is Ragya School.

Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbuling School was formally established in August 1994 with permission from the so-called Golog Local People's Government. It was the first privately-operated school in Qinghai Province. Over time, it became a specialized vocational school offering classes in Tibetan language, English, computer science, engineering, medicine, videography, and physical education. Since its inception, over 2,300 students have graduated, including at least 800 university students, 50 researchers, 90 doctors, 110 government employees, 250 university teachers, 13 headmasters, 110 monastic workers, and 260 entrepreneurs.

This is not the first instance of such closures. The Chinese government is targeting privately-operated schools, especially those engaged in promoting and preserving Tibetan culture and language. As per record of the Tibet Times, a Tibetan media outlet monitoring developments in Tibet from Dharamsala, India, out of 16 known private owned schools in Golog regions, since 2021, eight schools have already been shut down and most of the remaining schools under threat of closure through constant allegation and administrative pressure. For detailed reports on the

Ragya School shutdown, please refer to this 'Tibet Times' news link:

<https://en.tibettimes.net/2024/07/14/chinese-government-forcefully-shuts-down-ragya-gangjong-sheriq-norbuling-school/>

Buddhist philosophy based on Tibetan language offers numerous benefits to today's modern world, addressing both individual well-being and societal harmony. Concepts and practices from the Tibetan tradition are increasingly embraced and applied by a global audience. It is in every individual's interest to fight to preserve these invaluable ways of learning and living.

The United Nations promotes diversity and inclusion as fundamental principles across its agenda and it is also evident across its various programs and initiatives, aiming to build a more equitable and just world. This richness of Tibetan language, culture, and tradition offers much towards this diversity. The increasingly marginalized Tibetan language and culture should be protected and secured according to the principles and aims promoted by the United Nations.

As members of the global community, we urge the United Nations to take immediate and decisive action to address these critical issues and to preserve basic human rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people inside Tibet.

Given the severity and wide-reaching consequences of these educational restrictions, we respectfully request Your Excellency to:

- Urge for an end to forced school closures and ensure restoration; protect private and monastic schools for their continued existence throughout Tibet and enable the immediate reopening of all forcibly closed schools.
- Call for an immediate end of the boarding school system in Tibet.
- Raise your voice to protect the Tibetan language, culture and religion and speak out publicly on the human rights situation in Tibet.
- Press for accountability and urge the Chinese government to comply with international education rights standards, as China has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Urge those responsible for violations to be held accountable.

We believe these measures will significantly improve the right to education and cultural rights of the Tibetan people, their identity and cultural traditions, which in turn will help promote peace, security, and justice for the Tibetan people.

We have gathered signatures from Tibetans and those from other Himalayan regions – professors, lecturers, PhDs and Scholars from outside of Tibet – who have tremendous concern over the education crisis in Tibet. Their signatures below demonstrate widespread support for this letter and a collective desire for meaningful action and protection of fundamental human rights in Tibet.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt response. Together, we can work towards a more just and humane world for all.

Sincerely,

[Names redacted]

Former Ambassador Dilip Sinha talks to Tibetans in-exile about "Imperial Games in Tibet"

14 August 2024, [The Print](#)

The Tibet Policy Institute of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration on Wednesday held a talk by Former Ambassador Dilip Sinha on his recent book titled "Imperial Games in Tibet" in Dharamshala.

Various Tibetan intellectuals including Tibetan activists, a few members of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile and officials of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) attended the event.

Speaking to ANI, the author, Dilip Sinha, the former ambassador said, "I am grateful to the CTA and the Tibetan community in Dharamshala that they have invited me to speak on my book that was released a month ago in Delhi. It is a book called 'The Imperial Games in Tibet'. It is about Tibetan history and about the cause of Tibet so the purpose of the book is to make the Indian people know about the history of Tibet and what happened to Tibet and what is the issue that we face today in our relations with China."

Talking about India's policy towards Tibet, Sinha said, "India's policy at the moment is a policy of supporting the Tibetan community in exile. India also supports the Central Tibetan Administration which runs the affairs of the Tibetan community but at the same time, the Indian government used to support the desires of the Tibetan people and their spiritual leader his holiness the Dalai Lama. We recognise that Tibet is an autonomous region of China and the autonomy should be respected and Tibetan culture and identity should also be respected."

Speaking about the motivation to write the book, Sinha further said, "I have been a student of political science and history and I realised that there was a neighbour of ours which we knew very little and our northern border which was always very peaceful border, has now become a security risk for us so how did this happen? Why did this happen? And why is the way forward? This is something that I wanted to read

about to discover for myself and this is what I have written in the book.”

The deputy director of Tibet Policy Institute, Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha said, “I think it is an important event because the author is an Indian brother who wrote a wonderful book on Tibet and since he is a prominent former ambassador and diplomat so his presence here would highlight his book of course and also highlight how the imperial politics that was played at the time of independent Tibet and also around the time when Tibet was on the verge of losing its independence. The book will help the cause of Tibet because when more and more people read it they will have more and more understanding of what really happened to Tibet. After all, the book deals with the time between 1700 to the time when Tibet lost its independence so they will definitely have a great understanding.” (ANI)

Committee Reviews Rules and Regulations of Parliamentary Procedure and Conduct for Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile

13 August 2024, [CTA](#)

Following the decision made by the 7th session of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, a committee convened to review the ‘Rules and Regulations for Parliamentary Procedures and Conduct of Business’ concerning the removal of dignitaries from the Central Tibetan Administration has successfully concluded its work at 4 pm today.

The committee, chaired by Parliamentarian Dorjee Tseten and including Parliamentarian Karma Gelek (Secretary) and Parliamentarian Tenzin Jigdal, has spent over two months examining the current rules and comparing them with similar regulations from other countries.

The committee has submitted its report on these rules and regulations to Secretary-General Sonam Dorjee of the Tibetan parliamentary secretariat today.

Department of Education Initiates Free Distribution of Storybooks for Schools

11 August 2024, [CTA](#)

The Department of Education (DoE), Central Tibetan Administration initiated the free distribution of storybooks published between 2023 and 2024.

The Education Department aimed particularly on enhancing the reading proficiency of students in Tibetan schools throughout India. Each year, they translated internationally renowned children’s storybooks, produced new children’s publications, and distributed summaries of fairy tales. In the academic year 2023 to 2024, a total of 29 significant children’s

storybooks were released, of which 10 had been published previously.



Department of Education Initiates the Free Distribution of Storybooks

Dalai Lama’s Succession Strategy; China’s Xi Jinping Can’t Handle Unpredictability: Tibet’s Sikyong

11 August 2024, [StratNews Global](#), Amitabh P. Ravi

Tibet’s Sikyong (political head) Penpa Tsering in a wide-ranging, comprehensive chat on ‘The Gist’

Tibetan Sikyong Exclusive: Watch [Here](#).

“China cannot handle unpredictability. So they don’t know when His Holiness the Dalai Lama will talk about emanation, which means choosing somebody before one’s own demise. Or reincarnation. That’s finding a new body in the next life”. Tibet’s Sikyong or political head, Penpa Tsering says in an exclusive ‘The Gist’ interview with *StratNews Global’s* Amitabh P. Revi. “Sometimes when he’s asked whether it could be a woman, he says, why not? So all options are very open. And one thing, the Chinese cannot handle is unpredictability. So I think His Holiness is also being very strategic about his approach. But we can be very, very sure that he and he alone will be responsible for his succession. But he will definitely leave signs and indications,” the leader elected by Tibetans outside their country says.

India’s Tibet Policy

“Everybody would love to hear something from the Indian government. But I think it is taken for granted from our side too, that India is concerned, India has a stake in this. Suppose the next Dalai Lama is born in India. That makes it more relevant for India. So, I’m sure the Indian authorities are really thinking about and working on all this. And when and what they say is something for them to decide,” Penpa Tsering adds in this Tibet Sikyong Exclusive.

The Sikyong Also Discusses:

- The ‘Resolve Tibet’ Act that U.S. President Joe Biden has signed into law.

- Its overall ramifications and the next steps planned.
- Whether [India's Tibet policy](#) needs to be recalibrated.
- Calls for renaming the Line of Actual Control (LAC) the [Tibet border](#).
- Ways to counter the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) changing names of places in Tibet and India.
- The Tibetan government-in-exile's plans for a detailed historical map.
- How to bring the CCP "to its knees".
- The Central Tibetan Administration's position on Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Tibetans under Indian military command in the Special Frontier Force (SFF) and Vikas battalions.
- The Dalai Lama's middle way and dual polarity.
- Non-violence and the possibility of armed struggle.
- Back-channel talks in a third country.
- When the Dalai Lama will be back in India after recovering from knee surgery.
- And the [succession issue](#) and why Xi Jinping can't handle the unpredictability.

MPs re-launch Tibet group | Gao supports Tibetan people's rights

10 August 2024, [Arunachal Observer](#)

The All-Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT), first set up in 1970, was re-launched in new Indian Parliament on Wednesday following after the 2024 general elections as a delegation of Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPIE) lobbied during ongoing session of the Parliament.

Odisha's BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, who served as the pro-tem speaker of current 18th Lok Sabha is the group's convenor while Arunachal Pradesh BJP MP Tapir Gao is co-convenor, Central Tibetan Administration posted on its *Tibet.net* website.

Gao expressing his support for Tibetan people's rights to self-determination, said resumption of dialogue between China and envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the basis of the latter's middle way proposal, and for countering of China's false narrative on Tibet. He has called on China to immediately release all Tibetan political prisoners. Mehtab could not attend due to some unavoidable circumstance, Gao added.

The re-launch was announced during a dinner hosted by the TPIE and India Tibet Coordination Office (ITCO) here. Other MPs present were Sujeet Kumar (Rajya Sabha, BJD), and former APIPFT convenor Manoj Tigga (BJP MP, West Bengal); Amarsing Tisso (BJP MP, Assam); Joyanta Basumatary (MP, United People's

Party Libera, Assam); Phangnon Konyak (Rajya Sabha, BJP, Nagaland); Birendra Prasad Baishya (Rajya Sabha, Asom Gana Parishad, Assam); Jagannath Sarkar (MP, BJP, West Bengal); Angomcha Bimol Akoijam (MP, INC, Manipur); Indra Hang Subba (MP, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, Sikkim); Pradyut Bordoloi (MP, INC, Assam); Phani Bhusan Choudhury (MP, Asom Gana Parishad, Assam), Mohammad Haneefa (MP, Independent, Ladakh), Maneka Gandhi (former MP, BJP), Dr Pankaj Pushkar (Rajiv Gandhi Foundation Legislative Support Group senior fellow-cum-former Delhi Assembly MLA).

The TPIE members, who attended, also included Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, delegation members Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tsetan, Lopon Thupten Gyaltzen, Tsaneytsang Dhondup Tashi, Geshe Ngaba Gangri, Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen, and Tsering Yangchen.

The re-launching of APIPFT is relevant after the US Congress recently passed the Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act also known as Resolve Tibet Act. This legislation aims to promote a peaceful resolution to the Tibet-China dispute according to international law and the United Nations (UN) Charter through peaceful dialogue without preconditions.

Moreover this would also strengthen the efforts of Core Group for Tibetan Cause-India (CGTC-I) with former MP R K Khrimey as convenor and Tibet Support Group of Arunachal Pradesh president Tarh Tarak and secretary general Nima Sangey for honourable return of Tibetans living across the world to their motherland to lead a decent life free from coercion by China.

Indo-Tibetan support group declares 2025 as 'Year of Compassion' for Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday

10 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

The Bharat-Tibet Sahayog Manch's (BTSM) national council meeting China's aggressive policies in Tibet and expansionist ambitions against India and declared 2025 as 'Year of Compassion' honouring Dalai Lama's 90th Birthday.

The meeting held on 3 and 4 August in Sonapat, Haryana had a total of 267 members from 24 states featured the adoption of five resolutions addressing issues concerning Tibet and Sino-Indian relations. Minister of Security of the exile Tibetan government, Gyari Dolma attended the meeting as the chief guest. During the meeting, BTSM declared the year 2025 as the Karuna Varsh (Year of Compassion), in celebration of the 90th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Recognised globally as a symbol of peace, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday will be marked by year-long celebrations promoting peace, non-violence, brotherhood, and love. The group acknowledged its

commitment to forming a committee to organise these celebrations, engaging communities across India and the world.

MP Indresh Kumar, the patron of Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch said that the ongoing sinicisation in Tibet such as the recent closure of the Renounced Ragya Gangjong Sherig Norbuling School in Golog is a clear motive of China to eradicate Tibet and its unique identity. "What kind of humanity is it that China is eradicating Tibetan identity from Tibet, except for a few thousand of them in the rest of the world". He further stated that "BTSM condemned China's actions aimed at eliminating the Tibetan race through a systematic campaign of sinicization. BTSM firmly believes that China is engaged in a conspiracy to erase Tibetan culture and identity", he said.

National working president of BTSM Harjit Singh Grewal stated "We must Keep moving, keep talking about these things, keep making programs, with other groups, and new groups. We will be blessed because our movement is for the injustice faced by Tibetans from China. For the protection of India, we must continue doing it".

The Bharat-Tibet Sahayog Manch (BTSM) is a pan-Indian Tibet support group that was founded in 1998. Over the past 26 years, BTSM has grown to establish branches across India, becoming one of the largest Tibet support groups in the country. On Wednesday another Indian support group for Tibet, the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT), was successfully revived. The APIPFT appointed Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab, the pro-tem Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha and Member of Parliament from the BJP, as its Convener. Shri Tapir Gao, also a BJP MP, was appointed as the Co-convener in the capital of India New Delhi.

Tibetan Parliamentary Delegation Advocates Tibet, Meets Key Indian Leaders

09 August 2024, [CTA](#)

A Tibetan parliamentary delegation led by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, continued their Tibet outreach campaign on their fourth day of the Tibet advocacy campaign meeting key Indian leaders.

They held meetings with Shri. Sujeet Kumar, Rajya Sabha MP; Shri Kethi Reddy Suresh Reddy, Lok Sabha MP; Shri Mohammad Nisar, General Secretary of Janata Dal (United); and Shri Surendra Kumar, Co-convener of Core Group for Tibetan Cause.

The first group of the Tibetan parliamentary delegation led by Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel and consisting of MP Geshe Lharampa Atuk Tseten and MP Tsaneytsang Dhondup Tashi met with Shri Sujeet Kumar, Rajya Sabha MP. They expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the MP for his role as the convener of the

All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet for the last three years and his valuable contribution to the Tibetan cause. They presented him with a 12-point appeal letter and sought his continued support. Shri Kumar affirmed his steadfast commitment to the Tibetan cause.

Thereafter, the group met with Shri Mohammad Nisar, National Secretary, Janata Dal (United). They presented him with the 12-point appeal letter outlining the critical situation in Tibet. Shri Nisar, who has a keen interest in Buddhism and is aware of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, acknowledged the historical support of JDU leaders like Shri George Fernandes and noted that many current leaders of JDU also support Tibet.

The second group consisting of MP Lupon Thupten Gyaltzen, MP Geshe Gangri, MP Geshe Atong Rinchen Gyaltzen, and MP Tsering Yangchen met with Shri Kethi Reddy Suresh Reddy (Rajya Sabha MP, Bharat Rashtra Samithi, Telangana).

They briefed him about the critical situation in Tibet including the forced placement of children as young as six in boarding schools with the recent closure of Tibetan institutions such as the Gangjong Sherig Norbu Lobling (Jigme Gyaltzen Nationalities Vocational School) in Golok. They presented him with the 12-point appeal letter, highlighted the tragic self-immolations by 157 Tibetans protesting China's policies, and urged him to join the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet.

Throughout their advocacy campaign, the delegation also met with other key Indian leaders, emphasising the urgency of the situation in Tibet and the aspirations of the Tibetan people. Indian leaders expressed their support and solidarity with Tibetans. During the advocacy campaign, the delegation was accompanied by Tashi Dekyi, Acting Coordinator of India Tibet Coordination Office; Tenzin Paljor and Tenzin Sherab, staff of Tibetan parliamentary secretariat; and Phuntsok Gyatso, Delhi based coordinator of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

American Bar Association urges rights violations investigation in Tibet in first stand on the issue

08 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

In what has been termed as a landmark development, the American Bar Association (ABA) has on Aug 5 adopted a resolution urging the United States and the United Nations to investigate human rights violations in Tibet. The resolution came less than a month after US President Joe Biden signed the 'Resolve Tibet Act', which calls China's occupation of Tibet illegal under international law, recognizes the Tibetan people's right to self-determination, and mandates US support for a negotiated settlement of the issue.

The resolution, passed at the ABA's Annual General Meeting in Chicago, marks the first time the organization has taken a stance on the issue of Tibet, and "recommends measures to address ongoing atrocity crimes in Tibet", noted the *jurist.org* Aug 7. In particular, the resolution calls on the US Department of State's Office of Global Criminal Justice to investigate and publish updated findings on the question of genocide, crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations in Tibet. It also urges the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, to appoint a special rapporteur on the situation concerning Tibet and to include the situation of Tibet on its agenda.



The ABA House of Delegates, the association's policymaking body, met Aug. 5-6 to conclude the 2024 Annual Meeting in Chicago. (Photo courtesy: ABA)

The resolution was proposed by the International Law Section (ILS) of the ABA and received unanimous support from the delegates at the meeting. Sara Sandford, Attorney and former Chair of the ILS, stated that "the American Bar Association stood up for the rule of law and protection of human rights" by adopting the resolution, the report said.

Regina M Paulose, an international criminal law attorney and Co-Chair of the International Criminal Law Committee in ILS, has welcomed the news and expressed hope for future actions by the ABA in promoting dialogue and conversations about the rule of law, justice, and accountability related to Tibet. She has said:

"The situation in Tibet has been ignored for far too long despite credible and well documented reports indicating the commission of international crimes. The steps taken in this resolution should be implemented by the international community at large — not just the United States; ensuring accountability for Tibet in the wake of PRC's actions, upholding human rights, religious liberty, cultural heritage, and ensure international court rulings are adhered to."

China must end its persecution of Tibetan human rights defender Tsering Tso

08 August 2024, [TCHRD](#)

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy strongly condemns the relentless persecution of

Tibetan human rights defender Tsering Tso, who was arbitrarily arrested and subjected to a 10-day "administrative detention" by the local police in Yushu Prefecture.

Tsering Tso, a tour guide by profession, was detained for the fourth time in five years by the Chinese authorities for exposing Chinese authorities racial discrimination practices against two Tibetan monks on their way to pilgrimage in Drachen (Ch: Bachen) County, Nagchu (Ch: Naqu) Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). On the evening of 10 June, at approximately 5 pm local time, while escorting a group of monks on a pilgrimage tour to Lhasa and Tsari, local police in Gomri Township, Drachen County, interrupted their journey. The police stated that the monks needed to obtain prior permission from both the Monastery Management Committee and the local government for their travel. Later that night, the local police took the two monks, including Thutop Namgyal and another monk (name withheld for security reasons), into custody and subjected them to rigorous interrogation.

Upon learning of their arrest, Tsering Tso contacted the police, pointing out how Chinese tourists required no prior permission while Tibetan monks faced restrictions and mistreatment over permit requirements. She demanded the authorities for the immediate release of the two monks, asserting that their detention by Drachen County police was unlawful and in violation of China's law and domestic policies. Initially, the Drachen County police denied detaining the monks but later admitted to taking them for "interrogation", suggesting "cooperation" would expedite their release.

In a recorded conversation with the local police, Tsering Tso criticised the police's misuse of powers for harassing Tibetan pilgrims, stating that such actions contravened Xi Jinping's policies on ethnic unity.

Tsering can be heard saying, "As law-abiding citizens of China, Tibetans should have the same rights as Han Chinese. President Xi Jinping and the government always profess ethnic unity, but why am I facing this issue? What can I do now? Will you [the local police] not implement President Xi's policies?" demanding an end to the Drachen County authorities' abuse of power. The police responded with vague excuses, stating that different departments had different regulations. After three hours of urging the local authorities, the monks were eventually released around 3 am.

Tso later shared the entire recordings of the event on social media, exposing Drachen County police's discriminatory practices and illegal detention of the two monks. Subsequently, upon her return to her hometown in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, she was detained on 29 June on charges of "endangering social stability" and was later released

on 8 July after ten days in administrative detention. This is the fourth time Tso has been detained for criticising the Chinese government's discriminatory policies and advocating for equal and fair treatment of Tibetans inside Tibet.

In December last year, Drachen County police detained Tsering Tso for fifteen days, accusing her of refusing to cooperate with a traffic investigation and spreading false information online.

In October, Tsering Tso posted short videos on social media platforms, including WeChat and Douyin, exposing the Chinese government's discriminatory practices against Tibetans. Her videos highlighted how officials from various departments were harassing Tibetan businesses in Tibet, attempting to force their closure by leaving business owners with no option but to comply.

As a result, the Yushu Public Security Bureau officers sentenced her to 15 days of administrative detention on charges of 'picking quarrels and provoking troubles,' an allegation frequently levied against human rights defenders, minority groups, critics, and dissenters to compel conformity with the official narrative and to stifle questioning and dissent by deterring criticism of government policies. Whether at the central or local level, the party-state exercises its authority to define and enforce these trumped-up charges, categorising any deviation from the official stance as a violation.

Similarly, on the evening of 12 November 2020, Tsering Tso was forcibly detained from her Xining home by ten officers and taken to the Trikha (Ch: Guide) County detention centre. She was subsequently subjected to a 10-day administrative detention from 13 to 23 November and imposed a monetary fine of Yuan 1000. In addition to surviving only on steamed buns and boiled water during her detention, she was subjected to ill-treatment and intimidation, which the detention officers employed to coerce her into abandoning her vocal advocacy for democracy and the rule of law.

In 2017, while advocating for the legal right of local Tibetans to apply for passports in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tsering Tso was detained and interrogated by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) of Yushu Prefecture. She was brutally assaulted by an officer named Jamga from the Immigration Administration Division of the Yushu PSB, who kicked her in the head, face, chest, and abdomen. Although doctors from both the provincial and prefectural PSBs concluded that she had not sustained significant injuries, despite contrary reports from her husband and friends about the severity of her condition, the authorities fabricated a narrative to deflect responsibility. They claimed that the attack was perpetrated by ordinary civilians under the influence of alcohol, thereby denying her access to justice.

Tsering Tso is a native of Trika (Ch: Guide) County in Tsoilho (Ch: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture but works and lives in Yushu City. She operates the Tibet World Tours and Travel, specialising in organising tours in various regions, including Lhasa City, Ngari, and other parts of Tibet, as well as destinations in other parts of the world.

Tsering Tso has consistently advocated for equal rights for Tibetans, including freedom of movement as guaranteed by the Chinese Constitution. Instead of addressing her concerns, the Chinese government has repeatedly abused its power by detaining, intimidating, and harassing her.

In its concluding observations following China's periodic review in 2018, the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination called upon the Chinese government to revise its regulations and practices to ensure non-discriminatory determinations on passport applications and freedom of movement for Tibetans who wish to travel within the Tibet Autonomous Region and abroad. The contradictions between what is purportedly promised in the constitution against actual legal amendments and practices, especially in criminal procedures, reveal a legal system deliberately structured to navigate and manipulate domestic and international scrutiny, evading accountability for egregious human rights abuses.

Arbitrary arrests and detention are some of the pressing human rights issues that undermine the criminal justice system in China. Thousands are incarcerated outside the formal criminal process without access to legal rights and punished for up to 15 days in jail at mercy to police discretion. We call on the Chinese government to uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in its constitution, immediately abolish the discriminatory passport regulations, and allow Tibetans the right to movement and access pilgrimage sites in Tibet.

Tibetan athlete fails to medal in her latest Olympics but is 'happy'

07 August 2024, [RFA](#), Jeff Wang

Choeying Kyi, the only Tibetan ever to win a gold medal, was cheered on by Tibetans around the world.

Choeying Kyi and her partner in the race walk mixed relay marathon finished well outside of medal contention on Wednesday, a result she immediately described as "not good, not good, not good!"

But after having a moment to catch her breath, the lone Tibetan athlete at the 2024 Paris Olympics and the only Tibetan ever to win gold said that ultimately she had accomplished something of greater consequence.

"I have participated in four Olympic Games, and I was the only Tibetan representative in all four of them," Kyi told reporters after completing the race.

"I have persisted for so long because I really want to influence some children. I see more and more Tibetan athletes, and I feel very happy. I think it's all worth it. This cannot be proven by a medal."



Choeying Kyi speaks to reporters after competing in the race walk mixed relay marathon at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Aug. 7, 2024, in Paris.

Kyi and her teammate, He Xianghong, finished 14th in the 42.2-kilometers (26.2 miles) mixed team relay, which made its Olympic debut in Paris on Wednesday. They were among the 25 teams that competed in four roughly 10-km stages with the competitors – man, woman, man, woman – alternating in the race.

He Xianghong faced a three-minute penalty at the 29-km mark for committing three violations of the game's rules, which caused the team's ranking to drop sharply.

Kyi and He Xianghong finished the race in 2 hours, 59 minutes and 13 seconds, nearly 10 minutes behind the Spanish team that won but ahead of the other Chinese team that was competing.

Kyi – known as Qieyang Shijie in Chinese – said she knew the penalty would cost her team a medal but that she still pushed hard over her last leg.

"The main thing is to show the spirit of the Chinese team," she told reporters.

Kyi and He Xianghong won the mixed team's 35-km race walk at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, in October 2023.

Mixed emotions

Before the race in Paris, Tibetan netizens, including those inside Tibet, extended well wishes to Kyi, referring to her as the "Snow Princess of the Mountains," "Daughter of the Snowland" and "Pride of the Tibetan Race."

Along the route at the foot of the Eiffel Tower, Tibetan Parisians waved the Tibetan national flag as she raced past and shouted "Choeying Kyi, Go for it!" Afterward, some expressed mixed emotions about the scene.

"As a Tibetan, I was overwhelmed with joy to be able to witness a Tibetan girl taking part in this race at the Paris Olympics," said Tenzin Namgyal, a Paris resident. "But I was also overcome with sadness and a deep hope that one day Tibetan athletes will represent Tibet proudly under the Tibetan national flag. And I pray that such a day would come for Tibetans."

Online, Tibetans expressed similar feelings.

"In sports, it is not important to be the first. It's the joy and pride and inspiration she brought to 6 million Tibetans," Loten Namling, a Tibetan living in Switzerland, wrote on Facebook.

"Even if she had won the gold medal, China would have taken it away from her, but China cannot take away the joy and inspiration she gave to her people! This is a victory more valuable than a gold medal," he said.

Kyi was born in 1990 to humble beginnings in Haiyan County in Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai province but rose to be among the best in her sport.

She competed in the previous three Olympic Games in London, Rio and Tokyo. In 2012, Kyi originally finished third in the women's 20-km race walk, earning a bronze medal.

But 11 years later she made history when she was awarded the gold after the original first and second-place finishers were disqualified due to doping violations. Kyi also won a silver medal in the 20-km race at the 13th National Games in China in 2017.

"I felt both happy and sad when I heard the news," Kyi wrote on social media upon hearing the news in 2023 that she was an Olympic champion.

"I'm happy because I could be the champion I am in my heart and I could have an Olympic gold medal. But I'm also regretful as I didn't experience what an Olympic gold medalist should have experienced."

"Let bygones be bygones, and I will always try to work hard to get what I want," she added. "Tomorrow is a new beginning and a fresh start. Thank you all for your support and blessings over the years. May you all be healthy, safe and happy."

'Pro-democracy' academic who spied on Tibetans etc for China set for Jan 9 sentencing

07 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Wang Shujun wanted to be seen as a democracy activist with a passion to see his country become a free and open society, but a court in New York City has found that he was wearing that hat only to spy on critics of China, including Tibetans. The 76-year-old Chinese-American academic was convicted Aug 6 for illegally collecting information for Beijing.

A federal jury has found Wang guilty on four counts including acting as a foreign agent without notifying

the US attorney general and lying to US authorities following a week-long trial in Brooklyn federal court. He is to be sentenced on Jan 9, 2025 and could be jailed for up to 25 years, reported *Reuters* and other news agencies Aug 7,

Federal prosecutors had said Wang portrayed himself as a proponent of democracy and fierce opponent of the ruling Communist Party of China (CP) to gain the trust of his targeted groups. His contacts were stated to include Hong Kong pro-democracy activists, supporters of Taiwan declaring independence as well as Uyghur and Tibetan campaign groups.

Prosecutors had accused Wang of interacting with them only for the purpose of spying on their activists and sharing information with China's main intelligence agency, the Ministry of State Security (MSS).

Wang composed emails — styled as “diaries” — that recounted conversations, meetings and plans of various critics of the Chinese government. He saved them as email drafts that Chinese intelligence officials could access and read by signing in with a shared password. He did not send those emails in order to avoid creating a digital trail.

The emails included those that talked about people planning demonstrations during various visits that Chinese President Xi Jinping made to the US.

The indictment said Wang also wrote separate encrypted messages that contained details of upcoming pro-democracy events and plans for him to meet with prominent Hong Kong dissidents.

Wang lived a double life for over a decade. He held himself out as a critic of the Chinese government so that he could build rapport with people who actually opposed it, then betrayed their trust by telling Beijing what they said and planned, prosecutors have said.

“The indictment could have been the plot of a spy novel, but the evidence is shockingly real that the defendant was a secret agent for the Chinese government,” Brooklyn-based US attorney Breon Peace has said in a statement after the verdict.

Prosecutors have also charged four Chinese intelligence officers who allegedly worked as Wang's handlers. They are all at large and believed to be in China.

Wang was arrested in Mar 2022. He came to New York in 1994 to teach after doing so at a Chinese university and later became a naturalized US citizen. He helped to found the Queens-based Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang Memorial Foundation, named for two CPC leaders who were sympathetic to calls for reform in the 1980s, said the *AP* Aug 7.

The indictment was part of the US Department of Justice's crackdown in recent years on “transnational repression” by Beijing, referring to its alleged attempts at overseas surveillance and intimidation.

During a series of FBI interviews from 2017 to 2021, Wang initially said he had no contacts with the MSS,

but he later acknowledged on videotape that the intelligence agency asked him to gather information on democracy advocates and that he sometimes did, FBI agents testified.

Still, Wang had pleaded not guilty. His lawyers has cast him as someone who was forthcoming with US authorities about activities he saw as innocuous, and they disputed that his communications were truly under Chinese officials' direction or control, the report said.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy, has claimed in a statement Aug 6 that he was unaware of the specifics of the Wang case but that China opposed the United States' “slander,” “political manipulation” and “malicious fabrication of the so-called ‘transnational suppression’ narrative and its blatant prosecution of officials from relevant Chinese departments.”

Tibet House Japan Starts Three-month Tibetan Language Class

05 August 2024, [CTA](#)

The Tibet House Japan, a cultural wing of the Liaison Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama for Japan and East Asia, began its in-person and online three-month language and culture class on 3 August, 2024. Representative Dr. Tsewang Gyalpo Arya welcomed the participants and thanked them for taking an interest in the Tibetan language. He explained the contents of the class and what they will learn at the end of the class.

Representative Arya introduced the two staff, Tashi Yangzom and Chisa Tselha of the office, who will help take the class. He further said that along with the Tibetan conversation, reading, and writing class, the office will endeavour to enlighten the students on Tibetan religion and culture.

While participants from Tokyo and neighbouring areas will attend the class at the office, others from faraway prefectures will participate online. Some of the participants were repeat students who said they came again to refresh what they had learned earlier. Some elderly participants said that their interest in the Tibetan language was to gain some information on Tibetan religion and culture.

Lower TCV hosts first residential school for overseas Tibetan students

04 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhondup

Lower TCV school, a pioneer school in the exile Tibetan set up based in India celebrated the opening ceremony of the first residential school for Tibetan students from overseas on Friday in a bid to preserve the Tibetan identity and language for children based in the west.

The initiative by Tibetan Children Village for overseas Tibetan children living abroad aims to impart Tibetan language skills and cultural traditions, while simultaneously teaching modern education. At the moment, only students from the fourth to eighth grades are enrolled.



Tibetan children and their parents from overseas at the opening function (Photo/LTCV Facebook)

Only five overseas children (3 boys and 2 girls) have arrived in school from the registered eight. The school which was on the verge of closing in 2020 has now 73 students mostly from Arunachal, Tawang and the Himalayan region.

TCV Director Sonam Sichoe said that initially, the aim was to gather around sixty students from abroad. Fifteen students were enrolled earlier but due to visa issues, the numbers further dwindled. He further stated, "It's sad to see only a few children have enrolled on this programme but regardless of the numbers, the school will proceed as planned".

He said, "In Tibet, the Chinese authorities are closing schools and transferring Tibetan children to colonial boarding schools to sinicise the young Tibetan children. The Tibetan children inside Tibet do not have the opportunity and facilities to study the Tibetan language but in exile, we have both facilities and opportunities due to the efforts of His Holiness the 14 Dalai Lama, hence we have to preserve the Tibetan language and culture."

Sichoe further stated that critics of the initiatives say that "this initiative by TCV is to make profits but it's not true the sole aim of this programme is to provide Tibetan education". The fees for overseas students cost US\$350 per child per month for tuition, room and board.

Lobsang Sherab from New York, a parent of two children who enrolled in the school, shared his thoughts with Phayul, "The primary reason for bringing my children here is to instil Tibetan character in them. Education can be procured from anywhere, but my hope is to instil kindness and the Tibetan nature in my children. I would be satisfied if my children acquired Tibetan character and language. In

foreign countries, it is hard to learn Tibetan ways. There, the children are Tibetan only in name; only their face is Tibetan, but their behaviour and personality are like Westerners, which saddens the heart."

He further explained, "The weekend schools in New York are only gathered on weekends, so the time is very limited, and the children speak English in the classes. There are no substantial results in terms of inculcating Tibetan language, culture, and traditions in the children, which is why I brought my children here. Although my children are not very excited to go to school here, it is up to the parents to decide the future of their children. I have thought for their future, keeping in mind the importance of preserving the Tibetan identity."

In their social media handles, the school expressed excitement and anticipation stating "We are excited to see these students integrate into our community and bring their diverse perspectives and experiences. The entire school is abuzz with anticipation and enthusiasm as we prepare to support them in this new journey. Some students are still yet to report they will soon join here. We wish them the best of luck for their upcoming new session in the new school and hope they find this experience both enriching and memorable".

Richard Gere helping to produce documentary on Dalai Lama's message of kindness

03 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Hollywood star Richard Gere, possibly the world's most famous lay Tibetan Buddhist as well as Tibet activist, is helping to produce a documentary about the Dalai Lama and his message of peace, reported *aussiedlerbote.de* Aug 2, citing an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Together with producer and director Oren Moverman (58), Gere, 74, will serve as an executive producer for the Swiss documentary "Wisdom of Happiness".

As stated in the press release, the film will "create a powerful cinematic exploration of the inner thoughts of the Dalai Lama", the report said.

The documentary is set to be released worldwide in theatres in fall/winter 2024 and aims to be "a philosophical testament of the Dalai Lama on the big screen".

Regarding the potential impact of the documentary, Gere has said, "This is a fine film that can have a great impact on the future."

Fellow producer Moverman has added: "As a filmmaker, I am deeply grateful for the invitation to participate in this truly unique film that so beautifully translates the message of kindness into the visual language of cinema."

Gere is the Board Chair of Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet which researches on and advocates for Tibet. He has taken part in lobbying efforts in the US Congress, including hearings, on Tibet.

He remains banned from Oscar ceremonies for speaking up on Tibet while China's ban on his films has greatly affected his Hollywood career.

Sikkim: Tibetan Association hails MP Dorjee Lepcha's statement clarifying border as Tibet's, not China's

02 August 2024, [India Today](#), Sujal Pradhan

The Tibetan Association has expressed its gratitude to Rajya Sabha MP Dorjee Tsering Lepcha for his statement that the border from Arunachal Pradesh to Sikkim is Tibet's, not China's. This statement has brought joy to Tibetans globally and highlighted Tibet's independent status before Chinese occupation.

The various branches of the Tibetan Association has extended gratitude to Rajya Sabha MP, Dorjee Tsering Lepcha for stating that the border from Arunachal Pradesh to Sikkim is the Tibet border and not China border.

In a press release, the association comprising Tibetan Freedom Movement; Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, Gangtok (TYC); Regional Tibetan Women Association, Gangtok; Domey Association; Utsang Association; Dokham Chushi Khandruk, on behalf of the entire Tibetan community of Sikkim and Tibetans residing all over the globe, thanked Lepcha for "the immense love, support and for his bold statement."

The Rajya Sabha MP in his statement said, "This border, from Arunachal Pradesh to Sikkim, is approximately 1400 kilometers. We refer to it as the China border. It is not the China border; it is the Tibet border. Because along the entire Line of Actual Control (LAC), there is no China, the entire area is Tibet. Call it the Tibet Border."

He also stated that it is not the China border, but rather the Tibet border, and we should refer to it as such. "By doing this, the name of the dragon will be erased!"

He also demanded that the government refer to this border as the Tibet border instead of the China border. "Whether it is the Army, GREF, BRO, or any agency operating through the Central Government, they should be given directions to not treat it as the China border but as the Tibet border," he said.

"Your statement has brought so much joy and happiness in the faces of Tibetan residing all over the world. The voices we raise and want the world to know that Tibet was forcefully occupied by the communist Chinese regime and further Tibet was always an independent country," the members said, further stating, "Sir we wish you long healthy life ahead and success for your future endeavours."

CHINA POLITICS

China places former chairman of top aircraft maker AVIC under investigation for corruption

31 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Jane Cai

A former head of China's leading aircraft manufacturer has been placed under investigation as Beijing pushes ahead with anti-corruption efforts in sectors crucial to its military capacity.

Tan Ruisong, chairman of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) from 2018 to 2023, is suspected to have committed "severe violations" of the law and Communist Party discipline.

He is being investigated by the party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and the National Commission of Supervision, according to a statement released on Friday.

The country's top anti-corruption watchdogs did not provide details of the alleged "severe violations", a euphemism for corruption.

Tan, 62, was removed from his post at state-owned giant AVIC in March 2023 for age reasons, according to the party's personnel management arm.

Tan, a native of Hunan province, is a technocrat trained in aviation engine design, manufacturing and engineering. He had spent two decades with AVIC, a conglomerate with over 100 subsidiaries and 450,000 employees worldwide – more than America's Boeing and Europe's Airbus combined.

AVIC was the sixth largest defence contractor globally as of 2022 and second largest Chinese defence contractor by annual revenue after China North Industries Group, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

In 2022, Tan vowed to turn AVIC into a world-class military equipment supplier.

The company aimed to become an industry champion like "the national ping pong team", he told the China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition, the country's premier air show held in the southern city of Zhuhai every two years.

AVIC is at the forefront of China's drive to become more technologically self-reliant, and makes products for military use as well as for the civil aviation market. Through its many subsidiaries, it manufactures some of China's leading fighter aircraft such as the J-10, J-11, and J-20.

The company is also a major supplier of components for China's small regional jet ARJ-21 and the C919, a narrowbody medium-haul aircraft. Its exports include the regional turboprop MA60 series and Y12s, and the AC series helicopters.

The aerospace and defence industry sector is a major source of technocrats favoured by Chinese President Xi Jinping to become part of the political elite. However, it has become a key target of Beijing's anti-graft campaign since nine generals including previous and serving commanders from the rocket and air

forces were dismissed from the top legislature in December, after several of them were placed under investigation.

The shake-up exposed rampant irregularities in bidding and procurement processes for military equipment.

Months later, in June, former defence minister Li Shangfu and his predecessor Wei Fenghe were both expelled from the party as Beijing confirmed they were being investigated on suspicion of corruption.

The announcement of the unprecedented move came eight months after the abrupt dismissal of Li, making him China's shortest-serving defence minister.

Li, 66, previously oversaw military procurement. He was accused of accepting "large sums of money" to seek benefits for others, and allegedly bribing others.

Wei was accused of accepting a huge amount of money and helping others to gain improper benefits.

AVIC and other eight state-owned enterprises operating in key sectors including nuclear, aerospace and shipbuilding promised in July to tighten their bidding and procurement rules as well as look at areas such as hiring and quality control, following a series of inspections by the CCDI.

A number of senior defence company executives have already been caught up in the anti-corruption campaign. China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), a main contractor for the country's space programme, said 36 employees had been the subject of the party's disciplinary action and seven had been handed over to judicial authorities.

Former CASC chairman Wu Yansheng was among three senior aerospace-defence executives stripped of their seats on the country's top political advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), in December.

China's Communist Party brings in new rules to regulate faith, loyalty and performance

30 August 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Regulations target members who are not guilty of serious breaches but 'lack revolutionary spirit' or fail to pay membership fees on time.

China's Communist Party has rolled out a set of new rules to remove incompetent members deemed lagging in their faith, loyalty and performance, in a bid to further strengthen the party's control over the conduct of its nearly 100 million members.

The new rules released by the party's general office on Thursday, decree that underperforming party members, whose conduct might not warrant a formal corruption investigation, be disqualified from the party, state-run Xinhua news agency said.

Comprising 27 articles, the rules are "crucial for exercising full and rigorous" party self-cleansing,

according to Xinhua, quoting an official from the Central Organisation Department, the party's top personnel office.

Unlike disciplinary measures imposed on party members who violate the party's discipline, for example through corruption, this new set of regulations specifically targets party members who "lack revolutionary spirit, fail to fulfil their party obligations, or no longer meet party membership criteria", the official told Xinhua.

It is essential for establishing a team of party members with "stronger beliefs, better political reliability, superior qualities, stricter discipline and more significant contributions", the official said.

According to Xie Maosong, a senior research fellow at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, party membership is a necessity for those who want to climb the political or social ladder, but that many slack off after joining the party.

"The party is already very big. While it is growing in numbers, it must also control the quality of people who are in the party," Xie said.

According to the report issued by the Central Organisation Department in June, the party had more than 99.18 million members at the end of 2023, up by more than 1.14 million from 2022.

Xie said that previously the party had mainly relied on the party's anti-graft watchdogs for self-cleansing but, they can only tackle serious wrongdoing.

Many with smaller conduct problems had previously not resulted in disciplinary action, but the organisation department will now have the necessary means to show the exit to those who were lagging behind, he said.

The official from the Central Organisation Department told Xinhua party branches were now required to closely watch their members' conduct and set a deadline for underperforming members – such as those failing to take part in regular party activities or pay membership fees in full and on time – to rectify their behaviour.

Party branches will now be able expel members who have lost their ideals and beliefs, waver in their political stance, neglect work assigned to them by the party, are disloyal to the party or fail to take part in party organisational activities for six months without a valid reason.

Depending on the circumstances, they can also persuade those who fail to rectify their conduct to withdraw from the party voluntarily or it can expel them, according to the official.

The official added that members who threaten to leave the Communist Party as an attempt to gain leverage will be strongly encouraged to leave the party if they do not change their behaviour despite consultation.

New Chinese textbooks play up national security, Xi Jinping Thought and Vietnam, India wars

28 August 2024, [SCMP](#)



The Ministry of Education is introducing new textbooks for morality and law, which will give more space to Xi Jinping Thought and emphasise traditional Chinese culture and national security. Photo: CCTV

New Chinese school textbooks will give more space to national security and traditional culture in Beijing's latest move to step up ideological propaganda and control.

Primary and junior high school students starting the autumn semester next week will be handed the new textbooks on Chinese language, history, as well as morality and law, state broadcaster CCTV said on Tuesday.

Morality and law was known until 2016 as ideology and politics. It is a mandatory subject that promotes the ideology of the ruling Communist Party.

Topics highlighted in the new textbooks include the president's political philosophy, Xi Jinping Thought. There will also be an emphasis on traditional Chinese culture and national security, according to a Ministry of Education official cited in the report.

All Chinese nationals receive nine years of compulsory education, six in primary school and the rest in junior high. The new textbooks will initially be used in the first and seventh grades, and will be extended to all nine grades within three years, according to CCTV.

The new morality and law textbook would introduce the "main content and historical status" of Xi Jinping Thought, the report said.

Officially known as "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", Xi's political philosophy was enshrined in China's constitution in 2018.

However, it has expanded in recent years to include seven aspects, covering his instructions on economic, diplomatic, military and environmental matters, as well as the law, propaganda and party discipline.

Earlier this year, the study of these ideas was made a top priority for all party organisations across the

country, with orders to hold regular meetings to study Xi's speeches and directives.

The new history textbooks will include the brief but bloody border war in 1962 between China and India, which ended with India's defeat after four weeks.

China and India are still at odds over their ill-defined Himalayan border, involving more than 120,000 sq km (46,300 square miles) of disputed territory. Both countries maintain a significant military presence in the border areas, and were involved in another deadly conflict in June 2020.

The 1979 China-Vietnam conflict will also feature in the new history books. Some 300,000 Chinese troops entered Vietnam to prevent Hanoi from overthrowing the Beijing-backed Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia. The conflict caused tens of thousands of casualties on both sides in what Beijing called a "self-defence war against Vietnam".

However it has long been silent on the issue, including not organising public commemorations of its 40th anniversary in 2019 and trying to prevent veterans from paying tribute.

Vietnam seeks Chinese investment and technical support, but the 1979 war and territorial disputes with Beijing in the South China Sea are potential hurdles to bilateral ties.

The Ministry of Education official quoted in the CCTV report said the new content would "allow students to deeply understand that national security is a top priority and that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard it".

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China to make marriage easier, divorce harder in latest move to reverse population decline

25 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

China had found it easier to punish its citizens in the past for violating its decades-long one-child policy than to motivate them now to have more children. With incentive policies having failed, its civil affairs ministry has now released a draft amendment to the Regulation on Marriage Registration this month, with the aim to make it easier for citizens to get married and harder to get divorced.

Calling it an important change to “build happy and harmonious families”, the ministry has opened the draft amendment for public feedback until Sep 11.

For decades, families were ruined by impositions of steep fines and loss of jobs and opportunities for violating the country’s draconian one-child norm. But now, with its population shrinking and rapidly ageing, the country is facing a demographic crisis. Policymakers have been struggling to encourage young people to get married and have children.

According to official data, some 3.43 million people registered for marriage in the first six months of 2024 – down 12% from a year ago and the lowest number in a decade, noted the *scmp.com* Aug 25.

The birth rate meanwhile plunged to a record low of 9.02 million births in 2023, the National Bureau of Statistics was cited as saying.

Under the revised regulation, couples can get married using just their ID cards anywhere in the country. Previously, they also needed their official household registration, or hukou, and could only marry in the places where they were registered.

The revision also includes a 30-day cooling-off period for a divorce, when either party may withdraw their application. This only applies to divorce applications made at registry offices, not divorce by lawsuit.

But it remains doubtful whether the new legislation would make any significant difference. Faced with high living costs, a challenging job market and increasing work pressure, many young people are choosing not to marry and start families. In addition, more women are becoming well-educated and financially independent, which has led to more individual freedom and choices, the report noted.

The government has been trying to drive up the birth rate with incentives that included cheaper housing, tax

cuts and even cash payments. President Xi Jinping has called for women to return to more traditional roles, urging officials to “foster a new type of marriage and childbearing culture”.

But many young people are drawn to the narrative that marriage is a trap and has no benefits, the report noted.

For some young people, the trend away from marriage is liberating. Tiffany Chen, an unmarried film producer in Beijing, said it showed that young people saw marriage as an outdated institution, the report said.

“When young people are no longer getting married, it means that they believe love, intimacy, sex and companionship – crucial concepts to humankind – are no longer linked to a marriage,” she has said.

China moves to ease low-level officials out from endless meetings, reports and red tape

25 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Xinlu Liang

‘Formalism’ is viewed as scourge of grass-roots officials pushed to meet onerous standards and carry out ‘pointless formalities’.

China has unveiled new regulations to tackle “formalism” and reduce the burden on grass-roots officials to improve governance amid endless red tape.

The issue of formalism – characterised by excessive paperwork, meetings and inspections – has hindered the ability of local leaders to effectively do their job, according to the new regulations released by the General Office of the Central Committee and the State Council.

The regulations were created as a vital part of the party’s broader efforts to enhance governance quality and align with directives laid out by President Xi Jinping during the third plenum, a spokesperson from the General Office of the Central Committee told Xinhua on Monday, adding: “For the first time, it has established institutional norms in the form of intraparty regulations aimed at reducing burdens at the grass-roots level”.

This initiative responds to a long-standing problem in which junior party officials often feel overwhelmed by a barrage of meetings and extensive reports they must produce. These pressures have hindered Xi’s ambitions related to anti-corruption, revitalising the sluggish economy and rejuvenating the nation.

During last month’s third plenum, China also announced plans to improve mechanisms aimed at reducing “pointless formalities and bureaucratism”.

The published resolution emphasised the need to streamline meetings, documents and initiatives while curtailing community-level inspections and evaluations. It said there would be efforts to enhance

the quality of research and make such activities less frequent.

“We will formulate lists of duties for towns and townships [urban subdistricts] and refine the long-term mechanisms for reducing their burdens,” it added.

The newly enacted document includes reforms to streamline documentation, limit meetings, revise assessment protocols and ease burdens imposed on local-level organisations.

New guidelines governing how local policy documents are created aim to keep tasks to a minimum. Additionally, the document advises against using unnecessarily complex evaluation systems or burdening officials with detailed criteria, allowing them to focus on taking policy action instead.

In April, the central working group tackling formalism and China’s top anti-corruption watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), reported instances of junior cadres being burdened by bureaucratic tasks.

According to a report jointly released by the CCDI and a central working group tackling formalism, the education bureau conducted an unauthorised initiative in Changchun in Jilin province.

In 2023, the bureau changed the frequency of evaluations from every two years to annually and expanded the original 98 evaluation criteria into 179 scoring standards – resulting in some schools having to prepare around 1,000 review documents.

The Nangan District Education Bureau even borrowed veteran teachers from primary and secondary schools to work in the bureau.

The same joint report said China’s state-owned pipeline giant PipeChina faced criticism for poorly coordinating meetings across departments.

In 2022, its headquarters ordered participation in more than 800 meetings. On average, the employees had to attend more than three meetings each work day.

Concerns about excessive meetings were raised to relevant departments last September, but their number further increased over the following six months.

“This high volume of meetings significantly consumed work time, prompting strong feedback from employees regarding the inefficiency and disruption caused by such practices,” the CCDI notice said.

The rules tighten the management of government-run social media accounts and applications to ease the pressure of preventing damage from zombie accounts, hackers and trolls.

Earlier this year, Beijing’s cyberspace watchdog ordered many local governments to shut down their social media accounts, once seen as a propaganda tool, amid budget cuts, institutional reforms and fatigue among the officials managing these accounts.

Additionally, stricter rules have been put in place to stop higher-level offices borrowing too many staff members from local units, including a broad range of public sector workers such as teachers.

He Xuefeng, a professor at Wuhan University specialising in rural governance, said higher-level departments often shifted responsibilities to grass-roots organisations while imposing stringent requirements, leading to chaos and confusion.

“Due to overly strict demands and excessive tasks from above, along with insufficient governance resources at the grass-roots level and many requirements that do not align with local realities, grass-roots organisations can only resort to formalism to cope with the bureaucratic demands of higher departments,” he wrote in an article published on Monday by the local media outlet Guancha.cn.

He said that in one example in Henan province, village officials reported that collecting rural health insurance fees was more challenging than collecting agricultural taxes.

According to He, the burden on farmers had increased significantly and many were not willing to pay. Last year, they had to pay 380 yuan (US\$53) per person for the year, compared to just 10 yuan (US\$1.40) previously.

To meet collection goals, higher-level health insurance departments rank grass-roots organisations based on their performance in collecting health insurance, often leading to punitive measures for those that fall short, he wrote.

This system “shifts the responsibility of fee collection onto village officials instead of allowing voluntary participation from residents”, creating significant frustration and confusion, He wrote.

In light of this challenge, the new regulations call for clear duty descriptions for townships and streets to ensure that the assessment of grass-roots work is based on defined responsibilities, preventing responsibilities being transferred from higher authorities.

Cai Qi, China’s No 5 official and Xi’s chief of staff, has emphasised the importance of ongoing reforms to reduce formalism. During a meeting on Tuesday, he urged officials to streamline inspections, evaluations and assessments to lessen the burden on grass-roots units, allowing them to focus more on “practical implementation”.

China’s Politburo meeting stresses Chinese-ness, ethnic unity, border stability

23 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee has called for the forging of a strong sense of community for the

Chinese nation to safeguard ethnic unity and stability in border areas during a meeting it held on Aug 23 to review policies and measures to open up a new vista in the large-scale development of the western region, according to China's official *Xinhua* news agency.

The meeting of China's top decision-making body was stated to have been chaired by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee.

The meeting was stated to have urged focused efforts to pursue well-coordinated environmental conservation, large-scale opening-up, and high-quality development, and move faster to create a new pattern of development to elevate overall regional strength and sustainable development capacity.

These are often euphemisms employed by the Chinese leadership to implement policies for forced-relocation of Tibetan farmers and nomads, and for the facilitation of the settlement of burgeoning Chinese immigrants for a speedy Sinicization of the Tibetan Plateau. Many Tibetan farmers and herders have been force-relocated to newly built villages in remote areas near the borders with India, Bhutan and Nepal to act as eyes and ears for China's security apparatus, with little consideration for their largely subsidy-based living condition.

Efforts should be made to deepen reform comprehensively, further unleash and develop the productive forces, boost the vitality of society, and blaze a path of Chinese modernization that suits the realities of the region, a statement released after the meeting was cited as saying.

Measures will be taken to advance the new urbanization in accordance with local conditions, consolidate the poverty alleviation achievements, and make sure that there will be no relapsing into poverty on a large scale in rural areas, the meeting was cited as saying.

Much of the forced relocations in Tibet take place in the name of environmental protection and improving living conditions of Tibetan farmers and herders. The meeting was stated to have stressed "efforts to promote high-level environmental conservation, build a beautiful western region, thoroughly carry out pollution prevention and control, and advance green and low-carbon development."

Forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, a euphemism for Sinicizing the ethnic minority regions, is also seen to have been stressed at the 4th Qomolangma Forum on Tibetan Studies held in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, from Aug 21 to 23.

Held four times since 2010 and organized by the China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture and the China Tibetology Research Centre, nearly a hundred scholars from universities and scientific research institutions in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, as well as Beijing and

the Tibet autonomous region were stated to have attended this year's forum.

The participants were stated to have "exchanged academic research results from the perspectives of the contemporary inheritance and innovation of Tibetan studies, the practice of Chinese-style modernization in Xizang, and the forging of a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation."

As China celebrates Deng Xiaoping's legacy, the country is again at a crossroads

22 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Chow Chung-yan, Jane Cai and William Zheng

Deng and his 'true heir' Xi Jinping differ in strategies and approaches, but closer examination reveals many core similarities.

As China commemorates the 120th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's birth, the Post examines his legacy across generations. In the first of a three-part series, we look at Deng's continuing resonance with the ruling Communist Party's leadership.

Chairman Mao Zedong called him the "steel factory" for his uncompromising resolve. Yet he was also a master of charm – winning the hearts and minds of the American public in one swoop by donning a cowboy hat on the first visit by a Chinese communist leader to the US.

The "chief architect" of the greatest economic liberation programme in history was also the man who demanded that the Communist Party "unwaveringly uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat", nipping the country's democracy movement in its bud.

As China celebrates the 120th anniversary of the birth of the late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, the seemingly contradictory duality of the man and his legacy continue to resonate.

In Chinese culture, 60 years is known as *jiazi*, representing the full alignment cycle between heaven and earth.

The commemoration of Deng's 120th birthday on August 22 comes at a most intriguing time. After four decades of spectacular growth thanks to Deng's reforms, the world is again "standing at a crossroads of history", as his modern-day successor Xi Jinping put it.

Comparisons between the two men are almost inevitable. Xi, said to be the most powerful Chinese leader since Deng, is often depicted in Western narratives as the "dismantler" of Deng's reforms – an assertion that Beijing would angrily dismiss as a smear. Xi, according to various official reports and his own speeches, regards himself as Deng's true heir and the one to see through the great mission that Deng started – the rejuvenation of China as a great civilisation.

Although the two leaders differed in their strategies and approaches, closer examination reveals many core similarities.

Each of them faced critical moments that would decide the Communist Party's very survival and reacted by breaking with the conventions and paths set by their predecessors.

Both Deng and Xi embarked on a zealous mission to restore China to its position as a great world power, and they shared a conviction that the Communist Party is indispensable to achieving that goal.

Deng was the first to warn that China must chart its own reform path and not blindly copy the Western model. He sneered at Mikhail Gorbachev's "perestroika" reforms in the Soviet Union, even as they were widely praised in the West.

"My father thinks Gorbachev is an idiot," Deng's younger son, Deng Zhifang, once told a friend.

By dismantling the Communist Party's power structure, "he [Gorbachev] will lose the power to fix the problems before people kick him out", the younger Deng recalled his father predicting, ahead of the Soviet Union's eventual collapse in 1991.

"Deng likes to say that he was groping for the stones as he crossed the river," wrote Ezra Vogel in his book *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*.

"But in fact, he had developed strong convictions about getting across that particular river. One was that the Communist Party should be in charge."

Deng Yuwen, former deputy chief editor of the Central Party School's Study Times, also called Deng "a diehard communist".

"He did not want anyone using his reform initiative to damage the party's rule. He laid down the 'Four Cardinal Principles' to safeguard that."

The cardinal principles required Chinese leaders to adhere to the socialist path, the people's democratic dictatorship, the party's leadership, and Mao Zedong's Thought and Marxism-Leninism principles – the same message that Xi likes to stress.

"The most distinct feature of Comrade Deng's thoughts and practices is [they start] from reality, from the general trend of the world and from the situation and conditions of China," said Xi, in a 2014 speech to mark the 110th anniversary of his predecessor's birth. "A developing country like China would not rise if its people had no national dignity or the country lost its independence," Xi said. "We should not belittle ourselves, forget our heritage or betray the motherland."

Xi upheld Deng's Four Principles and answered with his own "Four Convictions" – officially translated as the Four Confidences.

These demand that the party's 99 million members demonstrate full faith in China's path, its unique political theories and system, and its rich history and

culture. The language and terminology used may differ, but the two men spoke with one voice.

Consensus, centralisation

However, each of them inherited a China facing drastically different challenges and conditions, and each responded with a unique approach.

When Deng and his colleagues emerged from the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the party and the country were on the brink of collapse. The decade-long anarchy had left the party's structure fragmented and ideologically divided.

Deng realised that his first task was to pull the party out of a quagmire of ideological infighting and shift the focus to economic growth. He opted for collective leadership – a consensus-building mechanism that gave the different factions seats at the table.

"Meetings should be small and short ... If you don't have anything to say, save your breath ... the only reason to have meetings is to solve problems"

- Deng Xiaoping

Many of the unwritten rules in Chinese politics were formed in the years that followed, including the customary retirement age of 68 for senior leaders and the immunity from prosecution for former top leaders. These rules provided basic power-sharing and a mutual protection framework that made it possible for the factions to work together.

It was a design born out of pragmatism. Deng and his colleagues realised that factional and ideological differences would lead to little actual result and must be set aside.

If they could not reunite their divided party and refocus minds on economic development, the party's very survival – along with the People's Republic of China – would be in doubt.

While Deng was the unquestioned leader, he had the support of other party elders, such as Chen Yun – like Deng, a founding father of the People's Republic – and other peers. In his book, Vogel called Deng China's "general manager".

Deng's emphasis on pragmatism is best reflected in his speech at the closing of the fifth plenum of the 11th party congress.

"Meetings should be small and short. They should not be held at all unless the participants have prepared ... If you don't have anything to say, save your breath ... the only reason to have meetings is to solve problems," he said.

"There should be collective leadership in settling major issues. But when it comes to particular jobs or tasks, individual responsibility must be clearly defined, and each person should be held responsible."

The principle of collective leadership was designed to revitalise the party, as well as to prevent any faction from total domination.

While it proved useful, its shortcomings gradually become apparent. The striving for superficial unity eventually led to extreme caution, inertia and a breakdown of party discipline.

Later party chiefs would increasingly struggle to assemble a support team of their own choosing or to carry out reform programmes that would upset entrenched interest groups.

This was most apparent under former president Hu Jintao, who expanded the powerful Politburo Standing Committee's membership to nine to accommodate conflicting factional demands.

The decision-making body was half-jokingly referred to as the "nine dragons ruling the rainfall", in reference to an idiom observing that when power is shared, no one is powerful enough to effect a downpour.

With no strong leadership at the top and responsibility spread across the team, party discipline broke down, breeding rampant corruption as well as abuses of power and even insubordination.

Xi responded to the crisis by launching the largest anti-corruption campaign in the party's history and a drive to recentralise power. In the process, the unwritten rules – such as the exemption from prosecution of former top leaders – were shattered.

While the two leaders opted for opposing strategies, both Deng and Xi were aiming for the same goal – to refocus the party's minds on the common goal of national rejuvenation.

And Xi, like Deng, is also known for his dislike of "empty talk", often urging the party's cadres to "roll up their sleeves and work harder".

Xi's move to recentralise power was based on his view that the party was in danger of losing its cohesion and being hijacked by powerful interest groups, in a repeat of Gorbachev's Soviet Union.

Such concerns have deep roots in Chinese governing philosophy. Han Fei – whose teachings of 2,200 years ago formed the foundation of the Qin empire – said "the key to governing [a vast empire] with pressing issues on all fronts is a strong core".

Xi cited this quote in a keynote speech to the Politburo Standing Committee on January 15, 2018 – two months before the National People's Congress approved the amendment to the constitution removing presidential term limits.

Legacy and challenges

Deng's reforms transformed China in just 30 years – half a *jiazi*, before heaven and earth could complete one full cycle of alignment – from one of the poorest countries to the world's second-largest economy.

"If there is one leader to whom most Chinese people express gratitude for improvements in their daily lives, it is Deng Xiaoping," Vogel wrote.

"Did any other leader in the 20th century do more to improve the lives of so many? Did any other 20th-

century leader have such a large and lasting influence on world history?"

Yet the Chinese leader's unparalleled success also created a host of problems. Towards the end of Vogel's book – written in 2011, just a year before Xi's ascension to power – the Harvard professor listed five challenges for Deng's successors.

They were: to contain corruption; provide universal social security; preserve the environment; maintain the party's legitimacy to rule; and to redefine and manage the boundaries of freedom. All have been top of the agenda under Xi.

"Things have changed so much ... but China still follows the route set by Deng, aiming to achieve rejuvenation by the construction of a unique China, no matter how the party's narrative put it," said Victor Gao, a former foreign ministry official and a translator for Deng in the 1980s.

According to Gao, vice-president of the Beijing-based think tank Centre for China and Globalisation, Deng's "vision and thinking remain relevant today" as the country "faces many challenges on how to open up to the world".

"It calls for an outstanding leader who can see the big picture clearly and work from the right direction, just like Deng did," he said.

Honour reformer Deng Xiaoping by realising China's revival, Xi Jinping urges nation

22 August 2024, [SCMP](#)



Deng Xiaoping is heralded as the "architect" of China's economic reform, transforming a poor, backward country into a global superpower. Photo: AFP

The best way to commemorate Communist Party patriarch Deng Xiaoping is to persevere to realise the mission of national rejuvenation, Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Thursday, the 120th anniversary of the late leader's birth.

Paying tribute to Deng's political legacy while also identifying with it, Xi called on the country to rally behind his own policies on establishing a modern economic system, promoting hi-tech self-reliance, and

safeguarding national sovereignty and development interests.

“The enduring tribute to Comrade Deng Xiaoping is to continue pushing forward the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics he initiated,” Xi told top government and party officials as well as Deng’s relatives and former staff at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Xi delivered the address at a commemorative event held every decade around August 22 – a tradition that allows the party’s leaders to reconnect with its founding fathers and announce a path forward.

He used the event to offer a salute to the past and to acknowledge the political challenges of today.

Xi said Deng’s “one country, two systems” proposal – which defines Hong Kong and Macau’s relationship with the mainland – “opened up a new path to achieve the complete reunification” of China in a peaceful way. The principle did so because it was centred on the country’s fundamental, overall and long-term interests, ensuring both autonomy and stability in the two special administrative regions.

“We must steadfastly implement the one country, two systems policy and promote Hong Kong and Macau’s integration into the national development framework,” Xi said, in a year that not only marks 40th anniversary of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a key document over the handover of Hong Kong to China, but also the 25th anniversary of the return of Macau to China.

One country, two systems was also supposed to be a template for unification with Taiwan.

In his address, Xi restated Beijing’s unyielding position against Taiwanese independence, and presented himself as taking on the responsibility left by the party’s elders.

“Achieving national reunification is not merely an aspiration of past leaders like Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, but a collective yearning of the Chinese people both home and abroad, and also an unstoppable historical trend.”

Beijing regards Taiwan as a part of China to be reunited by force if necessary. Most countries, including the United States, do not recognise Taiwan as an independent state, but Washington is against any move to take it by force and is committed to arming the island.

Deng, who died in 1997 at the age of 92, is credited as the “architect” of China’s economic reform which transformed a poor, backward country into a global superpower.

He dismantled the constraints of a heavily regulated planned economy and pioneered a hybrid market economy that has propelled China onto the world stage.

He also reintroduced public examinations for university admissions and government jobs, laying the

groundwork for the resurgence of education, science and technology in modern China.

But the anniversary comes as China grapples with unprecedented challenges, including economic sluggishness, rising unemployment and an intensified rivalry with the US.

With the country at a new crossroads, the leadership is drawing lessons from Deng but also searching for a path through the international tensions and economic headwinds.

“As we embark on this new journey in a new era, we must deeply study and apply Deng Xiaoping Theory to navigate the complexities of our time,” Xi said, directly connecting his policies to the foundational work done by Deng.

Xi has articulated clearer objectives with specific timelines, such as aiming for a “moderately developed” economy by 2035 and realising the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by 2049.

Party discipline is central to that reform mission – “the party must have a core, and the party’s Central Committee must have authority”.

“Reforms should be bold in spirit but steady in pace, managing the relationship between reform, development, and stability, with stability being paramount. The key to handling China’s affairs lies in the party, which must focus on both reform and opening up, and on combating corruption,” he said.

Xi also reflected on Deng and China’s place in the global order.

For the first time, Xi applauded Deng as “a great internationalist who has made significant contributions to world peace and development”, remarks that tied China’s present global path to Deng’s strategy.

“China is a staunch force for world peace. We will advocate peace, development, cooperation, and win-win outcomes while pushing forward with initiatives to create a community of shared human destiny,” Xi said, reaffirming his long-held goal for China to become a peaceful global superpower on the international stage.

“[Deng] profoundly summed up the experience and lessons of the reform and opening up process, emphasising the need to concentrate on party building, strengthen ideological and political work and education on fine traditions, improve the party’s leadership level and governing ability, and ensure the stability of the red regime.”

Xie Maosong, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Strategic Studies at Tsinghua University, said the speech framed Deng as the staunch defender of China’s socialist path, a central legacy that Xi inherited and was upholding now.

“Just imagine if China were to follow the Soviet Union’s path and to fall apart. The country might be totally different now. Deng’s fundamental contribution to the

party and his successors was leaving a united socialist China with the Communist Party playing an effective leadership,” Xie said.

Rana Mitter, ST Lee Chair in US-Asia Relations at Harvard Kennedy School, said not all of Deng’s approach was applicable today.

“Deng Xiaoping was a key figure in moving China from a command economy to market socialism. He worked with other key reformist figures, notably Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang, and had to push back against economic conservatives such as Chen Yun,” Mitter said.

“His plans worked well during the period of high global economic growth. However, today China faces slower growth and a need to move towards a more open, tech-driven economy – the export-oriented manufacturing of Deng’s time can’t just be translated to the 2020s.”

Alfred Wu, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore, said there was a desire to return to the times of strong economic growth.

“All reforms are driven by necessity,” he said. “Now everyone is dissatisfied, as the economic downturn is quite evident, and China is facing a hostile environment amid rivalry with the US.”

Leaked Documents Reveal CCP Plan to “Eliminate” Falun Gong, Escalating Persecution

20 August 2024, [ChinaScope](#)

The Falun Dafa Information Center has reportedly obtained information from insiders in China’s Ministry of Public Security’s (MPS) regarding the organization’s new plan to “dismantle Falun Gong worldwide,” including in the United States. Falun Gong (also called Falun Dafa) “is an ancient spiritual practice in the Buddhist tradition.” The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) started persecuting Falun Gong in 1999 and has continued its persecution of the practice until today. The CCP has also targeted the Shen Yun performing arts group, which showcases traditional Chinese culture and religious beliefs and aims to raise awareness about the CCP’s persecution of Falun Gong. The Falun Dafa Information Center’s report stated that “it is abundantly clear both from sources inside China as well as from observable attacks (on Falun Gong and Shen Yun) over the past few months that these escalations against Falun Gong have already begun and are trending into uncharted territory. The internal documents explicitly state that the regime’s aim is to ‘eliminate Falun Gong worldwide.’”

The MPS’ new plan has five tactics:

1. “Coordinated propaganda attacks against Shen Yun, Falun Gong”
2. “Inciting conflict between Falun Gong and the U.S.

The MPS indicates it will deploy a two-pronged strategy:

1. Incite Falun Gong practitioners to distrust and even protest the U.S. government.
2. Provoke the U.S. government to investigate Shen Yun Performing Arts and other organizations founded by Falun Gong practitioners.
3. “Cutting communication channels that expose persecution inside China,” blocking Falun Gong practitioners in China from contacting their overseas supporters
4. “Manipulating search engines and disseminating content in multiple formats” as a means to “carry out the offensive” against Falun Gong.
5. “Provoking distrust and internal divisions within the Falun Gong community”

Chinese cartoon campaign warns village clans against hindering Communist Party

20 August 2024, [SCMP](#)



A cartoon circulating on official Chinese websites and social media accounts is intended as a cautionary tale against confronting the Communist Party and the government. Photo: Handout

Beijing is urging family clans in rural areas not to stand in the way of Communist Party and government policies.

In a cartoon circulating on government websites and social media since last week, a family elder demands that his nephew, a village official, block the construction of a telecommunications tower.



A comic strip issued by Beijing outlines a cautionary tale about a family elder demanding that a relative block the construction of a telecommunications tower. Image: Handout

It goes on to say the tower was demolished by the villagers, “causing more than 200,000 yuan [US\$28,000] damage” and the village official was expelled from the party.

The illustrated narrative, which was published on August 12 on the WeChat account of the Organisation Department of the eastern province of Jiangsu’s party committee, has been reproduced on the social media accounts and web pages of courts and anti-corruption agencies in different regions of China.

The publication described the cartoon as a “case study”, but did not say whether it was based on a real case – and if so, when or where the incident took place.

The text accompanying the cartoon warned that “in recent years, a small number of people with bad intentions have organised themselves and used the solidarity and cooperation within clans to confront the party and the government”.

In many rural areas of China where people value family heritage, clans – often made up of male relatives with the same surname – hold considerable influence.

Under China’s village committee organisation law, villagers can elect officials to form a committee to run their village and decide some village affairs by voting.

The government post last week said the clans had “formed a ‘state within a state’, which has had extremely bad social effects”. It called on party members and cadres to “consciously resist” such behaviour.

The cartoon is part of a massive public education campaign launched by Beijing regarding new party discipline rules announced at the end of last year.

The new rules, which came into force this year, broadened the scope of violations and punishments, such as banning party members from reading negative party histories.

They also reaffirmed the party’s rules against clan influence, including the disqualification of party members who “organise and use clan influence to confront the party and the government”.

In some areas with strong clan influence – such as Guangdong and Fujian provinces in southern China – and in some areas with ethnic minority populations, village administrators are often from the same surname. Their defence of clan interests has challenged the introduction of party policies in the villages.

Over the years, Beijing has repeatedly called for family clans and gangsters who have taken root in the countryside to be punished, demanding that local governments prevent them from “undermining the primary-level political system”.

Walz's China experience draws GOP attacks, but Beijing isn't counting on better ties

17 August 2024, [ABC News](#)

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz has a history with China. And Republicans are seizing on it.

At 25, Walz taught a year of high school in China. He returned for his honeymoon and many more times with American exchange students. As a congressman, he served on a committee tracking China’s human rights and met figures like the Dalai Lama.

Now that Walz is the Democratic vice presidential nominee, Republicans have accused him of a decadeslong relationship with “Communist China” and even opened an investigation. The attacks reflect how, amid a tense U.S.-China relationship, visits once seen as simple cultural interactions have become a target for political opponents. Ultimately, Beijing does not expect U.S. policy to thaw regardless of who is in the White House, experts say.

With competition defining Washington's relationship with Beijing, any interaction with China appears to be “regarded with skepticism, if not outright suspicion,” and it's become “a well-worn tactic to attack opponents simply for having a China line in their resumes,” said Kyle Jaros, an associate professor of global affairs at the University of Notre Dame.

“The assumption behind these attack lines is that having China connections makes individuals beholden or sympathetic to China and compromises U.S. interests,” Jaros said. “There is definitely such a thing as being too cozy with one’s geopolitical rival, but blanket China-bashing and excluding people with firsthand China experience from U.S. policymaking is also bad for U.S. interests.”

Republican Rep. James Comer, chair of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, announced on Friday an investigation into Walz’s China connections, including the student trips he had organized. Comer said he asked the FBI for information on whether Walz could have targeted by or recruited for Beijing’s influence operations.

Walz’s “longstanding and cozy relationship with China” should be a concern for Americans, Comer said in a statement.

Walz spokesman Teddy Tschann pointed to the governor’s record in standing up to China’s Communist Party and fighting for human rights and democracy.

“Republicans are twisting basic facts and desperately lying to distract from the Trump-Vance agenda,” Tschann said.

Scrutiny started almost immediately after Walz was named Vice President Kamala Harris’ running mate in the November presidential election.

“Communist China is very happy with” Walz, Richard Grenell, former acting director of national intelligence

in President Donald Trump's administration, posted on the social media platform X.

Republican Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas wrote on X that Walz "owes the American people an explanation about his unusual, 35-year relationship with Communist China." Sen. Marco Rubio, a Florida Republican, called Walz "an example of how Beijing patiently grooms future American leaders."

Walz was 26 when he returned from a one-year teaching gig in China. He spoke kindly of the Chinese people and said they had been "mistreated and cheated" by their government. He told the newspaper Chadron Record in his home state of Nebraska that he wished they had proper leadership.

Walz returned to China in 1994 for his honeymoon. He got married on June 4, the fifth anniversary of the bloody crackdown of the student-led pro-democracy movement in Tiananmen Square, which remains a political taboo in China.

"He wanted to have a date he'll always remember," Gwen Whipple, Walz's wife-to-be, told the Star-Herald of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, ahead of their trip.

Later, when Walz came to Washington as a Minnesota congressman, he became a champion for China's human rights and served on a congressional committee that tracks the issue. He called a lunch with the Dalai Lama "life-changing."

He also posed for photos with Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong, who testified before Congress in 2019 when the territory was engulfed in monthslong protests over an unpopular proposal to allow suspects to be extradited to China for trial that raised concerns about Hong Kong's autonomy. Beijing sees the Tibetan spiritual leader and Wong as threats to its rule and disapproved of U.S. politicians meeting them.

In recent years, China has moderated its hopes for U.S. politicians with a history in the country, said Yun Sun, director of the China program at the foreign affairs think tank Stimson Center. That's partly because they might know details of China's internal problems, she said.

Walz's knowledge could actually lend credibility to U.S. criticism of the ruling Communist Party, said Dimitar Gueorguiev, an associate professor of political science at Syracuse University.

He also shows "how it is possible to have China experience and human-level empathy while retaining moral clarity" about the Chinese government, said Jaros of the University of Notre Dame.

In China, the public has been curious about Walz's experience in the country, but the government is tamping down discussions.

Alumni of Foshan No. 1 High School, the Chinese school where Walz taught in 1989-90, were asked not to post anything about Walz or accept media interviews, especially not with foreign journalists. The

notice, posted to at least one alumni chat group and shared with The Associated Press, cited the "extremely sensitive" China-U.S. relationship, the anti-China consensus of both political parties and the need to "avoid unnecessary troubles."

The nationalistic Chinese news site guancha.cn published an exclusive interview with Chen Weichuan, a retired English teacher from the school who was a translator between Walz and the principal and had taken Walz out for street food.

Chen described Walz as "very nice, easygoing and loved by students" and expressed admiration for Walz's ascent from a teacher to governor and now vice presidential candidate. "He is remarkable," Chen told guancha.cn.

Mao Ning, a spokeswoman for the Chinese foreign ministry, declined to comment, saying U.S. elections were a domestic affair.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has no illusion that Washington would soften its stance on Beijing, regardless of who gets elected in November, said Willy Lam, a senior fellow at the research institute Jamestown Foundation.

"They have stopped entertaining the aspect that individual politicians, individual CEOs might push the White House towards a more China-friendly policy," Lam said.

Jailed Chinese activist faces another birthday alone in a cell, his wife says

17 August 2024, [AP News](#)

Ding Jiayi knew he would spend his 57th birthday alone in a Chinese prison cell, without a phone call from family or a chance to stretch in the sunlight.

It was the activist's fifth year in those conditions. Despite letters assuring his family in the United States that he was healthy, his wife, Sophie Luo, was not convinced.

"I'm really worried about his health, because he was tortured before," Luo told The Associated Press from Washington.

Luo shared details about her husband's plight before his birthday Saturday, casting light on the harsh treatment endured by the country's jailed political prisoners, who are often deprived of rights such as outdoor exercise and contact with loved ones, according to families and human rights groups.

Beijing has said prisoners' legal rights are protected in accordance with Chinese law. The Chinese Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

Ding, a key member of the now-defunct New Citizen's Movement that sought to promote democracy and civil society in China, was detained in December 2019 after taking part in an informal gathering in the

southeastern city of Xiamen to discuss current affairs. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison in April 2023 on charges of subverting state power.

Maya Wang, interim China director for the rights advocacy group Human Rights Watch, called harsh treatment “all common fare” for China’s political prisoners.

“Unfortunately, the mistreatment is very common, and it has gotten worse under Chinese President Xi Jinping,” Wang said. Political prisoners have been tortured, deprived of access to lawyers and given “very little” contact with their families, she said, adding that the secrecy has made it easier for abuse against prisoners to continue and their health to suffer. Rep. Adam Schiff, who serves on a bipartisan congressional human rights commission, urged Ding’s release.

“Once again, he will be alone in a prison in Hubei Province in China. He will be separated from his loved ones — his wife and children. He will mark the passing of yet another birthday in isolation — his fifth in prison,” Schiff, D-Calif., said in a statement released Friday.

Luo said she has not been allowed to speak with her husband on the phone since he was taken away by authorities in 2019. Since then, “I haven’t heard his voice,” said Luo, who moved to the U.S. with the couple’s two children soon after Ding was detained the first time in 2013.

It was only this March that she received his first letter. In letters, Ding has not been allowed to write about his case, how he has been treated in prison or any other subject deemed sensitive by the Chinese government, Luo said.

She said she could not believe Ding was banned from leaving his cell to go out for exercise. “This is really bad for his health,” Luo said. “Every prisoner in China should have the right to be let out for exercise. Why can’t he have that?”

And she lamented on the absence of Ding from the lives of their two daughters. “He can’t be with the girls when they needed a father most,” she said. “It’s really a big loss.”

TikTok promotes pro-China bias on Tibet, Taiwan, Uyghurs: study

16 August 2024, [RFA](#)

The findings show Beijing’s attempts to sway public opinion, particularly among youth, experts say.

TikTok algorithms promote the Chinese government’s narratives on hot-button issues such as Tibet, Taiwan and the Uyghurs — while suppressing content critical of Beijing, a new study has found.

When users search for terms on TikTok — owned by Chinese company ByteDance — that are sensitive to

the ruling Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, such as “Tibet” and “Taiwan,” the results show much more content that is pro-China than content that is critical of China, researchers found.

Compared to similar searches on Instagram and YouTube, the results showed a pronounced pro-Beijing bias, according to the study, titled “The CCP’s Digital Charm Offensive,” by the Network Contagion Research Institute, or NCRI, at Rutgers University.

The findings, “while not definitive proof of state orchestration, present compelling and strong circumstantial evidence of TikTok’s covert content manipulation,” wrote NCRI co-founder Joel Finkelstein in the report.

Swaying youth

The study mimicked the user journeys of American 16-year-olds based on the newly created accounts that were used to test the three platforms’ search algorithm results, the report said.

The findings point to attempts by the Chinese government to shape public opinion — particularly among youth — on human rights and political issues, experts said.

Tibetan and Uyghur activists say that such bias obfuscates China’s oppression of Tibetans and Uyghurs and its attempts to undermine or wipe out their languages and cultures.

Constant exposure to TikTok’s pro-Beijing content is “a significant threat and concern,” said Lobsang Gyatso Sither, a member of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile and director of technology at the Tibet Action Institute.

Rushan Abbas, executive director of the Campaign for Uyghurs, said that the research shows a “strong possibility” of content suppression or amplification to align with Beijing’s interests.

“The CCP is responsible for the Uyghur genocide and the oppression of the people of Hong Kong and Tibet,” she said.

Beijing is using social media “in their campaign of transnational repression, harassing human rights defenders living outside of China,” she said.

TikTok users also say that the short-form mobile video app has censored comments deemed critical of Beijing.

One young Uyghur user who wanted to remain nameless said that last November, after the outbreak of conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, Chinese officials said on social media that a genocide was happening in Gaza but not in Xinjiang, home to some 11 million Uyghurs.

“I posted a comment in Arabic saying China was actually committing genocide against Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang,” he said. “My comment was soon removed by TikTok. I was quite shocked. Apparently, TikTok didn’t want the Muslim world to know about the Uyghur genocide.”

Rejecting criticism

A TikTok spokesperson rejected the study, saying it was a “non-peer reviewed, flawed experiment ... clearly engineered to reach a false, predetermined conclusion.”

“Previous research by NCRI has been debunked by outside analysts, and this latest paper is equally flawed,” the spokesperson, who asked that his name not be published, told RFA in an email.

“Creating fake accounts that interact with the app in a prescribed manner does not reflect real users’ experience, just as this so-called study does not reflect facts or reality.”

“One would hope media outlets would apply journalistic standards and rigor to fact check this type of fiction before rushing to publication,” he wrote.

Concerns about Beijing’s influence over TikTok are not new.

Since 2020, the Indian government has imposed a ban on more than 232 Chinese apps, including TikTok.

As of 2023, some 34 U.S. states enacted policies prohibiting government agencies and officials, including contract employees, from using TikTok. This year, the U.S. Congress passed legislation banning TikTok unless it is sold to a government-approved buyer. There are ongoing hearings about the potential for a ban of the app across the U.S.

The NCRI research found that when using TikTok to search for terms such as “Tibet,” “Tibet,” “Uyghurs” or “1989 Tiananmen Massacre,” between 61% and 93% of the results were either pro-China or irrelevant, while anti-China content constituted only 5%.

By comparison, pro-China content made up 13.7% of content on YouTube and 27.7% on Instagram, the study showed.

In December 2023, the NCRI published its first report on TikTok which showed a strong possibility that content on the video-sharing app was being either amplified or suppressed based on the alignment with Chinese government narratives.

Influence tool

The Chinese government uses TikTok as a strategic tool to influence other countries, particularly young people, in an effort to shift their perceptions of China, said Vinayak Bhatt, an Indian defense analyst and former army general.

“This includes promoting the idea that China’s economic growth is due not only to hard work but also to strategic government planning,” he said.

Many Gen Z users of TikTok say they are aware of the Chinese government’s biases and potential for content manipulation on the app, but choose to use it for recreational purposes.

“My page doesn’t have any political content, so when I think of TikTok, I view it as more recreational, but I also have a subconscious awareness that when I see anything pro-China or political, that it may be

influenced,” said Tenzin Khando, a 20-year-old Tibetan student from New York, who has had a TikTok account since 2019.

Dolma Lhamo, a 25-year-old Tibetan resident of Orissa, India, recalled an issue with TikTok in 2019 when she posted a picture of the Dalai Lama and a note of appreciation on the platform on his birthday, but the post was blocked and did not appear.

Lhamo, who created her TikTok account about 10 years ago, expressed concern about the incident and said she stopped posting anything related to Tibet. Most TikTok Gen Z users say they are subconsciously aware of the Chinese government’s biases and potential for content manipulation on the app, but choose to use it for recreational purposes.

But Chemi Lhamo, a Tibetan-Canadian human rights activist and campaign director at Students for a Free Tibet, said she avoids apps and digital platforms created by the Chinese government because she doesn’t trust them.

“I also advise others against using such platforms due to concerns about bias,” she said.

Language restrictions

Dawa Tsering, director of the Tibetan Policy Institute in Dharamsala, India, told RFA that the prohibition of Tibetan language on ByteDance’s Douyin, the Chinese version of the TikTok app available to Tibetans inside Tibet and others in China, is indicative of a broader policy to eradicate the Tibetan language.

He said these restrictions are in line with Chinese government orders to suppress Tibetan culture and language, with social media platforms like TikTok actively supporting this policy of cultural eradication. Douyin has become a key platform for the Chinese authorities to distribute information and propaganda. Like other social media services in China, Douyin adheres to the censorship regulations set by the CCP.

Experts warn of national security risks from Chinese apps

12 August 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#)

Chinese apps are a potential national security risk because of China's authoritarian political system, according to two experts from the Institute for National Defense and Security Research (INDSR).

“Information security risks are national security risks,” said Tzeng Yi-suo (曾怡碩), an associate research fellow at INDSR's Division of Cyber Security and Decision-making Simulation.

“As long as the app is under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government, there will basically be security concerns,” he explained.

Tzeng told CNA that commercial companies collect data about app users and then use algorithms to tailor relevant information and marketing.

This is not a problem in a democratic country governed by the rule of law such as Taiwan, the cyber-security expert said, because if the information involves judicial cases, the government will need to go through certain legal procedures to obtain the information.

However, the National Intelligence Law of the People's Republic of China and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Guarding State Secrets empower Chinese government agencies to require platform service providers to hand over users' data "as long as they determine that national security is involved," Tzeng said.

"How the Chinese government obtains the data and what they will do with it is not transparent," the security expert added.

In areas under China's authoritarian control, including Hong Kong and Macau, China "can assert its sovereignty" and "investigate the words and actions of users" through data collected by Chinese apps, said Tzeng.

In places outside of its jurisdiction, "China's authoritarian system" still poses risks to users, according to Lee Jyun-yi (李俊毅), an associate research fellow at INDSR's Division of National Security Research.

Lee cited the U.S. court testimony of former employees of ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, as evidence that "TikTok does indeed transmit users' personal information back to China."

In addition to the security of personal data, Chinese apps such as Douyin and TikTok pose risks relating to the spread of false information, according to Lee.

Lee told CNA that although misleading information is not limited to Chinese apps, popular Western platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have adopted new methods to crack down on bot accounts and mark state-funded media.

"TikTok's lack of effort to do so makes it relatively easy for false information to spread," the expert said.

Lee also believes that Chinese apps may "shape users' perceptions" through algorithms.

Up to 40 percent of popular videos come from accounts controlled by the Chinese government, he noted.

"The Chinese government has legislated to require media platforms' algorithm recommendation models to comply with the values of the Chinese Communist Party," the security expert told CNA.

Taking Douyin as an example, Lee said that the platform promotes content that is "beneficial to China" and the Chinese government requires the platform to self-censor.

According to the scholar, this makes it "difficult for short videos that are negative or critical of China to appear or spread, which has a long-term effect in shaping people's perceptions."

The two security experts are not alone in their concerns over Chinese apps such as TikTok.

In March, Taiwan's Minister of Digital Affairs Audrey Tang (唐鳳) said that TikTok had been classified as a "dangerous product." The use of the app is banned in government agencies and on their premises in Taiwan. In April, U.S. President Joe Biden signed into law a bill titled Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act which required ByteDance to divest its U.S. assets or face a nationwide ban. The earliest such a ban could go into effect would be Jan. 19, 2025.

India completely banned TikTok in June 2020, while countries including Australia, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Canada and New Zealand have separately imposed rules limiting certain workers from using the app due to cyber-security concerns.

Communist Party exhibitions lean on honour and obligation among young Chinese

11 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Yijing Shen and Alcott Wei

Xintiandi in downtown Shanghai used to be the name of a subway stop known for its chic restaurants and boutiques.

Three years ago, the stop was rebadged as the Site of the First National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Xintiandi Station, to mark the party's centenary. At the same time, just a few minutes' walk from the station, an expanded memorial to the party's origins in the city opened, housing a permanent exhibition to the organisation's founding.

Since then, a steady stream of visitors – many of them students – have bypassed the shops to make their way to the patriotic-themed memorial, particularly on public holidays.

As part of summer holiday school assignments, students are required to visit patriotic exhibitions, and the one at the memorial is on a list of options they can choose from.

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The idea is to inspire greater loyalty to the party through stories of its struggles and success but while some visitors say the approach is motivating, others are looking for a more diverse view of history.

Patriotic education has become a national priority with the introduction of a law in January that spells out the responsibilities of everyone, from children to adults, and schools to families, to the drive to build a strong, rejuvenated nation.

The effectiveness of the patriotism drive is difficult to measure, but one of those won over at the Shanghai memorial was Wang Xinning, a student at Fudan University in Shanghai.

Visiting the exhibition before the summer holiday, Wang said she was impressed by the stories of party martyrs who sacrificed their lives at a young age.

"[Their stories] contrasted sharply with my life, and made me rethink my purpose of joining the Communist Party," she said.

It was a similar story at the Red Building on the Peking University campus in Beijing, where a young student of Marxism said she felt "fired up" when she visited the historic party site.

The site is often regarded as the cradle of the student-led May Fourth Movement of 1919, an anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement in early modern China. The Red Building, a four-storey red brick house, reopened in 2021 to serve as a memorial to the party's early revolutionary activities.

"I feel like I am in the company of those students [in 1919], and I am motivated to relearn Marxism and theories about the Communist Party," the student said.

[Their stories] contrasted sharply with my life, and made me rethink my purpose of joining the Communist Party

Wang Xinning, university student

But there were also visitors to these exhibitions who came out of obligation.

At the Communist Party Museum near Beijing Olympic Park, some parents said they came to help their children fulfil school requirements. One mother said her son needed to complete a worksheet about the Red Army and write the story of a Red Army soldier.

"These tasks are troublesome, but they are requirements from the school. How can we refuse to do that?" she said.

An undergraduate student at the Red Building said the visit was just "a waste of time".

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"It's so boring and all propaganda, and there's nothing new in any of these [exhibition] rooms," he said. "I could have spent my time better studying for the postgraduate entrance examination.

"We waste too much time in ideological and political courses – even when we are on summer holidays."

Yuan Bo, who has completed her graduate studies and is working at a start-up in Shanghai, said she was often more interested in observing other visitors' reactions rather than the exhibits.

On a humid and hot Sunday afternoon in July, she visited the Sihang Warehouse Memorial of War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in central Shanghai, which houses an exhibition documenting a battle by Chinese soldiers against the invading Japanese army that started in 1937.

Yuan said she was indifferent about the memorial since the exhibition was similar to other patriotic education sites she had visited.

"We are told how we should feel about history and the motherland, instead of having our own thoughts and ideas. We won [the war against Japan's invasion] because of all the great work by our country and our people," she said.

Watching small children running and shouting "defeat the Japanese" at the memorial, Yuan said she was like them when she was their age but had since experienced a shift.

"Before I could form my own values, I was often fed with different ideas by others, and it's difficult not to be influenced by all those anti-Japanese films and TV series.

"But I don't want to blindly follow others now."

She said while patriotism was important, it should not be at the expense of independent thinking.

"Patriotic education is indeed necessary, but there should be room for discussion," Yuan said. "Promoting peace may be more important than promoting patriotism."

Jonathan Sullivan, an associate professor specialising in Chinese politics at the University of Nottingham, said that in China, "control of representations of the past represents an ideological battleground".



The People's Cafe serves up a patriotic coffee. Photo: Yijing Shen

Just outside the Sihang Warehouse exhibition, a coffee shop called The People's Cafe continues the patriotic message in its decor, which features red stars and other Communist Party icons. A stereo plays patriotic songs on a loop, and revolutionary posters on the walls carry slogans such as "Taiwan independence is a dead end".

Beijing sees Taiwan as part of China to be reunited by force if necessary. Most countries, including the US, do not recognise Taiwan as an independent state, but Washington is opposed to any attempt to take the self-governed island by force and is committed to supplying it with weapons.

The cafe sells two types of cappuccino – one with foam in the shape of China’s territory and the other topped with foam in the shape of the word “China” in Chinese characters.

Its pineapple-flavoured latte, a new introduction in July, is decorated with the shape of Taiwan island and the words “must be returned” on top.

“I felt I was living in magical realism,” said Yuan, watching the chocolate foam dwindling from the cappuccino she ordered.

Chinese diplomat reaffirms “One China” stance

10 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

In what is seen as reaffirmation of a key precondition by Beijing for any political resolution for Tibetans, Victor Gao, a former translator for Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and vice president of the Center for China and Globalization has said, “If you want to go back to Tibet, acknowledge Tibet is part of China.” during an interview with Al Jazeera at Conway hall in London, England, on Friday.

The interview, hosted by journalist Mehdi Hasan, focused on China’s foreign policy and its handling of dissent in Tibet, East Turkistan, and Taiwan. The discussion featured three experts on China: Rayhan Asat, an international human rights lawyer of Uighur descent and senior fellow at the Atlantic Council; Stephen Chan, a professor of world politics at the University of London, School of African and Oriental Studies; and Martin Jacques, author of *When China Rules the World* and visiting professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

During the Q&A session, Sonam Frasi, the representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Office of Tibet in London, asked about the current situation in Tibet, noting that after 74 years of Chinese rule, Tibet remains under strict control with limited access for journalists, tourists, and even Tibetans wishing to visit their families. Gao responded by stating, “Tibet has been part of China ever since the Yuan dynasty... I can assure you during your lifetime and mine Tibet will always be part of China.” He emphasized that acknowledging Tibet as part of China is necessary for anyone wishing to visit Tibet or any resolution for Tibet.

When Mehdi Hasan questioned the reasoning behind China’s approach to Taiwan and Tibet, Gao reiterated that China’s security is based on the principle that

there is only one China, with Taiwan, Tibet, and East Turkestan (Xinjiang) as integral parts of it.

The One China principle is a stance maintained by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP), asserting that there is only one sovereign state under the name China which includes the occupied East Turkestan, Tibet, Southern Mongolia, Manchuria and Taiwan, which China is seeking to occupy. According to this principle, the PRC is recognized as the sole legitimate government representing this expansive entity.

Experts say that Beijing has effectively weaponized the “One-China Principle” by pressuring countries to acknowledge the “One China Policy” as a prerequisite for establishing diplomatic relations with China. The Chinese government demands that “All countries having diplomatic relations with China and all member states of the UN should unconditionally adhere to the one-China principle and follow the guidance of UNGA Resolution 2758. Any attempt to unilaterally add preconditions and provisos to the one-China principle, to distort, fudge and hollow out the one-China principle is illegal, null and void”. This approach has become a critical tool in China’s diplomatic strategy, influencing international recognition and relations. Till now, china claims that 181 countries acknowledge the “One China Principle”.

China’s third plenum highlights the quiet rise of political theorist Wang Huning

10 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Yuanyue Dang and William Zheng

The CPPCC chairman’s role on the plenum’s documents drafting team shows he remains Xi’s ideological ‘brains trust’, an observer said.

In March 1994, Wang Huning was a star professor in political science at Shanghai’s prestigious Fudan University, whose dream was to “write more good books and teach more good students”, according to his diary from the time.

Instead, Wang’s career has taken him deep into the heart of elite politics in China. He has been an ideology guru for three of the country’s leaders, including President Xi Jinping, and is the ruling Communist Party’s fourth most senior official.

In a sign of his status, Wang was a deputy head on the Xi-led team that drafted the resolutions for last month’s third plenary session of the party’s Central Committee, setting China’s economic development tone for at least the next five years.

Wang, 68, stepped away from his ideology role and became chairman of political advisory body the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) last year.

But he continues to serve on the Politburo Standing Committee, the party's top decision-making body, where he was ideology and propaganda chief from 2017, in his first five-year term.

While Xi has remained exclusively in the pilot's seat of the drafting process for all party plenum resolutions since 2012, he has always selected two or three deputy heads from the seven-strong Standing Committee.

Two sources with relevant knowledge said that, besides seeking his assistance in drafting the resolution for the latest plenum, Xi regularly asks for Wang's input on his major speeches and statements. Since 2017, when he first gained a seat on the seven-strong committee, Wang has served as a deputy head on one of these drafting teams three times, for some of the party's most historic resolutions.

In 2021, he co-led the team that composed a resolution on the history of the Communist Party – only the third of its kind in the party's 100 years. A year earlier, he played a similar role in drafting the outline for China's 14th five-year plan.

Wang was also a vice-director of the drafting team for the 20th party congress in 2022, when Xi delivered the report which laid out his vision for the next five years to more than 2,000 delegates in Beijing.

Wang has also retained his position as deputy director of the Central Comprehensively Deepening Reforms Commission, a party group founded and chaired by Xi that met for fresh discussions on a range of issues just before the third plenum.

Wang's positions have given him sway in a long list of policy areas, including Taiwan, ethnic minority groups, the border regions of Xinjiang and Tibet, as well as Beijing's courtship of the country's private sector.

According to Neil Thomas, a Chinese politics fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute's Centre for China Analysis, Wang's role on the drafting team "shows that his political influence exceeds what is normal for a CPPCC chairman".

"Wang appears to still serve as Xi's brains trust for his domestic reform agenda," Thomas said.

He is a political survivor who loyally served Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao but found his greatest supporter in Xi Jinping

Neil Thomas, analyst

Wang had gained Xi's trust because he "is a believer in centralising power, fighting corruption, and prioritising hi-tech growth and has helped to make these issues central to Xi's political agenda".

"He is a political survivor who loyally served Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao but found his greatest supporter in Xi Jinping. Wang's neo-authoritarian intellectual project is a perfect complement to Xi's centralising political project," he said.

Wang's reputation was established in the early 1990s, with a number of published works – including a

collection of his diaries – that made him a rarity among China's career bureaucrats and articulated his political vision of "neo-authoritarianism".

Rather than a Western-style system based on checks and balances, China "must discover new political values from our own cultural traditions", Wang wrote in his 1994 diary.

He also noted that "China's development requires an authority that can regulate the whole of society in a unified way" and weighed in on how to fight corruption.

In his 1991 book *America Against America*, Wang said Japan's economic race with the US in the 1980s taught him that "individualism, hedonism and democratism" could be defeated by "collectivism, altruism and authoritarianism".

In the 1980s, when he was developing his political theories, Wang attached great importance to the concentration of state power, according to Xia Ming, one of his former students at Fudan, who now teaches political science at the City University of New York.

"He believed that with its unique political ecology, China has a unique political path," Xia said. Despite his familiarity with political thinkers like Hegel and Rousseau, Wang believed that he should be a defender of that path, Xia added.

"[Wang] thinks that with its large size, China must keep its authority on the central level to maintain its stability [and the West's] path of liberalisation is not suitable for China because it is too big and too poor, especially with the conditions in rural areas and with its clans," he said.

A political-science professor at Tsinghua University, who asked to remain anonymous, said Wang was very different from the Chinese intellectuals who looked to the West for inspiration after China opened its doors.

"Wang was not impressed by the Western style democracy of the US after he visited twice. He believed that was not suitable for China. Wang believed China must take a different development path from the US if it wants to overtake the US one day," he said.

In 1995, Wang left Shanghai for Beijing to begin his political career as head of the policy team at the Central Policy Research Office, in support of then president Jiang Zemin.

Wang was not impressed by the Western style democracy of the US after he visited twice

Political-science professor

The office is involved in drafting key documents for the leadership and advising the party on inner-party and domestic policies.

According to a mainland political analyst who interacted with Wang several times before his promotion to Beijing, it was after this move that the academic "retreated behind the scenes to provide advice to his political leaders".

The party's long-standing trust in Wang showed "its deep-rooted need for a sophisticated intellectual to explain the legitimacy of China's one-party rule and party-state system both externally and internally", he added.

For decades, Wang was known as purely a party theorist. In 2002, he was appointed director of the research office, a position he held for 18 years – the longest tenure of any official in the role.

While his position at the research office remained unchanged, his ranking in the party kept climbing – another rarity among Chinese officials. Notably, when Wang left the role in 2022, his successor's party ranking was far below his own.

Wang helped Jiang and his successor as president, Hu Jintao, to build their own ideological systems that were later written into the party's constitution. He also stood quietly behind them on numerous domestic and international trips.

He also helped to launch the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, also enshrined in the constitution, and is believed to be behind Xi's promotion of the concept of the "Chinese dream" for China's renaissance.

Wang remained in the background for the first years of Xi's presidency but gradually moved into the spotlight after 2017 and his accession to the Politburo Standing Committee, when the public started to hear Wang's voice for the first time.

In January 2018, as China's ideology chief, Wang used a meeting of the country's propaganda officials to call for the "construction of a socialist ideology with strong cohesion and guiding force".

On becoming CPPCC chairman, Wang's role expanded further to include management of sensitive issues such as ethnicity, religion and Taiwan, making him the top official in these areas.

In a meeting with Christian groups late last year, Wang asked them to ensure "strict" supervision of religion and to insist on the "Sinofication" of Christianity.

In February, a month after the election of the pro-independence Taiwanese leader William Lai Ching-te, Wang called for a "tough crackdown" on Taiwan independence and "interference from outside forces". But decades in the party's research arm has left Wang with very few protégés in the rank and file, unlike other officials who have years of local governance experience under their belts.

Wang's most visible protégé, Lin Shangli, was also his student and colleague at Fudan University. He left the Central Policy Research Office in 2022, after only a year as deputy director, to take up the presidency at Renmin University of China.

Wang is the only known official of his rank to have written a book on the US and his 1991 work *America Against America* is still popular among observers of Chinese politics.

Wang is seen as a political theorist rather than a grand strategist

Sun Yun, analyst

Sun Yun, co-director of the East Asia Programme and director of the China programme at the Stimson Centre in Washington, said Wang's knowledge of the US was "unique" among China's top leaders.

"He has dedicated experience studying and dealing with the US, while his colleagues on the Politburo Standing Committee are primarily domestic generalists," she said.

But Sun noted that "Wang is seen as a political theorist rather than a grand strategist", adding that his book on the US "is primarily about domestic politics rather than US-China relations".

Sun observed that Wang "plays a key supportive role" in China's US strategy, given that "Xi is the key decision-maker".

While Wang has said he remains largely critical of the political system in the US, he did have some positive takeaways from his experiences in the late 1980s when he was learning about American society and its perceived successes and failures.

As he wrote in his 1991 book: "Although America is a commodity society, a money-oriented society, when it comes to science and technology education, they have a deep understanding of how to spend money to get the most out of it."

Agents 'implanted' anti-China content in overseas university applications, ministry says

09 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Hayley Wong

Beijing's top spy agency has hit out at education consultants it said "implanted" anti-China messages in the applications of students seeking admission to overseas universities.

In a post on WeChat on Friday, the Ministry of State Security said some education agents had "stirred up sensitive issues" and used "defamation and slander" to "provide ammunition to anti-China activities" in the applications.

It said this was done to boost the students' chances of being accepted into foreign universities.

The ministry said there were "hidden risks" involved, and that smearing China in overseas university applications was a national security risk.

China is the world's largest source of overseas students, and it has become common practice for them to use agents to apply for foreign universities to help them navigate unfamiliar education and admissions systems.

In the WeChat post, the ministry highlighted the case of a high school student it identified as Zhang. It said Zhang had been told by an agent there would be a much higher chance of being accepted at an overseas

university if the student's application letter was "polished".

The ministry alleged that Zhang's letter had subsequently, without permission, been "implanted with a large amount of fake content that pandered to anti-China biases, including reactionary, political speech".

The consultancy involved was investigated by "national security authorities" and penalised in May, the ministry said, without elaborating.

It said it was illegal to fabricate, publish or disseminate information that endangers national security, citing the detailed rules for the implementation of the counter-espionage law that took effect in 2017.

The ministry said "certain countries" were tightening their policies for international students, and that they were also "trying to use studying abroad as bait to lure young students to engage in anti-China activities".

It said some education agencies "blindly pursue" their financial interests and university acceptance rates, and in doing so they become "accomplices of overseas anti-China forces that induce young students to fabricate false résumés and images".

The ministry also took aim at agencies it said had failed to adequately supervise staff training and that lacked awareness about national security.

It said there was "loose screening of foreign staff in some agencies" and some had hired "ill-intended foreign staff with unknown backgrounds and unclear qualifications".

According to the ministry, those staff had "catered to anti-China forces in the name of obtaining advantages for admission" by rewriting student applications for overseas universities.

Western countries are popular destinations for Chinese looking to study abroad, with the UK, US and Australia the top three choices this year, according to a report by Chinese educational service provider New Oriental Education & Technology Group.

Although numbers have fallen since the pandemic, Chinese students still topped the list of international students in many countries last year – from the US and UK to Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, a separate report by Chinese consultancy EIC Education said.

More Chinese students have headed to Asian destinations in recent years, and mainland Chinese have also looked to Hong Kong to study.

Last month, two mainland Chinese women were arrested in Hong Kong after it was discovered that around 30 students had secured places at the University of Hong Kong business school with the help of agents who had forged documents.

China's Proposed Nationwide Digital ID System Stokes Fears of Government Overreach

01 August 2024, [Time](#), Josh Xiao

China's plan to introduce a nationwide digital identification system has been met with criticism of government overreach in a country that already closely monitors and censors speech.

Some legal experts and users in the world's largest internet market have openly doubted the efforts' stated goal of protecting privacy after authorities published the proposal last week. China's internet regulator and police said users could opt in to such digital IDs, which would let them verify their identity online without giving up unnecessary personal details to internet service providers.

"The real intention is to step up the control of individual expressions online," Lao Dongyan, a law professor at Tsinghua University, said in a post on X-like Weibo on Tuesday that has since been removed. Du Zhaoyong, a lawyer, said in another post the move will have a "destructive" effect on the free flow of information.

The Chinese government already requires internet users to use their real identities to register for digital services and has extensive access to their online behavior and communications. But a new centralized digital ID system may give authorities a more direct and complete view of people's online lives.

Jeremy Daum, senior fellow at the Yale Law School Paul Tsai China Center, said Chinese people may be more wary of such a system following the use of health codes, an online identification system China used during the pandemic to record and control citizens' movement in order to contain the virus.

But he said the regulation appears to be focused on privacy, not content.

"In China, privacy regulation is usually privacy versus other citizens and corporations rather than versus the government," he said. The proposed system "gives you a new level of privacy where you don't have to share information with a corporation, but the government of course still has access to that information."

The proposal by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the Ministry of Public Security seeks to create a unified system for identity verification that would limit internet companies' ability to collect data.

Users may voluntarily request a unique ID, made up of alphabets and digits, and a digital certificate to confirm their identity. Internet platforms shouldn't ask for other personal information once a user is authenticated, according to the proposal.

Beijing has lashed out at internet platform companies for collecting excessive data, with the internet watchdog in 2021 naming 105 apps for violations including ByteDance Ltd's Douyin and Microsoft Corp.'s LinkedIn.

More than 50 popular apps, including those run by Tencent Holdings Ltd, Alibaba Group Holdings Ltd and ByteDance, have tested the proposed authentication

system, the *South China Morning Post* reported Thursday, citing a survey it carried out.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian's Regular Press Conference on August 1, 2024

01 August 2024, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)



CCTV: It's reported that Indian Navy and Coast Guard recently rescued an accidentally injured Chinese mariner off Mumbai coast and took him to hospital. What is China's comment?

Lin Jian: Most recently, a Chinese mariner was accidentally injured when operating on a ship off Mumbai coast. The Indian side swiftly came to his rescue and provided him with timely medical treatment. He is now in stable condition and recovering back in China.

The Chinese side expresses its heartfelt appreciation to all the departments and personnel of the Indian side who overcame the challenging conditions on the scene and successfully carried out this humanitarian rescue operation.

Dragon TV: It's reported that the DPRK recently commemorated the 71st anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War. Ambassadors of Russia, Viet Nam, Cuba and so on attended the event but the ambassador of China was not spotted there. Some say this is yet another sign that the relationship between China and the DPRK is experiencing issues and that China and Russia are in a contest over relations with the DPRK. What is China's comment?

Lin Jian: This year marks the 71st anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War. Seventy-one years ago, the Chinese People's Volunteers fought alongside the Korean people and troops and together achieved a resounding victory in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea and the Fatherland Liberation War. In that process, China and the DPRK forged with blood an unbreakable friendship. Despite the transformation in the international and regional landscape, the CPC and the Chinese government have never changed the importance they attach and their commitment to the

traditional friendship and cooperative relationship between China and the DPRK.

Lately, certain countries and media outlets have been speculating and asserting that there have been issues with China-DPRK relations or there is a China-Russia contest over relations with the DPRK. These are unsubstantiated, ill-motivated claims. Let me stress that both the DPRK and Russia are China's friendly neighbors. China is happy to see the DPRK and Russia grow their ties and play a constructive role for the peace and stability of this region.

Rudaw Media Network: How will the killing of Ismail Haniyeh impact the Chinese peace effort in the Middle East? Will it affect the recently signed "Beijing agreement" mediated by China? The problems in the Middle East are increasingly getting complicated. Does this distract or diminish your efforts regarding achieving security and stability and peace in the region?

Lin Jian: China has stated its position on the incident. We firmly oppose and condemn the act of assassination and are deeply concerned that the incident may plunge the region into greater turmoil. Gaza needs a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire as soon as possible and there should be no more escalation of the conflict and confrontation.

China supports Palestine's internal reconciliation and believes this is an important step towards solving the Palestinian question and realizing peace and stability in the Middle East. China commends Palestinian factions for their effort on the Beijing Declaration, and looks forward to the day when Palestinian factions achieve reconciliation and, on that basis, realize independent statehood as early as possible. We will continue to work with relevant parties towards this goal.

On your second question, the more daunting the situation is in the Middle East, the more critical it is for the international community to try to cool down the situation and enable deescalation. China remains committed to keeping the Middle East peaceful and stable, and opposes external interference. We stand ready to work with relevant parties to work hard for lasting peace and security in the region.

Kyodo News: It's reported that after China-Japan foreign ministers' meeting on July 26, China altered and published the Japanese Foreign Minister's remarks. China's readout stated that Japan's commitment to the one-China position remains unchanged and that Japan's control on semiconductor export is not targeted at any particular country, and Japan is willing to maintain constructive communication with the Chinese side to handle it properly. Did Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa make the above-mentioned remarks? It's reported that Japan's Foreign Ministry privately pointed out to the

Chinese side that the readout was inaccurate. Is that true?

Lin Jian: The one-China principle is a basic norm in international relations and prevailing international consensus. It's also the political premise on which China establishes and develops diplomatic relations with any country in the world. Japan made a clear commitment on this in the 1972 China-Japan Joint Statement, which says "The Government of Japan recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China. The Government of the People's Republic of China reiterates that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China. The Government of Japan fully understands and respects this position of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and it firmly maintains its position under Article 8 of the Potsdam Proclamation." According to my knowledge, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa reaffirmed Japan's position during the meeting, which has not changed.

When it comes to semiconductors, certain country, to perpetuate its supremacy, has been turning normal economic cooperation and trade into political and security issues, either enticing or coercing other countries to join its tech blockade against China, and deliberately disrupting global supply and industrial chains. We have noted that Japanese officials have repeatedly stated publicly that their export control measures on semiconductors are not directed at any particular country. China will work with countries around the world to stay open and pursue cooperation, and keep the global semiconductor industrial and supply chains stable.

AFP: The government of Germany accused China of conducting cyberattack on the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG). It also summoned the Chinese ambassador to lodge a protest. What is China's comment?

Lin Jian: China noted Germany's statement and remarks. During the past few months, some Western politicians and media have been spreading unverified and even deliberately fabricated disinformation to spread the fear for so-called "Chinese cyber threat." Their motive is clearly not about cybersecurity. China firmly opposes such political manipulation that clearly was preorchestrated and played up to attack China. We oppose any move to politicize and weaponize cybersecurity issues. China's Embassy in Germany has voiced strong opposition and lodged a protest to the German side.

Ensuring cybersecurity is a global challenge. China is a major victim of cyberattacks. We oppose and have fought various types of cyberattacks in accordance with the law. China and Germany have open lines of communication on cybersecurity. The two sides need to jointly address threats and challenges through

dialogue and cooperation, rather than resort to megaphone diplomacy, smear and attack one another and spread disinformation about so-called Chinese hacking operations. We call on Germany to maintain strategic independence, take a constructive and responsible attitude, abandon bloc confrontation and the Cold War mentality, and work with countries through dialogue and cooperation to keep the cyberspace peaceful and secure.

PROTESTS, DETENTIONS AND OTHER NEWS FROM THE PRC

China's Economic Protests Give President Xi Jinping a Headache

28 August 2024, [Bloomberg](#)

China's slowdown is presenting a fresh headache for President Xi Jinping: more protests.

Instances of dissent rose 18% in the second quarter compared with the same period last year with economic grievances making up nearly two-thirds of cases. That's according to a new report from China Dissent Monitor at Freedom House, a US advocacy group.

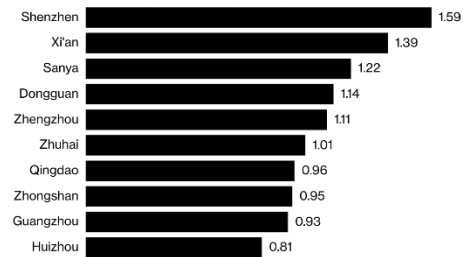
So far, labor and real estate are the key pain points. Protests were often driven by stalled housing projects, sudden company closures or lack of liquidity, the inability to pay wages, or even local government's problems with providing adequate benefits for retirees, the project's lead said.

The figures don't capture the whole picture — researchers observed a new campaign to scrub content on video platforms early this year, and they also incorporated a new source of data in June. But it does provide a rare snapshot of the mood on the ground in some parts of the country.

China's Top 10 Cities for Economic Protest

Dissent events in Guangdong province reflect strains in manufacturing hub

■ Number of economic protest events per 100,000 residents



Dissent events in Guangdong province reflect strains in manufacturing hub Source: Freedom House's China Dissent Monitor

In tightly controlled and heavily surveilled China, protests don't present an existential threat to its leader. They're typically small scale, sporadic and don't directly criticize Xi. This means they're unlikely to prompt Beijing to take bolder steps to support the economy.

But they are a problem for local officials responsible for resolving the disputes with concessions, suppression or a mix of both. The bigger issue is that the demonstrations are symptomatic of the economic malaise taking its toll across the country.

People everywhere are feeling the pinch — and it's even weighing on demand for the most accessible of goods. This week's disappointing earnings results are another red flag. They prompted record-breaking stock selloffs in China's biggest consumer companies,

Tang is accused of passing on information about events planned in New York to commemorate the Tiananmen Square massacre in 2021 and a year later, he allegedly provided the Chinese intelligence officer with information about an unnamed Congressional candidate's campaign team and fundraising. The candidate was also a Chinese dissident and human rights activist.

Court records alleged Tang also helped the agent monitor a group chat used by Chinese dissidents living in the U.S. "The group consisted of approximately 140 members, including confirmed PRC Dissidents such as the Congressional Candidate and a known PRC Dissident based in Flushing," investigators wrote.

Tang is charged with three counts, including acting as an agent of a foreign government and making false statements to investigators.

The FBI interviewed Tang in July 2023 and extracted data from five of his phones, an online account used by the Chinese intelligence officer, and Tang's computer. They recovered text and audio messages that Tang allegedly exchanged with the Chinese intelligence officer, photos and videos of pro-democracy events, screenshots of conversations between dissidents, and "a Chinese-language copy of the FBI's Transnational Repression Threat Intimidation Guide."

In one of the messages — sent on June 3, 2023, the Chinese intelligence officer allegedly urged Tang to "work harder."

"Work harder this month. You have to send over some new stuff with utmost priority," the message directed, court documents revealed.

According to investigators, Tang traveled to mainland China or Macau on at least three occasions between 2019 and 2023 to allegedly meet with the Chinese intelligence officer. During a 2022 meeting, prosecutors said the agent installed a "bug" in one of Tang's cellphones that "caused any photo, screenshot, or voice memorandum generated or captured on the Compromised Phone to be immediately transmitted" to the officer.

Prosecutors alleged Tang had not notified the U.S. federal government about his work for China's intelligence agency as required by law. He was arrested on Wednesday.

The Justice Department charged numerous individuals tied to transnational repression cases in recent years. Communities of dissidents and pro-democracy activists living in the U.S. have long been targets of China's intelligence agency, which uses the families of the activists still living in the mainland as a form of coercion as prosecutors alleged occurred in Tang's case.

Earlier this month, a jury in New York convicted a naturalized U.S. citizen of Chinese dissent who led a

pro-democracy group of secretly working with Chinese intelligence officers to surveil dissidents.

And last year, the FBI arrested two defendants on charges that they set up and operated an illegal Chinese police station in the middle of New York City in order to influence and intimidate dissidents critical of the Chinese government in the U.S.

A lawyer for Tang was not immediately identified.

Another Chinese Young Man Confronts CCP, Calls for Xi Jinping's Resignation

17 August 2024, [ChinaScope](#)

Recently a Chinese young man has attracted attention by calling for the ouster of Xi Jinping using a wifi router to spread his message.

On August 14, Su Yutong, a Chinese freelance writer living in Germany, released a video on the web and stated: "A young person from China who has been promoting the movement to dismantle the Great Firewall (CCP's internet censorship/blockade system) was imprisoned in a psychiatric hospital on political charges. This morning, I received this video showing that he has once again confronted the CCP." In the video, the young man shouted: "Oppose the CCP's internet censorship and control of speech," "No privileges, we want equality," and "We need freedom of speech and internet freedom." The video was recorded outdoors. The young man hoped that Chinese people would be able to "see the true face of the CCP." The young man also mentioned that, in the past, he had used routers and other equipment to broadcast messages such as "Xi Jinping, step down." The authorities issued a warrant for him as a "political criminal," ransacked his home, and confiscated his equipment including routers, laser sound systems, transmitter modules, and mobile phones.

On August 16, Su Yutong posted again on the *X platform* again, identifying the young man as Yan Zhongjian, born in February 1999. Su received a message from a friend entrusted by Yan: the friend and Yan had agreed that, if Yan could not be contacted for a certain period of time, the friend would release Yan's personal information and call on netizens to show concern and support for him.

The young man followed in the footsteps of several other dissidents in recent history. For example, in October 2022 Peng Lifa posted banners and played recordings denouncing the Chinese Communist Party and asking for the ouster of Xi Jinping. On July 30 of this year, Fang Yirong posted similar messages on an overpass in Hunan Province ([see this ChinaScope briefing](#)).

The First Known Survivor of CCP's Forced Organ Harvesting Speaks Out in Washington, DC

15 August 2024, [ChinaScope](#)

Cheng Peiming, a 58-year-old Chinese man from Northeast China, is regarded as the first known survivor of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) program of forced live organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience. On August 9, at a forum in Washington, D.C., he publicly shared his experience in which the Chinese authorities forcibly removed his organs twenty years ago.

Cheng stated that he was repeatedly detained and tortured by the CCP for practicing Falun Gong. In 2002 he was sentenced to eight years in prison. In July 2004, in a state of good health, he was dragged from prison to a hospital where guards tried to make him sign a form of consent for surgery. When he refused to sign, the guards knocked him down and anesthetized him. When he woke up three days later, Cheng found himself handcuffed to a bed with a 35-centimeter-long incision on his chest. In 2006, prison guards again took Cheng to a hospital. He said, "They had no reason for any surgery, so I knew I would be killed." He managed to escape while the guards were sleeping. Cheng spent the next nine years hiding in China and managed to flee to Thailand in 2015. Four years ago, with assistance from the U.S. government, he came to America through the United Nations refugee program. When media reports on China's forced organ harvesting practices first emerged in 2006, Cheng realized that this was what had happened to him. It was only after arriving in the U.S. that transplant specialists confirmed through scans that part of his liver and left lung had been removed. Cheng said that he still cannot feel certain parts of his chest and struggles daily with severe pain throughout his body. In 2019 an independent tribunal in London ("The China Tribunal") ruled that the CCP has committed crimes against humanity through its continuous harvesting of organs from minority groups, including Falun Gong practitioners. Two years later, a United Nations human rights expert reported that, in addition to Falun Gong practitioners, other minorities, including Uyghurs, Tibetans, Muslims, and Christians detained in China, had also become targets of forced organ harvesting. In June of this year the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Falun Gong Protection Act, aimed at compelling the CCP to end its persecution of Falun Gong and the forced harvesting of organs from detained practitioners.

China tries 11 Mongol herders for defending traditional land

06 August 2024, [UCA News](#)



Police arrest a herder in Urad Front Banner in Mongolia. (Photo:<https://smhric.org>)

The families of nearly a dozen herders branded "criminals" and standing trial in Inner [Mongolia](#) have accused local Chinese authorities of aiding and abetting a mining company to illegally occupy their traditional grazing lands.

The trial which has dragged on for more than 90 days is expected to end next week.

In a statement, the families said they "have lived on the grasslands of Urad Front Banner and maintained a pastoralist way of life for generations," the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC) reported on Aug. 5

"Jiranhoyor [their head] has appealed to the relevant [authority] multiple times. The destruction of grassland has never been resolved. Now, these 11 herders have become 'criminals' overnight," the families added.

Jiranhoyor is the former head of the Taigiin-Enger Gachaa of Bayanhuaa Township who led the local herders to defend their legal rights, the families said.

The Bayannuur League Public Security Bureau also reportedly arrested Sumyaa, Sumbur, Daichin, Munkhsumbur, Nars, Naranbat, Hurwaa, Wei Meili, Hong Wuyi, and Aldart for the first time in August 2020 and detained them multiple times since.

The herders have been detained for periods ranging from 37 days to 18 months without "legal due process," the SMHRIC said.

Photographs and videos posted on the SMHRIC website showed sick and elderly herders being taken into custody in wheelchairs and some being handcuffed and shackled to hospital beds.

The herders have been defending the alleged illegal occupation of their lands and environmental destruction by multiple Chinese mining companies, including Huo Tuo Mine, for more than a decade, the SMHRIC said.

In a statement issued in 2020, the Bayannuur security bureau called the herders "gangs" and alleged they were "long engaged in evil deeds and illegal activities,

seriously sabotaging the local economy, disturbing public orders, and creating adverse social effects.”

Urnaa, a daughter of Jiranhoyor, told SMHRIC that her father and the other herders were only protesting the mining companies for illegally occupying and destroying their grazing lands.

“As mining companies beating up and abusing local herders become commonplace, herders from our community often gathered together to block the mining trucks,” Urnaa said.

“These peaceful and legal activities are now labeled as ‘crimes,’” Urnaa lamented.

Urnaa pointed out that Jiranhoyor was diagnosed with bladder cancer before his arrest in 2020 and he had to undergo several surgeries and chemotherapy before he was arrested again for the second time in 2021.

Sumyaa, Urnaa’s mother, was detained for more than 17 months for signing the petition against the mining company.

Sumbur, a herder, who has been suffering from serious rheumatoid arthritis was handcuffed and shackled on a hospital bed during the detention, according to photos and video footage shared by Urnaa, SMHRIC said.

“Sumbur was not even able to walk and hold a teacup by himself. But he was taken away in a wheelchair by the police,” Urnaa alleged.

Naranbat, another local herder, was the longest-serving detainee at the Urad Front Banner Detention Center.

The center in a release notice said Naranbat was released on bail pending trial on Dec. 1, 2022, after serving an 18-month detention without trial, SMHRIC said.

Reportedly, the local public prosecution authorities have revised the indictment against the 11 herders four times in over four years due to insufficient evidence and legal basis.

The latest revision took place on July 25 during the most recent trial.

Meanwhile, Jiranhoyor’s family members alleged that the mining companies had bribed the local police and authorities.

SMHRIC pointed out that Chinese authorities have accelerated the resource extraction from Southern Mongolia which has prompted giants like Shenhua and Changqing to arrive in the country.

Allegedly, many have opened mines without the consent of locals sparking tensions in the region.

In 2011, a large-scale protest erupted after a Mongolian herder was brutally killed by a Chinese coal-hauling truck.

Thousands of herders were arrested and detained, and their leaders have been imprisoned, SMHRIC said.

Activist of Hunan bridge banner, White Paper Movement missing

06 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Screengrab of Hunan bridge banner protester Fang Yirong

Fang Yirong, a Chinese protester known for his recent demonstration on a bridge in Hunan Province, China, is missing. On July 30, Fang unfurled a banner demanding “freedom, democracy, and elections” and condemning Chinese President Xi Jinping as a “dictator” and an “authoritarian traitor.”

A pre-recorded video, widely circulated on August 2 on X (formerly Twitter), showed Fang introducing himself as a “young participant in the White Paper Movement” but does not directly reference the Hunan banner protest. In the video, Fang states, “Last summer, I posted comments supporting democracy on Telegram and was targeted by the Chinese Communist Party’s National Security Department. Since then, the National Security Department has subjected me to brutal and inhumane mind control persecution. I am posting this video now to prove that I am no longer afraid of them. Tyranny is inevitably terrifying, but authority cannot crush the human spirit. Xi Jinping can continue to persecute us, but he cannot stop the ideas of democracy from taking root and sprouting in the hearts of the Chinese people again and again. The waters of the Yangtze River will not flow backward. I hope the Chinese people can soon be free from tyranny and lead better lives. After doing this, I might be officially declared mentally ill by the Chinese Communist Party. I might also die in prison, but I will not regret it.”

In another post on X, journalist and China expert Jennifer Zeng translated a letter by Fang Yirong, which was posted online. In the letter, Fang detailed the political persecution he faced from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security, describing “daily surveillance, intimidation, and harassment” by agents. He wrote, “I participated in poster-posting activities at the end of the White Paper Revolution out of my dissatisfaction with the dictatorial tyranny of the Chinese Communist Party. I have also spoken out against the dictatorship and feudal rule of Xi Winnie (Xi Winnie-the-Pooh) on the internet many times. Eventually, I was exposed for plotting rebellion within

the CCP's black police entrapment group, the 'White Paper Matrix.' Since July last year, I have been suppressed and persecuted by the vicious government."

The banner unfurled by Fang Yirong on the Hunan bridge carried slogans strikingly similar to those displayed during the October 2022 Sitong Bridge protest in Beijing's Haidian district by Peng Lifa, who was immediately detained. The slogans read, "No COVID test, we want to eat. No restrictions, we want freedom. No lies, we want dignity. No Cultural Revolution, we want reform. No leaders, we want votes. By not being slaves, we can be citizens." Another banner urged residents to strike from school and work to "remove the dictator and national traitor Xi Jinping." These acts of dissent are unusual in China, where free speech and criticism are heavily suppressed, and protests often provoke a strong response from authorities. Observers note that the emergence of such banners reflects growing discontent with the Chinese Communist Party's stringent control over public expression, particularly following the implementation of the 'Zero COVID' policy. This policy has sparked sporadic demonstrations against Xi Jinping and the CPC's governance.

Fate of Drepung monastery monk remains uncertain after 17 years of disappearance

04 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Nyidon



Kunchok Nyima in an undated photo (Photo/RFA)

Kunchok Nyima, a monk from Drepung Monastery, has been missing for 17 years following his arrest by Chinese authorities on April 11, 2008, according to *Radio Free Asia* (RFA). His whereabouts currently remain unknown. He was detained for his alleged involvement in a peaceful protest by the monks of Drepung Monastery in 2008.

According to the report, the Lhasa Intermediate People's Court sentenced Kunchok Nyima to 20 years in prison. Despite repeated inquiries from his family members and villagers, authorities have consistently refused to disclose any information regarding his whereabouts or condition, maintaining strict secrecy about his status.

A source within Tibet reported that over two years after Kunchok Nyima's disappearance, he was sentenced to prison in June 2010. Despite efforts by his family and relatives in Dzoge County, who have connections with the authorities, to inquire about his status, they were eventually told that he had been transferred to Lhasa and was no longer under the jurisdiction of Dzoge County. The authorities expressed that they had no further options in the matter.

Kunchok Nyima originally hailed from Thebo in Amdo (Ch. Qinghai). He travelled to central Tibet for his studies and subsequently joined Drepung Gomang Monastery. There, he became a teacher and attracted numerous students from all three provinces of Tibet. On March 10, 2008, approximately 300-400 monks from Drepung Monastery held a peaceful protest on Barkhor Street to commemorate the 49th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising against China's illegal invasion of Tibet. Reports indicate that the monastery was subsequently surrounded by local military and police forces, and the monks were subjected to beatings and tear gas. Over 50 monks were arrested during the incident, according to reports.

Protest banner against Xi Jinping in China calls for freedom and democracy

01 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundup

A protest banner appeared on an overpass in Xinhua County, Hunan province, China on Tuesday calling for freedom and democracy. The banner hung over a bridge called for freedom and democracy, criticizing Chinese President Xi Jinping as a "dictator" and an "authoritarian." The message, translated by British-Chinese journalist Cindi Yu, read: "freedom, democracy, elections, protest school, protest work, protest authoritarian traitor Xi Jinping".

This act of dissent is unusual in China, where free speech and criticism are heavily suppressed. Protests are often met with a strong response from authorities. Observers say that the emergence of this banner reflects a growing discontent with the CPC's strict control over public expression, particularly since the implementation of the 'Zero Covid' policy. This policy has led to sporadic demonstrations against Xi and the CPC's governance.

In recent years, there have been several instances of public unrest in China. In October 2022, [two banners](#) appeared hung over a busy overpass in the capital Beijing. One reads: "Go on strike. Remove dictator and national traitor Xi Jinping." The other read "Say no to covid test, yes to food. No to lockdown, yes to freedom...Don't be a slave, be a citizen."

In November 2022, large-scale riots erupted in Zhengzhou and Guangzhou, with protesters clashing

with police and demanding changes to strict covid restrictions. In Zhengzhou, workers at Foxconn's iPhone plant protested company policies and Xi's regime, while residents of Guangzhou voiced their discontent with lockdown measures.

China's history of suppressing dissent includes events such as the 2008 Tibetan uprising and the 1989 Tiananmen square protests. The 2008 Tibetan uprising was marked by severe repression where hundreds of Tibetan monks gathered in Lhasa to protest and mark the 49th anniversary of a previous Tibetan uprising against Beijing's rule. The protesters sought the release of fellow Drepung monks, who were reportedly detained while attempting to celebrate the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama. Rights groups reported more than 140 deaths, while Chinese authorities claimed the death toll was just 22. The crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests in April-May 1989 remains infamous. Millions of people gathered in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, demanding greater freedoms. In response, the Communist Party of China (CPC) imposed martial law, deploying military forces on June 3-4 to end the movement. Estimates of the death toll vary widely, ranging from 200 to 10,000, with reports of severe violence against protesters.

Chinese military's new focus: Winning wars against "strong enemies, opponents"

24 August 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)



Chinese President Xi Jinping reviews the honor guards of the Chinese People's Liberation Navy. Credit: Reuters Photo

MILITARY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Beijing, From its decades-old doctrine of winning local wars, China's military is shifting its focus to winning wars against "strong enemies and opponents," a top defence official has said, amidst the mounting challenges Beijing faces on multiple fronts, including from the US. President Xi Jinping has also directed the People's Liberation Army to improve its strategic ability to defend the country's sovereignty and development interests. Celebrating the 120th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping, widely hailed as the paramount leader and the architect of modern China who rebuilt the country after the disastrous Mao Zedong era, Xi not only praised his outstanding contributions to the ruling Communist Party of China, the country and the world but also highlighted his emphasis to build a modern military.

"The best way to honour Deng is to continue advancing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics that he initiated," Xi, said in his address to a meeting held to mark Deng's birth anniversary.

He also recalled that Deng had highlighted the need to build the PLA into a strong, modernised and well-organised force, and to have fewer but better troops.

Xi, also the Commander-in-Chief of the PLA, on Thursday told the military to improve its "strategic ability to defend national sovereignty, security and development interests," the Hong Kong-based South China Post reported.

Significantly, at a PLA commemoration, Miao Hua, a member of the Central Military Commission, the military's top decision-making body headed by Xi, said: "In the new journey, we should ... focus on strengthening capabilities to defeat strong enemies and opponents."

Earlier on Wednesday, an article in the official PLA Daily said Deng had made the strategic judgment that “world wars can be postponed or avoided” in the 1980s, but China now faced “great changes unseen in a century.

“We must ... always maintain strategic clarity on the possible risks of war, make full preparations for military struggle, effectively deter war and resolutely win the war.”

The latest directive to the PLA to win wars against “strong enemies and opponents” is regarded as a major course correction for the Chinese military considering the mounting challenges China faces on multiple fronts.

Until recently, the CPC’s directive to the PLA was to develop the ability to win local wars considering China’s long-festering border dispute with India besides maritime disputes involving the disputed South China Sea and East China Sea with Japan. China’s relations with Taiwan, which Beijing claims is part of its own, have also worsened in recent times.

China claims most of the South China Sea while the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan counter its claim.

As recently as in 2022, in his speech at the Party congress, Xi had set “victory in local wars” as a goal and told the PLA to “improve training and preparation for war in all aspects and improve the ability of the army to fight and win.”

“We will strengthen the normal and diversified use of military forces, carry out military struggles with determination and flexibility, shape the security posture, contain crises and conflicts, and win local wars,” he said then.

Analysts said the strategic shift from winning local wars to defeating “strong enemies and opponents” was in line with Beijing’s thinking about the risks it faces and its increasing focus on security, particularly in the face of the growing rivalry between China and the United States on multiple fronts.

The Middle Of Nowhere: Introducing China's 5 Most Remote Airports

21 August 2024, [Simple Flying](#)

China is the third-largest country in the world by area, following only Russia and Canada. With its vast expanse and diverse terrain, China is home to some of the most remote and isolated regions on Earth. From the towering peaks of the Himalayas to the barren Gobi Desert and the distant islands of the South China Sea, these far-flung corners present unique challenges for connectivity and transportation. Yet, within these remote areas lie vital lifelines: airports that serve as the only gateways to the outside world.

In a country as vast, geographically diverse, and sparsely populated as China, these remote airports play a crucial role in connecting people and places. They provide essential access to economic opportunities, medical services, and cultural exchange, often bridging the gap between isolation and integration.

This article explores five of China’s most remote civilian airports, each situated in some of the most desolate and rugged terrain imaginable. From the frozen plateaus of Tibet to the distant islands of the South China Sea, these airports are more than just transportation hubs—they are symbols of human resilience and the relentless drive to connect even the most distant parts of the world.



Illustrated by Su Wu / Map: Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China

Haixi Huatugou Airport (HTT)

The airport in the Hoh Xil (Kekexili) region



Haixi Huatugou Airport (HTT) is located at the border between Qinghai Province and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China, in the northern part of the famous Hoh Xil (Kekexili) region. Administratively, the airport belongs to Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan

Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province. Situated at an elevation of 2,906 meters, Haixi Huatugou is a high-altitude airport and is classified as a 4C-grade domestic regional airport. Construction of Haixi Huatugou Airport began in 2012, and three years later, on June 26, 2015, the airport officially commenced operations. The airport is positioned in the northernmost part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The surrounding area, particularly Mangya City, is known as an oil town, thanks to the discovery of petroleum in the 1950s. Haixi Huatugou Airport does not have a railway connection, and the nearest major cities are reachable only by long road trips. The airport is situated on a key transportation route between Qinghai Province and Xinjiang.

According to the Baidu Navigation, it takes about 15 hours (1,300 kilometers) by road to reach Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, 19 hours (1,700 kilometers) to reach Kashgar, and 14 hours (1,250 kilometers) to reach Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province.

Currently, China Eastern Airlines is the sole carrier operating at Haixi Huatugou Airport, offering three direct routes to different destinations. These include flights to Xining, with four flights per week; to Dunhuang, also with four flights per week; and to Delingha, with three flights per week. All routes are served by Airbus A319 aircraft.

Yushu Batang Airport (YUS)

An airport on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau



Yushu Batang Airport (YUS) is located at the intersection of Qinghai Province, Tibet Autonomous Region, and Sichuan Province, in the northeastern part of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. With an elevation of 3,950 meters, it is classified as a high-altitude airport and ranks as the seventh-highest airport in the world. The airport is a 4C-grade domestic regional airport.

In 2007, China approved the construction of Yushu's civil airport, and work commenced the same year. On August 1, 2009, Yushu Batang Airport officially opened, with its inaugural flight operated by China Eastern Airlines on the Xi'an–Xining–Yushu route using an Airbus A319 aircraft.

Just over eight months after the airport's opening, a 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck Yushu on April 14, 2010, severing road connections and leaving Yushu Batang Airport as the only viable route for disaster

relief. In the 24 days following the earthquake, the airport facilitated 490 rescue flights, transported 17,051 rescue personnel, delivered 2,174.86 tons of relief materials, and evacuated 2,133 injured individuals. Yushu Airport is situated in a river valley in the southern part of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province. The airport lacks railway connections, and the nearest major cities are far from easy reach by road. The airport is located roughly midway between Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province, and Lhasa, the capital of Tibet Autonomous Region. By road, it takes about 11 hours (810 kilometers) to reach Xining and 19 hours (1,000 kilometers) to reach Lhasa.

Currently, three airlines operate regular passenger routes at Yushu Batang Airport. Tibet Airlines offers two daily flights to Xining; China Eastern Airlines operates one daily flight to Xining and one to Chengdu; and Capital Airlines provides two daily flights to Xining. All three airlines use Airbus A319 aircraft on these routes.

Qamdo Bangda Airport (BPX)

World's 2nd highest airport in Hengduan Mountains



Qamdo Bangda Airport (BPX) is nestled among the eastern mountains of China's Tibet Autonomous Region, at an elevation of 4,334 meters. This high-altitude airport is the second-highest airport in the world and is classified as a 4C-grade military-civilian dual-use regional airport. Qamdo Bangda Airport's runway length is 5 kilometers, which is also the longest civil airport in China.

The construction of Qamdo Airport was approved in 1969 during the Cultural Revolution, but it wasn't until nearly a decade later, in 1978, that Qamdo Bangda Airport was completed and became operational. The construction process was arduous, claiming the lives of 89 workers. Initially, the airport was used exclusively by the Air Force as a military airport. However, in 1992, a military-civilian expansion project commenced, and on April 28, 1995, Qamdo Bangda Airport officially opened for civil aviation services.

Situated in the Hengduan Mountains, Qamdo Airport is located in a narrow valley between the Nujiang (Salween) and Lancang (Mekong) rivers, in an area known for its treacherous terrain. The airport lacks railway connections, and access by road is limited to

two routes: a northern route that takes about two and a half hours (123 kilometers) to reach Qamdo (Changdu) City, and a southern route that takes about an hour (50 kilometers) to reach the famous G318 National Highway. From there, travelers can head west for 21 hours (1,060 kilometers) to reach Lhasa, or east for 18 hours (930 kilometers) to reach Chengdu.

Currently, three airlines operate regular passenger routes at Qamdo Bangda Airport. Tibet Airlines offers flights to Lhasa, Xi'an, Chengdu, and Chongqing, with one to two flights daily on each route. Air China's Southwest branch operates two daily flights to its base in Chengdu, while West Air, a subsidiary of Hainan Airlines Group (HNA Group), offers one daily flight to its base in Chongqing. All three airlines use Airbus A319 aircraft for these routes.

Sansha Yongshu Airport (YXG)

An airport 1370 km from mainland China



Sansha Yongshu Airport (YXG) is located on Yongshu Island in Sansha City, Hainan Province, China. Yongshu Island also serves as the administrative center of the Nansha District within Sansha City. Sansha Yongshu Airport is the southernmost airport in China and is classified as a 4C-grade military-civilian regional airport.

Sansha City was established in 2012, and the construction of Sansha Yongshu Airport began in 2014. On January 6, 2016, the airport successfully conducted its first civil aviation test flight. The test flight was carried out by China Southern Airlines and Hainan Airlines, using an Airbus A320-200 and a Boeing B737-800 from their Haikou Meilan International Airport base. The flights also carried some relatives of the military personnel stationed on Yongshu Island. Although Sansha Yongshu Airport is technically a military-civilian airport, due to national defense considerations, China has not developed large-scale tourism in the Nansha Islands. As a result, ordinary Chinese citizens cannot purchase tickets to fly to Sansha Yongshu Airport.

Currently, Sansha Yongshu Airport only operates occasional flights to Haikou, the capital of Hainan Province. To purchase tickets, one must provide a valid

reason, such as visiting military personnel stationed on the island.

In addition, China has three other airports on the islands under Sansha City's control, located on Yongxing Island, Zhubi Reef, and Meiji Reef. Among these, Sansha Yongxing Airport (XYI) on Yongxing Island in the Xisha Islands is also a military-civilian airport, while the other two airports on Zhubi Reef and Meiji Reef are currently military airports with no civil aviation flights.

Sansha Yongxing Airport (XYI) is located on Yongxing Island in Sansha City, Hainan Province, China. Yongxing Island also serves as the administrative center of Sansha City in Hainan Province. Sansha Yongxing Airport is classified as a 4C-grade military-civilian airport. In April 1991, Yongxing Island's military airport was completed and opened. In 2012, Hainan Province applied to expand Yongxing Island Airport to serve both military and civilian purposes. On December 22, 2016, Sansha Yongxing Airport officially began civil aviation operations, with Hainan Airlines operating a government charter flight route from Haikou to Sansha using a Boeing B737-800.

The runway at Sansha Yongxing Airport is 3,000 meters long and 50 meters wide, capable of accommodating aircraft up to the size of a Boeing B737-800.

Ngari Gunsu Airport (NGQ)

The most remote airport in Tibet



Ngari Gunsu Airport (NGQ) is located in the Ali region of China's Tibet Autonomous Region, sitting at an elevation of 4,274 meters above sea level. Classified as a high-altitude airport, it ranks as the third-highest airport in the world. The airport is situated 44 kilometers from the administrative center of Gar County in the Ali region. It officially opened for operations on July 1, 2010, with its inaugural flight operated by Air China's Southwest branch using an Airbus A319 on the Chengdu-Lhasa-Ali route.

The Ali region, with an average elevation of 4,500 meters, is located in western Tibet, approximately 1,600 kilometers from Lhasa, the capital of Tibet Autonomous Region. This area is where the Himalayas, Gangdise, and Karakoram mountain ranges converge. Ali is renowned for its unique natural scenery and cultural sites, most notably Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar, considered as sacred places by Buddhists. However, due to challenging transportation

conditions, reaching these remote landmarks has long been difficult for travelers. In terms of transportation, the Ali region lacks railway connections and is accessible by only three main roads: one leading north over the Kunlun Mountains to Kashgar in Xinjiang, one heading east to Chamdo, and one extending southeast to Lhasa. According to the Baidu Navigation, the distances from Ali to Kashgar and Lhasa by road are approximately 1,300 kilometers and 1,450 kilometers, respectively, with travel times averaging around 24 hours.

Currently, Ngari Gonsa Airport (NGQ) offers two regular passenger routes: one to Lhasa and another to Kashgar. The Lhasa route is operated by Tibet Airlines using Airbus A319 aircraft, with three to four flights daily. The Kashgar route is serviced by Lucky Air using Boeing 737-700 aircraft, with one flight daily.

China's remote airports are vital connections for some of the country's most isolated and challenging areas. These airports do more than just link distant regions to the rest of the world—they provide crucial access to services, support local communities, and help integrate these far-flung places into the nation. From the high mountains of Tibet to the far-off islands of the South China Sea, these airports are lifelines that keep even the most remote corners of China connected.

China Revises Military Personnel Benefits Regulations for 2024 Implementation

14 August 2024, [ChinaScope](#)

China's State Council and Central Military Commission have announced revised "Regulations on Preferential Treatment for Military Personnel," effective October 1, 2024. The new regulations aim "to ensure state support for military personnel, inspire their dedication to defending and building the country, strengthen national defense and military modernization, and make military service a respected profession."

Key revisions include:

1. Emphasis on "Communist Party leadership" and establishment of principles for military personnel benefits. The benefits are to "balance treatment with contribution, spiritual with material rewards, and care with service."
2. Adaptation to new national defense and military requirements via "clarification of benefit recipients, of management systems, and of financial responsibilities between central and local governments."
3. Enhancement of support measures for military personnel: ensuring access to social security, public services, and appropriate benefits. This includes increasing compensation for families of honored deceased personnel and inviting beneficiaries to major ceremonial events.

4. Improvement of service procedures and capabilities: improved processes for one-time compensation payments as well as refinement of disability rating assessments.

The revised regulations stress the importance of "dynamically adjusting benefit standards to align with economic and social development and military needs." They also "establish care and assistance mechanisms, particularly for beneficiaries facing special difficulties."

China eyes anti-drone technology as key to future battlefield success

11 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Amber Wang

China's military and private manufacturers have been urged to ramp up efforts to produce anti-drone weapons after seeing how effective they have been in the Ukraine war.

The People's Liberation Army has been watching closely how the technology has been employed on the battlefield, and has been testing its own capabilities in regular exercises.

The official military newspaper, The PLA Daily, has reported on some of these drills, the most recent being carried out in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province.

Another article in May highlighted some of the technology being studied, including Britain's DragonFire, a high-powered laser weapon that was successfully tested in January.

The military has also published regular articles about the use of the technology in conflicts such as Ukraine and Gaza.

One article in June argued that "through the study of local wars in recent years, it is found that foreign militaries usually adopt detection, electronic jamming ... and other means to implement anti-UAV [unmanned aerial vehicle] operations, and often achieve good results".

It went on to call for the building of "smarter and higher-efficiency" anti-drones systems for the Chinese military.

Earlier this year, *Globe Weekly*, a magazine published by China's state news agency Xinhua, said in an article about Israel's air defences, that "whichever side can effectively counter the other side's use of drones can better seize the initiative on the battlefield".

According to a report by the Pentagon last year, the PLA's air defence unit concentrated on improving its tactical air defences against low-flying and suicide drones in 2022.

Drones have played a key part in the war in Ukraine, with both sides using them for reconnaissance and attacks on enemy troops.

But counter drone systems – whether they involve the use of missiles or jamming – are just as important on the battlefield.

The technology could also prove vital in any conflict in the Taiwan Strait, where the United States has threatened to deploy thousands of drones if mainland forces attack the island.

Admiral Samuel Paparo, the new head of the US Indo-Pacific Command, told the Washington Post in July the US had plans to create an “unmanned hellscape” in such an event.

Meanwhile, the Taiwanese authorities are developing their own anti-drone defences, budgeting NT\$4.98 billion (US\$156 million) this year to spend on the technology.

On the Chinese mainland, there is a thriving domestic market for the technology.

One employee at Jindowin, a firm in Nanjing that specialises in anti-drone technology, said the market was “booming”, and Russia’s war against Ukraine had been the turning point for domestic producers.

“Our business is impacted by international situations, such as the Russia-Ukraine war during which drones have been widely used. Our country’s drones are amazing, and once there is a spear, there must be a shield,” they said.

China has been steadily tightening restrictions on exports of drone technology that has military uses following repeated Western accusations it is tacitly supporting Russia’s war effort.

But the Jindowin worker said the company had no overseas market and its products were mostly used for domestic security.

China imposed some of the strictest bans on civilian drones around the time of political events of various levels and there is strong domestic demand for drones to be used on such occasions.

The employee also said the country’s economic system gave it an advantage by providing all elements of the supply chain, which helped to reduce costs and produce “high-quality and low-price products”.

Tibetan prefecture marches toward modernization

09 August 2024, [China Daily](#)

After quitting her job in an auto parts company in a big city, Yeshe Lhamo decided to return to her rural hometown in the Northwest China plateau province of Qinghai two years ago to open a cafe.

Renowned for its yak butter coffee, the 90-square-meter cafe has become popular among tourists, and makes a profit of 20,000 yuan (\$2,800) a month.

Yeshe Lhamo, 27, who hails from Maqen county, in the Golog Tibetan autonomous prefecture, said that as the “hope of my family, I used to study hard to break free from the confines of the mountains”, but she now

realizes those efforts gave her the means to “come back and build our hometown even better”.

Established in 1954, the prefecture, at an average altitude of 4,200 meters, is nestled deep in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

The harsh environment, with steep mountains, vast grasslands, thin air and an average annual temperature of — 4 C, made life difficult for the locals, who mainly relied on herding for a living and horses for transportation.

Despite the challenging natural conditions, the past 70 years have seen a remarkable turnaround for Golog.

The prefecture now boasts over 13,000 kilometers of roads, ensuring connectivity to every town and village. It also has an airport, and expressways have been built in recent years.

There have also been 205 farming and animal husbandry industrial bases set up in the prefecture, starkly contrasting with the days when locals lived a nomadic lifestyle.

Through industries like animal husbandry and tourism, the prefecture, with a population of 222,000, achieved a GDP of 6.72 billion yuan last year.

The transformation from tents to apartments and from nomadic herders to settled residents exemplifies Golog’s journey from a state of backward feudal serfdom to thriving socialist modernization, said Ye Wanbin, head of the prefecture.

The progress was achieved through hard work. Zhou Wangzhong, deputy director of the prefecture’s transport bureau, said building roads in Golog means digging tunnels in mountains and crossing permafrost areas.

“The construction workers had to endure the harsh conditions of high altitude,” Zhou said. “No matter how difficult, the roads must be built because they symbolize hope for prosperity for our herders.”

As the prefecture advances toward modernity, residents have placed unprecedented emphasis on education, with their children benefiting from improved school facilities and resources.

Ngoje Nyima, who leads a herding life with his two children in Baima county, said that his greatest regret was dropping from school to go herding. Now, he is determined to ensure his children receive a good education. “I want them to go to school and not follow the old path of herding,” he said.

With assistance from Shanghai, as part of a national scheme in which developed eastern regions support less developed western regions, Golog has built new schools across the prefecture, with teachers coming from Shanghai to support the teaching efforts.

“In our pastoral area, the most beautiful architecture is mostly schools,” said Qi Yaqiong, president of a primary school in Madoi county.

The school has received 21.3 million yuan for the construction of the teaching building, sports ground and other facilities.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in late 2012, 3.8 billion yuan has been spent on education infrastructure projects in Golog, resulting in the construction, upgrade and expansion of 135 schools, a news conference on the 70th anniversary of the prefecture's founding was told last month.

Students from families who were previously registered as poverty-stricken and later lifted out of poverty no longer drop out of school.

"After I graduate from university, I believe my hometown will be even better, and I will choose to go to places where I am needed most, becoming a teacher," said Nedong Lhamo, a senior high school student.

Pidu District in China's Chengdu leads way in urban-rural integrated development

03 August 2024, [Bastille Post](#)

Pidu District of Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, stands at the forefront of promoting the integrated development between urban and rural areas, constantly seeking new avenues for shared prosperity by harmonizing urban and rural functions and industries.

Pidu District, the birthplace of the ancient Shu civilization and the source of the agricultural civilization of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, has a historical and cultural DNA rooted in agricultural prosperity.

In recent years, Pidou has created a model of modern agricultural and rural development, treating the city and countryside as interconnected entities. The approach optimizes spatial layouts to create a business-friendly and livable countryside.

In China's Sichuan Cuisine Industrial City, based on the Pixian Douban intellectual super-property which has a brand value of 66.109 billion yuan, over a hundred enterprises have been engaged in intelligent production and manufacturing, driving innovation and reaping the benefits of urban-rural integration.

"In fact, it is a very traditional industry. We used to rely heavily on the operating experience of the staff. In order to ensure a more stable product quality, the whole production process is now standardized and we are also using a lot of intelligent equipment, including intelligent systems, to achieve traceability of our entire production process. This helps improve the competitiveness of the company. We are also committed to solving the local employment problem, focusing on the welfare of frontline production staff, including income improvement," said Ni Tiaoyuan,

manufacturing manager of NGM biotechnology company.

China's Sichuan Cuisine Industrial City is the first industrial park named after a local cuisine. Over 19 years of development, it has insisted on technological empowerment, continuously enhanced its research and development, and supply chain management capabilities, and created more than 12,000 jobs.

"We support leading enterprises to establish chili, bean, pepper planting bases in Gansu, Xinjiang or Guizhou, so as to play the role of upstream and downstream drivers. We have also actively integrated into the new consumption industry, attracting tourists and promoting the integration of urban and rural exchanges from multiple perspectives," said Yang Li, deputy director of the Management Committee of Sichuan Cuisine Industrial City of China.

In Donglin Art Village of Pidou District, many agricultural, cultural and tourism integration projects have become Instagram-worthy places, attracting many visitors.

"My house is in Chengdu. I'm meeting a friend today. Usually everyone is very busy at work, so for the weekend, they would like to find a place to relax with friends. I checked online and found that the environment here is quite good, with good views of the countryside. People can be close to the countryside and enjoy the wonderful scenery. Outside the courtyard, there is a swimming pool. It is a great place to take pictures. So today, I have come here with my friend for afternoon tea," said Zhou Dan, a visitor.

Chen Guo, president of Dezhuyuan Rice and Garlic Specialized Cooperative, reflected on the company's efforts on boosting the integrated development of urban and rural areas.

"After working in Shanghai for more than ten years, I wanted to return to my hometown for work. Donglin Art Village is relatively close to the city, and at the right stage to be developed. I am engaged in industrial analysis and regional planning, and I am very familiar with agriculture. I chose Donglin Village as I thought it is more suitable. Our company is engaged in the agricultural and service industry sector. It has more than 50 employees, and the vast majority of them come from the village. In addition, millions of yuan are paid for labor in agriculture every year, constituting the income of nearby villagers working in the fields. Our company is also a perfect example of rural revitalization efforts to boost personal income growth, which reflects the integration of urban and rural areas in China," said Chen.

The communiqué issued by the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) underscores the integration between urban and rural areas and called for efforts to promote the two-way flow and equal exchanges between urban and rural areas, with the aim of reducing urban-rural

disparities and promoting prosperity and common development.

Taking advantage of regional advantages and characteristics, Pidou District is working hard to realize the idea that a city improves people's lives, while the countryside contributes to their happiness.

By harnessing the power of technology, Paralympic swimmers are gaining unprecedented insights into their performances, which empowers them to chase their dreams of gold in Paris and beyond.

One such device, resembling a fishing rod handle, is being used to measure the instantaneous speed, acceleration, and power of athletes as they move through the water. Attached to the athlete's body on one end and held by researchers on the other, the device transmits real-time biomechanical data to a computer, allowing athletes and coaches to optimize speed distribution.

"The device is connected to the end that I hold by a cord. The chip inside can connect to my computer, allowing us to calculate the distance the cord is pulled each frame, and from that, the acceleration. It can help us analyze the change in velocity over the cycle," said Li Shudong, a teacher at Ningbo University's School of Sports Science.

A more AI-driven system is added for more analysis, with underwater and poolside cameras automatically capturing and stitching together multi-angle footage. Advanced AI models then track key body points and provide objective feedback on the athlete's speed, angles, and trajectories, helping coaches and athletes identify areas for improvement.

"For example, when an athlete enters the water like this - his body forms a 'banana shape' - he will feel an obviously increased drag. The solution is to make the body slightly less than 180 degrees at the point of entry, allowing for a more streamlined entry," Li said in explaining how the system works.

For athletes like Zhang Li, who was born with cerebral palsy and relies only on her arms to propel herself through the water, these technologies are game-changers. Zhang claimed six golds and one silver medal at the Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2021 Paralympics, and is now using the cutting-edge system to strive for faster results.

"The margins between us in the same disability class are just fractions of a second. The technology allows us to more clearly and objectively compare and identify where we can improve, and where we are left behind," said Zhang, a member of China's 2024 Paralympic swimming team.

These advancements are also benefiting visually impaired athletes, like Yang Bozun, a five-time Paralympic swimmer who will be competing in Paris. Yang now trains with the added assistance of earphones, which allow his coach to provide instant

feedback and instructions on his movements and timing while in the water.

"Even in the pool, the instructions from the coach come through the earphones clearly. If they notice something off with my movement, they can immediately remind me, and I can correct it at once. Knowing when to accelerate, when to slow down, when to turn, and when to sprint to the wall - this real-time feedback has reduced a lot of injuries. It's a warm comfort for us athletes," said Yang.

China - Bhutan

Bhutan and China Border Meeting Shows China's Use of Coercive Tactics in Land Disputes

25 August 2024, [The Atlas News](#)



Bhutanese Foreign Affairs and External Trade Minister Tandi Dorji shaking hands with Chinese Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Sun Weidong after signing Agreement that outlined the responsibilities of the Joint Technical Team for delimitating boundary during the 25th Round of Boundary Talks between China and Bhutan

CHINA IN THE REGION

Bhutanese and Chinese delegations held the 14th Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on China-Bhutan Boundary Issues in the Bhutanese capital city of Thimphu from August 20th to the 22nd. The EGM was co-chaired by Hong Liang, China's Foreign Affairs Ministry (FAM) Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs' Director General, and Letho Tobhen Tangbi, Secretary General for the International Boundaries of Bhutan and Head of the Bhutanese Expert Group.

The 14th Expert Group Meeting on China-Bhutan Boundary Issues

Both sides "reviewed the positive progress" made in negotiations between the countries regarding demarcating the boundary in recent years. The delegations had "friendly, candid, and constructive discussions" on topics of mutual concern and interest, such as the implementation of the Three-Step Roadmap. The two sides also discussed the Joint Technical Team on the Delimitation and Demarcation of China-Bhutan Boundary's second meeting and the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement on the Functions of the Joint Technical Team on the Delimitation and Demarcation of the China-Bhutan Boundary. The talks were held in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere," reflecting the cooperative and friendly relations between China and Bhutan.

Previous Meetings on Boundary Issues

Since 1951, Bhutan shares a 296-mile (477-kilometer) border with China along the western, northern, and eastern sides of the country. However, the two countries dispute the ownership of four territories in the western, three in the northern, and one in the eastern areas of Bhutan. The country claims the Beyul

Khenpajong and the Menchuma Valley in the north; Doklam, Dramana and Shakhatoe; Sinchulungpa and Langmarpo Valley; Yak chu and Charithang chu in the west; and Sakteng in the east. In the 1980s, Bhutan gave up its claim to Kula Khari, saying its original claim was due to a mapping error.

Bhutan and China held previous meetings and consultations to solve the border issue. In October 2023, the 25th Round of Boundary Talks between China and Bhutan was held in Beijing, China. FAM Vice Minister Sun Weidong led the Chinese delegation, while Foreign Affairs and External Trade Minister Tandri Dorji led the Bhutanese group. Both sides had “in-depth discussions on the boundary negotiations” and noted the progress that the EGMs made since the 24th Round of Boundary Talks held in 2016. Sun and Tandri commended the expert groups “for the work done and agreed to build on the positive momentum.”



Photo of Bhutanese delegation, led by Bhutanese Foreign Affairs and External Trade Minister Tandri Dorji, and Chinese delegation led by China Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Sun Weidong leading the Chinese delegation during the 25th Round of Boundary Talks between China and Bhutan

The leaders also signed the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan on the Responsibilities and Functions of the Joint Technical Team on the Delimitation and Demarcation of the China-Bhutan Boundary. The team were created during the 13th EGM to assist the Expert Groups to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Three-Step Roadmap. Both sides agreed “to continue working together to simultaneously push forward the implementation of all the steps of the roadmap. The “discussions were held in a warm and friendly atmosphere,” and both sides exchanged views on “enhancing bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest.” The Bhutanese delegation visited Chinese cultural and historical sites during the visit.

In August 2023, the two countries held the 13th EGM on the China-Bhutan Boundary Issues in Beijing. Hong and Tangbi led the delegations and co-chaired the meeting. Both sides had “candid, friendly, and constructive discussions” on the continuous

implementation of the MOU on the Three-Step Roadmap for Expediting the China-Bhutan Boundary Negotiations that built on the “consensus reached at the 12th EGM.” Bhutan and China agreed “to expedite and take simultaneous steps to implement” the Three-Step Roadmap. The 13th EGM resulted in the establishment of the Joint Technical Team (JTT) on the Delimitation of the China-Bhutan Boundary. The JTT also held its first meeting on the sidelines of the 13th EGM. Both sides agreed to maintain the “positive momentum of frequent EGMs,” to hold the 14th EGM “as soon as possible,” and to maintain “communication on holding the 25th Round of China-Bhutan Boundary Talk.” **Bhutan and China Border Dispute**

The border dispute between Bhutan and China began in 1912 when the Qing Dynasty was abolished and replaced with the Republic of China (RoC) and Tibet declared independence. The RoC maintained the Qing Dynasty’s claims to both Tibet and areas along the Tibetan Bhutan border. The People’s Republic of China chose to maintain the RoC’s claim to the territories after it won the Chinese Civil War in 1949 and annexed Tibet in 1951. During the 1950s, China published maps that identified the Bhutanese territories as belonging to China to support their claims. The China government also began to send People’s Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers and Tibetan herdsmen to enter the disputed areas to pressure the kingdom to enter direct negotiations instead of relying on India to represent its interests. However, Bhutan began to represent itself in various international forums after it became a United Nations member in 1971.

In 1974, Bhutan invited the Chinese ambassador to India to attend the coronation of Jigme Singye Wangchuk to symbolically restart relations. The kingdom also gradually relinquished its claims to Kula Khari, a 154 square mile (398 square kilometer) area located along its border with China throughout the 1980s. Both countries also began talks to establish a bilateral relationship in 1983. In 1984, Bhutan and China began to hold annual meetings to solve the border issues. China and Bhutan discussed the possibility of trading Jakarlung and Pasamlung regions for the Doklam, Gieu, and Sinchulumpa areas in 1996, with Bhutan accepting the agreement as a general plan. However, the two countries signed an agreement where China confirmed its respect for Bhutan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, with both sides agreeing to build up ties based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in 1998.



Locations of the four disputed areas located along the Chinese Bhutanese border (Photo: Stratnews Global)

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the incursions by Tibetan herdsmen into the northern areas became significantly more aggressive, with reports of cattle theft, illegal timber harvests, and herdsmen forcing Bhutanese herders to pay large taxes for grazing permissions. In 2004, the incursions by PLA soldiers also escalated tensions because they conducted patrols deeper into the disputed territory of Beyul Khenpajong. China ordered the construction of six roadways near the disputed areas along Bhutan's western border, with four of them crossing into the country. While China stopped construction of the roads after Bhutanese authorities protested, they resumed building in 2005. The two sides also did not hold any ESMs or other discussions about the border for a three-year period beginning in 2006. During this time, however, PLA soldiers conducted approximately 38 incursions along Bhutan's western borders, with Bhutan lodging at least seven diplomatic protests. In 2012, a Chinese survey team conducted the first land and resources survey in Beyul Khenpajong, with construction beginning in 2013 after Bhutan rejected China's offers of economic aid in return for renouncing their territorial claims. In 2015, China began construction of the first road in the region that crossed into Bhutan via the Namgung La mountain pass. During this time, China also established at least four villages in the Beyul Khenpajong and Menchuma Valley. China resumed construction of a roadway near the Doklam Plateau that would reach the Indian border in 2017. The Indian military responded on behalf of Bhutan by deploying soldiers to stop the roadway's construction that led to a two-month standoff. The standoff ended when China agreed to stop construction efforts and both countries agreed to pull their troops from the area.

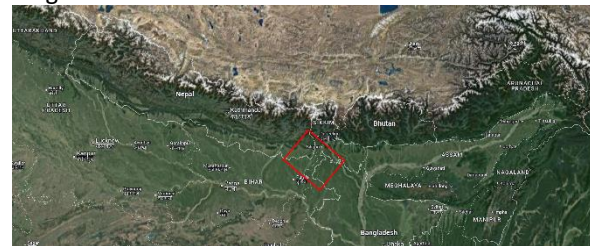


Photo showing locations of Bhutan China boundary, locations of Indian military vehicles and personnel, locations of People's Liberation Army soldiers during the 2017 Doklam Standoff

In 2020, China objected to the Global Environmental Facility giving Bhutan a grant for the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is located in eastern Bhutan, and China never included the territory in the dispute until it raised an objection. The two countries signed the MoU for the Three-Step Roadmap to expedite boundary negotiation discussions in 2021, which saw little progress because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2017 Doklam Standoff.

Recent Meeting Illustrates China's Use of Coercive Tactics and Bhutan's Ability to Not to Yield to Their Use

The dispute illustrates how China uses coercive tactics to gain leverage over Bhutan and force the country to give up territories that it views as having a strategic advantage in the region. China will use the dispute to increase its regional influence by forcing Bhutan to establish a diplomatic relationship with the country in return for concessions. China employs a variety of tactics to gain enough leverage against Bhutan to force the country to relinquish its claims to the four territories along its western border. The country views these lands as providing the country a strategic advantage versus India because it is located next to the Siliguri Corridor.



Location of Siliguri Corridor (red rectangle) in relation to the borders of Bhutan and China (Photo: Google Earth)

The corridor is a stretch of land that measures 12 to 14 miles (20 to 22 kilometers) at its narrowest point and connects India with the northeastern portion of the country. China's control over the Doklam Plateau area

would allow the PLA to cut off the northeastern states from the rest of India during a conflict between the two countries over disputed areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The PLA units could capture and secure the disputed areas along the LAC while mitigating the Indian military's ability to respond and reinforce units in the area.

China decided to build villages and infrastructure in the northern areas to force Bhutan to accept its terms to end the dispute. For example, China knows that Bhutan would never trade land in the Beyul Khenpajong area because of its spiritual importance to Tibetan Buddhism and the monarchy. China included Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in the dispute in an effort to increase the pressure on Bhutan.

China hopes that increasing the amount of land it includes in the overall dispute would eventually force the Bhutanese government to accept its terms. However, the ESMs and discussions held between the two countries illustrate Bhutan's unwillingness to accept China's terms because of the potential fallout that might occur. Bhutan would need to consult with India before signing any agreement that involves the transfer of western territories, especially Doklam. India understands the Siliguri Corridor's strategic importance and wants to prevent any agreement because it would swing the strategic advantage to China in the LAC dispute.

Bhutan would not agree to any agreement that ends the border dispute if it meant it compromises its neutrality and becomes aligned with China. For example, Bhutan understands that tying the border agreement with establishing diplomatic relations is part of the country's efforts to increase influence in the South Asia region. China would significantly increase its influence in Bhutan if the two countries established diplomatic relations with each other, which the country would use to deepen ties.

However, Bhutan understands that if the country establishes diplomatic relations with China, India will pressure it to do the same. Bhutan's decision would place the kingdom in an unfavorable position because it could no longer rely on the argument that it is a neutral country. The kingdom used the neutrality principle to govern interactions with China and India, but also with other countries, such as the United States. The foreign policy change regarding neutrality would place Bhutan in a position where it would need to choose between aligning with China or India.

China- Mongolia

China tries 11 Mongol herders for defending traditional land

06 August 2024, [UCA News](#)



Police arrest a herder in Urad Front Banner in Mongolia. (Photo:<https://smhric.org>)

The families of nearly a dozen herders branded "criminals" and standing trial in Inner [Mongolia](#) have accused local Chinese authorities of aiding and abetting a mining company to illegally occupy their traditional grazing lands.

The trial which has dragged on for more than 90 days is expected to end next week.

In a statement, the families said they "have lived on the grasslands of Urad Front Banner and maintained a pastoralist way of life for generations," the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC) reported on Aug. 5

"Jiranhoyor [their head] has appealed to the relevant [authority] multiple times. The destruction of grassland has never been resolved. Now, these 11 herders have become 'criminals' overnight," the families added.

Jiranhoyor is the former head of the Taigiin-Enger Gachaa of Bayanhuaa Township who led the local herders to defend their legal rights, the families said.

The Bayannuur League Public Security Bureau also reportedly arrested Sumyaa, Sumbur, Daichin, Munkhsumbur, Nars, Naranbat, Hurwaa, Wei Meili, Hong Wuyi, and Aldart for the first time in August 2020 and detained them multiple times since.

The herders have been detained for periods ranging from 37 days to 18 months without "legal due process," the SMHRIC said.

Photographs and videos posted on the SMHRIC website showed sick and elderly herders being taken into custody in wheelchairs and some being handcuffed and shackled to hospital beds.

The herders have been defending the alleged illegal occupation of their lands and environmental destruction by multiple Chinese mining companies, including Huo Tuo Mine, for more than a decade, the SMHRIC said.

In a statement issued in 2020, the Bayannuur security bureau called the herders “gangs” and alleged they were “long engaged in evil deeds and illegal activities, seriously sabotaging the local economy, disturbing public orders, and creating adverse social effects.”

Urnaa, a daughter of Jiranhoyor, told SMHRIC that her father and the other herders were only protesting the mining companies for illegally occupying and destroying their grazing lands.

“As mining companies beating up and abusing local herders become commonplace, herders from our community often gathered together to block the mining trucks,” Urnaa said.

“These peaceful and legal activities are now labeled as ‘crimes,’” Urnaa lamented.

Urnaa pointed out that Jiranhoyor was diagnosed with bladder cancer before his arrest in 2020 and he had to undergo several surgeries and chemotherapy before he was arrested again for the second time in 2021.

Sumyaa, Urnaa’s mother, was detained for more than 17 months for signing the petition against the mining company.

Sumbur, a herder, who has been suffering from serious rheumatoid arthritis was handcuffed and shackled on a hospital bed during the detention, according to photos and video footage shared by Urnaa, SMHRIC said.

“Sumbur was not even able to walk and hold a teacup by himself. But he was taken away in a wheelchair by the police,” Urnaa alleged.

Naranbat, another local herder, was the longest-serving detainee at the Urad Front Banner Detention Center.

The center in a release notice said Naranbat was released on bail pending trial on Dec. 1, 2022, after serving an 18-month detention without trial, SMHRIC said.

Reportedly, the local public prosecution authorities have revised the indictment against the 11 herders four times in over four years due to insufficient evidence and legal basis.

The latest revision took place on July 25 during the most recent trial.

Meanwhile, Jiranhoyor’s family members alleged that the mining companies had bribed the local police and authorities.

SMHRIC pointed out that Chinese authorities have accelerated the resource extraction from Southern Mongolia which has prompted giants like Shenhua and Changqing to arrive in the country.

Allegedly, many have opened mines without the consent of locals sparking tensions in the region.

In 2011, a large-scale protest erupted after a Mongolian herder was brutally killed by a Chinese coal-hauling truck.

Thousands of herders were arrested and detained, and their leaders have been imprisoned, SMHRIC said.

China - Hong Kong

Hong Kong has ‘irreplaceable’ role in country’s reform efforts: senior Beijing officials

26 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Kahon Chan and Natalie Wong

Commerce minister Wang Wentao and key legal official Shen Chunyao brief political elites on third plenum resolution in Hong Kong session.

Beijing has affirmed Hong Kong’s “irreplaceable” role in furthering the country’s reforms and opening up as the nation strives to become a modern socialist state, urging the city to contribute by refining its strengths and bolstering its international connectivity.

Commerce minister Wang Wentao on Monday also pledged measures to elevate Hong Kong’s status as a global financial hub amid fierce regional competition as he briefed hundreds of officials, lawmakers and business leaders for 2½ hours on the spirit of the [third plenary session](#) of the 20th Central Committee. He was joined by Shen Chunyao, chairman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee.

It was the first time senior Beijing officials had held a large session in Hong Kong, broadcast live to the public, about the country’s five-yearly top-level Chinese Communist Party meeting, when state leaders decide blueprints to guide development.

In his speech, the commerce minister said President Xi Jinping had stressed that only an open China would become a modern China, and one of the resolution’s focuses was to “improve the high-level opening-up system and mechanism” of the country, which would offer Hong Kong greater opportunities.

Pointing to a letter sent by Xi earlier this month to Hong Kong entrepreneurs with roots in Ningbo, Wang also said the city had enjoyed a role in the country’s reform and opening up “in the past, present and future”.

“Hong Kong’s position in the process of nationwide reform and opening up, as well as modernisation, is unique,” Wang said at the Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai.

“The contributions made by Hong Kong compatriots are significant and their role is irreplaceable.”

Hong Kong should strengthen its unique status and advantages by becoming a part of the country’s drive for reform, while “proactively” aligning with national strategies, such as the Greater Bay Area blueprint and the coming 15th five-year plan, which is due to start in 2026, he said.

But Wang also pointed to areas where Hong Kong was falling short. The city still needed certain “reforms” to overcome restrictions in rolling out the Southbound

Travel for Guangdong Vehicles scheme to further unleash the potential of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, he said, noting its traffic was dwarfed by that of the Shenzhen-Zhongshan link that opened in June. “Especially in the face of major changes unprecedented in a century, Hong Kong’s strategic position has become increasingly prominent, and it must serve as a superconnector and super value-adder connecting the world with the support of the motherland,” he added.

Noting Hong Kong’s many “shiny golden brands”, such as its free economy and legal system boasting the highest standards, Wang stressed the city remained the country’s most important investment channel, noting 60 per cent of mainland China’s accumulated foreign investment had originated or gone through the city as of the end of 2023.

Shen, who also chairs the Hong Kong Basic Law Committee, told the political elites gathered in the venue that one of the central ideas of the third plenum resolution was achieving “Chinese modernisation” through high-quality development and further reform and opening up.

He said that during his two days in Hong Kong he saw first-hand the enthusiasm of residents in grasping the country’s major policy plans.

“I have a feeling that Hong Kong compatriots in all aspects are very concerned about ... the major deployments and the great spirit of the central authorities and the country, eager to find out what are Hong Kong’s statuses and roles in them,” he said. “This is one very encouraging phenomenon.”

Businessman Iron Sze Wing-wai asked Wang and Shen about Beijing’s plans to elevate Hong Kong’s role as an international financial hub.

The commerce minister said that in addition to further reform measures from Beijing, “national power and strength are the greatest support for Hong Kong’s financial industry”.

Wang pledged to support the city in leveraging its strength in three aspects. The first was helping more Hong Kong companies join trade fairs and help mainland products find markets overseas.

The second was strengthening the city’s connections with countries under the Belt and Road Initiative and supporting Hong Kong’s accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a trade pact that covers a third of world’s population.

The third was offering further support by Beijing for Hong Kong’s deepened participation in the digitalisation of trade in the bay area and green economy by tapping its strengths in supply chain and asset management.

The bay area is Beijing’s plan to link Hong Kong, Macau and nine other southern Chinese cities into an economic powerhouse, while the Belt and Road

Initiative aims to create a China-centred trade network that spans more than 100 countries.

The push to turn Hong Kong into a global talent hub was another focus of the resolution, which also called on the city to bolster its standing as an international finance, maritime and trade centre.

In response to the remarks by the Beijing officials, Chief Executive [John Lee Ka-chiu](#) said Hong Kong must reform itself through innovative measures to seize development opportunities, especially amid a complicated international landscape.

Lau Siu-kai, a consultant for the semi-official Beijing think tank, the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies, said the central government expected Hong Kong’s financial system to contribute to the internationalism of the renminbi and connect more mainland businesses with overseas ones.

“Hong Kong now plays an even more pivotal role in helping Chinese firms expand overseas – less towards the West and more towards a diversified network of nations,” he told the Post.

He added that innovative reforms within Hong Kong’s system proved it had an “irreplaceable” role as they would guide the country’s broader reform efforts.

In Hong Kong, Xi has completed where Deng left off

23 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Alex Lo

The city’s destiny was always about unification and integration, not democratisation or meeting Western expectations.

It’s the 120th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping’s birth, and people are, again, arguing whether Xi Jinping has betrayed the legacy of the great reformer (mostly the Western narrative) or is really his true heir (the official Chinese version).

Let me add my two cents about the two paramount leaders with respect to the political development of Hong Kong up till now.

To save you from the suspense, let me lay my cards on the table. I think Deng inadvertently created the democratic opposition movement in Hong Kong, which was not necessarily a good thing in the long run, and which Xi has now neutralised, which is not necessarily a bad thing, also in the long run.

Consider this statement from the first of a series of articles in this newspaper.

Referring to Deng, it said, “The ‘chief architect’ of the greatest economic liberation programme in history was also the man who demanded that the Communist Party ‘unwaveringly uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat’, nipping the country’s democracy movement in its bud.”

That’s true as far as it goes.

The most controversial act of Deng's extraordinary career was his political decision made in 1989 to end the Tiananmen protests.

In the lead-up to the crackdown on June 4, the student and worker protesters formed bonds and connections with their counterparts from Hong Kong who subsequently helped many of the mainland student leaders escape from mainland China to overseas destinations via the so-called Operation Yellow Bird.

Tiananmen would turn many in Hong Kong into political activists; not a few would end up forming the Democratic Party (originally the United Democrats) and the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China. The alliance was the chief organiser of the annual Tiananmen vigil in Hong Kong until it was banned in recent years.

The colonial government turned a blind eye to Yellow Bird even though technically it was human smuggling. That activism laid the foundation of the Hong Kong indigenous opposition, a movement that was moderate for a time. Subsequently, though, from the 2010s, it became more radical, anti-China and anti-Chinese, in a movement sometimes called localism. Its most extreme expression was to claim independence for Hong Kong from the rest of China. That was never going to end well for the city.

Back then, Deng believed if he did not suppress the Tiananmen protests, it would lead to the collapse of the Communist Party's leadership, and, in the worst-case scenario, even civil war. But once suppressed, the mainland's democratic struggle was exported to Hong Kong. Paradoxically, Deng inadvertently recreated what he faced on the mainland in an anxious city awaiting reunification with the motherland.

Tiananmen triggered the democratic opposition movement, and the electoral reforms deliberately introduced by the last colonial governor, Chris Patten, gave it institutional support to bargain with Beijing. But it was ultimately the "one country, two systems" governing principle, Deng's brainchild, that made it possible for the opposition to grow and flourish in Hong Kong, despite his obvious intention that "one country" itself should never be compromised.

That was mostly thanks to the constitutional guarantee of 50 years of no change and eventual full electoral franchise. Because of the severe post-Tiananmen crackdown, confidence in post-1997 handover Hong Kong was at an all-time low.

Both the British and the Chinese had every incentive to make sure the power transition worked out – for very different reasons.

To restore and maintain public confidence, for the next quarter of a century, the opposition was given a free hand in such extraordinary circumstances, at least until 2020, to operate in ways that even democratic countries were unlikely to tolerate. These included lobbying foreign Western governments to punish

Hong Kong and mainland Chinese officials and to introduce trade policies that would hurt the local economy.

One country, two systems and its 50-year guarantee were supposed to prepare the city to integrate fully, over time, with the rest of the country, while maintaining Hong Kong's unique capitalist features. Instead, Hong Kong eventually drifted away from the "one country" part.

The opposition was acceptable to Beijing as long as it accepted a gradualist approach to expanding the franchise and stayed patriotic, meaning the acknowledgement of "one China", hardly a tough demand. But from the early 2010s, both independence and/or an immediate transition to full universal franchise emerged to take over the once more moderate opposition movement by a post-1997 group of youngsters.

As a result, in 2015, following the Occupy protests of the previous year, the opposition rejected Beijing's offer of a version of universal suffrage. All the while, separatism and antagonism – against mainlanders, not just the communist Chinese state – were growing. It all came to a head in the riots of 2019, arguably the worst in local history.

It was always understood that once the red line – when Hong Kong became ungovernable – was crossed, the central government would crack down. From the time Xi first took office, he has been firm about it. The die was cast after 2019.

And so, it eventually led to Beijing's imposition of the national security law to put an end to the protest chaos and an overhaul of Hong Kong's political system to ensure that only those deemed "patriots" would be elected or appointed to public office, which effectively neutralised the opposition.

In the past quarter of a century, both China and the West wanted to preserve one country, two systems in toto, for very different reasons, of course. But their political demands and economic imperatives proved incompatible after 2019.

It is therefore inevitable that Hong Kong today is caught up in the great power rivalry, if not a second cold war.

But that's a price Beijing and Xi are all too ready to pay, and a fight they have certainly won. With minimal suppression, the integration of Hong Kong with the mainland has been sped up by a quarter of a century. Despite Western media demonisation, the response of local authorities was no worse than that of the US government to the Capitol "insurrection" in January 2021 or in Britain during widespread city riots earlier this month.

In fact, when compared with the British crackdown on "hate" speech, which now seems to include anti-government messages online, Hong Kong has been pretty lenient.

Hongkongers now spend their weekends shopping and dining on the mainland, even to the detriment of local businesses!

The arc of Hong Kong's modern political history can be traced either through its failed democratisation in the style dictated by the West, or through its reunification with the nation after more than a century and a half of Western imperialism and reintegration through a tumultuous time in the 21st century.

The latter is the Chinese story that both Deng and Xi had worked to complete. That crucial chapter is now nearly finished.

A History Museum Shows How China Wants to Remake Hong Kong

23 August 2024, [The New York Times](#), Tiffany May

A new exhibit calls for the city's residents to be patriotic, loyal to the Chinese Communist Party and ever vigilant to supposed threats to the state.

The Hong Kong Museum of History was the place to go to understand the city's transformation from fishing village to a glittering metropolis. It housed a life-size replica of a traditional fishing boat and a recreation of a 19th-century street lined with shops.

That exhibit, known as "The Hong Kong Story," is being revamped. People have instead been lining up for a splashy new permanent gallery in the museum that tells a different, more ominous story about the city — that Hong Kong is constantly at risk of being subverted by hostile foreign forces. The exhibit features displays about spies being everywhere and footage of antigovernment street protests in the city that were described as instigated by the West.

As he kicked off the exhibition this month, John Lee, the Beijing-backed leader of Hong Kong, made clear that its overarching purpose was to be a warning to the city. "Safeguarding national security is always a continuous effort. There is no completion," he said. The gallery, which is managed by Hong Kong's top national security body, opened to the public on Aug. 7. The exhibit points to a new aspect of the Hong Kong government's crackdown on the city after antigovernment protests in 2019 posed the greatest challenge to Beijing's rule in decades. The authorities have introduced security laws to quash dissent in the years since. They are now pushing to control how people will remember the recent political turmoil.

In the government's telling, the protests were not organic expressions of the residents' democratic aspirations, as the city's opposition activists have said, but part of an ongoing plot by Western forces to destabilize China.

The national security exhibit opens with a short video highlighting the unfair treaties of the 19th century that

forced China to cede Hong Kong to the British, as well as the Japanese occupation of the city during World War II. Describing the protests in 2019, the video highlighted footage of protesters hurling Molotov cocktails. "Law and order vanished," the narrator said. Then it credited new national security laws imposed by Beijing in the crackdown that followed, for turning the tide "from chaos to order."

The exhibit displayed the battered shields, helmets and boots used by the riot police who quashed protests. It listed the casualties and damage purportedly inflicted by the protesters: 629 police officers injured and more than 5,000 Molotov cocktails thrown by violent protesters.

There was no mention of the tear gas, rubber bullets, beanbag rounds and pepper spray deployed by the police. The display did not mention the attack on protesters at a subway station by a mob armed with sticks and poles, and the police's slow response to that violence.

"One point of this exhibit is to stoke fears of social 'turmoil' and 'chaos' so as to persuade Hong Kongers to embrace the social stability that the Chinese Communist Party purports to offer," said Kirk Denton, an emeritus professor at Ohio State University and author of a book about the politics of history museums in modern China.

Winnie Lu, 61, a Hong Kong resident who works in sales and who was visiting the museum on a recent weekday, said that the exhibit reminded her of how hard it was for her to get to work during the protests, when demonstrators blocked roads and paralyzed the subway. "Without national security, how can ordinary people live a good life?" she said.

In many ways, the national security exhibit appeared to take a page out of the Chinese government's playbook after the Chinese military's brutal suppression of the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement left widespread disillusionment. In the months and years that followed, the authorities pushed an intensive patriotic education campaign in mainland China that cast Japan as an enemy of the Chinese people and the Communist Party as the sole engine of progress in Chinese history.

Rowena He, a senior research fellow at University of Texas, Austin, and a historian of the Tiananmen massacre who used to teach in Hong Kong, said that the new exhibit about national security was part of a broader "history manipulation" campaign by Beijing after the Tiananmen crackdown. The Chinese leadership wants to imprint the "official account of history into national memory, emphasizing China's victimhood at the hands of the West and Japan," she said.

In the name of patriotic education, the government in Hong Kong is also turning the Museum of Coastal

Defense, a military museum that has historically centered on semi-ruined British fortifications, into a memorial to China's war with Japan in World War II. It will rename it the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defense, referring to the war by the phrasing China uses: "The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression." The government also plans to build a museum focused on Chinese achievements, the history of the Communist Party and the founding of the People's Republic.

The new national security exhibit adds to broader concerns about a chilling effect imposed by China's crackdown on the opposition, which has led to the arrests of dozens of veteran democracy activists under national security charges. Public libraries have pulled books associated with local pro-democracy figures or movements. Gatherings to remember the victims of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre in Beijing have been banned, and a sculpture that was a memorial of it was removed. Academics have also come under pressure; Ms. He, a Canadian citizen, was recently denied a visa to return to her job as an associate professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Some Hong Kongers have been concerned about what they see as the government's efforts to rewrite the past. When the Museum of History's permanent exhibit, "The Hong Kong Story," closed for renovations in 2020, visitors filled the gallery, fearing that the authorities would use the planned revamp to erase the city's colonial history and its references to the annual candlelight vigils commemorating Tiananmen victims, now deemed sensitive.

Experts said that the exhibit at the history museum sought to bind Hong Kong ever more closely to Chinese history. The authorities have also organized patriotic study tours to mainland China and revamped the curriculum in schools to counter a rising local identity distinct from the mainland.

Some of the new displays at the national security exhibit closely resemble that which would be found in similarly themed museum exhibits on the mainland. A floor-to-ceiling Chinese flag hung on crimson walls. Next to it was a 13-foot long replica of an oil painting depicting Mao Zedong as he proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 at Tiananmen Square.

Conference on promoting China's peaceful reunification held in Hong Kong

21 August 2024, [Xinhua](#)

The 2024 Overseas Chinese World Conference for Promoting Peaceful Reunification of China was held Tuesday in Hong Kong.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of

China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, sent a congratulatory letter to the conference.

Wang said in the letter that compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan as well as overseas Chinese have long been opposing "independence" and promoting reunification. They have contributed to fostering exchanges across the Taiwan Strait in various fields, deepening the international community's commitment to the one-China principle and working toward China's peaceful reunification.

Wang encouraged compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan as well as overseas Chinese to keep pace with the trends of history, safeguard the overall interests of the Chinese nation and join hands in opposing "Taiwan independence" and promoting reunification.

Shi Taifeng, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and head of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, attended the event, stressing that the conference, gathering compatriots at home and abroad, will help advance the cause of opposing "independence" and promoting reunification.

Themed "Unswervingly promoting China's peaceful reunification and striving to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," the conference was hosted by the Hong Kong Association for Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China and attended by over 1,200 representatives.

The conference adopted the 2024 Hong Kong Declaration.

Beijing admits Hong Kong-flagged ship destroyed key Baltic gas pipeline 'by accident'

12 August 2024, [SCMP](#)

Beijing has admitted that a Chinese-owned ship damaged a critical Baltic Sea gas pipeline running between Estonia and Finland last October, but says it was an accident.

The South China Morning Post understands that the Chinese authorities conducted an internal investigation and recently communicated the results to governments in the European countries.

The Chinese-language report said the accident was the result of a strong storm.

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Both countries are still carrying out a joint criminal inquiry centred on the NewNew Polar Bear, a

container ship that was flying the Hong Kong flag at the time of the event. Its registered owner is the Chinese mainland firm NewNew Shipping Line.

While it is understood that the report is circulating in various ministries, it is not submissible as official evidence in the investigations. Authorities in both capitals urged Beijing to respond to their urgent requests for information on the ship.

A spokeswoman for the Estonian prosecutor said the document had not been sent to that office and that it "can't be used as evidence in an Estonian criminal investigation" in any case.

"We submitted a legal aid request to the Chinese authorities to gather evidence from the vessel and its crew," said Kairi Kungas, its head of public relations.

"In order to execute the legal aid request, the Chinese authorities can carry out the investigative operations by themselves or involve Estonian investigators, although all activities conducted on Chinese territory must conform to local legislation.

"The Chinese authorities have not provided a response on executing the legal aid request as of yet."



Finnish border guards captured an image of the NewNew Polar Bear in October last year. Photo: Reuters alt=Finnish border guards captured an image of the NewNew Polar Bear in October last year. Photo: Reuters>

A spokeswoman for the Finnish National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) declined to confirm whether it had received a document, but said its own inquiry was ongoing.

"During the investigation, co-operation with the Chinese authorities has been done and among others NBI has submitted a request for legal assistance to the competent Chinese authorities," said Anna Zareff, NBI's head of communications, in a written statement. "It must be stated that the investigation is still ongoing and final conclusions, what was behind these incidents (technical failure-negligence/poor seamanship-deliberate act), can be made only after all necessary investigative measures have been finalised and this will still take some time," her statement said.

The Chinese foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

Speaking to Estonian media on Monday, the country's foreign minister Elina Valtonen said: "We constantly cooperate with China and exchange information, but

we do not go into details, because the investigation is still in progress."

Authorities in the two EU member states have said that the ship dragged its anchor along the seabed, slicing through a crucial gas cable and also damaging two telecoms cables running between the two countries on the night of October 7 or morning of October 8.

Statements from Finnish investigators at the time described a "1.5 to 4 metre-wide [5-13ft] dragging trail" leading to the "point of damage in the gas pipeline".

"In the distance of a few metres from the gas pipeline damage point, there was an anchor which is believed to have caused the wide dragging trail and the damage itself," the October 24 statement said.

It added that once the anchor was lifted, there were "traces in it which indicate it had been in contact with the gas pipeline".

The 77km (48-mile) Balticconnector pipeline is a key source of energy for Finland.

Sources said the Chinese-language report claimed to have been conducted in line with International Maritime Organization rules.

The Chinese Ministry of Justice has yet to respond to detailed queries from Estonia and Finland. It is understood there has been willingness voiced to comply with the European probes at a later date.

That assurance came in response to comments by Estonia's state prosecutor Triinu Olev in May that Beijing had yet to provide any information.

"We need to collect additional evidence to determine whether the damage was caused intentionally or by accident," Olev said at the time.

After the incident, the NewNew Polar Bear sailed to St Petersburg, and was subsequently photographed in the Arkhangelsk region of Russia, before eventually docking in Tianjin.

Last November, the Finnish authorities said Beijing had pledged to fully cooperate with the investigation and in January then-president Sauli Niinisto held what Helsinki described as "constructive" talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping about the damaged pipeline.

The October incident came at a time of heightened suspicion among Baltic states towards China, largely due to its close ties with Russia in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine. This closeness towards Moscow has also caused a more general deterioration in relations with the European Union.

The damage to the pipeline also raised further alarm about the vulnerability of undersea infrastructure.

It followed the destruction of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines connecting Russia and Germany in September 2022 in a series of explosions that have yet to be explained.

Exclusive | Hong Kong should work with mainland China to host 'Belt and Road Games', Regina Ip says

09 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Connor Mycroft, Jeffie Lam and Edith Lin

Top government adviser says city must also reposition itself in new geopolitical landscape and tap emerging markets such as Middle East.

Hong Kong should work with neighbouring mainland Chinese cities to host an inaugural "Belt and Road Games" to help strengthen ties among more than 100 countries in the China-centred trade network, a top government adviser has said.

Regina Ip Lau Suk-ye, convenor of the government's key decision-making Executive Council, said on Friday that the city should also tap emerging markets such as the Middle East while repositioning itself in a new geopolitical landscape by helping the country find common ground globally.

Delivering a keynote address at the Post's Redefining Hong Kong conference, lawmaker Ip said the Belt and Road Initiative gave the city a "convenient entry point" to other markets and that she had urged the government to help host a sporting competition bringing together member countries.

"I have recommended to the chief executive that Hong Kong should work in conjunction with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area to host the first Belt and Road Games, [which can be] just like the Commonwealth Games," said Ip, who is also the chairwoman of the New People's Party.

"Riding on its stunning achievements in the Paris Olympics, Hong Kong should take the lead in using mega events in sports to build friendships, strengthen connectivity, spur innovation and stimulate growth."

The Commonwealth Games, established in 1930 as the British Empire Games, are open to 74 nations and territories and have been staged in Australia, Canada, England, India, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales.

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Speaking to the Post after the conference, Ip said Hong Kong would have to team up with other cities in the Greater Bay Area to leverage existing and coming sporting facilities such as Kai Tak Sports Park.

"When it comes to hosting these large-scale sports Games, the first thing you need to build are the facilities, but we already have that," she said.

The Kai Tak project, expected to open early next year, is the city's largest ever sports infrastructure scheme. It includes a 50,000-seat main stadium with a retractable roof, a 10,000-seat indoor sports centre, a 5,000-seat public sports ground and 14 hectares of landscaped open space.

The bay area is the central government's scheme to link Hong Kong, Macau and nine cities in neighbouring

Guangdong province, including Guangzhou and Shenzhen, into an economic powerhouse.

In Guangzhou, the Guangdong Olympic Stadium is one of the mainland's largest sports facilities by capacity, with seating for more than 80,000 people. It is undergoing renovations ahead of next year's 15th National Games, which will be jointly hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau.

The Shenzhen Universiade Sports Centre, which hosted the 2011 edition of what is now known as the FISU World University Games, has a capacity of more than 60,000.

Ip acknowledged that the government would first need to get Beijing's approval before the proposal could move forward, but she said he believed that hosting such an event would help to create a "new sports industry" in Hong Kong.

"So I think it is very good for Hong Kong and our region, whether economically, culturally, and from the point of view of connecting hearts and minds," she said.

Lobo Louie Hung-tak, senior lecturer of health and physical education at the Education University of Hong Kong, said a "Belt and Road Games" would be good for cultural exchanges but the government had to consider the capacity of local sports facilities and many other factors.

He said Hong Kong would have an edge for hosting events such as sailing and windsurfing because of its coast, as well as for organising football and rugby matches at Hong Kong Stadium and Kai Tak Sports Park.

"It involves logistics arrangements and a huge amount of resources. It also depends on the number of sports events and the time needed," Louie said.

"A city cannot host Games for too long as people have to go to work and they may complain.

"As the city is co-hosting the National Games next year, it will serve as a good opportunity to check if Hong Kong has the ability to hold Belt and Road Games."

He said the government also had to consider the views of Hong Kong residents, who might have little interest in sports events that were popular in the Middle East and Western Asia, such as wrestling.

In her keynote speech, Ip also said Hong Kong should readjust its role and positioning in a new geopolitical landscape, and be fearless amid hostility from some in the West.

"Despite geopolitical tensions, Hong Kong should strengthen its separate systems' characteristics, both in substance and in message, and mobilise its vast resources in and outside government to reach out to its traditional developed world partners in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia," she said.

"The constant drumbeat of sanctions and the twisted narrative on Hong Kong should not deter us from engagement. Through fearless engagement,

discussing, debating and arguing face to face, the real Hong Kong story will be told.”

Conceding it might not be easy to “move the mountain of Sino phobia”, she argued the city should make the most of its knowledge of Western culture, values and norms as well as its extensive network to “help China build common ground with Western countries and reduce misunderstandings”.

But Ip said the city should also look beyond the English-speaking world, with which it had previously prioritised business ties.

“It is high time for Hong Kong to reorient itself to the diverse and multicultural, non-English-speaking sphere, whether in the Middle East, eastern Europe or elsewhere,” she said.

“It should start by broadening its language skills and cultural mindsets, so that it can dive deep into building meaningful relationships with people and businesses from different parts of the world.”

She said the city was an inalienable, but different, part of China.

Hong Kong could use its common law system and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms to contribute to the nation by “being different”, she said, adding the city could show the world the success of the “one country, two systems” governing principle.

Hong Kong secondary students may soon be schooled in ‘Xi Jinping Thought’

08 August 2024, [Global Voices](#)

Curriculum guidelines recommend teaching Xi Jinping thought in a new subject

The political ideology of China’s leader Xi Jinping could soon be taught to Hong Kong secondary school students, according to curriculum guidelines for new subject Citizenship, Economics and Society.

The new subject, which will be introduced to first-year secondary students when the school year starts next month, highlights the teaching of national security and national identity. On Wednesday, the Education Bureau issued curriculum guidelines for the subject, stating that it should include content related to patriotic education. The document reads:

[Patriotic Education] helps students understand the development of our country and the importance of the close relationship between the Mainland and Hong Kong to the development of our society, thereby cultivating students’ sense of nationhood, affection for our country and sense of national identity.

Citing China’s patriotic education law, which came into effect on January 1 and covers Hong Kong and Macau as well as mainland China, the guidelines provide five “examples” of topics for students to learn as part of patriotic education. Among them were: Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for

a New Era, broadly known as Xi Jinping Thought; socialism with Chinese characteristics; and national security and national defence.

Xi Jinping Thought is recommended for third-year secondary students as part of a module called “Our Country’s Political Structure and Its Participation in International Affairs.”

The push for patriotic education has been part of Xi’s ideological campaign, as he has sought to unify and educate members of the Communist Party of China according to his doctrine.

When asked how much students should learn about Xi Jinping Thought, Ranny Yau, the principle of TWGHs Kap Yan Directors’ College and chairman of a committee responsible for reviewing the new subject, told Ming Pao on Thursday that junior secondary school students were expected to know more about China.

“It is unnecessary to single out and highlight some content that may worry teachers,” Yau said in Cantonese.

Xi Jinping Thought was added to the curriculum from primary schools to graduate programmes in mainland China from 2021.

The government announced it would replace Life and Society with a new subject named Citizenship, Economics and Society in 2022.

A document about the Citizenship, Economics and Society subject handed out by the Education Bureau in October 2022 lacked a learning objective including in the Life and Society curriculum: “to understand, appreciate, respect and reflect on the values and attitudes that underpin the local society, including rights and responsibilities, freedom, rule of law, social justice, democracy.”

Xi Jinping sends rare letter urging Hong Kong entrepreneurs to play major role in China’s reform

01 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Willa Wu

Chinese president thanked city’s business leaders with Ningbo ancestry for their support after they wrote to him about their contributions.

President Xi Jinping has taken a rare step to engage the business community as he urged Hong Kong entrepreneurs with familial ties in a mainland port city to make greater contributions to the nation’s modernisation, a move experts see as a way to show confidence in the faltering private sector.

Xi’s remarks on Tuesday were in a letter written in response to Hong Kong business leaders who are descendants of pioneering Ningbo-born entrepreneurs of the city.

They include Anna Pao Pui-hing, eldest daughter of the late shipping magnate Sir Pao Yue-kong, and Ronald Chao Kee-young, eldest son of the late industrialist Chao Kuang-piu.

Xi expressed gratitude to the businesspeople for their continued support of their hometown and country, including establishing businesses and schools, while asking them to leverage their respective strengths and actively take part in the country's reform and opening up.

The president's reply coincides with the 40th anniversary of late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's 1984 call to mobilise the global "Ningbo *bang*" – usually formed by merchants – to develop Ningbo. In Chinese, *bang* means a cluster of people who are bonded together by the same goals and ideals.

Ningbo, a city in Zhejiang province, where Xi served as party secretary from 2002 to 2007, is known as an important port and an industrial hub in China.

The Ningbo merchants have earned their name as "Ningbo *bang*" after helping establish China's first modern bank, stock exchange, insurance company, post office, fashion school and various speciality factories spanning cosmetics and food additives to matches and soap.

The "Ningbo *bang*" in Hong Kong, which includes shipping magnate Pao and late entertainment magnate Run Run Shaw, has long been hailed a pioneer in advancing China's reform and opening up in the 1980s.

The late Pao and Chao Kuang-piu, father of Ronald Chao, had also been received by Deng over various investment and economic activities on the mainland. In his letter, Xi noted that for many years, the Hong Kong entrepreneurs with Ningbo ancestry had a "homeland affinity" and patriotic spirit passed on from "generation to generation".

He also acknowledged the group's active engagement in innovation, entrepreneurship as well as philanthropy and education.

Xi said that the building of a strong country and rejuvenating it through modernisation required all Chinese to unite and work together.

"[I] hope you will continue to leverage your respective strengths, proactively integrate into China's reform and opening up, make new contributions to Chinese modernisation, and contribute to the realisation of the Chinese dream of great national rejuvenation," he wrote.

In response, Ronald Chao thanked Xi for his encouragement to the next generation with Ningbo ancestry, adding his father only made the contribution that every Chinese should have made in his life.

Chao said Hong Kong was presented with both opportunities and challenges as it entered a new stage.

"We will continue to inherit the spirit of loving the country and Hong Kong from the past generation, work hard in our own fields, serve and contribute to the needs of Hong Kong and the country, and better integrate into the overall development of the country," he said in a statement.

Xi's open letter was issued at a critical time when more Hong Kong entrepreneurs were losing confidence in the city's economic prospects, said Simon Zhao, the associate dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Beijing Normal University & Hong Kong Baptist University United International College.

Zhao added that Hong Kong's momentum in attracting foreign investment, both on its own and as a bridge to help the mainland attract foreign investment, was also weakening.

"Xi's letter sends a signal of reassurance and encouragement that the central government cares about them and needs them to be confident enough to stay in Hong Kong for development and sustained investment," he said.

Peng Peng, executive chairman of the Guangdong Society of Reform think tank, said Xi had shown his commitment to prioritising economic development in the second half of the year.

Peng also cited how the report by state-owned news agency Xinhua about the letter had mentioned Deng Xiaoping, a subtle yet significant sign of Xi's determination to continue the reforms Deng had embarked on.

Later this month, on August 22, is also the 120th birthday of the late paramount leader.

China's economy has slowed down in recent years from double-digit growth in 2010 to around 5 per cent currently. Over 95 per cent of Chinese business entities are from the private sector, making it the major growth driver.

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said Xi's letter showed the leader's "affirmation and sincere encouragement" for Ningbo-linked merchants in the city to redouble their patriotic acts and contributions to the country's development.

"The inspiring letter has instilled a steadfast confidence in not only the mentioned businessmen, but also Hong Kong entrepreneurs in different places of the country, to continue leveraging their strength to contribute to the country," Lee said in a statement issued on Thursday night.

The Hong Kong leader also pledged to unite all business and civil forces to integrate into the nation's development, contributing to a stronger country and its rejuvenation.

William Lee Tak-lun, president of the International Ningbo Merchant Association and one of the entrepreneurs penning the letter, told the Post that they sent it to Xi about two weeks ago.

According to him, their letter was a report of what they did in the past twenty years in terms of boosting Hong Kong's economy and people's livelihood, as well as their commitment to serve the city and the country.

"We are surprised that he replied to us so soon, which is a big encouragement to us," Lee said, adding most of the entrepreneurs are the second and third generation of Ningbo businessmen.

"The president has asked us to do more. We will as always," Lee said.

Since the mainland's reform and opening up in the 1980s, the Ningbo group in Hong Kong donated over 6 billion yuan (US\$830 million) to support the mainland's scientific, educational, cultural, health and public welfare undertakings.

They have also contributed to the economy and society by attracting investments and driving the opening up of the country.

The last time Xi wrote to individual business leaders was a decade ago when he replied to 30 Fujian entrepreneurs to mark the 30th anniversary of the province's leaders' appeal to decentralise enterprises. Xi used a Hokkien metaphor "hard work equals victory" in the letter to encourage them.

In his previous letters to Hong Kong, Xi had engaged with students from Pui Kui Middle School in July 2023, calling on them to build a stronger nation.

He also responded to 24 of Hong Kong's leading scientists and university professors who wrote to him in 2017 to "express their pressing hope to make a contribution to the motherland".

China – Nepal

China–Nepal strategic partnership stumbles over BRI and boundary issues

31 August 2024, [East Asia Forum](#)

In 2019, Xi Jinping visited Nepal and declared that China–Nepal relations would change from a comprehensive partnership to a strategic partnership. The focus of relations has shifted towards enhancing strategic and security. But neither country can come to an agreement on the two most important pillars of this new relationship, calling its sustainability into question.

These pillars are the Boundary Management System (BMS) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Xi proposed the BMS — which commits both countries to return people who are found crossing the border illegally. Nepal signed an agreement, but it has yet to be ratified. In 2017, Nepal signed the Memorandum of Understanding to join the BRI, but some point out Nepal's failure to implement projects. In June 2024, China and Nepal conducted two important meetings to discuss border-related issues and BRI implementation. The outcome of these meetings was

bleak, partially because of disagreements over the BRI and BMS.

On 20 June 2024, representatives of China and Nepal met in Beijing for a meeting of the Joint Expert Group to conduct a discussion related to border issues, but did not produce a bilateral statement. The lack of a bilateral statement encourages speculation. One particular speculation is that this meeting failed to yield positive outcomes to resolve border issues, which could be because of the failure to reach a consensus on ratifying the BMS.

While the Chinese side pressed Nepal to ratify the BMS, Nepal urged China to follow the mandates of the boundary protocol, which require both sides to first engage in border investigation, then meet and resolve border issues and finally ratify the BMS. In Nepal, border inspection is a priority because there have been increased cases of encroachment, illegal construction and missing border pillars.

China's push for a BMS is driven by the need to establish a comprehensive security mechanism at the border as soon as possible, to guard the political stability of Tibet. Since the Tibetans' 2008 protest in Nepal, Chinese scholars and leaders have pushed for border pacification to be China's top priority in Nepal. Tibetans are one of the primary targets of the BMS. Reports claim that the BMS also sought to repatriate Tibetans fleeing Tibet within a week, though the content of the agreement is yet to be made public.

Following the border talk, on 26 June 2024 China and Nepal held the 16th Meeting of the Nepal–China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism. Instead of joint statements, after the meeting Nepal made a press release, while China published news about the meeting. It is evident that a lack of agreement on the BRI is a major issue. For instance, the Chinese side mentioned the BRI twice in approximately 300 news reports. In contrast, Nepal's press releases do not mention the BRI at all.

The BRI has become a sensitive issue in Nepal. Nepal is reluctant to accept high-interest loans because it is wary of getting trapped in unsustainable debts owed to China, which has happened with Sri Lanka and other countries. In 2023 the above concerns spurred a controversy in Nepal, when the Chinese embassy mentioned that Pokhara International Airport was built under the BRI.

Some Nepalese lawmakers also expressed concern over the lack of transparency in the implementation of BRI projects. But China is not interested in providing grants, which has led to BRI diplomatic stagnation. Nepal also worries about maintaining strategic balance with India, which is Nepal's largest trading partner.

Amidst the contention over these issues, it is interesting to observe other aspects of the press releases. The Chinese side highlighted: 'The Nepali

side reiterated its firm adherence to the one-China principle and will never allow any force to use its territory for anti-China activities’.

But this commitment, usually evident in press releases or joint statements, is missing from the Nepali side. Nepal only mentioned that ‘Vice Minister Weidong appreciated Nepal’s commitment to the One China Principle’. There is no mention of zero tolerance for anti-China activities, and no mention of Tibet or Taiwan as integral parts of China. This departure from tradition underscores contention in the relationship.

With the change from bilateral relations to a strategic partnership, China’s pressure to sign the BMS underlines its role in China’s overall strategic and security objectives in Nepal. These two meetings revealed that the BRI and BMS constitute China’s two most important diplomatic and security elements, driving its interest in Nepal.

Without consensus on these two issues, the strategic partnership between the two remains peripheral. Nepal’s avoidance of mentioning the BRI and its commitment to anti-China activities is a small but significant gesture of resistance to China’s hegemony.

In July 2024, Nepal witnessed the formation of a new government that catapulted Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), to the prime ministership in a coalition government with the Nepali Congress party. The Chinese government have already pressured Oli on the BRI.

But the situation is different this time. Nepali Congress has long been opposed to Nepal accepting BRI loans because of Nepal’s high debt burden and argue Nepal should only accept BRI grants. Oli needs Nepali Congress support and will not be easily swayed by China, which further complicates the implementation of the BRI.

Nepal, China to issue five-year passes for Himalayan districts

29 August 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#)



Nepal and China have agreed to issue five-year entry and exit passes for people in 15 districts of northern Nepal abutting China. After incorporating Chinese

feedback, the Department of Immigration, under the the Ministry of Home Affairs, has recently redesigned the entry/exit pass and come with an operating procedure, which was first approved on June 19 by the ministry.

The new arrangement, which is in line with the bilateral agreement and immigration regulations, will allow Nepali citizens living near the Chinese border to enter and exit from China’s Autonomous Region, Tibet, states one of the objectives of the operating procedure issued by the government.

Nepali citizens living in northern districts who depend on Tibet for trade, pilgrimage, work, health checks and other daily activities, have long been complaining of hassles in visiting Tibet due to lack of mandatory passes.

However, this arrangement was suspended after the onset of Covid pandemic at the end of 2019. And after China started reopening 14 traditional entry points, some local units on the Nepali side started issuing temporary “China Departure and Entry Permits” locally. Now, to streamline the entry and exit permission, the Department of Immigration is all set to issue digital passes to residents of the 15 districts. However, Nepali citizens from other districts will need a visa to enter Chinese territory.

According to the operating procedure, the 15 districts where the passes would be distributed are Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha, Solukumbhu, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha, Manang, Mustang, Dolpa, Mugu, Humla, Bajhang and Darchula. Those 14 dedicated trading/entry/exit points between Nepal and China are Tiptala (Taplejung); Kimathnaka (Sankhuwasabha); Falak and Lapchi of Dolakha; Tatopani and Gumba of Sindhupalchok; Lazing and Chhekampar (Gorkha); Korala of Mustang; Hilsa (Humla); Nakcha (Mugu); Maringla Bhanjyang (Dolpa); Urai (Bajhang); and Tinkar of Darchula district.

According to the Department of Immigration, the entry pass will, however, not be issued immediately in Solukumbhu, Dhading, and Manang districts due to ongoing adverse weather conditions.

“A decision has already been made to issue digital passes. It is in the implementation process,” said Koshahari Niraula, Director General at the Department of Immigration. “Necessary instructions have been given to the immigration and district administration offices for implementation.”

Before 2007, Nepali and Chinese nationals from border districts could travel up to 30 kilometres inside each other’s territory without restrictions. However, in January 2007, both sides reached a new agreement under which an identity card with one year validity was made mandatory, said noted cartographer Buddhi Narayan Shrestha. Now, both sides have developed a digital identity card.

Nepal and China first entered an 'Agreement on Trade and other Related Matters between the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China and Nepal' on September 30, 1956, which was last renewed on July 10, 2002.

The agreement says those wishing to travel to the other country must hold valid passports issued by the sending country and a visa issued by the receiving country. Inhabitants of the border districts shall hold exit-entry passes with photo-affixed ID cards for border trade, pilgrimage and to visit relatives and friends, according to the agreement.

Shrestha said those with the entry/exit passes are not allowed to travel beyond the border districts into the interior of the other country.

"Generally, the limit is 30 km from the borderline. And those with permits for pilgrimage can travel through the designated routes and allotted entry points. They are not permitted to stay in the border districts of the receiving country for more than a month. Either party has the right to refuse entry into its territory of anyone deemed persona non-grata," according to Shrestha.

A senior foreign ministry official confided to the Post that the Chinese side initially expressed some reservations about the proposed operating procedure, particularly the issuance of five-year passes to Nepali citizens in the 15 northern districts. They had also called for making the passes digital.

After considering the Chinese request, the foreign ministry official said that the home ministry had redesigned the new pass, revisiting some conditions that were initially proposed.

Niraula said the Chinese side has agreed to issue the pass for five years. "With their consent, we have finalised and issued the new operating procedure."

According to one Home Ministry official, the ministry and the Department of Immigration agreed to incorporate biometric security features into the pass, as requested by Chinese officials. The new pass with biometric information is intended to curb illegal and criminal activities across the Nepal-Tibet border.

The five-year pass will be issued exclusively to Nepali citizens living in the 15 border districts, their siblings, and those who are married and living permanently in these districts.

Also, those who have migrated from other districts and are now permanently living in these 15 districts are eligible for the pass.

However, if someone gets married and migrates to another district, they will not get the pass.

To obtain the entry pass, one should fill out a form and provide required documents including a copy of the citizenship, a recommendation letter from the ward office, a migration letter if the service seeker has migrated from another district, a marriage certificate (for those coming from another district after marriage)

and a passport-sized photo, according to the operating procedure.

After verifying all the documents and information, the immigration office issues the permit, said the work plan. In case a district does not have immigration office, the service seekers should visit the district administration offices to receive the pass.

"The permit is not transferable and will remain valid for up to five years from the date of issuance. Once it expires, one should reapply. If the card is lost or destroyed, the same process should be followed to get a copy of the permit," according to the operating procedure.

Madav Sapkota, a CPN (Maoist Centre) lawmaker from Sindhupalchok district, lauded the development and said it will benefit the people living in bordering districts.

"The process was started when Pushpa Kamal Dahal was the prime minister, and now it is set to be formalised. Earlier, the Chinese authorities would issue one-year entry permits, and after Covid, they limited it to a day-long pass. If the entry process is simplified further, it will benefit the citizens from both sides even more," said Sapkota.

China-Nepal agricultural technology park launched in southern Nepal

28 August 2024, [Xinhua](#)

Nepal Southern Agricultural Science and Technology Park was launched on Tuesday in the south-central city of Bharatpur to increase rice production in the South Asian country.

The park will improve Nepal's rice yield per unit area and increase grain production by conducting experimental demonstrations of Chongqing hybrid rice varieties and rice cultivation techniques in the country, said Wang Shijie, deputy chief of Chongqing municipal agriculture and rural affairs committee.

China and Nepal will also carry out cooperation in greenhouse vegetable cultivation and livestock and fish breeding in Kubhinde village of Nepal's Sindhupalchok district as well as in Jhapa district, Wang noted in addressing the launch ceremony.

The park was developed with the support of China-South Asian Countries Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Center, which was officially launched in Chongqing in southwestern China in July 2021. The center aims to pool strength, integrate resources and exchange insights to support and help in the South Asian countries' economic development and livelihood improvement, thus jointly advancing poverty reduction.

Mayor of Bharatpur Renu Dahal described the park's launch as an important move toward poverty

alleviation through innovation and sustainable development.

Agriculture is the backbone of Nepal's economy and provides livelihood to a large portion of the population, she noted at the launch ceremony.

"We believe that the project would help address challenges such as climate change, food security and sustainable agricultural development," she said.

The project is implemented by Nepal's Agriculture and Forestry University based in Bharatpur and Chongqing Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song called the park a milestone in agricultural cooperation between the two countries.

Bharatpur is one of the most important traditional agricultural towns in Nepal with excellent natural conditions for agricultural development, while Chongqing has advanced agricultural sciences and abundant resources, and thousands of technical experts in the city could convert technology innovation into practical application, Chen said at the launch ceremony.

"Further agricultural cooperation could stimulate greater potential for Bharatpur, contributing to common development and shared prosperity for both cities and both countries," he added.

Benighat-Manaslu-China road brings promises of economic shift

27 August 2024, [Online Khabar](#)

The Nepali public has almost forgotten the economic block that was imposed by India and protestors from Madesh in 2015. However, the shift in the national economy after this six-month-long economic crisis has impacted many lives. There was a shift from Indian to Chinese trade in 2015, which led to the construction of multiple road networks connecting Nepal to China. One of those actions by the Government of Nepal during the 2015 economic blockade was letting the Nepal Army open a 180 km road linking China to Benighat via Gorkha's Sama Gaun. Another stretch of the same track passed through Chekampar village of TSUM, leading to China's Border. That's two roads to the Border of China, less than 50 km apart.

The construction project of the Benighat-China road was approved in January 2015, and the lower section from Benighat to Hawa Dada was done by the Departments of Road. The responsibility of a 120 km road section from Hawa Dada to the border was then handed over to the Nepal Army.

According to the Defence Ministry of that time, the army received Rs 35 million for opening the track back in 2017; after that, the army started the work. The construction was supposed to be completed in 2027.

Importance of Benighat- China Road

The long-due project of Benighat connecting the Border of Tibet opens a new trading route that is closer to Kathmandu Valley, Pokhara, and Chitwan, Nepal's three largest cities. The road goes via Samdo village of Darchre Rural Municipality directly into the Ruila Naka of Tibet.

Currently, the 108 km Araniko highway that connects Kathmandu to Kodak is the major trading route from Kathmandu to the world's major economy, China. Several factors, such as heavy traffic, poor road maintenance, landslides, political disputes at the Border, and many other factors, often cause trade to be blocked between Nepal and Tibet when we rely on the Araniko Highway only.

Thus, the need for a new highway connecting Nepal to Tibet, especially in the Western zone, closer to other large cities such as Pokhara and Chitwan, is going to play a big role in the import/ export business of Nepal and China. And this project is going to open up some new trade prospects.

Challenges along the road

The Nepali army commenced the construction of a 60-kilometre road in 2017. In five years, the army successfully opened an 18-kilometre-long section and handed it over to the Benighat-Arughat-Larkebhanyang Road Construction Task Force. Another 18.5 km of road track was also almost ready at the end of 2022.

Reports suggest that the road goes via the Ngula Dhajen Pass at a height of 5,093 m (16,709 ft), making it among the highest-altitude roads in Nepal. As the road section will be covered in thick snow for more than half of the year, construction is not easy.

Considering the remoteness of the Samagoan and TUSM area, logistical and engineering issues for cutting off such large cliffs and buildings through a narrow gorge are going to take a lot of work. Although the Nepal Army was supposed to complete the construction by 2027, it might take a few additional years before they are ready to hand over the complete road.

Road and life of Manaslu/ TSUM Valley

TSUM valley is one of the sacred valleys that Guru Rinpoche (also called Padmasambhava) created and named Beyul. In Buddhism, Beyul is a holy place where there will never be war among people, and everyone lives in perfect harmony with nature. Understanding the significance of such a holy place, the government of Nepal has kept TSUM valley as the restricted land of Nepal in an attempt to protect the traditions and culture of this pristine land.

For so many years, even a helicopter could not land in Manaslu without a special permit. So, having such a road network is going to greatly shift people's lifestyles.

Along with a national highway, many financial and social benefits come to the connecting villages. As a well-paved gravel road crosses the pristine TSUM valley, the locals have better access to trade, schools, hospitals, jobs, and more.

However, the locals are worried that it will be difficult to preserve the cultural and traditional values of the TSUM area after such exposure.

A local of Chhokung Paro village, Penarapsing, said, "We were never consulted if we wanted a highway to pass through our villages. They came up with a measuring tape, cut through our land, and ran dozers right next to our holy Monastery. How will we pray right next to the highway with continuous noise? The community's free, prior, and informed consent was not acknowledged while they planned the construction, and the villagers are not happy with it." Another big concern is its impact on the trek tourism incomes of Manaslu and TSUM. Manaslu Trek is currently the third most crowded hiking route in Nepal, right after Everest and Annapurna. Now, as this road passes through the traditional trekking route, the tourism industry here is at severe risk. The dirt, noise, and pollution along the way will surely end Manaslu's tourism shortly.

The local government should start planning to build an alternative trekking route to the villages of Samagaun and TSUM Valley as soon as possible. However, even after an alternative trekking route, the tourists are likely to reduce the duration of the trek. The previously popular Annapurna Circuit Trekking Trail's deserted villages reflect the future of Jagat, Deng, Chumling and more. A long-term sustainable plan must be made to protect the culture and trekking tourism industry of TSUM before bulldozers and heavy trucks start to walk through these "Beyul".

Nepal Asks China to Wipe Away a Loan It Can't Afford to Pay Back

23 August 2024, [The New York Times](#)

When Nepal's new international airport opened last year in one of the country's biggest cities, it was the type of landmark project expected to elevate the fortunes of one of Asia's poorest countries while deepening its ties with China, which built and financed the project.

But the Pokhara airport has become a symbol of another sort: the pitfalls of China's international infrastructure projects, which face criticism for sometimes costly and poor-quality construction that leaves borrower countries awash in debt.

On Thursday, Nepal's one-month-old government, led by the country's largest communist party, which has close ties to Beijing, formally asked China to convert a \$216 million loan for the airport into a grant, wiping away the debt. It made the request during a visit by a

Chinese delegation including Sun Weidong, China's vice foreign minister.

The airport has been beset by problems. A few weeks after it opened in January 2023, a domestic flight headed for the city crashed into a river gorge, killing 72 people. The airport has not attracted any regular international flights, dimming the financial outlook for the project. Over the last year, Nepal's anti-corruption agency and a parliamentary committee started investigations into the airport's construction.

Last year, The New York Times reported that China CAMC Engineering, the construction arm of a state-owned conglomerate, Sinomach, had inflated the cost of the project and undermined Nepal's attempts to keep tabs on construction quality. Through its Belt and Road Initiative, a signature campaign of President Xi Jinping, China has extended more than \$1 trillion in loans and grants, according to some estimates, for international infrastructure projects. The initiative is part of Beijing's efforts to forge economic and diplomatic ties with other countries, while building a lucrative portfolio of construction work for its state-owned enterprises. But for some developing countries, the loans have become a financial albatross as they struggle to repay the debt.

In an interview on Friday, Bishnu Prasad Paudel, Nepal's deputy prime minister and finance minister, said it had made the request to China as "our neighboring country" because Nepal was still scrambling to revive its economy.

"We are hopeful," Mr. Paudel said, but he declined to elaborate.

The Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

If Beijing agrees to Nepal's request, it will be another indication of a strengthening relationship between the country's new government and China. In July, Nepal's biggest communist party joined forces with the Nepali Congress, the largest party in the country's Parliament, to create a coalition government, led by K.P. Sharma Oli. He forged a reputation for opposing the influence of India, Nepal's neighbor to the south and a regional rival to China, during three previous stints as prime minister.

His government has wasted no time cozying up to Beijing. On Thursday, he overturned a ban on TikTok, the popular social media app owned by Chinese technology giant ByteDance, that his predecessors had imposed less than a year ago.

On the same day, Nepal also said the two countries had agreed to a series of development projects, including two to upgrade highways that connect to the Chinese border. They also agreed to build integrated check posts along the border between Nepal and China.

Nepal's economy, heavily reliant on overseas remittances and tourism, has struggled to recover since the pandemic. The international airport in Pokhara, a picturesque city in the foothills of the Himalayas, was seen as a way to bolster tourism and breathe new life into the economy.

But so far, the airport has failed to attract any commercial international flights, largely because India has refused to grant permission for its carriers to fly in and out of Pokhara. This has raised fears that the airport would not generate enough revenue to pay back the loan from the Export-Import Bank of China. Nepal is scheduled to start repayment of the loan in 2026.

At the same time, there are two investigations into the airport's construction. Nepal's Commission for the Investigation of Abuse and Authority is looking into reports of corruption by the Chinese construction company for compromising construction quality to maximize profit. Nepali officials are also accused of accepting kickbacks while awarding the contract to CAMC. A separate parliamentary committee was formed to investigate possible irregularities in construction.

CAMC did not respond to a request for comment about the investigations.

Binoj Basnyat, a retired Nepali general working as a researcher with Rangsit University in Thailand, said China would probably convert the loan to a grant because it wanted to build a strong relationship with Nepal's communist party. He also noted another benefit for China if it agreed to the request.

"The investigation into the corruption charges will quickly come to an end," Mr. Basnyat said. "Nobody will talk about that anymore."

In Nepal, the US and India Come Together to Counter China

22 August 2024, [The Diplomat](#)

Nepal's new Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba is in India this week for a series of high-profile meetings. Deuba was originally scheduled to fly to New Delhi for a routine health checkup. But given the political circumstances surrounding India-Nepal relations, New Delhi upgraded her visit to an official trip, and Deuba even got a rare audience with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Deuba's visit to India is her first foreign trip since taking charge of Nepal's Foreign Ministry last month under the country's new Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli. That detail is not by itself very significant: Since it became a republic 17 years ago, Nepal has seen a change of prime minister as many as 13 times — often a result of shifting alliances between the three major political parties in the country's divided parliament. Oli himself

has now become prime minister for a third time. His two main rivals, Sher Bahadur Deuba (Arzu Rana Deuba's husband) and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, have each been prime minister for five and three terms respectively. None of them has ever completed a full term in office so far.

Yet, Deuba's trip to New Delhi is still significant. The last two times that he was in power, Oli pivoted hard toward China and ran up a long gamut of spats with India. He faced down an economic blockade from New Delhi, raked up old territorial disputes along the border, and signed a landmark agreement with Beijing to reduce his country's dependence on Indian trade routes. With Oli back in power, India is now trying to get out in front, especially as it faces a series of politically unfavorable developments elsewhere in the neighborhood — from Bangladesh to the Maldives.

Nepal is important not just to India but also to the United States. Nestled between India and China in the strategically contested Himalayas, Nepal is an important player in checking China's influence in South Asia.

As in most other parts of Asia, the path to winning influence in Nepal runs through the economy. Much like the rest of the region, Nepal's economy suffered hard during the pandemic. Tourism revenue — a key driver of growth — dried up, causing trade imbalances and inflation. According to a government survey, unemployment stood at 12.6 percent in 2022-23 — up from 11.4 percent in 2017-18 before the pandemic. Not by coincidence, Nepal has become the unlikely source of the largest contingent of foreign mercenaries fighting for the Russians in Ukraine — as many as 15,000 of them, according to some reports.

China has already entered and dominated the fray. Like other South Asian economies, Nepal sees economic ties with China as a way to break free from New Delhi's historic hegemony. In recent times, Chinese imports have surged while imports from India have declined. Earlier this year, Nepal and China teamed up to drill for oil in the former's territory as a way to reduce Nepal's dependence on oil imports from India — a key strategic objective for Kathmandu after New Delhi imposed an economic blockade on its fuel imports in 2015 over a political dispute. There have also been reports of possible projects under China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative.

But while Nepal pivots to China, the United States has not stood by idly. In recent years, Washington has tried to build its own presence in Nepal. In 2017, a \$500 million compact was signed to build critical infrastructure, including the facilitation of cross-border electricity trade between Nepal and India. Last week, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Verma was in Kathmandu, pledging \$100 million in military support.

Ordinarily, India is very sensitive to such activities in its neighborhood by major world powers. But in the wake of sundry disputes with Nepal and others in the region, New Delhi increasingly recognizes that it might not be able to ward off China's economic influence alone. That has created more space for the U.S. to coordinate with India in neighborhood relations. Perhaps tellingly, after Verma went to Nepal last week, he was warmly welcomed in New Delhi by India's Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

For New Delhi, such collaboration with the U.S. has become increasingly pivotal. In recent years, India's rise as an emerging power has been accompanied by testy relations with the neighborhood. Countries like Nepal have naturally pursued a policy of strategic autonomy by pivoting to China, to counterbalance India. Washington's entry into the region with economic assistance programs of its own will be to India's benefit.

Nepal government prepares to lift TikTok ban

21 August 2024, [Online Khabar](#)

The government of Nepal is preparing to lift the ban on the popular social media platform TikTok, following persistent pressure from the Chinese government. The move comes after repeated inquiries and diplomatic interventions from the Chinese side, urging the Nepali government to reconsider its decision.

The Pushpa Kamal Dahal-led government introduced the Social Media Regulation Guidelines on November 9, 2023. These guidelines mandated that all social media platforms operating in Nepal must register locally and establish a contact point within the country. Just days later, on November 13, the Cabinet decided to ban TikTok, citing concerns over the platform's role in spreading social discord and violating social norms.

Before the ban was implemented, former Prime Minister Dahal consulted with major political parties, including the Nepali Congress and UML, which led to their tacit support for the decision. However, TikTok responded by sending a written commitment to adhere to all of Nepal's laws and regulations and requested the government to lift the ban.

Chinese diplomatic pressure

Despite TikTok's commitments, the ban remained in place, leading to diplomatic pressure from China. Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Chen Song, raised the issue in almost every political meeting with Nepali officials, urging the government to reconsider the ban. Sources from the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers have confirmed that Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has instructed officials to prepare the groundwork for lifting the ban. He emphasised that no social media platform should be

banned outright and directed the Ministry of Communications and his advisory team to discuss TikTok's commitments and bring a proposal to the Cabinet for approval.

Geopolitical considerations and global context

The TikTok ban is not just a domestic issue but also ties into larger geopolitical dynamics. "Since the TikTok ban is also tied to geopolitics, there is some hesitation in making a decision," an official from the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers noted. However, the Prime Minister believes that the ban should not be prolonged, and a decision to lift it may come soon from the Cabinet.

Globally, TikTok has faced similar challenges. India imposed a complete ban on TikTok in 2020, while the United States has imposed limited restrictions. Over half of the US states, along with the federal government and various security agencies, have banned the app on employee devices. Currently, TikTok is partially or fully banned in more than 30 countries.

TikTok's compliance and commitment to Nepal's Laws

TikTok has made multiple appeals to the Nepali government to lift the ban. A week ago, TikTok's South Asia Public Policy and Government Relations Unit wrote to Minister for Communication and Information Technology Prithvi Subba Gurung, reiterating its commitment to complying with all of Nepal's laws.

After receiving TikTok's letter, which confirmed its acceptance of all legal provisions in Nepal, the Minister of Communication discussed the matter with the Prime Minister.

Earlier, on May 18, TikTok's Head of Public Policy and Government Relations for South Asia, Ferdous Mottakin, also wrote to the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and copied the letter to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Communications. The letter mentioned various efforts by TikTok to address the government's concerns and claimed that the ban had negatively impacted government revenue.

TikTok's initiatives for content regulation and digital literacy

In the nine months since the ban was imposed, TikTok has sent eight letters demanding the lifting of the ban. In response to the government's decision, TikTok committed on November 14 to appoint a focal point to directly address Nepal's concerns regarding content on its platform.

On December 5, 2023, TikTok further committed to enhancing content filtering and moderation by onboarding Nepali language resources and addressing issues with filtering inappropriate content in the Nepali language.

TikTok has also pledged to launch a nationwide internet safety and digital literacy campaign and to

support digitising educational content for school and college students to improve educational outcomes. TikTok claimed that it has employed 60 people to oversee the compliance with its “Social Guidelines” in Nepal.

Additionally, TikTok stated that it has opened access to its “Trust and Safety Enforcement Tool (TSET)” for the Nepal government, enabling the reporting of any content that violates the law. TikTok registered as a digital service taxpayer in Nepal, claimed to have removed millions of videos from its platform that violated community guidelines.

Legal challenges against the ban

The TikTok ban has also led to legal challenges in Nepal. Several lawsuits were filed in the Supreme Court, claiming that the ban infringed on constitutional rights to freedom of speech and expression. On November 21, 2023, Judge Binod Sharma’s bench issued a show-cause order to the government without granting an interim order. The next hearing for the case is scheduled for September 25.

As the government finalises its decision, it remains to be seen how the lifting of the TikTok ban will unfold and what implications it will have for Nepal’s social media landscape and its relations with China.

Locals of Gorkha elated with reopening of Nepal-China border

21 August 2024, [The Annapurna Express](#)

After a long wait, both the border points with Tibet of China have been opened.

The Ruila border point in Chumanbri Rural Municipality-1 and Nguila border point in Chumanbri Rural Municipality-7 of Gorkha have been opened, rural municipality Chairman Nima Lama informed.

Ruila border crossing has been open for 15 days and Nguila crossing for a month, Lama said.

The border points, closed by the Chinese side, were opened for a short time after five years.

Locals have been elated after the opening of the border crossings.

“Our border points have been opened. Now, the people can go to the Tibetan markets to buy daily essentials,” Chetan Chumbel Lama of Chumanbri-7 said, adding, “We have been asked to bring citizenship and pass. Now, the villagers are preparing to go to Shyak of Tibet.”

Though the border points are open, people are allowed to take only horses, not yaks, to transport goods.

Nguila border points were opened from Tuesday and Ruila from Wednesday.

During a meeting between the representatives of Chekumpar and Tibetan officials, an understanding

was reached that the border points will be opened from May.

The Chinese side had closed all 14 border points including Nguila border in Chumanbri-7 and Ruila border in Chumanbri-1 after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chinese drones to transport trash from Nepal's Mount Everest in groundbreaking initiative

10 August 2024, [The Express Tribune](#)

The initiative aims to reduce the risks faced by Sherpas and improve waste management on the world's tallest peak.

This initiative announced by China's leading drone manufacturer, Da Jiang Innovations (DJI), aims to reduce the risks faced by Sherpas and improve waste management on the world's tallest peak.

Starting this autumn, heavy-lifting drones from DJI, will be used to transport trash from Ama Dablam, a 6,812-meter peak south of Everest.

This initiative announced by China's leading drone manufacturer, Da Jiang Innovations (DJI), aims to reduce the risks faced by Sherpas and improve waste management on the world's tallest peak.

Starting this autumn, heavy-lifting drones from DJI, will be used to transport trash from Ama Dablam, a 6,812-meter peak south of Everest.



The drones, which were successfully tested in April, can ferry up to 234 kg of waste per hour—a task that would typically take 14 porters six hours to complete.

In spring 2025, these drones will be put to work on Everest, supplying ropes and ladders to Camp I at 5,943 meters and bringing garbage back to the base camp at 5,364 meters.

This initiative, supported by a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality, and Airlift Technology Pvt Ltd, is seen as a critical step in improving safety and environmental conditions on Everest.

"After a successful test in April, we plan to use drones commercially in the Everest region," said Jagat Bhusal, chief administration officer of the rural municipality that hosts Everest.

The drones, which produce a buzzing sound similar to a swarm of bees, offer a safer alternative to the treacherous work traditionally performed by Sherpas, particularly in the dangerous Khumbu Icefall.

The Khumbu Icefall, a notoriously perilous section of the climb to Everest's summit, has claimed nearly 50 lives since 1953, according to the Himalayan Database and government records.

The use of drones is expected to significantly reduce the number of dangerous trips Sherpas must make through the icefall, where avalanches and ice collapses are frequent.

Despite concerns that drones might reduce job opportunities for local Sherpas, Bhusal emphasized that the primary goal is to save lives.

"Yes, there are concerns that the machines may actually cut jobs. But our sole purpose is to reduce potential deaths in the Khumbu Icefall, the danger zone," he said.

Bhusal added that Sherpas would be trained to operate the drones, ensuring they remain an integral part of the operations.

The DJI FlyCart 30, the drone used in the tests, demonstrated its capability to transport up to 18 kg from Camp II and 30 kg from Camp I, although its performance varied with altitude.

The drones' introduction is part of a broader effort to address the growing waste problem on Everest, exacerbated by climate change and the increasing number of climbers.

During the 2024 spring climbing season, nearly 100 tonnes of garbage were collected from Everest and Lhotse, with the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) managing 85 tonnes of waste from the base camp and higher camps.

The introduction of drones is expected to streamline waste collection and reduce the environmental impact on the mountain.

As the first commercial agreement under the MoU framework is set to be signed, the Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality has already invested Rs800,000 in the trial phase.

The use of drones is seen as a significant advancement in high-altitude waste management, offering a safer and more efficient solution to the challenges posed by Everest's extreme environment.

Chinese envoy to Nepal kicks up another row via social media

05 August 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

The Chinese ambassador to Nepal kicked up another controversy through social media, drawing the ire of the local population. In the latest such instance, Chen Song faced criticism for passing a "joke" about a bus accident in Nepal.

On July 28, while reposting a news article titled "19 kg magnet, brought to search for the lost bus, is itself missing", he wrote on X, "Find the magnet then". He was referring to the July 12 accident, when a bus travelling from Kathmandu to Gaur and another coming from Birgunj to Kathmandu were swept away into the Trishuli river at Simaltal, Chitwan district of Nepal.

Out of 65 passengers, 62 were missing. The whereabouts of the buses and most of the passengers are still unknown. Upon the request of the Nepal government, India sent a 12-member diving team with magnets to assist in the search. The Chinese ambassador's comments appeared to be targeted not only at Nepal but also at the failure of the Indian team, according to Kathmandu-based people.

Nepali Congress MP Ramhari Khatiwada termed Chen's comments 'objectionable' and urged the foreign affairs ministry to seek clarification from the ambassador. Sarvendra Nath Shukla, a lawmaker of the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party, criticised the Chinese ambassador without mentioning his name.

China- Pakistan

Pakistan relaxed rules to award \$2 billion contract to China for construction of Karakoram Highway: report

30 August 2024, [The Hindu](#)



Chinese and Pakistani flag on entrance to Karakoram Highway | Photo Credit: Getty Images

Pakistan relaxed bidding rules to directly award a \$2 billion contract to China for the construction of a strategically important road, according to a media report on Friday. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb-led Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet on Thursday approved to invoke a special

rule to exempt the requirement for the international competitive bidding to award a contract to Chinese firms for the construction of a section of the Karakoram Highway, *The Express Tribune* newspaper reported.

The Thakot-Raikot section of the highway is critical to keep China-Pakistan connected through the land route.

The committee considered a summary of the Ministry of Communications regarding the Execution of Framework Agreement between China and Pakistan on Realignment of KKH (Thakot-Raikot) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), according to a statement by the Ministry of Finance.

After detailed discussions and deliberations, and in order to comply with the codal requirements, the committee allowed the Ministry of Communications and National Highway Authority to proceed with provisions of the Framework Agreement in accordance with provisions of rule-5 of Public Procurement Rules, 2004 for procurement of construction of realignment of KKH (Thakot-Raikot Section 241 KM) project under CPEC (Phase-II), it added.

Pakistan had signed the framework agreement for the construction of Thakot-Raikot section of Karakoram Highway in June during the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Beijing. China will give a \$2 billion loan for the project.

The existing road portion will be submerged due to the construction of the Diamer-Basha, Dasu, Azad Pattan and Thakot dams along the road.

According to the framework agreement, the Chinese companies will be responsible for the engineering design, procurement and construction (EPC) and supervision work. The identification of the Chinese companies for the project will culminate in selection of one company or a consortium after due negotiations on all technical and financial considerations with the Pakistani institutions responsible for the project, according to the agreement.

China will provide a list of the recommended Chinese companies and Pakistan will select one of those for the construction work. Pakistan will use Chinese equipment for the construction of the project.

The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) law binds the government to give contracts through competitive bidding. However, the PPRA rule 5 states that whenever these rules are in conflict with an obligation or commitment of the federal government arising out of an international treaty or an agreement with a state, or any international financial institution the provisions of such international treaty or agreement shall prevail to the extent of such conflict. The committee also approved to relax competitive process conditions for hiring of foreign consultants for

the construction of Chakdara-Timergara road connecting Peshawar with Chitral.

The Export-Import Bank of South Korea has given a USD 49 million loan for the project but on the condition that the consultants will be hired as per its desire.

The Chairman ECC Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb directed that in future no foreign loans should be taken for those road projects, which cannot generate enough revenues to pay off these liabilities.

Pakistan's external financing position remains thin and the government took a couple of incentives to ease pressure on the foreign exchange reserves, according to the paper.

Deadliest Attack in Years Sabotages Pakistan's Security Promises to China

29 August 2024, [China Digital Times](#), Arthur Kaufman

This week, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), a militant separatist group from Pakistan's southwestern province, claimed responsibility for a series of coordinated attacks that left 73 people dead across numerous provinces. While no Chinese citizens were targeted, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif claimed that the BLA wanted to "drive a wedge" between Pakistan and China and scare off Chinese investors from projects in Balochistan and other parts of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Saleem Ahmad and Saud Mehsud from Reuters reported on the scope of the attacks:

Pakistan's military said 14 soldiers and police and 21 militants were killed in fighting after the largest of the attacks, which targeted buses and trucks on a major highway.

Balochistan's chief minister said 38 civilians were also killed. Local officials said 23 of them were killed in the roadside attack after armed men checked passengers' IDs before shooting many of them and torching vehicles.

[...] Officials said militants also targeted police and security stations in Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province by area but least populated, killing at least 10 people in one attack.

[...] The [BLA] said four suicide bombers, including a woman from the southern port district of Gwadar, had been involved in an attack on the Bela paramilitary base. Pakistani authorities did not confirm the suicide blasts, but the provincial chief minister said three people had been killed at the base. [Source]

Pakistan witnessed 409 militant attacks in the first five months of 2024, leading to 414 deaths and 474 injuries, marking an 83 percent increase in attacks over the same period in 2023, according to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies.

This week's attacks, the deadliest in years, reinforce the trend of a deteriorating security environment. Haroon Janjua from DW described the significance of these latest attacks, which experts view as a major escalation:

Analysts view the latest coordinated attacks as alarming due to their unprecedented scale and intensity, raising serious concerns about the security impacts.

"These are extremely significant attacks because of their scale — in terms of number of fatalities, the geographic scope of the attacks, and the wide range of targets, both civilian and security," Michael Kugelman, a South Asia expert at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, told DW.

Kiyya Baloch, a journalist and commentator who has extensively covered Balochistan, said that Monday's attacks marked a new level of seriousness due to their meticulous planning and coordination.

"This indicates that the use of force by the state in Balochistan in the last two decades is not effective. It is backfiring and worsening the situation," Baloch told DW. [Source]

Abid Hussain from Al Jazeera described the message that the BLA was attempting to send via the attacks, along with their motivations:

The targeted attacks on workers from Punjab — Pakistan's biggest, most prosperous and most politically dominant province — also add to a growing pattern, said experts. As with multiple previous attacks on Chinese nationals and projects in the province, the separatist movement wants to send the message that outsiders are not safe in Balochistan, they said.

"Besides the Chinese, Baloch nationalists also target specific groups such as security forces, Punjabi laborers, and workers involved in development projects. Their aim is to discourage these groups from coming to Balochistan to work on these initiatives," Malik Siraj Akbar, a Balochistan expert based in Washington, DC, said.

[...M]any in the province accuse the Pakistani state of systematically neglecting their needs and exploiting their resources, fuelling a sense of betrayal and deepening support for separatism.

"The nationalists are strongly opposed to the exploration of gold, minerals, and coal, seeing these activities as the exploitation of Balochistan's resources," Akbar said. "They often highlight images of coal trucks leaving the province as evidence of resources being extracted without benefiting the local population. This narrative helps to boost public support for their cause." [Source]

The CPEC and its flagship Gwadar port and free zone project, located in the resource-rich Balochistan province, are major investments by Chinese state actors that underpin the countries' bilateral

relationship. But local backlash to these projects has grown and made Chinese citizens targets of BLA attacks. Describing the insecurity-underdevelopment nexus in Balochistan, Abdul Basit wrote for The Diplomat about the neocolonial terms in which the BLA views China and the CPEC:

In its propaganda, BLA frames China's economic footprint in Balochistan as a neo-colonial project and compares it with the British East India Company which entered the Indian Subcontinent in 1608 as spice traders and gradually took over the entire region. In multiple statements after targeting Chinese nationals and projects in Pakistan, BLA has issued warnings to Beijing to roll back its development projects and leave the province.

BLA alleges that CPEC would give China control over Balochistan's mineral resources and strategic coastline through Gwadar's deep-sea port. BLA also accuses China of furthering the restive province's sense of economic marginalization that would reduce the Baloch community to a minority in their own province once Gwadar is fully developed as a modern city. Lacking technical skills and modern education, the Baloch fear that job opportunities in Gwadar will be grabbed by outsiders while sidelining them. Concurrently, Pakistan's worsening economic situation has also generated rumors that the country will offer Balochistan's resources to repay soaring Chinese loans, which have now risen to \$30 billion of Pakistan's \$126 billion external debt. Such narratives strengthen the insurgent groups and allow them to recruit by leveraging the Baloch community's economic anxieties to perpetuate the conflict. [Source]

The attacks coincided with a meeting on Monday between Pakistani Army Chief Gen Asim Munir and visiting Commander of the People's Liberation Army Ground Forces Gen Li Qiaoming to discuss bilateral security cooperation. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian also told a regular news briefing that "China is ready to further strengthen counter-terrorism security co-operation with the Pakistani side in order to jointly maintain regional peace and security."

But it is unclear whether China's security cooperation will make a difference. In Wednesday's China-Global South Project newsletter, Eric Olander wrote: "China's in a bind because it's too deeply invested in Pakistan to pull out, but the South Asian country is clearly not stable enough for Beijing to add more money to the \$60 billion that it's already spent building the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It's going to have to make do with the status quo, which means more destruction and more bloodshed."

China strongly condemns attacks in Pakistan, says Chinese foreign ministry

27 August 2024, [Reuters](#)

China strongly condemns the attacks in Pakistan and will continue to give strong support to the country in anti-terrorism action, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry said on Tuesday at a regular press briefing.

The attacks in Pakistan were the most widespread in years by ethnic militants fighting a decades-long insurgency to win secession of a resource-rich southwestern province, home to major China-led projects such as a port and a gold and copper mine.

Pakistan's Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) awarded to top Chinese general Gen Li Qiaoming

27 August 2024, [Deccan Herald](#)



Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China General Li Qiaoming (Left) being conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz in Pakistan. Credit: X/@Seyabkhandir

Gen Li Qiaoming received the Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) from President Asif Ali Zardari at a special ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr (President House). Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Army Chief Gen Asim Munir, service chiefs and parliamentarians attended the event. Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China General Li Qiaoming was on Tuesday conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, one of the top honours in Pakistan, for his "unwavering commitment" in promoting close cooperation between the militaries of the two all-weather friends.

PM, Commander Ground Forces of PLA China discuss bilateral ties, defence relations

27 August 2024, [Pakistan Today](#)

Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China, General Li Qiaoming called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Monday.

The prime minister extended a warm welcome to General Li and underscored that Pakistan and China are All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and trusted friends.

PM Shehbaz Sharif highlighted that the deep-rooted ties between the two nations enjoy broad public, political, and institutional support in Pakistan, making them indispensable for the progress and development of both countries.



ISLAMABAD: Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China, General Li Qiaoming calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. INP

Expressing satisfaction at the deepening military-to-military exchanges, he noted that the defense and strategic ties between Pakistan and China are vital for peace and stability in the region as these relations form the foundation of their bilateral relationship.

In his remarks, General Li affirmed that China, as an iron brother, strategic partner, and reliable friend, places the highest priority on its relationship with Pakistan.

The PLA commander expressed China's desire to elevate their bilateral friendship to new levels of cooperation and collaboration. Recognizing the role of Pakistan's armed forces in promoting regional peace and stability and combating terrorism, General Li reiterated the PLA's commitment to further expanding its cooperation with Pakistan to enhance the capacity building of the two armed forces.

The two sides focused on various aspects of the Pakistan-China friendship, particularly the bilateral defense and strategic partnership.

Earlier, PLA Commander General Li Qiaoming visited the General Headquarters where he held a meeting with Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir.

The meeting offered a forum for in-depth discussions on matters of mutual interest, regional security, military training, and strategies to improve bilateral defense cooperation, according to a statement from the ISPR.

Gen Asim Munir thanked the dignitary and reiterated how much Pakistan values its brotherly relations with China.

Earlier, in a formal show of deference and hospitality, General Li Qiaoming arrived at the General Headquarters, laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada, and received a guard of honour by a well-groomed Pakistan Army detachment.

Pakistan's Balochistan, home to China-led projects, hit by militant attacks, 60 killed

26 August 2024, [SCMP](#)

The attacks targeted police stations, railway lines, and vehicles on highways, with the Baloch Liberation Army claiming responsibility.

Separatist militant attacks on police stations, railway lines and highways in Pakistan's restive province of Balochistan, coupled with retaliatory operations by security forces, killed more than 60 people, officials said on Monday.

The most widespread assault by ethnic insurgents in years forms part of a decades-long effort to win secession of the resource-rich southwestern province, home to major China-led projects such as a strategic port and a gold and copper mine.

"These attacks are a well thought out plan to create anarchy in Pakistan," Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement, adding that security forces had killed 12 militants in operations after the attacks on Sunday and Monday.

Pakistan's military said 14 soldiers and police, and 21 militants, were killed in fighting after the largest of the attacks, which targeted vehicles from buses to goods trucks on a major highway.

It was not immediately clear if that included the 12 militants the interior ministry confirmed dead.

Local officials said at least 23 passengers were killed in the attack, with 35 vehicles set ablaze.

Rail traffic with Quetta was suspended following blasts on a rail bridge linking the provincial capital to the rest of Pakistan, as well as on a rail link to neighbouring Iran, railways official Muhammad Kashif said.

Police said they had found six as yet unidentified bodies near the site of the attack on the railway bridge. Officials said militants also targeted police and security stations in Balochistan, which is Pakistan's largest province by area, killing at least 10 people in one attack.

Militant group the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) took responsibility in a statement to journalists that claimed many more attacks, including one on a major paramilitary base, though Pakistani authorities have yet to confirm these.

The BLA is the biggest of several ethnic insurgent groups that have battled the central government for decades, saying it unfairly exploits Balochistan's gas and mineral resources. It seeks the expulsion of China and independence for the province.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed that security forces would retaliate and bring those responsible to justice.

General Li Qiaoming, commander of China's People's Liberation Army Ground Forces and Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir met on Monday, though a Pakistani military statement made no mention of the attacks.

"The meeting afforded an opportunity for in-depth discussions on matters of mutual interest, regional security, military training, and measures to further augment bilateral defence cooperation," it said.

Passengers killed

On Sunday night, armed men blocked a highway in Balochistan, marched passengers off vehicles, and shot them after checking their identity cards, a senior superintendent of police, Ayub Achakzai, told Reuters. As many as 35 vehicles, including trucks, were set on fire on the highway in the area of Musakhail.

"The armed men also not only killed passengers but also killed the drivers of trucks carrying coal," said Hameed Zahir, deputy commissioner of the area.

Militants have targeted workers from the eastern province of Punjab, whom they see as exploiting their resources.

In the past, they have also attacked Chinese interests and citizens in the province, where China runs the strategic southern deep water port of Gawadar, as well as a gold and copper mine in its west.

The BLA said its fighters targeted military personnel travelling in civilian clothes, who were shot after being identified.

Pakistan's interior ministry said the dead were innocent citizens.

Six security personnel, three civilians and one tribal elder made up the 10 killed in clashes with armed militants who stormed a station of the Balochistan Levies in the central district of Kalat, police official Dostain Khan Dashti said.

Officials said police stations had also been attacked in two southern coastal towns, but the toll had yet to be confirmed.

Balochistan, which borders both Iran and Afghanistan, is Pakistan's largest province by size, but the least populated and remains largely underdeveloped, with high levels of poverty

Pakistan postpones opening of \$250 million China-funded airport over security fears

23 August 2024, [First Post](#)

The planned opening on August 14 - Pakistan's Independence Day - was abruptly delayed following mass protests earlier this month that paralysed Gwadar, the city where the airport is located

Pakistan has postponed the opening of a nearly \$250 million China-funded New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) due to security concerns.

According to *Nikkei Asia* report, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was due to attend the inauguration of New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), close to a port at the center of the \$50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

However, the planned opening on August 14 - Pakistan's Independence Day - was abruptly delayed following mass protests earlier this month that paralysed Gwadar, the city where the airport is located.

No new opening date has been announced for the \$246 million project, which got off the ground following a grant deal with Beijing in 2015.

"All the required work and prerequisite arrangements on [the New Gwadar] airport have been completed and it's ready for flight operations," *Nikkei Asia* quoted a government official familiar with the matter as saying.

The New Gwadar International Airport's opening has been delayed again, following an initial postponement last year, due to concerns over low flight demand amid ongoing militant attacks and separatist unrest.

The single-runway airport, located 45 kilometers from the Chinese-controlled Gwadar port, spans 4,300 acres and can accommodate large aircraft like the Airbus A380, making it Pakistan's largest airport by size, surpassing Islamabad's airport.

Gwadar's efforts to establish itself as a major hub have been underwhelming, with only three weekly flights to a smaller nearby airport from Karachi, many of which are canceled.

Despite anticipated direct flights from Chinese airlines, analysts doubt there will be a significant increase in demand, reported *Nikkei Asia*.

"The inauguration of NGIA is symbolic in nature because it is not commercially viable for any airline in the short term," Afsar Malik, an expert in airline economics, was quoted as saying.

Pakistani governments have long touted the multibillion-dollar investment with China as a means to transform Gwadar into the next Singapore.

However, on Monday, the prime minister ordered that half of all government sea cargo, originally slated for Karachi, be rerouted to Gwadar's port, underscoring its underutilisation.

There are concerns that Gwadar's new transport hub may become a white elephant, akin to Sri Lanka's Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, which is often labeled the "world's emptiest international airport" due to sparse flight activity.

"Vanity projects are not new for the Chinese, they have built similar projects back home which have limited use," *Nikkei Asia* quoted Mohammad Shoab, an assistant professor at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, as saying.

"The Chinese are biding their time and the NGIA can be of use once Gwadar kicks off. ... In the meantime, NGIA and old Gwadar airport can be used by other support missions from China," Shoab added.

This month, Gwadar saw major protests by groups advocating for civil, political, and economic rights in Balochistan, where the China-funded port is located.

Beijing has become increasingly cautious about investing in Pakistan following a series of deadly attacks on its nationals. The country faces a rise in militant activity from both Islamist groups and separatists in Balochistan.

Islamabad, already struggling with a fragile economy, has pledged to enhance security for workers and launch new counterterror operations. Despite hopes that the new airport will attract more Chinese investment, skepticism remains about its impact on the largely impoverished local population.

Pakistan blames users for slow internet as firewall rumours grow

19 August 2024, [BBC](#), Kelly Ng

Pakistan has for weeks been experiencing painfully slow internet - but who, or what, is to blame is a matter for debate.

Activists say the state is building a China-style internet firewall as it looks to exert further control over the online space.

Officials have disputed these claims and instead blamed the widespread use of secure connections or VPN (virtual private networks) for the crawling speeds. Shutting down the internet to crush dissent is a familiar move in regulators' playbooks in Pakistan and other parts of Asia.

Since the riots sparked by former prime minister Imran Khan last year, the government has blocked social media platforms and throttled connection speeds as the battle for public support spilled over from the streets to the digital space.

The micro-blogging platform X has been blocked since the February elections due to "national security" concerns.

Mr Khan's party supporters are big users of X and he is the most popular Pakistani on the platform, with nearly 21 million followers.

But Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima said on Sunday that the government was not behind the recent slowdown.

She said her team has been "working tirelessly" with internet service providers and telcos to resolve the issue.

Ms Fatima said a "large population" had been using VPNs and "this strained the network, causing the internet to go slow".

She said reports that the state was behind the slow connections were "completely false".

However Ms Fatima said the government had been upgrading its systems to improve cyber security.

"It is the right of the government to [take such measures] given the cyber security attacks that this country has to go through," she said.

Activists however accuse the minister of "dodging criticism like a usual politician".

Shahzad Ahmad, director of local digital watchdog Bytes for All, told the BBC his organisation has "ample tech evident" to prove the existence of a firewall.

"It seems its purpose is to monitor online traffic... and limit dissemination [of information] in online spaces, particularly curbing political expression," Mr Ahmad said.

"Even if civil liberties don't matter, this is now about people's livelihood and the economy as well," said Farieha Aziz, co-founder of Bolo Bhi, a local non-profit that advocates for free speech online.

Business leaders and associations have warned that the slow connections could endanger Pakistan's business potential.

"The imposition of the firewall has triggered a perfect storm of challenges, with prolonged internet disconnections and erratic VPN performance threatening a complete meltdown of business operations," said the Pakistan Software Houses Association.

This could cost the IT sector up to \$300 million, the association said, calling it a "direct, tangible and aggressive assault on the industry's viability".

"A mass exodus of IT companies is not just a possibility but an imminent reality if immediate and decisive action is not taken," it said.

Activists have filed a petition before the Islamabad High Court, calling for access to the internet to be declared a fundamental right under Pakistan's constitution.

Pakistan-China friendship highlighted in Independence Day celebrations, two former diplomats awarded for contributions

16 August 2024, [Global Times](#), Dong Feng

The Embassy of Pakistan in China celebrated the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan in Beijing on August 14. Activities were hosted at the embassy. The friendship between China and Pakistan was also celebrated at an award ceremony.

Moreover, the Embassy of Pakistan in China hosted a Pakistan Civil Award Investiture Ceremony. Two representatives who contributed to the bilateral ties were awarded - Sha Zukang, former permanent representative of China to the UN in Geneva, who also served as president of the China-Pakistan Friendship Association, and Nong Rong, deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the CPC Central Committee and Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, who also served as the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan. Ambassador Hashmi, on behalf of the President of Pakistan, conferred the prestigious "Hilal-e-Quaid-i-Azam" award.

In his remarks, the Ambassador extended heartfelt congratulations and paid a rich tribute to the

contributions made by the two dignitaries. He highlighted the significant impact of their efforts on bilateral relations and beyond.

Embassy of Pakistan in China celebrates 78th Independence Day of Pakistan

15 August 2024, [Global Times](#), Dong Feng

Embassy of Pakistan in China celebrated the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan in Beijing on Wednesday. Activities were hosted at the embassy. The friendship between China and Pakistan was also celebrated at an award ceremony.

Early in the morning, officials and Pakistani community participated in a flag hoisting ceremony to celebrate the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan. Holding their national flags, Pakistani children smiled in the morning sunshine.

Messages from President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, as well as Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif were extended to the audience.

In his keynote speech, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi said, "This day marks a celebration of our nation's enduring spirit, a testament to the sacrifices and unwavering resolve of our founding fathers, who paved the path for our freedom. As we unfurl our national flag today, let us reflect on the progress we have made and renew our commitment toward a prosperous and peaceful country."

The ambassador also stressed the friendship between Pakistan and China.

"Here in China, we are privileged to witness the blossoming of a friendship that has grown alongside our nation's journey. The bond between Pakistan and China, characterized by mutual respect and a shared vision, is unparalleled in inter-state relations," he said.

He also urged the attendees to contribute more to strengthen bilateral relations.

"We are resolved to further solidify this friendship. I call upon the Pakistani community in China to continue playing its vital role in strengthening this unique relationship," the ambassador noted.

Moreover, the Embassy of Pakistan in China hosted a Pakistan Civil Award Investiture Ceremony. Two representatives who contributed to the bilateral ties - Sha Zukang, former permanent representative of China to the UN and president of the China-Pakistan Friendship Association, and Nong Rong, deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the CPC Central Committee and Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and former ambassador of China to Pakistan - were awarded. Ambassador Hashmi, on behalf of the president of Pakistan, conferred the prestigious "Hilal-e-Quaid-i-Azam" award.

In his remarks, the ambassador extended heartfelt congratulations and paid a rich tribute to the contributions made by the two dignitaries. He highlighted the significant impact of their efforts in bilateral relations and beyond. "I have the honor to witness and personally engage myself in the promotion of China-Pakistan friendship," Sha said.

Since the establishment of China-Pakistan diplomatic relations, Pakistan has been consistently supporting China in maintaining independence, national sovereignty and territory integrity. Pakistan has been consistently and firmly supporting China's social and economic development. At the same time, Pakistan has always been supportive of China's international initiatives and proposals, including the establishment and construction of a community of shared interests. "I take it, this support of Pakistan to China is most valued. This support cannot be measured in cash," Sha noted.

"We should take and we do, take this friendship, as radical assets of our peoples, particularly at a time when we are undergoing centenary changes in the world situation. To further promote the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan and deepen our solidarity and cooperation carries special important significance," he stressed. Nong also expressed his gratitude to the president of Pakistan for the honor and reaffirmed his commitment to further advancing the China-Pakistan relationship. "The friendship between China and Pakistan is higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the ocean, sweeter than honey, stronger than steel. The iron clad friendship between China and Pakistan is deeply rooted in the hearts of our two peoples," he said. Nong continued recalling the meetings between the state leaders of the two countries. "I have every confidence in the future of China-Pakistan relations and stand ready to continue to contribute to this friendship," said Nong. On the sideline of the activities, in an interview with the Global Times, Ambassador Hashmi also recalled the salience of the time-tested, all-weather friendship between China and Pakistan, describing it as a model of inter-state relations based on mutual respect, strategic trust, and a shared vision for global peace and development.

Talking about developing and strengthening the China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, the ambassador said, "I think it's fair to say that there is no dimension that we have not touched bilaterally. So we work on the diplomatic front, on the political front, on defense, economic trade, investment, culture, education, agriculture, the science of technology, and people to people [exchanges]. In our relationship, our cooperation has even gone to space with the launch of a satellite."

He also highlighted investment opportunities in Pakistan.

"Right now we are very much focused on the economic side of the relationship because it's mutually beneficial in the sense that Chinese enterprises are small-, medium- and large-state-owned and private enterprises. They have a lot of expertise, they have a lot of management experience, technology and capital. They can invest in Pakistan." Talking about the outlook for cooperation between China and Pakistan in cultural heritage and cultural relics protection efforts, the ambassador said, "There's a lot of heritage from Buddhist sites that are in Pakistan that go back centuries and millennia." Pakistan has featured some artifacts in an exhibition at the Capital Museum in Beijing for three months. Taking popularity into account, the exhibition was also showcased at other locations such as Gansu Province and Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. "We are also starting a project that is looking at the two civilizations. The civilization that flourished along the Indus River in Pakistan and one of the most significant rivers in China - the Yangtze River. "Experts from the two sides - archaeologists and historians - are working together and they will undergo field visits while doing some research and this will lead to a book but also an exhibition and hopefully also a documentary," he introduced.

China-built landmark hydropower project connects to grid, another milestone for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, despite Western media's smears

13 August 2024, [Global Times](#)

The first unit of the Chinese-built Suki Kinari Hydropower project in northwest Pakistan was connected to the power grid on Monday, the Xinhua News Agency reported, meaning the project, which was among the first under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, has taken the most critical step toward full commercial operation. The launch of the landmark project, which is the largest overseas greenfield hydropower investment project by a Chinese enterprise, will further alleviate Pakistan's chronic electricity shortages, while injecting new impetus into the sustainable development of the regional economy, experts said.

The project's launch comes as some Western media outlets have intensified efforts to badmouth China-Pakistan cooperation, the CPEC in particular, and the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), by bringing up old issues such as debt, which they claim may disrupt future cooperation.

Construction of the project, funded and developed by Energy China, started in January 2017 with a total investment of about \$1.962 billion. The power station

features four impulse turbine units, with a total installed capacity of 884 megawatts and a total reservoir volume of 13.45 million cubic meters, according to Energy China.

All units of the power station will be put into operation by the end of August, the company said. As a flagship project of the CPEC, the Suki Kinari Hydropower project boasts the largest impulse water turbine generator units and the deepest pressure shaft group in the world, meaning that it involved high construction standards.

The project will generate an average of 3.21 billion kilowatt-hours per year, saving about 1.28 million tons of standard coal annually and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by about 3.2 million tons.

More importantly, it will provide affordable, clean electricity to more than 1 million households in Pakistan.

Chinese experts said that the launch of this massive project is another milestone in the cooperation between China and Pakistan under the BRI. It serves as a living example of how the Chinese company has deeply participated in the sustainable development of Pakistan for the benefit of its social and economic development. "Helping Pakistan deal with its energy shortage has been an important task under the development of the CPEC since the beginning... while the heavy reliance on imported coal and high international coal prices are among the issues that have troubled Pakistan.

"The hydropower station offers an alternative choice to resolve many of these problems due to its ecologically friendly, affordable and sustainable nature," Liu Zongyi, director of the Center for South Asia Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, told the Global Times on Tuesday.

The launch is an important achievement in the new phase of the high-quality construction of the CPEC, which will further ease Pakistan's electricity crisis and provide tangible benefits to local living standards and economic development, Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, told the Global Times on Tuesday.

The launch comes amid negative coverage by foreign media outlets of China-Pakistan cooperation and the CPEC. One even used an intimidating headline saying that "China-Pakistan ties are at a crossroads," in hyping issues such as debt and security in the region. "Such negative commentary is not new... it has been ongoing since the inception of the CPEC," Qian said. He noted that these persistent negative claims by Western media outlets can underscore the critical importance of China-Pakistan cooperation in further building a China-Pakistan community with a shared future. China is globally recognized for its

infrastructure capabilities. In terms of financing, projects under the BRI have benefited from favorable loans, which have significantly motivated Chinese enterprises to participate in development and construction.

This financing also helped Pakistan overcome funding constraints that are common among developing countries, experts said.

As a key flagship project under the BRI, the CPEC has brought \$25.4 billion in direct investment to Pakistan, created 236,000 jobs, built 510 kilometers of highways and generated more than 8,000 megawatts of electricity, among other achievements.

All these have significantly boosted Pakistan's social and economic development, according to the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan.

As the CPEC enters a new phase in 2024, its 11th year, experts said that cooperation between China and Pakistan under the BRI will be further strengthened in sectors where they have complementary advantages. These sectors could include new energy, manufacturing and cross-border e-commerce, to further enhance regional connectivity and support Pakistan's sustainable development and improvement of livelihoods.

China, Pakistan: Rallies in Gilgit Baltistan interrupting cross-border trade and travel disruptions end as of Aug. 12 /update 1

12 August 2024, [Crisis24](#)

Protests in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, end as of Aug. 12, easing cross-border trade and travel disruptions with China.

Protests in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, that were disrupting cross-border trade and travel with neighboring Xinjiang, China, have ended as of Aug. 12. Activists in Gilgit-Baltistan had staged disruptive sit-ins along a major section of the Karakoram Highway (National Highway 35) and outside the Sost Dry Port from July 24, affecting cross-border travel and trade near the Khunjerab Pass. Organizers were denouncing taxation on Chinese imports at the affected crossing and called off the action following successful negotiations with government officials.

Lingering localized transport and business disruptions, including shipping delays, are possible through Aug. 12 as operators clear backlogs.

Traders end protest against taxes at northern border pass linking Pakistan to China

10 August 2024, [Arab News](#)

Traders in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region on Sunday called off a 17-day sit-in protest against taxes

on imports at an important border pass linking Pakistan to China, following successful negotiations with the government that will pave the way for trade to resume at the key crossing. Trade and transportation at the high-altitude Khunjerab Pass connecting Pakistan and China remained suspended since July 26 after traders staged a sit-in protest at the Sost dry port against taxes on Chinese imports.

On July 20, the GB Chief Court declared illegal the collection of income tax, sales tax and additional sales tax by Pakistani revenue authorities on goods imported from China through the Khunjerab Pass. Protesters accused the federal government of violating the court's orders and collecting taxes on imports that arrived through the pass.

"The customs department has accepted the GB Chief Court's order and the unanimous resolution of the GB assembly," Imran Ali, president of the GB Chamber of Commerce and Industry, told Arab News via a text message.

"So now, we have announced to call off the protest." Muhammad Iqbal, president of the GB Importers and Exporters Association, said a three-member team representing the traders met GB Chief Minister Hajji Gulber Khan and Minister for Kashmir Affairs and GB Amir Muqam in Islamabad to resolve the issue. "And they promised to fulfill our demands after assurances with the FBR," Iqbal said. "From today, the border is open for all kinds of trade and transport." Bakhtiar Muhammad, a spokesperson for the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said the customs department was willing to implement the GB court's interim order subject to the provision of monetary security during the case proceedings to safeguard government revenue.

"Traders finally agreed to provide post-dated cheques as security and customs negotiated a standard operating procedure for the clearance, to which they agreed," Muhammad said.

GB Information Minister Eman Shah shared details of the agreement, saying that local traders in GB would not be taxed for imports through the Khunjerab Pass. "However, a checkpoint will be installed at the Thakot Bridge by customs where all taxes will be applicable on imported things being transported to another region," he revealed.

Ninety-six percent of trade between Pakistan and China consists of China's exports to Pakistan, while Pakistan's share of exports to China is only 4 percent, as per the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

The main items imported from China into Pakistan include electronic items, shoes, garments and spare parts while Pakistan exports gemstones, dry fruits, medicinal herbs and some clothing items to the neighboring country.

Relations with US should be repaired but not at China's expense: Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif

05 August 2024, [The Indian Express](#)

Sharif said that work was progressing fast in the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and also informed that during the recent visit of Chinese experts to Pakistan, there was positive movement in the promotion of cooperation in different fields.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan wants to repair ties with the US but not at the cost of its ties with China as no other country could do what Beijing was doing for his cash-strapped country.

The 72-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader made these remarks during a meeting with a group of journalists who had recently returned from an official visit to China at his Model Town residence here, according to the Dawn newspaper.

Sharif said that work was progressing fast in the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and also informed that during the recent visit of Chinese experts to Pakistan, there was positive movement in the promotion of cooperation in different fields.

Asked about the Pakistan-US relations, the prime minister said that the country needed to repair its relations with Washington as that was in its best interests but it shouldn't be at the expense of China.

"I think our relations with the US must be repaired, as it is very necessary for Pakistan...But it shouldn't be at the cost of China... and I had told (the Americans) recently in the presence of various dignitaries, including Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar," Sharif was quoted as saying.

"I also told them that similarly, the friendship with China is not at the cost of the US, as both have significance for us," he clarified.

Ties between the two countries soured after jailed former prime minister Imran Khan openly accused the US of orchestrating his downfall after he was removed through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022.

Prime Minister Sharif said he believed that whatever China was helping Pakistan accomplish, the US cannot do.

Sharif also spoke about his letter to Beijing requesting a debt re-profiling and said that if China agreed to give Pakistan five to seven years to pay back the loans, the government would be able to bring down inflation, including electricity prices, the Dawn reported.

The premier said their request is under consideration and he is hoping for a positive response from China.

He also expressed his concern about the safety and security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan and assured that the government would use all its resources to ensure their well-being.

In March, five Chinese nationals were among six people killed when an explosives-packed vehicle rammed into their bus in Pakistan's troubled province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It was the second suicide attack on the personnel working on the China-backed hydropower project since 2021.

The Chinese were working on the Dasu hydropower project, which is about 300 km to the north of Islamabad. The 4,320 MW project is being constructed by the China Gezhouba with funding from the World Bank.

Thousands of Chinese personnel are working in Pakistan on several projects being carried out under the aegis of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

What China is doing for Pakistan, no other country can do: PM

05 August 2024, [Dawn](#), Khalid Hasnain

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Sunday that whatever China was doing for Pakistan, no other country could do, and reiterated that relations with Washington should be repaired, but not at the cost of ties with Beijing.

The prime minister, who had a busy weekend, met with a group of journalists at his Model Town residence in Lahore. The journalists had recently returned from an official visit to China, undertaken on the invitation of the China Public Diplomacy Association.

Speaking on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said that work was progressing fast on the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and during the visit of Chinese experts to Pakistan, there was positive movement on the promotion of cooperation in different fields.

Talking about his letter to Beijing requesting debt re-profiling, he said that if China agreed to give Pakistan five to seven years to pay back the loans, the government would be able to bring down inflation, including electricity prices.

However, when asked if he had received any response so far, he said: "No... [our request] is under consideration".

"We hope for a positive response from China in this regard," he said.

When asked about Pakistan-US relations, the PM was of the view that the country needed to repair its relations with Washington, as that was in its best interests.

"I think our relations with the US must be repaired, as it is very necessary for Pakistan... But it shouldn't be at the cost of China... and I had told [the Americans] recently in presence of various dignitaries including Mr Ishaq Dar," he explained.

"I also told them that similarly, the friendship with China is not at the cost of US, as both have significance for us," he clarified.

The PM said he believed that whatever China was helping Pakistan accomplish, the US cannot do.

He was also very concerned about the safety and security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan, and assured that the government would use all its resources to ensure their well-being.

There is no place for politics of any kind on relations with a close friend like China, he remarked.

He said he was well aware of problems, including the inflation and energy prices, being faced by the public at large.

For this, he said, the government had taken Rs50 billion out of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and allocated it for relief in energy prices to those using up to 200 units of electricity.

The premier also appeared supportive for those using 400 units and said they should also be given such relief. "We are really worried about the energy prices. And we are reassessing our priorities concerning Independent Power Producers," he maintained.

Youm-i-Istehsal

Today (Monday), marks the fifth anniversary of India revoking Kashmir's special status. In commemoration, the country will observe Youm-i-Istehsal in solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren.

According to *PTV News*, PM Shehbaz Sharif is expected to visit Muzaffarabad, where he is expected to make an important policy statement.

While stressing continued support for the people of Kashmir for the realization of their right to self determination on the eve of Youm-i-Istehsal, PM Shehbaz said in his message that since 2019, "India has been trying to convince the world that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of its territory. However, international law, historical facts, moral principles and the situation on the ground deny India's baseless claims."

He said that efforts were being made in India to silence the genuine leadership of the Kashmiri people and muzzle the media.

The number of political prisoners remains in the thousands, while 14 political organisations have been outlawed, he said.

Harassment of innocent people, arbitrary detentions, and the so-called 'cordon and search operations have become a matter of routine.

The Indian forces are operating with impunity, according to them under different draconian laws, he added.

He saluted the indomitable courage of the Kashmiri people that has enabled them to withstand every Indian attempt to subjugate them.

"History has proven, time and again, that durable peace in South Asia remains contingent upon the

settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. In the interest of lasting peace and security in South Asia, India must move from dispute denial to dispute resolution," he added.

China's reform policy opens up opportunities for global investment: Pakistani experts

03 August 2024, [Xinhua Net](#), Misbah Saba Malik

Pakistani officials and experts said on Friday that China's transformative economic journey has a global impact, and over the years, the country has not only eradicated poverty for millions but also opened up vast opportunities for international trade and investment.

Addressing an event titled "Global Opportunities in Deepening China's Reforms in the New Era," the Focal Person on the Development Projects of the Government of Pakistan, Asim Khan, said that China has made a remarkable journey of economic reforms, which have transformed the country into a global powerhouse.

He said that China's reforms have not only lifted millions of people out of poverty but also created unprecedented opportunities for global trade, investment, and cooperation.

China's growing influence in international affairs is undeniable and its contributions to global governance, climate change, and development financing have been noteworthy, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in particular, has the potential to reshape regional development and connectivity, he added.

"From Pakistan's perspective, we view China's BRI as a game-changer, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a pilot project of the BRI, has transformed Pakistan's profile from a perceived safe haven for terrorism to an attractive destination for Chinese and global investment," he noted.

He hoped that Pakistan would attract more investments by relocating Chinese industries to Pakistan as there are tremendous opportunities for both countries to deepen their economic ties.

In his address, Khalid Taimur Akram, executive director of the Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shared Future in Islamabad, said that China has been an engine of global growth for decades and will continue to be a key player in international development in the years to come.

China's steady economic progress and substantial potential in trade and investment are not only major positives for the current global economy, but also for the future, he added.

"China's ongoing reforms constantly shape new momentum and advantages for development, promote a new leap in productivity, and sustain the continuous high-quality growth of China's economy,

bringing new opportunities to countries around the world, particularly to the iron-clad friend Pakistan," the expert said.

Speaking at the event, Liaqat Ali Khan, head of policy in the Center of Excellence for CPEC in the country's Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, said that Pakistan can benefit from the second phase of CPEC as it provides the country with an opportunity to attract the labor-intensive and light engineering industries that are relocating due to the reform process in China.

He said that the participating countries of BRI should learn to understand the reform policies of China that lead to the country's economic transformation from the coastal regions to the inland and Western areas to ensure balanced development across the country.

Launched in 2013, the CPEC is a corridor linking the Gwadar Port in southwest Pakistan's Balochistan province with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport, and industrial cooperation in the first phase, while in the new phase expands to fields of agriculture and livelihood, among others.

Pakistan PM writes to China for debt reprofiling as IMF loan approval nears

02 August 2024, [Arab News](#), Muhammad Ibrahim

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Friday he wrote a letter to the Chinese government requesting debt reprofiling as his administration seeks a \$7 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has consistently focused on the country's debt obligations and energy sector issues. Last month, Pakistan reached a staff-level agreement with the IMF for a fresh loan, which it expects to be validated by the Fund's executive board later this month. The IMF has repeatedly expressed concerns about Pakistan's plans to manage its escalating circular debt in the energy sector while also addressing its external financial obligations.

"I have written to China for [debt] reprofiling," the prime minister informed his cabinet ministers. Debt reprofiling is a financial strategy used to restructure a country's existing debt obligations. It involves extending the maturity dates of debt, reducing interest rates or altering other terms of the debt agreements to make repayment more manageable.

The IMF previously raised concerns about Pakistan's external financing gaps, prompting the country to seek assistance from friendly nations like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and China, which shored up its foreign exchange reserves by depositing significant amounts into the central bank. These nations also rolled over existing funds when

Pakistan requested it, thereby providing additional relief to its financial situation.

The prime minister pointed out his government had also sent Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to China for talks on power sector debt relief. He said he had a detailed conversation with President Xi Jinping during his own visit to China, where Xi asked about Pakistan's plans to convert to coal-based projects under the multibillion-dollar joint economic corridor project.

Sharif told him it would help Pakistan save "\$500 million in investment, and annually, we will save \$1 billion, which will be a very significant thing." He maintained that his administration was aware of people's hardship amid rising power tariffs causing inflationary pressure. But he noted that it was taking steps to provide relief to power consumers, though it would take some time before these efforts produce the desired outcomes.

"Rome was not built in a day, and you cannot expect instant results," he added.

China-Taiwan

Residents of Nepal's 15 northern districts to get five-yearly Tibet entry-exit passes

31 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Normal life appears to have finally resumed for the people living in 15 districts of northern Nepal near Chinese occupied Tibet's border with the two countries having agreed to issue five-year entry and exit passes for them, according to *kathmandupost.com* Aug 29. Most of these people are ethnically Tibetan or of Tibetan-origin. It is not clear whether people on the Tibetan side of the border will be issued similar passes.

Nepali citizens living in northern districts who depend on Tibet for trade, pilgrimage, work, health checks and other daily activities, have long been complaining of hassles in visiting Tibet due to lack of mandatory passes, the report said.

The permit system was suspended after the onset of Covid pandemic at the end of 2019. After China finally started reopening 14 traditional entry points recently, some local units on the Nepali side started issuing temporary "China Departure and Entry Permits" locally. Now, to streamline the entry and exit permission, the Department of Immigration is all set to issue digital passes to residents of the 15 districts. However, Nepali citizens from other districts will need a visa to enter "Chinese" territory, the report explained.

The 15 districts where the passes would be distributed are listed as Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha, Solukumbhu, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Dhading, Gorkha,

Manang, Mustang, Dolpa, Mugu, Humla, Bajhang and Darchula.

And the 14 dedicated trading/entry/exit points are listed as Tiptala (Taplejung); Kimathnaka (Sankhuwasabha); Falak and Lapchi of Dolakha; Tatopani and Gumba of Sindhupalchok; Lazing and Chhekampar (Gorkha); Korala of Mustang; Hilsa (Humla); Nakcha (Mugu); Maringla Bhanjyang (Dolpa); Urai (Bajhang); and Tinkar of Darchula district.

However, Nepal's Department of Immigration will not immediately issue the entry pass in Solukumbhu, Dhading, and Manang districts due to ongoing adverse weather conditions, the report said.

The five-year pass will be issued exclusively to Nepali citizens living in the 15 border districts, their siblings, and those who are married and living permanently in these districts. Those who have migrated from other districts and are now permanently living in these 15 districts are also eligible for the pass, the report said.

Before 2007, Nepali and Chinese nationals from border districts could travel up to 30 kilometres inside each other's territory without restrictions. However, in Jan 2007, the two sides reached a new agreement under which an identity card with one-year validity was made mandatory. Now, both sides have developed a digital identity card.

The report noted that Nepal and China first entered an 'Agreement on Trade and other Related Matters between the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of China and Nepal' on Sep 30, 1956, and it was last renewed on Jul 10, 2002.

A Home Ministry official of Nepal has said the ministry and the Department of Immigration had agreed to incorporate biometric security features into the pass, as requested by Chinese officials. The new pass with biometric information is intended to curb illegal and criminal activities across the Nepal-Tibet border, the report added.

Earlier, the Chinese authorities would issue one-year entry permits, and after Covid, they limited it to a day-long pass. If the entry process is simplified further, it will benefit the citizens from both sides even more," Madav Sapkota, a CPN (Maoist Centre) lawmaker from Sindhupalchok district, has said.

100 days into the job, Taiwan's new leader is cutting mainland ties by reframing history

31 August 2024, [SCMP](#)

William Lai Ching-te's first 100 days as leader of Taiwan have been evaluated not only on the basis of his handling of local affairs, but also in relation to the self-governed island's heightened tensions with mainland China.

Cross-strait relations have deteriorated significantly since Lai took office on May 20, according to analysts,

who say he has actively sought to sever Taiwan's historical ties with the mainland.

His predecessor Tsai Ing-wen, also of the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), employed a strategy of ambiguity in dealing with the mainland during her eight years in office. However, the more assertive Lai is seen to have taken a clear and decisive stance.

His promotion of the "mutual non-subordination" theory to define Taiwan's relationship with Beijing has raised concerns among observers, who fear it could further strain cross-strait ties and potentially lead to conflict.

In his three major speeches on cross-strait relations since taking office, Lai has consistently stressed his view that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are no longer connected.

"The Republic of China and the People's Republic of China are not subordinate to each other," Lai said in his inauguration speech, referring to the official names of the two sides.

According to analysts, Lai has sought to use these speeches to project a permanent disconnect, reframing the two sides of the strait as adversaries rather than kin.

"In contrast to Tsai, who adopted a strategic ambiguity approach by maintaining the Act Governing the Relations Between the People of Taiwan and the Mainland to avoid overly provoking Beijing, Lai chose to make it clear that the two sides are not subordinate to each other," said Wang Kung-yi, head of the Taiwan International Strategy Study Society, a think tank in Taipei.

Promulgated in 1992, the act governs visits and exchanges of people between Taiwan and the mainland.

Although Tsai also promoted the island's independence, Wang said that by maintaining the cross-strait relations act that still binds the two sides together, she managed to give Beijing the impression that she did not seek to overly offend.

But Lai has simply abandoned the act and directly touted the "mutual non-subordination" concept to wipe out the historic cross-strait link, Wang said.

Addressing the centennial celebration of the Whampoa Military Academy in Kaohsiung on June 16, Lai said: "Despite drastic changes over the past 100 years, we firmly believe that wherever the Republic of China is, there is the spirit of Whampoa."

Lai made no mention of the late Kuomintang (KMT) leader Chiang Kai-shek, who headed the academy when it was first established in the southern mainland city of Guangzhou in 1924.

The academy was relocated to Taiwan shortly after the civil war, when Chiang's defeated forces retreated to the island and set up an interim government there in 1949.

"Only those who fight for the survival, development and security of the Republic of China and its people are true graduates of the academy; those without such ambition are false ones," Lai said.

Last week in Quemoy – a Taiwanese defence outpost also known as Kinmen – Lai addressed a ceremony to mark the 66th anniversary of the start of the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, also known as the "August 23 Artillery Battle".

"We are no longer trying to retake mainland China, but we are also unwilling to be ruled by the Chinese Communist Party," Lai said."

"When the artillery battle happened, I wasn't born yet, and the Democratic Progressive Party hadn't been established either. Clearly, China's intention to take over Taiwan is not directed at any particular person or political party in Taiwan, nor is it about what anyone has said or done."

The battle in 1958 saw communist forces shelling the nearby islands of Quemoy and Matsu – another Taiwanese defence outpost close to the mainland – in an attempt to take control of Taiwan.

Beijing sees Taiwan as part of China to be reunited by force if necessary. Most countries, including Taiwan's main international backer, the United States, do not recognise Taiwan as independent, but Washington is opposed to any attempt to take the self-governed island by force and is committed to supplying it with weapons.

Beijing sees Lai, leader of the DPP, as a "separatist" who could bring war to the Taiwan Strait and has stepped up military intimidation since he was elected to succeed Tsai in January.

"In his June address to the Whampoa Military Academy, Lai stressed that although the academy was set up 100 years ago in Guangzhou, it is now in Kaohsiung, and the Whampoa spirit only exists in Taiwan rather than in mainland China," Wang said.

"Lai attempted to strike a delicate balance between acknowledging the academy's historical roots in mainland China and promoting a distinct Taiwanese identity," Wang added, saying he also sought to erase the legacy of Chiang, who had deep historical links with the mainland and whose influence still lingered within the military.

Huang Kwei-bo, a professor of diplomacy at National Chengchi University in Taipei, said Lai's August 23 speech was part of an ongoing attempt to decouple Taiwan from mainland China.

"In the case of the August 23 Artillery Battle, Lai sought to lead the public to believe that the battle was a conflict between 'democratic Taiwan and communist China,' whereas in reality, it was the extension of the Chinese civil war between the KMT and the [Communist Party]," Huang said.

Like the mainland, Taiwan was under one-party rule in 1958. The KMT is now the main opposition party in Taiwan.

Huang said Lai's remarks that China's attempt to take the island was "not directed at any particular person or political party in Taiwan" suggested that Beijing's wish to seize Taiwan had nothing to do with the ruling DPP's promotion of independence.

However, Lai I-chung, president of the Prospect Foundation, a government think tank, said that Lai's remarks aimed to assert that Taiwan had "long since moved beyond the historical perspective of the Chinese Civil War".

"The artillery battle should not be viewed as an extension of that civil war," he said, adding the island's leader sought to "break free from the Chinese civil war framework in Taiwan's cross-strait discourse, anchoring it instead in the broader national context". Additionally, his remarks aimed to shift society away from an outdated historical viewpoint, urging Taiwanese to realise that Taiwan is now of global significance, Lai I-chung said.

"The Taiwan Strait issue is not merely a matter between Taiwan and China but a challenge faced by the entire world, and Taiwan is not facing it alone."

James Yifan Chen, a professor of diplomacy and international relations at Tamkang University in New Taipei, said Lai's cross-strait policy rhetoric appeared to be more separatist than Tsai's because of Lai's repeated emphasis on how the two sides were not subordinate to each other.

"Lai is also framing a different concept which denies [Taiwan's] past legacies on the mainland to push for more obvious separation as a historical revisionist," Chen said.

Timing is also important. Lai is promoting his ideology during the "vacuum period" of the US presidential election, when Americans typically pay less attention to the words and actions of a Taiwanese leader, according to Chen.

"I think US national security adviser Jake Sullivan and China's top diplomat Wang Yi would definitely talk about this [but] the US worries more about the Middle East and the South China Sea now, and cross-strait issues do not appear on its alert radar," he said.

Li Zhenguang, dean of the Taiwan Research Institute at Beijing Union University, said that from the mainland's perspective, Tsai Ing-wen was more inclined towards "soft confrontation" while Lai's provocations on the issue of Taiwanese independence have surpassed hers.

He warned that if Lai continued to push the "Taiwan independence historical narrative" to sever cross-strait ties or adopted a "hard confrontation" approach in cross-strait relations, the mainland will undoubtedly respond with "hard measures" to seek unification.

"This is evident from earlier actions such as the mainland issuing judicial documents to punish stubborn Taiwan independence elements, the People's Liberation Army exercises targeting Taiwan, and the normalisation of law enforcement patrols by the mainland coastguard in the waters around Quemoy," he said.

Sullivan's just-concluded visit to Beijing also sent "a clear signal" that the US wanted to cooperate with the mainland to improve risk management regarding Taiwan, Li said.

China lacks the ability to invade, but has options

31 August 2024, [Taipei Times](#)

China lacks the ability to "fully" invade Taiwan as it does not have the equipment, but is bringing online advanced new weapons and has other options to threaten Taiwan, such as inspecting foreign cargo ships, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) said yesterday.

In an annual threat assessment of China sent to lawmakers, a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters, the ministry said Beijing continues to hone skills such as joint command operations.

"However, the use of tactics and strategies against Taiwan is still limited by the natural geographical environment of the Taiwan Strait and insufficient landing equipment and logistic capabilities," it said.

China "does not yet fully possess the formal combat capabilities for a comprehensive invasion of Taiwan," it added.

However, China is speeding up development of a slew of new weapons, such as the H-20 bomber and hypersonic missiles, beefing up the number of nuclear warheads and trialing new tactics, the ministry said.

The report said that in May, when China staged war games around Taiwan shortly after President William's Lai (賴清德) inauguration, China Coast Guard ships were sent for the first time on interception and inspection drills off the east coast.

China's aim with the drills was to practice cutting off communication with the outside world and blockade Taiwan, and boarding foreign cargo ships is an option China could take, short of open conflict, the ministry said.

The Chinese Ministry of National Defense did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

At a regular news briefing in Beijing on Thursday, the Chinese ministry said that as long as the Democratic Progressive Party "engages in 'Taiwan independence' [efforts], there will be no peace."

"The more they provoke, the faster they will perish," Chinese Ministry of National Defense spokesperson Wu Qian (吳謙) told reporters.

Taiwan's proposed defense spending is to rise faster than expected economic growth next year, as Taipei

builds more missiles, submarines and other weapons to deter China.

"Peace achieved by strength is true peace," Lai told officers at the defense ministry yesterday. "We will continue to improve our self-defense capabilities and show the world that we are united as a nation and are determined to protect our country."

Hundreds of Taiwanese 'disappear' in China over past 10 years

30 August 2024, [RFA](#), Haung Chun-mei and Jing Wei

Rights groups call for better safeguards for all victims of 'enforced disappearance.'



Victims of enforced disappearance in China (L to R) rights attorney Gao Zhisheng, retired university professor Sun Wenguang, 2022 bridge banner protester Peng Lifa, and the 11th Panchen Lama.

More than 800 nationals of democratic Taiwan have "disappeared" over the past 10 years in China, which has long used forced disappearances to silence and control its own dissidents and rights activists, rights groups said on Friday.

Figures compiled by the Taiwan Association for Human Rights and several other non-government groups showed that 857 Taiwanese nationals have been "forcibly disappeared or arbitrarily arrested" in China, activists told a joint news conference in Taipei.

They include publisher Li Yanhe (pen name Fu Cha), detained in Shanghai since April 2023, democracy activist Lee Ming-cheh, who served a five-year jail term in Hunan province for "attempting to subvert state power," and businessman Lee Meng-Chu, jailed for nearly two years for "espionage" after he snapped photos of People's Armed Police personnel at a Shenzhen hotel at the height of the 2019 Hong Kong protests.

Speaking on the United Nations' International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, Taiwan Association for Human Rights chief Eeling Chiu called on China to fulfill its obligations under international human rights law.

"China should ... immediately release those who have been forcibly disappeared or arbitrarily detained," Chiu told journalists, calling on the Taiwan authorities

to ratify United Nations conventions against torture and enforced disappearances as soon as possible.

"[They should also] actively assist the families of those who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained in China and set up assistance mechanisms for them," she said.

Activist Wang Chia-hsuan of a petition group in support of Li Yanhe, or Fu Cha, said Li was born in China but had permanent residency in Taiwan at the time of his disappearance, having lived in Taipei for more than a decade.

He has been incommunicado for 527 days, and has been detained on suspicion of "incitement to secession," Wang said.

He called on Taipei municipal authorities to step up efforts to communicate with the Chinese authorities regarding Li's case.

Lee Ming-cheh told the news conference that his disappearance and subsequent jailing put huge pressure on his family back home.

"Collaborators with the Chinese government in Taiwan warned my wife off talking to Taiwanese NGOs or speaking out publicly about my case, saying they would allow her to travel to China to visit me [if she complied]," he said.

"If she spoke publicly about my case, she wouldn't be allowed to go to China," Lee said, accusing the Chinese government of abusing current crime cooperation agreements with Taiwan to persecute its residents.

Negotiating is key

Ruling Democratic Progressive Party lawmaker Puma Shen said the Taiwanese authorities could do a better job of negotiating in the early stages of such cases.

"Government officials ... should call on China for more appropriate handling of [such] cases," Shen said. "If that doesn't happen, then we should cut off communication [with China]."

"If we continue to communicate past that point, there will be no deterrence at all ... and it will send the message that it's OK if our people keep disappearing," he said.

Meanwhile, Taiwanese lawmaker Hung Shen-han warned that it's not only Taiwanese who are at risk of arbitrary arrest and "disappearance" in China.

"The risk to individuals of being disappeared and prosecuted in China don't just apply to Taiwanese," Hung said, adding that some democratic countries have issued travel advisories to their citizens on the matter.

"The Chinese government uses its laws, along with various undemocratic and unsupervised practices, to threaten the personal safety of people from all countries who go to China," he said.

"Chinese citizens themselves face the same problem." Geng He, the U.S.-based wife of human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng said it has been seven years since he "disappeared" on Aug. 13, 2017.

"Gao Zhisheng has been missing for seven years and 17 days, with no news or explanation, neither verbal nor written," she told RFA Mandarin in a recent interview.

"They deploy the whole state apparatus in its entirety to target people like Gao Zhisheng who speak the truth and work on behalf of the people," Geng said.

The couple's entire family has also been affected, she said.

"My entire family's ID cards have been confiscated for the past 15 years now," Geng said. "This has caused great inconvenience to my family in terms of their ability to work, go about their lives, access medical treatment and travel."

"They're being controlled to death," Geng said. "Basically, they can't leave their homes."

Gao's sister died by suicide in May 2020, while his brother-in-law also took his own life after being forced to beg the authorities to "borrow" his own ID card so he can access his cancer medication.

Veteran rights lawyer Bao Longjun said the authorities have also "disappeared" his wife Wang Yu, also a prominent rights attorney, on several occasions in recent years. She was incommunicado for several hours on Wednesday during the trial of rights lawyer Yu Wensheng and activist Xu Yan in Suzhou.

"I feel like it's about ruling the country through terror," Bao told RFA Mandarin. "There is no legal basis for [enforced disappearances]."

"If you are even slightly disobedient, they will immediately bring state power to bear, forcibly restricting your freedom, and controlling you to achieve what they think is stability," he said.

Uyghurs and Tibetans

Chinese authorities have also forcibly disappeared Uyghurs and Tibetans in the far-western part of mainland China.

An estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims have been detained in Xinjiang under flimsy pretexts during mass incarcerations that began more than seven years ago in an effort by Chinese authorities to prevent religious extremism, separatism and terrorism.

Former Xinjiang University President Tashpolat Teyip, who himself vanished in 2017 amid rumors he had run afoul of China's increasingly hardline policies in Xinjiang, told RFA that he has had no news about his brother, Nury, who also fell victim to an enforced disappearance.

Teyip, who now lives in the U.S. state of Virginia, said he has lost faith in the United Nations and international human rights organizations which did little to help except release a statement.

"I haven't received any information from them regarding my brother — whether he's alive or not, whether he was executed or not," he said.

Rights groups and the Tibetan government-in-exile expressed "serious concern" on Friday over the enforced disappearances of Tibetans in Tibet and called on the Chinese government to release credible information on the whereabouts and well-being of those who have been arbitrarily detained.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy highlighted a "disturbing trend" of underreporting of the number of Tibetans who are victims of enforced disappearances as China cracks down more heavily with restrictions and heightened surveillance in Tibet.

The rights group has documented more than 63 known cases of Tibetans subjected to enforced disappearance in Tibet over the past four years, but said the underreporting likely had to do with fear of reprisals.

In February 2024, Tibetan performer Gyegjom Dorjee, who sang publicly about the exiled Dalai Lama's return to Tibet and blasted Chinese leaders as "false," was arrested in China's Sichuan province.

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 in Sichuan province.

And on May 28, the Chinese authorities arrested Rabgang Tenzin who hoisted the Tibetan national flag on the rooftop of his home in Tibet's Chamdo prefecture as part of a consecration ceremony.

On Friday, the U.S. Congressional Executive Commission on China and the Tibetan government in exile urged Beijing to reveal the whereabouts of one of the highest Tibetan Buddhist leaders, the 11th Panchen Lama, or Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, as one of the "most prominent enforced disappearance cases." He was abducted by Chinese authorities in May 1995, just days after the Dalai Lama recognized the then six-year-old as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, the second-highest spiritual leader in the largest sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

'An egregious human rights violation'

The whereabouts and well-being of disappeared Tibetans remain unknown, despite repeated attempts by family members to get information about them, causing them, government officials and rights groups said.

"Enforced disappearance is an egregious human rights violation that inflicts the trauma of indeterminate detention or disappearance on its victims, whom all too often are targeted for their dissent or advocacy for human rights and democracy," said U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a statement on Friday.

"Families of those forcibly disappeared also suffer immensely, not knowing where their loved ones are, or whether they are alive or dead," he said. "The agony that enforced disappearance inflicts on the victims and their families is unimaginable."

According to the U.N.'s official website, enforced disappearances are "frequently" used by authorities around the world as a way of spreading terror.

Hundreds of thousands of people have vanished during conflicts or periods of repression in at least 85 countries around the world, plunging their families into "mental anguish" and dire economic hardship, it said.

The disappeared are particularly vulnerable to torture, while women are at risk of sexual violence, a U.N. page explaining the concept said.

The practice violates a slew of fundamental human rights, including the right liberty and security, the right not to be subjected to torture or inhumane treatment, and the right to a fair trial, it said.

Taiwan sentences 8 military officers on charges of spying for China

27 August 2024, [Phayul](#). Tsering Dhundup

The Taiwan High Court sentenced eight Taiwanese military officers to prison on charges of spying for China in exchange for financial gain on Thursday. The sentences range from 18 months to 13 years, marking one of Taiwan's largest espionage cases in recent years.

The Taiwan high court stated that the defendants were involved in collecting intelligence for China, leading to the leak of important secrets. The defendants were reportedly motivated by financial incentives. The court also noted that an individual named Chen Yuxin contacted and recruited the defendants at key military sites to form a spy network for China. Chen is believed to have fled to China.

The defendants were accused of planning to fly a CH-47 Chinook military helicopter to a Chinese aircraft carrier in the Taiwan Strait and of creating a video indicating their intention to surrender to Beijing in the event of war, as reported by Taiwan's Central News Agency. According to Timothy Heath, a senior international defence researcher with the RAND Corporation, the consequences could have been severe if Taiwan's authorities had not intervened.

According to Taiwanese authorities, this sentencing is the latest in a series of espionage cases involving Chinese efforts on the island. Russell Hsiao, executive director of the Global Taiwan Institute, highlighted a shift in Chinese espionage tactics, noting that the convicted agents in this case were relatively younger than those in prior cases, which often involved older retirees from the military.

Hsiao also pointed out that while older targets were often motivated by ideology and financial gain, the recent cases appear to be driven primarily by financial motives. He observed that the sentences in this case

are more severe than in previous cases, potentially serving as a deterrent.

China claims Taiwan as its territory and has increased military and political pressure in the Taiwan Strait. Espionage between the two sides has been ongoing for decades. Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, stated that this issue concerns the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, which he described as belonging to the same China.

Hsiao mentioned an upward trend in espionage cases involving Taiwanese military personnel over the past decade. Taiwan's Control Yuan, the government's oversight branch, confirmed this trend, noting a significant increase in the number of espionage-related cases uncovered by Taiwan's military security units. From 2011 to 2023, there were 40 espionage cases, involving 113 military and civilian personnel, and numerous top secrets were leaked.

Taiwan condemns China for disrupting regional peace

27 August 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#)

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) strongly condemned China on Tuesday after a Chinese aircraft infringed on Japanese airspace earlier in the day.

The action seriously violated Japan's sovereignty and heightened regional tensions, MOFA said in a statement.

Chinese military aircraft and ships have continuously intruded into Taiwan's and Japan's air defense identification zones and exclusive economic zones, MOFA said.

Furthermore, China has partnered with Russia to frequently carry out military exercises in the East China Sea and South China Sea, in attempts to change the status quo through military prowess. Their expanding military actions have posed serious threats to countries in the Indo-Pacific region, said MOFA.

MOFA called for China to exercise restraint and refrain from disrupting peace in the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan will also strengthen its self-defense and work with like-minded countries to stop the expansion of authoritarianism, MOFA said.

Taiwan bans concert by Chinese rapper over insulting 'Taipei, China' promotional materials

26 August 2024, [FOX4](#)

Taiwan has cancelled a planned Taipei concert by a Chinese rapper after he used the insulting term "Taipei, China" in promotional materials.

Wang Yitai's scheduled Sept. 14 concert has been scrapped and the performer from the southwestern city of Chengdu banned from the island, the Taiwanese government's Mainland Affairs Council announced late Sunday.

The term is insulting because it describes Taipei, the island's capital, as a Chinese city under Beijing's rule, echoing the government's position on eventually annexing Taiwan by force if necessary and denigrating the island's lively democracy.

Not widely known outside China, Wang is signed to a rap label in Chengdu, a city with a lively arts scene that has become famous for eclectic performers and venues. Its also home to the rap group CD Rev, which won international notoriety for hard-line nationalist tracks including ones that compare Taiwan to the semi-autonomous Chinese city Hong Kong and made obscene and misogynist references to former President Tsai Ing-wen.

China regularly bans Taiwanese artists, many of whom are popular in the mainland, for any sign of support for the ruling Democratic Progressive Party that favors the island's de-facto independence from China.

While Taiwan regularly welcomes Chinese artists and its government considers musical interactions in a positive light, the Mainland Affairs Council said that "cross-strait exchanges should be conducted based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual respect, and any publications or promotions that belittle Taiwan's status will not be tolerated."

While Taiwan's official name is the Republic of China, after the government that fled to the island in 1950 amid civil war, it is widely known simply as Taiwan, and competes at the Olympics as "Chinese Taipei" in deference to Beijing, whose pressure has reduced the island's number of formal diplomatic allies to just 12.

U.S. national security advisor to raise Taiwan on upcoming China trip

25 August 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#)

A senior White House official told reporters on Friday that the U.S. will raise concerns about China's "destabilizing" military, diplomatic and economic pressure on Taiwan when National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan meets China's foreign minister in Beijing next week.

Sullivan will travel to Beijing for meetings with the People's Republic of China's (PRC) foreign minister, Wang Yi, between Aug. 27-29, according to the White House.

"I expect in these conversations next week we're going to raise concerns about the PRC's increased military, diplomatic, and economic pressure against Taiwan," the official told reporters in a press briefing phone call early on Friday morning (U.S. Eastern Time).

"These activities are destabilizing and risk escalation," the official said, without elaborating.

"And we're going to continue to urge Beijing to engage in meaningful dialogue with Taipei."

Reiterating the Biden administration's commitment to the United States' "One China" policy -- in which the U.S. recognizes the PRC as the sole legal government of China but only acknowledges Beijing's claim that Taiwan is a part of China -- the official said the U.S. "oppose[s] unilateral changes to the status quo from either side."

"We expect cross-strait differences to be resolved peacefully," the official added.

"Everything that we have seen come out of Taipei indicates that the current leadership remains committed to maintaining status quo and peace and stability," the official said, referring to President Lai Ching-te's (賴清德) calls for dialogue with Beijing since assuming office in May.

The official also said that "the economic impact of instability in the region would be overwhelming" and there is a "global stake in continued peace and stability and status quo."

Sullivan has met with Wang four times over the last year and a half, according to the White House.

The trip next week comes in advance of the U.S. presidential election in November and amid tensions between Washington and Beijing over China's growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region.

Chinese Planners Push Creation of Post-Takeover 'Shadow Government' for Taiwan

23 August 2024, [National Review](#), Jimmy Quinn

The plan comes from a team at Xiamen University's Cross-Strait Institute of Urban Planning and was published earlier this month, then translated by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Xiamen, which is located in China's Fujian province, is only a few miles away from the Taiwanese island of Kinmen.

The Xiamen University paper states that the Chinese regime would need to move more swiftly in Taiwan than it did after the 1997 handover of Hong Kong by the United Kingdom. "The depth and breadth of the takeover will be far greater than in Hong Kong in 1997, so preparing plans for the comprehensive takeover of Taiwan after 'reunification' is already an urgent matter," the Xiamen academics wrote.

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Taiwan after ‘reunification’ is already an urgent matter,” the Xiamen academics wrote.

They proposed the creation of a “Central Taiwan Work Committee” that the government would set up “as soon as possible,” then send to Taiwan after annexation. It would study “post-takeover policies such as the application of laws, currency conversion, mainland-Taiwan infrastructure integration, customs, international travel, and screening of military personnel, civil servants, and teachers.”

The three purposes of that committee would be to bolster the Chinese regime’s understanding of Taiwanese institutions and how they could be adopted or changed after takeover, galvanize the efforts of Beijing’s political allies in Taiwan’s current political system akin to how the Communist International supported the CCP, and “smooth the impact of regime change” by working with Taiwanese elites to help craft Beijing’s plans for the takeover.

The paper’s mention of Beijing’s allies in Taiwan seems to be a nod at the CCP’s extensive “united front” influence operations and espionage campaigns in the country, though it also notes that these “anti-Taiwan independence forces” have grown less influential in recent years.

The plan also calls for the immediate creation of a “Taiwan Governance Experimental Zone” in Xiamen or nearby Nan’an City, both of which the paper notes are adjacent to Kinmen and have mountains and a culture similar to that of that Taiwanese island.

The experimental zone would simulate Taiwan’s political structure, enacting policies such as the elimination of the traditional Chinese characters used in Taiwan but not mainland China and the phasing out of Taiwan’s currency.

The Chinese authorities would also train CCP cadres in the experimental zone, primarily consisting of retired Taiwanese soldiers, civil servants, and teachers.

The Xiamen University paper is just the latest indication that Beijing would govern the island with an iron fist, in the event of its absorption by the mainland, and although it was published by academics, it is consistent with previous Chinese-regime statements.

Increasingly, Chinese-government officials have spoken about how Beijing would rule over the island after annexation, with China’s ambassador to France Lu Shaye in 2022 stating that the party would carry out a widespread “reeducation” campaign

Last year, the party’s prominent Chinese People’s Political and Consultative Conference body purportedly passed a resolution urging the Chinese authorities to craft a “Taiwan Province Separatist Forces Blacklist,” which would include the names of prominent Taiwanese individuals to execute.

The author of that resolution, who posted to social media about the CPPCC’s vote to approve it, also called for the execution of Taiwanese president

William Lai, who was the country’s vice president at the time.

Then, earlier this month two Chinese agencies — the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Public Security — posted a list of “diehard ‘Taiwan independence’ secessionists” to their websites, according to the *Global Times*, an English-language propaganda organ.

The members of that list include Taiwanese vice president Bi-Khim Hsiao, national security council secretary-general Joseph Wu, and several other Taiwanese officials.

China’s ‘growing authoritarianism’ poses a global challenge, Taiwan’s President Lai warns

21 August 2024, [CNBC](#), Lee Ying Shan

Taiwan’s President Lai Ching-te has cautioned that China’s “growing authoritarianism” will not stop with the island, and that it poses a challenge at the “global level.”

Lai was speaking at the annual Ketagalan Forum, a dialogue focusing on security issues in the Indo-Pacific. It was attended by representatives from several countries including the U.S., India, Japan, Australia and Canada.

“We are all fully aware that China’s growing authoritarianism will not stop with Taiwan, nor is Taiwan the only target of China’s economic pressures,” Lai said, adding that this authoritarianism is becoming “more aggressive.”

“It’s now a challenge at the global level,” Lai emphasized, calling for countries to cooperate and curtail China’s efforts.

His comments come as China has been ramping up military activity in the South China Sea.

“China intends to change the rules-based international order. That is why democratic countries must come together and take concrete action,” the Taiwanese president said.

Last weekend, China’s Ministry of Transport said it carried out a maritime patrol and law enforcement operation in the Taiwan Straits aimed at “enhancing traffic management and emergency rescue capabilities.”

In May, after Lai was sworn in, China’s military conducted two days of drills around Taiwan as an act of “punishment” to the island’s “separatist acts.”

Tensions between China and the Philippines have also been escalating in the Spratly Islands for months. Recently, vessels from the two countries collided near the disputed Sabina Shoal in the South China Sea.

Following the vessel collision, Beijing’s actions drew condemnation from Philippine allies, with the U.S. reaffirming its mutual defense pact with the Philippines.

“Such actions are intended to intimidate China’s neighbors and undermine regional peace and stability,” said Lai.

China had dismissed the outcome of Taiwan’s elections in January that brought Lai to power, saying the ruling Democratic Progressive Party did not represent the mainstream public.

Beijing maintains that the democratically governed island of Taiwan is part of its territory.

China’s foreign ministry did not immediately respond to CNBC’s request for comment.

Taiwan’s defense spending is reportedly set to climb 7.7%, outpacing the island’s GDP growth.

China confident of ‘reunification’ with Taiwan: CCP official

20 August 2024, [Alarabiya](#)

Beijing is confident about “complete reunification” with self-ruled Taiwan, a senior Chinese Communist Party official said Tuesday at a Hong Kong conference promoting China’s reunification.

The annual conference -- held in Hong Kong for the first time in 14 years -- was attended by more than 1,200 pro-China politicians and public figures from the mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas, according to organizers.

“Today, we are closer to... realizing the great rejuvenation of the people of China than at any other time in history, and more confident and more capable than ever to complete reunification,” said Shi Taifeng, who heads the United Front Work Department (UFWD).

China claims self-ruled Taiwan -- which has its own government, military and currency -- as part of its territory.

Beijing has said it would never renounce the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control.

The UFWD is responsible for engaging with minor ethnicities, religious groups and overseas Chinese on issues related to Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan.

Tuesday’s “Promoting Peaceful Reunification of China” was organized by an umbrella council under the department.

Beijing considers Tibet, a Himalayan region, and northwest Xinjiang province -- home to a largely Sunni Muslim Uyghur population -- as inalienable parts of its territory, while Hong Kong and Macau are classified as “special administrative regions.”

In his speech, Shi said the current situation in the Taiwan Strait is “grave and complex,” blaming it on the government of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te and his Democratic Progressive Party’s “wanton incitement of cross-strait confrontation.”

“But the time and situation are always on the side of those who advocate national reunification,” he said.

“We must... uphold the fighting spirits, dare to shoulder our responsibility and... always stay vigilant to the movements of the Taiwan independence forces and external interfering forces.”

Among the attendees were leaders of minor pro-unification political parties in Taiwan, such as the New Party and the Labour Party.

China maintains a near-daily military presence around Taiwan with fighter jets, drones, and naval vessels.

Beijing also launched war games around the island days after Lai was sworn into office.

It regards him as a “dangerous separatist” for his views of maintaining Taiwan’s sovereignty.

Within Taiwan, the issue of “unification” is deeply unpopular for the Taiwanese population, according to regular surveys done by National Chengchi University. The most recent one, published in June, shows that around one percent of people support “unification as soon as possible,” while nearly 90 percent want to maintain the status quo.

Tensions Rise: Taiwan Monitors Increased Chinese Military Activities

19 August 2024, [Devdiscourse](#)

Taiwan detected eight Chinese aircraft and nine vessels near its territory on Monday, with four aircraft crossing into its Eastern Air Defense Identification Zone. The Taiwanese Ministry of Defence monitored the situation and took responsive measures, highlighting ongoing Chinese military provocations in the region.

Taiwan’s Ministry of Defence reported the detection of eight Chinese aircraft and nine vessels around its territory on Monday. Notably, four of these aircraft crossed the median line, entering Taiwan’s Eastern Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Taiwan responded by monitoring the situation closely.

In an official statement shared on X, Taiwan’s MND disclosed that the intrusion was part of a pattern. Earlier, on Sunday, seven Chinese military aircraft and 15 naval vessels were detected between 6 a.m. Saturday and 6 a.m. Sunday, with some crossing the median line and entering Taiwan’s northern and southeastern ADIZ.

In response to these incursions, Taiwan deployed aircraft, naval ships, and coastal-based missile systems to monitor the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) activities. The recent incidents are seen as a continuation of China’s increased military operations around Taiwan, including frequent air and naval incursions and nearby military exercises.

Chinese military aggression has been on the rise since former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to

Taiwan in 2022. Taiwan has operated independently since 1949, but China views the island as part of its territory, advocating for reunification by force if necessary.

This month alone, Taiwan has tracked over 300 PLA aircraft and about 200 Chinese ships. Since September 2020, China has employed 'grey zone' tactics, characterized by incremental escalations that avoid large-scale direct confrontations.

Chinese vessels patrol Taiwan Strait to close jurisdictional gap: Experts

19 August 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#), Hsieh Yi-hsuan and Sunny Lai

A patrol and law enforcement operation carried out by official Chinese vessels in the Taiwan Strait could indirectly expand Beijing's jurisdiction to the median line of the strait, as a way of eliminating jurisdictional gaps, experts have told CNA.

The operation, jointly launched by the Chinese Ministry of Transport's Fujian Maritime Safety Administration and its East China Sea rescue bureau, was conducted from Saturday to Sunday, after China's three-and-a-half-month fishing moratorium concluded on Aug. 16, according to China's state-run Xinhua News Agency.

The operation involved three public service ships, lasted 30.5 hours and covered a total distance of 413 nautical miles, with the aim being to "enhance traffic management and emergency rescue capabilities in the strait to ensure the safety of vessels, facilities and personnel," Xinhua reported.

A new media website under China Central Television also reported that the operation reached 2 nautical miles east of the central part of the Taiwan Strait, while the southernmost point reached the Taiwan Shoal, claiming to cover "a wider area than in previous years."

The Taiwan Shoal, situated southwest of Penghu County and near the median line of the Taiwan Strait, falls within Taiwan's exclusive economic zone, encompassing approximately 8,800 square kilometers with a water depth ranging from 8 to 40 meters, according to the National Academy of Marine Research.

The report also mentioned that the operation was "a further extension of regularization," with the relevant departments in China having established a big data system for more comprehensive management of the strait.

Commenting on the issue, Su Tzu-yun (蘇紫雲), a research fellow at Taiwan's government-funded think tank, the Institute for National Defense and Security Research, said Beijing's move to include the Taiwan Shoal and waters near Penghu as part of the patrol

area may indirectly lead to an expansion of jurisdiction to the strait's median line, indicating an attempt to turn the strait into "quasi-internal waters."

According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Taiwan Strait is not considered internal waters (waters on the landward side of the baseline), the Chinese authorities therefore have adopted a "salami slicing" strategy to gradually assert jurisdiction over the Taiwan Strait, Su said.

Criticizing the operation as indirectly eroding the sovereignty of the Republic of China (Taiwan's official name), Su predicts that such actions could occur more frequently in the future and their scope be gradually expanded.

Chieh Chung (揭仲), a researcher at the Taiwan-based Association of Strategic Foresight, said that the operation reflected China's view of the Taiwan government as a "local government" with no authority to issue laws governing traffic in the strait.

"On one hand, the Chinese Communist Party is trying to eliminate the gap in jurisdictional areas, and on the other, it is denying our laws and orders through these actions," Chieh said.

The Chinese authorities have been pushing a legal battle in the Taiwan Strait since June 2022, with the key objective being to claim jurisdiction over most of the strait, Chieh said.

He cited the example of the Kinmen speedboat incident, during which China's Taiwan Affairs Office said "there is simply no such thing as so-called 'prohibited or restricted waters.'"

According to Taiwan's Coast Guard Administration (CGA), prohibited waters and restricted waters are designated by the Ministry of National Defense in accordance with the Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area, with waters around the Taiwan-held Kinmen and Matsu Islands being delineated using a polygonal method.

Under the act, no Chinese vessels, civil aircraft or other means of transportation are allowed to enter Taiwan's restricted or prohibited waters, including those in the outlying islands.

Regarding the patrol and law enforcement operation carried out by the three Chinese vessels, Taiwan's CGA said Sunday that the three ships briefly crossed the median line by 3.2 nautical miles at 12:25 p.m. on Saturday before heading back towards China.

MAC criticizes China's claim of uncovering over 1,000 Taiwanese spy cases

15 August 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#), Sunny Lai

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) said Thursday that China's claim of detecting more than 1,000 cases

of espionage by Taiwanese spies was a means of achieving "goals" set by high-level Chinese authorities. If the Chinese authorities' claim is not a boast, then it suggests that they are abusing their power to detain people, MAC deputy head and spokesperson Liang Wen-chieh (梁文傑) said at a press conference.

He was referring to an article published Tuesday on the social media account of China's Ministry of State Security, which said that its authorities had "uncovered more than 1,000 cases of espionage by Taiwanese spies," without providing any details.

A large number of espionage networks established by Taiwanese spies in China have been destroyed, while "Taiwan independence leaders" such as Yang Chih-yuan (楊智淵) have being arrested, dealing a "severe blow and strong deterrence" to Taiwan independence forces, according to the article titled "Resolutely Fight against Taiwan-related Separatism and Espionage."

Yang, one of the founders of the Taiwanese National Party, was the first Taiwanese to be prosecuted and arrested for the crime of "secession" in China and has been in custody there since August 2022.

On Thursday, Liang said the approach taken by the Chinese Communist Party over the years has been very simple, with the high-level authorities setting certain targets, and the subordinates working to achieve those "goals."

"Historically, whether it's the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the Cultural Revolution, the Great Leap Forward, or others, it has always been the same [approach]," Liang added.

Regarding Yang's arrest, Liang said the MAC has been in contact with his family and now has "a better understanding of his current situation" but cannot disclose any detailed information, as it has to respect his family's wishes.

Liang said Yang's political stance has often been fluid, aligning sometimes with the ruling Democratic Progressive Party and at other times with the opposition Kuomintang, which means it is difficult to categorize his views.

"Before his arrest, he was teaching Go in China and participating in some Go competitions," Liang said. "It is quite absurd that someone like him can be labeled as a leading advocate of Taiwan independence, just to achieve those [Chinese] 'goals.'"

China says it 'destroyed large network' of Taiwanese spies

14 August 2024, [RFA](#), Taejun Kang

Beijing has uncovered more than 1,000 espionage cases by Taipei, its spy agency says.

China has "destroyed" a large network of Taiwanese spies in the mainland and uncovered more than 1,000 espionage cases undertaken by Taiwan, China's

security ministry said as it vowed to fight "separatism."

"The cases involved espionage activities and leaking state secrets," said the Ministry of State Security, China's counterintelligence agency, in a post on its official WeChat account.

The ministry cited the case of Taiwanese citizen Yang Zhiyuan, who was arrested in 2022.

"His arrest dealt a serious blow to pro-independence separatist forces and had a strong deterrent effect," the ministry said in its post on Tuesday, calling Yang a "Taiwan independence" leader.

Yang was detained in August 2022 in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, on suspicion of engaging in "separatist activities" and endangering China's national security.

He was reportedly handed over to prosecutors in April the following year and is now facing trial in a Chinese court.

"We will resolutely fight against Taiwanese separatism and espionage," the ministry said, adding that it would destroy any attempt to seek Taiwanese independence.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, which is responsible for cross-strait affairs, said in response to a query from RFA Mandarin that the announcement by the Chinese security department illustrated its use of "vague and unclear laws" to detain people from Taiwan who do not conform with the political ideology of China's ruling Communist Party.

The arrests also hindered a healthy interaction between the two sides, the council said, while reiterating its advice to Taiwan people to carefully consider the necessity of traveling to the mainland.

Arrests of Taiwanese

The Chinese ministry also lashed out at Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party authorities, warning that "those who are willing to work with them will be shattered under the wheels of history."

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province that should be reunited with the mainland, by force if necessary. The democratic island has been self-governing since it effectively separated from mainland China in 1949 after the Chinese civil war.

China has dialed up diplomatic and economic pressure on the island since former president Tsai Ing-wen's administration came to power in 2016. Tsai and her party refuse to acknowledge that Taiwan and the mainland belong to "One China."

President Lai Ching-te, who is also a DPP member who came to power after a January election, is also viewed with suspicion by China's Communist Party.

There have been several other cases in recent years of people from Taiwan who have been imprisoned in mainland China on espionage charges.

Researcher Cheng Yu-chin was jailed for seven years in prison in 2022 on espionage-related charges. He was a former aide to Taiwan's former president Tsai.

Taiwanese activist Lee Ming-che was sentenced to five years in a mainland Chinese prison for subversion of the state before being released in 2022, while Taiwanese businessman Lee Meng-chu was jailed on espionage charges after being arrested in Shenzhen in 2019 for taking photos of armed police officers.

In June, China issued guidelines on criminal punishment for “diehard Taiwanese separatists,” who attempt or incite secession, with penalties up to death.

Chinese authorities also recently released a list of 10 “diehard Taiwanese separatists,” including Vice President Hsiao Bi-khim and former DPP chairman Su Tseng-chang.

China says it uncovered over 1,000 Taiwanese espionage cases in recent years

13 August 2024, [AA](#), Serder Dincel

Country’s State Security Ministry says it destroyed ‘large number of spy intelligence networks’

China Tuesday said it has uncovered more than 1,000 cases of Taiwanese espionage in recent years.

The State Security Ministry said these cases were exposed through a series of special operations and pledged to maintain pressure on Taiwan’s “pro-independence forces,” according to a report by South China Morning Post.

It said that the cases included espionage and the theft of state secrets, adding that it destroyed “a large number of spy intelligence networks” established by Taiwanese operatives in mainland China.

The ministry said it continued to “strike hard” against alleged spying activities.

China considers Taiwan its “breakaway province,” while Taipei has maintained its independence since 1949.

China lists Taiwanese independence supporters it wants people to denounce

08 August 2024, [The Guardian](#), Helen Davidosn

Beijing website asks for information about supposed ‘crimes’ of ‘secessionist’ current and past Taiwan officials.

China’s government has called for people to denounce “diehard secessionists” and give information about their “criminal activities” as it intensifies its legal and rhetorical intimidation of Taiwan.

The Taiwan affairs office and ministry of public security this week launched new webpages with lists of 10 current and former officials in Taiwan who have been named as “diehard” separatists.

The site includes a prominently displayed email address and urges people to report “the clues and

crimes” of those on the list, as well as “new ‘Taiwan independence’ diehards who commit serious crimes”. China’s ruling Communist party (CCP) claims Taiwan is a province of China and has vowed to annex the territory, by force if necessary. Taiwan’s democratically elected government and a growing majority of its people reject the prospect of Chinese rule, and both sides have been preparing for a potential war in coming decades.

The 10 names – which had been previously announced in 2021 and 2022 – including Taiwan’s vice-president, Hsiao Bi-khim, the former foreign minister and now head of Taiwan’s security council, Joseph Wu, Wu’s deputy, Lin Fei-fan, and senior officials from the ruling Democratic Progressive party. The new site and tipline are part of a broader escalation by Beijing against Taiwan and those who maintain that it is not and will not become a part of the People’s Republic of China. Official state media said the pages, which also included legal documents and government statements, “present the legal foundation for such actions”.

China’s hawkish state media tabloid, the Global Times, said the publication of the 10 names served as “both as a deterrent and as a clear message that the criminal justice measures are aimed at a small number of diehard individuals who engage in or incite secession activities, and do not target the majority of Taiwan compatriots”.

In June the CCP said “ringleaders” of independence efforts would face the death penalty under Chinese laws. It issued new guidelines for Chinese courts, prosecutors and public and state security bodies to “severely punish Taiwan independence diehards for splitting the country and inciting secession crimes in accordance with the law, and resolutely defend national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity”, according to state media.

“The sharp sword of legal action will always hang high,” Sun Ping, an official from China’s ministry of public security, told reporters in Beijing.

Taiwan’s leaders rejected Beijing’s claim that its laws had any jurisdiction over Taiwan, which has its own government, legal system, currency and military.

“The government appeals to our country’s people to feel at ease and not to be threatened or intimidated by the Chinese Communist party,” Taiwan’s mainland affairs council said at the time.

Beijing should set up ‘shadow government’ ready to run Taiwan, academics say

08 August 2024, [SCMPv](#), Amber Wang

In an article on social media, mainland Chinese research institute says a plan is needed for

‘comprehensive takeover’ of the island after unification.

A mainland Chinese research institute has suggested Beijing set up a “shadow government” so that it is ready to govern Taiwan after unification.

The proposal from the Cross-Strait Institute of Urban Planning at Xiamen University was made in an article recently posted to social media network WeChat that was later taken down.

“It is imperative to prepare a plan for the comprehensive takeover of Taiwan after unification,” the research institute said in the article, which sets out a proposed power transition for the island.

It also said the complex international environment – including the potential re-election of Donald Trump as US president in November – could accelerate Beijing’s unification timeline, without elaborating.

The article offers a rare glimpse of the discussions going on in mainland China over the future of self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing sees as part of its territory and to be brought under its control – by force if necessary.

Most countries do not recognise Taiwan as an independent state but oppose any attempt to seize the island.

The Xiamen research institute – part of the university’s architecture and civil engineering school – confirmed that it wrote the article and said it would be reposted later, but declined an interview request.

Two mainland Chinese academics who focus on Taiwan were sceptical about the proposal which they said was not practical.

The institute suggested in the article that a “Central Taiwan Work Committee” be set up to function as a “shadow government” that could be ready to assume control of the island’s administration at any moment. It said the committee should look at issues such as applicable laws, currency conversion and infrastructure integration between the two sides.

Its role would also include uniting anti-independence forces on the island and encouraging Taiwanese to take part in discussions on the takeover plan.

“As the mainland’s military strength grows, the difficulty of unification itself is decreasing, and effective control after unification will become increasingly important,” the article said.

Relations between Beijing and Taipei remain strained after William Lai Ching-te, from the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party, took over as Taiwan’s leader in May.

Beijing has for decades proposed a “one country, two systems” model to govern Taiwan but has never released a detailed plan about how it would be done. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for a “two systems” solution on Taiwan in 2019, saying Beijing would

consider the island’s reality, as well as views and proposals from both sides.

Beijing elaborated on that in a white paper in 2022, saying Taiwan would have a “high degree of autonomy” as a special administrative region after unification, and that its social system and way of life would be respected. It did not say whether there would be changes to Taiwan’s political system.

Taipei has rejected the proposal.

In the article, the Xiamen institute also suggested that Taiwan governance pilot zones be set up on the mainland and that new systems planned for Taiwan should draw on lessons learned from Hong Kong.

“The recent unrest in Hong Kong shows that the one country, two systems approach of fully accepting the existing system is not necessarily suitable for Taiwan,” the article said. “Taiwan should aim to fully integrate into the mainland from the beginning.”

It said the pilot zone could be established in coastal cities such as Xiamen and Quanzhou in Fujian, which are across the strait from Taiwan and share similar language and culture.

The institute said the zones could be used to simulate the post-unification governance model – including for elections, language and education – to put policies to the test and train the cadres who will run the island.

“Hong Kong’s role as a model [for one country, two systems] has become a lot less persuasive on the island,” the article said, noting that a new model was needed.

While Beijing insists that the one country, two systems framework has been successful in Hong Kong, Taiwan’s three main political parties have all rejected the plan, citing its failure in the city.

Taiwan condemns China's guidelines on punishing 'stubborn independence supporters'

07 August 2024, [Taiwan News](#), Kelvin Chen

Beijing releases additional legal document on 'Taiwan independence elements'

Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) blasted China’s release of an additional guideline on “Punishing Stubborn Taiwan Independence Elements” on Wednesday (Aug. 7).

China is preventing the positive development of healthy cross-strait exchanges, MAC said, per Liberty Times. Beijing should pursue policies that “are conducive to positive interactions between both sides,” it added.

In its new guideline, China listed 10 previously blacklisted Taiwanese, including Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) and Joseph Wu (吳釗燮). Beijing previously issued a document in June listing the legal procedures for dealing with Taiwan Independence supporters. One of

the provisions called for the death penalty for those found guilty of "splitting the country." Other punishments include life or fixed-term imprisonment of more than 10 years.

MAC Minister Chiu Chui-cheng (邱垂正) said on Tuesday that China has been waging legal wars against Taiwan since it passed the Anti-Secession Law in 2005. Beijing has no jurisdiction over Taiwanese, Chiu added.

Taiwan celebrates badminton victory against China, without political symbols

05 August 2024, [Reuters](#), Richa Naidu and Ann Wang

Taiwan supporters celebrated their country's first gold medal at the Paris Games on Sunday during a badminton doubles final that took place without their national flag, as security staff enforced International Olympic Committee rules.

Lee Yang and Wang-Chi-Lin retained their title by beating China's Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang in front of euphoric Taiwanese supporters, but some of them saw their banners confiscated and had to rub out their face paint.

"I want to cheer for them," said Mina Syue, a 28-year-old engineer from Taiwan who said her banner had been confiscated after the guards checked the message with translation software.

Syue's banner was in the colours of Taiwan's flag -- a red background with 'Taiwan you're the best!' written in blue and white.

IOC rules prohibit flags or signs that include political messages or support countries that are not participating at the Olympics.

Taiwan competes at the Olympics as Chinese Taipei to avoid objections from China, which claims the democratically governed island as its own territory. Taiwan's government rejects Chinese sovereignty claims.

A Taiwanese family of four told Reuters they had painted the Taiwanese flag on their faces but were made to wash it off before they could enter the arena. During the match spectators cheered 'Taiwan' each time their team scored a point. At least one supporter managed to sneak in the Taiwanese flag and wave it from the stands.

UNITING TAIWAN

After the match, Taiwan supporters celebrated the gold medal victory chanting "Taiwan Taiwan" and "Taiwan number 1".

Taiwanese freelance artist Peng Cheng-yang had bought a last-minute ticket and travelled from Germany to see the match when he found out Taiwan would be playing China.

"It's a political action to be here, to show we are a country, to support our people. We don't need the flag

- it's the people that is important," he said, adding he was "moved".

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said on Facebook that "the Lin-Yang team faced strong opponents and fought all the way to the end, uniting and inspiring Taiwan!" When asked about the Taiwanese president's Facebook post, Lee and Wang paused for several seconds looking uncomfortable.

"Very tough question. We thank all the support we have received and will continue to work hard. We will put out better performances in the future," Wang said. Spectator Christina Chang, a Taiwanese education worker living in New York, said that she was very proud of the Taiwan players but that she clapped for the silver medallists too.

"It is not a political symbol. I'm excited as it's our first gold medal but the Chinese deserved the silver too - that's the beautiful thing about the Olympics," she said.

Isa Zhang, a 35-year-old China supporter living in Paris, said that although the team she was rooting for came second she was happy with the result because "China, Chinese Taipei - it's all the same for me."

At Taipei's main train station, supporters held a party to watch the final at 10 p.m. local time where they were able to stridently show their support with Taiwanese flags and political colours.

"It is an honour to have our flag represented in an important event ... I hope one day we can bravely hold our flag in an international event without (it) being snatched away," said Danny Tsai, 36, a local resident in the crowd.

Taiwan joins international parliamentary alliance countering China

05 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tsering Dhundop

The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) has officially welcomed Taiwan as a member during its fourth annual summit held in Taipei on July 30.

The announcement was made by IPAC Executive Director Luke de Pulford during a press conference. He revealed that ruling Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Fan Yun and opposition Taiwan People's Party Legislator Chen Gau-Tzu would serve as co-chairs of the Taiwan legislature within the alliance. According to the IPAC official website, each legislature in IPAC is led by two co-chairs from diverse political backgrounds.

In a statement, IPAC expressed strong support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, "Its [Taiwan's] formal inclusion in the Alliance was welcomed as a historic result by all delegates."

This year's summit was attended by 49 politicians from 24 countries, reflecting the growing international

concern about China's policies. Established in 2020, IPAC focuses on reforming countries' policies towards the People's Republic of China. It also unites lawmakers worldwide, promoting democracy and addressing threats to the rules-based and human rights systems posed by the rise of China.

With Taiwan's inclusion, IPAC now comprises over 250 cross-party members from 40 countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Previous summits were held in Rome (2021), Washington DC (2022), and Prague (2023). Taiwan was a central focus of this year's summit, with speeches by Taiwan President Lai Ching-te and Vice-President Hsiao Bi-khim, emphasizing the need for a "democratic umbrella" to defend Taiwan and preserve the international rules-based order.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Lin Jian, criticized the move, [stating](#), "This so-called alliance has maliciously hyped up issues related to China. Spreading lies and rumours about China, and has no credibility whatsoever. There is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. The Taiwan question is purely China's internal affair that brooks no interference by any external forces."

[Reports](#) emerged before the conference that eight lawmakers from at least five countries had received pressure from Chinese diplomats to avoid attending the summit. These attempts to dissuade foreign parliamentarians were condemned by the organizers as "massively overstepping" and acts of bullying. In a statement, the organisers condemned China's action stating "The PRC's actions around IPAC's Summit are yet another example of their brazen efforts to curtail other nations' democratic privileges and negate Taiwan's rights to engage in legitimate diplomatic exchanges". The statement further stated "In response to the PRC's intimidation, IPAC has decided to bring forward its announcement of our largest ever enlargement, welcoming six new countries to the Alliance: Colombia, Iraq, Malawi, Solomon Islands, The Gambia and Uruguay".

Taiwan says Macau's 'One China' demand blocks envoy's visa

02 August 2024, [The Straits Times](#)

Taiwan said it's having difficulty sending staff to its representative office in Macau because the special administrative region's government is demanding that they sign a commitment to the "One China Principle" to get a visa.

A Taiwan official who was set to be posted to the Macau, which China resumed sovereignty over in 1999, couldn't get a visa, Mr Liang Wen-chieh, deputy

head of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, said at a briefing on Aug 1.

He urged Macau to remove the obstacle and deal with the issue in a friendly manner, but added that Taiwan will "prepare for the worst," without elaborating.

At issue is Macau's demand that Taiwan officials commit to the "One China Principle" which states that there is only one China, ruled by the Beijing-based Communist government, and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the country. That position is anathema to Taiwan, a democratic and self-ruled island, which argues it has the right of self-determination and that it has never been under the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China.

The dispute echoes a similar spat that led to Taiwan recalling seven representative officials from Hong Kong in 2021, leaving only local Hong Kong employees to handle affairs in the city. It also underscores China's efforts to undermine international recognition of Taiwan, where President Lai Ching-te this week called for democracies around the world to stand up to Beijing.

At present, there are just two Taiwanese staff remaining in the Macau office, meaning Taiwan has to remotely assist with consular services, Mr Liang said.

Macau and Hong Kong have both closed their representative offices in Taipei in 2021. That move came amid souring cross-strait relations and claims that Taiwan was interfering in Hong Kong affairs.

Relations between China and Taiwan have worsened over the past decade, with Beijing stepping up pressure on the island after Mr Lai was elected in January to succeed Ms Tsai Ing-wen, also of the Democratic Progressive Party. After a deadly boat incident in February, China's coast guard started to "normalise" patrols near Taiwan's offshore islands near China.

China also held large-scale military drills around Taiwan a few days after Mr Lai took office in May, and then fleshed out a law targeting supporters of Taiwan independence in June. In response to this, Taiwan raised its travel alert for China in late June, urging its citizens to avoid non-essential trips.

But there has been some progress. Beijing and Taipei on July 30 agreed to resolve the boat incident. And separately, Taiwan's United Daily News reported on Aug 2 that a Taiwanese angler held by China in another incident will return to Taiwan on Aug 7.

Taiwan detects 29 Chinese aircraft, 10 naval vessels near its territory

01 August 2024, [Indian Narrative](#)

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence said that 29 Chinese military aircraft and 10 naval vessels were

detected operating around the nation from 6 am (local time) on Tuesday to 6 am (local time) on Wednesday. Of the 29 People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, 13 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's northern, central, southwest, and eastern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). Taiwan sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed coastal-based missile systems to monitor China's military activity.

In a post on X, Taiwan's Defence Ministry said, "29 PLA aircraft and 10 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 13 of the aircraft crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's southwestern and southeastern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly." Earlier on Wednesday, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence said that 25 Chinese military aircraft and 10 naval vessels were detected operating around Taiwan from 6 am (local time) on Tuesday to 6 am (local time) on Wednesday.

This latest incident adds to a series of similar provocations by China in recent months. China has increased its military activities around Taiwan, including regular air and naval incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ and military exercises near the island.

The Taiwan Strait, separating Taiwan from mainland China, has been a frequent area of contention, with Beijing viewing Taiwan as a breakaway province and asserting sovereignty over the island.

The latest incident comes amid heightened regional security concerns and underscores Taiwan's ongoing vigilance in defending its airspace and territorial integrity against Chinese military activities.

Amid rising tensions across the Taiwan Strait, China has increased its military presence and conducted frequent drills in the region. The manoeuvres are seen as part of Beijing's ongoing pressure campaign against Taiwan, which China views as a renegade province.

China – Xinjiang

China deflects after UN renews calls to investigate Xinjiang abuses

30 August 2024, [VOA](#), William Echols



FALSE

On August 27, United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk renewed calls for Beijing to strengthen

protections of minorities in China's northwestern Xinjiang region and to fully investigate "allegations of human rights violations, including torture."

The appeal comes nearly two years after the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report, which found Beijing's treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China "may constitute international crimes," particularly "crimes against humanity."

In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said China was ready to have a "constructive exchange" with the OHCHR, but warned it to "refrain from being used by political forces aiming at containing and vilifying China."

Lin then repeated a well-worn Chinese propaganda talking point that people in Xinjiang were enjoying historic levels of happiness and prosperity.

"People of all ethnic groups in China are equal and their legitimate rights and interests are fully protected," Lin said. "Xinjiang today enjoys social stability and economic growth and the people there live a happy life."

That is false.

While China has invested billions of dollars to develop resource-rich Xinjiang and turn it into a driver of economic growth, those efforts have been coupled with grave human rights abuses.

A wide body of evidence suggests Chinese authorities have subjected Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang to mass internment, forced sterilization, torture, sexual violence, forced labor, religious repression and other forms of cultural erasure.

At the heart of this repressive system are Beijing's internment camps, where the government has detained an estimated 1.8 million people in Xinjiang.

China portrays those detention facilities as vocational training centers aimed at eliminating poverty and extremism.

But U.S. lawmakers have shared ample documentation that Chinese authorities use the camps to subject detainees to "forced labor, torture, political indoctrination, and other severe human rights abuses."

China claimed it has since closed those facilities after the individuals who passed through them succeeded in finding better work.

In April 2021, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) identified 385 detention sites through a years-long process using satellite imagery, construction contracts, government documents and eye-witness testimony.

ASPI said China built or expanded those 385 facilities between 2017 and 2021.

There is evidence authorities have shuttered some of those facilities, although Beijing's strict control of

media and the lack of government transparency complicates verification efforts.

To verify the ASPI's claims, an Agence France-Presse (AFP) team traveled to 26 of the 385 documented sites.

In their report, published in September 2023, AFP said 10 of the 26 sites "appeared operational," but authorities did not grant them access, thwarting attempts to "identify anyone who was indisputably incarcerated."

International news crews attempting to report on the ground in Xinjiang have repeatedly faced roadblocks. Further complicating verification efforts, China regularly targets the family members of Uyghur activists who speak out against rights abuses.

In August, Tahir Imin, a U.S.-based Uyghur activist, told VOA that authorities had prosecuted six of his former business associates, and 28 of his family members, because of their "association" with him.

In June, a U.N. human rights expert said that China had detained Gulshan Abbas, a Uyghur doctor in Xinjiang, six days after her sister criticized the persecution of Uyghurs at an event in Washington D.C.

The U.N. expert said the Chinese government sentenced Abbas to 20 years on unfounded terrorism-related charges to retaliate for her sister's activism.

Six Uyghur reporters from Radio Free Asia, a VOA sister organization, stated dozens of their family members had been detained and sent to camps "for ill-defined reasons."

"Beijing's brazen refusal to meaningfully address well-documented crimes in Xinjiang is no surprise, but shows the need for a robust follow-up by the UN human rights chief and UN member states," said Maya Wang, associate China director at Human Rights Watch.

China willing to engage with UN rights body on Xinjiang

28 August 2024, [VOA](#), Kasim Kashgar

China says it is ready to engage with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, or OHCHR, after the U.N. body called this week for a comprehensive review of Beijing's laws and policies in Xinjiang.

Speaking at a regular briefing on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said, "China is willing to engage in constructive exchanges and cooperation" with OHCHR but added that a review should be conducted "on the basis of mutual respect."

China and its policies in Xinjiang have been a persistent point of tension in recent years for the international community and Beijing. The Chinese government has been blamed for incarcerating more than 1 million Uyghurs in Xinjiang, with some accusing it of genocide, a charge that Beijing strongly denies.

In a 2022 report, Michelle Bachelet, then-U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, detailed alleged abuses in Xinjiang. The report cited abuses such as mass arbitrary detentions and forced labor and concluded that these practices might amount to crimes against humanity. The report also urged the Chinese government to address these violations and implement meaningful reforms.

On Tuesday, just days ahead of the anniversary, OHCHR released an update to the report and renewed its call for a thorough review of China's laws, especially those impacting ethnic and religious minorities in Xinjiang.

Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, urged Beijing to conduct a "full review, from the human rights perspective, of the legal framework governing national security and counterterrorism," and called for enhanced protections against discrimination for minorities, including in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. "We understand that many problematic laws and policies remain in place in Xinjiang," Shamdasani said. China says the measures are necessary to combat extremism, terrorism and separatism.

While Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said China was willing to engage, he also warned against the "politicization of human rights and divisive confrontational actions."

The U.N. has been actively raising individual cases of concern with the Chinese government, urging the release of arbitrarily detained individuals and seeking clarity on the status of those whose families are inquiring about them.

Shamdasani emphasized the high commissioner's commitment to continuing engagement with China and advocacy on behalf of victims. "Our goal remains to improve human rights protections for all individuals on the ground," she added.

Calls for accountability

Rayhan Asat, a human rights lawyer and nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, described the high commissioner's update as a crucial acknowledgment of China's failure to implement U.N. recommendations or halt its repressive policies against Uyghurs.

"Despite the high commissioner's years of engagement, progress remains absent as the laws underpinning mass imprisonment remain in place," Asat told VOA. "The need for a renewed approach, combining public and private pressure, is evident."

Asat is a co-author of a study released earlier this month by the Genocide Studies Program at Yale University. The report says China's mass imprisonment of Uyghurs constitutes both a crime against humanity and a crime of genocide.

The Yale report estimates that if this mass incarceration in Xinjiang continues, Uyghurs could suffer a cumulative 4.4 million years of incarceration. Asat's brother, Ekpar Asat, who has been arbitrarily imprisoned by Chinese authorities in Xinjiang, is among the many cases studied in the report. Ekpar, a Uyghur media tech entrepreneur, was detained in 2016 after returning to China from a U.S. State Department exchange program. He was later sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of "inciting ethnic discrimination and ethnic hatred."

In a statement on Tuesday, Human Rights Watch urged the U.N. and its member states to intensify their efforts to pressure the Chinese government to end its abuses in Xinjiang.

"Beijing's brazen refusal to meaningfully address well-documented crimes in Xinjiang is no surprise but shows the need for a robust follow-up by the U.N. human rights chief and U.N. member states," Maya Wang, associate China director at Human Rights Watch, said in the statement.

"Contrary to the Chinese government's claims, its punitive campaign against millions of Uyghurs in Xinjiang continues to inflict great pain," she said.

Raphäel Viana David, China program manager at the International Service for Human Rights, welcomed the high commissioner's commitment to working with civil society and advocating for the implementation of all U.N. recommendations to China.

"Beijing does not get to cherry-pick: U.N. human rights findings are indivisible and, altogether, chart the only genuine path forward for China to achieve meaningful human rights change," he said in a statement on the ISHR website.

David added that any deviation from adhering to U.N. recommendations is deceitful and demonstrates a lack of commitment to being a responsible global actor.

"We believe that the OHCHR needs to fulfill its mandate in a just and objective manner, respect countries' sovereignty, respect facts, conduct constructive dialogue and cooperation with countries," Lin said.

He also highlighted China's historical achievements in human rights in Xinjiang.

"Xinjiang today enjoys social stability and economic growth, and the people there live a happy life," he said. "It is at its best in history, where people of all ethnic groups are working together for a better life."

Persistent concerns

The U.N. Human Rights Office's latest call for reform follows a June visit by a U.N. human rights team to China, where they engaged with authorities on counterterrorism policies and the criminal justice system. Despite those discussions, concerns persist.

"Allegations of human rights violations, including torture, need to be fully investigated," the update stated. The OHCHR still faces challenges related to

limited access to information in Xinjiang and risks of reprisals against those engaging with the United Nations.

"We continue to follow the current human rights situation closely, despite these challenges," Shamdasani noted.

China's Xinjiang officials want to build 'strategic barrier for geopolitical security'

27 August 2024, [SCMP](#)

Authorities in Xinjiang have vowed to make stability and security their top priority and to turn the far western region into a "strategic barrier" against geopolitical risks, according to official media.

The Xinjiang committee of China's ruling Communist Party made the pledge in a statement at the end of its annual plenary session – attended by the top party and government officials from the region – on Saturday.

"[We should] make social stability the top priority and improve the system and mechanisms for maintaining national security," according to the statement published in Xinjiang Daily, the mouthpiece of the regional party committee.

It said Xinjiang should also improve "the legal and work routines for counterterrorism and maintaining stability", along with public security and stability on the border.

The Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region shares borders with countries including Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

China has been accused of human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including that at least 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities were held in mass internment camps. Beijing has denied the claims, saying the centres were for "vocational training" and that its policies in the region are aimed at cracking down on terrorism and extremism.

In Saturday's statement, the committee also said it would better support the modernisation of the military, improve mechanisms to fight foreign interference in Xinjiang, and build the region into "a strategic barrier to maintain national geopolitical security" for China. It called for the sense of identity and community to be strengthened among all ethnic groups, with more efforts needed to publicise, educate, research and interpret the idea of the Chinese nation's "one common community".

The party's regional committee also said the legal framework for governing religious affairs should be improved.

On developing the region, it said oil and gas exploration and development should be accelerated, with more efforts towards clean and efficient use of

coal, developing green energy, and exploration of strategic mineral resources.

The committee also urged the regional government to speed up development of a free-trade pilot zone and projects linking to Central Asia.

In addition, the statement echoed a pledge made last week by Yin Bai, who heads the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission that oversees security and law enforcement in China, to prevent and resist “colour revolutions”.

Yin told state news agency Xinhua that “safeguarding political security” and strengthening national security would be the commission’s top priority. He also stressed the need for efforts to counter terrorism, maintain stability and “fight against separatism and infiltration”.

With China locked in an escalating rivalry with the United States, Beijing is increasingly focused on national security.

An entire section of a policy document released in July after the third plenum – a key party meeting – is devoted to “modernising” national security, which the leadership sees as the “pivotal foundation” for China’s development.

The regional committee on Saturday also approved a decision to expel former Xinjiang deputy security chief Ma Guoqiang from the party, according to Xinjiang Daily. Ma, 51, was placed under investigation for corruption in August last year. He has mostly worked in Xinjiang’s Aksu prefecture, where a dozen officials have been investigated for corruption in recent years.

In March, Dou Wangui – Ma’s former boss in Aksu and vice-chairman of Xinjiang’s political advisory body – was also placed under investigation for graft.

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China: two years after Xinjiang findings, UN Rights Chief reports ‘limited access to information’, ‘reprisals’ against activists

27 August 2024, [ISHR](#)

A spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, issued today a rare public statement on his Office’s work on China, marking two years since the release of its groundbreaking report on the grave human rights situation in the Uyghur region (Xinjiang).

In a public statement on 27 August, the Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) stressed its engagement and recommendations in areas where it has been pushing for responses and results from the Chinese government, including on Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and individual cases ‘of particular concern’ in mainland China.

This includes a renewed call on Beijing to ‘take prompt steps to release all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty, and to clarify the status and whereabouts of those whose families have been seeking information about them.’

‘I welcome Volker Türk’s strong endorsement of the Xinjiang report. One day is a day too long for victims like my mother. This must be an urgent wake-up call for all countries to take concrete and swift action to hold China accountable for its long list of documented human rights violations, starting at the UN Human Rights Council.’

Ziba Murat, activist and daughter of arbitrarily detained Uyghur doctor Gulshan Abbas

Two years ago, on 31 August 2022, former High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet released a long-awaited report determining the possible commission of ‘crimes against humanity’ against Uyghurs and other Muslim peoples by Chinese authorities. While the UN report already concluded that conditions were in place for ‘serious violations to continue and recur,’ mounting documentation by UN expert bodies and civil society have confirmed the serious deterioration of the human rights situation in the Uyghur region and across China since 2022.

In today’s statement, the OHCHR underscored that ‘many problematic laws and policies remain in place’ and that allegations of human rights violations, including torture, must be ‘fully investigated’. The Office also called for a ‘full review’ with a human rights emphasis of the legal frameworks governing Chinese policies related to national security, counter-terrorism and minority rights. All of these have remained in place despite extensive concerns, including in the 2022 report, that authorities have weaponised such tools to target Muslim individuals, but also Tibetans, human rights defenders and journalists, and to clamp down on civil society space across mainland China and Hong Kong.

The Chinese government also maintains widespread and systematic restrictions, including through laws, policies and practices described in the UN report, that severely impact the intergenerational transmission of culture, language and religion of Uyghurs and Tibetans.

Beijing has perpetually attempted to present the Xinjiang report to other countries as an isolated initiative. Yet, since its release, further findings by widely-respected UN expert bodies have confirmed and expanded on its findings. Two impartial UN expert committees have called for the report's full implementation: the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in their unprecedented November 2022 Urgent Action Decision on Xinjiang, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in their May 2023 review of China.

In December 2022, at least 15 UN experts also recalled numerous report findings in a strongly-worded letter to the government, laying out seven benchmarks for immediate action, yet expectedly rejected by Beijing.

'We welcome the High Commissioner's commitment to work with civil society and advocate for the implementation of all UN recommendations to China. Beijing does not get to cherry pick: UN human rights findings are indivisible and, altogether, chart the only genuine path forward for China to achieve meaningful human rights change. Any step away from it is deceitful and a proof of lack of willingness to be a responsible global actor.'

Raphäel Viana David, ISHR China Programme Manager Crucially, the OHCHR stated it continues to 'follow closely the situation,' but reported 'difficulties posed by limited access to information and the fear of reprisals against individuals who engage with the United Nations.' The High Commissioner's Office also committed to advocating on behalf of victims and engaging with civil society 'to seek tangible progress in the protection of human rights for all in China.'

'After two years, High Commissioner Türk's update that the Office is committed to tangible change in China is heartening. Yet, China has not implemented any OHCHR recommendations, and independent investigations are still limited or blocked. Victims like my brother Ekar Asat, who endured three years in solitary confinement, and families facing China's psychological warfare can't wait any longer. Türk's work and engagement with China must fully acknowledge these realities.'

Rayhan Asat, Uyghur human rights lawyer

Further evidence of the absence of good faith from Beijing in its engagement with the UN include an increased rejection rate of recommendations during its last UN human rights peer-review in January 2024 – including all related to the Xinjiang report and UN Treaty Bodies – and its unwillingness to provide

unrestricted access to the whole territory for UN Special Rapporteurs listed in the Xinjiang report.

China also remains among the top perpetrators of reprisals against those cooperating, or seeking to cooperate with the UN, and has increased trans-national repressive tactics to try silencing activists and victims abroad. In June 2024, two UN experts condemned the continued enforced disappearance of Uyghur doctor Gulshan Abbas, recalling the Xinjiang report's findings of a pattern of reprisals 'against family members of Uyghurs in exile who had engaged in advocacy.'

'Beijing has done its best to discredit the report, even touring foreign officials through Xinjiang, avoiding substantial discussion about the UN's findings,' added Raphäel Viana David. 'The High Commissioner's message places the Xinjiang report at heart of his engagement with Beijing. The onus is now on China to take meaningful steps forward and on the Human Rights Council to closely monitor until it does so,' Viana concluded.

In June 2020, June 2022 and September 2022, over 40 UN experts jointly rang the alarm at China's human rights crisis, urging the Human Rights Council to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the country's rights situation.

Last June, ISHR and three rights groups jointly released translations of the Xinjiang report in the five remaining UN official languages.

ISHR urges:

- The Chinese government to adopt a roadmap with a clear timeline for the implementation of recommendations from the OHCHR Xinjiang report and other UN human rights mechanisms, and for its meaningful reengagement with UN bodies, including by allowing unrestricted access to the whole territory for UN independent experts for adequate investigation and by putting an immediate end to all acts of reprisals as reported by the UN;

ISHR further calls on:

- The Human Rights Council to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on the human rights situation in China, with a view to uphold the integrity of its mandate and put an end to China's exceptionalism.
- The High Commissioner to continue monitoring the human rights situation in China, to publicly report about it, including on the implementation of the Xinjiang report and any restrictions in accessing information, and to publicly advocate on individual cases.

China: Update on the work of UN Human Rights Office

27 August 2024, [OHCH](#)

Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ravina Shamdasani.

In response to questions in relation to our work on China, particularly as we approach two years since the publication of our Office's assessment on human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on 31 August 2022, here is an update.

The High Commissioner and the Office have had detailed exchanges with the Government of China on a range of critical issues, such as counter-terrorism laws and policies, criminal justice, other policies of concern that impact on the human rights of ethnic and religious minorities, including in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region, equality and non-discrimination, as well as national security and human rights concerns in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Notably, in June this year, a UN Human Rights team visited China and engaged in dialogue with the authorities, specifically on counter-terrorism policies and the criminal justice system. In particular, on Xinjiang, we understand that many problematic laws and policies remain in place, and we have called again on the authorities to undertake a full review, from the human rights perspective, of the legal framework governing national security and counter-terrorism and to strengthen the protection of minorities against discrimination. Allegations of human rights violations, including torture, need to be fully investigated.

We hope to continue our active engagement with the Government, as well as with civil society actors, to seek tangible progress in the protection of human rights for all in China.

We are also continuing to follow closely the current human rights situation in China, despite the difficulties posed by limited access to information and the fear of reprisals against individuals who engage with the United Nations.

We have continued to raise with the Government individual cases of particular concern, calling on the authorities to take prompt steps to release all individuals arbitrarily deprived of their liberty, and to clarify the status and whereabouts of those whose families have been seeking information about them.

We are continuing to advocate for implementation of these and other recommendations made by us, as well as those made by other human rights mechanisms and during the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review process.

The High Commissioner is committed to sustained engagement with the Government of China and to advocating on behalf of victims – always guided by the goal of helping improve human rights protections for the people on the ground.

China's Xinjiang region emerges as a Powerhouse of international trade

26 August 2024, Pakistan Today

BEIJING: Having overcome multiple challenges, China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is now presenting a scene of diversified development, with new high-quality productivity, micro- and macro-economy, art, culture, faith and social values meeting the needs of all social classes.

"Big shoutout for local and central governments of China for channelizing a slew of resources to make Xinjiang a powerhouse of international trade, logistic & economic corridor and resounding hub of all ethnic groups," according to Pakistan's 9-member media delegation that toured the Xinjiang last week, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday.

The delegation visited Xinjiang counter-terrorism and counter-extremism exhibition, Xinjiang Islamic Institute, Xinjiang Software Park, Tianshan Cloud Computing, Xinjiang Art Theatre "Mukam", Xinjiang International Grand Bazar, China-Kazakhstan International Cooperation Center, Khorgos, Jinyi international trade group, Ili general' mansion, Shaanxi mosque, Kazanqi Ethnic culture street, Chabuchar Daily, Uzonbrak resettlement village of Chabuchar and Ili Yimuxin Dairy company,

The members of the delegation comprehended phases of the ongoing deeper transformation of Xinjiang in all spheres of life.

They observed that Xinjiang's economic turnaround is no less than a miracle. It reflects the unflinching resolve of the Chinese leadership to make things happen, one of the delegates expressed.

They applauded Xinjiang Software Park dubbed as a bridge connecting China and abroad for cultural and economy.

Xinjiang inheriting the glory of the past one thousand years, the ancient Silk Road is awakening around the corner of a new era, setting an unprecedented starting point of prosperity for Xinjiang.

With the further implementation of China's Belt and Road Initiative, Xinjiang is brimming with development opportunities like never before.

Because of its unique strategic position as a westward gateway, location and industrial agglomeration benefits, barrage of fortunes are available for Pakistan enterprises in Xinjiang Software Park, delegation was informed.

Delegations also witnessed enormous government support for development of Uyghur performing art in the shape of Xinjiang Uyghur Muqam Art which is a comprehensive art integrating singing, dancing, and music, widely prevalent in Uyghur communities across northern and southern Xinjiang.

Meanwhile Xinjiang International Grand Bazaar mesmerized delegation with its unique historical architecture, traditional facade of shops, medieval pathways and shades of many ethnic groups.

There are two huge buildings in Grand Bazaar, and the exterior of the building is khaki, which is very thick, and the characteristic pillars and domes are quite beautiful.

Delegation also saw a mosque on the south side of the square, and there are many Muslims come here to pray every day, which are full of Islamic style.

The Silk Road tower is the most famous scenic spot in Xinjiang Grand Bazaar, which has also left a very deep impression on the delegation members.

Paintings and exhibitions on all the layers of the tower, which show the history of the Silk Road.

The interior of Xinjiang Grand Bazaar is a huge market, where numerous traders sell Xinjiang's special commodities such as dried fruits, clothing, attar, Yingjisha knives, handicraft and other various products, and that is quite worth to visit.

"The whole international Grand Bazaar is the most ethnic place in Urumqi," according to Mr. Xin from the Information office of Urumqi.

The Sunday Story: Arresting Your Brothers and Sisters

25 August 2024, [NPR](#)

In the Xinjiang region of western China, the government has rounded up and detained at least hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic groups. Many haven't been heard from in years, and others are still desperately searching for their families. Western governments have called this crackdown a cultural genocide and a possible crime against humanity.

NPR Correspondent Emily Feng has been reporting on Uyghurs inside and outside of China for years. In this episode, she profiles two Uyghur men who have found themselves sometimes unwilling actors within the Chinese state's systems of control over Uyghurs. As they work to silence others, they sometimes find themselves silenced as well.

Additional Context:

- Listen to Emily Feng's 2022 reporting, "The Black Gate: A Uyghur Family's Story" [part one](#) and [part two](#).

- For more on the history of the Uyghur people, listen to the episode "[Five Fingers Crush The Land](#)" from NPR's *Throughline* podcast.

Hundreds of Uyghur scientists imprisoned in China, rights group says

23 August 2024, [VOA](#), Kasim Kashgar

Index on Censorship, an organization that promotes freedom of expression globally, is featuring the silencing of scientists and science around the world in the next issue of its publication. One country where scientists and intellectuals, especially those who are Uyghur, have disappeared over the years is China.

In recent years, the Uyghur rights organization Uyghur Hjelp has documented more than 200 cases of Uyghur scientists and other science professionals being imprisoned in China, according to Abduweli Ayup, founder of the Norway-based group.

Among the most prominent is Tursunjan Nurmamat, who received his graduate and postgraduate education in the United States. Nurmamat, who is from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwestern China, specialized in molecular biology and was working as a science editor when he disappeared in 2021.

In addition, he translated English nonfiction books about science and scientists into the Uyghur language. He used his well-known pen name, Bilge, for these translations, which he published on his social media accounts in China.

One of Nurmamat's former employers, Shanghai's Tongji University, confirmed with Radio Free Asia reporters in July 2021 that he had been arrested and had been under investigation since April that year. In response to VOA's request for more information, Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, wrote, "I am not aware of this specific case, thus having nothing to share. China is a law-based country, and I believe the judicial and law enforcement institutions perform their jobs in accordance with law."

Just before Nurmamat's arrest by Xinjiang police, he announced his new role as a science editor at Cell Press, a publisher of scientific journals headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"When I last spoke with him before his forced disappearance, he said he was 'stuck and couldn't leave,' " said a friend who is an exiled Uyghur now living in Canada. The Canadian Uyghur, along with several other exiled Uyghurs in the U.S. who knew Nurmamat before his disappearance, shared with VOA details about his situation. They expressed concerns about his well-being in Chinese custody and requested anonymity because of fears for their families in Xinjiang.

Joseph Caputo, head of media and communications at Cell Press, confirmed to VOA that Nurmamat had a brief tenure at the organization but did not provide further details on his current situation.

“No one outside the Chinese government knows his current location or the length of his sentence, similar to many other cases involving Uyghur intellectuals,” Uyghur Hjelp’s Ayup told VOA in a phone interview.

Uyghur rights organizations say China has been increasing its crackdown on Turkic-speaking Uyghurs in Xinjiang since 2017 with human rights abuses that include arbitrary detention of over 1 million individuals, forced labor, sterilization of women and torture.

China’s treatment of Uyghurs has been labeled as genocide by the U.S. and several Western parliaments. The United Nations human rights office has suggested these actions may amount to crimes against humanity. China denies these accusations, saying Xinjing-related policies are established in the context of combating violent terrorism and separatism, and it accuses the U.S. and Western anti-China forces of spreading disinformation.

Censorship of Uyghur science

Ayup described Nurmamat’s case as a key example of the broader censorship affecting Uyghur science and scientists.

“The Chinese government has targeted Uyghur scientists like [Nurmamat] who have studied abroad and experienced democratic freedoms,” Ayup told VOA. “His work, including translations and science materials in Uyghur, made him a target.”

Ayup noted that by translating and writing extensively in Uyghur about science, Nurmamat directly challenged China’s efforts to suppress the Uyghur language in education.

Over the past two decades, Uyghurs have observed that Chinese authorities have gradually removed the Uyghur language from science-related subjects in K-12 schools and universities in Xinjiang.

Ayup also compared Nurmamat’s case to that of Tashpolat Tiyp, a prominent Uyghur geographer and former president of Xinjiang University, where Nurmamat completed his bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

Tiyp disappeared in 2017, four years before Nurmamat’s arrest, while traveling from Beijing to Berlin for a scientific conference. Since then, there has been no information on his whereabouts or the charges against him.

“Even the Xinjiang University website has removed his record from its list of historic presidents, though it still lists a former president who fled to Taiwan in 1949,” Ayup noted.

Dangers of US education

Nurmamat began his doctoral studies in molecular biology at the University of Wyoming in fall 2009, then

moved to the University of California for a fellowship, which he completed in 2018.

During the fellowship, Nurmamat traveled to Xinjiang in summer 2017 for a job interview at Shihezi University. He took his wife, Nurimangul, and their U.S.-born 5-year-old daughter, Tumaris, with him to China, in hopes of landing a job back in China after his U.S. fellowship.

“At the airport, he was interrogated by Chinese officials, and the Chinese passports belonging to him and his wife were confiscated. Their daughter, who held a U.S. passport, was the only one spared from the interrogation,” a friend said.

After weeks of questioning, Chinese authorities allowed Nurmamat to return to the U.S. to finish his fellowship but imposed strict conditions: His wife and daughter, an American citizen, had to stay in China.

“He was also required to promise that he would return to China once his fellowship concluded,” the friend added.

Dangerous return

Following the completion of his fellowship in 2018, Nurmamat voiced significant apprehensions about returning to China.

“I’m still really worried. Shihezi University keep asking me to return; but I’m scared to return after my experience in the last summer,” he confided to his friend in the U.S. via a messaging app on April 11, 2018, a screenshot of which was shared with VOA. “My family wasn’t able to join me. I’m hoping they will be able to get their passport back and join me in the U.S.”

Despite these fears, Nurmamat returned to China in summer 2018, aiming to secure the release of his wife, a Xinjiang University graduate. She had been under house arrest since 2017 and was later detained in an internment facility, known as a “vocational training center,” which holds over a million Uyghurs, according to his friend.

“Nurmamat thought that keeping his promise to the Chinese authorities would help free his wife and their U.S.-born daughter,” the friend said.

But instead of returning directly to Xinjiang, where his wife was detained, Nurmamat took a research position at Tongji University in Shanghai. He believed Shanghai would be safer and hoped to eventually reunite with his family. But his efforts proved futile, as he eventually followed the path of other Uyghur intellectuals before him, with arrest and detention.

China’s Uyghur policies a ‘racialised atrocity crime’, Harvard law scholar finds

22 August 2024, [The Guardian](#), Peter Hessler

The Chinese government has imposed 4.4 million years of cumulative imprisonment on ethnic Uyghurs

in its far-western Xinjiang region, a new report has found.

The report, titled Uyghur Race as the Enemy and published by the Yale Macmillan Center's Genocide Studies Program, finds high rates of incarceration are part of "racialised atrocity crimes" occurring in China against Muslim minorities.

It demands urgent action from governments to prevent genocide and ensure "the Uyghurs' ability to continue existing as a people".

The Uyghurs are a mostly Muslim, Turkic ethnic group, whose culture and language are distinct from China's ethnic Han majority.

Since 2017, Chinese authorities have waged the "People's War on Terror", which they say is aimed at stamping out Islamic extremism.

At least 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities are estimated to have been detained extrajudicially in detention camps, which Beijing says are vocational training centres.

The study's lead author Rayhan Asat, a Harvard law scholar and senior fellow with the Atlantic Council, told the ABC that the researchers set out to establish: "What is the Chinese government's understanding of extremism?"

Cases analysed in Ms Asat's report, based upon Chinese court documents, reveal "cruel and disproportionately harsh" punishments for alleged support for terrorism or extremism.

In June 2019, a Xinjiang court sentenced Zahire Memet to 15 years' imprisonment for "wearing long clothes, covering her face, and wearing a hijab" between May 2010 and May 2015, against the advice of the village officials.

"In another case that we looked at, they said 'this person is financing terrorism' basically [because] they bought a ring for their son in Türkiye," Ms Asat said.

"In another case, they sent tuition fees to their kids who were studying overseas."

Having connections to Uyghurs abroad, including in Australia, has commonly been cited as a factor for being targeted by Chinese authorities for imprisonment.

World's 'highest incarceration rate' in Xinjiang

The report's cumulative sentencing of 4.4 million years figure was based on available data about prosecutions, which showed the average prison sentence handed to Uyghurs in the region was 8.8 years.

Xinjiang legal authorities reported that between 2017 and 2021, a total of 540,826 individuals were prosecuted in the region.

"That makes China, especially the Uyghur region, basically the highest incarceration rate in the entire world," Ms Asat said.

Xinjiang authorities have since stopped publishing this court data, meaning these were in fact conservative figures, she said.

In China's opaque legal system, it is difficult to ascertain who is behind bars after formal prosecution and who is detained extrajudicially.

The country's official prison population is reported to be 1.69 million.

According to World Prison Brief at the University of London, however, this figure only accounts for sentenced prisoners in Chinese Ministry of Justice prisons, excluding pre-trial detainees and those held in administrative detention as well as those in camps in Xinjiang.

The Associated Press previously reported that in one county in China's Uyghur heartland alone, one in 25 people had been sentenced to imprisonment on terror-related charges.

While journalists and activists routinely became the enemy of the Chinese state, Ms Asat said, soaring rates of incarceration showed the entire Uyghur population had become enemies.

Ms Asat, whose own brother is serving a 15-year prison sentence, said that when a Uyghur is imprisoned in China, "the whole family goes in with them" — such is the level of trauma experienced by the community.

Australian Uyghur community leader Ramila Chanisheff said "every Uyghur that lives in Australia" has a family member or friend in Xinjiang "who they have lost connections with, who they don't know their situation or whereabouts".

"It's simply because they are Uyghur. China is just wanting to erase them completely, and this is the way to do it."

Earlier this year, Human Rights Watch reported that Chinese authorities had changed the names of some 630 villages, to remove cultural or religious references, in an effort to erase Uyghur culture.

Mosques across China have been demolished or altered, including the removal of minarets, as part of authorities' drive to "Sinicise Islam".

From extra-legal jailing to authoritarian 'lawfare'

While the Chinese government has consistently denied human rights abuses in Xinjiang, large amounts of evidence have been gathered by journalists, human rights groups, academics and the United Nations.

A report by the UN human rights chief released in 2022 corroborated previous findings from major human rights groups, concluding that "arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other predominantly Muslim groups ... may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity".

International scrutiny had driven Chinese authorities away from extrajudicial detention towards forms of "lawfare" and weaponising criminal prosecutions, Ms Asat said.

"Chinese authorities have continued to try to justify their patently illegal conduct by calling it the

opposite," wrote former China director at Human Rights Watch, Sophie Richardson, in a piece published by The Diplomat in response to the research.

"The tactic is designed to minimise international scrutiny and discourage the pursuit of accountability." Ms Asat said that little had been done by the UN human rights office since its landmark findings in 2022.

"With China opening up, after the COVID lockdown, we see everybody is going to China ... as if this is doing business with a normal, democratic regime," she said.

"To see the prime minister of Australia, going and shaking hands, smiling for the cameras, with the very people that are imprisoning my people. That's been very difficult.

"There cannot be business as usual with the Chinese government."

The UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery concluded in 2022 that forced labour among Uyghur, Kazakh and other ethnic minorities in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing had occurred in Xinjiang.

For years, trade unions and human rights groups have demanded Australia ban the import of goods such as textiles or solar panels suspected of being made with Uyghur forced labour.

Ms Chanisheff said the Albanese government should impose sanctions on Chinese officials involved in human rights abuses in Xinjiang — just as Australia had done for officials from Russia, Myanmar and Iran.

"We are sick of our government, our foreign minister and our now prime minister being sympathetic or empathetic. We're sick of the words when we've got millions of people disappearing," she said.

"Australia claims that we are the strongest partner for China, but what kind of friend do you have when you know they're committing genocide, ethnic cleansing — and you're quiet about it?"

A spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said: "Australia has consistently condemned human rights violations against the Uyghurs and other ethnic and Muslim minorities in Xinjiang and across China."

The spokesperson said that at the UN Human Rights Council in January 2024, Australia called on China to "repeal legislation and cease practices which discriminate against Uyghurs on the basis of race or religion, cease arbitrary detention, coercive labour transfer and family separation programs; and end restrictions on movement and on rights to enjoy their own culture and language".

7 brothers from prominent Uyghur family confirmed jailed in Xinjiang

19 August 2024, [RFA](#), Shohret Hoshur

China arrested them on flimsy charges during mass incarcerations that started in 2017.



A man walks towards the entrance of a vocational and technical school believed to be a detention facility in Jiashi county, Kashgar Prefecture, China's northwestern Xinjiang region, July 15, 2023.

Seven brothers from a prominent Uyghur family in Kashgar have been sentenced to terms ranging from nine to 17 years for charitable work "supporting Uyghurs" and overseas trips, as part of the ongoing mass incarceration campaign against the mostly Muslim group that started in 2017, three people with knowledge of the situation said.

The Obulqasim brothers — Abdusalam, 45; Abduhelil, 47; Mametsidiq, 49; Yusupjan, 51; Memmettursun, 54; Pazil, 56; and Sabir, 62 — were businessmen active in construction materials, electrical appliances and other products.

They were detained and imprisoned amid mass arrests of Uyghurs and are serving their sentences in prisons in Kashgar and Urumqi, the sources said.

"They are one of the richest families in Kashgar," said Abduweli Ayup, founder Uyghur Hjelp, also known as Uyghuryar, a Norway-based nonprofit organization that documents Uyghurs who have been arrested and imprisoned. He said he confirmed through his information network that the seven brothers were all jailed.

They are among the estimated 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims detained under flimsy pretexts during mass detentions that began more than seven years ago, as Chinese authorities rounded up businesspeople, clerics, intellectuals and those who had traveled abroad years before or who taught the Quran to youngsters.

Claiming they were fighting separatism and terrorism, China has clamped down harshly on Uyghurs, penalizing those who communicated with Uyghurs outside of Xinjiang or offered financial support.

Though Chinese authorities long prohibited Uyghurs from traveling abroad, there was a brief period after

2010 when they were encouraged to obtain passports after international pressure.

But later, authorities deemed suspicious those who did obtain passports or merely applied for them and subsequently detained in camps and prisons.

Active businessmen

Their father, Obulqasim, now deceased, sold and repaired watches in Kashgar. The brothers started businesses selling various goods at the city's Id Kah Market, a prime business district.

Over the years they established the Aq Orda Trade Center, selling construction materials and electrical appliances, according to Ayup. They also owned stores in Kashgar.

Pazil expanded the family business into cargo shipping, establishing a presence in Central Asia and Turkey, and became a leading Uyghur businessman. The brothers were also involved in the hotel industry.

The seven brothers were sentenced in May 2019 and received prison terms of 17, 13, 11 or nine years, said a security guard from Kashgar Prison's employee residence building.

Five of the brothers, including Abduhelil and Pazil, are serving their sentences at Kashgar Prison, also known as Yerken Peylu Prison. The other two are in jail in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, he said.

Targeted for supporting Uyghurs

Pazil and Yusupjan were accused of "supporting Uyghurs" through charitable work, while the others either traveled abroad or displayed "ethnic hatred and discrimination," the security guard said, referring to discrimination against Han Chinese.

Their arrests came at a time when many Uyghur businessmen were targeted for their charitable activities, Ayup added.

"I heard they were collecting money for people," the prison security guard said. "Starting from 2000, they had been a key family to be under watch."

The brothers helped other Uyghurs get jobs in Kashgar, performed charity work to benefit orphans and the poor, and contributed to children's education, Ayup said.

Pazil and Yusupjan were detained for their charity work and for their connections with Uyghur expatriates during their business operations in the cargo shipping business, he said, citing people with knowledge of the situation.

Their financial assistance to expatriate Uyghurs in need while doing business abroad was later labeled as "supporting" Uyghurs, said another source with knowledge of the situation, who did not want to be identified for fear of retribution by authorities.

They were accused of supporting Uyghurs abroad, and three other brothers were accused of ethnic hatred and discrimination, the guard said.

Authorities disclosed the details of their sentences to their families after their arrest, as there were no prior

announcements or notifications about their detention," said the security guard.

Another brother, Abduhelil, a filmmaker and entrepreneur, was first arrested in October 2017, held in a pretrial detention for more than 18 months and sent to a "re-education" camp, RFA reported this July. His films promoted Uyghur culture.

Authorities released Abduhelil in December 2019, but rearrested him in September 2023 for "inciting separatism" for promoting Uyghur culture in his films. He is serving a 15-year sentence in Kashgar Prison.

China diverting world attention away from Xinjiang crisis, says Swedish Uyghur Committee

16 August 2024, [The News Mill](#)

The Svenska Uyghur Kommitten (SUK), generally known as the Swedish Uyghur Committee, on Thursday said that China has been creating a facade of development to divert the world's attention away from its abuses in East Turkistan. The committee said in a statement that China's invasion and occupation of East Turkistan is a 'dark lesson in global manipulation'.

In the statement posted on X, the SUK said, "Since 1949, China's invasion and occupation of East Turkistan have not just been a blueprint for colonization and genocide against the Uyghurs and other Turkic peoples; they've been a dark lesson in global manipulation. Through economic leverage and a meticulously crafted facade of modernization, China has convinced much of the world to turn a blind eye to its crimes, all the while presenting itself as a pillar of stability on the world stage.

Claiming it to be a bitter irony, the same statement by the SUK stated that China has been using all of its tools to build a narrative away from the brutal reality of the Xinjiang region.

The statement said, "This is a bitter irony, the very tools China uses to commit and conceal its human rights abuses propaganda, economic coercion, and diplomatic double-speak are now exported as part of its global influence. But behind this facade lies the stark reality of a people fighting for survival. The international community, including nations like Sweden, cannot afford to remain complicit in this charade".

The SUK urged the world that addressing the genocide and occupation tactics of China is necessary but is not enough. They demanded that the world must support the struggle of East Turkistan people for independence.

The statement stated, "It is the only path that guarantees the survival of our people. Independence is not just a moral imperative, it is a strategic necessity in the face of a regime that has proven time and again

its willingness to erase entire cultures to achieve its ends”.

The world’s policymakers and diplomats, do not be fooled by the veneer of progress that China projects, the statement said.

The statement added that one must understand that supporting East Turkistan’s independence is not just about standing against oppression—it’s about rejecting the global spread of a model that prioritises power over people.

The survival of East Turkistan is a test of whether we will allow autocracy to rewrite the rules of international conduct, or whether we will stand firm in defence of human rights, freedom, and the truth, the statement by the SUK added.

Report highlights systematic repression, human rights violations of Uyghurs in Xinjiang by China

16 August 2024, [Indian Narrative](#)

A recent report by Yale University has highlighted the precarious living conditions of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) under Chinese repression.

Uyghurs have been facing deteriorating conditions in the Xinjiang region. Beijing has also intensified its crackdown on those who speak out against human rights abuses.

The report has underscored that China’s extensive imprisonment of Uyghurs constitutes both a “crime against humanity” and a “genocide,” representing a dangerous scale of lawfare.

It has detailed severe inconsistencies and deficiencies in China’s legal system, including excessive punishments, widespread prosecutions, and unusually high incarceration rates. The analysis reveals how China’s authoritarian framework undermines both domestic and international legal standards.

The Yale report also highlighted how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has adapted its tactics to evade international scrutiny while continuing its persecution of Uyghurs.

It stated that the scale of imprisonment, unprecedented since World War II, represents the extreme reach of what scholars term “authoritarian legality” and poses a grave concern for global humanity.

The report estimates that if mass imprisonment persists, the Uyghur population could endure a cumulative total of 4.4 million years of imprisonment. Furthermore, the report also highlighted that among 13,114 records with prison sentences (excluding 25,155 without), the average prison term is approximately 8.80 years.

Earlier, a February 2022 report from the Xinjiang High People’s Procuratorate revealed that 5,40,826

individuals were prosecuted in the region from 2017 to 2021.

However, with the Xinjiang court ceasing to release new data, the actual number of prosecutions is likely much higher with the missing data of 2022, 2023 and 2024.

The report also raises alarms about China’s conviction rate for Uyghur Muslims, which exceeds 99.9 per cent. Nearly all Uyghurs arrested for reeducation or labelled as suspicious are likely convicted, positioning the XUAR with the highest imprisonment rate in the world at 2,095 per 1,00,000 citizens.

Turkish journalists on China-sponsored Xinjiang tour give positive reports

15 August 2024, [VOA](#), Kasim kashgar

Turkish journalist Erdal Emre shared his impressions about a recent media tour of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwestern China.

"Our #Xinjiang trip with journalist friends from 8 media outlets has concluded. It was a trip where we learned a lot. We will be writing about our impressions. We extend our sincere thanks to our Chinese colleagues for their hospitality," Emre wrote on the social media platform X on Wednesday.

Emre was part of a group of 11 Turkish journalists who participated in the "Media Trip in Xinjiang: Always More to Discover," a nine-day event co-sponsored by Guangming Online and the Xinjiang Cyberspace Affairs Commission.

The tour covered Urumqi, Ili, Aksu and Kashgar, cities in the north and south of Xinjiang, with the journalists closely monitored by Chinese authorities.

Guangming Online, the digital arm of the state-controlled *Guangming Daily*, operates under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party. The Xinjiang Cyberspace Affairs Commission, a regional government department, is responsible for overseeing internet censorship and online content management in Xinjiang.

Image campaign

Guangming Daily reported that the initiative aimed to "vividly showcase a beautiful Xinjiang" marked by "unity, harmony, prosperity, progress, security and ecological well-being."

Zhang Jun, director of the Xinjiang Cyberspace Affairs Commission, said in the news report that the goal was to counter criticism and promote a positive image of the region.

"We hope that everyone will come to understand Xinjiang through seeing it with their own eyes, tell the story of Xinjiang in different languages, and share a true Xinjiang with the world," Zhang said in the report. China's efforts to host international journalists in Xinjiang are part of its response to allegations of

human rights abuses. These allegations include mass detentions, which the U.S. has labeled as genocide and the U.N. as crimes against humanity. Reports indicate that Uyghurs and Turkic Muslims face forced indoctrination, abuse, labor and sterilization in these facilities.



FILE - Protesters chant slogans as they hold posters and pictures of victims during a protest against China's brutal crackdown on ethnic Uyghurs, in front of the Chinese Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, Nov. 30, 2022.

This strategy aligns with Chinese President Xi Jinping's directive from July 2022 to enhance external propaganda efforts. Xi stressed the importance of using various platforms to "tell the story of Xinjiang" and present the region in a favorable light, advocating a multifaceted approach to bolster China's global influence and shape perceptions of Xinjiang.

According to Abdürreşit Celil Karluk, professor of international relations at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University and visiting fellow at the University of Sheffield's School of East Asian Studies, China strategically spends money to try to influence Turkish public opinion through media channels.

The campaigns target a country that hosts one of the largest and most politically active Uyghur diasporas in the world. Rights groups estimate there are 50,000 to 75,000 Uyghurs living in Turkey.

"Media giants such as CRI Türk and CGNT Türk, which are directly linked to China, broadcast in Turkish 24 hours a day," Karluk said. CRI Türk is owned by China Radio International, which is a state-owned broadcaster controlled by the Chinese government.

Diverging narratives

In a video posted Tuesday by the Chinese Embassy in Turkey, Tunç Akkoç, founder of digital media organization Harici, expressed surprise at what he perceived as a stark contrast between his experience in Xinjiang and the reports from Western media.

"It is totally a different impression and a different reality from what we hear, especially from some Western media," Akkoç said.

Mustafa Birol Güger of the *Cumhuriyet* daily newspaper remarked that the smiling faces he observed at an Urumqi bazaar suggested to him that the populace was content.

"If you want to check the level of stress in a country, you should go to public places and look at the face of the people," Güger said. "In Urumqi, in the grand bazaar today, everyone was smiling, so that means they are happy, and if they are happy, we are happy, too. What I see is completely different from what is being told in the media."

Asli Atasoy, host of the CGTN Turkish channel's program "Chasing the Dragon," on Monday shared a blog post on Turkish news site T24 detailing her visit and an interview with Muhterem Sherif, the imam of the Noghay mosque in Urumqi. CGTN, or China Global Television Network, is a Chinese state-owned media outlet.

Sherif is quoted as saying that Uyghurs "are very satisfied" with the Chinese government's religious policies.

Opinion shaping

Karluk, the international relations professor, said that with sponsored trips like this, China aims to persuade nationalist and conservative groups in Turkey, traditionally supportive of Uyghur rights, to change their stance.

"China is also attempting to influence more nationalist conservative groups in line with its own discourses by taking them to China as part of packaged programs, particularly given the growing anti-Westernism, especially anti-Americanism, in Türkiye most since 2016," he said in an email.

Economic compromise

Yalkun Uluyol, a Uyghur rights advocate, views the Chinese sponsorship of Turkish journalists as part of China's strategy to present a favorable narrative and obscure human rights abuses.

"Similar to previous efforts, China tries to whitewash ongoing abuses and gain international legitimacy," Uluyol said.

Uluyol argues that Turkey's concerns for Uyghurs are being overshadowed by economic interests, citing a \$1 billion deal with China's electric carmaker BYD and the resumption of direct flights between Istanbul and Urumqi after an eight-year hiatus as emerging evidence of Turkey's shift from criticism to accommodation of China's Uyghur policy.

Uyghur rights group condemns China for destroying 16,000 mosques in Xinjiang

15 August 2024, [News Intervention](#)

The East Turkistan National Movement (ETNM), a US-based organization dedicated to advocating for the rights of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, has issued a strong statement condemning China for its systematic destruction of Uyghur culture and heritage. The organization is urging the international community,

human rights authorities, and activists to take decisive action against Beijing's oppressive policies.

In a statement released on X (formerly Twitter), the ETNM accused the Chinese government of demolishing over 16,000 mosques and converting other religious sites into bars and clubs. "The Chinese government is executing a calculated strategy to annihilate the identity of the East Turkistan nation to ensure its occupation of East Turkistan continues. In a blatant attempt to erase our historical and cultural roots, Beijing has demolished over 16,000 mosques, desecrated religious sites by turning them into bars and clubs, and destroyed countless historic Uyghur neighborhoods," the ETNM said. "These acts of cultural destruction are designed to break the spirit of our people and erase our Turkic and Islamic heritage from existence."



Demolition of 16,000 Mosques in Xinjiang (Photo - X)

The ETNM also criticized Muslim-majority countries, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Central Asian Republics for their silence in the face of China's campaign against Uyghur Muslims. The organization accused these entities of turning a blind eye to the atrocities in Xinjiang and, in some cases, even supporting China's actions.

A 2021 report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) supported ETNM's claims, revealing through satellite imagery that significant damage has been done to over 20 percent of the region's mosques, with many being demolished or repurposed.

Xinjiang has become one of the most heavily monitored regions in the world, with extensive use of facial recognition technology and other surveillance methods. There is substantial evidence, including satellite imagery, of large-scale internment camps in the region. These facilities, described by the Chinese government as "re-education" camps, are considered by international observers and human rights organizations to be detention centers aimed at erasing the identity of East Turkistan and its people.

The ETNM's call to action is a plea for the world to recognize and confront the ongoing cultural genocide in Xinjiang and to support the Uyghur people in their fight for survival and freedom.

Uyghur Prison Sentences Total 4.4 Million Years

14 August 2024, [National Review](#), Jimmy Quinn

A new analysis from Yale University attempts to put a number on the staggering cost of the Chinese Communist Party's campaign against Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang.

As Beijing has modified its campaign from that of a program of mass arbitrary detentions to one where it comes up with a bogus legal basis for imprisoning individuals, Chinese courts have sentenced residents of Xinjiang to a cumulative 4.4 million years in prison, the report, released this week, [found](#).

"This type of legalized form of repression is profoundly alarming — it is no less widespread nor humane than the former," stated the report, from the Genocide Studies Program at Yale's MacMillan Center.

"In fact, one might consider it even more harmful precisely because its veil of legal legitimacy renders it elusive to international scrutiny and legalizes human rights abuses."

The anti-Uyghur program was brought to public attention in the late 2010s — culminating in the U.S. State Department's designation in 2021 of the abuses as genocide. Since then, international scrutiny has lagged as Beijing has sought to reframe foreign perceptions of its rule over Xinjiang.

With the completion of campaigns to raze mosques, or otherwise convert them in such a way for access by Han Chinese, and other efforts to turn the region's cities into tourist destinations, Beijing has welcomed visitors to the region. The party's broader effort to add the perception of legal legitimacy to the mass detentions is part of this overhaul.

To reach the 4.4 million estimate, researchers — led by Rayhan Asat, a human-rights lawyer who campaigns for the release of her brother, Ekpar, from the camps — consulted data from the Xinjiang Victims Database, an initiative that pulls together information on over 62,000 specific victims from multiple sources including leaked Chinese law-enforcement documents.

They looked at 13,000 cases that listed a prison sentence, finding that the average sentence was 8.8 years, then multiplied that number by the 540,000 individuals the Xinjiang High People's Procuratorate said it prosecuted from 2017 to 2021.

The report says the Xinjiang victims dataset reflects only a fraction of the true size of the prison program and that the "actual numbers are far more significant." And while the Chinese authorities make public criminal records in other parts of the country, records from almost 90 percent of cases in Xinjiang are not public, it said.

The existence of this mass detention program, of course, is already widely known, if attention to the ongoing atrocities has flagged in the years that have followed the U.S. genocide determination. But the 4.4

million figure is new and noteworthy because it helps to measure the party's employment of a legalistic charade, which is one less-known detail of the crackdown.

Like other aspects of the atrocities against Uyghurs, this advances Beijing's effort to eliminate a people. "If the Uyghur population continues to be barred from maintaining their communities, it is only a matter of time before full ethnic incapacitation is realized and the damage is irreversible," the report concluded.

Xinjiang starts water diversion for China's longest inland river

13 August 2024, Global Times



A drone photo taken on Aug. 12, 2024 shows water flowing from the Daxihaizi Reservoir into the river course in Yuli County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Monday began discharging water from a reservoir into the Tarim River, China's longest inland river, as part of an ongoing ecological conservation project in the region. (Photo: Xinhua)



An aerial drone photo taken on Aug. 12, 2024 shows water flowing from the Daxihaizi Reservoir into the river course in Yuli County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Monday began discharging water from a reservoir into the Tarim River, China's longest inland river, as part of an ongoing ecological conservation project in the region. (Photo: Xinhua)



An aerial drone photo taken on Aug. 12, 2024 shows water flowing from the Daxihaizi Reservoir into the river course in Yuli County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Monday began discharging water from a reservoir into the Tarim River, China's longest inland river, as part of an ongoing ecological conservation project in the region. (Photo: Xinhua)



An aerial drone photo taken on Aug. 12, 2024 shows water flowing through the populus euphratica forests in the lower reaches of Tarim River after being released from the Daxihaizi Reservoir in Yuli County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Monday began discharging water from a reservoir into the Tarim River, China's longest inland river, as part of an ongoing ecological conservation project in the region. (Photo: Xinhua)

Uyghur-American politician calls for enhanced cooperation to address independence struggles in China, PoGB

10 August 2024, [Indian Narrative](#)

In a significant push for greater unity and action, Salih Hudayar, a prominent Uyghur-American politician known for advocating for East Turkistan independence, has emphasized the need for increased collaboration to tackle the independence struggles of regions under Chinese and Pakistani control.

In a post on X, Salih stated, "Yesterday, a significant gathering took place at the National Press Club at Washington DC, bringing together representatives of East Turkistan, Gilgit Baltistan, and Tibet. We convened to address the ongoing independence struggles of Tibet and East Turkistan, alongside the political challenges facing Gilgit Baltistan."

In his post, Salih emphasized that the struggles of people go beyond mere human rights issues, encompassing profound political challenges with far-reaching geopolitical implications for both regional and global security and freedom. He also noted that discussions revealed a fundamental cause of our nations' suffering: Chinese imperialism and expansionism.

Salih stressed the critical importance of enhanced cooperation and advocacy to tackle these challenges. He underscored that restoring independence to East Turkistan and Tibet is crucial not only for reclaiming our territories but also for protecting the rights and survival of our people.

Likewise, he highlighted that reuniting Gilgit-Baltistan with India is key to safeguarding the rights and future of its residents.

Salih stated, "This meeting marks an important step in uniting our voices and advancing our shared goals on the global stage. We are committed to working together to counter Chinese expansionism and to secure a future where our nations can thrive in freedom and peace."

The Uyghur people, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group, have long sought independence or greater autonomy from China.

The region, officially known as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, has been the focus of intense international scrutiny due to reports of human rights abuses, including mass detentions in so-called "re-education camps" and forced labour.

Similarly, Tibet, home to the Tibetan Buddhist community, has also experienced longstanding tensions with the Chinese government. The Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, fled to India in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule. Tibetans continue to seek greater autonomy and the preservation of their cultural and religious practices.

The Chinese government maintains strict control over the region, with significant restrictions on religious freedom and political dissent. On the other hand, various local political parties and activist groups in PoGB continue to advocate for greater autonomy of the region. These groups often organize rallies, write petitions, and engage in political dialogue to push for their demands.

Exclusive: Uyghur activist says former business partners sentenced in Xinjiang

06 August 2024, [VOA](#), Kasim Kashgar



First row, middle: Tahir Imin; left: Yashiq Ahmed; right: Nurmemet Imin. Second row, first on the right: Rashidin Gheyret; second: Elkem Ilhamjan; third: Dawut Osman. (Photo courtesy of Tahir Imin)

Tahir Imin, a 42-year-old U.S.-based Uyghur activist and former political prisoner from China, tells VOA that he recently learned that six of his former business associates in Xinjiang were sentenced for allegedly attempting to split the country.

"I've learned from two sources that the sentences, handed down in early 2024 by the Urumqi Intermediate People's Court, were linked to their association with me," Imin told VOA. "One received 15 years, while the others got 12."

Information in Xinjiang is tightly controlled, making it extremely difficult to get details about court proceedings. Imin — the founder of the Washington-based *Uyghur Times* and a member of the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project — said his sources were unable to share documents for fear of retaliation from the Chinese government. Among those charged, he added, was the nephew of a top party official in Xinjiang.

The Urumqi Intermediate People's Court is in the capital of Xinjiang, which is home to nearly 12 million predominantly Muslim Uyghurs. The U.S. and other countries have accused China of genocide in Xinjiang, where more than 1 million Uyghurs are believed to be detained in facilities that Beijing describes as vocational training centers.

China says the measures are necessary to combat extremism, terrorism and separatism. Some people have been detained for practicing their religion or for their contacts with overseas individuals who are speaking out about China's policies in Xinjiang.

When reached for comment on the case, Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, told VOA he had not heard of the cases mentioned by Imin.

"China is a law-based country where laws must be observed and those who violate the law must be held accountable," Liu said in an email to VOA. "If the sentencing is linked to accusations of 'attempting to

split the country,' please refer to Article 103 of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China."

Article 103 of the Chinese Criminal Law states that people who "organize, plot or carry out the scheme of splitting the State or undermining national unity" face life imprisonment or at least 10 years.

The sentences of 12 to 15 years for Imin's former associates suggest they might have been charged under this article.

Not the first time

Imin believes the news about his former associates is part of China's broader strategy of transnational repression against activists like himself.

It is not the first time this has happened to him, he said.

"Previously, I discovered that 28 of my family members were sentenced to prison simply because of their relationship to me," he said. "I am deeply concerned about my daughter, who was forced to denounce me, and my estranged wife, who was forced to divorce me."

Imin told VOA that he has not heard from his wife or daughter in years and has no way of knowing whether they are alive or living freely.

"That leaves me with a constant sense of guilt and sorrow," he said.

Imin and the six sentenced business associates — Ismail Kerim, Elqem Ilham, Dawut Osman, Yashiq Ahmed, Nurmemet Imin and Rashidin Gheyret — founded Xinjiang Ottuz Oghul Import and Export Trading Co., Ltd. in 2014.

Imin left China in March 2017, first relocating to Israel before settling in Washington. After moving to the U.S., he lost touch with his former associates and began speaking out against alleged abuses in Xinjiang. As a result, his associates severed contact with him, leaving him unable to track the fate of the company they once shared.

VOA was able to find details about his import-export firm on Chinese company search websites. According to Alibaba's 1688 business-to-business website, the company and its associates registered with the Urumqi Municipal Administration for Market Regulation on May 14, 2014, with Tahir Imin listed as the representative and chairman and the other sentenced individuals in administrative roles.

Imin says his former associates all had separate businesses, with their joint company serving as a collaborative venture.

"We were all well-educated and focused on business and social improvement," Imin said. "Our company's motto was development, cooperation and social responsibility."

Family ties

Ilham, one of the former business associates who was sentenced, is a nephew of Kaiser Abdukerim, the

current vice chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, according to Imin.

VOA couldn't independently verify the connection between Ilham and Abdukerim. Despite multiple calls to a number listed on the Xinjiang government website, the calls went unanswered.

Abdikerim has long been a vocal supporter of the Chinese government's policies in Xinjiang. At the United Nations in 2018, as president of Xinjiang Medical University, he defended the government's policies, calling them social progress even as allegations of mass detentions and human rights abuses were growing.

In March 2023, as vice chairman of Xinjiang, Abdikerim claimed on CGTN that international criticism of Xinjiang was an attempt to interfere in China's internal affairs.

Restricted access

According to information collected by the Xinjiang Victims Database, which documents individuals affected by China's policies in Xinjiang, all of Imin's former colleagues were arrested in July 2021 on charges of problematic association. They later attended a hearing in March of 2023. Imin's update about their sentencing is the latest on their status.

According to Gene Bunin, curator of the Xinjiang Victims Database, access to court verdicts and legal documents is highly restricted with the government now requiring users who want to access them to use Chinese platforms such as WeChat or AliPay.

"The other reason is that, even when accessible, they [Chinese authorities] generally did not post any of the sensitive cases, which is the vast majority of criminal cases for Xinjiang," Bunin told VOA.

He said that in a study he carried out in 2018, only 7,000 of 70,000 criminal cases in Xinjiang had verdicts posted.

"This rate, of around 10%, was by far the lowest in the country, as for most provinces/regions at least 60-70% of the verdicts were posted," said Bunin. "Of the 7,000 visible, almost all were for standard crimes that would be recognized anywhere in the world (drunk driving, theft, robbery, rape, murder, etc.), with essentially no political/religious cases."

According to a Human Rights Watch report released in 2022 that was based on Xinjiang government data, more than half a million people had been prosecuted since 2017.

Xinjiang authorities target Uyghurs cadres in 'dark forces' crackdown

01 August 2024, [RFA](#), Shohret Hoshur

The measure is meant to purge government workers deemed disloyal to China.

Authorities in a central Xinjiang city have detained more than 70 Uyghurs officials after purging them for being “two-faced” — part of a larger operation to investigate and jail those deemed disloyal to China and the Chinese Communist Party, police said.

Authorities in Korla, the second-largest city by population in Xinjiang, told Radio Free Asia they had so far investigated over 200 Uyghurs deemed problematic, as part of a nationwide “dark forces” crackdown on the mostly Muslim group that began on July 15, police said.

The term “two-faced” is used by authorities to describe Uyghur officials who do not willingly follow directives, exhibit signs of disloyalty or show sympathetic tendencies toward other Uyghurs in northwestern China's Xinjiang region where the ethnic group faces repression.

“Since the beginning of the crackdown on ‘dark forces,’ more than 200 suspects have been investigated, [and] 76 of them were determined to be two-faced,” said a police officer on duty at the People’s Government building in Korla.

The crackdown is the latest of a series of ongoing measures to suppress what China deems “ethnic separatist forces,” “terrorist forces” and “religious extremism” in Xinjiang, home to more than 11 million Uyghurs.

It is also in keeping with policies to fully meld Uyghurs into the Chinese nation and deepen ideological control over the region.

Reexamination method

The crackdown was initiated by Xinjiang’s “Combating Dark and Evil Forces” working group, which held a meeting on July 14, according to a Xinjiang TV report. The group said authorities would “identify and punish those who do not fulfill their duties in key areas using the reexamination method.”

Xinjiang authorities first used the “reexamination method” in 2016 to purge Uyghur writers, artists and researchers by finding “problems” in their previous works that raised questions about their loyalty to China, and subsequently punished them.

Authorities in Korla have operated under a state of emergency since the end of 2023 and have maintained that status since the beginning of the crackdown on “dark forces,” said the officer on duty at the People’s Government building.

“In meetings we were told that the main targets were two-faced-people,” he said. “There have been a lot of two-faced people detained since we started the attack on ‘dark forces.’”

While the “attack on dark and evil forces” in Chinese provinces mainly targets gangs and criminals, authorities in Xinjiang go after Uyghurs in political and government positions, especially top Uyghur cadres, state employees and Chinese Communist Party members, according to Chinese media reports.

During the “dark forces” crackdown in Hotan, a major oasis town in southwestern Xinjiang called Hetian in Chinese, authorities investigated and punished leading cadres deemed “two-faced” for purportedly protecting “national separatists” and “religious extremists.”

Authorities in Xinjiang have targeted ordinary Uyghurs during previous “reexamination” operations, jailing them for “religious extremism” for practicing their Muslim faith or studying or teaching the Quran, the central religious text of Islam, to others, even if the activities occurred a decade or two earlier.

China-US

India open to 'unprecedented' cooperation with US because of Chinese aggression, says ex-NSA McMaster

29 August 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

India open to 'unprecedented' cooperation with US because of Chinese aggression, says ex-NSA McMaster
Washington, The Indian government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is willing to engage in "unprecedented" levels of cooperation with the United States, mainly due to Chinese aggression, but at the same time is "fearful" both of "entrapment and abandonment", former US National Security Adviser Lt Gen H R McMaster has stated in his latest book.

Giving the firsthand account of his tenure during the Donald Trump administration as the National Security Advisor, McMaster in his book "At War With Ourselves", that hit the bookstores this Tuesday, says he met his Indian counterpart Ajit K Doval a day before he was fired by Trump.

“The day before I was fired, I met for dinner with my Indian counterpart, Ajit Doval, at Quarters 13, Fort McNair, a quiet place at the intersection of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, just south of the US Capitol. Doval is a character straight out of central casting. Betraying his background as the former director of his country’s Intelligence Bureau, he would lean into conversations, cock his head to the side as he spoke, and use hushed tones, even when discussing the most routine subjects,” McMaster writes.

“During our walk after dinner, he whispered, 'How much longer will we work together?' It did not take someone with Doval’s intelligence background to figure out I was departing the Trump administration. Without answering directly, I told him it had been a privilege and expressed confidence that there would be continuity,” he says.

McMaster writes they knew each other well enough for Doval to be direct.

“What happens in Afghanistan after you leave?” Doval asked him, to which McMaster reminded the Indian NSA that Trump had approved the South Asia strategy last August and that it was the first reasoned and sustainable strategy in 17 years of war.

“Doval knew this, but sometimes you cannot be fully candid with even your closest foreign counterparts. In fact, I shared Doval’s concern, and I knew that my response was less than convincing. Trump was unconventional and impulsive. Sometimes his impulses were good. Other times, to use one of his turns of phrase, ‘not so much,’” the American general writes.

McMaster in his book gives a detailed account of his trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India from April 14–17, 2017, during which he met then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar, Doval and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

The conversation was easy, as Doval, Jaishankar, “and I believed we had a tremendous opportunity to work together in pursuit of our mutual objectives”, McMaster writes about his meeting at the Janpath residence of Doval. Jaishankar then was the Foreign Secretary and late Sushma Swaraj was the External Affairs Minister.

“We spoke about the war in Afghanistan and the threat to India from nuclear-armed Pakistan, but Jaishankar and Doval spoke mainly about an increasingly aggressive China. The two men were open to unprecedented cooperation thanks to Xi Jinping’s aggression. The deepening partnership between the world’s largest and the world’s oldest democracies seemed logical, but India is fearful both of entrapment into competitions from which it would prefer to abstain and abandonment based on the short American attention span and ambivalence over South Asia,” McMaster writes.

“Those ‘schizophrenic’ anxieties and the legacy of India’s leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War had led to hedging behaviour, especially with Russia, an important source of arms and oil for India,” he states.

On the final day of his trip, he met Modi at his residence.

“Modi gave us a warm welcome. It was clear that deepening and expanding our relationship was a top priority for him. He expressed concern over China’s increasingly aggressive efforts to extend its influence at India’s expense and over its growing military presence in the region,” the former NSA writes.

Modi, McMaster says, suggested that the US, India, Japan, and like-minded partners emphasise the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific as an inclusive effort to benefit all, in contrast to China’s ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative.

At the end of the meeting, he says, the prime minister gave him a hug, put his hands on his shoulders, and

blessed him. “You have an aura around you, and you will do good for humanity,” Modi told him.

A few months later Trump hosted Modi for a meeting at the White House on June 25-26, 2017.

“We huddled in the Oval Office for a few moments between the meeting with Modi’s delegation in the Cabinet Room and the statements and question-and-answer session in the Rose Garden. I warned Trump that the prime minister was a hugger and, based on how well the visit was going, would probably hug Trump after their statements,” McMaster writes.

“Although Trump was known to hug the occasional American flag onstage, he was not a big hugger of people. The hug was delivered and reciprocated in a way that was not too awkward. Success. Modi departed on June 27, just two days before Moon’s arrival,” he says.

Modi was the first head of state the president and First Lady hosted for dinner in the Blue Room, he noted.

Agenda for US-China talks includes Taiwan, South China Sea, Russia and AI

27 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Igor Patrick

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi are set for three days of meetings in Beijing this week.

In addition to Taiwan and tariffs, when US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi meet this week, they will discuss counternarcotics, better communication between the nations’ militaries and improved artificial intelligence security, a senior White House official said Monday.

The meetings, scheduled to run from Tuesday to Thursday in Beijing, are to build on the talks that began at last year’s summit in California between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

“Mr. Sullivan’s trip to China was discussed by the two leaders last November. A lot of planning and scheduling went into it since then, and they’re now executing it in Beijing,” National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

Sullivan’s meeting, his fifth with Wang, will be the first trip by a US national security adviser to Beijing since 2016, when Susan Rice of the Barack Obama administration travelled there.

Additionally, Sullivan is expected to raise US concerns regarding security in the Indo-Pacific region, China’s support for Russia’s defence industrial base as well as other international hotspots, including North Korea, the Middle East and Myanmar, a senior US official said last week.

On Sunday, China’s Foreign Ministry said that Beijing regarded Sullivan’s trip as “an important step for the two sides to implement the common understandings the two presidents had at their San Francisco

meeting,” but that Wang would take the opportunity to raise “serious concerns” about Taiwan.

“The US side must abide by the one-China principle and the provisions of the three China-US joint communiques, and honour its commitment of not supporting ‘Taiwan independence,’” the ministry said in a statement.

According to Kirby, the US intends to tackle the “rising tensions in the South China Sea”, where China and the Philippines are embroiled in territorial disputes.

On Monday, Manila criticised Beijing for “repeated aggressive, unprofessional and illegal” actions in the waterway, accusing Chinese aircraft of conducting unsafe manoeuvres against a civilian aircraft patrolling over the Scarborough Shoal and Subi Reef.

Kirby said that Sullivan would also discuss “sea tensions across the Taiwan Strait and a range of other issues, including unfair economic practises”.

China’s Foreign Ministry said it intended to communicate to Sullivan that “countries outside the region should not do things that provoke confrontation or increase tensions”.

“China’s territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the region have sufficient historical and legal basis, and ... countries in the region have full confidence, wisdom and capability to properly handle the issue,” the statement added.

Chinese Communist Party Plots Response to Trump’s America First Agenda

24 August 2024, [AMAC](#), Ben Solis

Earlier this summer, a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry claimed that Beijing was indifferent to who wins the U.S. presidential contest this fall. But experts with whom I spoke said that is far from the truth, with one describing the Biden-Harris administration as “a gift that keeps on giving” to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Dr. Shoi-Ming Teng, a distinguished economist and philosopher who defected to the West in the 1980s, told me that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) undoubtedly prefers that the “status quo” remains unchanged with a Kamala Harris victory in November. He emphasized that Beijing fears the “constant surprises” that characterized Trump’s policy toward the communist nation and would prefer to deal with more predictable Democrat leaders.

“The speed and depth of Trump’s policy overwhelmed them,” he added, referring to the CCP’s senior leadership. “Trump threw them on their knees.”

Meanwhile, Teng said, the CCP has shown that it does not take Biden as a serious threat, pointing specifically to an altercation early in Biden’s presidency where Chinese officials berated and ridiculed Biden Secretary of State Antony Blinken during meetings in Alaska.

Teng also said that while Biden has maintained many of Trump’s sanctions and tariffs, he has “failed to make the necessary adjustments after the CCP found a way to avoid them.” As a result, China has been able to resume flooding the U.S. with its goods, continuing the hollowing-out of American industry.

Lawyer and economist Jun De Ning, who advised Chinese leader Hu Yaobang and defected to the West shortly after his death, told me that the CCP’s “biggest fear” is Trump’s return to the White House.

As Ning explained, despite false “official” numbers published by the CCP, China is in a deepening economic crisis caused by Xi’s policies and accelerated by Trump’s presidency. Prior to Xi’s moves to tighten the government’s grip over all of Chinese society, many CCP officials assumed China’s economic expansion was unstoppable. But now the country has seen a notable rise in unemployment, increasing debt, and a significant foreign investment and capital outflow, with almost \$15 billion leaving between April and June.

Early indications also suggest that China may already be making preparations to weather the storm of a second Trump term, further indicating that they would much prefer another four years of Democrat rule.

China’s increasing military and economic cooperation with Russia may be one prime example of this. Should Trump win a second term, China would need somewhere else to offload the goods that are currently coming into the United States.

One possible answer is Russia, another American adversary. Chinese exports to Russia rose by 4.76 percent in June, more than quadruple the 0.92 percent increase in May.

However, neither Russia’s capital nor its consumer market can come close to supplanting the United States. Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine has also hampered Moscow’s ability to be an effective trading partner.

But Beijing has also adopted a three-pronged approach to potentially insulate itself from renewed tariffs and sanctions in a second Trump term.

First, Beijing is working to aggressively integrate Chinese firms into the American economy. This includes working to remove Chinese companies from U.S. blacklists, forcing Trump to restart the sanctions process if he is re-elected. Chinese entities, including real estate owners and tech firms listed on major stock exchanges, have been directed to discreetly increase their U.S. capital ownership.

Second, Chinese companies are also rapidly expanding their operations in Mexico and Canada. In addition to allowing them to skirt existing tariffs, Beijing is hoping that joint Chinese-Mexican and Chinese-Canadian ventures can capture a large share of the American consumer market and make it more economically painful for a second Trump administration to impose

new tariffs. Notably, Kamala Harris's assertion that Trump's proposed tariffs on Chinese goods are a "tax" and would raise prices for consumers plays right into Beijing's hands on this front.

Finally, the CCP intends to continue heavily subsidizing Chinese industry to flood foreign markets with Chinese goods. While this practice maintains the Yuan's depreciated value, it is also keeping many Western economies on the brink of an economic crisis and decimating their domestic manufacturing capability. Beijing recognizes that if it can maintain its subsidies to keep prices low long enough, manufacturing in the United States and throughout the West will be decimated to the point where the world will have no choice but to rely on imports from China.

Despite what CCP officials may suggest, the outcome of the presidential election this year will have an enormous impact on the future of Chinese economic and foreign policy. With Trump leading in the polls, Beijing is preparing for the worst.

But even if Trump does win a second term, the question remains – will it be soon enough?

Jake Sullivan to make first China visit as US national security adviser

23 August 2024, [Financial Times](#), Demetri Sevastopulo and Joe Leahly

White House expects foreign minister Wang Yi to ask about November election.

Jake Sullivan will make his first visit to China as US national security adviser next week for talks with foreign minister Wang Yi as part of the "strategic channel" created by the two superpowers to stabilise relations. Sullivan will hold talks with Wang on Tuesday and Wednesday, according to a US official. They last met in Bangkok in January, two months after President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping held a summit in San Francisco.

His visit is part of a broader effort to stabilise the relationship between the two superpowers, which hit a new low last year after a Chinese spy balloon flew over North America. But tensions remain high over issues ranging from the South China Sea and Taiwan to disagreements over the US export controls on technology and China's support for Russia. Sullivan is the first national security adviser to visit China since Susan Rice, who served in the administration of President Barack Obama and last travelled there in 2016. The White House expects Wang to ask about the US election, which has taken a surprise turn since his last meeting with Sullivan, with vice-president Kamala Harris replacing Biden as the Democratic nominee. The race between Harris and Donald Trump remains tight, with the former president threatening swingeing tariffs against Beijing if he is elected. Over the past 16

months, Sullivan and Wang have held four unannounced meetings — in Vienna, Malta, Washington and Bangkok — in attempts to reduce the odds of the increasingly competitive relationship veering into conflict, particularly over Taiwan. The US official said Sullivan and Wang would discuss issues ranging from Taiwan and technology-related national security policies to US concerns about China's support for Russia. The US will also raise concerns about aggressive Chinese actions towards the Philippines, a US ally, in the South China Sea. "It's partly about maintaining stability during a period of high political activity in the United States and...general geopolitical uncertainty," said the official. He said Wang would probably ask, "what does a baton pass from Biden to Harris look like" if she wins November's election, and added that Sullivan would say he expected "more continuity than change in China policy" under Harris. The official said Sullivan and Wang would also discuss the possibility of Biden and Xi having a final engagement before the US president left office in January, adding that an in-person meeting was "not off the cards". "We haven't proposed anything, but the notion that they would see each other one last time before the president leaves office... is not out of the question," said the official, who noted that both leaders were likely to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and G20 in November. A second US official said the Sullivan-Wang channel was less about convincing China to change its policies and producing "deliverables" and more about ensuring that the two countries managed their rivalry. "It really is about clearing up misperceptions and avoiding this competition from veering into conflict," the official added. The official said Sullivan would voice concern about China's "increased military, diplomatic and economic pressure against Taiwan" and "continue to urge Beijing to engage in meaningful dialogue with Taipei."

Biden and Xi agreed to set up the channel when they met in Bali, Indonesia, in late 2022. They also agreed to have a series of reciprocal visits by top officials. But the plans were derailed when a Chinese spy balloon flew over North America a few months later. For Beijing, Sullivan's visit marks the latest step in efforts to return the relationship from the brink of an uneasy equilibrium after disruptions caused by the trade war during the Trump presidency, the pandemic, the Ukraine war and the balloon incident. China needs a more stable international environment as it relies on its export engine to steer its economy through the fallout from a deep property slump.

China warns US not to allow Dalai Lama's 'separatist activities' or talks with officials

22 August 2024, [SCMP](#), William Zheng

Beijing protests to Washington after the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader meets senior American officials in New York.

China warned the US not to allow the Dalai Lama to engage in "separatist activities" while visiting the country and made "solemn protests" to Washington after senior American officials met the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader in New York on Wednesday.

"China firmly opposes any country allowing the Dalai Lama to visit under any pretext, and firmly opposes any government officials of any country meeting with the Dalai Lama in any form," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Thursday.

"[We] have made solemn protests to the US. The appointment of a so-called special coordinator of Tibetan issues constitutes interference in [China's] internal affairs," she said, adding that Beijing does not recognise the coordinator position.

Mao urged the US to abide by its commitments on Tibet-related issues and respect China's core interests and major concerns.

"Do not allow the Dalai Lama to engage in political separatist activities in the US, and do not have any form of contact with him," she added.

China's protest came a day after senior US officials met the 89-year-old spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism in New York on Wednesday.

White House human rights director Kelly Razzouk and Uzra Zeya, the US undersecretary of state for human rights and special coordinator for Tibetan issues, travelled to New York to meet the Dalai Lama, according to a statement by the US Department of State.

The meeting "reaffirmed the US commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans", the statement said.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet.

He has been in the United States since June, when he travelled to New York to seek medical treatment for his knees. It is the first time he has visited the US since 2017.

A bipartisan US congressional delegation met him in June at his residence in India's Dharamsala. The delegation included Republican congressman Michael McCaul and former US House speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat. They also met officials from the Tibetan government-in-exile, which is not officially recognised by any state or government.

Last month, Beijing also expressed strong opposition to Washington after US President Joe Biden signed the Resolve Tibet Act, which urges Beijing to resume direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama to resolve

differences and calls for a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

Beijing considers the Dalai Lama a separatist and opposes contact with him by foreign government officials. It has not held talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama since 2010.

China says it is 'seriously concerned' about US nuclear strategic report

21 August 2024, [Reuters](#)

China is seriously concerned about a report that said the United States approved a nuclear strategic plan to focus on China's rapid expansion in its nuclear arsenal, the Chinese foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

"The U.S. is peddling the China nuclear threat narrative, finding excuses to seek strategic advantage," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said.

According to a report by the New York Times, U.S. President Joe Biden approved in March a highly classified nuclear strategic plan that focused on China's quickly growing arsenal, but also seeks to prepare the U.S for possible coordinated nuclear challenges from China, Russia and North Korea.

"China is seriously concerned about the relevant report, and the facts have fully proved that the United States has constantly stirred up the so-called China nuclear threat theory in recent years," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning at a regular press briefing.

The White House said on Tuesday that the classified nuclear strategic plan approved by Biden this year is not a response to a single country or threat.

The U.S. has consistently pointed to China's expansive and growing nuclear weaponry. An annual report by the Pentagon last October said China had more than 500 operational nuclear warheads in its arsenal, and will probably have over 1,000 warheads by 2030.

US soldier pleads guilty to selling secrets to China

14 August 2024, [BBC](#), Gavin Bulter

A US Army analyst has pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to sell military secrets to China, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has said.

Sgt Korbein Schultz was arrested in March after an investigation by the FBI and US Army counterintelligence alleged that he was paid \$42,000 (£33,000) in exchange for dozens of sensitive security records.

The criminal conspiracy began in June 2022 and continued up until his arrest, officials said.

He is scheduled for sentencing in January.

Sgt Schultz, who held a security clearance to access top secret information, conspired to collect data with

someone whom he believed to be living in Hong Kong, according to court documents.

The purported Hong Kong resident asked Sgt Schultz to collect sensitive data related to missile defence and mobile artillery systems, according to court records.

Sgt Schultz also collected data on US fighter aircraft, military tactics, and the US military's defence strategy for Taiwan, based on what it learned from Russia's war in Ukraine.

"By conspiring to transmit national defence information to a person living outside the United States, this defendant callously put our national security at risk to cash in on the trust our military placed in him," Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen of the DOJ's National Security Division said.

Sgt Schultz on Tuesday pleaded guilty to all charges against him, including conspiracy to obtain and disclose national defence information and bribery of a public official.

The indictment against Sgt Schultz earlier detailed messages he sent to the supposed Hong Kong resident, who was referred to in court documents as Conspirator A.

In one exchange, Sgt Schultz said he "wished he could be Jason Bourne" in reference to the fictional spy character.

After being promised more money from his handler, he said in another message: "I hope so! I need to get my other BMW back!".

The FBI and US Army Counterintelligence Command are continuing investigations into the case.

Biden repeats debunked claim he traveled 17,000 miles with China's Xi Jinping

13 August 2024, [Fox News](#), Julia johnson

Biden dropped out of the presidential race last month

President Biden repeated a claim he had been fact-checked for in the past, telling an audience on Tuesday that he traveled 17,000 miles with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"I spent a lot of time with Xi Jinping," he said during his remarks at an event touting the Biden "Cancer Moonshot" initiative in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"I spent over 80 hours with him alone. Over 17,000 miles in China, anywhere in Tibet, near Tibet."

He described telling the Chinese president that "possibility" is the one word that can define America, tying his analogy to the Cancer Moonshot initiative.

Biden's claim that he has traveled more than 17,000 miles with Xi has previously been fact-checked and considered primarily inaccurate, however.

He has made the claim many times over several years and was fact-checked by the Washington Post in 2021.

"Try as we could, however, we still could not get the

travel to add up to 17,000 miles," wrote the publication.

Biden was given three pinocchios for his claim.

According to the Post, this number of pinocchios means there is "significant factual error and/or obvious contradictions." It is comparable to a rating of "mostly false."

The White House did not immediately respond to inquiries from Fox News Digital.

Biden announced \$150 million in ARPA-H awards to develop technologies that will allow surgeons to provide more successful tumor-removal surgeries for people facing cancer at the event in New Orleans.

After having dropped out of the 2024 presidential race last month and endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris to succeed him, Biden is now reportedly focusing on the causes that are most personal for him in his remaining months as president.

Cancer research is of "immense importance" to the president, an aide told CNN.

U.S. Officials to Visit China for Economic Talks as Trade Tensions Rise

12 August 2024, [The New York Times](#), Alan Rappeport

A group of senior Biden administration officials is traveling to Shanghai this week for a round of high-level meetings intended to keep the economic relationship between the United States and China on stable footing amid mounting trade tensions between the two countries.

The talks will take place on Thursday and Friday and are being convened through the U.S.-China Financial Working Group, which was created last year. Officials are expected to discuss ways to maintain economic and financial stability, capital markets and efforts to curb the flow of fentanyl into the United States.

Although communication between the United States and China has improved over the past year, the economic relationship remains fraught because of disagreements over industrial policy and China's dominance over green energy technology. The Biden administration imposed new tariffs in May on an array of Chinese imports, including electric vehicles, solar cells, semiconductors and advanced batteries. The United States is also restricting American investments in Chinese sectors that policymakers believe could threaten national security.

The U.S. delegation, which departed on Monday, is being led by Brent Neiman, the Treasury Department's assistant secretary for international finance. He will be joined by officials from the Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission. They are expected to meet with the People's Bank of China's deputy governor, Xuan Changneng, and other senior Chinese officials.

“We intend for this F.W.G. meeting to include conversations on financial stability, issues related to cross-border data, lending and payments, private-sector efforts to advance transition finance, and concrete steps we can take to improve communication in the event of financial stress,” Mr. Neiman said ahead of the trip, referring to the abbreviation for the financial working group.

Image



Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen pressed Chinese officials during her trip to China in April to stop flooding global markets with cheap clean-energy products. Credit... Pool photo by Tatan Syuflana

American and Chinese financial regulators have been conducting financial shock exercises this year to coordinate their responses in the event of a crisis, like a cyberattack or climate disaster, that might affect the international banking or insurance systems.

The Biden administration has been urging China to take action to prevent chemicals used to produce fentanyl from being exported to other countries and smuggled into the United States. There were signs of progress this month when China announced that it would put new restrictions on three of these chemicals, a move that the United States described as a “valuable step forward.”

Other economic issues between the two countries continue to be contentious. Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen pressed Chinese officials during her trip to China in April to stop flooding global markets with cheap clean-energy products, warning that its excess industrial capacity would distort global supply chains. But after a meeting of Communist Party leaders last month, there was little indication that China would retreat from its investments in high-tech manufacturing or take major steps toward rebalancing its economy by bolstering domestic consumption.

The talks this week are the fifth meeting of the financial working group and will be the second time the officials have convened in China.

Love the army, defend the motherland: how China is pushing military education on children

11 August 2024, [The Guardian](#), Helen Davidson and Chi-hui Lin

Growing emphasis on military training for civilians reflects heightened nationalism under Xi Jinping – and a growing risk of war over Taiwan

At Beijing Jiaotong University’s affiliated elementary school, a class of children, maybe six or seven years old, stand in a line in a rainbow painted hallway. A boy holds a replica handgun, and behind him other students grasp unwieldy fake assault rifles. Fake police flak jackets cover their blue and white tracksuits, and their heads swim inside too-big artillery helmets. In other photographs students practise drills, salute visiting soldiers, and arrange themselves on a sporting field to spell out “I [heart] u” next to a Chinese flag.

In the post that includes the [photos](#), published online in April, the school says it has worked hard in recent years to conscientiously “promote the main theme of patriotism, and make it an important part of the school’s ideological and political education and moral education”.

“We will create a strong atmosphere of national defence education, carry out rich and colourful activities, cultivate students’ patriotism, love for the army, and organisational discipline, and cultivate their ambitions to build and defend the motherland from an early age,” it says.

The elementary school is among the thousands designated as “model schools for national defence education”, part of China’s push to increase military awareness and skills among its population – starting at younger and younger ages.

More designations announced in January by the ministry of education and the central military commission almost doubled the number of “model schools”. They are likely to be followed by legal changes extending mandated training including “cadet activities” to students under 15. A bill proposing amendments to the National Defence Education Law was given its first reading in the rubber-stamping National People’s Congress in April.

The amendments make more prescriptive what was previously a guide, emphasising the need for basic military training in high schools and tertiary institutions, and allowing it to be extended to younger students for the first time.

“All state organs and armed forces, all political parties and public groups, all enterprises and institutions and grassroots self-government organisations of a mass character shall, in light of their specific conditions, organise national defence education in their respective regions, departments and units,” the draft said.

'Rebuilding the strength of the Chinese Communist party'

The growing emphasis on military training for civilians reflects a heightened nationalism in today's China under Xi, who has also made clear his distaste for what he sees as declining masculinity in China, and the worsening risk that he could take the country into war over Taiwan.

"Requiring children to engage in performative military education activities at younger and younger ages normalises China's increasingly aggressive foreign policy, and could potentially prepare the country psychologically for a contingency in which China engages in armed conflict," said Bethany Allen, the head of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's China programme.

China-based analysts have also told media the ruling Chinese Communist party (CCP) is learning from the Ukraine war and the potential need to have a population that can be quickly mobilised for conflict. Increasing militarism by China under Xi Jinping has raised the risk of conflict or hostilities with other countries, particularly over Taiwan. At the same time its armed forces, despite undergoing a massive overhaul and modernisation process, are reportedly struggling with corruption issues and low recruitment.

The defence ministry said in September 2023 that primary and secondary schools across the country had begun the new school year with defence education lessons, "planting a deep sense of patriotism, respect for the military, and concern for national defence in the heart of students".

It's not clear if the lessons are improving recruitment, and China's punitive censorship culture makes it almost impossible to survey their impact on general opinion. Most published comments are similar to that of Feng Shanguo, a former soldier who took part in leading lessons at his child's school, Neijiang No 13 in Sichuan.

"It can help children to build tenacity, courage, and hard-working qualities," Feng told state media.

But Katja Drinhausen, head of Merics' research programme on Chinese policy, said military education was just one aspect of a broader campaign to boost the CCP's strength at a time when it was facing multiple challenges including economic downturn, sporadic social unrest, multiple regional disputes, and worsening natural disasters driven by climate change.

"It's important to put together the different pieces of the broader ambition," Drinhausen said.

"There is renewed focus on military training and creating identity and buy-in from the broader population on what the military does, which also serves to build internal cohesion when the party needs to find new sources of social and political legitimacy

because the economy isn't doing it any more," she said.

"First came a renewed focus on patriotic education and what 'makes China great' in schools. Then came a rollout of national security education, not just the mainland but also in Hong Kong ... I do think these are different layers that are part of a broader strategic refocus on rebuilding the strength of the CCP inside China."

Drinhausen also noted that the military, the People's Liberation Army, is officially the armed forces of the CCP, not the Chinese state or its people, and has been used in the past to violently put down domestic protests.

"It's helpful to see the development when it comes to military and defence focused education [in the context of different possible scenarios] because when you look at it that way, all these measures aren't necessarily solely a precursor for war but serve all sorts of crisis management for the party going forward," she said.

U.S. Vies With Allies and Industry to Tighten China Tech Controls

09 August 2024, [The New York Times](#), Ana Swanson

The Biden administration must navigate the interests of U.S. companies and allied governments as it tries to close off China's access to advanced chips

The Biden administration is fighting to overcome opposition from allied nations and the tech industry as it prepares to expand restrictions aimed at slowing China's ability to make the most advanced semiconductors, which could be used to bolster Beijing's military capacity.

The administration has drafted new rules that would limit shipments to China of the machinery and software used to make chips from a number of countries if they are made with American parts or technology, as well as some types of semiconductors, according to people who have seen or were briefed on a draft version of the rules.

The rules are aimed at blocking off some of the newer routes that Chinese chipmakers have found to acquire technology, despite international restrictions.

The United States has been pushing allies like Japan and the Netherlands to toughen their restrictions on technology shipments to China, during visits to those countries as well as a Japanese state visit to Washington in April. Those nations are home to companies that produce chip-making machinery, like ASML Holding N.V. and Tokyo Electron Limited. But industry in the United States and other countries has argued the rules could hurt them, and it remains unclear when or if foreign governments will issue limitations.

In the meantime, some of the rules that the United States plans to impose would have significant carve-outs, the people said. The rules blocking shipments of equipment to certain semiconductor factories in China would not apply to more than 30 allied countries, including the Netherlands, South Korea and Japan.

That has sparked pushback from U.S. firms, who argue that the playing field will be further tilted against them if the U.S. government stops their sales but not those of their competitors.

U.S. officials say negotiations are ongoing, and that they still hope to persuade Japan and other countries to tighten their restrictions. But some analysts are skeptical.

Emily Kilcrease, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, said that while U.S. allies are increasingly wary of a threat from China, they are more comfortable with rules that limit only the most advanced technology.

“The broader the controls get, the more it hurts them commercially,” she said.

Ms. Kilcrease said that U.S. firms were also “not happy” about the U.S. move to restrict the activity of American companies but not their competitors in allied countries.

Gregory Allen, an analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that countries like South Korea were now making significant updates to their export control rules, after having been urged to do so by the United States.

“I think they’ve made a lot of progress,” he said. “My question is always, are they making progress fast enough to deal with Chinese countermeasures?”

A spokeswoman for the Commerce Department said that it was continually updating export controls to protect U.S. national security and remained committed to working closely with allies.

A representative for the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said the United States had abused export control measures, and China hoped other countries would resist U.S. economic coercion.

Much about the policy remains unclear, and could be subject to change. But the rules — which could come as soon as this month — are clearly an effort to shore up previous restrictions aimed at limiting China’s ability to develop the most advanced A.I. chips.

Most advanced chips are used in consumer devices, but some can also be used to develop weaponry, carry out cyberattacks and construct surveillance systems.

The U.S. government has blocked American technology exports to China, but a key part of the Biden administration’s strategy has been to get other countries to pass similar regulations. If they don’t, China could still get much of its technology from elsewhere, while American companies would simply lose out on sales. It could also encourage countries not

to use American components so they no longer have to follow U.S. rules.

U.S. officials have been trying to get Japan and the Netherlands to target particular companies in China with tougher restrictions, and change their laws to stop their citizens from servicing equipment in chip factories in China.

The effort to get allies to block chip technology to China started in the Trump administration, when the Netherlands agreed to stop shipping China ASML’s most advanced machines.

Then, two years ago, the United States banned shipments globally of advanced chips to China, as well as U.S. exports of chip-making machinery from U.S.-based companies including Applied Materials Inc., Lam Research Corporation and KLA Corporation.

Last year, the Netherlands and Japan agreed to issue restrictions barring shipment of some of their most advanced machinery to China, and the United States further tightened its own rules, including stopping more shipments from ASML and Tokyo Electron.

Still, the Chinese chip industry has continued to progress.

Last year, the Chinese telecom company Huawei rolled out a phone with an advanced chip, a move widely seen as a challenge.

Since then, the Biden administration has been working on tighter rules.

One draft version would place about 120 Chinese companies on a so-called entity list, which requires other companies to obtain a special license to ship them products from the United States. The listings would focus on companies that make chips, chip-making machinery and products and services to support them.

Certain Chinese chip factories would also be subject to international restrictions limiting shipments of equipment made with American parts or technology from certain countries.

The draft list included several Chinese chip factories alleged to be cooperating with Huawei, including SwaySure, Shenzhen Pensun Technology, Pengxinwei IC and Qingdao Si’En. It did not include major Chinese chipmaker CXMT, which was previously rumored to be targeted.

Other rules would restrict shipments of memory chips, which are crucial for training A.I. models. The administration has considered lower thresholds for A.I. chips made by Nvidia and other companies, but it’s not clear if those will be included.

Details of the rules were earlier reported by Reuters and Bloomberg. KLA and Applied Materials declined to comment, while Lam did not respond to a request for comment.

The revised policy would make it harder for U.S. companies to sidestep restrictions by shipping to

China from subsidiaries in countries including Israel, Malaysia and Singapore. But surging shipments to China from certain other countries would be unaffected.

ASML said last month that sales to China accounted for nearly half of its revenue in the first quarter. Tokyo Electron has said that the impact of export controls was “smaller than expected,” as it increased sales of less sophisticated equipment to China.

Analysts say that networks of distributors and brokers have sprung up to funnel technology to restricted Chinese semiconductor factories.

U.S. companies also suspect that foreign technicians are helping China to maintain American machinery that was previously sold to Chinese factories.

People familiar with the discussions say that foreign partners have been somewhat skeptical of U.S. national security arguments, and are concerned about Chinese retaliation and lost sales.

Japanese officials did not respond to a request for comment. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it was in close contact with partners and it was up to each country to make its own assessment on export controls.

Paul Triolo, a partner at Albright Stonebridge Group, called the rule “an attempt to skirt head-on confrontation.”

“Nobody wants to run roughshod over allies,” he said. However, the damage from export controls on U.S. industry has been “significant,” he said.

“There’s been a lot of frustration, which the administration has mostly ignored,” he said.

Kamala Harris’ VP pick has a long history with China. But Beijing may not be happy about it

09 August 2024, [CNN](#), Nectar Gan, Eric Cheung, Issac Yee and Will Ripley

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris’ running mate has a decades-long connection with China. But in the eyes of Beijing, that may not necessarily be good news.

Tim Walz moved to China fresh out of college in 1989 to teach high school for a year, and then frequently returned to the country during a decade of taking American students on summer cultural exchanges.

The 60-year-old Minnesota governor has spoken fondly of his time in China and the people he met there, and his familiarity with the country and empathy for its people bring a personal, nuanced perspective on the United States’ biggest strategic rival that is rare among his political peers.

Some Republican opponents have seized on that experience to accuse Walz of being “pro-China,” but

the Democratic vice-presidential nominee has a long history of criticizing authoritarian Chinese leadership. Walz moved to China at a tumultuous and politically charged time, shortly after the Tiananmen Square massacre, when the ruling Communist Party sent tanks in to violently quell peaceful student-led democracy protests in Beijing. Upon returning home to Nebraska in 1990, he told a local newspaper he felt the Chinese people had been mistreated by their government for years.

“If they had the proper leadership, there are no limits on what they could accomplish. They are such kind, generous, capable people,” he told the Star-Herald at the time.

During his time in Congress from 2007 to 2019, Walz rallied support for imprisoned Chinese activists. He met with the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader loathed by Beijing, and Joshua Wong, the young Hong Kong democracy activist now jailed for his activism against Beijing’s tightening grip.

“The more he understands China, the more he feels pity for the Chinese people, and the more critical he becomes of the rulers who govern them,” said Shen Dingli, a foreign policy analyst in Shanghai.

“He has some understanding of Chinese culture and respects it in his heart, but he definitely does not accept China’s political (system),” Shen added. “Beijing is probably more fearful and uncomfortable with such a foreigner who understands China.”

‘It was more about the people’

Walz was among the first groups of young Americans to teach in high schools in China under a Harvard University volunteer program, just a decade after the two countries established diplomatic relations.

As a fresh graduate, he spent a year teaching English and American history at the Foshan No. 1 High School, in the southern province of Guangdong.

There, he was met with industrious and welcoming students who applauded him each time he used a Chinese word correctly, and friendly strangers who offered to help whenever he stopped in the streets looking bewildered, he told the Star-Herald in 1990.

“I was treated exceptionally well,” he told the newspaper. “There was no anti-American feeling whatsoever. American is ‘It’ in the eyes of the Chinese. Many of the students want to come to America to study.”

That was a different era in China. The impoverished country was curious about the world after emerging from decades of self-imposed isolation and tumultuous rule under Mao Zedong. Paramount leader Deng Xiaoping unleashed market reforms and, along with an economic opening, calls for political liberalization gathered pace in the 1980s.

Such calls coalesced into a student-led movement in the spring of 1989, which was brutally put down by the Chinese military weeks before Walz’s trip.

"I remember waking up and seeing the news on June 4 that the unthinkable had happened," Walz told Voice of America in an interview in 2014.

"Many of my colleagues decided to go home and not to go on [to China]. I thought it was more important than ever to go, to make sure the story was told and to let the Chinese people know we were standing there, we were with them."

From Guangdong, Walz took a 40-hour cross-country train ride to the Chinese capital to see Tiananmen Square, the site of the democracy protests.

He made sure he would always commemorate the crackdown in a personal way – by getting married on June 4, 1994, the fifth anniversary of the massacre.

"He wanted to have a date he'll always remember," his wife and fellow high-school teacher, Gwen, told a local newspaper in Minnesota before their wedding.

The newlyweds spent their honeymoon taking students on two-week tours in China for sightseeing and classes on culture, education and history. These trips became a summer tradition for the couple through 2003.

"I would go back in a heartbeat," said Cara Roemhildt, who went on such a trip in 1998. "It was an educational trip with one of our favorite teachers. It was more about the people. It wasn't about the politics."

Roemhildt said she and her classmates still talk about the trip decades later.

"It felt very, very comfortable. And we went all over...Train rides (to) a whole bunch of different places," she told CNN. "Just seeing a different culture and having respect for it while seeing it. Knowing that it's different, but knowing that it's okay, too."

A nuanced critic

After entering politics in 2006, Walz continued to devote time and attention to China in Congress.

He served more than a decade on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which monitors human rights and the rule of law in the country – a role Beijing would not be happy about.

"The Chinese government has always viewed that commission as 'anti-China,'" said Liu Dongshu, an assistant professor of public and international affairs at the City University of Hong Kong.

In Congress, Walz co-sponsored a series of resolutions calling on China to release its jailed rights activists, including Nobel Peace laureate Liu Xiaobo, who eventually died in custody of liver cancer.

In 2015, Walz joined a congressional delegation on a trip to China, which included a rare stop in Tibet, which he had also visited decades earlier during his time teaching at the Chinese high school.

The following year, Walz met the Dalai Lama in Washington for what he called a "life-changing lunch." He also welcomed Lobsang Sangay, then leader of Tibet's government in exile, into his congressional

office to meet a group of Minnesota high-school students.

At a congressional meeting that year, he called on Beijing to "ensure the preservation of traditional Tibetan culture" and "provide less regulated religious freedom to the Tibetans."

Walz has also been a vocal supporter of Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement.

In 2017, when Wong, the student protest leader, was jailed for his political activism, Walz posted a photo of himself and the young activist standing side by side to show solidarity with "all advocating for democracy in Hong Kong."

Walz also threw his support behind the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which sanctions officials responsible for human rights violations in the city, when the legislation appeared to be languishing in Congress.

"We knocked on every door when the #HKHRDA lacked momentum. Only Walz answered his," Jeffrey Ngo, a Hong Kong democracy activist now based in Washington, said on X.

"Walz is perhaps the most solid candidate when it comes to human rights and China on a major-party ticket in recent memory," Ngo said.

On the diplomatic front, Walz has criticized China's unfair trade practices and its growing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

In Chinese nationalist circles, which have an outsized voice on policy debates in China, there are no rosy illusions about Walz.

"On human rights and ideological issues, he has basically crossed all the possible red lines out there," Shen Yi, an international relations scholar known for his fiercely nationalistic views, wrote on social media.

But unlike more hawkish politicians, Walz does not believe in decoupling, and instead holds a more nuanced view on the geostrategic rivalry between the US and China.

"I don't fall into the category that China necessarily needs to be an adversarial relationship. I totally disagree," he said in an interview in 2016.

"We're on the same sheet of music, two of the world's great superpowers, there's many collaborative things we can do together."

Stephen Roach, former chief of Morgan Stanley Asia, said the Harris-Walz ticket may provide "an important counterweight to the current venom of American Sinophobia."

Walz's empathy for the Chinese people and appreciation of China's non-political aspects make him a harder case for Beijing to "villainize as an 'anti-China' foil" than politicians that are hawkish on all dimensions, Eric Fish, a former Beijing-based journalist and author of "China's Millennials: The Want Generation," said on X.

'A complex country'

Walz's extensive experience with China makes him a rare figure in the race for the White House – at least since George H. W. Bush, who served as America's unofficial ambassador to Beijing in the mid-1970s before running for vice president and later president.

Bush's stint in Beijing would go on to influence his foreign policy – and help steer US-China relations through the tumultuous fallout of the Tiananmen crackdown.

But US-China relations are at a very different place now from the honeymoon period of engagement. Being tough on China has become a rare point of bipartisan consensus in the US, and Beijing is unlikely to be counting on Walz to improve bilateral ties.

"The direction of US policy towards China is very clear. As an individual, regardless of your attitude towards China, there's not much room for maneuver," said Liu, the expert at the City University of Hong Kong.

"And vice presidents can have a varied level of say in foreign policy, depending on the president they serve," he added.

Walz's experience living and teaching in China could serve as a useful diplomatic ice breaker to warm up the room if that's what the two sides wish to do, Liu said. But even then, he added, the Chinese would need to dance around the awkwardness in the timing and avoid all mention of the Tiananmen crackdown – which remains a political taboo in China.

On China's tightly controlled social media, Walz's early ties to the country have raised eyebrows and generated considerable interest. The hashtag "Harris' VP pick once taught in China" racked up 15 million views on microblogging site Weibo.

The year of Walz's arrival in China – 1989 – was not lost among those who understand the sensitivity of the date, despite decades of effort by the Chinese government to erase the brutal crackdown from public memory.

But, perhaps reflective of the different era China now finds itself in under leader Xi Jinping, who has fanned nationalist sentiment and suspicion against foreigners over national security, many questioned the "real motive" of Walz's first trip to China.

"Heh, 1989-1990, Americans teaching in China during this period – it's something worth pondering carefully," said a top comment on Weibo.

"Must be a spy," said another.

Liu said that, given how drastically China has changed over the past decades, Walz's understanding of the country from his younger days may offer limited help on American policy toward China today.

Walz himself has conceded that he's by no means a China expert.

"I lived in China, and as I said I've been there about 30 times," he said in the 2016 interview. "But if someone

tells you they're an expert on China, they're probably not telling you the truth because it's a complex country."

US bans imports from five more Chinese companies over Uyghur forced labor

09 August 2024, [Reuters](#), Karen Freifeld

The United States on Thursday banned imports from five more Chinese companies over alleged human rights abuses involving the Uyghurs, according to a government posting, as part of its effort to eliminate goods made with forced labor from the U.S. supply chain.

The companies include Hong Kong-based Rare Earth Magnesium Technology Group Holdings (0601.HK), opens new tab and its parent, Century Sunshine Group Holdings (0509.HK), opens new tab, which manufacture magnesium fertilizer and magnesium alloy products. Also included is Zijin Mining Group Co (601899.SS), opens new tab subsidiary Xinjiang Habahe Ashele Copper Co, which mines nonferrous metals.

The list identifies those who work with the government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region to recruit and transport Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz or members of other persecuted groups out of the region, and those who source material from the region or from people who work with the government of Xinjiang.

U.S. officials say Chinese authorities have established labor camps for Uyghurs and other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang. Beijing denies any abuses.

"The so-called 'forced labor in Xinjiang is nothing but an egregious lie propagated by anti-China forces and a tool for US politicians to destabilize Xinjiang and contain China's development," a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington said on Thursday in a statement. "China will continue to firmly safeguard the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese companies."

China targets U.S. track athletes in response to doping allegations dogging its swimmers

08 August 2024, [CBC](#)

Doping agency cites sprinter Erriyon Knighton as example of U.S. double standard

China is trying to fight fire with fire in the face of persistent doping allegations that have dogged its swimmers at the Paris Olympics.

The China Anti-Doping Agency called Thursday for more intensive testing of American track and field competitors, citing in a news release past doping scandals and questioning how the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency handled them.

Repeated blasts from the Chinese agency have been echoed by reports in the government-controlled state media complaining about double standards applied to Chinese competitors. The reports have highlighted the more than 600 tests undergone by Chinese swimmers at the Paris Games with no violations found.

The World Anti-Doping Agency and World Aquatics have acknowledged that 23 Chinese swimmers tested positive for a banned substance ahead of the Tokyo Olympics. The results were not made public until revealed by media reports earlier this year, with both bodies accepting the Chinese explanation that the positive tests were caused by tainted food.

After the details emerged, the U.S. launched an investigation under a law passed in 2020 giving federal authorities power to investigate sports doping and cover-ups.

In a meeting in Paris this week, the head of the China's Olympic delegation told his American counterpart that China hopes the U.S. will stop its "long-arm jurisdiction" and ensure that athletes from all countries can participate smoothly and safely in the 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles and the 2034 Winter Games in Salt Lake City, according to an account in an official Chinese sports newspaper.

China's anti-doping agency and its state media have zeroed in on an American sprinter, Erriyon Knighton, who was competing Thursday in the 200-metre finals. Knighton tested positive for a banned substance in March but the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency said an arbitration panel determined it came from contaminated meat, allowing him to compete.

The Chinese agency issued a release Tuesday accusing the U.S. agency of double standards. It followed up Thursday with the release calling for more testing of U.S. track and field competitors.

Some competitors from other countries spoke out about the controversy as China won 12 medals in swimming in Paris, including a gold in the men's 4x100 medley relay that ended a decades-long U.S. dominance of that event. Chinese swimmers have denied cheating.

U.S. swimming legend Michael Phelps doubled down on his support for tougher sanctions, including a lifetime ban for anyone who tests positive for a banned substance.

British swimmer Adam Peaty, whose team missed out on a medal by finishing fourth in the relay, blasted a system that allowed the Chinese swimmers who tested positive to compete.

"As an honourable person, I mean, you should be out of the sport," he said, "but we know sport isn't that simple."

Chinese businesses hoping to expand in the US and bring jobs face uncertainty and suspicion

06 August 2024, [The Economic Times](#)

WASHINGTON: It was billed as the "biggest ever economic development project" in north Michigan when Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2022 welcomed a Chinese lithium-ion battery company's plan to build a \$2.36 billion factory and bring a couple thousand jobs to Big Rapids.

But now the project by Gotion High-Tech is in the crosshairs of some U.S. lawmakers and local residents. Leading the charge is Republican Rep. John Moolenaar of Michigan, chairman of the House Select Committee on China, who accuses the Chinese company of having ties to forced labor and says he fears it could spy for Beijing and work to extend China's influence in the U.S. heartland. Gotion rejects the accusations.

"I want to see this area have more jobs and investments, but we must not welcome companies that are controlled by people who see us as the enemy and we should not allow them to build here," Moolenaar said at a recent roundtable discussion in Michigan.

Lured by the large U.S. market, Chinese businesses are coming to the United States with money, jobs and technology, only to find rising suspicion at a time of an intensifying U.S.-China rivalry that has spread into the business world.

U.S. wariness of China, coupled with Beijing's desire to protect its technological competitiveness, threatens to rupture ties between the world's two largest economies. That could hurt businesses, workers and consumers, which some warn could undermine the economic foundation that has helped stabilize relations.

"This is a lose-lose scenario for the two countries," Zhiqun Zhu, professor of political science and international relations at Bucknell University, said in an email. "The main reason is U.S.-China rivalry, and the U.S. government prioritises 'national security' over economic interests in dealing with China." Lizhi Liu, an assistant professor of business at Georgetown University, said the trend, along with the decline of U.S. investments in China, could hurt China-U.S. relations.

"Strong investment ties between the two nations are crucial not only for economic reasons but also for security, as intertwined economic interests reduce the likelihood of major conflicts or even war," she said. But U.S. lawmakers believe the stakes are high. Sen. Marco Rubio said at a July hearing that China is not only a military and diplomatic adversary for the U.S. but also a "technological, industrial and commercial" opponent.

"The technological and industrial high ground has

always been a precursor of global power," said Rubio, a Republican from Florida. He argued that U.S. foreign policy should take into account the country's commercial, trade and technological interests. The bipartisan House Select Committee on China has warned that widespread adoption in the US. of technologies developed by China could threaten long-term U.S. technological competitiveness. U.S. public sentiment against Chinese investments began to build up during President Barack Obama's administration, in a pushback against globalization, and were amplified after President Donald Trump came into office, said Yilang Feng, an assistant professor of business at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who studies economic nationalism and resistance to foreign direct investments in the U.S.

"The scale has increased, so has the intensity," Feng said.

As President Joe Biden's administration seeks to revive American manufacturing and boost U.S. technological capabilities, many politicians believe Chinese companies should be kept out. "Can you imagine working for an American company working tirelessly to develop battery technology and then you find out that your tax dollars are being used to subsidize a competitor from China?" Moolenaar said as he campaigned against the Gotion project in his congressional district in a state that is critical in the presidential election.

Whitmer's office has declined to comment on the project. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation told The Associated Press it has received "bipartisan support at all levels" to move forward with the project, which will create up to 2,350 jobs.

Danielle Emerson, spokesperson for MEDC, said the project is "critical to onshore the battery supply chain and create thousands of good-paying local jobs, which reduces our reliance on overseas disruptions and further protects our national security."

Local residents of Green Charter Township, however, revolted against the project over its Chinese connections last year when they removed five officials who supported it in a recall election.

Also in Michigan, a partnership between Ford and CATL, another Chinese battery manufacturer, has been scaled back, following pushback over CATL's potential connections to China's ruling party. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the Chinese biotech company WuXi Biologics paused construction of a large facility a few weeks after lawmakers introduced a bill that would, over data security concerns, ban U.S. entities receiving federal funds from doing business with a number of China-linked companies, WuXi Biologics included.

John Ling, who has helped South Carolina and Georgia attract Chinese businesses for nearly two decades,

said geopolitics have been getting in the way in recent years. Chinese companies are less likely to consider South Carolina after the state senate last year approved a bill banning Chinese citizens from buying property, even though the bill has yet to clear the statehouse, Ling said.

Data by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis show the total investments by China in the U.S. fell to just under \$44 billion in 2023, from a high point of \$63 billion in 2017, although first-year expenditures rose to \$621 million in 2023, up from \$531 million in 2022 but drastically down from the high of \$27 billion in 2016. The figures include acquisitions, new business establishments and expansions.

Thilo Hanemann, a partner at the research provider Rhodium Group, said there's been an upswing in new Chinese investments in the U.S. following a major decline, prompted by the end of disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for Chinese companies to go overseas when margins at home are dwindling.

U.S. policymakers are worried that Chinese companies, beholden to the ruling Chinese Communist Party, could pose national security risks, he said, while Beijing is concerned that overseas investments could lead to Chinese technology leakage. "Chinese companies are in between a rock and a hard place, dealing with both domestic governments in terms of not letting them go abroad and then the U.S. or host governments that have concerns," Hanemann said.

Yet, Chinese investors may still find the U.S. market appealing "due to its high consumption levels and judicial independence," said Liu of Georgetown University.

In 2022, Michigan beat out several other states in luring Gotion, according to the governor's office. Keen to revive its manufacturing base, the state offered a package of incentives, including \$175 million in grants and the approval of a new zone that could save the company \$540 million. Local townships approved tax abatements for Gotion to build a factory to make components for electrical vehicle batteries. In Green Charter Township, the new board dropped support for the project and rescinded an agreement that would extend water to the factory site, only to be rebuked by a U.S. district judge.

The future of the plant remains uncertain, as Moolenaar is rallying support for his bill that would prevent Gotion from receiving federal subsidies. He has accused the company of using forced labor, after congressional staff discovered links between the company and Xinjiang Production Construction Corps., a paramilitary group sanctioned by the U.S. Commerce Department for its involvement in China's forced labor practice.

Chuck Thelen, vice president of manufacturing of

Gotion North America, in recent town hall meetings called the forced labor accusations "categorically false and clearly intended to deceive."

By allowing the Chinese company to build a plant in Michigan, it would help "onshore a technology that has been vastly leapfrogged" outside of the U.S., he said.

It doesn't amount to "a Chinese invasion," Thelen said. "This is a global approach, an energy solution."

US reportedly to escalate AI chip restrictions on China, 'may incur countermeasures'

02 August 2024, [Global Times](#), Ma Jingjing

Hegemonic move only 'impels Chinese firms to strive for tech self-reliance'

The Biden administration is reportedly working on a set of unilateral restrictions on China's access to artificial intelligence (AI) memory chips and equipment capable of making those products, in the latest hegemonic move to contain China's AI industry in order to maintain its global monopoly. Chinese observers said the US cannot impede China's technological progress and will only impel Chinese enterprises to strive for technological self-reliance. They said China may take countermeasures, including lodging complaints with the WTO, when it is necessary to fight back as the US continues to expand its "small yard" policies.

Observers said the US' intensifying crackdown on and "decoupling" from China will lead to further deterioration in China-US bilateral relations, bringing monumental losses to US firms that are betting on Chinese opportunities.

US' stepped-up restrictions

Bloomberg reported on Thursday that the Biden administration is expected to announce a set of new restrictions as soon as late August to curb China's access to AI memory chips and related equipment. The measure is designed to keep Micron Technology Inc and South Korea's leading memory chipmakers SK Hynix Inc and Samsung Electronics Co from supplying Chinese firms with so-called high-bandwidth memory, or HBM, chips, the report said, citing people familiar with the matter. HBM chips are required to run AI accelerators like those offered by Nvidia Corp, it said. "By putting patches on its chip export restrictions on China, the US' ultimate purpose is to curb China's technological development so as to maintain its global monopoly in cutting-edge technologies," He Weiwen, a senior fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, told the Global Times on Thursday. He said the US' political maneuvers are not sustainable, as they go against economic rules and the interests of US enterprises and residents.

"China may take countermeasures when it is necessary," He said, noting that China could also lodge complaints with the WTO if the US' restriction measures against China reach a certain scale. At a routine press conference on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian blasted the US for continuing to politicize trade and tech issues, tie them to national security and use them as a weapon to tighten control over chip exports to China and coerce other countries to go after China's semiconductor industry, which severely undermines international trade rules, destabilizes global industrial and supply chains, and serves no one's interests. The Biden administration is taking an increasingly hardline stance on China issues in the election year. In June, the US Treasury Department issued draft rules for banning or requiring notification of certain investments in AI and other technology sectors in China that could "threaten US national security." Lü Xiang, a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, warned that the US' intensifying crackdown on China's technological rise may further harm China-US relations and send bilateral relations to a new low.

In addition, the US' attempts to crack down on China will backfire on itself and its allies, Lü told the Global Times on Thursday.

"For example, South Korea and Japan previously exported a large number of semiconductor products to China every year, but the US' export restrictions led to South Korea posting a trade deficit with China. The US' selfish moves will harm its allies' production capacity, and will prompt those countries to resist the US' coercion one day," Lü said.

China market indispensable

"For US, tightening chip export controls on China is a double-edged sword," Fu Liang, a Beijing-based tech analyst, told the Global Times on Thursday. Faced with external pressure, Chinese chip producers are accelerating research and development to boost domestic replacements, which means medium- and low-performance US chip products will become increasingly insignificant for the China market, Fu said. Despite the Biden administration's continuous crackdown on China's high-tech field, US firms such as Nvidia are striving to tap the great potential of the huge market of the world's second-largest economy. Nvidia is reportedly working on a special version of its AI chip for the China market. Nvidia will work with Inspur, one of its major distribution partners in China, on the launch and distribution of the chip, which is tentatively named "B20," and the shipments are planned to start in the second quarter of 2025, Reuters reported in July.

US sounds alarm bell on China's military development

02 August 2024, [Think China](#), Han Yong Hong

With the US reaffirming its view that China is its biggest threat and warning of a widening military gap, Lianhe Zaobao associate editor Han Yong Hong notes that once the US loses its overwhelming hard power, the entire chain of efforts to suppress China will also fall apart.

A 29 July report released by the bipartisan US Congressional Commission on the National Defense Strategy (NDS) does not hide its anxiety about the situation facing the US, including the challenges faced by the US military. While the report has not attracted much attention in China, Chinese citizens may feel that it is a rare positive evaluation of China's strength by the US.

US's outdated strategy

At the outset, the 114-page report emphasises in its summary that the threats the US faces are the most serious and most challenging the nation has encountered since 1945 and include the potential for near-term major war, but the US military is "not prepared".

The report boldly proposes that the US should significantly increase military resource investment, prepare for multiple wars and implement a Multiple Theater Force Construct.

To this end, cooperation with allies and partners is necessary to ensure simultaneous defence of the US homeland and response to threats in the Indo-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East.

The commission was tasked to review whether the US Department of Defense's strategy, formulated before the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas conflict, is still applicable. The report assesses that the design and force structure of US defence strategy are outdated, and the defence industrial base is grossly inadequate to provide the equipment, technology and munitions needed today, let alone given the demands of great power conflict.

... while the US "still has the world's strongest military with the farthest reach, within 1,000 miles of China's shore, [the US has] lost military dominance and could lose a war". — Eric Edelman, Vice-Chair, NDS Commission

The report believes that the US should change its longstanding post-Cold War two-war construct, as the alliance between China, Russia, Iran and North Korea has created a real risk of simultaneous protracted conflicts in multiple theatres worldwide.

The report reiterates that China poses the preeminent challenge to US interests and the most formidable military threat. In many ways, China is outpacing the US and has largely negated the US military advantage

in the Western Pacific through two decades of focused military investment. China currently boasts the largest navy in the world with over 370 ships and submarines, and the largest aviation force in its region.

In contrast, the US Navy's "ability to construct, maintain, and repair the maritime forces it requires is fundamentally in doubt" due to insufficient shipbuilding industrial capacity. The report also notes that the US military's combat capability is at an inflection point.

Vice-chair of the NDS Commission, Eric Edelman, also stated that while the US "still has the world's strongest military with the farthest reach, within 1,000 miles of China's shore, [the US has] lost military dominance and could lose a war".

Since July, the People's Liberation Army not only attended numerous military parades and celebrations around the world but also flexed its military muscles on at least three occasions.

US concerns not unfounded

The US Congress typically releases reports like this before the Department of Defense updates its strategy, to feed hawkish elements and US military industry interests, and to provide reasons and ammunition to increase military budgets.

China usually strongly refutes such reports for "playing up the China threat" and "fearmongering". However, China did not respond strongly this time. One can see that the report's observations on China's military capabilities are not entirely exaggerated. From another perspective, US concerns are not entirely unfounded.

Indeed, the Chinese army is not what it used to be. Since July, the People's Liberation Army not only attended numerous military parades and celebrations around the world but also flexed its military muscles on at least three occasions. It demonstrated the new heights that it has reached in global naval and air power projection capabilities while displaying its military strength against the US and NATO.

This includes the first time Chinese and Russian bombers were seen flying near Alaska on 24 July; and Chinese troops heading to Tanzania in early July to participate in the Peace Unity-2024 joint land and sea military exercise with Tanzania and Mozambique in late July.

The Chinese side also deployed two Type 071 comprehensive landing ships and a Type 052D guided missile destroyer to escort the cross-border transport of heavy weapons and equipment, and then transported troops from the Central Theater Command to Africa on a Y-20 strategic transport aircraft.

... China's drone industry is outstanding and can be said to be at the forefront of the world. At the same time, the military application of drones would also rewrite the traditional mode of combat.

Also, on 29 July, the Type 052D guided-missile destroyer Jiaozuo was deployed to Finland to participate in a joint military operation with Russia. This was interpreted as an exercise on NATO's "doorstep", expressing China's dissatisfaction with NATO's increasing involvement in Asia-Pacific affairs, just as the approach of Chinese bombers to Alaska was seen as a countermeasure against frequent US reconnaissance along China's coast.

In fact, China's drone industry is outstanding and can be said to be at the forefront of the world. At the same time, the military application of drones would also rewrite the traditional mode of combat.

Balancing development with global interests

These are all the inevitable result of China's economic rise and its strong industrial base and manufacturing capabilities. As written in the report, if the US defence industry does not address its shortcomings, the development gap between the US and China will widen.

In future great power competition between the US and China, if the US does not have a decisive military advantage, what kind of situation might that lead to? Indeed, a series of international issues will follow.

... once the US loses its overwhelming hard power, the entire chain of efforts to suppress China will also fall apart.

Thus, it can be anticipated that China's strategic goal would be to continuously invest in its military, forcing the US to eventually abandon its efforts to suppress China militarily. The Communique of the Third Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party also listed deepening military reform as one of its goals to serve this strategy.

From a broader perspective, once the US loses its overwhelming hard power, the entire chain of efforts to suppress China will also fall apart.

On the one hand, the rest of the world is somewhat concerned about the uncertainties following China's rise and the expansion of China's military ambitions. On the other hand, it is also very worried that China and the US may engage in conflicts that could lead to a global catastrophe before both sides can achieve peaceful coexistence.

This great power competition will only intensify, and the rest of the world will also adjust their strategies as the situation evolves. The great power that can better balance its own development with global interests will receive broader support and genuine affirmation.

Protesters in US were attacked by Beijing-linked figures: report

02 August 2024, [RFA](#), Alex Willemyns

Anti-Xi protesters at last year's APEC summit were harassed and assaulted to silence them, the report says.

Pro-democracy and human rights activists who protested against Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to San Francisco last year were harassed and in some cases violently assaulted by organized supporters of the Chinese Communist Party, a new report says.

The report, *Exporting Repression*, was released Tuesday by the Hong Kong Democracy Council and Students for a Free Tibet. It says that there was an organized "mobilization" of violent counter-protesters arranged by the CCP's "United Front" foreign-influence program.

"Their actions created a pervasive atmosphere of intimidation that not only had a deterrent effect on protests throughout the duration of Xi's stay but also interfered with protesters' exercise of their free speech rights," it says, blaming police for "exhibiting a lack of awareness."

The report details 34 cases of alleged harassment and violent attacks on anti-Xi protesters and calls for U.S. authorities to look into whether some of the people it alleges carried out the attacks are "unregistered foreign agents" working for Beijing to silence dissent in America.

The attacks, it says, were primarily directed toward Uyghurs, Tibetans and Hongkongers protesting against Xi, who was in San Francisco in November for the Asia-Pacific Economic summit and for high-profile talks with U.S. President Joe Biden just outside the city.

Intimidation of protesters included "threats, attempts to prevent protest, physical attacks and beatings, thefts of cell phones, and incidents of stalking," according to the report. It details multiple cases of protesters being surrounded by counter-protesters before being beaten.

Radio Free Asia reporters in San Francisco also witnessed anti-Xi protesters being attacked with the poles of Chinese flags, with San Francisco Police Department officers at times intervening to stop the violence but at other times taking a hands-off approach.

The report calls efforts by local law enforcement to stop attacks, and later to apprehend those responsible for violence, "inadequate."

The SFPD did not respond to a request for comment.

Plausible deniability

The report does not directly attribute the violence to orders from the Chinese Embassy in the United States, but says Beijing's diplomats in America "play a key role

in cultivating united front groups overseas, often providing them with guidance and direction at key junctures.”

The United Front organizers allegedly behind the campaign to suppress the anti-Xi protests maintain “a facade of autonomy” from Beijing for appearance’s sake, it says, but are nonetheless ultimately “guided” by the CCP and act only to preserve its interests.

But this is denied by Beijing.

Chinese Embassy spokesman Liu Pengyu told RFA that the people in San Francisco who the report claims were violent counter-protesters were in fact peaceful supporters who turned out to welcome Xi.

He said the people who turned out in San Francisco to welcome Xi’s arrival were there “expressing their support for the stabilization and sound development of China-U.S. relations,” which he said should be “welcomed by anyone with good will for the bilateral relationship.”

Liu said it was in fact the anti-Xi protesters who stoked violence, blaming them for injuring more than 60 people, including the elderly.

“Some of the victims were knocked out, others were beaten to brain and nose bleeding, still others got hurt at sternums and ribs,” Liu said. “Some of the violent rioters were arrested on site and indicted with criminal prosecutions by U.S. law enforcement agencies.”

RFA has found no record of the prosecution of any protesters or counter-protesters, with inquiries to the SFPD going unanswered.

But Liu said the Chinese Embassy condemned the violence.

“We have asked the U.S. side to investigate the incidents, bring to justice the perpetrators at an early date and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the victims,” the spokesperson said.

Transnational repression

The report comes as U.S. lawmakers and White House officials express [growing concerns](#) about [transnational repression](#) committed by foreign governments against rights activists on American soil.

In a statement, Rep. John Moolenaar, a Republican from Missouri who chairs the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, called on the FBI and SFPD to “hold the perpetrators accountable” and said lawmakers needed to come up with solutions themselves.

“Congress must also act to give law enforcement additional tools to prosecute these crimes,” he said. “The CCP cannot be allowed to bring its Orwellian model of totalitarian control to American soil.”

Chemi Lhamo, the campaign director at Students for Free Tibet, told RFA Tibetan she hoped the report would lead to increased awareness of the ways in which China’s government was trying to silence critics abroad, and perhaps even work to discourage the behavior.

“While there is much talk about transnational repression on international platforms, it has typically been difficult to show clear proof of it, which is one of the challenges the report addresses,” Lhamo said, adding that it built on a growing body of “tangible proof” of repression.

“The Chinese government’s policy of transnational repression is never going to work well when it always tries to silence and intimidate our people and Tibetan freedom fighters,” she said. “We will never be discouraged and will fight back even harder.”

US lawmaker calls Chinese sanctions 'badge of honor'

02 August 2024, [VOA](#), Katherine Michaelson

Representative Jim McGovern, the most recent U.S. lawmaker to be put under Chinese sanctions, says he will wear the sanctions “as a badge of honor,” calling on the Chinese government to end its oppressive actions in Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong in a statement emailed to VOA from the representative’s media office Friday.

“These absurd sanctions against me only serve to highlight how PRC leaders are afraid of free and open debate. They seek to punish and silence those who disagree with them. But the world is watching what they do, and people who care about human rights will not be silent,” he said in the statement.

China placed McGovern under sanctions Wednesday for frequently “interfering in China’s internal affairs.” In his politics, McGovern has taken on the Tibetan cause, sponsoring a bill advocating for a peaceful resolution of the China-Tibet dispute that President Joe Biden signed into law on July 12.

China views Tibet as an “inseparable part of China since ancient times,” despite supporters of the Tibetan Government in Exile and the Dalai Lama saying that Tibet has historically been independent. Chinese state-sponsored media Xinhua said McGovern’s Tibet-China Dispute Act “grossly interferes in China’s internal affairs,” violates international law and distorts historical facts to suppress China and encourage Tibetan separatist movements.

Framed as a response to McGovern’s efforts to undermine Chinese territorial sovereignty, the sanctions freeze the representative’s Chinese assets, prohibit organizations or individuals in China from engaging with him, and ban him and his family from entering Chinese territory, according to a publication from Xinhua.

McGovern, who represents the state of Massachusetts in the House of Representatives, has no assets or business dealings in China.

McGovern’s Tibet-China Dispute Act, gives the State Department increased authority to counter Chinese disinformation about Tibet and promotes the

resumption of talks between Chinese leaders and the Dalai Lama. No such talks have occurred since 2010.

China stands accused of large-scale human rights abuses in Tibet, which the congressman hoped to alleviate with this legislation.

In a statement released on June 12 when the bill passed the House, McGovern said, "The People's Republic of China has systematically denied Tibetans the right to self-determination and continues to deliberately erase Tibetan religion, culture and language.

"The ongoing oppression of the Tibetan people is a grave tragedy, and our bill provides further tools that empower both America and the international community to stand up for justice and peace," he said. Among the signees of the statement were House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, Senator Todd Young, McGovern and Senator Jeff Merkley.

China has sanctioned other U.S. representatives for their involvement in an issue that threatens Chinese territorial homogeneity. Over the last year, China has sanctioned Representative McCaul and former Representative Mike Gallagher over their support for Taiwan.

China woos local U.S. officials as tensions with Washington rise

01 August 2024, [Nikkei Asia](#), Pak Yiu

Delegations of American mayors visiting China have grown since last year

More than 140 Chinese provincial government officials and business figures gathered in the small port city of Tacoma, Washington in July for a day of exchanges with their U.S. counterparts from 21 different states. As Washington hardens its stance toward Beijing, China is increasingly focused on strengthening ties with state and local officials.

The sixth U.S.-China sister cities summit, held on July 19, was the first to be held in person since 2019, and included a series of panel discussions on business and trade opportunities, youth and education exchanges, and sustainability.

Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards said she was able to reconnect with her counterparts at the event after having visited China in June.

"I was really energized and it just reminded me again of why opportunities like this are so important," she said.

Woodards' visit to China was organized by the government of Fuzhou -- a city in the country's southeast -- to celebrate the 30th anniversary of a sister-city partnership. She later flew to Ningbo and Beijing to meet with city officials and the Chinese

People's Association for Friendship with Countries (CPAFC), a key organizer of the U.S.-China sister cities summit and an extension of the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department.

From Tacoma to cities in South Carolina, California and Iowa, China has been courting mayors and state officials to strengthen its local-level diplomacy.

As for tensions between the capitals, "some of that does trickle down to the state," Woodards said. "For me, it is staying focused on the things that unite us as opposed to the things that divide us."

At the July event, China's Ambassador to the U.S., Xie Feng, said more than 30 delegations from Chinese provinces have visited the U.S. since the start of 2023, while 10 delegations from the U.S. have travelled to China. He anticipated more to come before the end of the year in order to address "new challenges facing subnational exchanges."

"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 in video remarks at the US-China sister cities summit.

"But the friendship between our two peoples is deeply rooted in our long history of exchanges," Xie said. "Neither setbacks in bilateral relations nor headwinds against people-to-people connections will ever change the fundamental wish of our peoples for friendship and cooperation."

The Chinese embassy in the U.S. referred Nikkei Asia to Xie's speeches at other events when asked for comment.

The summit was hosted by international nongovernmental organization Sister Cities International and CPAFC. Neither group responded to requests for comment.

Thomas Huston, a professor at Cincinnati University who has been establishing increased student exchanges with Chinese universities, said it was important to maintain such engagements.

"When you get to the personal level, or school level, the cooperation is here," he said. And while he acknowledged the existence of China-focused policies at the federal level, Huston said, "You don't get hung up on the geopolitical policies at the end of the day."

Relations between the two countries have deteriorated rapidly since 2018 over a wide range of issues, including trade tariffs, reported human rights abuses in Xinjiang and the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in 2022 added fuel to the fire, prompting China to pause climate and military talks. Military talks resumed April this year after the long hiatus.

In 2020, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo discontinued U.S. participation in a 2011 memorandum of understanding between U.S. and

Chinese governments concerning the establishment of a bilateral governors forum to boost subnational ties. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were more than 12 local-level engagements annually on average, according to the Truman Center, a think tank focused on national security issues. The number of state, county and city-level engagements reached 27 in 2017.

But meetings plummeted to just two in 2020, when tensions between the two superpowers intensified and the pandemic heavily restricted international travel. The number recovered to 14 last year, while this year has also seen 14 engagements with more expected to come.

China's National Development and Reform Commission, a government agency focused on economic planning, said in June that it would establish local liaison mechanisms with the U.S. on climate change, following an event between California and China's Greater Bay Area officials.

The engagement figures are likely underreported, but the Truman Center said they provide a "snapshot" of the vast scope of engagements.

"Part of it is pent up demand, there was a lot of engagement that was just on ice for three years," said Kyle Jaros, an associate professor of global affairs in the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame.

Repairing perceptions of China was one objective, said Jaros, an expert on subnational diplomacy.

While China has been eager to engage with U.S. state officials, Jaros said not all on the U.S. side are enthusiastic about meeting with their Chinese counterparts.

"There's clearly a diplomatic component to it. China concluded that at the state and local level, it might find at least some partners who believe there's an important reason for a constructive U.S.-China relationship, a kind of talking relationship and also [a] close trade and investment relationship."

"In some cases or places, this kind of charm offensive could create backlash against China," said Jaros.

Some U.S. states have taken a more aggressive attitude towards China of late, with a spike in state legislation targeting Chinese investment, trade and education introduced in the past two years.

But not all states have pursued hostile policies towards China as they value Chinese investments and trade with the country, according to analysts.

California is one such state. Six city mayors from California flew to China in May on a trip organized by China Silicon Valley, a nonprofit organization aimed at promoting investment between the two countries.

The mayors met with Hong Kong officials before flying to Chongqing in China's southwest to attend a trade fair and meet with city-level officials. China Silicon Valley did not respond to requests for comment.

"Because of California's dependence on Chinese trade and college students, the state government continues to frame its cooperation with China as mutually beneficial in climate change, green technology, and fighting Asian hate, even though there's little tangible results," said William Chou, Japan Chair fellow at the Hudson Institute.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom met Chinese leader Xi Jinping in October last year to discuss climate change, shortly before Xi and Biden met in San Francisco a month later.

Political analysts say there are concerns in Washington that China could exploit local engagement for its own interest and harm U.S. national security.

"For China, these states give it a useful backdoor at a time when there is growing U.S. concern towards China," Chou added.

The Biden administration, aware of the increased Chinese engagement with local officials, has begun to invest in strengthening cooperation between local governments and the federal government. This year it dispatched State Department advisers to Chattanooga in Tennessee, Kansas City in Missouri, San Antonio in Texas and San Diego in California to work with local community groups, trade associations, and businesses in a bid to strengthen engagement on global issues.

Additional reporting by Ken Moriyasu

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

Foreign minister Jaishankar underlines India's special problem with China

31 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has on Aug 31 noted that there is a general China problem being debated in many countries of the world, and India is not the only one facing issues with it. However, India's problems with China are particularly significant, extending beyond the shared concerns of the international community, *timesofindia.com* Aug 31 cited Jaishankar as saying during a conversation with Pranab Dhal Samanta at the ET World Leaders Forum in Delhi.

"There is a general China problem, apart from our own difficult situation in the border. We are not the only country in the world which is having a debate about China. Go to Europe, and ask them what is today among your major economic or national security debates? It's about China. Look at the United States (of America). It's obsessed with China, and rightly so in many ways. So, the fact is let's not make out as though it's only India which has a China problem."

Elaborating on it further, Jaishankar has said, "Decades ago the world decided to overlook problems in China. Now everyone has a problem. India has a special China problem, over and above the world's China problem. Because there is a general problem, apart from our border situation, the sensible thing to do is take precautions which a country like India should be taking."

He has said one of these precautions is to scrutinize Chinese investments in India.

"It has never been the government's position that we should not be having investments from China or doing business with China. But on the investment issue it is common sense that investments from China would be scrutinized. I think the border, and the state of relations between India and China call for it."

And he has stressed the importance of carefully examining investments originating from China before granting approval. He has noted that even countries without shared borders with China are subjecting Chinese investments to increased scrutiny, although the level of examination may vary.

The minister emphasized the delicate balance between economic considerations and national security, remarking, "There is a thin line between economics and national security in most cases," reported *businesstoday.in* Aug 31.

The minister's remarks came as both India and China spoke positively about the atmospherics of the 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) which was held in Beijing on Aug 29 and their desires and goals. However, India again differed from China by

its insistence that normalizing the border situation was prerequisite for resuming normal overall ties.

China and India held six rounds of WMCC meetings on border affairs in 2020 following the Galwan Valley border skirmish on Jun 15, 2020. Except for that year, since the first WMCC meeting on border affairs started in 2012, the two sides have held WMCC meetings on border affairs one to three times a year, China's official *globaltimes.cn* Aug 31 cited analysts as saying. It cited the analysts as also saying that the recent frequent interactions signalled that both sides were actively seeking to accelerate a resolution to the border standoff and to get bilateral relations back on track.

India, China discuss situation along LAC to narrow down differences and find resolutions

29 August 2024, Times Of India

The ministry of external affairs said that India and China held a discussion over the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on Thursday and decided to jointly uphold peace and tranquillity on the ground. MEA said that a 'frank, constructive and forward-looking exchange of views' took place at the 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in Beijing.

The Indian delegation was led by Gourangalal Das, joint secretary (East Asia) while the Chinese delegation was led by Hong Liang, director general of the boundary & ocean affairs department of the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs. The two sides narrowed down their differences and sought to find early resolution of the outstanding issues. For this, they further agreed for intensified contact through diplomatic and military channels.

Indian solar panels face US scrutiny for possible links to China forced labor

27 August 2024, [Reuters](#), Lewis Jackson and Nichola Groom

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has detained nearly \$43 million in shipments of electronics equipment from India since October under a 2022 law banning goods made with forced labor, according to agency data, representing a new focus for the trade enforcement agency.

While CBP does not specify what types of electronic equipment it has detained, polysilicon, a raw material in solar panels, is identified as a high-priority sector in the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), and solar panels have historically made up most of the

stopped shipments in that category, according to industry sources.

The CBP did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The law bans goods made in China's Xinjiang region where Chinese authorities are reported to have established labor camps for ethnic Uyghur and other Muslim groups.

China denies any abuses.

No Indian electronics shipments were detained under the UFLPA in previous years.

Nearly a third of the detained Indian electronics shipments were denied, according to CBP. By comparison, just 5.4% of shipments from top U.S. solar component suppliers Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand were denied entry over that period.

The Indian detentions represent a small share of the \$3 billion in electronics shipments CBP has stopped at the border under the UFLPA in the last two years.

But they are a setback for Indian producers seeking to cast themselves as an alternative for U.S. solar project developers weary of navigating tariffs and UFLPA enforcement delays on panels made by mainly Chinese companies.

"If the solar cells for Indian panels are coming from China, then there is likely a good reason why detentions of Indian products may be increasing," said Tim Brightbill, a trade attorney with Wiley Rein LLP. "My sense is that Customs and Border Protection did not realize for a while that many Indian solar panels contained Chinese solar cells, and therefore the UFLPA risks were (and are) high."

Imports of solar products from India have soared in recent years, hitting \$2.3 billion last year, according to U.S. trade data.

In the second quarter of 2024, India accounted for 11% of U.S. panel imports, more than double its share in the previous quarter, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

As recently as 2018, the U.S. was not importing any solar panels from India.

The increased scrutiny of Indian shipments is a reflection of the border agency's recent efforts to broaden UFLPA enforcement beyond just the biggest China-based solar panel makers, which have replaced their Chinese polysilicon suppliers with sources from the United States and Europe in a bid to avoid their shipments being detained, according to a trade attorney.

"Indian module manufacturers found an opportunity to import more at a time when the Chinese manufacturers were being held up because of UFLPA," Richard Mojica, a trade attorney with Miller & Chevalier in Washington said.

Waaree Technologies (WAAR.BO), opens new tab and Adani Enterprises (ADEL.NS), opens new tab are the top Indian solar suppliers to the U.S. market.

A spokesperson for Adani confirmed that some of its shipments had been detained and that all had been released.

"This outcome reaffirms that our products imported into the U.S. fully comply with UFLPA regulations, reinforcing customer confidence in the quality, reliability and legal adherence of our products and manufacturing," the spokesperson said.

Waaree did not respond to requests for comment.

Following the guidance from two foreign ministers' meetings in Astana and Vientiane in July 2024, both sides engaged with a goal to narrow down differences and find an early resolution to outstanding issues. To achieve this, they decided to intensify contact through both diplomatic and military channels. "In the meantime, they decided to jointly uphold peace and tranquillity on the ground in border areas in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements, protocols and understandings reached between the two Governments. It was reiterated that restoration of peace and tranquility, and respect for LAC are the essential basis for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations," MEA said in a press release. Additionally, the leader of the Indian delegation called on the vice minister in the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs.

This meeting builds upon the previous WMCC meeting held last month.

Ladakh herders seek mechanism for return of yaks straying across Tibet border

20 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Villagers in Ladakh have rounded up yaks that had strayed from across the Tibetan side of the international border but there is no mechanism for returning them, or getting back their own herd that had previously strayed to the other side, reported [greaterkashmir.com](#) Aug 19.

Konchok Stanzin, a politician and a former executive Councillor for Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, has tweeted that these yaks, numbering 40, from Tibet were found on Dzomolung Demchok valley. He has on Aug 19 posted videos and pictures which he said were of "Chinese" yaks that had strayed to the Indian side.

Konchok Stanzin has said that people from the Indian side in Ladakh too had lost their yaks some years ago, after they strayed into Tibet, but never got them back. He has urged the governments of India and China to initiate a mechanism that would facilitate the returning of these animals.

Jaishankar says China, Pakistan not invited to join Voice of Global South summit

18 August 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

India's relations with China and Pakistan are currently at an all-time low, and both countries were also not part of the 2 earlier Voice of Global South Summits. China and Pakistan were not part of the Voice of Global South Summit hosted virtually by India on Saturday, and the meeting was joined by leaders and ministers of 123 countries to discuss key challenges facing developing countries.

Several countries raised the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine during the day-long summit, external affairs minister S Jaishankar told a media briefing. The countries that raised the situation in Gaza expressed concern at the civilian casualties and emphasised the need to put in place a ceasefire and resume negotiations, he said.

Responding to questions, Jaishankar said both China and Pakistan were not invited to the third edition of the summit hosted by India. In the case of China, he said, "Were they invited, the answer is no."

India's relations with China and Pakistan are currently at an all-time low, and both countries were also not part of the two earlier Voice of Global South Summits held last year.

The summit was joined by a total of 123 countries, including India. Twenty-one countries participated in the leaders' session, while 118 ministers joined various sessions devoted to issues such as digital, trade, and health. A total of 34 countries participated in the two sessions for foreign ministers.

The issue of reforming the United Nations also figured in the summit, with Jaishankar saying there is a need to reconcile many different ideas for the proposed reforms and then give UN members the ability to make a choice. There should be text-based negotiations, and countries should be allowed to vote on the future of the UN, he said.

"We are not going to get perfect unity among 190 odd countries in the world...nor do we expect it...We feel that process has been unduly and unfairly blocked," Jaishankar said.

With India's capabilities and economic heft set to grow, the country will have to cope with more responsibilities and expectations, especially from countries of the Global South, he said.

China Threatens To Snatch Disputed Areas On India-China Border, Indo-Pacific Using PLA-Backed 'Civilian Soldiers'

16 August 2024, [The EurAsian Times](#)

China, the world's second-most populous nation, is advancing its global ambitions through land and sea

strategies. These efforts aim to expand territory and increase trade dominance without resorting to direct conflict. A key aspect of this approach involves using civilian forces as indirect support for military objectives.

Known for its expansionist policies, China is not only focused on becoming a world superpower but is also strategizing on how to seize neighboring lands without engaging in direct conflict. To achieve this, the Chinese military takes indirect support from civilian forces, who are often used as a shield by the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Examples of this include the "Xiaokang" border defense villages and the Maritime Militia, which are nontraditional forces involved in gray-zone operations. These operations—employing nontraditional methods to achieve security objectives without provoking armed conflict—are frequently discussed in military literature. Let's explore in detail how civilian forces are used to support China's military efforts on both land and sea.

Border Defense On Land: "Xiaokang" Villages

On its land borders, particularly along the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Middle and Eastern sectors of the India-China border, China has implemented the "Xiaokang" border defense village initiative.

The term "Xiaokang" translates to "moderately prosperous." The Xiaokang initiative is designed to populate the 21 Himalayan border counties, including Nyingchi, Shannan, Shigatse, and Ngari prefectures. The plan includes the construction of new Xiaokang houses, infrastructure, and public service facilities in these areas to strengthen and enrich the border regions of Tibet.

This initiative involves villages in Tibet, including Zhuangnan, Yarao, Kuiqiongmen, and Majiduncun, which commonly feature military or dual-use facilities. Notably, the Xiaokang border plan seeks to populate these areas with individuals loyal to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), creating a civilian border force through China's military-civilian fusion strategy, which has been increasingly emphasized under Xi Jinping's leadership.

Over the past five years, China has developed more than 600 villages along its border with India in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Since 2019, China has been building villages along the LAC, and while many of these were initially unoccupied, they have recently seen new residents.

Some of these villages are located along the LAC, opposite the Lohit Valley and the Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh, a region administered by India but largely claimed by China as "South Tibet." By populating and re-populating these border areas, China appears to be strengthening its territorial claims

by establishing a "settled population" in disputed regions.

China is rapidly upgrading these dual-use villages along disputed borders. New roads and what may become small security outposts are being constructed between these remote villages. Given China's focus on military-civilian fusion, these Xiaokang border villages are expected to serve as forward posts for troop deployment.

The extensive network of roads and the active civilian force near the border would function as a defense force, providing resources and support in the event of border skirmishes, effectively turning these villages into extended troop cantonments near the LAC.

These villages, often accompanied by military and dual-use infrastructure, serve as a "Gray Zone" tool for China to assert and defend its claims in disputed areas. Commercial satellite images reveal the rapid and significant progress China is making in these border villages despite the harsh environment.

Media reports indicate that these complexes include barracks, perimeter walls, and radome/communications towers, suggesting the likely presence of China's military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It is also possible that these facilities are operated by the paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP). Under China's Land Borders Law, both the PLA and PAP share responsibility for defending China's borders from armed attacks or other encroachments.

Maritime Strategy: The Maritime Militia

At sea, China employs its Maritime Militia to support the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in asserting territorial claims, particularly in the South China Sea. The Maritime Militia is often described as a shadowy armada, a fleet of vessels that appear to be ordinary fishing boats but can mobilize for military purposes.

The Maritime Militia has existed for decades, but under President Xi Jinping's leadership, it has become more professional, better equipped, and increasingly militarized. Officially, the People's Republic of China (PRC) defines its militia as "an armed mass organization composed of civilians retaining their regular jobs," serving as a component of China's armed forces and an "auxiliary and reserve force" of the PLA.

The Maritime Militia operates independently of the PLA Navy and China Coast Guard (CCG). It consists of citizens working in the marine economy who receive training from the PLA and CCG to perform tasks such as border patrol, surveillance, reconnaissance, maritime transportation, search and rescue, and supporting naval operations during wartime.

The Maritime Militia is composed of two main forces. The first is a 'Professional Fleet' of at least 100 purpose-built boats that appear to be fishing vessels but are stronger and equipped with military-grade technology.

The second fleet, known as 'The Spratly Backbone Fishing Vessels' (SBFV), consists of actual fishing boats drafted into China's missions. These boats operate out of ports in Hainan and Guangdong. The professional fleet can fish when needed, but they often remain inactive and then cluster together at disputed locations. SBFV crews receive lucrative government fuel subsidies for militia missions.

The United States, a treaty ally of the Philippines, has repeatedly accused China's Maritime Militia of violating international law to enforce China's expansive and unlawful maritime claims. By deploying vessels in groups, China seeks to challenge the rules of freedom of navigation, bolster its maritime claims, secure vital resources, and extend its economic influence globally.

China's overtly civilian distant-water fishing (DWF) fleets, affiliated to varying degrees with government agencies, have come under growing international scrutiny. These fleets are often visible on satellite tracking platforms, swarming around disputed areas.

Crews in both the professional and SBFV fleets are believed to include civilian fishers, sailors, and ex-military personnel recruited through Chinese government training programs. When engaged in militia activities rather than genuine fishing, these vessels typically operate with smaller crews of about five to six members, according to The Guardian report. According to a research report published by International Law Studies, China's Maritime Militia is a key instrument for peacetime power projection in the region, particularly as it guards China's audacious maritime claim to over 90 percent of the South China Sea.

The philosophical foundation of this militia lies in the concept of the "people's war," which integrates civilian and military sectors. China believes that using a civilian militia composed of fishing vessels is a less provocative way to advance its strategic goal of regional hegemony.

During armed conflict, these vessels could conduct reconnaissance, gather intelligence for the PLAN, and engage in military deception, jamming, sealift, ship repair, and emergency rescue. The militia is also armed and may participate in more challenging maritime security operations, such as boarding foreign-flagged fishing vessels in contested waters.

Military-Civil Fusion Strategy

Both the Xiaokang villages and Maritime Militia exemplify China's "military-civil fusion" strategy, which aims to integrate civilian and military sectors for national objectives.

This approach is formalized in China's Land Borders Law, which emphasizes the role of local governments and civilian populations in border defense and security and urges them to "strengthen the construction of mass defense forces to maintain border security."

A 2021 article in the official PLA Daily highlights the importance of enhancing border infrastructure and encouraging people of all ethnic groups to settle in border areas, protect their homeland, and develop their communities. This focus on integrating civilian villages into the military framework is a clear example of China's "military-civil fusion" strategy, which seeks to merge the country's economic and military development to advance national objectives.

Through these initiatives, China seeks to advance its territorial ambitions and global influence while minimizing the risk of direct military confrontation. This strategy represents a significant challenge to neighboring countries and international norms in both land and maritime domains.

Message to China? PM Modi says India's progress doesn't come with crisis for anyone, we are land of Buddha

15 August 2024, [First Post](#)

In his Independence Day address, without making any specific references, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India will 'defeat all those with bad intentions with our good intentions'

India's progress does not come with any crisis for anyone and the world shouldn't be concerned about the country's growing strength, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday against the backdrop of geopolitical turbulences in various parts of the world.

In his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the iconic Red Fort, Modi said India is facing "countless" challenges both "within and outside" and that the country will neither "falter nor get tired" in dealing with them.

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Without making any specific references, he said India will "defeat all those with bad intentions with our good intentions." "There are challenges within as well as outside. As we become stronger and our influence increases, the challenges too will increase," he said.

"The challenges from outside will increase but I want to tell everyone that India's progress does not bring crisis for anyone," he said.

"We are the land of the Buddha, war is not our path and because of this, the world shouldn't be concerned about India's progress," he said.

"I assure the world community that you should understand India's traditions and its history of thousands of years, don't think of us as a crisis." The prime minister said there should not be any concern over the country's development.

"I want to tell the countrymen that no matter how many challenges we face, it is in the nature of India to challenge the challenge," Modi said.

"We will neither falter, nor get tired, nor stop, nor bow down. We will leave no stone unturned to fulfil our resolutions, to change the fate of 140 crore countrymen, to realise the dreams of the nation.

"I assure you that we will defeat all those with bad intentions with our good intentions," Modi said without elaborating.

Modi's remarks came against the backdrop of India's frosty ties with China following the border row in eastern Ladakh that erupted in 2020.

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The prime minister spoke about the situation in Bangladesh. But his address was largely devoid of any other foreign policy issues.

Eye on China & Pakistan, India fast-tracks deal for 31 US 'hunter-killer' drones

14 August 2024, Times Of India, Rajat Pandit

With both China and Pakistan bolstering their fleets of armed drones, India is fast-tracking negotiations for the acquisition of 31 weaponised MQ-9B 'hunter-killer' remotely-piloted aircraft from the US, with the somewhat ambitious aim to ink the mega deal by November-December this year.

Techno-commercial discussions for the inter-governmental contract for the 31 armed high-altitude, long endurance drones "are in an advanced stage now", with 15 Sea Guardians earmarked for Navy and 8 Sky Guardians each for Army and IAF, defence ministry sources told TOI.

This comes at a time when China, which continues the military confrontation in eastern Ladakh for the fifth year running now, has stepped-up supplies of its armed Cai Hong-4 and Wing Loong-II drones to Pakistan. "Pakistan has sought 16 more armed CH-4 drones from China. It already has seven CH-4 drones in the Army and 3 in Navy," a source said. The MQ-9B Reaper or Predator-B drones, designed to fly for around 40 hours at altitudes over 40,000-feet for surveillance and armed with Hellfire air-to-ground missiles and smart bombs for precision strikes, are considered far superior to Chinese armed drones.

The operational utility of the MQ-9B drones has been reinforced by extensive ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) missions being undertaken by the two unarmed Sea Guardian drones -- taken on lease from US firm General Atomics -- both over the vast Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as well as along the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control with China. While the US has put a price tag of \$3.9 billion (over Rs 33,500 crore) for the 31 weaponised MQ-9B drones and associated equipment, including 170 Hellfire

missiles, 310 GBU-39B precision-guided glide bombs, navigation systems, sensor suites and mobile ground control systems, the Indian negotiating team is working to bring the costs down.

"The price and terms offered by the US govt and General Atomics to other countries is being taken into account. All efforts are underway to conclude the deal within this calendar year after the final nod from the cabinet committee on security," a source said. Under the deal, the drones will be assembled in India, while General Atomics will also source some components from Indian companies as well as set up a global MRO (maintenance, repair, overhaul) facility here.

"Since General Atomics cannot give transfer of technology for the varied sub-systems it sources from other companies, it will provide expertise and consultancy to DRDO and other entities to develop such advanced drones indigenously," the source said. The armed forces hope to induct the first 10 MQ-9B drones within a couple of years of the contract being inked, though it will depend on General Atomics' production capacity. The rest will come in batches every six months.

The plan is to deploy the fighter-size drones at ISR command and control centres at Arakkonam and Porbandar for the Indian Ocean region and Sarsawa and Gorakhpur for the land borders. "With their long-distance hunting and killing capabilities, such drones are required at a time when China's naval forays into the IOR are only going to increase further," an officer said.

Minor Indian-Chinese troops skirmish along Ladakh border reported

13 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

It is not clear how often skirmishes are taking place between the two sides along the Tibet-India border Line of Actual Control (LAC), if at all. However, one reported incident has taken place on Aug 12 morning in the Burtse area in the Durbuk Sector of Ladakh. Sticks were used freely by both sides during the confrontation that took place at 4 am, reported *thestatesman.com* Aug 12.

The trouble started with the Chinese troops reportedly burning two RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) huts on the Indian side of the LAC. This was followed by a faceoff between the Indian and PLA troops of China, the report said.

The minor skirmish was stated to have taken place near the LAC pillar point 12 while India was replacing an Armoured Battalion from the area.

Tension has been prevailing between the Indian and Chinese Armies since Jun 2020 when troops from the two sides got engaged in a brutal physical

confrontation without the use of firearms in the Galwan valley. It resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers. China belatedly admitted that four of its soldiers died, although intelligence reports said the figure was much higher.

India and China have held at least 20 rounds of military talks and 13 rounds of foreign office led discussions but there is no let-up in the tensions, the report said.

China, Pakistan Try To Derail India, G4 Nations' UN Security Council Bid

13 August 2024, [NDTV](#)

China's Permanent Representative Fu Cong also threw in criticism against India and the G4, saying that there were "a few countries and interest groups who pursue their own selfish and small-circle interests when it comes to Council reform".

The lack of adequate geographic representation in the UN Security Council is responsible for its failures, and giving Africa permanent membership will be essential to make the highest decision-making body effective, R. Ravindra, charge d'affaires of India's UN mission has said.

Speaking on behalf of the G-4, the group of India, Brazil, Germany and Japan, on Monday at an open debate of the Council on reforming itself, he said, "A primary reason for the underperformance of this critical institution remains the non-representation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the under-representation of Asia-Pacific in the permanent category".

"We are convinced that African representation in both permanent and non-permanent categories will be an indispensable part of UNSC reform for a more representative and effective Council," he said.

The meeting of the Council was convened by Sierra Leone, which holds the rotating presidency, to push Africa's case for reforming the Council to give the continent better representation.

Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio said, "Despite being home to over 1.3 billion people, and the 54 African countries making up 28 per cent of the total membership of the UN," Africa continues to suffer from the historic injustice of being deprived of permanent seats at the Council.

"Nearly 80 years after its creation, the Council has been stuck in time" -- 1945 when the UN was created while most of Africa was under the colonial yoke perpetuating the injustice, he said.

"Africa demands two permanent seats in the UN Security Council and two additional non-permanent seats" to the existing three, he said.

Mr Ravindra said, "We as G-4 continue to support fully these legitimate demands and aspirations from the people of Africa" and its relationship with the

continent " is anchored in trust and mutual respect and is focused on ensuring that Africa finds its rightful place in a new age of reformed multilateralism".

"It is also inconceivable that Africa which constitutes over 70 per cent of the UNSC's agenda items under discussions, does not get a permanent voice at the horse-shoe table" at the Council chamber, he said.

Mr Ravindra said the Inter-governmental Negotiations (IGN) for Council reforms should expedite text-based negotiations so that it can proceed with the reform process in time for the 80th anniversary of the UN next year.

He said that at the summit of G-20 last year under India's leadership, Africa was given membership in the group of the major industrialised and emerging economies, which was also noted by Bio.

Bio said that Africa's claim should be treated as a "special case" and given priority in reforming the Council in time for the 80th anniversary next year.

Many speakers at the meeting also emphasised Africa's case for special expedited treatment in the reform process mired for decades by opposition by a small group of countries that call themselves Uniting for Consensus (UfC) hoping to detach the continent from the controversies involving other countries.

India, its G4 partners that work together to expand the Council, and other countries have counted on Africa's case for reform to break the stalemate.

But the calls for treating Africa as a "special case" ahead of the Summit of the Future in September and the UN's 80th anniversary next year seek to make the reform a piecemeal effort -- if it happens at all.

Marco Romiti, a Minister Counsellor in the UN Mission of Italy which heads the UfC, spoke out against adding more permanent members.

Munir Akram, the permanent representative of Pakistan, which is also a member of UfC, opposed expanding permanent membership but said that Africa can be considered a special case and be given long-term seats in the Council.

But he, too, was firm against adding permanent members.

Bio was asked outside the Council chamber at his meeting with the media how he hoped to overcome the UfC opposition.

He said Africa has a very compelling case and that is what we are pushing for.

"We don't consider the opposition," he said. "We have a genuine case and that is what we are pushing. We know that there are others ... it is a total reform, but we are talking for Africa".

He said he was confident that it was only a matter of time before Africa got its due.

"The gatekeepers will find it difficult to let us in, but as you can see, there is already willingness and as you can see we are gradually inching towards the next steps in order to be able to reach our goal," he said.

Mr Akram took a dig at India and the G4 saying, "Africa is critically different from the demand of four states for permanent membership for themselves".

China's Permanent Representative Fu Cong also threw in criticism against India and the G4, saying that there were "a few countries and interest groups who pursue their own selfish and small-circle interests when it comes to Council reform".

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the "cracks" in the Council's "foundation are becoming too large to ignore".

"They are contributing to deadlock, stalemate and stagnation around today's most pressing crises and they are feeding a broader crisis of credibility and legitimacy that is affecting multilateralism itself," he said.

"We cannot accept that the world's preeminent peace and security body lacks a permanent voice for a continent of well over a billion people -- a young and rapidly growing population -- making up 28 per cent of the membership of the United Nations," he said.

Civil 'guardians': China quietly builds villages near border with India, other countries to press territorial claims

10 August 2024, [Money Control](#)

The New York Times conducted a comprehensive mapping and analysis of settlements along China's border to create the first detailed visual depiction of how China has strategically transformed its frontier regions through the establishment of civilian outposts
On a once empty land nestled deep within the Himalayas, Chinese officials built 'Qionglin New Village' and paid people to move there from other settlements, according to a report by *The New York Times*. It lies a mere three miles from a contentious zone.

This nearby area has become a flashpoint of tension, with substantial military deployments and confrontations between Chinese and Indian forces fueling apprehensions of an impending border conflict.

Xi Jinping, the President of China, calls people living in these areas as "border guardians". The villagers of Qionglin serve as de facto guardians on the periphery of China's territorial assertion over Arunachal Pradesh, India's easternmost state, the *NYT* report added.

Qionglin is only one of many such villages that have surfaced recently.

The New York Times conducted a comprehensive mapping and analysis of settlements along China's border to create the first detailed visual depiction of how China has strategically transformed its frontier regions through the establishment of civilian outposts.

"The mapping reveals that China has put at least one village near every accessible Himalayan pass that borders India, as well as on most of the passes bordering Bhutan and Nepal," according to Matthew Akester, an independent researcher on Tibet, and Robert Barnett, a professor from SOAS University of London, reported *NYT*.

These civilian settlements serve a dual purpose. They provide critical infrastructure -- roads, internet connectivity, and electricity -- that could facilitate rapid military deployment to the border if needed. Additionally, the villagers act as eyes and ears in these remote regions, deterring intrusions and potential defectors.

India, meanwhile, has launched its own initiative dubbed "Vibrant Villages Programme." This program seeks to reinvigorate hundreds of settlements along the frontier.

Last year, the government had approved Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) as a centrally sponsored scheme for comprehensive development of select villages in 46 blocks in 19 districts of abutting northern border in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and UT of Ladakh.

Last month, Union home minister Amit Shah reviewed the implementation of the 'Vibrant Villages Programme' at a high-level meeting in the national capital and stressed the need to provide employment opportunities to local residents as well as increase connectivity to prevent migration from border villages. Amit Shah further emphasized that the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Army deployed around the border villages should encourage the purchase of local agricultural and handicraft products through cooperatives, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement.

China still to acknowledge having custody of 2 Arunachal men missing from border for nearly 2 years

04 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Two men from the state of Arunachal Pradesh missing for nearly two years from a remote location along India's border with Chinese ruled Tibet are still untraceable. They are believed – in fact, known – to be in the custody of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), which has so far not acknowledged having them in custody, reported the *PTI* news agency Aug 4.

Batelum Tikro (35) and his cousin Bainsi Manyu (37) went missing from the Chaglagam area in Anjaw district on Aug 19, 2022 while looking for medicinal herbs at a high altitude area. They never returned home and could not be traced.

"I have come to know that they were detained by the Chinese army," Mr Tikro's brother Dishanso Chikro has told *PTI* over phone.

Chikro has said he approached the local army authorities several times seeking information about his brothers.

"I am told that the issue was raised by the Indian Army with their Chinese counterparts. But no response has come so far," he has said.

"The Chinese side has not yet acknowledged that the youths are in their custody. But I am told that they are still alive," Anjaw MLA and State's Women and Child Development Minister Dasanglu Pul has said.

Mr Chikro had also lodged two missing-person complaints at the local Hayuliang police station saying, "Some fellow villagers might have last seen them at border areas on Aug 24, 2022", adding, "but since then there has been no sign of the whereabouts of the duo".

Mr Tikro, who belongs to Doiliang, is unmarried while Manyu, who hails from Manyu Chiprogam of Anjaw district, is married and has two very young children.

"I have no idea what was the response of the Chinese side at the flag meetings (when the matter was raised). The parents of the men keep telling us to do something. But we are helpless so far. We hope that they will return home safe and soon," Anjaw district Zila Parishad Chairman Soblem Pul has said.

While this is not the first time residents of Arunachal Pradesh have gone missing along the border or been detained by China's PLA, in most cases, such people returned home after a few days or weeks, the report noted.

This is the first time persons missing along the border have not returned home for almost two years.

India shares a 3,400-km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) with Chinese occupied Tibet, from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

India has repeatedly rejected China's claim that Arunachal Pradesh is southern (or south) Tibet and part of its territory.

China ready to work with India to bridge gap between people of the two countries: Chinese diplomat

02 August 2024, [The Hindu](#)

Recently Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy jointly rescued a Chinese mariner.

Chinese Consul General in Mumbai Kong Xianhua has said his country is ready to work with India to bridge the gap between the people of [the two neighbours](#), recalling the Indian help during the Sino-Japanese war. The senior diplomat on August 1 visited the Indian Coast Guard Headquarters (West) to express gratitude to the maritime security agency for saving Chinese

mariners over the past two years, an official statement said.

Mr. Kong met Inspector General Bisham Sharma, Commander of Indian Coast Guard (West), and said China is ready to work with India to bridge the gap between the people of the two countries and strengthen friendship.

"... our two peoples will walk together like brothers and sisters," he said.

The Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy have jointly carried out a [successful rescue mission](#) to evacuate a Chinese mariner who was critically injured and suffering heavy blood loss on July 24, the statement said.

"The Indian Coast Guard responded immediately to the medical emergency. The rescue team overcame the strong wind and high waves to evacuate him to hospital. Thanks to the Indian Coast Guard's prompt rescue and professional treatment, the mariner recovered very well and has already been back to China," Mr. Kong said.

"Today I come here on behalf of the Chinese Consulate General in Mumbai to express my heartfelt gratitude to you and all the officers and pay my highest tribute to the Indian Coast Guard," Mr. Kong told IG Sharma.

Mr. Kong recalled that in 1938, an Indian medical team went to China to help Chinese people fight against Japanese aggression.

Dr. Kotnis, one of the doctors who was from Solapur (in Maharashtra), sacrificed his life for the great cause of Chinese people's liberation. Many Chinese people also gave their firm support for India's independence, the diplomat said.

In the current context, these rescue missions carried out by the Indian Coast Guard are of great significance and will strengthen the friendship between the two neighbours, he said. "A Chinese idiom goes 'compassion knows no borders'".

He said the Indian Coast Guard has saved three Chinese mariners in the consular district of the Consulate General alone over the past two years.

Mr. Kong said, "These rescue missions not only fulfil the (Coast Guard's) motto of 'Vayam Rakshamah' (we protect), but also demonstrate the common philosophy of People First, Life First in both China and India." IG Sharma said that over the past decade, the Indian Coast Guard has saved 27 Chinese citizens.

China's Pangong Tso bridge in Tibet seen as meant to alter India-border status quo

02 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

After two back-to-back meetings between their foreign ministers during the month, India and China held their latest round of foreign-office led border talks on Jul 31. Both sides have spoken of the talks in

positive terms but different hues while reporting no progress. Meanwhile China has completed the construction and began using a strategic 400-metre bridge, connecting the northern and southern banks of the Pangong Tso (Lake) inside the India-claimed lines in eastern Ladakh.

Indian military veterans have expressed apprehension that China's latest move confirmed their fears that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was forcing India to accept the new status quo in the region, the report said.

It also cited security experts as saying the lake-bridge would give China "a strategic edge" in the region as it would allow PLA troops to speedily move between the north and south banks of the lake.

"It is a matter of extreme concern for India. The bridge enhances connectivity between China's forward and depth forces, underscoring Beijing's commitment to solidifying its territorial claims against India by modifying the landscape to its advantage," the report quoted a former major general as saying.

"It has also confirmed our fears that the PLA seems to be forcing India to accept the new status quo in the region," the unnamed former major general has said.

The report also quoted a retired colonel as saying the Chinese army "has fortified its positions at multiple transgression points in eastern Ladakh".

"The PLA is forcing India to agree to its reinterpretation of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). India's capitulation has made restoration of the pre-Apr 2020 status quo difficult," he has said.

"Previously, the PLA had to navigate the lake's entire eastern section to reach conflict zones, a lengthy detour that hampered their response time in an active conflict zone," the *financialexpress.com* Jul 30 quoted Damien Symon, a satellite imagery expert and researcher with The Intel Lab, as saying.

The bridge is expected to reduce the travel distance between the lake's banks by approximately 50-100 kilometres, significantly cutting travel time, the report said, citing *ndtv.com*.

The Jul 31 discussions held in New Delhi under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination were the first to take place in India after the 2020 Galwan clashes, said *thewire.in* Jul 31. It added that there was no sign of a breakthrough again as India and China met for the working mechanism's 30th round of talks.

While their public statements have not indicated any change in their positions, the frequency of their meetings has raised speculation of a thaw, the report said.

In its press release, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the "discussion at the meeting was in-depth, constructive and forward-looking".

It also stated that both agreed to "maintain the momentum through the established diplomatic and

military channels," that they also "reviewed the current situation along the [LAC] with a view to finding an early resolution of the outstanding issues."

It added that the two sides "agreed on the need to jointly uphold peace and tranquillity on the ground in the border areas in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements, protocols and understandings reached between the two governments."

On its part, the Chinese foreign ministry stated that based on the "important consensus" reached by the recent meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers, the two sides agreed to "focus on specific issues related to the China-India border, take care of each other's reasonable concerns, and reach a solution acceptable to both sides as soon as possible". The press note further stated that the two sides agreed to "strengthen the construction of negotiation mechanisms, accelerate the negotiation process, and achieve a turning point in the border situation as soon as possible".

India's aim in holding these talks is to achieve "complete disengagement" along the LAC. However, China has characterized the meeting's agenda as promoting the "transition of the border situation into a normalized phase of control", report noted.

Indian and Chinese troops have disengaged from some places along the LAC after the 2020 clashes after a series of talks at different levels, but the Chinese have refused to undertake any disengagement at two places, namely Demchok and Depsang plains, where soldiers on both sides continue to be in a faceoff situation.

India's position remains that overall bilateral ties cannot return to normalcy until the border issue is resolved. On the other hand, China insists that the border issue should not overshadow their broader relationship.

India's fear might be that accepting China's position would only lead to further Salami slicing of its territory by continued creeping intrusions by Chinese troops.

COMMENTARIES

Ethnic unity in China or cultural genocide in Tibet?

31 August 2024, [Actual News Magazine](#)

On August 14, amid almost general indifference, 100 Tibetan academics sent a petition to the United Nations High Commissioner to denounce the policies of cultural assimilation still taking place in Tibet, an autonomous territory controlled by China.

According to them, the Chinese government continues its policies of suppression of the Tibetan language and culture, including through the closure of schools or through indoctrination and propaganda in school curricula.

The private Tibetan-oriented school Gangiong Sherig Norbu Lobling was reportedly closed last July. According to the Tibet Action Institute, this is a continuation of Chinese President Xi Jinping's policy of "ethnic unity", which promotes the culture of the Han majority in the country's minority territories.

China claims that Tibet has been an inseparable part of its territory for centuries, while control of the Himalayan region (of which Tibet is a part) was only completed after the Communist Party came to power in 1949.

Cultural genocide can occur without violence or loss of life. It is the intentional destruction of a people's culture through the elimination of cultural practices, cultural objects or artifacts, language (written and oral), and ancestral traditions. The concept was developed by Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin in his 1944 book, which also defined the term "genocide."

According to a June report by the NGO Human Rights Watch, China continues to coercively relocate Tibetans from rural areas to cities in the name of "poverty reduction."

Assimilation

This forced urbanization would be a way to assimilate the population more quickly and to eliminate cultural practices that are more alive in the countryside than in the city. The aim would also be to eliminate the nomadic lifestyle of about 3 million Tibetans who live from yak herding and agriculture.

According to the New York-based human rights group, such forced displacements cause permanent damage to Tibetan culture and way of life, particularly when farmers and herders are no longer able to ply their trades and are forced to work as wage laborers in non-agricultural industries.

Of course, Chinese authorities call the relocations "voluntary," but Human Rights Watch has reviewed more than 1,000 reports from state media and government publications that contradict these claims. Visits by government officials or threats to cut off all services to homes are reportedly frequently used to force Tibetans to leave their villages.

According to official figures, by the end of 2025, more than 930,000 Tibetans will have been displaced,

sometimes in entire villages. Although these policies date back to the early 2000s, 76% of these interventions are said to have been carried out after 2016. While the repression in Tibet is no longer in the headlines, there is apparently an acceleration of assimilation policies.

India is not doing much better. According to an independent report, in June it planned to rename 30 Tibetan sites with Indian names. This is likely retaliation by New Delhi, as in March China unilaterally assigned Chinese toponyms to 30 already named places in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in order to strengthen its territorial claims over the region.

India has historically accepted China's hold over Tibet, in the face of Beijing's de facto control over the region. However, India's recent actions suggest a change in policy by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Answers

Anti-government protests in the region in 2008 led to a massive military crackdown by China, and foreigners wishing to visit Tibet now need a special visa. Journalists have great difficulty getting there, except for those from Chinese state media.

The repression suffered by the Tibetan people is nevertheless recognized by the international community. At least three motions on this subject were adopted at the UN, in 1959, 1961 and 1965, but they did not bring about any major change in Chinese policy.

A recent U.S. State Department report notes that Chinese authorities have intimidated, surveilled, and harassed Americans in Tibet and have barred many diplomats and journalists from entering. Americans of Tibetan descent also reportedly face additional scrutiny when applying for Chinese visas.

The Canadian House of Commons unanimously adopted a motion last June affirming its willingness to defend Tibet's right to self-determination and its right to exist as a distinct nation.

The motion, brought forward by Bloc Québécois MP Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, recognizes that the Chinese government is pursuing a generalized policy of cultural assimilation of Tibetans and specifies that China should not interfere in the selection of the next Dalai Lama.

The historic Tibet region, about 2,500,000 km² was an autonomous country from 1912 to 1951, before officially becoming a Chinese province after its annexation by the communist government, then an "autonomous region" of China in 1965.

Its official name is Xizang Autonomous Region. The official religion is Tibetan Buddhism, and the spiritual leader is the Dalai Lama. According to 2022 figures, at least 160 monks, religious figures, and ordinary Tibetans have self-immolated in protest against Chinese policies.

This text is part of a series on oppressed peoples around the world.

Analysis: Elders stay faithful to Deng over 'reformer Xi Jinping'

29 August 2024

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/China-up-close/Analysis-Elders-stay-faithful-to-Deng-over-reformer-Xi-Jinping>

Katsuji Nakazawa is a Tokyo-based senior staff and editorial writer at Nikkei. He spent seven years in China as a correspondent and later as China bureau chief. He was the 2014 recipient of the Vaughn-Ueda International Journalist prize.

What can be called a "revolt against reformer Xi Jinping" took place behind closed doors this summer, dealing a setback to the supreme leader and his allies. The highly unusual political drama played out during the third plenary session of the Chinese Communist Party's current 20th Central Committee. The plenum was held in Beijing from July 15-18.

Around that time, international attention was focusing on what medium- and long-term economic policies party chief Xi and his team would unveil during the key meeting.

The political focus in China, however, was zeroing in on something else entirely, how "reform and opening-up" -- the policy that led to China building the world's second-largest economy -- came to be adopted. More specifically, the focus was on what role Xi and his late father, Xi Zhongxun, who once served as vice premier, played in forming the policy widely credited to Deng Xiaoping.

The state-run Xinhua News Agency on July 15 published a lengthy commentary, "Xi Jinping the reformer," to coincide with the plenum's opening. The piece praised Xi as an outstanding reformer and appeared designed to reinforce Xi's authority at the big meeting.

But behind the scenes the essay came under an immediate barrage of attacks from political forces not close to Xi. Some within the party called the article strange and factually incorrect, while others said it was not in line with official party history and asked who greenlighted its publication.

Observers said the backlash hit like an unexpected tsunami. It fed off particularly vociferous criticism from retired party elders and "second-generation reds," or children of revolutionary-era party leaders, and proved impossible to contain. Many others within the party used the reverberations as an opportunity to vent their pent-up frustrations with China's dire economic situation.

The controversial article focused on the history of "reform" under Xi, thereby daring to trivialize the

history and results of Deng's "reform and opening-up." The piece also partially used the terms "reform" and "reform and opening-up" interchangeably, deliberately sowing confusion among readers.

Descriptions of the 1970s, including an assertion that reform was a "family tradition" for Xi, came in for particularly intense criticism.

In 1978, when Deng put his policy into motion, Xi's father was sent to southern China. According to the commentary, Xi Zhongxun led politics in Guangdong province and established special economic zones in Shenzhen and other places.

The article also said that in 1978, the elder Xi commissioned the younger Xi, who was studying at Tsinghua University in Beijing, to go to Anhui province in eastern China to conduct a field study on the household responsibility system. The younger Xi took copious notes while in Anhui and has kept the notebook for over 40 years, the article said.

The household responsibility system, also known as the contract

responsibility system, was introduced as an agricultural reform measure to incentivize farmers. It allows farming households that meet their production quotas to freely sell any surpluses.

The Xinhua commentary gave the impression that father and son Xi, not Deng, led China's reform drive by virtue of the father's work in the south and the son's notetaking in Anhui.

As for Xi's role in Anhui, it was actually Wan Li who at the time promoted the household responsibility system in that province. Wan, a staunch supporter of Deng's reform and opening-up policy, later served as vice premier and then as chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's parliament.

Furthermore, Xi's current economic policy seems to significantly differ from Deng's reform and opening-up.

Party elders critical of the Xinhua commentary might have felt that Xi was taking credit for Deng's great achievement.

The article's description of Xi as an outstanding "reformer" also became the specific target of behind-the-scenes criticism. While Deng has been dubbed "the general architect of reform and opening-up," the commentary emphasized that Xi, not Deng, is now the highest authority on reform in the party's history.

When the backlash reared, Xi should have realized the seriousness of the situation. He had no choice but to effectively order relevant departments to completely withdraw the article. It did not go on to run in a print edition of the People's Daily, a party mouthpiece, and was completely scrubbed from China's internet before the last day of the third plenum.

This is how "reformer Xi Jinping" was toppled.

It is not hard to imagine the atmosphere at the third plenum after the downfall of "reformer Xi Jinping." The harsh political climate that the commentary triggered could have made it difficult for any meaningful decisions or personnel changes to be made.

Xinhua is under the direct control of the State Council, which belongs to China's central government, and is under the supervision of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party, a propaganda unit. In addition, any important articles like the commentary cannot be published without approval from the General Office of the Communist Party, which manages clerical work in Beijing's Zhongnanhai area, where Xi and other leaders have their offices. At any rate, the commentary's sudden erasure was highly unusual. Blame the debacle on an error in judgment by Xi's close aides.

Those aides miscalculated, partly because they failed to fully consider what this year means in terms of party history: It is the 120th anniversary of Deng's birth.

Deng's birthday, Aug. 22, this year came at a politically sensitive time, shortly after the party's Beidaihe meeting, which is held annually at the seaside resort of the same name in Hebei province, where party leaders and retired elders informally discuss important issues.

It was a decade ago when Xi, shortly after that year's tense Beidaihe meeting, presided over an event to commemorate the 110th anniversary of Deng's birth. Back in 2014, the elders focused their Beidaihe discussions on Xi's fierce anti-corruption campaign.

Their discontent was strong, even that of former President Jiang Zemin, as the elders' former subordinates and the military officers who were close to them were being targeted by Xi's anticorruption team.

But Xi simply shrugged off their discontent as he went about steadily consolidating his power under the banner of fighting corruption. The elders eventually had no choice but to pledge solidarity with Xi.

So what was the mood like at this year's Beidaihe meeting? The discussions remain shrouded in secrecy, even as August is nearing its end. It isn't even known whether Xi traveled to the seaside resort to join the conclave. The lid on information is being held down tighter than ever.

In place of accurate information from the meeting -- and touched off by Xi's disappearance from public view -- various rumors concerning Xi swirled from the end of July to the middle of August.

Amid the confusion one certainty has emerged, and it stems from another disappearance, that of the Xinhua commentary. Chinese politics has been altered to some extent, and the situation is developing. What is less certain is whether this turn of events will give rise

to another behind-the-scenes battle in the months to come.

CPEC 2.0: Transforming Pakistan-China Relations – OpEd

29 August 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Manahil Jaffer

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has been a cornerstone of the Pakistan-China relationship since its inception in 2013. With the introduction of CPEC 2.0, this partnership has entered a new phase, bringing both opportunities and challenges that could reshape Pakistan's economic landscape and its strategic ties with China.

CPEC 1.0: A Brief Overview

CPEC 1.0 focused on infrastructure development, energy projects, and establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The \$62 billion initiative addressed Pakistan's energy deficit, modernized its transportation network, and stimulated industrial growth. By 2021, several projects were completed, including the *Gwadar Port*, various power plants, and road networks that enhanced connectivity between China and Pakistan.

These projects have brought tangible benefits, such as alleviating Pakistan's energy crisis and improving transportation infrastructure. However, they also generated concerns about debt sustainability, environmental impact, and the uneven distribution of benefits across different regions of Pakistan. Despite these challenges, CPEC has remained a symbol of the strong bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China.

The Evolution to CPEC 2.0

CPEC 2.0 represents a *strategic shift* from infrastructure development to industrialization, agriculture, socio-economic development, and digital connectivity. The focus is now on enhancing Pakistan's industrial capacity, improving its agricultural output, and integrating its economy more deeply with China's. This phase is particularly important for Pakistan, as it seeks to address its economic challenges, including a balance of payments crisis, low industrial productivity, and a stagnant agricultural sector. By leveraging Chinese expertise and investment, Pakistan hopes to transform its economy, increase exports, and reduce its dependence on external borrowing.

One of the key components of CPEC 2.0 is the development of *Special Economic Zones (SEZs)* aimed at attracting foreign investment and promoting industrialization. The *Rashakai SEZ* in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, *Allama Iqbal SEZ* in Punjab, and *Dhabeji SEZ* in Sindh are among the priority projects. These zones are expected to create thousands of jobs,

enhance technology transfer, and boost Pakistan's manufacturing sector.

Another significant aspect of CPEC 2.0 is *agricultural cooperation*. Pakistan's agriculture sector, which employs nearly 40% of the workforce, has struggled with low productivity and outdated practices. Under CPEC 2.0, China has committed to sharing its expertise in modern farming techniques, water management, and agricultural technology. This collaboration could significantly improve Pakistan's food security and export potential.

Economic Implications for Pakistan

CPEC 2.0 offers Pakistan a pathway to *economic revitalization*, but it also comes with challenges that need to be carefully managed. The success of this phase will largely depend on Pakistan's ability to implement reforms, enhance governance, and ensure that the benefits of CPEC are equitably distributed.

One of the main concerns is the growing debt burden associated with CPEC projects. While Chinese loans have been instrumental in financing key infrastructure projects, they have also added to Pakistan's external debt, raising concerns about debt sustainability. To address this issue, Pakistan will need to ensure that CPEC investments generate sufficient economic returns to service the debt.

Another challenge is the need for improved governance and transparency in the implementation of CPEC projects. Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political instability have previously hindered the progress of several initiatives. To fully realize the potential of CPEC 2.0, Pakistan must strengthen its institutions, streamline project approval processes, and enhance coordination between federal and provincial governments.

Moreover, the environmental impact of CPEC projects remains a critical concern. The expansion of infrastructure, industrial zones, and agricultural activities under CPEC 2.0 could exacerbate environmental degradation if not properly managed. Pakistan needs to adopt sustainable practices and implement strict environmental regulations to mitigate these risks.

Strategic Implications for the Pakistan-China Relationship

The evolution of CPEC into its second phase underscores the deepening strategic partnership between Pakistan and China. This relationship, often described as "*all-weather*," has become increasingly important for both countries in the context of regional and global dynamics.

For Pakistan, China remains a crucial ally in its quest for economic development and security. The CPEC initiative has solidified China's role as Pakistan's largest trading partner and investor. Furthermore, China's support in international forums, particularly on issues

like Kashmir, has further strengthened the bilateral relationship.

For China, Pakistan is a key partner in its broader Belt and Road Initiative. CPEC not only provides China with access to the Arabian Sea through the Gwadar Port but also serves as a counterbalance to India's influence in South Asia. The strategic location of Pakistan makes it a vital component of China's efforts to secure its energy supply routes and expand its geopolitical influence.

However, the deepening Pakistan-China relationship has also raised concerns among other regional and global powers, particularly India and the United States. India perceives CPEC as a threat to its sovereignty, especially since the corridor passes through the disputed territory of Gilgit-Baltistan. The United States, under its Indo-Pacific strategy, has also expressed reservations about CPEC, viewing it as part of China's broader ambitions to expand its influence in South Asia and beyond.

The Way Forward

As Pakistan and China move forward with CPEC 2.0, the focus should be on maximizing the economic benefits while addressing the associated challenges. This will require a collaborative approach, with both countries working together to ensure the successful implementation of projects, adherence to environmental standards, and equitable distribution of benefits.

For Pakistan, CPEC 2.0 represents an opportunity to achieve long-term economic growth and stability. However, this will only be possible if the government remains committed to reforms, improves governance, and ensures that the interests of all stakeholders are taken into account. For China, the success of CPEC 2.0 will reinforce its strategic partnership with Pakistan and demonstrate the viability of its Belt and Road Initiative in other regions. By continuing to invest in Pakistan's development, China can further solidify its position as a key player in the global economy and a major influence in South Asia.

CPEC 2.0 marks a significant evolution in the Pakistan-China relationship, with the potential to reshape the economic and strategic landscape of the region. Both countries stand to benefit from this partnership, but success will depend on careful planning, effective implementation, and a shared commitment to sustainable development.

Opinion: Dr. Doom's origin in Tibet- Disney should not whitewash and kowtow to Communist China

29 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Tenzin Younten and Tenzing Dhamdul



Robert Downey Jr. appears at the Marvel Studios panel at San Diego Comic-Con as Dr. Doom on July 28, 2024 (Jesse Grant/Getty Images)

The Marvel Cinematic Universe and its parent company Disney have the stage set and have the opportunity to bring a big change in the film industry and that is by tackling the issue of 'whitewashing' in its upcoming Dr. Doom movies and cast Tibetans to play the roles of Monks of Dooms and even Mahatma Doom if he is to be part of the upcoming Marvel projects.

On 28th July at this year's San Diego Comic-Con, Marvel Studios announced that the Russo brothers will return to direct the 2 upcoming Avengers movies: Avengers: Doomsday and Avengers: Secret Wars. But what took everyone back was when it was announced on stage that Robert Downey Jr. (who revealed himself) would return to play as Dr. Victor Van Doom popularly known as Dr. Doom. This character is the next biggest villain in Marvel's upcoming phase but one thing that caught many fans and Tibetans in particular is how the origin of this very popular Marvel character like Dr. Strange is tied to Tibet, where the art of mysticism is closely associated with popularly.

The Marvel Universe is a goliath in the Hollywood and movie industry largely due to the fandom and the content they have been bringing out to the public. However, one has repeatedly seen how business and economics take the front stage even if it means straying away from the original story.

When the Marvel movie Dr. Strange was released, it was called out for its practice of Whitewashing, in particular the character of the Ancient One. Whitewashing in films is described as the casting of white Caucasian actors and actresses in roles originally meant to be characters of color, whereby it does not only dismiss the original characters but also their story and place of origin.

Marvel Comics has a long-standing practice of attaching the lore of its characters to Tibet especially

when it comes to two prominent Doctor-themed characters Dr. Strange and Dr. Doom. In the Marvel comics, the mentors or Lama (as we call it in Tibetan) of both these Marvel characters are Tibetans and of Tibet origin with popular Marvel Fandom making it clear for us all as well. Dr. Strange's mentor, the Ancient One, and Dr. Doom's attendant, the Monks of Dooms were from Tibet and Tibetan in origin. The original writers described them clearly as from Tibet and Tibetans rather than Chinese.

Based on the original comic from which the storyline and the movie of Dr. Doom will blossom, it is visibly clear that the Monks of Dooms (a group of Tibetans monks residing in the Himalayans Mountains in Tibet) forged Dr. Doom's iconic Armour in the Great Furnace of the Tibetan monastery and was also here he learned his mystic arts and skills from. This is a critical component of Dr. Doom's origin story and is sure to receive much screen time similar to how the creation of Stormbreaker (Thor's weapon to substitute Mjolnir) in the movie Avengers: The Infinity War was portrayed. But the question lies in whether Marvel will be bold enough to confront its inner demons here and stay true to its source materials.

In the past, against all the backlashes of Marvel Universe's whitewashing practices, they still decided to Whitewash the Ancient One in Dr. Strange's movies with Caucasian Actress Tilda Swinton. The practices of whitewashing Tibetans and Asians off the big screen have far greater repercussions than simply denial of representation. The decision to remove and ignore Tibetans off the big screen is undoubtedly for profit over principle and further aid and abet CCP's efforts to erode Tibetans and its unique identity. It's an act of appeasement towards the CCP and being able to access their market, at what cost though? Rather than casting Tibetans and keeping the distinct originality of the films intact they till now have viewed it as a risky move that would affront or antagonize the People's Republic of China. Marvel Studio to date has decided to remove Tibetans and its ties to Tibet entirely.

Doctor Strange's writer when speaking on why Tibetans were cast off from the movies, admitted to placating PRC stating that the Ancient one "originates from Tibet, so if you acknowledge that Tibet is a place and that he's Tibetan, you risk alienating one billion people who think that that's bullsh*t and risk the Chinese government going, 'Hey, you know one of the biggest film-watching countries in the world? We're not going to show your movie because you decided to get political.'

It is unfortunate to witness such a big body kowtowing to Chinese demands and aiding them in spreading disinformation about Tibet. An agenda that was mentioned in the recently passed US law now titled 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' popularly known as the 'Resolve Tibet Act.' With

Marvel Studios being based in the USA, they would directly be violating this law if they were to act with Beijing's consciousness. The Chinese Communist party-led government has used Hollywood and other big business entities including the NBA to spread their narrative with notable incidents being Tibet Supporter Richard Gere permanently being banned from China, the 'Seven Years in Tibet' and 'Kundun' movies, the career of NBA player Enes Kanter and more recently removing chunks of the famous cult movie 'The Fight Club' and US Congressmen Jim McGovern being sanctioned for supporting Tibet. Tibet an illegally occupied country by China continues to face severe repression, it has been named the least country according to Freedom House Report, 2024.

We the Tibetans, ethnic minorities, Asian communities, and Marvel comic book fans around the world demand Marvel Universe and Disney not whitewash Tibetan characters off from the upcoming Dr. Doom movies and cast Tibetans for the role of monks of Doom and Mahatma Doom. Moreover, erasing the representation of Tibetans within the Marvel Universe just to appease China is not art and directly contradicts what Walt Disney stood for.

Why China must recall history before replacing Tibet with 'Xizang'

29 August 2024, [First Post](#), Claude Arpi

Chinese officials should read their own reports and history on how Tibet, which was clearly not theirs, was first 'liberated' and then brutally 'pacified'

One can argue that the Chinese are history lovers; they have a recorded history for several millennia (which is not the case of India, where history was usually transmitted in the *guru-shishya parampara* form); however, since the advent of the Communist Dynasty in 1949, the Mandarins in Beijing seem to have lost this sense of history. There is a simple reason for this: the Communist ideology has to prevail over history.

The Middle Kingdom's relation with Tibet is an example of the Chinese amnesia about the recent past.

From immemorial times (to use Chinese terminology), the Tibetans have turned to India for their religion, culture, trade, and civilisation in general; Tibetan Buddhism is still today synonymous with the Nalanda tradition. Similarly, Tibetan script has evolved from the Brahmi script, which can't be included in the Chinese knowledge system.

One could multiply such examples; even politically, Tibet was an independent nation till it was invaded by Mao's Army in 1950-51.

The fact that Tibet, India, and China sat on an equal footing for six months at the conference table in Simla in 1913-14 is the best proof that the Nationalist

regime could not deny Lhasa the right to negotiate a treaty (even if, at the end, it was not ratified by China for unrelated reasons).

Official Erroneous Interpretation

On the first day of her arrival in the Chinese embassy in Delhi, a Chinese official tweeted a threatening message, attacking the Indian media, which did not follow, according to her, the line of the Communist Party: "Recently, we noticed some comments on Xizang-related affairs in some Indian media. Xizang has been part of China since ancient times. Xizang-related affairs are purely China's internal affairs that brook no foreign interference," she wrote.

What is this 'Xizang'?

It is the name given by Beijing to Tibet. As any colonial power has done in the past, the names of places (and persons) are changed. For Beijing, the name 'Tibet' needed to be erased and replaced by a Chinese one.

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Then the official tried to make us believe that Communist China has great expertise about the return on earth of the spirit of advanced masters: "Reincarnation of Living Buddhas comes with a set range of rituals and conventions, which has been in existence for several hundred years. The Chinese government pursues policies of freedom of religious belief, including respecting and protecting the reincarnation of Living Buddhas, an institution of succession in Tibetan Buddhism. For the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Erdeni, and other grand Living Buddhas, a complete set of methods and procedures have been established over the centuries, and the religious rituals and historical conventions as well as the Chinese laws need to be complied with in this process."

'Living Buddhas' is again a Communist invention; reincarnated lamas are generally known as tulkus or Rinpoches (an honorific title meaning 'precious') or yantsi, a term literally meaning 'being born again' or 'repeat of existence'; a master takes birth again in the cycle of existence, purportedly to continue his spiritual work started in his previous life.

The Chinese official concluded that "reincarnation of Living Buddhas including the Dalai Lama, must comply with Chinese laws and regulations and follow religious rituals and historical conventions. It is hoped that the media respect China's core interests and do not provide any platforms for anti-China separatist activities."

In Tibet, the system of reincarnation was not rigidly codified; it was left to each monastery, college, or school of Tibetan Buddhism to discover their own masters, then enthrone and groom them.

The Panchen Lama is also mentioned in a renamed form, 'Panchen Erdeni' by the official. The Panchen Lama is considered the second most important

spiritual leader in the Yellow (Geluk) School of Tibetan Buddhism.

The case of the Panchen Lama is interesting as it shows how far Beijing is ready to go to control the 'reincarnation' system.

Following the death of the 10th Panchen Lama in 1989, in 1995, the 14th Dalai Lama recognised a young boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, as the true incarnation of the 10th incarnation. Three days later, Beijing abducted Gedhun and his family. A few months later, after setting up its own search committee, Beijing selected Gyaltzen Norbu as the 'real' Panchen Lama. For the purpose, they used a lottery system known as the Golden Urn, which was extremely rarely used in Tibet...because it is easier to manipulate.

Since 1995, the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family are unknown. Is he still alive? Who knows?

The message of the official of the embassy, however, indicates that China is preparing to select its own 15th Dalai Lama, even against the will of the present one. For this, the Communist leadership will send Gyaltzen Norbu to Lhamo Latso, the holy Lake of Vision; Norbu will have a vision of a boy born in Tibet, and *Xinhua* will announce the good news.

How the Chinese Communist 15th Dalai Lama will be accepted by the Tibetans and the world is another story.

Just look at the 14th Dalai Lama; he was recently in New York, where 17,000 people gathered in a stadium to offer long-life prayers. Following a knee replacement surgery in June, it was his first major public appearance.

People gathered in the sports arena to fervently pray for the long life of the 89-year-old Buddhist leader, who told them, "I have done my best to benefit others and the Tibetan people."

Two days later, he had a stopover in Switzerland. In Zurich, he went on the stage at the Hallenstadion, where he sat on a throne before large Thangka paintings. The stadium was booked to full its capacity of 15,000.

Thinley Chökyi, Representative of the Office of Tibet, Geneva, said in her opening remarks: "May you yet be able to return to Tibet, take your seat on the Lion Throne in the Potala Palace, and offer teachings from there once more." Watching the videos, the fervour of the Tibetans offering long-life prayers was truly moving.

Around the same time, Gyaltzen Norbu, the Chinese selected Panchen Lama, was travelling in Nagchu City (prefecture) 'in China's Xizang Autonomous Region' (note, 'China's Xizang' in case one forgets where Tibet is).

Before returning to Lhasa, Norbu visited several Tibetan Buddhist monasteries: "he participated in

religious services and performed head-touching rituals for monks and believers.”

Xinhua asserted that “he also attended a series of Buddhist and social activities in various localities, including a horse racing festival and a symposium of representatives of the religious circle.”

The point is that everywhere the crowds were minimal, like it has been when he visited some areas of Central Tibet and border areas during the past years, never more than 50 people.

It so happens that during this time, I was working on the role of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force in Tibet; what is striking is that ever since the invasion (called ‘liberation’ by China) of the Roof of the World, the Tibetans have never felt part of the Middle Kingdom, quite on the contrary.

When they started rebelling against the Communist rule, which wanted to impose ‘reforms’ on them (a few years later the Red Guards introduced similar reforms in the Mainland), they had to be ‘pacified’; at that time, many Tibetans were trying to take refuge in the northern districts.

In August 1958, the Central Military Commission ordered the PLA to systematically attack the fleeing Tibetans from the air. By then, the pilots had a very simple way of identifying ‘rebel bandits’: after spotting hundreds of white sheep, “we neared the sheep herds; we’d discover yaks alongside them, as well as scattered tents, and then we could basically conclude that they were rebel bandits,” said a Chinese record quoted by Jianglin Li, a Chinese author based in the United States. Jianglin quoted an Air Force 25th Division pilot who took part in the bombing: “One time, a buildup of thousands of rebel bandits [read the Tibetans] was surrounded by our troops on the top of Maqin [Amnye Machen] Mountain. At first the army launched a powerful attack on the mountain from four directions, but because the enemy occupied a commanding position and the mountain slopes were precipitous, the attack was not successful, and our troops suffered substantial casualties. The Rebellion Pacification Command Post ordered an immediate deployment of bomber planes to bomb the rebel bandits on Maqin Mountain.”

The Tibetan rebel ‘bandits’ tried to fire on the aircraft with guns, but they experienced “the iron fist of the People’s Air Force. ... In one stroke, we annihilated this band of stubbornly resisting rebel bandits.” The PLA Air Force unit is said to have dropped nine 100-kilo bombs on Amnye Machen Mountain, and all of them hit their target.”

Jianglin and some other authors give a number of examples.

One can only suggest that all Chinese officials should read their own reports and history on how Tibet, which was clearly not theirs, was first ‘liberated’ and then brutally ‘pacified’.

Beijing’s Sovereign Claims for Tibet

28 August 2024, [AIER](#)

Even a cursory knowledge about modern China reveals the contradictory conditions of increased economic freedoms with continued repression of civil and political liberty. For example, forming political parties is viewed as an unacceptable challenge to the inviolable “dictatorship of the proletariat” overseen by China’s Communist Party.

However, Beijing uses heavy-handed methods to suppress non-political groups, including an “iron fist” approach to Falun Gong, a sect known for breathing exercises. It has also halted prayer meetings and closed Christian churches, while administering some “rough handling” of the Uighur minority.

As it is, China’s communist leaders have proven themselves to be adept masters of diplomatic maneuvering. They deflect external criticisms against internal repression of dissent or religious freedom by asserting sovereign rights to conduct domestic affairs and that foreigners have no right to comment or pass judgments.

Meanwhile, Beijing raises warning flags or sends diplomatic missiles to countries even if there are only rumors of a visit or interactions with politicians from Taiwan. Despite its persistent and harsh interference with religious and cultural freedoms against Tibetan Buddhists, after Taiwan, complaints or comments about this will invite very prickly responses from the Communist leadership.

As the 14th Dalai Lama celebrates the ninth decade of his mortal life, he and other Tibetan Buddhists worry about the identification of his reincarnate and that of the Panchen Lama, the top figures in Tibetan Buddhism. For its part, China’s State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) declared that all reincarnations of living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism will be considered “illegal or invalid” unless they have government approval.

Dalai Lamas, acting as spiritual and administrative leaders of Tibet since 1391, are considered manifestations of Avalokiteshvara, the patron saint of Tibet. When Lhamo Dhondup was two years old, (born as Tenzin Gyatso in 1935), he was recognized as the reincarnation of the preceding Lama.

A Living Buddha, known as tülku, is a reincarnated Tibetan Buddhist lama that consciously decides to be reborn many times to continue his religious pursuits. Among the most powerful tülku lineages are the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas.

Regardless of Beijing’s preferences, the Dalai Lama is the undisputed spiritual leader of millions of Tibetans, including those forced into exile or living under the shadow of the People’s Liberation Army. In considering

whether to accede to China's demands, it might be useful to consider the basis of its claims over Tibet.

Considering history and communist ideology, one of the persistent demands and great triumphs of the twentieth century was ending imperial dominance of unwilling populations. It has become fatuous and disingenuous to make territorial claims and insist upon adherence to treaties imposed by defunct imperialists. It is remarkable for an atheistic regime with ideological disdain of imperialism to pass judgment on religious affairs in a territory that it claims to rule based on an imperial past. As it is, Chinese law and political claims for "unity" are being allowed to trump Tibetan autonomy in pursuing a unique religious culture and heritage.

China's insistence on sovereignty over Tibet or other areas of previous control is dubious on numerous grounds since this logic renders moot all its territorial disputes with India that was unified long before China in 321 BCE. While India's centrally-controlled State included Afghanistan and controlled the entire Indian Subcontinent, it refrains from asserting claims on this line of historical reasoning.

China's claims over Tibet are based upon imperial treaties or conquests, including the marriage of Tang Princess Wencheng to Tibetan king Songtsen Gambo in the seventh century. Chinese scholars ignore the fact that the Chinese emperor initially rebuffed Songtsen Gambo who then used military prowess to force his will in the matter.

While no indigenous Chinese force was able to subdue Tibet in ancient times, the great Mongol chieftains did conquer Tibet. A claim to Tibet based upon treaties with Genghis Khan and his great-grandson Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan dynasty, involved agreements that included anyone of Han-Chinese origin.

In all events, political allegiance and religious blessings were exchanged for protection by the Mongols. Later, it was an administrative region under the Yuan Empire (1279-1368), and then the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) recognized the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.

Eventually, Lhasa broke away from the Yuan emperor and regained independence from the Mongols. While the Han-Chinese Ming dynasty ruled China from 1368 to 1644, it had few ties to and no authority over Tibet, and then Tibet was largely free from foreign influences until the eighteenth century.

Interaction with the Manchus and the Qing dynasty began in the seventeenth century with its tight embrace of Tibetan Buddhism. But imperial troops sent to Tibet were for the protection of the Dalai Lama from foreign invasion or internal unrest rather than making it part of the Manchu empire or incorporating it into the territory of China.

Several pacts during the twentieth century relating to Tibet and European imperial powers were overseen by

the Chinese imperial court. While Great Britain acknowledged Chinese suzerainty in Tibet with the 1904 Lhasa Treaty (Anglo-Tibetan Convention), it exacted financial indemnity and trade concessions in Tibet and Sikkim, but such a treaty has no moral authority.

In 1906, an Anglo-Chinese Convention signed in Beijing reversed the right of Britain and Tibet to conduct direct negotiations as conducted earlier in Lhasa. But again, it was a matter between two outside imperial powers that decided that the Chinese government was the administrative master of Tibet.

Later, the imperial powers of Britain and Russia signed the Anglo-Russian Convention (1907) agreeing that future negotiations over Tibet would be conducted through the Chinese government. During the times of imperial domination, Tibetans were not consulted about the resulting conventions as most such treaties ignored local interests.

Apologists for Beijing's dominance often suggest that the Chinese have helped preserve Tibetan ways. While it is claimed that China has more practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism, most are in a former Tibetan province (Amdo) that was incorporated into the Middle Kingdom and renamed Qinghai province in the 18th century.

It is also pointed out that the YongHe Gong Lamasery in Beijing has been the site of worship for nearly almost three centuries. Even so, Chinese forces have razed many of Tibet's monasteries and temples, either as retaliation against resistance to Beijing's rule or to dilute their influence.

In all events, Chinese physical presence or cultural influences in modern Tibet were negligible until after the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, it was only in the past 25 years or so that significant numbers of Han Chinese were resettled in Tibet.

Beijing has applied several new tactics to secure its control over Tibet. One of these was its "Go West" campaign that involved enlisting the support of businesses to develop the western region of China, including the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region and Qinghai province.

There was also an attempt to bring in the World Bank to extend a loan for \$160 million to resettle about 60,000 farmers in traditional Tibetan lands as part of the China Western Poverty Reduction Project. This resettlement of farmers would involve several ethnic groups, notably the majority Han Chinese. Groups supporting preservation of Tibetan culture have denounced the moves by China to be tantamount to "cultural genocide".

If according to legal custom, possession is nine-tenths of the law, China can use such logic to rationalize its continued occupation of Tibet. Whatever merit this dictum might reflect, judicial procedure and reasoning are normally applied to determine whether the basis

for possession was reasonable or just. A dispassionate view of the matter indicates that China's assertions for suzerainty over Tibet teeter on a weak and unconvincing foundation.

Considerable evidence indicates many Tibetans feel they would be better off without Beijing's choking embrace, as there have been periodic uprisings during the five decades under Communist Party rule. Their expressions of discord were met with harsh retaliation by Chinese soldiers and police, leading to the death of thousands of Tibetans.

After the Dalai Lama fled Tibet for India in 1959 after a failed uprising against the Chinese invasion, authorities in Beijing have persistently demonized him. Even so, Tibetan Buddhists remain strongly loyal to him as their spiritual leader.

Of course, such meddling in religious affairs is not confined to Tibetan Buddhists. Uighur Muslims, Daoists, Falun Gong, "unregistered" Protestants and Vatican-loyal Catholics must bend their faith to fit the Procrustean demands of China's secular law.

In 1982, the CCP Central Committee issued, "Concerning Our Country's Basic Standpoint and Policy on Religious Questions During the Socialist Period" imposed "proper control" over religious affairs. As such, "patriotic" religious associations were to sacrifice the interests of their religious communities to promote the objectives of the Communist state.

Only a Beijing bureaucrat could see no humor in the requirements that reincarnation applications must be submitted in quadruplicate forms to secular authorities. Among the bodies tasked to "institutionalize management on reincarnation of living Buddhas" are the religious affairs department of the provincial-level government, the provincial-level government, SARA, and the State Council with approval granted according to the fame and influence of the living Buddhas.

SARA officials insist that selection of reincarnates must preserve national unity and solidarity of all ethnic groups. And they insist that this precludes the influence in the selection process by any group or individual from outside the country.

As it is, administrating religious affairs based on interests of the Chinese state or "public interest" interferes with Tibet's internal religious affairs. While regulations guarantee "normal religious activities" of Tibetan Buddhism and protect the religious belief of Tibetan Buddhism, temples that recognized reincarnation of a living Buddha must be legally registered.

It is easy to see why Beijing considers it necessary to keep them under tight control. Reincarnated lamas have considerable influence over life of native Tibetans since they lead religious communities and oversee training of monks.

And so it was that the eleventh incarnation of the Panchen Lama, identified as a six-year-old Tibetan Buddhist Gedhun Choekyi Nyima in 1995, was spirited away to Beijing. In turn, he was replaced with Gyaltzen Norbu by religious affairs officials in Beijing.

As it is, most Tibetans never felt the need to be "liberated" by an alien, outside power. For their part, they wish to preserve the dignity of indigenous people that wish to be free to choose their own destiny within their own culture.

But Chinese policy ignores the reality that Tibetans care more about their own distinctive culture, history, and identity than they care about expressing loyalty to Beijing. Perhaps this is what is most galling to China's leaders.

Beijing's insistence upon its beneficence in dealing with the local people is no more convincing than Japan's rationale for "liberating" the rest of Asia from European domination during the 1930s and 1940s under the guise of a "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere." Although the scale may be less, the degree of brutality used has not been much different than the Japanese during the Rape of Nanking.

In all events, the issue for Tibetans is more about preserving cultural and religious identity rather than geography or borders. While geographic territory is an important element of sovereignty for modern nation-states, it should not be used as an unconditional reason to overwhelm the aspiration of humans that engage in conflict with their governments.

For their part, political systems that aspire to peace should provide methods to resolve tensions relating to rights of self-determination so individual citizens or groups can undertake continuous expressions of their will. As the motivating force behind anti-colonial movements, collective self-determination allows diverse groups and individuals within political borders to act to shape their cultural and value systems.

But Chinese law and Beijing's political claims for geographic "unity" are seen to override Tibetan's desire for self-determination and to maintain their unique religious culture and heritage. While control of Tibet's religious heritage has been usurped by an atheistic regime with ideological contempt for imperialism, it insists on controlling religious affairs based on territorial claims based on imperial treaties. One cannot ignore the irony and hypocrisy behind Beijing's insistence for recovering Hong Kong was the rejection of the legality of titles based on force and unequal treaties. Since neither military invasion nor continuing occupation change the legal basis of Tibetan sovereignty, it must be viewed to be an independent state under illegal occupation.

Dalai Lama — thorn in China's side

28 August 2024, [Taipei Times](#)

The Chinese government's sensitivity toward the Dalai Lama is a complex issue rooted in historical, political and cultural factors. Understanding this sensitivity requires delving into the intricate relationship between China and Tibet, as well as the broader implications of the Dalai Lama's influence.

The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, fled Tibet in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule. Since then, he has lived in exile in India, continuing to advocate for the rights and autonomy of the Tibetan people.

Despite his public stance of seeking genuine autonomy rather than full independence for Tibet, the Chinese government views him as a significant political threat. His influence and the support he garners for Tibetan autonomy challenge China's sovereignty over Tibet, a region it considers an integral part of its territory.

One of the most unique aspects of the Dalai Lama's role is the process of reincarnation. The Chinese government has expressed a strong desire to control the selection of the next Dalai Lama, ensuring that the successor aligns with their political interests.

This move is part of a broader strategy to maintain control over Tibetan Buddhism and prevent any separatist movements. By controlling the reincarnation process, China aims to diminish the Dalai Lama's influence and integrate Tibetan Buddhism more closely with the state.

The Dalai Lama's global recognition as a symbol of peace and human rights often leads to diplomatic tensions between China and other countries. His meetings with foreign leaders and his international advocacy for Tibetan rights are perceived by China as attempts to undermine its sovereignty and territorial integrity. These interactions can strain China's diplomatic relations, leading to strong reactions from the Chinese government whenever the Dalai Lama is given a platform on the global stage.

The Dalai Lama holds immense cultural and religious significance for Tibetans and Buddhists worldwide. His teachings and leadership are deeply revered, making him a powerful figure beyond the political realm.

The Chinese government's efforts to control religious practices and institutions in Tibet are part of a broader campaign to assimilate Tibetan culture into the dominant Han Chinese culture. The Dalai Lama's influence represents a challenge to these efforts, as he embodies the preservation of Tibetan identity and religious freedom.

The Chinese government's sensitivity toward the Dalai Lama is driven by a combination of historical grievances, political calculations and cultural considerations. The Dalai Lama's enduring influence

and his advocacy for Tibetan rights continue to pose a challenge to China's authority over Tibet.

As long as the Dalai Lama remains a prominent figure on the global stage, the Chinese government's sensitivity toward his activities is likely to persist.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial to comprehending the broader geopolitical landscape and the ongoing struggle for Tibetan autonomy and cultural preservation.

Khedroob Thondup is a former member of the Tibetan parliament in exile.

Don't Ever Invade China: Xi Jinping Prioritizes Border, Coastal, and Air Defense

27 August 2024, [War On The Rocks](#), Shanshan Mei and Dennis J. Blasko

Major or minor

You don't want yourself

An incident

Don't ever invade China

Mark Knopfler, *Don't Crash the Ambulance* (2004)

Just as the U.S. National Defense Strategy lists homeland defense as the first priority of the Department of Defense, China's national defense policy states that the top mission of China's armed forces is to "safeguard national territorial sovereignty (领土主权) and maritime rights and interests (海洋权益)." Other "major security domains" have been added to China's National Defense Law — specifically space, the electromagnetic spectrum, and cyberspace in 2020 — but protecting the borders of the homeland has always been the prime directive.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping underscored mainland defense on July 30 with a speech to the Chinese Communist Party's politburo standing committee group study session on China's border, coastal, and air defense (边海空防). This meeting addressed the duties of a significant portion of the active-duty People's Liberation Army, the People's Armed Police, and the reserves and militia, which operate on the frontlines with neighboring militaries and civilian entities. Xi praised their efforts as central to China's national security and strategic interests since he took power in 2012. The study session became the banner front page article of the Aug. 1 edition of the Chinese-language *Liberation Army Daily* newspaper. Xi's speech gained symbolic heft by coming on the date celebrated for the 97th anniversary of the founding of People's Liberation Army.

What does Beijing's carefully crafted, high-profile political signaling tell us? First, the timing of this session suggests the Chinese leadership seeks to deter the United States, its allies, and partners (including

Taiwan) by highlighting its commitment to defending China's sovereignty and territorial claims.

Though no foreign military might actually be contemplating action against the Chinese mainland in the near term, Mark Knopfler's musical warning resonates with the paranoia of Chinese leaders. Fear of invasion goes back long before the founding of the People's Republic of China to the foreign occupation extending through the war with Japan in the 1930s. In the 1950s, China was threatened with nuclear weapons during the Korean War and the Taiwan Straits crisis. Beginning in 1964, a tremendously expensive program known as the Third Line (三线 or Third Front) moved strategic industries deep into the interior for protection from attack. A decade later, the military and militia practiced the "three attacks, three defenses" (三打三防, "attack tanks, aircraft, and airborne troops, defend against air, chemical, and nuclear attack"). In the 1990s, a "new" was added before the three attacks, three defenses and to keep up with technology, the targets were changed to "attacking enemy stealth, cruise missiles, and helicopters and defending against precision strikes, electronic warfare, and reconnaissance."

The threat to China's sovereignty was further highlighted by the mistaken bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999. Despite U.S. explanations and apologies, many Chinese leaders and people still consider the action a deliberate strike. We may never know for certain, but it is plausible that the Chinese Communist Party worries about another "October surprise" during the fall 2024 election season or early in a new U.S. administration. This is amplified by increasing friction in the South China Sea and across the Taiwan Strait. As of summer 2024, Chinese government continues to assess that a "certain major power [the U.S.] has resorted to power politics and bullying, and willful containment and suppression of emerging forces." And Xi's "explainer" for the recently concluded Third Plenum continued to warn against the dangers of "black swans" and "gray rhinos" — both are Chinese codewords for unforeseen risks and uncertainties, foreign and domestic.

Second, prioritizing China's border, coastal, and air defense reflects Xi's continuing belief in "People's War," China's "magic weapon" (法宝), in its strategic deterrence posture and "integrated national strategic systems and capabilities" (一体化国家战略体系和能力). He is determined to mobilize manpower, resources, and technical know-how embedded in Chinese society and civilian sectors to advance the Chinese Communist Party's security interests first at home and gradually beyond China's borders.

Third, Xi's statement raises the possibility of more "major" Chinese activities along the country's land

borders (e.g., India, Burma) and coastal regions (e.g., Taiwan Strait, South and East China seas), potentially employing new and innovative measures. The fact that the Central Military Commission Joint Staff Department provided the briefer for the study session may portend a significant change in the responsibilities of the Chinese military chain of command regarding border operations. Expect the unexpected.

Who's Leading the State Border and Coastal Defense Commission? Unclear.

China's border, coastal, and air defense system is roughly equivalent to the U.S. homeland defense functions. It coordinates the enforcement of the country's claimed territorial boundaries and integrates the party, government, military, law enforcement, and civilian assets (党政军警民) under a unified central authority. Its leaders will play a central role in any potential crisis along China's land or sea borders. Chinese homeland defense is led by the Party Central Committee and Central Military Commission, with responsibilities shared among the armed forces, civilian law enforcement, and local governments. But who exactly is in charge seems to be in flux.

The 2006 defense white paper reported that the State Border and Coastal Defense Commission (国家边海防委员会), created in 1994, was composed of "the relevant departments of the State Council and the [People's Liberation Army]." Many of its responsibilities include infrastructure development projects to improve the transportation and communications in border regions and to upgrade the standard of living for military personnel. However, the 2020 National Defense Law removed the State Council from that commission, implying changes to come.

Today, it is unclear who leads the State Border and Coastal Defense Commission. Previously, the minister of national defense held the position. The deputy director of the Party Central Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (changed into a commission in 2018) has served as one of the deputy directors of the commission. Current Defense Minister Admiral Dong Jun, however, has not been associated with the commission, nor has he become a member of the Central Military Commission or a state councilor. We don't know who oversees the commission's foreign affairs portfolio, either.

The director of the Central Military Commission National Defense Mobilization Department (军委国防动员部) has served as deputy director of the State Border and Coastal Defense Commission since the military reform started in 2016. Within that

department is a Border Defense Bureau (边防局), which coordinates with smaller border and coastal defense bureaus/divisions in the five theater armies' joint staff departments (战区陆军参谋部边海防处) and in the army staff department (陆军参谋部边海防局). So far, we have found no similar staff organizations in the navy or air force, although those services contribute units to conduct missions along China's borders.

Chinese Armed Forces Units Responsible for Border, Coastal, and Air Defense

The People's Liberation Army's Army, Navy, and Air Force all provide units and personnel to conduct daily border, coastal, and air defense operations (but not Rocket Force units except in their general nuclear and conventional deterrence role). These units are supported by elements of the People's Armed Police, particularly the China Coast Guard, and reserve and militia units. The newly formed Military Aerospace Force, Cyberspace Force, and Information Support Force provide capabilities with global reach to China's strategic deterrence posture in support of the four services and five theaters.

The army contributes the largest force dedicated to this mission. Though the army may participate in a few exercises outside of China with foreign militaries each year and provides about 2,000 personnel annually to United Nation Peacekeeping Operations, the vast majority of its troops have never left the country.

Army units, in general, are categorized into three groups. "Maneuver operation (机动作战部队)" units are organized mostly into 13 group armies and a handful of divisions that may move from one part of the country to another as required. "Garrison forces (警卫警备部队)" comprise the system of provincial military districts, military subdistricts, and people's armed forces departments that provide mobilization support, perform conscription functions, and command militia units.

The army's "border and coastal defense (边海防部队)" units were mostly reorganized after 2015 into brigades (except for the western theater, where the former structure of regiments was retained). The International Institute for Strategic Studies *Military Balance* counts about 50 border and coastal defense brigades and regiments, which we estimate could number well over 100,000 personnel. The forces are widely dispersed in small units across the country. They primarily are responsible for patrolling and monitoring the borders for military activity. These units have been equipped with some new weapons and equipment, but remain in a defensive posture.

In hot spots, the border defense units are reinforced by "maneuver operation" combat units. For instance,

the line of actual control with India has been reinforced as part of the 506 Special Mission for nearly a decade. This mission has been amplified in the years since the 2020 skirmishes in the Galwan Valley. Along the east coast, in August 2022, new army modular long-range multiple rocket launcher systems were employed in the large joint exercise in response to U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

The navy is in a period of transition, moving from "defense on the near seas (近海防御) to protection missions on the far seas (远海防卫)." The *Military Balance* counts more than 100 patrol craft and corvettes that are optimized for operations along China's coast, along with many of its conventionally powered submarines. Meanwhile, roughly the same number of carriers, cruisers, destroyers, frigates, and nuclear subs can perform operations within the first island chain as well as in distant waters. The navy's land-based coastal defense force (岸防部队) maintains multiple anti-ship cruise missile regiments and air defense, electronic countermeasures, and radar brigades, plus a significant land-based aviation force.

The air force, meantime, is "accelerating the transition of its tasks from territorial air defense (国土防空) to both offensive and defensive operations (攻防兼备)." It has "one of the largest forces of advanced long-range [surface-to-air] missile systems in the world" augmented by a large fleet of fighter aircraft to provide integrated air defense of the mainland and adjacent seas.

The "air defense" Xi referred to in his speech actually applies to civil or people's air defense (人民防空, or 人防) and not active-duty air defenses (防空). China Civil Air Defense offices are found in local civilian governments to manage construction of facilities, such as bomb shelters and command posts, and cooperate with other government agencies in emergency management.

The China Coast Guard has "over 150 regional and oceangoing patrol vessels," including over 20 former navy corvettes modified for coast guard operations. In May 2024, several coast guard vessels participated in the Joint Sword-2024A exercise after Taiwan's presidential election. In addition, hundreds of maritime militia vessels operate daily in the South China Sea alone and will complicate foreign operations in time of crisis or war.

Finally, People's Liberation Army reserve units, currently being restructured, also contribute to border and coastal defense operations, particularly in air defense and support tasks. Militia units also have been assigned air defense, rescue and recovery, and

other technical and logistics tasks including operating multiple types of unmanned vehicles.

Conclusion

Prioritizing border, coastal, and air defense aligns with the party's resolution to "strengthen traditional combat forces" in Xi's speech to the recent party Third Plenum (see section XIV). In Chinese military parlance, "traditional combat forces" refer to conscript-heavy units that make up the border and coastal defense forces and other ground combat units. Xi's emphasis on homeland defense will almost certainly help elevate the stature of such (mainly) army elements. To give them higher profile in society, border troops have a webpage dedicated to their stories for internal consumption on the Chinese-language China military website.

Inside China, local officials and bureaucrats may read something else into Xi's speech: that central funding is available for dual-use infrastructure construction in border regions for projects that contribute to defense readiness. This may encourage local leaders to volunteer to participate in this development as part of nationwide "military-civilian integration/fusion" (军民融合) activities. A likely example of this thinking is demonstrated in the construction of over 50 new villages and expansion of 100 others in remote regions along China's periphery since 2016.

Xi's speech noted that it is "important to foster neighborly relations and pragmatic cooperation with neighboring countries to create a favorable surrounding environment." Military relations with several adjacent southeast Asian countries seem relatively stable. However, given the friction caused by China's actions over disputed ocean territories, any call to foster neighborly relations with its offshore neighbors appears mostly empty. But maybe Xi's emphasis of "pragmatic cooperation" signals Beijing's willingness to adopt a more flexible approach in the coming years.

Finally, Xi stressed the need to "optimize the leadership management system." Xi may be considering placing border operations under the Central Military Commission's Joint Staff Department. Such a move would take it away from the National Defense Mobilization Department Border Defense Bureau and might ripple down to the theater commands' Joint Staff Departments. Perhaps the navy and air force may create border operations staff offices. Such changes could lead to greater integration of operations along China's periphery. In the long run, more unified control of front-line units could also reduce miscommunications and accidental encounters with foreign military and civilian entities operating in proximity to Chinese borders.

The dark side of China's Tibet strategy

27 August 2024, [Daily Mirror](#)

China's Tibet policy has been one of the most controversial aspects of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) seventy-five-year rule. While the CCP has claimed to develop Tibet as a global center, the reality is much grimmer than Beijing projects.

Tibet, rich in cultural heritage and historical significance, remains one of the most underdeveloped regions in China. Despite its vast natural resources and strategic importance, Tibet lags behind in nearly all development metrics, including literacy rates, healthcare access, and infrastructure. This raises the question: Why does the CCP, which has promoted rapid development elsewhere in China, allow such disparities in Tibet?

The answer is straightforward: Tibet is punished for its adherence to a faith the CCP views as revolutionary and anti-CCP. The Party aims not only to eradicate Tibetan Buddhism but also to transform the region into a Han-majority area, ultimately erasing Tibetan culture.

China's policies in Tibet have focused on limiting foreign contact and stifling economic development. The state has also sought to alter the local demography, disrupting the ethnic and cultural balance to assert its dominance. China's Tibetan policy is notoriously brutal, as evidenced by its violation of the Seventeen Point Agreement, the dismantling of Tibetan traditions, and the forced exile of the Dalai Lama.

Under-development as a Strategy of stifling the culture of Tibet

The literacy rate in Tibet is among the lowest in China, contrasting sharply with the rapid educational advancements in other regions. Tibetan schools are often underfunded, and the curriculum prioritizes Mandarin over the Tibetan language, reinforcing cultural erosion. This suppression of education is not an oversight but a calculated strategy by the CCP to control the Tibetan population by keeping them undereducated and less informed about their rights and the outside world.

Furthermore, the CCP's policies in Tibet suppress not only economic development but also the social and cultural identity of the Tibetan people. By limiting development, the CCP ensures that Tibet remains economically dependent on Beijing, curbing any potential for resistance. A well-developed, educated population with strong cultural ties threatens the CCP's narrative of a unified China under its rule. Thus, by maintaining low development parameters, the CCP can more easily impose its will on the Tibetan people, minimizing dissent and preserving its control over the region.

This systematic suppression of development is a deliberate attempt to weaken Tibet's ability to assert its identity and autonomy. The world must recognize this as part of the broader strategy of the CCP, which uses underdevelopment as a tool of oppression. It is crucial to bring international attention to this issue and advocate for the Tibetan people's rights to education, economic opportunities, and the preservation of their unique cultural heritage.

For decades, the Tibetan population has been subjected to severe and violent Chinese policies designed to instill fear and suppress resistance. Discriminatory practices prevent the use of local culture and language, with communities banned from mentioning the Dalai Lama's name or writings. The authorities' fear of the Dalai Lama's influence is so intense that they worry his teachings could spark a mass revolt among Tibetans. To prevent this, the state suppresses both communities and news outlets.

Over the past thirty years, hundreds of young Tibetans have self-immolated to draw attention to the oppressive nature of the Chinese regime. This has led the CCP to extend its policies beyond overt repression; the party now directs local governments to report all political activities, monitor personal communications, and profile the DNA of individuals deemed suspicious, all without accountability. These strategies raise serious questions about human rights violations undertaken by the CCP in Tibet.

The failing logic of the CCP's official response to Tibet

The justification for such cruel measures often comes in the form of claims about stability, economic development, and overall progress in a volatile region. The Party's repeated human rights violations have not only attracted global scrutiny but have also hindered Chinese plans in Tibet.

The CCP's sole objective in Tibet is to reshape Tibetan history. The Party describes these tactics as part of its "strategy to achieve long-term social stability." While the official narrative is cloaked in the motive of achieving lasting peace, it is clear that Tibet is part of a larger CCP plan to dominate disputed regions.

The well-being of millions of Tibetans rests on disrupting Chinese strategies. The world should be concerned about Chinese intentions in disputed regions, as the Party will not stop at Tibet if it successfully achieves its strategic objectives there.

Modi 3.0 Faces the Dragon

27 August 2024, [ORF](#)

Is greater economic engagement with China feasible at a time when New Delhi is moving closer to Beijing's red lines on Taiwan, Tibet and South China Sea?



Source Image: Getty

In the jumble of statistics contained in the government's Economic Survey 2023-24, there was a tantalising proposition of greater economic engagement with China. The document suggested that inviting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Chinese companies could help India improve its participation in international supply chains through exports. It held out two propositions: one in which we continue trading with China that results in an ever-widening trade deficit. The other is getting the optimal ratio between commerce with Beijing and Chinese investment, with the hope that India could address the trade deficit, leveraging the geopolitical trend of the West shifting away from its erstwhile partner. The Survey cited the case study of East Asian economies like South Korea and Vietnam that have received a double bonanza of the US redirecting manufacturing from China, and these nations also getting large FDI flows from Beijing. However, the government was quick to reject speculation that there was an intent to loosen Chinese capital inflows, with Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal stating that there was no review of India's stance on Chinese investments into the country. It has been four years that Indian and Chinese armies have been locked in a tense standoff, which has had a bearing on their larger relationship. The Indian government assesses that China's bid to repeatedly change the status quo along the border through the use of force has "violated the basis" of relations between the two nations. Foreign Minister S Jaishankar termed the India-China relationship as "abnormal". Thus, the government has pointed to the centrality of resolving the border impasse over economic and cultural engagement.

In the run-up to the 2024 Indian General Election, there seemed to be a sliver of a thaw. Amidst the electioneering, China named Xu Feihong as its new ambassador in Delhi after a long hiatus, which gave rise to speculation that there could be a resolution to the standoff. In an interview to *Newsweek*, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that there was a need to resolve the pro-longed situation along the borders.

China's foreign ministry's reaction to the prime minister's statement was that India would work with China to keep building trust. However, words have not been matched by deeds, and China has used military coercion to send a signal to India ahead of the election. Reports have surfaced that China has deployed its state-of-the-art Chengdu J-20 stealth aircraft in Tibet, and reportedly conducted military exercises near eastern Ladakh in March 2024, less than a month before the first phase of voting. When the election results showed that Modi would form a government in a coalition, strategists began to debate the contours of Modi 3.0's foreign policy, especially with respect to China. The concern was that domestic issues would consume Modi 3.0's bandwidth, leaving less space for the robust foreign policy dealings witnessed in his previous two terms. But proving naysayers wrong, S Jaishankar is back in the saddle at the foreign office, and India's resolve to combat China does not seem to have flagged. India is striding close to China's red lines on Taiwan, Tibet, and the South China Sea.

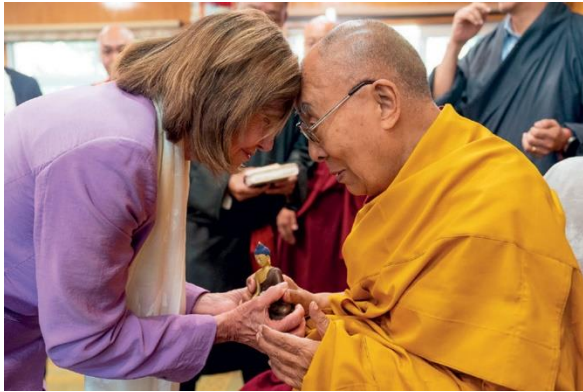
In fact, early on, Modi responded to Taiwan President Lai Ching Te's congratulatory message upon his election win and even pledged to deepen economic and technology cooperation. China, which sees Taiwan as a break-away province, saw red and urged India to adhere to its commitment towards One China. This development comes at a time when China is seeking to isolate Taiwan; soon after Lai won the election, Nauru switched diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic, cutting off ties with Taiwan. But undaunted, India-Taiwan dynamics are seeing an uptick. Under an agreement for labour mobility, the first set of Indian labourers will join the workforce in Taiwan by next year. The Tata Group and Taiwan's Power-chip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation's plan to set up a plant will commence production of chips by 2026. India bestowing the third-highest civilian award this year to Taiwan tech major Foxconn's Young Liu is testimony to the growing Indian-Taiwan technology cooperation.



Chinese President Xi Jinping visits a Tibetan Buddhist temple in Xining, Qinghai province, June 20, 2024

India is backing efforts by the US to put the world's focus back on Tibet by greenlighting the trip of a bipartisan US Congressional delegation to meet the Dalai Lama. The venue of the interaction was Dharamshala, which is considered to be the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile. Dispelling doubts that this was merely an outreach by US lawmakers, the Indian foreign ministry reaffirmed support for the Tibetan religious leader, stating that he was free to conduct his spiritual activities. The Biden administration's stance on Tibet follows the US passing new legislation that directed Beijing to re-engage with the Dalai Lama and elected Tibetan nominees to resolve the standoff over Tibet's future. The new law mandates that the US government coordinate multilateral efforts to effect a settlement on Tibet. The legislation also stipulates that the US should allocate funds for countering disinformation spread by the Communist Party of China regarding Tibetan culture, and religious institutions like the Dalai Lama.

The Indian position on Tibet has also undergone a change in the last decade. During Modi's first inauguration in 2014, the political head of the Tibetan government-in-exile was invited along with heads of state from South Asian nations. The Dalai Lama was hosted at the Rashtrapati Bhavan by then-President Pranab Mukherjee in 2016. India has also deployed the Special Frontier Force, a unit comprising predominantly of Tibetans, in military operations against the People's Liberation Army in 2020. For some time, there was a perception that China was waging a psychological war to get the upper hand as evidenced by its renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh, and releasing a map depicting Indian territory within its territorial limits. Now, as a response to China's map-fare strategy, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has advocated that Modi 3.0, too, rename places in Tibet. Modi 3.0 has also sought to make common cause with nations that have been at the receiving end of Chinese belligerence. India has backed the Philippines following the recent confrontation between Chinese and Filipino maritime security personnel in the South China Sea. Here, words are being fortified by deeds. India's delivery of the BrahMos missiles to the Philippines sends a signal to China that its bid to change the status quo — along the Line of Actual Control or the South China Sea — will not go unchallenged.



Delhi's strategic community has cautioned that India is ceding ground to the US on Tibet. Some commentators have advocated dialogue at the executive level with China, considering its large economy and superior military capabilities. On the contrary, India-US cooperation on Tibet can serve to keep Beijing on tenterhooks as it has been unable to completely erase the Dalai Lama's standing in the region. It stokes the Communist Party of China's anxieties of a forgotten conflict in the late 1950s waged on the roof of the world when US intelligence trained Tibetans to operate behind enemy lines. This is also being reinforced by India deploying the Special Frontier Force against the People's Liberation Army during the standoff that started in 2020. As for restarting political dialogue, interactions at the executive level froze post-Galwan in 2020. Any opening to China will be viewed by it as a sign of weakness post the electoral verdict of 2024. Between 2014 and 2019, Modi has had 18 interactions with Chinese President Xi Jinping. In 2019, Modi hosted Xi in Tamil Nadu and desired to augment economic cooperation, but even before the ink dried, India's peace moves were met with China trying to change the status quo unilaterally in Galwan, which resulted in the deaths of Indian soldiers. The question is whether Modi 3.0's treading closer to what Beijing defines as its core interests—Tibet, Taiwan, and the South China Sea—is bearing fruit. While it is too early to tell, there may be some visible strains.

First, China's anxiety regarding Tibet springs from its inability to completely obliterate the Dalai Lama's influence on the region. There have been efforts by China to exert greater control on organised religion across China, particularly in Tibet. The Communist Party of China has sought to create a "politically reliable" religious class who bears affection for their nation and religion. Curiously around the Congressional delegation's tour of Dharamshala, Xi Jinping visited a Tibetan Buddhist shrine in Xining, Qinghai's provincial capital, where he reiterated his point about "creating a sense of community for the Chinese nation", and "promotion of national unity".

Second, the Indian and Chinese governments are discussing ways to resolve the border standoff.

Jaishankar has met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi twice in July—most recently, at the sidelines of the East Asia Summit, and previously, at the Shang-hai Cooperation Organisation summit—in which the border issue was discussed. On July 31, the 30th sitting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China Border Affairs took place with a delegation from Beijing visiting Delhi. The remit of top diplomats from both sides was to arrive at a solution to the pending friction points along the border and restore peace and tranquility. Lastly, when dealing with the Chinese, we must factor in their mindset. When asked about the impact of the French Revolution, then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai retorted that it was too early to tell. In this way, India must avoid the affliction of short-term gains, and think long term in its ambition to take on the China challenge.

China's urban-rural gap is a threat to growth. Is the divide too wide to fix?

27 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Yuan Yue Dang

Researchers report waning optimism about social mobility among rural Chinese as education disparities create obstacles for economy

Zheng Yajun, a mainland-born PhD graduate of the University of Hong Kong, knows from personal experience how difficult it is to break through China's urban-rural divide.

Raised and educated in a remote small town in the northwestern province of Gansu, Zheng sat for the national college entrance examination twice before she was admitted to Shanghai's prestigious Fudan University in 2009.

Zheng did not find life easy at Fudan, where she struggled to understand her instructors and fellow classmates from big cities. Many of her classmates from less developed regions had a similar experience, she said.

"In my first year of university, I couldn't understand why – although I had worked hard since childhood and never wasted a day – I still looked so bad compared to other students [from big cities]," she said in a widely circulated interview last year.

She managed to survive the fierce competition. After her graduation from Fudan, she expanded her master's thesis on the gap between urban and rural students at top universities in China, and her findings were published early last year.

Zheng's book, which discusses class differences from a sociological perspective, is one of the most prominent of several works on similar topics published in recent years in China, sparking widespread media coverage and public debate.

These discussions all point to the same question: are class divisions and the rural-urban divide irreparable in today's China?

The Communist Party leadership is aware that if the urban-rural divide continues to widen, China's sustainable growth could be jeopardised.

At a key plenary session in 2013, party leaders pointed out that "the dual structure of urban and rural areas is the main obstacle to the integration of urban and rural development".

Six years later, at another plenum, party leadership proposed to "continue to promote the integrated development of compulsory education in urban and rural areas".

The problem was again discussed among top leaders of the Communist Party last month, when they called for actions to narrow the gap during the third plenary session of the decision-making Central Committee.

Observers said while Beijing was aware of its gravity, resolving the problem was no easy task, especially in education.

In China, all children are required to complete nine years of compulsory education, including primary and junior high school.

But scholars have pointed out that the deficiencies in China's rural education start when students are very young, and if the rural-urban divide persists, the world's second-biggest economy, which is already slumping, will face a serious human capital crisis.

Scott Rozelle, faculty co-director of the Stanford Centre on China's Economy and Institutions, said that low- and middle-income labour in rural areas "could be a major long-term obstacle to China's sustainable economic growth".

This is because a lack of skills has made it difficult for rural workers to compete in the urban labour market. "Children attending rural schools have difficulty acquiring the academic skills needed for highly skilled jobs," Rozelle said.

According to research by Rozelle, 40 to 50 per cent of rural children have delays in cognitive development, which can lead to difficulties in learning maths, science and languages.

"The average level of education of the entire workforce in China (aged 18 to 65) is slightly lower by international standards, almost entirely due to the lower level of education of the rural population. A significant proportion of rural workers do not have a high school diploma," Rozelle said.

He added that if Chinese workers find it difficult to move from low-skilled to high-skilled jobs, "it could hinder China's transition to a high-income, high-skilled economy".

Beijing announced in 2021 that it had achieved success in eliminating extreme poverty, and President Xi Jinping hailed the lifting of 850 million people out of

poverty as an "unprecedented achievement" unmatched by any country in modern history.

But Rozelle said China's "policy focus needs to shift to addressing the challenges faced by hundreds of millions of low-income rural Chinese".

According to the 2021 national census, the population living in rural areas stood at 509.79 million, accounting for 36.11 per cent of China's total population.

Following the conclusion of the third plenum last month, party leaders announced an action plan for the next five years to support rural development in agriculture, housing and for migrant workers.

The plenum's decisions hinted that some policies seen as contributing to the rural-urban divide might ease, including the much-criticised household registration system, or hukou, which restricts the movement of people from rural to urban areas where a residency often means better social welfare, medical care and education for children.

Zheng Linyi, a researcher with the China Academy for Rural Development at Zhejiang University, said some measures included in the action plan would create conditions for residents to move more freely between rural and urban areas and promote the "integrated development" of cities and the countryside.

He said the income gap between urban and rural areas in China had narrowed in the past decade, but it would be more difficult to achieve the reform goal "if there are still huge gaps in public services and infrastructure because of the imbalance of urban and rural development".

Zheng said the education gap was a key manifestation of the urban-rural divide.

He added that if China's population declines in the coming decades, as most demographers have predicted, mergers of some rural schools would become inevitable, and this means more rural students would have to travel longer distances for school, creating "an increased burden on farmers".

Yuan Changgeng, an anthropologist at Yunnan University, warned that public awareness was still lacking in the discussion of the rural-urban divide.

Public discussions in recent years about the disadvantages of rural students have been dominated by "middle-class and intellectual circles", Yuan said.

"This kind of social discussion is still small-scale," Yuan said, adding that people from small towns or rural areas do not have enough of a voice.

Settling in the city, becoming a member of the middle class and enjoying a better life are long-held aspirations of many people from less-developed regions, especially rural areas. These aspirations have been strongly supported by nearly four decades of rapid economic growth in China.

For many decades, and especially after the reform and opening process kicked off by Deng Xiaoping, Chinese society has encouraged individual endeavours, and

many people believe that hard work can lead to social mobility. The highly competitive university entrance exam system, known as the *gaokao*, is at the heart of this belief.

But HKU's Zheng said things have changed. For many students from less developed regions, especially rural areas, it has become increasingly difficult to enter the middle class despite individual efforts.

She interviewed 62 students from Beijing's Tsinghua University and Shanghai's Fudan University and found that the differences in their life choices at university and after graduation were greatly affected by their background.

Students from big cities have a better understanding of how to survive at elite universities and are able to plan their careers in advance, and it is easier for them to find an "elite" job after graduation. Students from rural areas, however, are at a disadvantage in this game.

The elite university students interviewed by Zheng are already at the top of the rural student pyramid, while the situation seems even more acute for the vast number of students at the bottom, who are largely invisible.

According to her research, rural graduates from top universities still achieved social mobility compared to their parents, but they fell behind their urban counterparts after graduation.

Yuan, who has long studied social issues in China, said the belief that success in the *gaokao* could lead to social mobility might have been shaken.

Yuan grew up in a county in the eastern province of Shandong. He said that when he was in high school more than 20 years ago, most of his classmates were hard-working rural students and "their efforts were rewarded compared to the living conditions of their parents' generation".

But Yuan said that now some of his students are convinced they will have limited achievements, reflecting social attitudes that are different from those of their parents who came of age in the 1980s, after the *gaokao* had been restored following the end of the Cultural Revolution and at a time when people were generally optimistic about the future.

According to Yuan, another problem was that many people "refused to question the fairness of the *gaokao*".

"As long as you have a basic understanding of China's education system, you know that it is not the final examination that determines the results, but the years of preparations," he said, adding that the huge rural-urban divide had made these preparations "not a fair game".

Big Data China, a collaboration between the Washington-based think tank Centre for Strategic and International Studies and Stanford University, published an analysis last month showing how Chinese

people's beliefs about personal effort and inequality had changed based on surveys conducted over the past 20 years.

Drawing on work by Rozelle and Martin Whyte, a professor emeritus of sociology at Harvard, the report found that between 2004 and 2014, respondents believed that "lack of ability, "low education" and "lack of effort" were the three most important factors explaining poverty in China.

But by 2023, "unequal opportunity" had become the top reason respondents cited for why people were poor, while "an unfair economic system" ranked third, with only "low education" remaining in the top three. Similarly, when asked why people became rich in China, the top three factors chosen in 2009 were "ability and talent", "hard work" and "good education". But as of last year, the top three factors were "having good connections", "grew up in a rich family" and "better opportunities".

In addition, the share of people who agreed with the statement "in our country, effort is always rewarded" fell from 62 to 28 per cent over the past two decades. The researchers said while these changes were "shaped by the excessively strict policies implemented to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus over the course of 2022", they actually echoed sentiments that had already been trending in Chinese society in previous years.

The idea of "lying flat" or *tangping* – doing the bare minimum to get through hard times, and doing nothing except what is absolutely necessary to survive – has become popular among young people.

This means that some people have become reluctant to study hard, join the brutal competition for jobs, buy a house or start a family.

In 2021, the official censors removed much of the online discussion around lying flat after realising that the idea, if it became widespread, could affect economic development.

The Big Data China authors said the trends "point to an overall challenge for the Chinese government in the coming years, as it works to rebuild confidence in the economy's ability to provide opportunities for all and develop a revised social contract acceptable to the populace".

They added that if the government introduced "the right kind of policies" to promote economic growth, "it could generate a reduction in perceptions of inequity and unfairness and greater popular optimism about the future".

India-Tibet Ties Higher Than Himalayas: Need Stronger Bond Amid Chinese Sinicization

27 August 2024, [Bharat Shakti](#)

It has often been the approach of more powerful nations to overwhelm the cultural past and historical linkages of weaker nations. The Chinese efforts to Sinicize Tibet and curtail the religious freedom of its people is an example of this. However, these efforts are bound to fail. Renaming certain places to establish Tibet's Chinese linkages is bound to fail, as the civilizational relationship between India and Tibet disproves any false Chinese connections that Beijing would like to promote. The resilience of Tibetan culture is a testament to this. Tibet which China now calls "Xizang", also known as the "Water Tower" of Asia and the "Roof Top of the World," has once again become the centre of geopolitical manoeuvring between two leading powers of the world. On July 12, 2024, US President Joe Biden signed the "Resolve Tibet Act," which means that China must peacefully resolve the Tibet-China Issue in accordance with international laws and not through subjugation. China's claim that "Tibet has always been a part of China" has no basis whatsoever. Both spoken and written Tibetan languages have no relation with the Chinese language and are derived from the Indo-Aryan tradition. The traditional boundary between Tibet and China was demarcated by the "Peace Treaty of 1821," which stated that the two countries should never interfere in each other's affairs. However, everything changed when the Communist Party took over the reins of China in 1949 and annexed the "Sovereign Land of Tibet" in 1951.

Tibet's origin is shrouded in mystery, but archaeological and historical evidence suggests it was inhabited as early as the Neolithic period, around 8000 BCE. The first recorded kingdom of Tibet was the Yarlung Dynasty, which ruled from the 5th to the 9th century CE. From the pre-modern period until the annexation of Tibet by Communist China in 1951, Tibet had a unique history and distinct culture and tradition. India significantly influenced Tibetan traditions and culture due to the deep bond Tibet shared with India as the birthplace of Buddhism. Over the past several hundred years, Tibetan monks travelled to India to study Buddhism, and Indian scholars and teachers travelled to Tibet to spread their teachings. This exchange of knowledge and ideas helped shape Tibetan culture and played a key role in the growth of Tibetan Buddhism. During a series of exchanges, the Northern Indian States signed several treaties with the Tibetan Rulers to facilitate trade and the movement of scholars across the Himalayan ranges. The first treaty of friendship,

known as the "Tibet – Bushahr Treaty", was signed in 1674 between Raja Kehri Singh of Bushahr (Himachal Pradesh) and the Gaden Phodrang government of Tibet. This treaty ensured no taxes were imposed on Tibetan and Bushahri merchants and established trade in Tibetan towns such as Purang, Ruthog, Dawa, Tsaparang, and Gartok. Subsequently, another treaty was signed in 1684 called the "Treaty of Tingmosgang" between Ladakh and the Tibetan government under the regency of Desi Sangye Gyatso.

Another treaty of friendship that Tibet made with Ladakh was the "Treaty of Chushul" after the Dogra-Tibetan War of 1841-42. Raja Gulab Singh of the Sikh Empire sent his general Zorawar Singh to conquer Tibet's western Ngari region in order to control the trade routes into Ladakh. Zorawar Singh reached Minsar but was later killed in action. His tomb remains at Minsar.

Subsequently, an agreement known as the "Agreement of 1852 between Ladakh and Tibet" was signed by the Garpons (provisional governors) of the Gaden Phodrang Government of Tibet, with Thanadar Sahib Bastiram representing the Maharaja of Kashmir. It's important to note that all agreements were signed by representatives of India and Tibet, with China not being involved. The borders that India and Tibet shared remained peaceful for centuries until China occupied Tibet.

India and Tibet have deep cultural, religious, and historical connections. For Hindus, Tibet is a sacred land where they can cultivate higher spiritual consciousness. The regions of Burang and Minsar are considered the territory of Kuber (God of wealth) and the treasurer of Devtas (Gods).

Many important Vedic cultural sites, such as Mansarovar Lake and Kailash Parvat (Mount Kailash), as well as many other religious sites, are located there. Mount Kailash is one of the most sacred mountains and has become an important pilgrim site for four faiths: Buddhists, Jains, Hindus, and the Tibetan religion of Bon.



Burang County is in Tibet and shares a border with Uttarakhand state in India. This border is significant as

it serves as a key entry point for Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain pilgrims travelling to the sacred sites of Lake Manasarovar and Mount Kailash.

These religious sites hold great importance for their respective followers. The region surrounding Burang originates from major rivers such as the Indus, Ganges, Yarlung Tsangpo/Brahmaputra, and Karnali/Ghaghra. In historical context, General Zorawar Singh captured Burang and Zanda County to establish a land border with the Kingdom of Nepal during the Dogra-Tibetan War.

On the journey from Burang to Mount Kailash, there is a holy Jain shrine named Ashtapad (“eight steps”). It is located in Darchen village, just opposite Mount Kailash, and serves as the starting point for any pilgrimage in the region. Ashtapad holds great religious significance for Hindus as it is believed to be the abode of Lord Shiva.

Jains also hold this mountain in reverence as it is considered to be the place where Rishabhadev, the Tirthankara of Jainism, attained nirvana.

The final destination of this pilgrimage is the sacred Kailash Parvat, also referenced in the Tibetan-English dictionary. The mountain is known as Gang Rinpoche in Tibetan, meaning ‘precious one’, and in Chinese, it is called Gang ren bo qi feng (冈仁波齐峰).

Mount Kailash is near Manasarovar and Rakshastal lakes and is revered in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Bon religions. People from India, Nepal, Tibet, China, and other countries embark on pilgrimages to the mountain.

The village of Minsar, also known as Moincer, is in Gar County, just south of Kailash and west of Manasarovar. Minsar was under the governance of Ladakh for 160 years and later under the Sikh Empire. Even after India gained control, Minsar continued to send revenue.

In 1947, when India gained independence, the village of Minsar was considered part of India. Despite being surrounded by Tibetan territories, the inhabitants of Minsar had historically paid taxes to the Kingdom of Ladakh and later to the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) for centuries.

The last official to visit the region was Rigzen Ghagil Kalon, a special officer of the Government of J&K, who visited the village in 1950. His report was then forwarded to the Government of India in New Delhi. During the India-China Boundary talks, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) report in 1960 also demanded India’s claim over Minsar.

Despite Chinese efforts to “Sinicize Tibet” and restrict religious freedom in the region, Buddhism continues to grow in China. The historical ties between India and Tibet are deep and intertwined, particularly through the Nalanda-Lhasa connection of past centuries.

Despite 74 years of harsh occupation by the Han Chinese and the Communist Party of China, Buddhism

is flourishing in Tibet, with Sanskrit-based sutras being chanted across the India-Tibetan plateau.

India does not need to rename places in Tibet to emphasize its historical relationship, which is often described as ‘Higher than the Himalayas.’ This connection is echoed in daily mantras in the highlands and temples. It’s imperative for India to assert and strengthen its historical ties and ancient traditions with Tibet to solidify its bonds with the region.

China’s quest to replace ‘Tibet’ with ‘Xizang’ is destined to fail

26 August 2024, [Tribune India](#)

THE term ‘South Tibet’ frequently pops up in Indian media, uncritically disseminating misinformation from Chinese news outlets. A recent report claimed that China has renamed 30 more places in Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing asserts are part of ‘South Tibet’. In common parlance, Tibetans may refer to the eastern, western, central or northeastern regions of Tibet, but there is no term ‘South Tibet’ as a geographic proper noun in the Tibetan lexicon – a fact easily verified by consulting any Tibetan dictionary or encyclopaedia. This term is an entirely new Chinese construct.

Beijing truly deserves recognition for its exceptional mastery in the politics of names. Their prowess in manipulating names — whether of people, places or concepts — as strategic political tools to assert power, control narratives, shape identities and influence public perception is a masterclass in propaganda.

A classic example of China’s dominance in shaping the narrative on the Sino-Tibetan conflict is evident from their definition of ‘Tibet’ itself. The ‘Tibet’ referred to by China is geographically distinct from the Tibet that exists in the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people. The People’s Republic of China, established in 1949, considers only the ‘Tibet Autonomous Region’ (TAR), created in 1965, as Tibet — an ancient nation with a rich history spanning thousands of years! Traditionally, Tibet consisted of three regions: U-tsang, Kham and Amdo. When Tibetans speak of ‘Tibet’, they mean all three regions, encompassing approximately 2.5 million square km.

In line with the classic colonial divide-and-rule policy, the so-called TAR includes only U-tsang and parts of Kham, with the remaining areas fragmented as autonomous prefectures and counties, and incorporated into the neighbouring Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu. Qinghai, for example, is composed entirely of the traditional Amdo and parts of Kham.

The composition of the current democratically elected leadership of the exile Tibetan polity highlights the stark incongruity of China’s definition of Tibet. For

example, both the current and former Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration belong to areas outside the so-called TAR. The current Sikyong, Penpa Tsering, belongs to Amdo Chentsa, now part of Qinghai province, while former Sikyong Lobsang Sangay belongs to Kham Lithang, which is currently within Sichuan province.

In previous Sino-Tibetan talks, a key demand from the Tibetan side was the establishment of a single autonomous Tibetan administration encompassing all Tibetan autonomous areas. This is crucial for the genuine implementation of China's constitutional provisions regarding national regional autonomy.

Between 2002 and 2010, nine rounds of formal talks took place between representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government. Beijing, however, rejected our entire proposal, including our request for a single Tibetan administrative unit. They claimed that the proposed autonomous region would be too large and that Tibetans have historically never been governed under a single administration. This claim is a clear distortion of historical facts. I quote an excerpt from a speech by former Kalon Tripa, Prof Samdhong Rinpoche: "Tibetans were under one administration until the mid-ninth century. Later, Tibetans were again re-integrated into one administration in 1260 under Drogon Choegyal Phakpa. This was offered to him by emperor Kublai Khan and this offering explicitly refers to the three Cholkas with a clear demarcation of its borders. Such unified administration remained until the 1730s."

China further distorted the definition of 'Tibet' by introducing the notion of 'Greater Tibet'. While Tibetans, like people from any other nation, proudly refer to their homeland as great, Beijing has very deftly rephrased this as 'Greater Tibet'. This is a vicious distortion of Tibetan territorial identity. For Tibetans, there is no concept of 'Greater' and 'Smaller' Tibet; there is simply Tibet, as understood in our collective consciousness.

Beijing has now gone a step too far by attempting to supplant the term 'Tibet' with 'Xizang'. It is important to note that Beijing's definition of even 'Xizang' differed both before and after the invasion of Tibet in 1949-50.

In ancient times, such as in the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821-822, the terms 'Great Tibet' and 'Great China' were used. Before 1949, the Republic of China employed the terms 'Inner Tibet' and 'Outer Tibet' to differentiate regions within Tibet, similar to the use of 'Inner Mongolia' and 'Outer Mongolia' for Mongolia. 'Inner Tibet' referred to the areas under Chinese control at that time, while 'Outer Tibet' denoted independent Tibet. These terms also appeared in the Simla Convention (1913-14), which involved Great Britain, China and Tibet.

China's gradual military conquest of eastern territories of Tibet was swiftly followed by the renaming of the newly annexed places. For example, Ziling was renamed Xining, Dhartsedo became Kanding, Bathang (my homeland) was changed to Ba an, and Chamdo was renamed Changdu. China then developed and promoted its own narrative, claiming that only the territories under the effective control of the Government of Tibet at that time constituted Xizang. They believe that by renaming places annexed through military conquests and forging new identities and historical narratives, they can gradually root out and erase the deep, centuries-old bond between the people of these areas and historic Tibet. The current reality, however, is quite the opposite. Since the disintegration of the mighty Tibetan Empire in the ninth century and the eventual inception of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Government in Tibet in 1642, what is ubiquitous across the Tibetan plateau today is a strong, deep sense of common territorial and national identity.

Beijing's quest to replace 'Tibet' with 'Xizang' is, therefore, destined to fail. If history is any guide, the imposition of Chinese identity through the distortion of historical and cultural narratives will only further alienate the Tibetan people and strengthen their sense of distinct national identity.

Views are personal

How to secure the China front

25 August 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Lt Gen Harinder Singh (Retd)



A view of the mountains in the eastern part of Ladakh, 3 km from the Line of actual Control between India and China, on 1 August 2024. ANI

India will have to make it clear to China that it opposes any unilateral military action. Any Chinese attempt to alter the status quo will be met with stiff resistance, and if necessary, with counter action.

China's growing military might and its assertive posture along the Himalayas pose a tough challenge to

India. It is incumbent upon India to craft a border guarding strategy that not only safeguards its rightful territorial claims, but deters China from undertaking any unilateral military action. Until a mutually acceptable boundary solution is found, India has no option but to build its capacity to deter China from altering the status quo.

Building India's capacity would imply acquiring and deploying assets for strategic intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), augmenting border infrastructure and troop habitat, fielding the right mix of weapon-platforms, creating an asymmetric edge, stockpiling strategic reserves of war material and restructuring the current force to provide high levels of military readiness and response action. But deterring the Chinese military is not simply a matter of restructuring, equipping and reorienting the border guarding force; it is also about signalling a strong military intent and willingness to use force.

The more powerful an adversary, the more important and difficult it is to deter the adversary. India will have to make it clear to China that it opposes any unilateral military action. Any Chinese attempt to alter the status quo will be met with stiff resistance, and if necessary, with counter action. India will also have to assure China that it does not seek any territorial aggrandisement. Improvements in border infrastructure are India's legitimate needs, and should not be construed as inimical to Chinese interests. So, how does India demonstrate its military resolve to deter China, without exacerbating an unintended escalation, are among the issues that befuddle policymakers and practitioners.

TERRITORIALITY AND CONFLICT

Two scholars, Paul D. Senese and John A. Vasquez, in their book, *The Steps to War*, explain how wars arise from a series of steps that states take to deal with real or imagined grievances that bedevil their relationship. One such factor is territory and disputes arising out of it. When states are unable to draw a compromise in a territorial dispute and disagreements persist, they tend to resort to the use of force. If such disputes recur and militarise over time, they lead to a deep sense of rivalry that becomes very hard-line and prone to war. Understandably, India's festering territorial disputes with China have acquired such a military character. As the likelihood to give up respective territorial claims diminishes over time, the probability of using force will only increase. This could lead to inadvertent military escalation. In this context, two aspects are important: First, the role and salience of territorial contiguity in increasing the probability of war. Second, whether the presence of a border dispute is real or imagined, how do the two states handle their disputes is significant in bringing about or averting war. Hence, it is not territory per se, but territorial contiguity and lack of

geographical clarity that explain the occurrence of border disputes and the probability of war.

Our border disagreements and disputes with China are borne out of this territorial contiguity. Complicated and intricate colonial treaties, unclear boundary lines, imprecise border tri-junctions, illegality of ceded territory and manning difficulties in unreachable sectors of super high-altitude—all add up to a contentious border. This lack of clear border demarcation has bred intense mutual suspicion, and in turn grievances over control of territory. The recurring nature of these disputes indicates the acuity of prevailing mistrust. Once an escalatory threshold is crossed, the probability to miscalculate increases and it can trigger a wider military escalation. The question then is, how China and India will manage such risks of territorial contiguity, in absence of its geographical clarity, so that recurring disputes do not escalate into war.

Broadly speaking, the presence of norms and mechanisms to manage disputes can give a set of actors' ways and means for handling disputes, without an inadvertent escalation. While four such agreements and protocols (1993, 1996, 2005 and 2013) exist, and they lay out a set of norms and protocols, these are not adequate to address the current nature of border disagreements. These protocols have worked well until the late 2010s, but post that, with frequent stone-walling from the other side, there has been a marked decline in their effectiveness to mutually defuse border tensions. A reset in the norms and protocols is therefore necessary in the Sino-Indian context.

RITUALISING BORDER-CONTACT

During the Cold War, the US and Soviet Union demonstrated that ritualisation of the mutual relationship could help dampen prospects for war. The probability of war tends to increase if territorial disputes militarise and recur, but one can expect the likelihood of war to reduce if the handling of disputes is ritualised. When there are no mutually accepted norms or mechanisms to handle border disputes, military escalation becomes strident. Even if norms and protocols do exist, but these are not very precise, the parties to the dispute tend to exploit the loopholes. Therefore, how disputes are handled holds the key to ushering in peace and tranquillity, not merely the presence of norms or protocols.

There can be only two ways of handling disputes. Either by use of force, or by demonstrating restraint. The tendency to over-compensate for perceived threats, by way of military build-up and arms-racing can increase the risk of war. Furthermore, militarised border disputes tend to generate domestic narratives that pre-disposes governments to pursue hard-line policies. However, if states were to resolve their disputes through restraint and dialogue, they can

expect long periods of peace and prosperity. In other words, the policy practices of a state act as a dampener or cause of war.

The ritualisation of border-contact can help avert inadvertent escalation. The ongoing military-level talks in Eastern Ladakh must be seen in this light. Besides managing the disputes at hand, these talks assist in resolving other minor infractions arising out of routine border-contact. It would make eminent sense if these high-level talks are extended to other sectors. The need to ritualise contact also highlights the necessity to increase existing channels of military communication, in terms of additional border hotlines, alternate media connectivity for fail-safe communications and border meeting points. These act as useful tools and mechanisms to avoid or manage inadvertent escalation.

POLICY CHOICES

While much political and military capital is being expended on managing the current border disputes, there is little effort spent on addressing the long-term risks of territorial contiguity. A political settlement alone can help build durable peace. Once the borders are settled, other disagreements arising out of an absent boundary would cease to exist. However, China might not have any incentives to seek an early resolution to the boundary question. In that case, as an interim measure, stabilisation of the borders, by revisiting the existing border agreements and protocols, could be pursued.

A few aspects are important. First, a new agreement, which comprehensively addresses the current infirmities in existing border agreements and protocols, is the need of the hour. A comprehensive one-piece peace and tranquillity agreement would avert the need to connect the dots over four different agreements (1993, 1996, 2005 and 2013) to interpret the field-level responses in a crisis

situation. At the tactical level, this is a critical requirement for better understanding and response action.

Second, an all-inclusive border agreement can help draw clarity on a few extant clauses that are misleading and contentious. For instance, Article-II under BPTA 1993, which lays out the principle of mutual and equal security, is woefully vague and prone to conflicting interpretations. A few other clauses pertaining to use of certain category of armaments and weapon platforms, or permissible force levels in a sector, or modalities that guide mutual reduction of forces remain obscure and unclear.

And third, a revised agreement could help address the current gaps and new nuances in border management. For instance, heightened risk-taking behaviour of troops, skirmish-prone stand-offs, use of intrusive or disruptive technologies such as drones, sonic booms, dazzlers and tazers, provocative deployment of large-

calibre area weapons in the forward zone, or coordinated separation of entangled forces, all of which impact border management at the tactical level. In the wider context, it might also be prudent to consider the principles that might guide a future border settlement. And how we can draw clarity and consensus on it. The answers to these questions would require resumption of a political dialogue with China, to re-build trust and confidence. China with its political structure has an edge. India would have to work hard to build domestic consensus, lest our internal contradictions limit own options to negotiate. Many experts might argue that making peace would signal weakness and invite renewed Chinese aggression. On the contrary, this approach might afford us the time and opportunity to bridge the power gap and, in turn, the material resources to strengthen our efforts to build a credible military deterrent.

China-Xizang Himalayan Forum: The cynical 'sinicisation' of Tibet

25 August 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Srikanth Kondapalli

The delegates invited, the agenda unveiled, and the larger context, indicate China's efforts to convert Tibet (renamed recently as Xizang) into the fulcrum of sub-regional initiatives as well as to expand China's influence in the neighbourhood.

With a forum for the trans-Himalayan region – the 'China-Xizang Himalayan Forum' -- Beijing is firstly sending a signal of consolidating and dominating the "roof of the world" in a post-Dalai Lama scenario, secondly encircling India in a multi-dimensional way by following one of its 36 ancient stratagems of "hexiao kongda" (cooperate with the small to counter the big) by providing incentives to South Asian countries to cumulatively exert pressure on New Delhi, and thirdly, obfuscating the impending environmental disaster through its modernisation efforts.

Pointedly, the China-Xizang Himalayan Forum was initiated at Nyingchi prefecture in Tibet, opposite Arunachal Pradesh, in 2018. Its fourth meeting was held in early July this year. The delegates invited, the agenda unveiled, and the larger context, indicate China's efforts to convert Tibet (renamed recently as Xizang) into the fulcrum of sub-regional initiatives as well as to expand China's influence in the neighbourhood.

The first forum meeting in September 2018 was attended by representatives from Nepal, Pakistan and other countries, with the agenda focused on economy and tourism. The next three meetings had a focus on environmental issues, one of the weakest issues for China in view of its exploitation of Tibet's resources.

At the third meeting last October, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi made five points, some of them

repetitive, some even contradictory to the current Chinese practice in Tibet. Wang called for upholding mutual respect and mutual trust and building a “trans-Himalaya region into a family of solidarity”. He also called for building an “ecological civilisation” and a “trans-Himalaya region of green development and cooperation”, as well as for regional integration through connectivity and enhancing people-to-people exchange.

The fourth meeting, also held at Lulang town of Nyingchi prefecture on July 5 this year, was attended by nearly 20 countries, including representatives from Nepal, Myanmar, Mongolia, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan but also countries like Sri Lanka, Chile, Bolivia, and South Korea. The inclusion of countries not connected in any way to the Himalayas suggests that China is trying to drum up support for its policies in Tibet.

While China entered Tibet in 1951 through military intervention, in recent times, it has intensified not only its control but also its “modernisation” efforts. In August 2020, a few months after the Galwan border incident with India, the decisive Tibet Forum Meeting, attended by the Communist Party’s politburo members, including President Xi Jinping, declared the goal of ushering in “sinicisation of Tibet” – meaning, to intensify the long ongoing effort to strip Tibet of its own characteristics and identity and infuse Han Chinese body and soul into it.

Subsequently, Xi visited Nyingchi prefecture in July 2021 to oversee the progress in infrastructure projects, such as the \$5.8 billion Sichuan-Tibet railway line. His visit to Tibet was also to convey a message of resolve to fully integrate the region into China.

As a result, over a period of time, 7.5 million Han Chinese have come into Tibet, drastically altering the demographics of the region and making Tibetans a minority in their own land. China introduced “strike hard” policies of repression and banned the Dalai Lama’s photos or any activity seen as “splittism”. Beijing has sought to take control of the Dalai Lama’s succession by insisting on a “golden urn” process to select the next Dalai Lama. It has also passed the Land Border Law and built 628 “well-off society” villages across Tibet’s borders with the rest of South Asia. These “well-off society” military/paramilitary “watch posts” are expected to consolidate China’s control over the peripheral areas of Tibet and adjoining regions in South Asia. In the event of any political uncertainty in the region, these are expected to trigger military consolidation efforts by China.

China’s modernisation drive saw a flurry of infrastructure projects in Tibet, with the current 14th Five-Year Plan allocating \$22 billion in funding for railways, roads, energy pipelines, fibre optics, telecommunications, hydro-electricity dams, and

reconstituting Tibetan nomads into ghettos for effective surveillance and control.

While the infrastructure projects attracted an estimated 55 million domestic and foreign tourists to Tibet last year, the world’s “third pole” is under stress due to China’s economic policies. China began exploiting 100 minerals in Tibet, as well as diverting water and electricity from it to the rest of China. As a result, Tibetan glaciers have melted over 15% in the past decades, threatening the fragile environment. However, China wants to convince the participants in the China-Xizang Trans-Himalayan Forum that all is well with the Tibetan ecology.

By including countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar in such meetings, China is trying to counter India. To counter China’s intrusions, India needs to comprehensively review its policies, build an international Buddhist circuit in Arunachal Pradesh, promote eco-tourism in the region, and prepare for Trans-Himalayan turbulence in the coming years.

Diaries of Mao's secretary at the center of a legal battle over the history of modern China

25 August 2024, [NBC News](#)

The diaries of a top Chinese official and prominent critic of Beijing are at the center of a U.S. legal battle, raising questions about who will write the history of modern China.

Li Rui, who died in 2019 at the age of 101, held a number of important positions within the ruling Chinese Communist Party, including personal secretary to longtime leader Mao Zedong. In detailed handwritten diaries he kept from 1946 to 2018, Li recorded his experiences and observations during seven tumultuous decades of Communist Party rule — a version of events that might conflict with the official party line.

As a high-ranking official, Li was an authoritative witness to parts of history that the party would rather not highlight — from internal disputes and policy missteps to the deadly Tiananmen Square crackdown — because they challenge its narrative of uninterrupted prosperity and political unity as China rose from a poor and isolated nation to become the world’s second-largest economy.

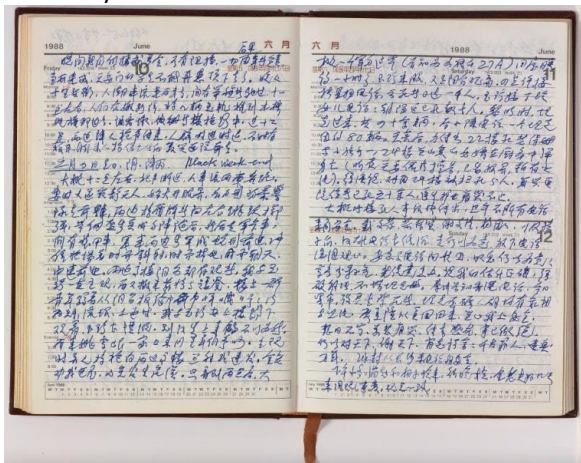
A trial that began in California on Monday will decide whether Li’s diaries should remain at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, where his daughter donated them, or be returned to his elderly widow, who has been accused of acting as a front for Chinese authorities who would most likely censor them.

“We’ve never had something like this before,” said Joseph Torigan, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

“These are diaries and personal papers that run to dozens and dozens of boxes that talk about everything from the early years of the revolution to Li Rui’s work as a secretary to very powerful individuals, including Chairman Mao.”

Few top Chinese Communist Party officials have kept such detailed diaries, especially after the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, when they were used as evidence for political persecution.

“It is very hard to study the People’s Republic of China because it is an authoritarian regime that believes that different narratives about its past are very dangerous for regime security, which means that they run a tight ship,” said Torigian, who is also an assistant professor at the School of International Service at American University.



In his diary, Chinese official Li Rui referred to the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown as “Black Weekend.” Hoover Institution Stanford says Li had directed his daughter, Li Nanyang, to donate the materials to the Hoover Institution, which is known for its large archive of historical materials on modern China, for fear they might otherwise be destroyed by Chinese authorities as part of a crackdown on dissent he saw growing worse under President Xi Jinping.

Li Nanyang, a vocal critic of the Chinese Communist Party who lives in the United States, carried most of the diaries out of China in 2017. She made the donation to the Hoover Institution official days before her father’s death in 2019, once she felt he was safe from possible reprisal.

Shortly after that, Li’s second wife, Zhang Yuzhen, sued for the return of the original diaries, which she says are rightfully hers. Her lawyers argue that they contain deeply personal information about her relationship with Li, and that the violation of her privacy has caused her emotional distress.

A Beijing court found in favor of Zhang, a ruling Stanford says cannot be enforced because it was denied the opportunity to appear in court and defend itself. The university has sued Zhang in California in return.

Lawyers for both sides say their claims are buttressed by comments Li made in his diaries and in interviews about what he wanted to happen to his writings and who should represent him.

But given that Zhang is now in her 90s, questions have been raised about whether the lawsuit was her idea.

“She will not be capable of making money or contributing money for a lawsuit or to pursue the return of the diary,” said Feng Chongyi, an associate professor of China studies at the University of Technology Sydney, who met regularly with Li.

Only the Chinese Communist Party, he said, has “the resources, the money and the political will to do that.” Zhang’s lawyers have said that she is acting alone. The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Feng and others worry that Chinese authorities would severely restrict access to any diaries by Li, a longtime critic of the party’s leaders and policies, whose writings were banned in China in 2006.

Li joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1937 at the age of 20, rising through the ranks as it defeated the existing government in a civil war to gain power in 1949. By 1958, Li had become Mao’s personal secretary.

But he was expelled from the party the following year over his criticism of the Great Leap Forward, an industrialization program championed by Mao that led an estimated 30 million to 40 million people to die of starvation in three years. During his 20 years in exile, Li was imprisoned in a labor camp and spent eight years in solitary confinement.

He was reinstated to the senior party ranks in 1979, three years after Mao died. In the 1980s, Li worked in the party’s powerful Organization Department, which is responsible for the appointment and promotion of high-ranking officials.

Li was also highly critical of the Chinese government’s deadly crackdown on pro-democracy protests in 1989. From the balcony of his apartment in Beijing, he could see soldiers firing on protesters in and around Tiananmen Square in what he described in English as “Black Weekend.”

His diaries, Torigian said, reveal “his thinking as well as a lot of other very senior revolutionary elders during that crisis,” public discussion of which is suppressed in China.



Li Rui at age 89 in 2006. Goh Chai Hin / AFP via Getty Images

In his later years, Li was a leader of a group of pro-reform elder intellectuals in Beijing, “and there are details about his interactions with that circle as well,” Torigian said.

“So the breadth and the detail are really something that are quite unprecedented for the study of politics and the Chinese Communist Party,” he said.

Though the Hoover Institution has scanned copies of the diaries, archivists and historians say it’s important to retain the original materials as well, both for research purposes and to reinforce the authenticity of the scans.

“The Communist Party of China has a history of altering materials in order to fit what it wants the version of history to be,” said Perry Link, a Sinologist and emeritus professor of East Asian studies at Princeton who testified at the trial last week.

If scholars publish research based on the Hoover copies but the originals are in Beijing, “the government in China can say, ‘No, your conclusions are wrong, you worked from the wrong materials. We have the originals, and that’s not what they say,’” said Link, who is also a professor at the University of California, Riverside.

With the originals in their possession, party elites could release them selectively to support their preferred narratives “and might even change what’s in the diaries,” he said. “They’ve done this before.”

The Dalai Lama Divides China And The US

24 August 2024, [Patheos](#), Alice H. Murray

China and the US don’t only disagree on trade, Taiwan, and use of the South China Sea. There’s also the issue of the successor to Tibet’s Dalai Lama. The elderly religious leader’s recent presence in the US for medical treatment has provided reason for more tension between the two superpowers. One thing everything can agree on is that the Dalai Lama divides China and the US.

Who Is The Dalai Lama?

The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the 89-year-old spiritual leader of Tibet, an area which embraces Tibetan Buddhism. He is the 14th Dalai Lama in a line stretching back to the late 1300s. Tibetan Buddhists believe the Dalai Lama is the manifestation of the Bodhisattva (one who works to lead all beings to the state of enlightenment) of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet.

Prior to 1951, Tibet had a theocratic form of government of which the Dalai Lama was the head. He also served as supreme religious leader. Communist forces began occupying the country in 1950, and in 1959 China annexed Tibet. After an unsuccessful revolt by Tibetans against Chinese rule, the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959. He has remained there in exile for many years.

Work During Exile

After arriving in India, the Dalai Lama set up a government-in-exile in the Himalayan Mountains there. He stepped down as the head of the Tibetan government-in-exile in 2011.

While in India, the Dalai Lama has pursued a nonviolent campaign to end Chinese domination of Tibet. He is seeking real autonomy for Tibet with protections provided for its religion, language and culture. The Dalai Lama’s work led to his being awarded the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize. This religious leader has become one of the most recognizable and highly respected individuals in the world. Nevertheless, China views the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist seeking independence for Tibet, a claim the Dalai Lama has denied.

About Tibet

Tibet, known as the “rooftop of the world,” sits on a vast area of mountains and plateaus in Central Asia. This area includes the world’s highest mountain, Mount Everest. Historically an autonomous region of China, as of 2020 Tibet provided a home to more than 3.5 million people over 471,700 square miles.

Because Tibet sits on a high plateau surrounded by enormous mountain masses, the country was relatively isolated prior to 1950. It had its own language and religion, Tibetan Buddhism.

Interference By China

In 1950 China began to incorporate Tibet into the People’s Republic of China. This action was highly controversial in both Tibet and worldwide, and the issue remains highly charged even today. Tibetans deemed China’s move as an invasion of their sovereign country which continues as occupation by a foreign power. Although it is officially an autonomous region of China, in reality, China’s Communist Party strictly controls Tibet.

In particular, Communist party leaders in Beijing want to control the selection of the successor Dalai Lama. They insist the succession process must comply with Chinese law. The current Dalai Lama had suggested he

could name his successor rather than relying on the traditional means of selecting the individual deemed his reincarnation. The Chinese government rejected his suggestion. This impasse raises the fear rival Dalai Lamas could result—one approved by Beijing and another supported by the current Dalai Lama and his Tibetan followers.

US Support For The Dalai Lama

In June US officials met with the Dalai Lama in India. They conveyed the message that the US did not intend to allow the choice of his successor to be influenced by China. Going even further, the Americans indicated their country would pressure China to begin talks again with Tibetan leaders, a process that has been stalled since 2010.

The Dalai Lama's time in the US this summer has increased tensions between China and the US. The spiritual leader came to New York for knee replacement surgery conducted on June 28th. Following that surgery, he spent time recuperating in upstate New York for six weeks. This past Wednesday, senior US officials met with the Dalai Lama in a show of support for him and to bring greetings from Pres. Biden. Additionally, they expressed staunch support for the Tibetan community. **Dalai Lama Divides China And The US**

China, anxious about the religious leader's successor, reacted angrily to news of this meeting. It lodged serious protests with the American government, noting the Dalai Lama was "a political exile engaged in anti-China separatist activities under the cloak of religion." US officials face attempting to strike a balance between managing already tense relations with China and showing support for a religious leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner respected worldwide. Clearly, the Dalai Lama divides China and the US, but it is only one facet of the two countries strained relationship.

Whether the divide between China and the US over the Dalai Lama can be bridged is questionable. China wants one process and the US-backed current Dalai Lama desires another to determine his successor. But with an 89-year-old religious leader, the issue will have to be addressed sooner rather than later. Given the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize, hopefully he will adhere to his track record of advocating for nonviolent change and find a way to keep the peace between all involved.

Taiwan and China must negotiate a new political agreement to avoid war

24 August 2024, [East Asia Forum](#), Philip Hou

Efforts to fortify Taiwan against decapitation assaults and amphibious invasions can only do so much to prevent conflict with China in the long run.

Taipei and Beijing have pushed political boundaries closer to their respective red lines. To prevent conflict, Taiwan and China need to negotiate a new mutually acceptable political framework that clarifies, strengthens and respects each other's red lines and political concerns.

Taiwan can reassure China's concerns about 'independence' by formally recognising relations as region-to-region, government-to-government, non-state-to-state or a combination thereof. Unlike the 1992 Consensus, such frameworks shift the emphasis from sovereignty disagreements toward defining cross-strait relations while preserving the assumptions of 'One Country' included in the 1992 Consensus.

In return, China should recognise domestic pressure in Taiwan against such political agreements by acknowledging cross-strait relations as a non-hierarchical relationship between two equal political entities. China could also recognise and reassure the autonomy of Taiwan's democratically elected government to govern the 'Taiwan region' and participate in international organisations.

Under such a political framework, Taiwan can still assert that it is an independent, sovereign country. China would also maintain space to express its commitment to peaceful reunification.

Taiwan's Lai administration has faced criticism from the opposition party, Kuomintang (KMT), over its ambiguous position on cross-strait relations. Facing domestic pressure, Lai's administration could be more open to new cross-strait political frameworks. While Beijing demands the 1992 Consensus as a prerequisite, it could be receptive to renegotiating an agreement that implicitly recognises the consensus. Current US policy responding to rising cross-strait tensions and China's military build-up has centred around the 'porcupine strategy' of arming Taiwan to deter invasion. While stronger US-Taiwan defence capabilities may affect China's calculus, relying solely on military means for a political problem would be misguided.

It is a long-standing US policy to support 'cross-strait dialogue' and the status quo. Obligations to ensure Taiwan has sufficient defence capabilities do not relieve the United States of its responsibility to support the peaceful settlement of conflict between Taiwan and China. The United States should actively encourage cross-strait dialogue and oppose unilateral changes to the status quo.

Defence-oriented policies place Taiwan under a state of chronic pressure. A war over Taiwan would upend global security through the militarisation of the Asia Pacific, regardless of whether China succeeds or is defeated.

If China successfully 'unifies' Taiwan, neighbouring countries and the United States may engage in a rapid military build-up, form a treaty alliance system similar

to NATO, pursue total economic decoupling and allow for regional nuclear arms proliferation. China could also face armed insurgency and an uncooperative population.

If Taiwan and the United States repel a Chinese invasion, China could resort to launching long-term, around-the-clock airstrikes against Taiwan and US military assets. A war in the Taiwan Strait is unequivocally a no-win situation.

The military dimension of conflict between Taiwan and China is only peripheral to the underpinning political drivers and is a tool for achieving political objectives.

From China's perspective, Taiwan's 'reunification' is an essential milestone for party legitimacy and continued rule. China's enduring view that Taiwan is an inseparable part of its territory compels the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to maintain recognition of the 'One China Principle' and prevent official Taiwan independence.

Taiwan, governed by the Republic of China (ROC) government, views the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a threat to its autonomy. Taiwan, under the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has asserted the ROC as a sovereign independent country, non-subordinate to the PRC.

China cut off contact with Taiwan under former president Tsai Ing-wen's administration due to the DPP's rejection of the 1992 Consensus. Under the 1992 Consensus, the KMT and CCP agreed that both Taiwan and mainland China belong to 'China' while refraining from delineating China's sovereignty as belonging to either the PRC or ROC. Both Taipei and Beijing considered the status of their relations as region-to-region rather than country-to-country.

This agreement addressed China's top concern of preventing official Taiwan independence. Yet, the consensus neglected Taiwan's core interest of maintaining its autonomy.

Under the DPP, Taiwan has blurred its position on the nature of relations with the PRC. Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te has refused to accept the 1992 Consensus under the premise that recognizing the consensus equates to accepting China's 'One Country Two Systems' model for unification.

Taiwan, under the DPP, has also pushed for greater recognition of its autonomy. Taiwan has asserted that the PRC has never ruled Taiwan and that the ROC and PRC are not subordinate to each other. China perceives these assertions as Taiwan salami-slicing towards independence because these stances avoid specifying Taiwan's relationship with 'China'.

Peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are in the strategic interest of Taiwan, China and the United States. Yet, with the collapse of trust, an arms race seems like the safest bet to secure national security and achieve political agendas.

Taiwan and China are trapped in an illusion that military power alone will prevent encroachment on their red lines and secure their political goals. The United States also mistakenly believes that defeating an invasion of Taiwan guarantees a foreign policy triumph. Before marching toward catastrophe, Taipei and Beijing should attempt strategic negotiations.

The Rise, Decline, and Possible Resurrection of China's Confucius Institutes

24 August 2024, [The Diplomat](#)

CIIs grew rapidly in the early years, thanks to a favorable geopolitical environment toward China. Can they rebrand and rise again under very different circumstances? This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Confucius Institute – established by the Chinese government to promote the Chinese language, culture, and a positive image of China globally. Confucius Institutes rapidly expanded to more than 500 centers across 160 countries in little over a decade, becoming a central component of China's international language and culture promotion (ILCP) strategy.

Yet their development has not been unchallenged. Over the past decade, Confucius Institutes have faced setbacks, most notably in the United States, where at least 100 have closed. These closures led to a major overhaul of the management structure of Confucius Institutes in June 2020, when the Chinese International Education Foundation (CIEF) was established as the effective brand holder, while the former headquarters was dissolved and replaced by the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC). These changes marked a shift toward decentralization.

The initial rapid growth of Confucius Institutes was attributable to the favorable geopolitical environment toward China during the early years of the initiative. Under President Hu Jintao, China adopted a diplomatic philosophy of "*tao guang yang hui*" (hiding capabilities and keeping a low profile), emphasizing soft power as a means for its peaceful rise.

Confucius Institutes were intended as a bridge to reinforce friendship and cooperation between China and the world, with the project benefiting from substantial financial and human resources provided by the Chinese government. Its joint venture model – which involved partnerships between Chinese universities and host universities – allowed Confucius Institutes to be integrated within local academic institutions, utilizing their existing facilities and resources while attracting substantial funding from China. This model facilitated the rapid establishment of Confucius Institutes, particularly in Western countries, where China sought to improve relations

and foster cooperation despite differing political ideologies.

Internationally, the rise of China and its growing influence created a demand for knowledge about China and the Chinese language. This was particularly evident in the United States in the early 2000s, when the two countries enjoyed relatively good relations. The rapid expansion of Confucius Institutes was widely seen as a reflection of China's growing soft power during this period, with the initiative providing an avenue for promoting Chinese culture and language and offering institutions a chance to partner with Chinese universities.

Partly because of this dramatic expansion, however, Confucius Institutes faced increasing scrutiny and criticism, particularly in the U.S. Some critics argued that the project served as a tool for Chinese propaganda, raising concerns over academic freedom and the potential for political influence. This occurred as China's rise had begun to shift the power balance between China and the West, resulting in an increasingly hardline approach toward China in Washington.

Under the Obama administration (2009-2017), the U.S. strategic "pivot" to Asia aimed at balancing against or containing China, and marked the beginning of a more critical stance toward Confucius Institutes. In 2012, for example, a U.S. Department of State directive led to the temporary expulsion of Chinese teachers in Confucius Institutes over visa issues, signaling growing unease within the administration about Confucius Institutes in U.S. universities.

Under the Trump administration (2017-2021), this scrutiny dramatically intensified, resulting in a wave of Confucius Institute closures across the United States. The mechanism that the Trump administration used to shut down Confucius Institutes was principally the threat of withdrawal of federal funding from universities. For example, a Confucius Institute's former oversight committee member at one U.S. university explained to the authors how the passing of an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in 2019 forced U.S. universities to make a choice between substantial federal funding and China's smaller Confucius Institute funding.

The committee member explained that in order to receive U.S. federal funding, "the University would need a waiver to prove that no federal funding would support Chinese language instruction, but this was challenging because funding is often fungible." The committee member added, "Government grants typically cover the overhead of entire university. Separating the funding to ensure that none of it benefited the CI [Confucius Institute] posed difficulties."

The committee member further explained how "there was no established process for waivers, which could

take years to resolve. Consequently, [funding agencies] decided to stop accepting grant applications from any institutions with a CI until new procedures were established."

The outcome was often the closure of the Confucius Institute. The committee member stated, "...Considering the University's significant stake in such grants, compared with the much smaller Chinese funding for the CI, this price was deemed too high. Therefore, the committee agreed to close down the CI. Even though the focus seemed limited to the language itself, the objective was to ultimately shut down the CIs."

Under the Biden administration, similar policies on Confucius Institutes have continued to be enforced, including under the NDAA (2021), the Innovation and Competition Act (2021), and the Confucius Act (2021). Clearly, for higher education institutions in the United States that hosted a Confucius Institute, closing the institute was often an easier solution than lengthy rule-checking or applying for waivers. Following on from the U.S. lead, countries such as Australia, Germany, India, Japan, and the U.K. have all launched reviews or imposed pressure on Confucius Institutes. Meanwhile, Confucius Institutes in the developing world, India aside, have continued to develop robustly during the period of China's rise.

In response to the growing challenge to Confucius Institutes, particularly in the United States, China has undertaken a major overhaul of its ILCP strategy since mid-2020, signaling a shift toward decentralization in three aspects.

Administratively, the CIEF, the CLEC, and other similar initiatives such as ChinesePlus and the China Center for International People-to-People Exchange (CCIPE), have been established to share the former responsibilities of the Confucius Institute headquarters.

Politically, there has been an effort to disassociate the new management system of the Confucius Institute from the Chinese central government, resulting in the diminished official political status of the new ILCP initiatives. Financially, compared to the centralized fiscal role assigned to the former Confucius Institute headquarters in China's previous ILCP strategy, at least five decentralized sources of funding for revamped Confucius Institutes can be identified: the CIEF, a Chinese partner, a local partner, the CLEC, and income from individual Confucius Institutes.

The outcome of this new strategy, however, remains uncertain. It has, so far, not significantly altered critics' perception of Confucius Institutes. It has also caused confusion and resistance within the Confucius Institute administrative system, while additionally complicating funding arrangements and casting doubts on the funding capability of the CIEF.

While decentralization may have reduced the scrutiny and criticism previously directed at Confucius Institutes, it has not fully resolved the broader issues of trust and suspicion that have emerged between China and the West, particularly in the United States. The evolving story of Confucius Institutes from a positive global symbol of China's soft power to a contested initiative highlights the challenges of promoting cultural diplomacy in a complex, ever-changing, and sometimes hostile international environment. The future success of the Confucius Institute and China's revised ILCP strategy will depend on broader geopolitical dynamics and the ability of China to rebuild trust and cooperation with the United States.

In this sense, the decades-long involvement with China by Democratic vice-presidential candidate Tim Walz – since he taught in China in the late 1980s – raises the possibility that the outlook could still alter somewhat. A victory for the Harris-Walz campaign in the U.S. election in November might begin to change the China narrative in ways that could help in the rebuilding of the United States' more than 100 lost Confucius Institutes.

The Future of Leadership: What Lies Ahead for the Senior Military Leadership in the Chinese Army?

23 August 2024, [Politics DZ](#)

Over the past twenty years, only a handful of studies have examined the leadership of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). These studies typically covered only specific sectors of leadership, and most were completed before the structural reform of the PLA that began at the end of 2015. In this context, the Institute for National Strategic Studies published a report in September 2022 by Joel Wuthnow, a senior fellow at the U.S. National Defense University, titled "The Gray Dragon: Assessing Senior Military Leadership in China." The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the senior leadership of the PLA in 2021, analyzing more than 300 biographies of senior Chinese military officers from 2015 to 2021 to evaluate the structure, demographic composition, career patterns of PLA leadership, as well as their political qualifications and promotion determinants. Ultimately, the report assesses China's military effectiveness and the future of leadership within the army.

Army Structure

The report focuses on the structure of senior leadership within the PLA and analyzes the major changes that have occurred under the structural reforms implemented by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2015, as follows:

Presence of Elite Officers in Senior Leadership:

According to the report, the senior leadership of the PLA consists of the top 100 to 200 officers in the army, who sit at the peak of an officer corps made up of hundreds of thousands. The number of senior leaders in 2021 was approximately 155 officers. They are similar in importance to the three- and four-star officers in the United States, according to the report.

Clear Division of Specialties in Senior Leadership:

The report notes that before reaching senior leadership, these officers systematically progress through lower ranks. Upon commissioning, they are categorized into five specialties: military affairs, political affairs, logistics, equipment, and technical specialists.

Periodic Structural Reforms in the Army:

According to the report, the senior leadership was not immune to the structural reforms undertaken by President Xi within the army. In 2015, the number of senior leaders was 182 officers, but by 2021, the number had decreased to 155. This 13% decrease aligns with the overall reduction in army personnel during the same period from 2.3 million to 2 million individuals. The reductions in leadership also included the Central Military Commission itself; when Xi became chairman of the commission in 2012, it included 10 officers, but after the 19th Party Congress in October 2017, this number dropped to six officers. According to the report, the cornerstone of the PLA reforms under Xi was the development of a joint command structure in which theater commanders have peacetime authority over land, naval, and air forces. This model was better aligned with the army's focus on preparing for high-intensity joint operations compared to the pre-reform system, where military region commanders lacked peacetime operational control over non-military units. The Chinese military has also expanded joint training in recent years, allowing officers to hone their planning and command skills in a "realistic combat" environment.

Dominance of Air and Naval Forces in Positions:

The report highlights that the share of ground force officers in senior positions has decreased by more than 20% under recent structural reforms, after having dominated most key positions in general departments and military regions. This shift favors the development of the Chinese military's future operations in the maritime and aerial domains. The biggest winner from these reforms, according to the report, was the "Rocket Force," which saw its share double (from 4% to 8%). Additionally, naval and air force officers became military theater commanders for the first time in 2017.

Increase in Leadership at Military Service Headquarters:

According to the report, the share of officers appointed to service headquarters doubled from 16% to 32%. This reflects the creation of new military

headquarters, such as the Strategic Support Force (SSF) and the Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF). Under the new system, officers appointed to army, navy, and air force headquarters are primarily responsible for building forces in terms of training and equipping them. The report suggests that having a larger share of senior officers in service headquarters may have implications for competition among upper echelons in the future.

Leadership Characteristics

According to the report, the group of senior military leaders in 2021 has formative and professional experiences different from their predecessors, but they are demographically similar, as follows:

Possession of Similar Professional Experiences: The report indicates that the current leadership was the first to join the PLA during the “Reform and Opening-Up” era (1979 to the present). Their careers were shaped by the changing military strategy of China before and after the end of the Cold War. Most began their careers preparing for a large-scale conflict against the Soviet Union, which was China’s main adversary in the late Cold War. These officers were also in service during the 1980s, when the Chinese military engaged in significant military cooperation with the United States. However, they also witnessed the deterioration in Sino-U.S. relations after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989.

Similar Ages Among Senior Leaders: Only 18 out of 155 senior officers in 2021 joined the military during the era of President Mao (1949–1976); they are now in their mid-sixties to early seventies and will soon retire. Most senior officers joined in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the youngest joining in the mid-1980s. According to the report, Chinese military officers rotate every two to three years and are exposed, to some extent, to different responsibilities, but less so than in the U.S. system, where four-star officers typically change positions every 18 months or so.

Similar Gender and Ethnic Composition: The report states that male Han Chinese dominate the senior leadership of the PLA. There were no women among the senior military officers in 2015 or 2021. The military also follows preferential policies against ethnic minorities, though it has sometimes appointed Uyghur and Tibetan officers to senior levels in the Xinjiang and Tibet military regions, according to the report.

Limited International Experience: According to the report, senior Chinese military leaders often move across the country but have limited international experience, aside from what they may have gained through military diplomacy on short tours earlier in their careers. The report also suggests that there may be limited awareness of other functional skills; for example, operational commanders tend not to have backgrounds in logistics or acquisition.

Promotion Determinants

All PLA officers must be in good standing with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but candidates for promotion to the highest ranks are subject to further scrutiny due to the sensitivity of their positions. Below are the key qualifications and determinants for promotion in the Chinese military:

Loyalty to the Chinese President: Senior leaders need to possess political acumen; they must have not only social capital but also successfully navigate elite internal struggles. Some have already been purged in anti-corruption campaigns that Xi used to remove political opponents after taking power. The report emphasizes that those who survived the purges were those who avoided association with Xi’s rivals and were also careful to show loyalty to him by supporting his agenda for military reform.

Competence and Diverse Experiences: There is a misconception that senior PLA officers are disproportionately selected from the Nanjing Military Region, where Xi Jinping served from 1985 to 2007. It is also known as the “cradle of generals” due to its importance in preparing for the anticipated Taiwan conflict. However, only about a third of the senior leaders in 2015 had served in the Nanjing Military Region in the past decade. Instead of favoring officers with a specific geographical background, Xi focuses on high performers and ensuring that leadership includes a diverse range of experiences.

In conclusion, the report suggests that the stringent duties within the PLA and the extreme centralization of decision-making may reduce China’s effectiveness in future conflicts, especially those requiring a high level of cooperation and adaptability, such as the war Russia waged against Ukraine in 2022. This is particularly true if Chinese military leaders lack the ability to think in new ways beyond their service and specialty.

Therefore, there are signs of change in the senior leadership, most notably by providing emerging leaders with greater experiences and giving the new generations the opportunity to participate in senior leadership. This could create a future generation that is quick to grasp modern operations and technology. The report also suggests that producing a completely different type of senior PLA officer would require changes in service traditions and organizational culture, which has proven to be difficult even for the United States after more than three decades of the Defense Reorganization Act passed on October 4, 1986.

Claude Arpi | China's 'salami' warfare big danger to Himalayas Columnists

23 August 2024, [Deccan Chronicle](#), Claude Arpi

The planet is being churned; and wherever one looks, one sees natural and unnatural (mostly man-made) disasters. It is not only the multiple landslides that occurred in six villages of Wayanad district of Kerala on July 30, but the entire Himalayan belt is disturbed. In Wayanad, heavy rains triggered the collapse of hillsides, resulting in torrents of mud, water and boulders cascading down into the valley. Similarly in the Himalayas, particularly in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand or Arunachal Pradesh, tragic incidents such as these are taking place.

In most of the cases, wild development activities have resulted in these mishaps. For example, in Himachal Pradesh, some environmental activists told the Down To Earth magazine that "most incidents of natural disasters that occurred in Himachal Pradesh during the last one year happened around some power (dams) or national highway project". In Uttarakhand, wild construction, not taking into account the capacity of the mountains to sustain new roads, new hotels and millions of tourists, has been one of the factors triggering one tragedy after another.

One basic fact has been forgotten: that mountains are fragile. Flying over the Himalayan range, one has the impression that the snow-covered ranges and high peaks are massive and seemingly-impenetrable mountains; however, on the ground, the Himalayas are in grave danger. For millennia the Himalayan passes have been criss-crossed by adventurers, pilgrims, traders, monks or holy men looking for a mythic paradise upon earth, or simply good business; however, through all that time the environment was not disturbed.

Another factor has to be taken into consideration is the militarisation of the Himalayan range, and for this India cannot be held responsible. The finger must be pointed clearly at our northern neighbour. For centuries, life went on as usual, but in 1950 the troops of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) marched into Tibet. The military balance of the peaceful plateau as well as the ecological equilibrium quickly started to change.

Another factor has to be taken into consideration is the militarisation of the Himalayan range, and for this India cannot be held responsible. The finger must be pointed clearly at our northern neighbour. For centuries, life went on as usual, but in 1950 the troops of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) marched into Tibet. The military balance of the peaceful plateau as well as the ecological equilibrium quickly started to change.

During the following years, thousands of Tibetans managed to escape their colonised land and take

refuge to India; it included the Dalai Lama, Tibet's religious and temporal leader, who arrived in India in 1959. Then came October 1962, when Chinese troops attacked India on the Himalayan slopes; from the arid Ladakh region in the west to the dense forests in the north-west, the PLA marched into Indian territory. The conflict was short, just one month, but violent. More than 60 years after the event, it is still deeply engraved in the Indian psyche. It had incalculable consequences for the mountains and though the passes were closed, trade and pilgrimage routes stopped and communications were cut between northern India and the Tibetan plateau. India now had a bully instead of a friend as a neighbour. At the beginning, very few worried about the environment and even less about climate change. But the Chinese occupation slowly started to have disastrous consequences for the Himalayan ecology. Today, it is not only India who is under threat of the Chinese "salami tactics" (taking over a few kilometres of territory at a time). On August 23, 2023, China released a new "standard map". The map included Taiwan and parts of the maritime zones of the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. It added the tenth dash to its existing nine-dash line claim in the South China Sea... and of course Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin area. Interestingly, the map included the small Bolshoy Ussuriysky island, though in 2005, Russia and China had agreed that the island would be split in half and the border would run in its centre. On May 17, 2024, the South China Morning Post in an opinion piece said that "China must act fast to reclaim 'lost territories' from Russia". A hundred years ago, a treaty between the then USSR and China had abolished the so-called Czarist unequal treaties, it noted, and said: "Now, with Russian President Vladimir Putin bogged down in the Ukraine war, it may be the best time for Beijing." Another recent example of Chinese aggressiveness, from August 2 to 4, some Japanese fighter planes had to scramble to cope with an intrusion into Japanese airspace over the Sea of Okhotsk, the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Examples could be multiplied. India, like several other countries, has no alternative but to defend itself. As a result, the Himalayas have become one of the most militarised regions in the world. Despite several bilateral agreements between India and China, in May 2020, China started practicing "salami" slicing in five different areas of Ladakh, the high plateau in north-western India. Why open new fronts in that arid mountain desert? Many believe that one general, in search of promotion, had suggested some "small" operation to President Xi Jinping. These few kilometres here and there would give strategic depth to the PLA. India reacted swiftly, at the cost of spending four winters at 15,000 feet, often with temperatures at minus 40 degrees Celsius. Each army

has today between 60,000 and 70,000 troops posted at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). China and India then began to frenetically develop the infrastructure on their respective sides. The immediate collateral damage was to the environment; this is compounded by climate change and wild tourism development. On July 25, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar met China's foreign minister Wang Yi. Mr Jaishankar underlined the need for "full respect" of the LAC; ultimately, both sides agreed on giving "strong guidance for disengagement". It is, however, doubtful that it will translate in troops reduction on the ground. The degradation of the Himalayan environment is obviously due to several other factors too, but the militarisation triggered by China's hegemonic tendencies has brought incalculable harm to the fragile eco-system. A solution had been proposed by the Dalai Lama in 1989 in his Five-Point Peace Plan: the whole of Tibet, including the eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo, should be transformed into a zone of "Ahimsa", meaning a state of peace and non-violence. Unfortunately, this dream seems much more distant today than 35 years ago; when the Dalai Lama had explained: "The establishment of a peace zone in Tibet would require the withdrawal of Chinese troops and military installations from the country, which would enable India also to withdraw troops and military installations from the Himalayan regions bordering Tibet." A "Zone of Ahimsa" would be a great boon for the Himalayan environment, but for the time being, it may remain a dream.

The Climate Crisis in Tibet: The Dalai Lama's Warning 22 August 2024, [National Interest](#)

Earlier this year, at the ninth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) held in Brussels, the Dalai Lama addressed 140 representatives from 40 countries. His speech highlighted Tibet's environmental concerns as a global problem. This is not the first time the revered Tibetan leader has tackled the issues of climate change and the effects of ecological degradation due to wanton human activities.

Over the years, be it his speech at the "Endangered Tibet" conference in 1996 or his remarks at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), to name a few, the Dalai Lama has not only cautioned about the global ramifications of "ecological neglect" in the "Third Pole" of the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau but also emphasized the importance of the "spirit of solidarity and cooperation" to counter transnational challenges.

But if the world at large has thus far remained relatively unmindful of the Buddhist leader's words, what is the relevance of the Dalai Lama's climate

advocacy today? First, there is a direct correlation between his teachings on the interdependence of species on each other and nature and the impact of human-driven environmental changes, including severe water shortages.

Second, the significance of the Dalai Lama's advocacy for climate action is related to China's repression of the Tibetan people and culture. This repression, in part, takes the form of accelerating Tibet's climate crisis through myriad infrastructure developments (from mega-dams to over-mining). In this context, the Dalai Lama has not shied away from calling out China for not only neglecting the ecological devastation in the Tibetan Plateau but actively participating in the overexploitation of natural resources "without proper environmental safeguards."

The third reason is the current highly divided political landscape where the democratic states, and not just in the West, are increasingly recognizing the imperative of countering China's militaristic aims, including in Tibet. China's financial and diplomatic support of several authoritarian regimes like Russia, North Korea, and Iran have also created greater concerns about the dangers to the liberal order. Thus, today, there is potential for greater receptivity of Tibetan concerns than ever.

What is the extent of Chinese activities on the Tibetan and Himalayan ecology? What specific measures must the West and partners like India take to address the ecological balance in the Himalayas?

The Climate Crisis in the Third Pole

The Tibetan Plateau and its surrounding mountainous areas are commonly considered the "Third Pole" because they are home to the largest reservoir of glaciers and ice sheets on earth after the Arctic and Antarctica polar regions. In effect, several major rivers such as the Mekong, Salween, Yellow, Yangtze, Yarlung Tsampo (Brahmaputra in India), Indus, Irrawaddy, Ganges, Sutlej, and Karnali fountain from the Plateau. Thus, it serves as the "Water Tower of Asia," providing fresh water and vital sources of livelihood to billions of people not just in Tibet but across South and Southeast Asia.

Moreover, the Plateau is not only one of the most biodiverse regions in the world but also rich in minerals, including rare earth reserves. Additionally, it is surrounded by four biodiversity hotspots—biologically diverse but threatened areas—namely the Himalayas, Mountains of Southwest China, Mountains of Central Asia, and Indo Burma. These hotspots are not immune to the repercussions of climate change, including glacial melting and extreme weather events like flash floods. This is exacerbated by increased human activities—from unbridled infrastructure development to increased hostilities in the Himalayas. In such a scenario, it is time that the world and its leaders champion an ethical approach to climate-

change solutions, including proper and widespread dissemination of information among the general populace, something the Dalai Lama has always underscored. However, the challenges are far from over. The rise in decibel levels from the U.S.-China great power competition and Russia's Ukraine invasion means that the Chinese will stake a claim over Tibetan resources more aggressively than ever.

China's Infrastructure Spree: Unlikely to Slow Down?

China has been systematically undertaking infrastructure development in Tibet and Xinjiang over the last twenty years. This has had devastating results for the fragile Himalayan ecology, and lowland areas have witnessed increased flooding. The intensive infrastructure buildup has led to habitat fragmentation and increased air and noise pollution. In 2006, after the Golmud-Lhasa railway line became operational, there was a massive boom in mining operations on the Tibetan plateau. Mining exploration revealed that there were deposits of over 110 types of minerals across 3,000 sites, with a value of more than \$125 billion. This included large deposits of copper, chromium, gold, and lithium, as well as oil and gas reserves. The heightened mining activity led to protests by Tibetan nomads, citing poisoned drinking water and the deaths of herd animals. Moreover, there are reports of the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads to make way for mining and hydropower projects.

Between 2021 and 2025, China has planned to spend approximately \$30 billion on infrastructure projects in Tibet under the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan: "By 2025, the total mileage of highways in Tibet will exceed 120,000 km, and that of expressways will exceed 1,300 km." This development plan includes roads, railways, airfields, border villages, telecommunication facilities, and hydroelectric projects.

Moreover, China's construction of hydroelectric projects on the river Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), such as the sixty-gigawatt mega-dam, is concerning for downstream states like India and Bangladesh. It will impinge on the availability of water in downstream nations and create opportunities for coercion and conflict. It is important to note that in Chinese president Xi Jinping's security-obsessed worldview, water is not a global common but a source of leverage to solidify regional domination.

As a result, the vision of a Sino-centric order as a "community with a shared future for mankind" is hogwash intended to mislead the international community from investigating China's repressive policies in Tibet (and elsewhere) that have accelerated climate change via increased mining of valuable minerals, building "dual-use" infrastructure, and "whole-village" relocation of Tibetan nomads, who are essential to maintaining the ecosystem of the plateau.

The consequence of all this activity is the rapid degradation of delicate environs and habitats, such as wetlands, alpine meadows, and forests. Several endangered species, including the snow leopard and Tibetan antelope, which reside here, are thus further vulnerable. Not only is wildlife threatened, but a recent study indicated that if the prevailing temperature trends continued, the Himalayan glaciers might disappear entirely, "having a significant impact on regional water supplies, hydrological processes, ecosystem services, and transboundary water sharing." Studies show the Tibetan Plateau is warming three times faster than other parts of the world, leading to retreating glaciers. Thus, the international community needs to act fast not only to counter China's policies but also to spur climate action.

India & the West Must Join Forces

Clearly, Europe and the West must include the Himalayan region in their environmental strategies since the climate crisis in the Third Pole will soon escalate into a global emergency. Concurrently, China's recent militarization efforts in the Tibetan Plateau that have transformed villages into resettlement zones, including dual-use infrastructure such as helipads, highways, oil pipelines, road and rail networks, and dams, must be countered together.

India faces even more onerous direct challenges due to its Himalayan territory coming under threat from climate change. In addition, India's decades-long border dispute with China and the risks associated with China's growing eco-hegemony, including unrestricted access to Tibet's critical water resources, are also no less a threat.

Against this scenario, the fast-changing conditions at the Third Pole have not received much attention compared to the northern and southern polar ice caps. Often, the mainstream media, in particular, has focused excessively on the disputed borders rather than the region's environment, which is relevant to global well-being. This needs to change, and a concerted approach to increase public awareness should be one of the main targets.

More importantly, reliable, informed, up-to-date scientific knowledge is essential to tackle this crisis. That being said, Europe and the West must collaborate with India and other "like-minded" nations to develop scientific programs for environmental and climate change monitoring, including both ground-based and satellite-based monitoring.

Moreover, as the partnerships within the still-emerging U.S.-led Indo-Pacific economic and security architecture continue to take shape, it is important to include the Himalayan climate and geopolitical concerns into the mix. Naturally, bilateral, minilateral, and multilateral cooperation that earnestly works at climate change solutions is all equally vital.

In this regard, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)'s Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP) is a welcome initiative. While it recognizes the need for "integrating resilience" into policies from investments to governance, the Quad must look into including the Third Pole specifically in this ambit. Similarly, the G7's push to address the tripartite crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution is admirable.

As the group of 198 countries that have ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change get ready to meet for the COP29 held in Baku later this year, new frameworks and partnerships will be needed to scale up climate cooperation, particularly for the three polar regions. This is all the more pertinent as the COP29 Presidency's plan is based on two mutually reinforcing parallel pillars. The first is to get all parties to commit via national action plans, and the second is to ensure the availability of finance to enable action, thereby reducing emissions, adjusting societies to the effects of climate change, and addressing damages. COP29 must integrate the mountain region's challenges into the negotiation tracks.

Hopefully, the debates this year will focus beyond energy transition and into the ways to control extensive damage caused by human actions and greed for more resources and power, particularly in politically and ecologically sensitive regions like the Tibetan Plateau. The international community, including decision-makers and the private and public sectors, needs to be involved in regional cooperation ventures in the Himalayas to ensure accountability, maintain transparency, and take responsibility.

Last but not least, the world's leaders will do well to remember what the Dalai Lama cautioned nearly thirty years ago about developing a "greater sense of universal responsibility" for global well-being and solving environmental problems—words to live by.

The Climate Crisis in Tibet: The Dalai Lama's Warning
22 August 2024, [National Interest](#), Jagannath Panda

The international community needs to hold China to account for its environmental degradation of the critical Tibetan Plateau.

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The third reason is the current highly divided political landscape where the democratic states, and not just in the West, are increasingly recognizing the imperative of countering China's militaristic aims, including in Tibet. China's financial and diplomatic support of several authoritarian regimes like Russia, North Korea, and Iran have also created greater concerns about the dangers to the liberal order. Thus, today, there is potential for greater receptivity of Tibetan concerns than ever.

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water is not a global common but a source of leverage to solidify regional domination.

As a result, the vision of a Sino-centric order as a "community with a shared future for mankind" is hogwash intended to mislead the international community from investigating China's repressive policies in Tibet (and elsewhere) that have accelerated climate change via increased mining of valuable minerals, building "dual-use" infrastructure, and "whole-village" relocation of Tibetan nomads, who are essential to maintaining the ecosystem of the plateau. The consequence of all this activity is the rapid degradation of delicate environs and habitats, such as wetlands, alpine meadows, and forests. Several endangered species, including the snow leopard and Tibetan antelope, which reside here, are thus further vulnerable. Not only is wildlife threatened, but a recent study indicated that if the prevailing temperature trends continued, the Himalayan glaciers might disappear entirely, "having a significant impact on regional water supplies, hydrological processes, ecosystem services, and transboundary water sharing." Studies show the Tibetan Plateau is warming three times faster than other parts of the world, leading to retreating glaciers. Thus, the international community needs to act fast not only to counter China's policies but also to spur climate action.

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India faces even more onerous direct challenges due to its Himalayan territory coming under threat from climate change. In addition, India's decades-long border dispute with China and the risks associated with China's growing eco-hegemony, including unrestricted access to Tibet's critical water resources, are also no less a threat.

Against this scenario, the fast-changing conditions at the Third Pole have not received much attention compared to the northern and southern polar ice caps. Often, the mainstream media, in particular, has focused excessively on the disputed borders rather than the region's environment, which is relevant to global well-being. This needs to change, and a concerted approach to increase public awareness should be one of the main targets.

More importantly, reliable, informed, up-to-date scientific knowledge is essential to tackle this crisis. That being said, Europe and the West must collaborate with India and other "like-minded" nations to develop

scientific programs for environmental and climate change monitoring, including both ground-based and satellite-based monitoring.

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Realism, strategic interests should dictate India-China ties

21 August 2024, [Tribune India](#)

A realistic assessment of the current state of India-China relations is necessary amid the apparent orchestrated pleas urging India to ease travel and import restrictions on Chinese personnel and goods. Since its military adventure in Ladakh in April 2020, Beijing has consistently sought normalisation of relations, especially economic, setting aside the situation on the border. Over the past couple of months, various business sectors, reinforced by arguments advanced by some economists and media reports, have echoed China's demands.

There is a negligible prospect of an improvement in India-China relations in the near future. The absence of communication for over four years at the highest level and China's recent protest against economic assistance to projects in Arunachal Pradesh and other border regions -- on the specious pretext that they are disputed -- are brazen examples. On the contrary, they

point to China expanding the areas of pressure on India.

The bilateral relationship has been subjected to considerable strain ever since Beijing decided that it will attempt to forcibly take the territories it claims and compel India to acquiesce to China being the leading power in the region. China has simultaneously redoubled efforts to establish dominance over Asia. These developments have coincided with the view in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership that India has drawn uncomfortably close to the US. Additionally, Beijing sees India as adopting a tougher, unyielding stance, which includes building defences along the border as well as initiating steps to close off the burgeoning Indian market to China. Beijing views these as unwelcome steps, but considers that India does not yet pose a serious challenge. The situation on the border has also not changed; 60,000-70,000 troops remain deployed on the front lines. The Chinese have built additional accommodation to billet reinforcements and new advanced weaponry and military units continue to be inducted. Border defence infrastructure is being built at a frenetic pace with plans to build 35 military or dual-use airports and major arterial railways and roads along the border in Tibet. Chinese President Xi Jinping's attitude towards India, signalled on the opening day of the 20th Party Congress in October 2022, with the screening of a video of the fateful Galwan clash of June 2020, has not altered.

In a cosmetic attempt to show that China wants to improve ties but it's India that is playing spoilsport, Beijing claimed that it had sent Ambassador Xu Feihong, who arrived in India almost 20 months after his predecessor Sun Weidong departed, to enhance communication and improve bilateral ties. This has been echoed by many Indian journalists, academics and others. Since his arrival, Xu Feihong has virtually been holding court, meeting Indian politicians, former diplomats, businessmen and others. China is keen on maintaining commercial and economic access to India's market but has no intention of taking substantive steps to ease tensions on the border. At the same time, it is determined to keep India under protracted and sustained pressure. There are other signs of China's attitude and intentions. Xi has not initiated direct contact or meeting with Prime Minister Modi since April 2020, or even observed basic diplomatic niceties and congratulated him on his re-election. Chinese Premier Li Qiang did send a routine message of congratulations, but only after Modi's swearing-in. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained that it would have been 'premature' to convey greetings prior to the swearing-in. There was, however, no such hesitation in inviting Indonesia's President-elect on an official visit prior to his swearing-in! Whether this presages an effort to restrict China-

India interaction at the level of the Chinese Premier is to be seen.

Xi also skipped the G-20 Summit and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meetings. A senior CCP cadre had divulged a couple of months prior to the G20 Summit that Xi would not attend the event and it would, therefore, be a failure. However, Xi's absence ensured there would be no distractions, the G20 communique was unanimously approved, and, importantly, India brought the Global South within the G20 fold.

Another instance was China's prickly objection to Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's congratulations to Prime Minister Modi.

China's real attitude towards India is now more clear. The Chinese foreign ministry's remark on July 10 that "South Tibet is China's territory," and India's development activities in the area are "illegal and invalid" underscore its approach on border issues. The same day, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who is also China's Special Representative for border talks, congratulated Ajit Doval on his reappointment as National Security Adviser and Special Representative observing he is ready to "properly handle" issues related to the situation on the ground in border areas. The use of the phrase "properly handle" indicates that discussions would be in accordance with China's stated position on the border since April 2020.

Beijing's attitude towards India will undoubtedly colour its position on border and other negotiations. It will explore additional avenues for applying pressure on India, including through international financial organisations. India needs to take cognisance of this while examining proposals by Beijing and also consider whether to give China a free pass on issues like human rights, Tibet, Xinjiang, etc. Beijing will, meanwhile, continue to activate Indian businessmen and others to exert pressure on the government to facilitate the inflow of Chinese personnel and goods. Any travel and trade concessions would be at the cost of the public exchequer, further increasing the galloping trade deficit and with long-term deleterious effects severely undermining the 'Make in India' initiative.

India's China conflict and a JP angle in championing the 'Free Tibet' cause

China isn't mocking India as usual. It's praising Modi's Russia-West balancing act instead

21 August 2024, [The Print](#), Sana Hashmi

One Chinese commentator suggested Modi's visit coincides with a period of Ukrainian passivity, potentially allowing India to make the most of the situation.

When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Russia in July 2024, it sparked extensive discussion in China regarding India's strategic positioning between the United States and Russia. Chinese commentators were divided; some expressed frustration over what they saw as the West's perceived leniency towards India, while others admired Modi's adept balancing act. As Modi prepares for a landmark visit to Ukraine later this week, these debates are resurfacing with renewed intensity.

Modi's visits to Poland and Ukraine mark significant milestones. The trip to Poland is the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 45 years, underscoring India's growing engagement with Europe and its intent to bolster bilateral relations and extend its influence in the region. More notably, Modi's visit to Ukraine will be the first by an Indian Prime Minister since the establishment of diplomatic ties between New Delhi and Kyiv in 1993. It's another sign of India's careful strategy of balancing its ties with both Russia and Ukraine amid the ongoing conflict.

It reinforces India's commitment to a diplomatic solution to the conflict and positions the country as a potential mediator. Modi was the only world leader to condemn Russia's attack on a civilian hospital—by stating that "loss of life leads to despair, especially when children are killed"—in front of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Now, he's set to visit Ukraine. Modi's actions are aligned with his prior assertion that 'this is not an era of war', a perspective also echoed in the G20 communique. It reflects India's broader objective of fostering peace and stability. At the same time, China, which brokered a peace deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia, positions itself as a global peace broker. It's why China is closely observing India's visit and its potential role as a mediator in the conflict.

Will Modi bring lasting peace?

Chinese reactions to Modi's visit to Ukraine reflect a range of perspectives. Many commentators agree that lasting peace in the region will ultimately depend on direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, and view Modi's visit as part of India's broader effort to facilitate this process.

One analysis provided three key reasons for Modi's Ukraine visit. First, it suggests that Modi's visit aligns with a utilitarian approach to diplomacy: while Russia offers valuable resources and technology to India, the West provides markets and investment opportunities. Thus, Modi's trip can be seen as part of a strategic effort to balance these interests.

Second, by engaging directly with Ukraine and trying to mediate the conflict, Modi aims to bolster his image as a prominent global leader, enhancing India's stature on the world stage.

Third, the visit is viewed through the lens of competition with China. The commentary highlighted

that India's desire to match China's diplomatic moves is evident, especially following Beijing's recent invitation to Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. Modi's visit, announced shortly after Kuleba's departure from China on 26 July, seems strategically timed to capitalise on this competitive dynamic.

Another perspective highlights the significance of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's meeting with Modi in the broader context of regional peace efforts. Ukraine has been actively seeking support from countries in the so-called Global South, including India. Despite these efforts, India, along with several other nations, did not sign a joint statement at the Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland in June, reflecting differing strategic interests.

But as one commentator pointed out Ukraine views India through a commercial lens as well: state-owned enterprise Zorya-Mashproekt has been negotiating with Indian enterprises for joint production of gas turbines. Additionally, discussions are ongoing regarding the production of aircraft and aircraft engines in India.

Yet another commentator suggested Modi's visit coincides with a period of Ukrainian passivity, potentially allowing India to make the most of the situation. They note that recent Ukrainian losses in Kursk have weakened Kyiv's military capacity, making Modi's visit strategically timed. With the possibility of a Donald Trump re-election in the US limiting Kyiv's conflict sustainability, New Delhi might find new opportunities to augment its influence.

Less mockery, more appreciation

On Chinese social media, particularly Weibo, there is a range of narratives. One user suggested that Modi's visit to Ukraine is damage control, following his controversial trip to Russia. Another user noted Modi's seemingly favourable reputation, observing that his visit to Ukraine follows closely after his visit to Russia. Some commentators have supported Modi's policy on Russia, arguing that purchasing Russian oil does not necessarily equate to supporting Russia's actions. A commentator argued that if global energy production had not increased and Russian oil and gas had been removed from the market, energy prices would have surged, leading to higher transportation costs, global price increases, and potential shortages in poorer nations. The commentator contended that the best approach is to keep Russian energy resources in the market, while preventing it from directly funding the war. Europe and the US have imposed a price cap on Russian crude oil rather than excluding it, allowing oil once sold to India to be redirected to Europe and maintaining stability in the international energy market.

Overall, discussions in Chinese media and social media about Modi's visit to Ukraine and India's potential role

in mediating the conflict reflect a shift from the usual mockery India faces. There is considerable appreciation for Modi's adept handling of India's relations with the West and Russia—an area where China has faced challenges. Modi's recent visits to Russia, and now Poland and Ukraine highlight India's strategic agility in an ever-complex geopolitical landscape.

Bhutan: A Frontier Against China's Expansion in the Himalayan Region

20 August 2024, [Japan Forward](#), Dr. Monika Chansoria

Beijing's policy toward Bhutan is limited for now, but history shows why the latter remains wary of China's ultimate strategic aims in the Himalayan region.

China's geostrategic bid to exert influence in South Asia finds Bhutan as its last standing border barrier apart from India. Clasped between India and China, this landlocked mountain kingdom was long isolated by frosty Himalayan peaks. It is known for its geographical, cultural, and religious proximity to Tibet.

China has held no relations with Bhutan since 1947. Historians and analysts attributing this to the 1910 treaty between British India and Bhutan and the 1949 treaty between India and Bhutan.

'Five Fingers of Tibet'

Two successive political developments, namely the communist revolution in China in 1949 and its annexation of Tibet in 1950, further underlined Bhutan's political and strategic vitality.

Following its victory in the 1949 communist revolution, China, led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), described Bhutan as one of the "five fingers" of its "Tibetan palm." The treaty that the Republic of India signed with Bhutan in 1949 is largely said to be a continuation of the treaty of 1910.

Following the 1949 treaty, China tacitly recognized the special treaty relationship between India and Bhutan. However, it held grave reservations, particularly regarding Article 2, which empowered the government of India to guide Bhutan's external affairs upon the latter's request.

Bhutan's border with India remains clearly identified and demarcated. While signing the 1949 treaty, India returned about 32 square miles (about 83 sq km) of land territory in the area known as Dewangiri to Bhutan to accommodate its claims.

Particularly after 1959, China began reasserting its supposed claims over Bhutan. Maps were published in Beijing in which Bhutan was shown inside the domain of China.

There have been instances where the Bhutanese elite softened their attitude towards China. Nevertheless,

the latter's policy in Tibet continues to arouse hostility in traditional Bhutanese society, which remains culturally woven to Tibet. Meanwhile, Bhutan's policy towards China is circumscribed by numerous political and economic considerations. Moreover, Bhutan's apprehensions over the ultimate politico-strategic objectives of Chinese policy in the Himalayan region have not disappeared.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay. (@Prime Minister's Office of India)

Bhutan and Tibet at the Borders

When activity in Tibet gained momentum in 1958-1959, Chinese maps began showing almost the entire eastern district of Tashigong and pockets of northeastern and northwestern Bhutan as parts of China. All normal travel and trade between Bhutan and Tibet came to an end in 1959 when China suppressed the Tibetan uprising. At that time, the 14th Dalai Lama and his followers fled Lhasa and sought refuge in India.

The following year, 1960, Bhutan sealed its borders with Tibet. This closed the traditional trade routes northward to Shigatse and Lhasa from Paro, Punakha, and Tashigong as well as the brisk trade route via Yatung in the Chumbi Valley to the west. The Royal Government of Bhutan adopted a cautious policy towards Tibet and offered asylum to hundreds of Tibetan refugees in 1959-1960. However, it later asked them to accept Bhutanese citizenship or leave the country.

Historically, Bhutan maintained checkpoints all along its boundary with Tibet and exercised effective administrative jurisdiction up to this boundary. The Bhutanese officials conducted official tours and collected taxes from the land areas extending up to it. Moreover, Bhutanese citizens regularly utilized the lands up to their border. And local Tibetan officials in areas adjacent to the border respected this boundary. The discrepancy existing in this area was confirmed when the Chinese side handed over the coordinates of the most strategic southeast corner of Bhutan to India. The latter viewed that the coordinates were being incorrectly shown in Chinese unofficial and official maps.

China's Strategic Objectives

Surveying the political history and geographic location of Bhutan provides a strong rationale for studying the consequences of its relationship with Beijing. The forward element of China's foreign and defense policy has remained visible in its policy of extending its sway and influence over the peoples and territories of peripheral regions. These include Mongolia, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, parts of India's northern and northeast frontiers, and to an extent, even Burma.

Beijing's strategy of prolonging border-related negotiations to extract maximum strategic concessions is a well-demonstrated tactic across Asia. As for Bhutan, its China policy has limited objectives, at least in the short term. Securing a comprehensive agreement on the boundary question will remain Bhutan's priority. However, its bilateral and regional initiatives have been driven by fear and apprehension regarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

Since the Sino-Indian border war of 1962, the Bhutanese have nursed anxieties of a Chinese military intervention in the region. The long-feared communist threat still looms large in Himalayan Asia.

Is China winning the Global South?

19 August 2024, [The Week](#), Joel Mathis

US leaders say America needs to step up.

China is "forging ties in the Global South," said The Washington Post, making inroads with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America whose leaders increasingly seek an "alternative to Western hegemony" led by America and Europe. Beijing has increased its joint military drills with countries like Tanzania and Mozambique, and has sought to expand the U.N. Security Council to include the developing world. It's all part of China's attempt to achieve "greater legitimacy on the global stage."

Those efforts are boosting China's standing. "In a lot of the capitals around the world," Stanford University's Oriana Skylar Mastro told the Post, "they're now thinking first of Beijing, and then of Washington."

"This isn't about authoritarianism versus democracy," David P. Goldman said at The Asia Times. It's about commerce and influence. Beijing has "doubled exports to the Global South" since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, and those exports are going to democracies like India. The goal? "To make the world dependent on Chinese technology and supply chains." What did the commentators say?

Chinese firms are expanding to the Global South "with startling speed," said The Economist. Those businesses are "building factories in countries from Malaysia to Morocco," and they're also pursuing the "5 billion consumers who live in the rest of the

developing world." That growth offers "uncomfortable lessons" for the West, which has increasingly raised trade barriers to Chinese goods. China is now "reaping the rewards" of sticking with globalization. "As the West has turned inward, China and the rest of the emerging world have drawn closer."

"The Chinese charm offensive is working," Gabriele Manca said at *The Diplomat*, helped along by a combination of "economic influence, soft power, political pressure, and diplomatic initiatives." That work is also forward-thinking: By 2100, "eight out of 10 people will live in Asia or Africa." That shift in population will inevitably "reshape the global economic and political order." New York is the "quintessential city of the current era of globalization" that has been shaped by Western countries. Now China is offering a way forward to those "left out of today's globalization benefits."

What next?

There is a class element to all of this. A survey of 35 countries found that most residents of "middle-income countries" — like those found in the Global South — see China favorably, said Pew Research Center. (The favorable views were highest in Thailand, Kenya and Bangladesh.) In high-income countries, however, the vast majority of respondents see China unfavorably. Those views are more divided, though, in the Asia-Pacific where China has simmering territorial disputes with its neighbors.

American leaders acknowledge that China has "outpaced" the U.S. in the Global South, said *The Washington Post*. "We need to do more," Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The goal for U.S. officials is to make sure the planetary playing field doesn't go uncontested. "We want to help ensure that [countries in the Global South] have a choice," another State Department official said to *The Atlantic Council* in February, "and that they can make their decisions free from coercion."

Dharamshala's Tibetan tide ebbs, arrivals fall steeply amid China's strict border vigil

19 August 2024, [Hindustan Times](#)

Only around 10 to 15 Tibetans trickle into Dharamshala annually now, down massively from nearly 3,000 a decade ago

Once abuzz with Tibetans arriving in India from their native land after crossing the Himalayas, the Tibetan Reception Center at Khanyara, Dharamshala, has seen a sharp decline in arrivals in recent years. Only a handful Tibetans trickle in now, a shift that most Tibetan government-in-exile officials attribute to stricter border control imposed by the Chinese government.

Originally built as a transit point for over 2,500 Tibetans who annually made the clandestine journey from Tibet into Nepal and then to Dharamshala — home to the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, since his escape from Tibet — the facility has seen significantly reduced activity now.

The officials at Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), based in Dharamshala, say surveillance around the border and mountain passes was amped up by the Chinese in 2008 following a major demonstration in Tibet.

According to CTA officials, in 2021, only four Tibetans arrived in Dharamshala while five had arrived a year ago. The numbers did not improve much, with 10 arrivals in 2022 and 15 in 2023.

The same figure stood around 2,500 to 3,000 around the 1990s or the early 2000s. CTA officials said the number of arrivals has gone up in the last couple of years, but is nowhere close to what it was a decade or two ago.

CTA spokesperson Tenzin Lekshay says, "The situation has changed dramatically after the massive Tibetan uprising in 2008. In response, China took measures to prevent information about the situation in Tibet from reaching the outside world. They tightened border controls to restrict movement and stop people from leaving Tibet. China aimed to obscure the reality of conditions in Tibet, promoting a positive image that contradicts the actual situation."

He adds that China has also been restricting access to Tibet for outsiders, "Visiting Tibet is not like travelling to China; foreigners need special permits to enter. This tight control suggests that there are aspects of Tibet that China wants to keep hidden."

The CTA operates three Reception Centers in Nepal, Delhi, and Dharamshala. New arrivals first enter Nepal, then transit through Delhi, before ultimately arriving in Dharamshala.

Namkyi, a former political prisoner who recently arrived from Tibet, had testified her experiences before she decided to leave Tibet for Dharamshala. She and her sister, who had participated in a march calling for "Free Tibet" in October 2015 were detained by police. "In November 2016, after our detention period had lasted for 13 month, the court of Trochu County called us to the courtroom and we were put on trial. We were sentenced to three years each on trumped-up charges of undertaking 'separatist acts against the nation' and supporting 'the Dalai clique,'" Namkyi, who speaks in Tibetan, said in her testimony published by CTA.

After their release in October 2018, the family was put on a blacklist. "Our expressions and movement were severely restricted, putting anyone we were in contact with at risk," Namkyi, who began her journey to India with her aunt Tsering Kyi in May 2023, says.

Tenzin Tsundue, Tibetan writer and activist based in Dharamshala, said the Tibetan uprising during the 2008 Beijing Olympics that rocked Chinese control was found to be inspired by Tibetans who returned from India.

“So, the Chinese border guards tightened the Tibet-Nepal borders and started to pay Nepalese border guards to stop Tibetans escaping Tibet. Since 2010, the number of Tibetans escaping Tibet drastically fell from 3,500 a year before the uprising to just 20 to 30,” he said, adding that Tibetans now have to report departure and arrival every time they travel from one district to another.

“Many passports have been revoked, ID cards, including ration cards, mobile numbers, and bank accounts, are rolled into one number with DNA personal details. With such a sophisticated mechanism of control, China has turned Tibet into a police state,” he added.

Tsundue says China now also uses paid western YouTubers to create a false image of Tibet as a tourist destination, but in reality is very strict in giving visas to foreigners. He adds that visas are not being given to Indians since the 2020 Galwan valley clash.

Opinion: More Painful Than the Agony of Death

19 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Palden Sonam

On July 12, a video clip from Tibet was going viral on the Tibetan cyber world, which, at first glance, appeared like a funeral ceremony. Everyone in the video looked visibly distraught with their heads down and many crying.

However, it turned out to be a scene from the final day of Ragya Sherig Norbu Lobling –a prominent private-run Tibetan school in Amdo region of Tibet as teachers and students paid their last respect to their beloved school after the Chinese government forced it to close.

In a normal situation, a school would be shut down if it failed to serve the primary goal of giving education to its students. In today’s occupied Tibet, however, a school can be forced to close simply because it is able to give great education to its students.

Ragya School was established in 1994 by Jigme Gyaltzen, a Tibetan monk educator in Golok, (Ch: Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai). Golok is largely a remote nomadic area and this school has played a pivotal role in providing quality education to hundreds of Tibetan students. As its popularity spreads, students from different parts of Tibet have sought admission into it. Many of its students are orphans.

This school, in addition to providing both traditional and modern education –including Tibetan traditional medicine and handcrafts, computer and international

languages like Chinese and English –has adopted the centuries-old techniques of Nalanda’s analytical debate to teach contemporary subjects. This teaching method proved to be a great success in the learning experience of the students. Some Chinese scholars have been so much impressed by the academic brilliance of the school’s students that they visited the school to observe it.

In fact, Ragya school and its founder won many official recognitions from Chinese government including Excellent Service Award (2003), China Charity Worker award (2005), National People’s Education award (2010) and Innovative School Award (2012) for its contribution to education and society.

Nevertheless, the aggressive assimilationist campaign, Chinese president Xi Jinping launched as the key feature of his repressive policy toward Tibetans and other colonized people like the Uyghurs, has drastically reduced their already limited space to teach and study and practice their language, culture and religion.

This policy is implemented on an aggressive scale – shutting down village-level schools, banning private Tibetan classes, displacing Tibetan as medium of instruction and putting thousands of children in colonial boarding schools. In May this year, China closed another Tibetan-run school, Taktsang Lhamo Tibetan Culture School in Amdo Ngaba (Sichuan). This school founded in 1986 played a key role in providing education to the local Tibetan children.

For Tibetans, this ethno-nationalist war, on their language and culture, is not only an issue of language and cultural rights and repression, but also human rights violation and a crime against humanity.

The most cruel and heinous aspect of this cultural war is that it targets children by putting them in colonial boarding schools –even children as young as 4 years old, too little and too vulnerable to be in a boarding school. Today these boarding schools house roughly one million children between ages 6 to 18. China kept another 100,000 children aged between four to six years old in boarding pre-schools. They have not only been subject to cultural assimilation but also ideological indoctrination as a strategy to manufacture a generation of model colonial subjects –rootless in their culture and toothless in their language.

This systematic policy of separating children from their families and subjecting them to cultural assimilation and ideological indoctrination is nothing but Cultural Genocide. Under this policy, Beijing is not only tearing families apart but also forcing vulnerable children to become strangers to their own culture by severing their spiritual, linguistic, and cultural ties to their home and community.

This has to be understood, not merely as an issue of taking away defenceless children from their families and brainwashing them, but in a more psychological

and physiological sense of brutalizing children's mind and body for political ends. And the traumatic experiences, they have to suffer, and the social and emotional tolls they will have on the people of Tibet in the future is not an uneasy thing to guess.

An absurdity, stretched beyond its limit, is Beijing's justification for running the colonial boarding school system on the grounds that there are not enough schools in rural and remote Tibetan areas. However, the reality is that it is the same regime in Beijing that closed existing village-level as well as the few private schools in Tibet –leaving no alternatives for Tibetan students except the boarding schools.

Therefore, the real problem with Ragya School, in China's eyes, is not that it does not have fancy buildings or expensive grounds. Instead, it stood in Beijing's way of cultural and linguistic elimination in Tibet. This school has produced many modern educated students with strong roots in their culture and skilled in their mother tongue –making a positive impact in their respective field as educators, artists, intellectuals, writers, civil servants and entrepreneurs.

In the ultimate analysis, this forced closure of Tibetan medium schools is to terminate, not just an alternative school for the Tibetans but the very idea that it is not only possible, but also pedagogically more conducive for Tibetan students to excel academically if the medium of instruction is their own language.

Colonial system, whether yesterday or today, is intrinsically disempowering when it comes to the true interests and aspirations of the occupied people. In the case of Tibet, this has never been clearer than now. It is manifested in the form of political repression, economic marginalization and cultural suppression. The forced closure of Tibetan medium schools is another bomb China dropped on the soul of Tibetan people and civilization.

Tibetans, especially in Tibet, felt the crushing blow of this repression against their culture and language. The mournful scene from the last day of the school is, indeed a funeral rite –for an acclaimed school and the idea of such an alternative. Despite the enormous personal risks including the arrest and torture, many in Tibet expressed their sense of loss, sadness and helplessness after the school was shut down.

A line from the social media post of a Tibetan encapsulates the general mood in Tibet during that time —“Even the agony of death may not be as excruciating as today's event.”

India-China relations: The ball is in the Chinese court

19 August 2024, [ORF](#), Manoj Joshi

India is open to re-configuring relations with China but a resolution of the border issue in eastern Ladakh is essential for progress.

For some time now, there have been signs that India wants a reset of its relations with China, however, no concrete steps are visible as of now. The formal Indian position, articulated repeatedly by the External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, is that there can be no forward movement till there is a final resolution of the border issue in eastern Ladakh.

Last month, the Ministry of Finance in its annual Economic Survey, called for increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from China to increase India's participation in the global supply chain and its exports. This was a surprise because in 2020, as a fallout of the eastern Ladakh tensions, India had placed stringent restraints on FDI from China.

The Survey noted that if India were to take advantage of the prevailing “China plus one” strategy, it needed to either integrate into Chinese supply chains or use FDI from China “for boosting India's exports to the US,” in the same way other East Asian economies had done in the past. It added that “It is more effective to have Chinese companies invest in India and then export the products to these markets rather than importing from China, adding minimal value”.

Both sides continue to hold fast to their respective positions—India insisting that the status quo ante be restored in eastern Ladakh to normalise relations, while China insists that there is no real problem there and India should set aside issues relating to the border and forge good relations with China.

Whether these views of the Ministry of Finance have an impact on current policy remains to be seen, on the surface, however, there is little change. Both sides continue to hold fast to their respective positions— India insisting that the status quo ante be restored in eastern Ladakh to normalise relations, while China insists that there is no real problem there and India should set aside issues relating to the border and forge good relations with China.

In early July, S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Jaishankar noted on X that he and his counterpart “discussed early resolution of remaining issues in border areas.” And that they had agreed to “redouble efforts through diplomatic and military channels to that end”, adding that “respecting the LAC and ensuring peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential.” The key to good relations, he said, was the “three mutuals”—“mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, and mutual interest”.

A press release by the Ministry of External Affairs noted that the two ministers agreed “that the prolongation of the current situation on the border is not in the interest of either side.” It noted that Jaishankar emphasised “the importance of fully abiding by relevant bilateral agreements, protocols and understandings reached between the two Governments in the past.”

Three weeks later, the two met again in Vientiane, Laos; the official MEA press release noted that their discussions focused on the need to find “an early resolution of the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control to stabilise and rebuild bilateral relations.” It reiterated the importance of the “three mutuals.”

Just how much of a gap there remained between the Indian and Chinese positions was evident from the Chinese press release of the meeting which ignored the border issue and noted that “the two sides should take a rational approach to rise above differences and frictions to promote the improvement as well as stable and sustainable development of China-India relations.”

The release cited Jaishankar as saying that the two sides had “broad converging interests” and had to “face the shadow brought by the situation in the border areas”. But the Indian side was ready “to take a historic, strategic, and open perspective to find solutions to the differences.”

At the apex level, Prime Minister Modi in April 2024 had given an interview to *Newsweek* magazine where he mentioned that in his view the relationship with China was “important and significant.” He went on to add that it was his “belief that we need to urgently address the prolonged situation on our borders so that the abnormality in our bilateral interactions can be put behind us.” He said that he hoped and believed that “through positive and constructive bilateral engagement at the diplomatic and military levels, we will be able to restore and sustain peace and tranquillity in our borders.”

In eastern Ladakh, through their military and diplomatic talks, the two sides have been able to create “no patrol zones” in three of the six areas which the Chinese had blockaded in 2020 and prevented Indian forces from patrolling—the Kugrang river valley, Gogra, and Pangong Tso. As part of the settlement, Indian troops vacated the Kailash heights overlooking Spanggur Tso.

As of now both sides also continue to maintain substantial additional forces on either side of the LAC. But Chinese blockades in two important areas remain—the Depsang bulge in the north and the Charding-Ninglung Nala area in the south. As of now both sides also continue to maintain substantial additional forces on either side of the LAC. Only with

complete disengagement will the two sides de-escalate in eastern Ladakh.

The 21st round of Corps Commanders level meetings to discuss the issue took place at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point in 2024. And parallel to this, the 29th meeting of officials under the rubric of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) took place on 27 March in Beijing. There have been no further institutional meetings aimed at resolving the border issue, though Wang and Jaishankar expressed hope in Astana that a meeting of the WMCC would take place soon.

Even today, the goal of the surprise Chinese action in 2020 remains a mystery. In 2019, Xi Jinping met Prime Minister Modi for their second informal summit in Chennai, an event that presaged good relations in the coming period. 2019 was also the year in which Chinese investments into India peaked in terms of the number of transactions (527). The peak year for investments, US\$859 million was 2015.

But then, they conducted a sudden mobilisation, violative of the 1996 Military Confidence Building Agreement, and established blockades at several points in eastern Ladakh to prevent Indian troops from patrolling parts of the LAC. They did not attack any Indian post as such and the Galwan events that led to the loss of 20 Indian soldiers were more by way of a situation gone out of control than any planned action. The Indian reaction was quick and tough. Besides banning hundreds of Chinese apps, the India issued Press Note 3 which placed restrictions on investments from countries sharing a land border with India. Though ostensibly aimed at preventing “opportunistic takeovers/acquisitions of Indian companies due to the COVID 19 pandemic”, its real effect was palpable on FDI flows from China which had coincidentally undertaken the eastern Ladakh incursions at that time. A parliamentary question in March 2022 revealed that 347 applications had been received in the previous two years and of these 66 were approved and 193 rejected.

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Despite all this, India-China trade continued to grow, and in 2023-24, it has reached US\$ 118.4, making China India’s largest trading partner ahead of the United States. There was a huge imbalance in this with India exporting just US\$16.67 billion worth of goods and importing US\$101.7 billion. India remain heavily reliant on China for critical products like telecom parts, pharmaceutical ingredients, and advanced technology components.

The Economic Survey’s call for seeking enhanced FDI from China was also an admission by the government that the Production Linked Investment (PLI)

scheme that it had launched in 2020 to strengthen India's manufacturing industries and make them more globally competitive was not performing as well as expected.

As of now in terms of relations with India, the ball is in the Chinese court. India has made it clear that it is not willing to normalise ties till issues are settled in eastern Ladakh. China continues to ignore that demand while calling for better ties. Meanwhile, both sides continue to maintain additional forces along the LAC as well as their build-up on either side of the border.

Opinion: More Painful Than the Agony of Death

19 August 2024, [Phayul](#), Palden Sonam



Hundreds of students march on October 19, 2010, to protest Qinghai provincial policy threatening Tibetan linguistic and culture heritage (Photo/Free Tibet)

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Nevertheless, the aggressive assimilationist campaign, Chinese president Xi Jinping launched as the key feature of his repressive policy toward Tibetans and other colonized people like the Uyghurs, has drastically reduced their already limited space to teach and study and practice their language, culture and religion.

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The most cruel and heinous aspect of this cultural war is that it targets children by putting them in colonial boarding schools—even children as young as 4 years old, too little and too vulnerable to be in a boarding school. Today these boarding schools house roughly one million children between ages 6 to 18. China kept another 100,000 children aged between four to six years old in boarding pre-schools. They have not only been subject to cultural assimilation but also ideological indoctrination as a strategy to manufacture a generation of model colonial subjects—rootless in their culture and toothless in their language.

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and body for political ends. And the traumatic experiences, they have to suffer, and the social and emotional tolls they will have on the people of Tibet in the future is not an uneasy thing to guess.

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‘Monument to history’ battle between US and China over future of Mao's secretary's diary

18 August 2024, [The Guardian](#), Amy Hawkins

Beijing is believed to be behind court bid to secure account of life inside Communist HQ.

In the early hours of 4 June 1989, Li Rui, a veteran of the Chinese Communist party (CCP), was standing on the balcony of his apartment on Chang'an Boulevard in central Beijing. He could see tanks rolling towards Tiananmen Square.

For weeks, up to a million protesters had been gathering peacefully in Beijing's plaza, demanding political reform. But they failed. Instead, as Li observed from his unique vantage point, troops opened fire, killing an estimated several thousands of civilians. It was the worst massacre in recent Chinese history. “Soldiers firing randomly with their machine guns, sometimes shooting the ground and sometimes shooting toward the sky,” Li wrote in his diary. A “black weekend”.

The first-hand account of an event that the Chinese government has systematically tried to distort and erase from the historical record is one of thousands of observations noted in Li's diaries, which he kept meticulously between 1946 and 2018. Few people, especially not of Li's stature, have kept such detailed records of this tumultuous era in Chinese history. Now those diaries are the subject of a hotly disputed lawsuit, the trial of which begins on Monday.

Born in 1917, Li joined the Communist party as a young idealist. After the communists seized power in 1949, he rose through the ranks to become Mao's personal secretary in 1958. But it wasn't to last. In 1959, Li publicly criticised Mao and was sent to a penal camp as punishment. His persecution continued through the Cultural Revolution, including more than eight years in solitary confinement. It wasn't until after Mao died in 1976 that Li returned to the senior party ranks. He went on to become one of the most outspoken members of the liberal, reformist faction, observing from the inside the silencing of dissent that has intensified under the rule of his personal acquaintance Xi Jinping.

Li's papers are, therefore, thus a crucial archive. “It's hard to overstate their significance,” says Joseph Torigian, a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. But on Monday, a court in California, not China, will begin hearing a trial about the fate of those diaries, the culmination of five years of legal wrangling that have complicated Li's legacy since he died in February 2019, at the age of 101.

For several years before his death, Li's daughter Li Nanyang, who lives in the US, had been scanning, transcribing and cataloguing her father's papers, and ultimately transferred them to the Hoover Institution, the leading archive for CCP history in the US. Li Nanyang and Stanford claim that this was in line with Li's wishes. On 30 January 2017, for example, he recorded a meeting with his wife, Zhang Yuzhen, to talk about “the issue of my diaries”. Zhang “agreed

with my decision ... having Hoover retain the diaries”, he wrote.

But on 21 March 2019, a lawyer for Li’s widow wrote to Stanford, asserting her ownership of the diaries and seeking their return. The 89-year-old soon filed a lawsuit in Beijing, arguing that she was the rightful heir to Li’s estate. In May that year, Stanford filed a countersuit in California to eliminate Zhang’s claims to the materials. And so began a legal battle between one of the world’s top universities and an ageing widow – who, Stanford argues, is a front for the Chinese government.

Why would Zhang, who is now well into her 90s, spend several years and millions of dollars fighting over a collection of diaries?

Lawyers for Zhang, who did not respond to interview requests, say it is about privacy. The materials reflect “deeply personal” affairs, including “intimate correspondence”, her lawyers argue. The “ongoing violations” of her privacy have caused “severe emotional distress”.

But others are sceptical. “By all indications ... the PRC [People’s Republic of China] is running this litigation behind the scenes,” lawyers for Stanford have argued. “To put it simply, Ms Zhang lacks the financial ability to pay the attorneys’ fees being incurred on her behalf.” Zhang’s lawyers deny there has been any interference from the Chinese government.

“It’s simply about control,” says Ian Johnson, author of a book about China’s unofficial historians, such as Li. Under Xi Jinping, China’s leader, the party has made it clear that it “can’t allow competing narratives of what happened in the past”.

In many countries, the diaries of a political leader would be housed in an archive, available to researchers or the public. In China, the opposite is true. In 2013, Xi warned against “historical nihilism”. For historians, that has meant that, after a period of relative openness, archive after archive has been shuttered. In 2012, the archives of the foreign ministry abruptly closed, reopening the following year with 90% of the materials redacted.

That makes Li’s diaries particularly valuable to researchers. “The detail is mind-boggling,” says Frank Dikötter, a historian. Insights into elite politics are buried among notes about how many laps he swam in the pool, and how many times he got up to use the bathroom at night. Domestic details notwithstanding, Dikötter says it’s unimaginable that his diaries could be displayed in today’s China. “When you have a monopoly over power, you develop an obsession with secrecy.”

Li was keenly aware of this trend. In 2013, he said in an interview: “There are classified materials of the party about the Cultural Revolution ... I heard it was all burned.” Such tidbits have been marshalled by Stanford to argue that Li wanted his papers preserved

at Hoover. But Zhang’s lawyers have found their own bits of evidence in Li’s voluminous writings and interviews. In 2014, he said, “Li Nanyang is Li Nanyang, and I am myself. My thoughts and opinions are well known and expressed in my books and articles. Li Nanyang is my daughter, but she can’t represent me, and I don’t allow her to represent me.”

Li Nanyang, a fierce CCP critic herself, doesn’t dispute the fact that she and her father didn’t always see eye to eye. “He wanted to save the party. That’s not my idea ... This is not something that demonstrates that my father won’t work with me [to donate] his historical materials.”

Zhang denies that there is a plot to hide the Li Rui diaries from the public. Her legal filings note that she is only seeking the return of his original handwritten diaries, not the full collection of papers at Hoover, and that Hoover is free to make copies for researchers.

But historians say that original manuscripts are vital, especially when history is contested. It’s “crucial that you have the handwritten ones,” says Dikötter. “Because, ultimately, that’s what the whole thing relies on. The credibility relies on that.”

Li “would have known how difficult it would have been for [the diaries] to see the light of day [in China],” says Johnson. “I think very much that he wanted to donate them to Hoover.”

Li died without a will. His daughter says that this is because if he had made his intention public, including getting a will formally notarised, he would have faced trouble from the government. Zhang’s lawyers have quoted from a draft will, in which Li stated that his children “must not participate in the publication of my diaries”. Stanford says it has never seen evidence of this draft.

A court in Beijing long ago ruled in Zhang’s favour. A second lawsuit filed in Beijing by Li Nanyang’s sister, seeking the return of the papers relating to their mother, Li Rui’s first wife, also resulted in a judgment that the materials should be returned. But the 40 boxes full of pages and pages of Li’s dense scrawl, documenting the dramatic and often darkening developments of China in the 20th century, for now remain at Stanford. Some legal experts have pointed out that this week’s trial could simply be a question of whether a US court should respect a ruling made in a foreign jurisdiction. But for scholars, the stakes are higher. The diaries are “a monument to history”, says Dikötter.

This article was amended on 22 August 2024. An earlier version referred to Li Rui having kept diaries between 1938 and 2018; in fact the dates are 1946 to 2018. It has also been clarified that Li was sent to a penal camp in 1959, before the Cultural Revolution started in 1966.

Tibetan Travails: China's Stranglehold on Movement

18 August 2024, [Devdiscourse](#)

China's stringent travel restrictions are severely impacting ethnic Tibetans' freedom of movement. Increased surveillance, checkpoints, and passport hindrances create significant barriers, affecting their ability to seek exile or practice their cultural identity. The Tibetan community in Dharamshala sees dwindling arrivals amidst heightened security since 2008.

China's stringent travel restrictions are disproportionately affecting ethnic Tibetans, creating significant barriers to their freedom of movement. The obstacles include troop deployments, checkpoints, roadblocks, required bureaucratic approvals, and passport restrictions, which impede travel both within Tibetan areas and externally.

Restrictions have intensified, particularly near international borders in the south, making it harder for Tibetans to seek exile in India and other countries. The Tibetan Reception Center in Dharamshala remains largely vacant, with dwindling student numbers at the Lower Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) school. Experts attribute this decline to increased strictness on movement following the 2008 protests in Tibet.

According to Central Tibetan Administration sources, only five Tibetans arrived in Dharamshala in 2020, four in 2021, ten in 2022, and 15 in 2023. This contrasts starkly with over 2000 annual arrivals during the 1990s and early 2000s. Tenzin Passang, executive director of Students for a Free Tibet-India, remarked, "Fleeing Tibet has always been perilous, but Tibetans pursue it to preserve their cultural identity and religious freedom."

Passport acquisition for foreign travel remains nearly impossible for Tibetans, with over 2,000 inspectors manning 700 discipline committees across rural Tibet. These measures have severely curtailed the number of Tibetans escaping post-2008 due to Beijing's heightened security to prevent protests and international scrutiny. Passang noted, "China aims to prevent escapes as Tibetans can provide firsthand accounts of human rights abuses."

Previous incidents involve Chinese authorities confiscating passports and imposing travel restrictions to Lhasa. Tibetan-origin foreign nationals also face major hurdles in obtaining visas to visit Tibet, often resulting in denials after prolonged waits. Highlighting these issues, Passang added, "Our culture and way of life face aggressive suppression by the CCP."

China's extreme restrictions on freedom of movement affecting ethnic Tibetans

18 August 2024, ANI

China's extreme restrictions on freedom of movement are disproportionately affecting ethnic Tibetans. Obstacles including troop deployments, checkpoints, roadblocks, required bureaucratic approvals and passport restrictions impede freedom of movement both within Tibetan areas and between those areas and the outside world. China has tightened travel restrictions, with Tibetans needing permits to enter certain areas, particularly near international borders in the south. These constraints on freedom of movement also hinder Tibetans from seeking exile in India and other countries.

The Tibetan Reception Center in Dharamshala is lying vacant. Moreover, the number of students in the Lower Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) school in Dharamshala is also decreasing.

Experts say that after the protests in Tibet in 2008, China has increased strictness on the movement of Tibetans.

According to Central Tibetan Administration sources only five Tibetans had arrived in Dharamshala in 2020, four in 2021, ten in 2022 and 15 arrivals have been reported in 2023. However, in the 1990s or the early 2000s, the annual arrivals were over 2000. Speaking to ANI, the executive director of Students for a Free Tibet-India, Tenzin Passang said, "Fleeing Tibet has always been a dangerous journey but Tibetans still believe that it works because they cannot practice their religion freely or speak their language and express their cultural identity so they realise that they have a better chance for maintaining this unique Tibetan identity in-exile so they choose to flee." Tibetans face nearly insurmountable hurdles in obtaining a passport for foreign travel. Also, more than 2,000 "inspectors" that staff around 700 "discipline committees" set up in rural Tibetan communities have tightened travel restrictions in recent years. "After 2008 the number of people escaping from Tibet decreased drastically because China specifically raised their security and surveillance across Tibet to ensure that there is no repeat of the mass demonstrations that happened in 2008 which also received global media attention and China faced international criticism so they have a strong interest in preventing Tibetans from escaping because the Tibetans can provide the first-hand information about the human rights abuses in Tibet," Passang added.

Further, she also highlighted the previous cases in which the Chinese authorities have confiscated the passports of Tibetans and restricted travel to Lhasa. Foreign nationals of Tibetan origin face enormous

challenges when seeking a visa to visit Tibet, often waiting for years only for their request to be denied. "There were also cases where they confiscated the passports of Tibetans living at the borders and they imposed strict restrictions to travel across Lhasa. Even in our own country, the CCP has raised a war against our culture and our way of life," she said.

Dalai Lama, the US and diplomacy

18 August 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Khedroob Thondup

During his 2020 presidential campaign, US President Joe Biden made a promise that resonated deeply with advocates of human rights and religious freedom: He pledged to meet the Dalai Lama and invite him to the White House if elected.

This commitment was seen as a significant gesture toward supporting the Tibetan cause and standing up to China's oppressive policies in Tibet.

However, as Biden's four-year tenure draws to a close, this promise remains unfulfilled, raising questions about the administration's diplomatic priorities and its stance on human rights.

Despite his campaign pledge, Biden has not met with the Dalai Lama during his presidency. This absence is notable, especially considering that some former US presidents, including George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, have met with the Tibetan spiritual leader.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, symbolizes the struggle for Tibetan autonomy and the broader fight for human rights and religious freedom. One of the primary reasons for this unfulfilled promise appears to be the Biden administration's concern over offending China. The US-China relationship is complex and fraught with tension over issues ranging from trade to human rights to military presence in the South China Sea. Meeting with the Dalai Lama, who Beijing views as a separatist, could exacerbate these tensions and potentially derail diplomatic efforts on other fronts.

By not meeting with the Dalai Lama, Biden has missed an opportunity to reaffirm the US' commitment to human rights and religious freedom. Such a meeting would have sent a powerful message to the world about Washington's stance on these critical issues. It would have also provided a platform to highlight the ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet and to support the Tibetan people's struggle for autonomy.

While the Biden administration has taken steps to address the Tibet issue, such as signing the Resolve Tibet Act, which pressures China to resume negotiations with Tibetan leaders, the symbolic power of a presidential meeting with the Dalai Lama cannot be overstated. Symbolic gestures in diplomacy often

carry significant weight, influencing public perception and international relations.

Biden's decision not to meet with the Dalai Lama during his tenure reflects the delicate balance of international diplomacy.

However, it also underscores a missed opportunity to stand firmly for human rights and religious freedom. As the world watches, it is crucial for leaders to not only make promises but also to follow through on them, especially when they pertain to fundamental values and principles.

Nancy Pelosi has consistently called out China's oppressive policies

18 August 2024, [The Week](#), Khedroob Thondup

Pelosi has advocated the rights of the Tibetan people.

NANCY PELOSI, a name synonymous with resilience and unwavering commitment to human rights, has long been a formidable figure in American politics. Her relationship with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people is a testament to her dedication to justice and freedom. As someone who has consistently stood up to China, Pelosi has an admirable legacy of courage and tenacity.

Pelosi's history of challenging China dates back to 1991, when she unfurled a pro-democracy banner in Tiananmen Square, commemorating the victims of the 1989 massacre. This act of defiance was a clear message to Beijing that the US would not turn a blind eye to human rights abuses. Over the years, Pelosi has consistently criticised China's record on human rights, from the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang to the suppression of freedoms in Hong Kong and Tibet.

Pelosi's connection with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause dates back to the early years of her political career. In 1989, she was one of the first American politicians to meet with the Dalai Lama after he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This meeting marked the beginning of a long-standing friendship and a shared commitment to the Tibetan struggle for autonomy and human rights. One of the most poignant moments in Pelosi's advocacy for Tibet came in 2008, during the Beijing Olympics. Despite the potential diplomatic fallout, she led a congressional delegation to Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile. There, she met with the Dalai Lama and expressed her solidarity with the Tibetan people. Her visit was a bold statement against China's human rights abuses and a clear message that the world was watching.

She has consistently used her platform to call out China's oppressive policies and to advocate the rights of the Tibetan people. In 2007, she played a crucial role in the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act, which

aimed to support the preservation of Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic heritage. During a visit to Tibet in 2015, she and her delegation were closely monitored by Chinese authorities. Despite the restrictions, Pelosi managed to meet with local Tibetans and hear their stories of resilience.

Pelosi's role in world affairs extends beyond her advocacy for Tibet. As the first woman to serve as Speaker of the US House of Representatives, she has been a trailblazer for women in politics. Her leadership during critical moments, such as the passage of the Affordable Care Act and the impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump, has cemented her reputation as a formidable and principled leader.

Her stance on China has been particularly noteworthy. Pelosi has been a vocal critic of China's human rights record, its aggressive territorial claims and its influence on global affairs. She has consistently called for a tougher stance on China, advocating policies that promote human rights and democratic values.

Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022 was a significant moment in her career and in US-China relations. Despite warnings from Beijing and even caution from the Biden administration, Pelosi proceeded with her trip, emphasising the US's unwavering support for Taiwan's democracy. Her visit was met with strong condemnation from China, which conducted large-scale military exercises in response. This move was seen by many as a bold statement against China's increasing assertiveness in the region.

Pelosi's achievements in a male-dominated field are even more remarkable as she has consistently stood up to powerful adversaries. She has shattered glass ceilings and paved the way for future generations of women leaders. Her ability to navigate the complexities of international politics while maintaining her commitment to human rights and justice has made her a significant figure in world affairs.

The author is the son of Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's elder brother and his former personal representative to China. He lives in Taiwan.

President Biden's Missed Opportunity: He should have met the Dalai Lama

18 August 2024, [The Sunday Guardian](#), Khedroob Thondup

During his 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden made a promise that resonated deeply with advocates of human rights and religious freedom: he pledged to meet the Dalai Lama and invite him to the White House if elected.

This commitment was seen as a significant gesture towards supporting the Tibetan cause and standing up to China's oppressive policies

in Tibet. However, as President Biden's four-year tenure draws to a close, this promise remains unfulfilled, raising questions about the administration's diplomatic priorities and its stance on human rights.

Despite his campaign pledge, President Biden has not met with the Dalai Lama during his presidency. This absence is notable, especially considering that previous U.S. presidents, including George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, have all met with the Tibetan spiritual leader.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, symbolizes the struggle for Tibetan autonomy and the broader fight for human rights and religious freedom. One of the primary reasons for this unfulfilled promise appears to be the administration's concern over offending China. The U.S.-China relationship is complex and fraught with tension over issues ranging from trade to human rights to military presence in the South China Sea. Meeting with the Dalai Lama, whom Beijing views as a separatist, could exacerbate these tensions and potentially derail diplomatic efforts on other fronts.

Impact on Human Rights Advocacy

By not meeting with the Dalai Lama, President Biden has missed an opportunity to reaffirm the United States' commitment to human rights and religious freedom. Such a meeting would have sent a powerful message to the world about the U.S.'s stance on these critical issues. It would have also provided a platform to highlight the ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet and to support the Tibetan people's struggle for autonomy.

While the Biden administration has taken steps to address the Tibet issue, such as signing the Resolve Tibet Act, which pressures China to resume negotiations with Tibetan leaders. The symbolic power of a presidential meeting with the Dalai Lama cannot be overstated. Symbolic gestures in diplomacy often carry significant weight, influencing public perception and international relations.

President Biden's decision not to meet with the Dalai Lama during his tenure reflects the delicate balance of international diplomacy. However, it also underscores a missed opportunity to stand firmly for human rights and religious freedom. As the world watches, it is crucial for leaders to not only make promises but also to follow through on them, especially when they pertain to fundamental values and principles.

Dalai Lama's nephew, Khedroob Thondup is a geopolitical analyst.

Tibetan people deserve their dignity — and their rights

17 August 2024, [Boston Globe](#), Jim McGovern

Our visit was to India — not Tibet — because the Dalai Lama has lived in exile there for the past 65 years, forced to flee after his native homeland was brutally taken over and occupied by China.

Earlier this summer, I was part of a bipartisan congressional delegation that traveled to Dharamshala, India, to meet with the Dalai Lama.

Our visit was to India — not Tibet — because the Dalai Lama has lived in exile there for the past 65 years, forced to flee after his native homeland was brutally taken over and occupied by the People’s Republic of China.

For decades, the United States has played a complicated role in the resulting dispute — pledging support for the people of Tibet while also accepting China’s sovereignty over the region. In recent years, and rightfully so, the Chinese government has come under increasing scrutiny for violating the rights of the Tibetan people and attempting to erase their language, culture, religion, and way of life. For America to help right these wrongs, we must demand that China start treating the people of Tibet with dignity and respect. We have more tools in the toolbox — now is the time to use them.

Visiting with His Holiness was an incredibly powerful and moving experience. As the world’s best-known Tibetan leader, he has inspired millions with his belief in the oneness of all humanity and the importance of human dignity. I have been guided by his commitment to nonviolence and his dedication to preserving the one planet we all share. In a world consumed by turmoil, his leadership is as relevant and as necessary today as ever.

Our visit to Dharamshala was a vivid reminder of these two realities. The Tibetans we met in India are there because of Chinese repression. The thriving community and solid institutions they have built — including the democratically self-governing Central Tibetan Administration — are evidence of their strength and resilience as a people. But the underlying dispute over the Tibetan right to self-determination is unresolved.

The week before our bipartisan delegation departed for India, the House voted overwhelmingly to pass the Promoting a Peaceful Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, a bill I authored. This legislation affirms America’s support for Tibetan self-determination and requires the State Department to counter false information about Tibet — such as the PRC claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times. Correcting the historical record is one step the United States can take to support the Tibetan people.

China has criticized this new legislation with the tired accusation that it constitutes interference in China’s internal affairs. In fact, the PRC sanctioned me for my role in calling out their horrific human rights record — an action that only serves to highlight how afraid their leadership is of free and open debate, and how they seek to punish and silence those who disagree with them.

I will wear their sanctions as a badge of honor, and I will continue to call on the Chinese government to honor its existing obligations under international human rights law. As a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, China has accepted that “all peoples have the right to self-determination.” Self-determination can take many forms; the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans in China, is one example.

The United States must continue to pressure Chinese officials to stop their efforts to erase Tibetan culture. Tibetans must be able to speak their language, practice their religion, educate their children, and preserve their history as they see fit. Tibetan political prisoners should be released. And the Dalai Lama’s successor, the Panchen Lama — forcibly disappeared by the Chinese government in 1995 — should be allowed to live his life in freedom. The Dalai Lama should be allowed to return to Tibet if he wants and meet with his people.

The United States must also urge the Chinese government to negotiate in good faith with the Dalai Lama, the Central Tibetan Administration, or whoever Tibetans decide, to ensure a future in which Tibetans preserve their dignity and all of their rights. There is no obstacle to negotiation on the Tibetan side. It is past time for the PRC to return to the table. If they were to take these steps, the international community would respond positively.

Finally, America must uplift the voices of Tibetans in the diaspora and support their initiatives to preserve their culture and memory. At the end of the day, this comes back to the Tibetan children who greeted us upon our arrival in Dharamshala. We seek a better future for their sake.

Despite our differences, China and the United States must learn to peacefully coexist. But peaceful coexistence doesn’t mean staying silent when we disagree — we have different principles and values, and those values compel the United States to stand up until the human rights of the Tibetan people are respected.

America must stand in solidarity with the people of Tibet for as long as that takes.

India lagging behind the West on Tibet stance?

17 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Given the recent US adoption of the 'Resolve Tibet Act' and the passing of significant resolutions on Tibet by the parliaments of the EU, Canada, and Australia in recent times, Tenzin Sherab quotes US House Speaker Emeritus Nancy Pelosi that "Now things have changed" to argue that India too should adopt a more robust policy on Tibet in keeping with its historical ties with the Chinese occupied Himalayan territory and its current geopolitical concerns.*

Two recent Tibet related events have made Tibetans jubilant and Xi worried. Seventy-year-old conflict between Tibet and China has now surfaced prominently through media and on various social platforms.

In his recent speech at upper Indian Parliament (Rajya Sabha), a member from Sikkim State, Shri Dorjee Tshering Lepcha made a pragmatic demand to the Government of India to refer the border of 1,400 km stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh as "Tibet border" rather than China border. Since 1962, India and China have held 30 border meetings, the latest one in July 2024 in New Delhi, which yielded no tangible result for both sides. Historically, there never existed borders between India and China. MP Mr. Lepcha urged the Indian Government to issue a directive to its agencies to officially rename the border as "Tibet border" as it affected India's national identity and territorial integrity.

And another significant event was the recent passage of the 'Resolve Tibet Act' by the US Congress, which is a legislative milestone and unprecedented bipartisan support for the Tibetan cause. This important bill is to end an impasse in negotiation with Beijing which has stalled since 2010. The US delegation who met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and their subsequent statement refuting the Chinese claim of "Tibet being a part of China", rattled the communist regime.

A delegation of seven influential US lawmakers led by Republican Congressman Michael McCaul, former Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, and long-time Tibet supporter and human rights champion and Democrat Congressman Jim McGovern, made headlines across the globe on June 19, 2024. They brought the issue of Tibet to the forefront. The law not only underscores renewed US support for Tibet but also challenges the core issue of the "One China Policy" which many countries have adhered to over the years.

However, the immediate counter-reactions from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to the "Resolve Tibet Act" included shutting down the renowned private Tibetan School in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province and surveil and suppress every movement of Tibetans. Unless the Joe Biden administration steps up to implement the Act in

letter and spirit, Tibetans inside Tibet will continually be put in inconceivable harm's way and their lives and identity would be seriously jeopardized.

Catastrophic Miscalculation

A look back at the international playbook of politics and diplomacy reminds us Tibetans, who have been perennial and hapless victims of oppression and misinformation, how the CCP had twisted the credibility of even acclaimed leaders such as Britain's Tony Blair, David Miliband and the Clintons, to name a few stalwarts. China misguided them to the extent that they gave in to the CCP's narrative of the "One China Policy". In doing so, they looked the other way to decades of China's iron-grip control of Tibet.

Even former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to Beijing in 2009 hushed up severe rights violations in Tibet that occurred in the aftermath of widespread protests in Tibet against Chinese rule and in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Her widely reported press statement in Beijing, saying human rights violations in China can't interfere with or take precedence over other economic issues, was unnerving and totally distressing. Her stoic silence on human rights issues caused extensive damage and distress to the Tibetan struggle and to other minorities who were suffering under the regime. The catastrophic miscalculations of such Western leaders that China will become liberal after it is brought into the WTO fell flat in the face of a more belligerent and assertive China. Instead, the Chinese regime – not its citizens who are hardworking and freedom loving – became a more aggressive and existential threat to peace-loving peoples and rule-based international democratic systems.

And so, the radical change in the legislative US policy towards Tibet gives Tibetans a huge sigh of relief and hope. It also aligns well with what India might have perceived lately to counter the Chinese cartographic warfare concerning the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh and China's growing influence in the region.

The Significant Bond

Pundits in Delhi, I believe, are aware of how profound cultural and spiritual affinity between India and Tibet evolved over the centuries. It is not just Buddhism that binds the two nations together. The Tibetan language, with its letters originally based on Brahmi Gupta scripts, is the foundational basis of mastering the Tibetan language, and the Buddhist sutras and tantras. More than two hundred volumes of the Buddha's teachings, a few hundred years ago, were translated into Tibetan by Indian and Tibetan scholars.

The 38th Tibetan Emperor Trisong Detsen (8th century AD) invited Indian masters such as Padmasambhava, Acharya Shanta Rakshita, etc, to Tibet. Buddhism, therefore, took a firm root and flourished. Worship of deities such as Tara Devi, Saraswati, Vajrapani, Bhairava, Hayagriva, etc, have been an integral part of

Tibetan practices and way of life. Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar are not only considered sacred, they are a significant bond between the Indian and Tibetan civilizations. However, peace, calm, and tranquillity that historically prevailed between the two sides on the border were rudely disrupted by the forceful Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1951. There were hardly any soldiers patrolling the India-Tibet border until then. In fact, it was Tibet's independence which ensured India's security. More than 1.2 million Tibetans died as a result of Chinese occupation, and many are still languishing in prison for as simple a reason as displaying a picture of H. H the Dalai Lama. It is time for India to initiate a more significant and robust Tibet policy, to strike while the iron is hot, as old saying goes. As a great admirer of the visionary trio (Prime Minister Modi-ji, Mr. Doval & Dr. Jaishankar), I, for one, appeal to them to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at least in his capacity as religious and spiritual leader of the Tibetans and millions of his followers worldwide.

USA aside, Canada, the EU, and Australia have also pledged their support for Tibet in a manner no one has ever imagined a decade ago. As per Asian News Network, Japan will hold its first ever International Conference next year in support of Tibetans. In short, it is fair to say that what matters to the leaders depends entirely on the self-serving interest of their concerned nation when it comes to chalking a policy direction. It only needs to be understood that the Tibet issue is not only for Tibetans, rather, it involves long-term geopolitical interest of the global community as well.

As Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi rightly said, "Now things have changed." So does the law of impermanence, as per Buddhist belief, is inevitable, and only time will tell what fate lies ahead for Tibet.

What 'Tibet' means for China's water security

16 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), the western half of Tibet proper which China calls Xizang (or Xizang Autonomous Region), is home to 41% of China's total glaciers, 16.5% of its water resources, 30% of its grasslands, 18.3% of its wetlands and 40% of its lake area, reported China's official *Xinhua* news agency Aug 16.

These percentages will rise enormously if the other historically Tibetan areas that are under Chinese rule are also taken into consideration, especially Qinghai, made up of the bulk of Tibet's historical Amdo (or Domey) province and a section of Kham (or Dotoe) province.

The report gave these details in the context of the coming into force on Oct 1, 2024, of a regulation on

the protection of the glaciers in the region, citing a press release issued by the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of TAR on Aug 15.

The report noted that the regulation came after China's law on ecological conservation on the Tibetan Plateau was enacted in Sep 2023, the first state-level legislation specialized in regulating ecological conservation on the plateau.

The regulation is stated to provide specific guidelines for governments and relevant departments in glacier areas, introduce a responsibility system and performance evaluation mechanism for glacier protection goals, and establish punitive measures for violations.

The regulation will effectively protect glacier resources, ensure the ecological safety of the Tibetan Plateau, and contribute to the preservation of the plateau's flora, fauna and landscapes, Zhao Guiying, deputy director of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the TAR has said.

Surrounded by the flames

16 August 2024, [ORE](#), Harsh V. Pant

With multiple fires burning around India, what is astounding is not India's seeming inability to manage those fires but its remarkable success in insulating itself from those flames

Events in Bangladesh continue to reverberate across the region. But their consequences would take a long time to reveal themselves. Even before the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina Wazed government, the region was reeling under a host of challenges. It appears that the political and the economic turmoil in most of the region's nations, except India, are taking a toll.

Pakistan has been in a state of flux for quite some time now. Afghanistan under the Taliban has had no success in getting rid of its pariah status despite a lot of effort. The seemingly never-ending political transition in Nepal has resulted in a sense of fatigue. Myanmar continues to drift towards being a failed State as the military junta has ceded space to a plethora of non-State actors that have found it difficult to coordinate their actions on the ground. And the effects of Sri Lanka's economic crisis continue to shape its political trajectory with no clear sense of purpose.

Bangladesh under Wazed was giving everyone a false sense of stability even as the ground beneath her had begun to shift. As the people of Bangladesh and the entire region come to terms with a post-Wazed political and social landscape, there has been a sense of despondency about the future in popular and intellectual discourses. This specifically relates to India's supposed failure in the region at a time when

Indian policymakers have talked about their nation as a leading global player with a rising profile on the international stage.

Bangladesh under Wazed was giving everyone a false sense of stability even as the ground beneath her had begun to shift.

There are three aspects to this debate that need highlighting. First, changes in global balance of power have ensured that there is no such thing as 'South Asia' anymore. South Asia might have been a mental map for geopolitical articulations at some point in time but today that kind of strategic mapping no longer makes sense. India and its surroundings are now part of a wider Indo-Pacific, a geography that is as much a function of China's spectacular rise as it is of India's rise and New Delhi's need to develop critical linkages with East and Southeast Asia as well as the wider Pacific. The shift from a India-Pakistan binary to a Sino-Indian one is a reality that New Delhi will have to contend with along with all its attendant costs and opportunities. China's partnerships with India's neighbours and its growing presence in the Indian Ocean region are manifestations of this dynamic. There is no going back to South Asia anymore. Consequently, as geopolitical contestations among major powers get sharpened, they will impact India's periphery. Some of that was evident in the downfall of Wazed as well.

Second, New Delhi's centrality in its backyard is declining. But there was never a golden age of Indian hegemony in its backyard. Right from Independence, India's perceived hegemony was challenged by its neighbours, with Pakistan taking it to extremes. While Islamabad's morbid fascination with ensuring equality with India ensured its downfall, India's other neighbours also did their best to balance Indian preponderance in the region. There were times New Delhi used military or economic coercion to get its way but it almost always turned out to India's disadvantage. It is easy to forget how dire India's ties with Bangladesh were before Wazed assumed power 15 years back. Even under her, China was Bangladesh's most important defence partner. The agency of Indian neighbours should never be underestimated and New Delhi's ability to manage the region should never be overestimated.

The final aspect pertains to India's own regional profile. With multiple fires burning around India, what is astounding is not India's seeming inability to manage those fires but its remarkable success in insulating itself from those flames. New Delhi has shown that despite the challenges in its neighbourhood, Indian foreign policy and its corresponding global profile have only grown. That's a tribute to Indian resilience and a cause for celebration on India's 78th Independence Day.

Xi balances between professionalism and political control of the PLA

15 August 2024, [East Asia Forum](#), Yoram Evron

Chinese President Xi Jinping's relationship with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is marked by frequent purges, recurring organisational reforms and deep-seated distrust, despite continued military modernisation efforts. Xi's strategy of assertive rhetoric and limited military use aims to cultivate China's (and his own) powerful image and placate the PLA, without engaging in full-scale warfare, but ongoing political interferences, purges, and reforms raise questions about the PLA's actual strength and ability to control escalation dynamics.

The tumultuous relationship between Chinese President Xi Jinping and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is marked by frequent purges, recurring reforms and persistent expressions of distrust. Simultaneously, Xi advances military modernisation and assigns the military a role in foreign policy not seen for decades. This dual approach intensifies the tension between military professionalism and political loyalty, reaching levels not seen since the Mao era.

But Xi's lack of trust in the PLA raises concerns about its effectiveness in crisis. Launching a war would also give PLA leaders greater political influence, a situation Xi might be reluctant to accept. What does this indicate about China's military modernisation and recent assertiveness?

A possible explanation is that China's recent incendiary rhetoric and frequent yet limited use of the PLA does not necessarily signal a reckless use of force. Rather, it may reflect a strategy to deter adversaries without engaging in full-scale warfare, while concurrently placating the PLA.

Xi's complex relationship with the military has been especially chaotic throughout 2023–24. In March 2023, former defence minister Wei Fenghe, who previously commanded the Rocket Force, vanished from public view. A few months later, the defence minister at the time, Li Shangfu, who had headed the Central Military Commission's Equipment Development Department, also disappeared, only to be officially removed in October. Both were expelled from the Chinese Communist Party in June 2024.

In December 2023, nine generals were ousted from the top legislature, including General Ju Qiansheng, commander of the PLA's Strategic Support Force, and three aerospace executives from China's military-industrial complex who were purged. They are not alone — more senior cadres, many linked to the PLA's pivotal Rocket Force and the military-industrial complex, had also been purged during this period.

In addition, organisational reforms initiated by Xi just eight years earlier have been partially revised.

The replacement of established bodies has altered the PLA's command structure and its lines of subordination to the Central Military Commission and Xi himself. Notably, the Strategic Support Force, formed in December 2015 to oversee aerospace and cyber units, was dissolved in early 2024.

Any belief that these moves stabilised the Party's relationship with the military was disproven by the June 2024 Military Political Work Conference that was held for the first time in a decade. Symbolically, it was held in Yan'an, the historic revolutionary base. Expressing deep dissatisfaction with the PLA's conduct, Xi emphasised the need for a strong, loyal, corruption-free and capable military under Party guidelines and supervision. He stressed ideological transformation, strict anti-corruption measures and the revitalisation of the PLA's commissar system. Xi also underscored the importance of learning from historical roots, urging PLA commanders to visit the PLA's Civil War-era headquarters.

These measures collectively reflect Xi's distrust of the PLA, both politically and operationally, despite its impressive progress over the last two decades. Since the 1980s, and especially in the past 25 years, the PLA's budget has skyrocketed. This has enabled extensive modernisation in nearly every area, including weaponry, command and control, doctrine and training. Recent purges may further advance the PLA's modernisation by removing unprofessional and corrupt officers.

But the PLA is likely not as formidable as China would like others to believe. Xi's rule of fear, extensive political activities within PLA units, and pervasive corruption across the armed forces and the defence industry offset much of the positive impact of modernisation measures. The revival of dual leadership with political commissars further diminishes any benefits.

These factors create widespread paralysis, inefficiency, the promotion of unqualified commanders, insufficient training and other maladies reminiscent of the Mao era, which reforms since the late 1970s have attempted to address. The Ukraine War provides a pertinent context for understanding these sources of weakness. Observing the conflict, Xi might recognise the risks and costs associated with large-scale military operations.

Unwilling to compromise on China's — and his own — image of strength, Xi aims to cultivate such a reputation without engaging in significant military conflicts that could expose weaknesses and result in substantial losses. Instead of outright military action, he emphasises deterrence, particularly regarding Taiwan. By sounding the drumbeats of war and emphasising military readiness, Xi seeks to deter any adversary from challenging China's red lines.

This approach not only strengthens China's assertive posture but also mitigates the risks associated with full-scale warfare. Simultaneously, it provides the PLA with a sense of purpose and mission, ideally minimising the risk of political interference. The crucial question remains whether Xi's China can maintain control over these escalation dynamics.

COMMENT: Sino-Indian relations warm, but Delhi sticking to a neutral middle path

15 August 2024, [Intellinews](#), Ben Aris

Recent signs of improved relations between India and China, such as progress in border dispute talks and a more open stance toward Chinese investment, suggest a tactical shift rather than a fundamental realignment in India's geopolitical strategy, Capital Economics said in a note.

The changing relations between the world's two most populous countries underscores a broader trend among emerging markets (EMs) that are increasingly courting Chinese investment to strengthen their positions in the evolving global economy, even as they continue to lean towards the West.

Unlike the Cold War era, where the world was divided into two ideological camps of socialism and capitalism, since the start of the 1990s everyone is a capitalist. However, as the leading emerging markets have developed over the last three decades they have started to flex their geopolitical muscles, which has led to tensions. Capital Economics earlier described this as a fractured world where countries have coalesced into two groups centred on the US and the Sino-Russia alliance.

In this new world India has historically sought "strategic autonomy" and strives to keep a neutral non-aligned position, but in the current geopolitical landscape, it is increasingly aligning with the West, driven by both security concerns and economic opportunities, Shilan Shah argues, the deputy chief emerging markets economist at Capital Economics.

The long-standing border dispute in the Himalayas with China, particularly the tensions that escalated in 2020, has reinforced India's wariness of its northern neighbour. Additionally, the US offers significant friendshoring opportunities as global supply chains shift, particularly in sectors like mobile phone and semiconductor manufacturing, where India has seen a surge in its global market share.

But more recently India has warmed to both Russia and China in defiance of international pressure to make Moscow a pariah. Modi was in Moscow in July, where he was warmly greeted by Russian President Vladimir Putin and negotiated for long-term oil and fertiliser supply deals. Modi shrugged off the muted criticism from the West for his Moscow visit,

highlighting that he would act in what he saw as India's best interests, irrespective of how that is perceived in the West.

Likewise, Indian policymakers appear to be warming to the idea of more Chinese investment to fuel the rapid development of India's economy, which is also leading to better relations with Beijing.

Another consequence of Russia's war in Ukraine and the resulting extreme sanctions regime has been to push the Global South countries closer together as they seek safety in numbers in the face of increasing aggression by the world's leading powers. This change was manifest in both of last year's G20 summit and the expanding BRICS+ group, but not limited to these two. Both China and India have indicated a willingness to resolve their border issues, with the creation of five "buffer zones" where troops have been withdrawn and patrols ceased, marking a rare moment of cooperation.

And Delhi has reversed its hesitance to host major Chinese industrial investments. A year ago, it blocked BYD's attempt to establish an electric vehicle factory in India. India's flagship Annual Economic Survey noted that "developing countries will have to figure out a way of... boosting domestic manufacturing capabilities, sometimes with the collaboration of Chinese investment and technology" – a sentiment that was recently repeated by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"Some have suggested that these developments indicate a shift in India's geopolitical alignment. This isn't unheard of: over the past couple of years, a number of EMs including Saudi Arabia and South Africa have moved towards China's sphere of influence with their own strategic interests in mind," says Shah. While some observers suggest these moves could indicate a shift in India's geopolitical alignment, this interpretation seems premature, says Shah. The border negotiations remain fragile, and any miscalculation could reignite tensions. India remains deeply concerned about China's military presence in the Indian Ocean and its alliance with Pakistan. At the same time, India is equally annoyed with the US, which also maintains cordial relations with Pakistan, and incensed Delhi by agreeing to a deal to supply Islamabad with advanced F-16 jet fighter planes last year, which has only reinforced its strategic autonomy policy.

And India is hedging its bets with China too. Part of the talks between Modi and Putin covered an order for Russia's advanced S-400 missile system that India has already paid for, but yet to receive, which it intends to install all along its border with China. Likewise, China has been building dozens of "border guardian" settlements in the Himalayas at the end of any traversable valley and paying people to go and live there, partly as a regional development programme,

but also as a passive early warning network to protect against invading forces. The settlements have also been built on the borders with Bhutan and Nepal, according to a recent *The New York Times* (NYT) investigation.

Moreover, India's membership of the Quad – a security dialogue that includes the US, Japan and Australia – along with its stringent policies against Chinese smartphone apps, reaffirms India's ongoing mistrust of Beijing.

The slight warming in Sino-Indian ties does not negate the advantages of aligning with the US, particularly in capturing the benefits of friendshoring. For example, India's global share of mobile phone and semiconductor exports continues to grow, underscoring the economic benefits of this alignment. However, India's engagement with China reflects a broader strategy seen in several EMs, which are balancing relations with both China and the West to maximise economic benefits. This approach, exemplified by India's potential acceptance of Chinese investment in infrastructure, aims to enhance its appeal as a manufacturing hub while carefully managing geopolitical risks, says Shah.

Elsewhere, countries like Morocco and Hungary are also benefiting from Chinese investment, particularly in green technology and electric vehicles, while maintaining strong economic ties with Europe and the US. Hungary, for instance, has seen a surge in Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI), making it one of the top recipients globally, despite its alignment with the US bloc.

In Central Asia, the five 'Stans, squeezed between Russia and China, have been a lot more cautious to keep China at arms-length and will search for other investors and creditors first to diversify their exposure, only accepting Chinese investment if no other viable alternative can be found.

As China's domestic growth slows, its firms are likely to continue investing overseas, driven by the need for higher returns and the desire to bypass Western protectionist measures. For some EMs, this presents an opportunity not just for capital inflows but also for the transfer of technological and managerial expertise. However, the balancing act could become more challenging if the US, China rivalry intensifies.

"Courting both sides could become harder for EMs if the US and China become more aggressive in pushing to exclude each other's inputs from their supply chains. For example, if the US were to prevent goods containing certain Chinese components from being sold domestically, then firms anywhere hoping to sell to the US would have to exclude them too," says Shah. There are some signs that this is already happening. For example, Indonesia is attempting to reduce Chinese investment in new nickel mining projects in order to qualify for tax breaks in the US. The US has

also introduced smart sanctions on Russia in December, where Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is increasingly targeting third countries supplying Russia with “priority goods” and threatening their companies with secondary sanctions.

“Only time will tell if this is the direction that fracturing will take. But for some EMs, greater Chinese investment now could prove fruitful, not only in terms of higher capital spending but through the transfer of technological and managerial know-how,” concludes Shah.

Coercive annexation of Taiwan by the People’s Republic of China would unleash globally destructive consequences, Rice Baker Institute report says

15 August 2024, [Rice University](#)

A new paper from Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy argues that an annexation of Taiwan by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) would trigger economic shocks and diminish the quality of life for populations across Asia and beyond, as well as have devastating impacts on American interests and Americans’ well-being.

Gabe Collins, Baker Botts Fellow in Energy and Environmental Regulatory Affairs at the Baker Institute, and his coauthor Andrew Erickson, professor of strategy at the U.S. Naval War College, say an annexation of Taiwan would be one of the most dangerous, consequential flashpoints on the planet. The paper aims to address the economic, military and geopolitical impacts of coercive annexation, with particular focus on semiconductors, weapons systems, allies and partners.

“At stake are crucial interests such as the semiconductors that power today’s big data world and the national security of U.S. allies and partners,” the paper reads. “Neighboring states’ responses to PRC expansion could also result in the erosion of American military advantages as well as the destabilization of democracy and the international order.”



As a global commodity, microchips are as important as oil, Collins and Erickson argue. There are currently only two places in the world that produce the latest generation of silicon chips – in Taiwan by Taiwan

Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited and in South Korea by Samsung.

“If China could capture Taiwan with minimal direct use of military force, it could potentially obtain a near-monopoly over one of the 21st century’s most critical economic inputs,” the authors wrote. “That could help to catapult Beijing into a position of global preeminence and, in turn, might allow China to dominate the world economy even in the face of sanctions.”

Semiconductors are essential to the modern economy with approximately \$600 billion worth produced globally each year, according to the report. The semiconductors are added into physical items collectively worth multiple trillions of dollars, and the services delivered by these devices – such as smartphones, data centers or cars – amount to tens of trillions of dollars annually..

Collins and Erickson argue that coercive annexation brings the possibility of major disruption of Taiwan-origin semiconductor supplies that could temporarily halt technological progress and could slow global economic growth for years thereafter.

The authors argue that American policymakers must act urgently to deter PRC aggression and maximize U.S. capabilities to prevent China from coercively annexing Taiwan and creating long-term economic strife.

View the executive summary and the entire report titled “Annexation of Taiwan: A Defeat From Which the US and Its Allies Could Not Retreat” [here](#).

Imposing on questions of faith will get China nowhere

15 August 2024, [Hindustan Times](#), Dhundup Gyalpo

It is high time for other countries to step up and clarify their stance on whether the Tibetan people have the right to religious belief and the freedom to choose their own religious leaders, thereby helping prevent China from creating an embarrassing situation for itself.

These days, one often hears that China may choose the next Dalai Lama. Alarming as it may sound to many around the globe, my answer is invariably and emphatically: It does not matter. For the Tibetan people, it does not matter if China chooses its own Dalai Lama. Just as with the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, a Chinese-appointed Dalai Lama will only cause embarrassment for China. Despite Beijing’s all-out efforts to promote their Panchen Lama as an authentic spiritual leader, the Tibetan people have firmly and wholeheartedly refused to offer him even a modicum of obeisance.

Unlike the Panchen Lama’s case, where the real Panchen Lama along with his entire family have

“disappeared”, when that critical time eventually dawns upon us, the world will have another Dalai Lama, born in a free country, recognised in accordance with Tibetan religious traditions and customs, and chosen as per the clear instructions left behind by the current Dalai Lama.

Despite China’s complete occupation of Tibet since the Dalai Lama’s escape into exile in 1959, it still lacks legitimacy for its rule over Tibet. It, therefore, continuously insists that other countries recognise Tibet as a part of China. Since the Dalai Lama has been historically the supreme temporal and spiritual head of Tibet, if China can somehow arrogate to itself the right to recognise and choose the next Dalai Lama, selecting a docile one, it would help legitimise its rule over Tibet. This is inherently flawed.

Tibetans revere the Dalai Lama as the emanation of Avalokiteshvara, the *bodhisattva* of compassion and the patron saint of Tibet. He is the ultimate symbol of Tibet as a nation and its people. The process of search and recognition of a reincarnation may seem complex and intricate to outsiders, it’s important to note that since 1391, the Dalai Lama has been reincarnated 13 times. The institution of the Dalai Lama, in stark contrast to the People’s Republic of China established only in 1949, is ancient and experienced enough to manage all potential future scenarios.

Let me briefly set the basics straight on the issue of reincarnation. The following excerpt from the present Dalai Lama’s interview to *TIME* in 2004 should offer some insight: “The institution of the Dalai Lama, and whether it should continue or not, is up to the Tibetan people. If they feel it is not relevant, then it will cease and there will be no 15th Dalai Lama. But if I die today, I think they will want another Dalai Lama. The purpose of reincarnation is to fulfill the previous [incarnation’s] life task. My life is outside Tibet, therefore, my reincarnation will logically be found outside. But then, the next question: Will the Chinese accept this or not? China will not accept. The Chinese government most probably will appoint another Dalai Lama, as it did with the Panchen Lama. Then there will be two Dalai Lamas: one, the Dalai Lama of the Tibetan heart, and one that is officially appointed.”

The mind-boggling conundrum such a situation presents for Beijing was highlighted back in 2013 by a professor at the Party School of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing. In an interview with *Asia Weekly*, professor Jin Wei noted that treating the Dalai Lama as an “enemy” alienated all six million Tibetans who revere him as “the living Buddha.” She said, “The Dalai Lama is the key to the issue of Tibet,” and recommended that China should resume its stalled dialogue with him. According to Jin Wei, China’s ultimate goal should be to avoid an embarrassing situation that throws up two Dalai Lamas. She believed that if China could control the

selection of the next Dalai Lama’s reincarnation, the party would gain the goodwill of all Tibetans and weaken the Tibetan independence forces working outside the country. Unfortunately, both then and now, good sense has yet to prevail in China.

The system of reincarnation, unique to Tibetan Buddhism, is a purely religious matter rooted entirely in people’s faith. No force can impose faith upon people. And in matters of faith, there is no room for compromise, flexibility, or doubt: Either people believe someone is the reincarnation, or they don’t; there are no maybes.

The United States, through various legislative acts concerning Tibet, has sent a clear and strong message to China that it stands firmly in solidarity with the Tibetan people. It is high time for other countries to step up and clarify their stance on whether the Tibetan people have the right to religious belief and the freedom to choose their own religious leaders, thereby helping prevent China from creating an embarrassing situation for itself.

Beijing intensifies gray tactics against Taiwan

14 August 2024, [GIS](#), Junhua Zhang

Newly elected Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te is struggling to counter the creative use of pressure coming from China.

Three months after President Lai Ching-te took office in Taiwan, Beijing continues to seek ways to make life difficult for the new leader. At the beginning, despite Mr. Lai’s measured rhetoric (from his perspective) at his May 20 inauguration, the reaction in China was extreme displeasure. The Chinese State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office slammed Mr. Lai for “stubbornly adhering to the ‘Taiwan independence’ position,” while Foreign Minister Wang Yi accused him of “betraying the nation and his ancestors in a disgraceful way.”

Beijing’s response was largely triggered by President Lai’s refusal to deliver his inaugural speech in accordance with Chinese expectations. Officials described the address as even more pro-independence than those of previous Taiwanese leaders, and as a point of no return. Since then, Beijing has given clear signals as to the implications of this perception, with consequences for cross-Strait relations over the next four years.

The approach of Lai Ching-te

Mr. Lai did not mention a single word about Taiwanese “independence” in his speech. But unlike his scholarly predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen (2016-2024), the current leader’s governance style is seen as more “manly” and unafraid of conflict, while lacking a degree of sophistication. Compared to his predecessors, he

comes closer to what Beijing considers the red line around the issue of Taiwanese independence.

For example, the “two-state theory” drafted by former President Lee Teng-hui (1988-2000) has gone through a 25-year-long evolution from ambiguity to clarity. In his first address, Lai Ching-te was more forceful in elaborating on the cross-strait issue, avoiding mention of the Cross-Strait Act, which implies that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the same China. He also used the term “China” throughout the speech, instead of “the other side of the Taiwan Strait” or “Beijing,” terms purposely used in Ms. Tsai’s inaugural speeches of 2016 and 2020 to avoid anger from mainland China.

While Ms. Tsai’s “one-China” hopes seemed to persist, however obscured, in the eyes of Beijing, Mr. Lai’s positioning on cross-strait relations has transformed strategic ambiguity into strategic clarity.

In a June interview, President Lai emphasized “dignity and reciprocity” in his dealings with China, and invited Chinese President Xi Jinping to share with Taiwan the responsibility for peace and stability in the region and to create prosperity. It has become clear that this line of messaging has had no effect on the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) attitude.

China’s response

Facing President Lai’s “iron fist in a velvet glove,” Beijing quickly adopted various measures – both soft and hard, internal and external – with the clear intention of trying to hinder Mr. Lai’s government.

Beijing’s intimidation began with military power. Just three days after the inauguration, China began a two-day, large-scale military drill. It is worth comparing this to a previous episode. When former United States Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi led a delegation to Taiwan in August 2022, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) also conducted a military drill and organized live-fire exercises in six sea and air areas surrounding the island.

This time, despite the lack of live-fire operations, the “pockets” were tightened – in other words, the scope and degree of deterrence were significantly greater than following Ms. Pelosi’s visit. At the same time, Beijing continued to use various military aircraft to fly over the center line of the Taiwan Strait. Soon, it even appeared that civilian aircraft were being used to fly over Taiwan-controlled Kinmen.

Along with military signals, Beijing has stepped up its information war against Taiwan, spreading a great deal of disinformation in Taiwanese media. It has also taken economic measures, such as suspending tariff concessions for some products under the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement and erecting trade barriers to more Taiwanese products on antidumping grounds. Diplomatically, Beijing has increased efforts to isolate Taiwan and intimidate its allies.

Tactical adjustments

At the same time, the Chinese government under President Xi has changed its approach this year. This is reflected in two ways. On the one hand, prior to President Lai’s inauguration, the Kuomintang (KMT) party in Taiwan had positive interactions with the government in Beijing. The culmination was an April 10 meeting between former KMT Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou (2008-2016) and Mr. Xi. By meeting with an outgoing president who is no longer in the political arena, and scheduling the meeting one month before Taiwan’s new president was sworn in, Mr. Xi aimed to convey the message that, given the choice, Beijing would still prefer “peaceful reunification” with Taiwan over a costly reincorporation by force. According to sources familiar with the matter, Mr. Ma even submitted a report to the Chinese side on specific issues such as the country’s proposed name after a future cross-strait reunification.

Although China has not reported these developments, Beijing has a high opinion of these positive interactions with the KMT. It gave Beijing good reason to believe that there is still enough room to further exploit the position of KMT, as well as the Taiwan People’s Party (TPP), to the point of discrediting and paralyzing Mr. Lai’s government. This led to a chain of events in which the KMT and the TPP, which have a majority in the Executive Yuan, turned on Mr. Lai’s Democratic Progressive Party after his inauguration, with the outcome still uncertain.

Beijing will generally not use force until it has exhausted its gray tactics and other means of creating divisions in Taiwan.

The other area of China’s change in strategy was diplomacy. Beijing has decided to take every measure to reduce U.S. pressure in East Asia. The military cooperation between Japan, South Korea and the U.S. established by the administration of President Joe Biden is a major threat to China’s incorporation of Taiwan by force. To this end, in May, Beijing restarted a meeting of the leaders of China, Japan and South Korea after over four years of hiatus. Chinese Premier Li Qiang called for greater contributions to regional prosperity and stability, seeking to use the bait of new cooperation to pick apart the U.S.-Japan-South Korea alliance.

It is important to realize that China is Japan’s largest trading partner, export destination and import source, with bilateral trade totaling \$317 billion in 2023. China is also South Korea’s largest trading partner, largest export market and largest import source, with their trade amounting to \$310 billion last year. This economic dependence is a card in Beijing’s hand.

Xi’s Taiwan timeline

Although the CCP has never disclosed (and will never disclose) a timeline for the “liberation” of Taiwan, President Xi’s unwillingness to leave the issue

unresolved during his third or fourth five-year term in office is obvious to all. While Mr. Xi made a point of recently telling European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, in an effort to win European sympathy, that Washington was trying to “goad Beijing into attacking Taiwan” (as if China itself had no intention of doing so), there are increasingly hints that the timetable is changing.

Zhang Weiwei, a professor at Fudan University and a favorite of the Chinese propaganda ministry, claimed publicly that Taiwan’s recent election might be its last. He Lei, a former PLA official, also recently said that the complete reunification of the motherland was growing nearer. What Beijing fears is that if President Lai Ching-te stays in his position for eight years, the mindset of “Taiwan independence” will be even more deeply embedded in the minds of the island’s younger generation, and it will be difficult to eradicate it even with a change of political parties. The time pressure is thus increasing.

The Lai tenure so far

Fully matching the new president’s character, Taiwan under Mr. Lai appears set to be more determined to pursue high-end military hardware, such as submarines and fighter jets, and focus on military training to defend against a Chinese invasion. But all of this will do little to stop China’s gradual imposition of coercive control through law enforcement and other nonlethal, “gray” tactics. Taiwan is trying to take steps to counter the mainland’s salami slicing.

Taiwan’s previous administration clearly disappointed and confused many young people during its eight-year tenure on social issues, especially housing and employment. And that legacy is now being borne by President Lai Ching-te. He leads a minority government without a majority in the Legislative Yuan, which would already have made it difficult for him to govern, not to mention that the opposition party in the legislature is trying to reduce the scope of the president’s power.

In polls after Mr. Lai’s inaugural speech, 53 percent of those who watched were satisfied with his May 20 inaugural address, 28 percent were dissatisfied, and 19 percent had no opinion. Some 47 percent of respondents said they trusted Mr. Lai, compared to 34 percent who did not trust him and 20 percent with no opinion.

Nearly a month later, a poll by the Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation found that the number of people approving of President Lai’s handling of the country’s affairs has decreased by 9.8 percent, suggesting that he has lost support from nearly 2 million people since taking office. Arguably, China’s combination of soft and hard means – and the use of Taiwan’s internal contradictions to stoke polarization – has so far achieved certain results for Beijing.

The role of the U.S.

Washington has long pursued a policy of strategic ambiguity toward Taiwan, meaning it does not indicate exactly how it would respond if Beijing were to attack Taiwan. Facing the upcoming November election, both the Democrats and former President Donald Trump are competing to sound tough on Taiwan.

President Biden has made it clear that the U.S. will not stand idly by should Beijing attack Taiwan. Admiral Samuel Paparo, the new commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, outlined during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore a “hellscape” response scenario by the U.S. military in the event of an invasion of Taiwan by the PLA. Although there have sometimes been harsh voices, the Biden administration has generally preferred to stick to strategic ambiguity, with a continued arming of Taiwan becoming the White House’s preferred option. The Pentagon recently established the Taiwan Advanced Integration Team to help Taipei get the weapons and military assistance it needs more quickly. So far, President Biden has implemented 15 arms sales to Taiwan since 2021 to strengthen its defenses.

At the same time, the U.S. government is also clearly putting pressure on Mr. Lai to avoid excessive expressions of “Taiwanese independence.” As U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul has warned, Beijing’s one-China policy has “certain red lines” that should not be crossed, even if U.S. policy does not recognize Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan.

Scenarios

Beijing will generally not use force until it has exhausted its gray tactics and other means of creating divisions in Taiwan. Of course, these methods are backed by military power. Neither Taiwan nor the U.S. seem to have effective countermeasures to China’s approach. The biggest challenge for President Lai is to adjust his relationship with Taiwanese opposition parties to deal with the mainland’s tactics. Assuming that Beijing will persist in using such gray methods against the Lai government over the next several years, three scenarios are relevant.

More likely: KMT triumph

One is that President Lai allows the pro-China factions among the KMT and the TPP to grow in power in the Legislative Yuan to the point where the function of the Executive Yuan is objectively paralyzed. In this scenario, the KMT wins the next round of elections and will secure governing power.

More likely: Domestic compromise

In a second scenario, Mr. Lai quickly learns to deal with the opposition parties and manages to compromise. At the same time, he effectively solves domestic problems (such as in housing and energy) and, in doing so, eases the relationship with China, allowing Taiwan to buy time.

Less likely: Tensions exacerbate within the next four years

A third outcome would see China start to impose sanctions on the so-called “Taiwan Independents” and use the pro-China fraction of the KMT to further polarize Taiwanese society, which also suffers from the KMT’s own incompetence. As a result, cross-Strait relations become extremely tense, leading to military action.

Pakistan’s Role In Protecting Chinese Interests In CPEC – OpEd

14 August 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Dr. Sahibzada Muhammad Usman

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is hailed as a milestone in the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan. This ambitious project, a key component of China’s “Belt and Road Initiative,” aims to enhance connectivity and cooperation through an extensive network of roads, railways, and pipelines. The CPEC project, with an investment of \$62 billion, is poised to transform Pakistan’s economy by creating employment opportunities, improving infrastructure, and promoting regional integration. However, despite these promising prospects, the security of Chinese workers and engineers involved in CPEC projects has emerged as a significant concern, threatening the very foundation of this crucial partnership.

The safety and security of Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects in Pakistan have become a serious issue due to the persistent threat of terrorist attacks by Baloch separatists and their affiliated militant groups, particularly the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). These groups, driven by various motives, have targeted Chinese citizens, viewing them as symbols of the CPEC initiative that they oppose. The most high-profile attacks have occurred from Karachi to Gwadar, exposing the vulnerabilities in the security arrangements promised by Pakistani authorities to their Chinese counterparts.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a separatist group, has been at the forefront of these attacks, demanding that China cease its involvement in CPEC and withdraw from Baluchistan. The BLA has repeatedly warned Beijing against signing new CPEC deals with Islamabad, condemning China’s role in the Gwadar port project. These threats have not only endangered Chinese lives but also shaken the confidence of Chinese investors, who now demand foolproof security measures from Pakistan.

Security analysts have noted that the increasing frequency of attacks on Chinese interests in Pakistan has damaged the perception of invulnerability that Pakistani authorities had sought to project. Beijing, as the largest foreign investor in Pakistan, now faces significant security concerns that could potentially

affect its future investments in the country. While Pakistan has blamed “foreign elements” for these attacks, arguing that their primary goal is to sabotage Pakistan-China relations and the CPEC project, the damage to the confidence of Chinese stakeholders is undeniable.

These terrorist attacks have claimed precious lives and strained the relations between the two nations. The hesitancy of China to pursue new CPEC projects, as indicated by reports of limited progress during recent high-level visits, reflects the growing apprehensions within Chinese leadership. Although official statements from both countries have maintained a positive tone, the underlying concerns are palpable. During a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed hope that Pakistan would create a “safe and stable business environment” to guarantee the safety of Chinese personnel and projects.

The Pakistani government has assured the Chinese leadership that it is taking all necessary measures to address the security challenges posed by these terrorist groups. According to Pakistani security officials, stringent measures are being implemented under a comprehensive policy aimed at eliminating the terrorists involved in attacks against Chinese citizens. Intelligence sharing between Pakistani and Chinese authorities is ongoing, reflecting the seriousness with which both nations are addressing these threats.

The complex nature of the security challenges faced by Chinese workers in Pakistan is further complicated by the involvement of various militant groups. Beyond the Baloch militants and the TTP, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a group seeking to establish a separate state in China’s Muslim-majority Xinjiang province, has also been implicated in these attacks. Many ETIM militants had settled in North Waziristan in the late 1990s, where they developed close ties with Taliban elements. These relationships have persisted, enabling coordinated attacks on Chinese residents working on CPEC projects.

Pakistan’s efforts to counter these threats have included the arrest and extradition of numerous ETIM militants to China. However, despite these efforts, the attacks on Chinese citizens in Pakistan have not ceased, underscoring the need for more vigorous and comprehensive measures to dismantle the networks of terrorists involved. The persistent nature of these threats demands a sustained and multi-faceted approach that goes beyond immediate security responses.

The success of the CPEC project and, by extension, the stability of Pakistan-China relations hinges on the ability of Pakistan to address these security concerns effectively. The continuation of terrorist attacks not only jeopardizes the lives of Chinese citizens but also

threatens to derail the broader objectives of CPEC. A failure to provide a secure environment for Chinese investments could lead to a decline in Chinese enthusiasm for future projects, which would have far-reaching consequences for Pakistan's economic development and regional integration goals.

The race to choose the next Dalai Lama China and India disagree over reincarnation

14 August 2024, [UnHerd](#), Christopher Harding

This time next year, the world may find the arcana of Tibetan Buddhist reincarnation taking centre stage in global politics. For the 14th Dalai Lama, who celebrated his 89th birthday a few weeks ago, has long promised to reveal his succession plans when he turns 90. In the past, he has suggested that his reincarnation might take place in India or somewhere in the West. This will be a moment fraught with danger for Tibet and Tibetans in exile, but also for relations between two of the most powerful countries on earth: China and India.

Tibet and China go back a long way together, and theirs has rarely been a happy history. At the height of its power in the eighth century, the Tibetan kingdom's armies fought their way into the great capital of Tang China, Chang'an, and occupied it. The Tibetan Empire would later fragment after the last king of Tibet was murdered in 842, and Buddhist teachers known as lamas would eventually come to rule in his place. They helped the Mongols to govern Tibet in the 13th century. Then, in 1279, Kublai Khan established the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongol-led dynasty of China, and Tibet became nominally part of his empire.

The degree of authority over Tibetan affairs exercised by Chinese emperors of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties fluctuated a great deal over time, but in general they preferred indirect influence to outright control. Crucial to these arrangements was the maintaining of good relations with Tibet's Buddhist leaders and in particular its *tulkus*. These were lineages of men and sometimes women who were regarded as manifestations of a particular *bodhisattva*: an enlightened being who puts off their entry into paradise in order to help others. By controlling the intermediate realm between death and rebirth, they were able to choose specific human incarnations, again and again, in order to continue their lineage and fulfil their salvific purpose in the world. Among the best-known Tibetan lineages are the Karmapas and the Panchen and Dalai Lamas.

The lineage of the Dalai Lama goes back to the turn of the 15th century, peaking with the "Great 5th" Dalai Lama who united Tibet under his rule in 1642. Subsequent Dalai Lamas enjoyed both spiritual and political authority but found themselves embroiled in

struggles for power between neighbouring Mongols and Chinese. In 1720, the Kangxi Emperor of the Qing Dynasty won a decisive victory over a Mongol rival and managed to install his favoured candidate as the 7th Dalai Lama. From then on, China's Qing dynasty regarded Tibet as a protectorate of sorts and the question of a Dalai Lama's reincarnation as very much their business.

Yet the mysteries of reincarnation were often hard to control. Traditionally, an elderly Dalai Lama might leave written information about where he intended to be reincarnated or drop hints during the last weeks of his life. The direction in which the smoke drifted at his cremation might be watched for clues. Senior lamas would weigh these things alongside dreams or intuitions of their own before paying a visit to the homes of children who appeared to be likely candidates. There they might lay in front of the child some of the predecessor's possessions, alongside unrelated objects, to see whether the child recognised the correct items as his own.

Concerned about the political quarrels and corruption that sometimes accompanied this process, and worried more broadly about Tibetans dabbling in divination when this was supposed to be the prerogative of the imperial court, the Qianlong Emperor sought to exert some control over Tibetan reincarnations. In a move that may well have important repercussions next year, the Emperor decided in 1792 to intervene in the process of identifying reincarnations within *tulku* lineages. Personally doubting the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation but resigned to managing the people of Tibet on their own terms, the Emperor had a golden urn made and sent to Lhasa. When it came time to identify a reincarnation, candidates identified in the usual way would have their names placed inside the urn. After prayers were said, a single name would be drawn by a Qing official.

This wasn't about luck or having China's preferred candidate fortuitously selected, though it did rather usefully allow for the latter. The Golden Urn method was based on a form of divination already used in branches of China's imperial administration and was intended as a means of avoiding human corruption and allowing fate to take its course. Qing efforts to make the method acceptable to Tibet's elites were helped by the fact that the chosen children frequently came from wealthy and influential families. The Golden Urn method ended up being used, over the decades that followed, to finalise a number of reincarnations. Precisely how many is debated, but they may have included the 10th, 11th and 12th Dalai Lamas.

After the Qing dynasty fell and a Republic of China was proclaimed in 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama sought independence for Tibet. But both the Republic and

then, after 1949, the People's Republic continued to regard Tibet as belonging to China. After the 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet for India in 1959, China moved steadily to consolidate its control over Tibetan affairs. This included the use in 1995 of the Golden Urn to identify the 11th Panchen Lama. It was an important moment: the Dalai Lama's favoured candidate was rejected and both the candidate and his family were disappeared into "protective" custody. The People's Republic has since gone further still, creating a register of all those who are permitted to reincarnate after death. The state can revoke that permission at any time. It also claims authority over when the search for a new reincarnation may begin.

Much of this appears to be designed to ensure that the 15th Dalai Lama will be a person with whom the Chinese Communist Party can do business. The current Dalai Lama, alongside Tibet's government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, rejects the idea of using the Golden Urn to identify the next Dalai Lama and insists that no candidate who is effectively chosen by the People's Republic will be acceptable. It is highly likely as a result that within a few years we will have two people both claiming to be the 15th Dalai Lama: one in China selected using the Golden Urn, and another elsewhere chosen in the traditional way. Assuming that both are children — likely, but not inevitable — they will probably have regents speaking and acting on their behalf.

Why would the CCP go to all this trouble? More than a decade ago, the current Dalai Lama relinquished his political authority in favour of a prime minister, or *sikyong*, elected by Tibetans in exile. But although the Dalai Lama no longer holds political power, over the course of a long life he has become synonymous with Tibet's spirit and its hopes of independence — the question of who succeeds him is therefore enormously important. The United States made clear its position in 2015: Chinese government interference in the Tibetan reincarnation process would go against the internationally recognised right to religious freedom. The Tibetan government has been working hard, of late, to persuade European countries to follow suit, but much will depend on how willing those countries are to risk antagonising China. Standing up to China over Tibet in the Sixties was a relatively cost-free exercise for Westerners. That is no longer true in 2024.

"Standing up to China over Tibet in the Sixties was a relatively cost-free exercise for Westerners. That is no longer true in 2024."

India, meanwhile, will face a particularly difficult decision. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently warmed to the Dalai Lama, sending him birthday greetings and attending a Global Buddhist Summit alongside him in 2023. It is all part of an effort to deploy Buddhism as part of India's soft power,

especially with countries such as Japan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and South Korea, in whose cultures Buddhism runs deep. Modi has spoken of India's "Buddhist cousin nations" around the world and of his desire to develop Bodh Gaya — the place where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment — as the "spiritual capital" of Buddhism. In April 2023, India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting produced "Lessons from Lord Buddha": a compendium of speeches by Modi that emphasise his spiritual debt to Buddhism. India's Prime Minister is, the introduction assures readers, "a huge admirer and follower of Lord Buddha".

India cannot, however, afford to ignore its relationship with China. India recognises China's sovereignty in Tibet and has to tread carefully when it comes to disputed border areas in the Himalayas — many of which are home to significant Buddhist populations. China's leadership has already shown its displeasure, on a number of occasions, with Modi's wooing of the "anti-China" Dalai Lama. It also hopes that a "Buddhism with Chinese characteristics" will be capable of enhancing relations with its neighbours. Both Modi and Xi Jinping, it seems, regard Buddhism as key to their attempts to win friends and influence people in Asia.

Modi may also need to worry about how the search for the next Dalai Lama could cause divisions within Tibet's exile community in India. Without the current Dalai Lama there to act as a unifying figure, older rivalries may once again come to the fore. Meanwhile, it is no longer sensible to assume that Beijing's candidate for the 15th Dalai Lama will be uniformly rejected or ignored by Tibetan Buddhist leaders living in Tibet and China. Some of these have made converts among Han Chinese who find the drama of Tibet's landscape and esoteric religious traditions a refreshing — perhaps even a countercultural — alternative to urban Chinese life. For Tibetan monks and lamas ministering to these Han Chinese Buddhists, the backing — or at least the tacit permission — of the Chinese state is essential in going about their work.

The countdown, then, is on. A Hindu leader in India, an atheist one in China and their Christian and secular counterparts around the world must soon decide how to respond to what a nonagenarian Tibetan Buddhist will say about his forthcoming reincarnation. Perhaps this strange moment will be the last of its kind. The next Dalai Lama may well lack their predecessor's charisma, gift for communication and international status. The lineage may fall into semi-obscurity as geopolitics moves on. China's leaders may well be hoping for just such a turn of events. For Tibetans in exile, it would be a disaster: their greatest spiritual and diplomatic asset gone, with no-one to take his place. Lacking a homeland and having lost a powerfully

symbolic leader, the challenge will be daunting of retaining — perhaps remaking — Tibetan identity.

America's gambit: Putting Tibet in the legal spotlight

13 August 2024, [ORE](#), Udayvir Ahuja

The recently enacted Resolve Tibet Act marks another chapter in America's engagement with the Tibet issue, potentially reinvigorating international attention on the region

Tibet captured global attention following World War II when the People's Republic of China annexed it in 1950. However, in the past two decades, Tibet's struggle for autonomy has largely faded from the forefront of international consciousness, becoming a footnote among the freedom movements of the 21st century.

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Aside from Nepal and India, which are home to the majority of the Buddhist Tibetan refugees, it is the United States (US), which has arguably played a more significant role in keeping the Tibetan movement alive in the international arena. Most recently, on 12 July 2024, US President Joe Biden signed the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act', also dubbed as the Resolve Tibet Act.

Background

Since the invasion of Tibet by China in October 1950, the region of Tibet has been under Chinese control. For a brief period, a settlement was reached between the Tibetan and Chinese governments, through the Seventeen-Point Agreement, which was signed in 1951. However, due to significant violations of multiple undertakings of the agreement as well as forced reforms in addition to propaganda campaigns against Tibetan culture and history, the Tibetan government legally repudiated the agreement in March 1959. During the same period, there was a short-lived armed revolt by the Tibetan population, in the aftermath of which the 14th and current Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa and took shelter in Dharamshala, India.

Since the invasion of Tibet by China in October 1950, the region of Tibet has been under Chinese control.

Today, Tibet is governed as an autonomous region of China through the administration of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and 12 Tibetan autonomous prefectures or counties in the nearby provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan.

US and Tibet

Historically, the US's policy towards Tibet has fluctuated drastically depending on its relations with China and its geopolitical outlook. In the 1950s and 60s, it provided military and financial aid to Tibetan

guerrilla forces. In the 70s and 80s, however, we witnessed a switch where the US had almost zero contact with the Tibetan government in exile as it was trying to strengthen its relations with China. However, from 2000 onwards, it began to refocus its attention on Tibet with the Tibet Policy Act (TPA) of 2002, a core legislation which still acts as a guiding US policy towards Tibet, which states 'It is the policy of the United States to support economic development, cultural preservation, health care, and education and environmental sustainability for Tibetans inside Tibet'. The enactment further went on to establish the position of Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in the US State Department, talk about the establishment of a US Branch Office in Lhasa and encourage dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama, among other things.

Fast-forward to 2018, the US came out with the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act 2018, which directed the Department of State to report to Congress regarding the level of access Chinese authorities granted U.S. tourists, journalists and diplomats to Tibetan areas in China.

The 2020 Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TSPA) stipulated that the question of the succession of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama, be decided within the Tibetan Buddhist community, without any interference from the Chinese government.

The 2020 Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TSPA) stipulated that the question of the succession of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama, be decided within the Tibetan Buddhist community, without any interference from the Chinese government. The TSPA also imposes sanctions against Chinese officials who engage in said interferences.

Resolve Tibet Act

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act was introduced as a bipartisan bill by US Senators Jeff Merkley and Todd Young. The Act promotes an unconditional dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the People's Republic of China (PRC) to seek a settlement and further enhance the US's overall support for Tibet.

Key enactments:

1. The definition of Tibet: While the Act does not necessarily change Washington's policy of viewing Tibet as a part of China, it lays down a statutory definition of Tibet that encompasses not only the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) but also Tibetan areas within the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan. Unlike the Chinese government's typical reference to Tibet, which is limited to the TAR, this broader definition aligns with the regions traditionally recognised as Tibet.

2. Self-determination: Section 2 of the Act underlines the 'Right of Self-Determination' of the Tibetan people as laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The right to self-determination is a core principle of international law which provides that every person has the right to self-determination. By the said right, people can freely determine their own political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. This has been reinforced by the International Court of Justice in the Wall case (2004), in which it states 'the principle of self-determination of peoples has been enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 2625 (XXV), under which "Every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to [in that resolution] ... of their right to self-determination". The Act may serve as a catalyst which brings Tibet back into the attention and purview of international law.
3. Tackling Chinese disinformation: The Act amends the TPA by expanding the duties of the Office of the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues to tackle Chinese disinformation about Tibet's history, culture, people, and institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama. This comes amidst a global narrative push by the Chinese government Tibet has "always" been a part of China. A possible reason behind this is to construct a narrative that gives them a right to be in Tibet and that justifies China's record since its takeover in the 1950s. Thus, delegitimise Tibetan nationalism and any question of independence within the international framework.

Impact

The Resolve Tibet Act, enacted following a high-level US delegation's meeting with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in June 2024, marks another chapter in America's engagement with the Tibet issue, potentially reinvigorating international attention on the region. By emphasising the right to self-determination and challenging China's narrative, the Act raises intriguing questions about Tibet's status in international law. This legislation could serve as a catalyst for bringing Tibet's case before international legal forums, opening new avenues for discourse. However, the practical impact remains uncertain, given China's firm stance and global influence. The Act's effectiveness in opening doors for Tibet in

international law will depend on diplomatic manoeuvring, support from other nations, and the complex dynamics of US-China relations. As Tibet remains caught between shifting geopolitical priorities of nations, as with any geopolitical dispute, it is crucial to remember the ongoing toll on the Tibetan Buddhist population since the 1950s.

China's third plenum shows its reform era has entered a new phase

13 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Yang Yao

The Communist Party's long-awaited third plenum seems to not have grabbed the expected amount of attention, both inside and outside China. One of the explanations is that the plenum failed to meet expectations for significant reforms. In particular, there were no announcements of any concrete measures to boost China's low domestic consumption levels – widely acknowledged as a major problem for the country's economy.

However, the third plenum is not oriented towards solving short-term problems. The third plenums of past party congresses put forward long-term strategies. This most recent third plenum was no exception. One of its significant achievements is that it lays out a plan for China in 2035 regarding its economic system. The key is the new goal of implementing a "high-level socialist market economy". Several aspects of this goal are particularly significant for China's policy agenda.

First of all, it implies that the primary stage of socialism, a concept formally proposed in 1987 to describe China's early stage of development, is reaching its endpoint. As that stage comes to a close, so are the institutional arrangements that characterised the first part of China's reform era.

China's economic system is founded on the reforms carried out in the 1990s. With the unification of dual exchange rates in 1994, markets became the main tool to set prices. Many state-owned enterprises were either privatised or went bankrupt. Since then, privately managed businesses have consistently gained ground.

The conventional formula to describe the role of private businesses now is the so-called 56789: the private sector contributes 50 per cent of tax revenue, 60 per cent of gross domestic product, 70 per cent of innovations, 80 per cent of urban employment, and 90 per cent of registered businesses. The Chinese economy is no longer one that is dominated by state-owned enterprises but one that features a mixture of private and public ownership.

Other reforms were no less important, such as policies that replenished China's financial system by successfully removing its non-performing loans. The

tax reform of 1994 created a fiscal federal system that is believed to be one of the secrets for China's economic success as it gave local officials strong incentives to grow local economies.

The government reform got rid of a third of the ministries in the central government and downsized civil servants across the board. Finally, accession to the World Trade Organization lifted China's economic opening to new heights, paving the way for its phenomenal growth in exports.

However, the Communist Party's theoretical foundation has not fully reflected these reforms, despite their level of success. Thus, one of the main tasks of the third plenum was to theoretically cement those reforms, with the purpose of creating a high-level socialist market economy. As a mixed economy of both public and private businesses, China will continue to open to the rest of the world and will rely on the market to determine the allocation and pricing of resources.

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About 20 per cent of the Chinese population live in places where they do not have local hukou and thus have no access to local benefits. For more than a decade now, the central government and various provinces have initiated hukou reforms, though results have substantially varied. This time, the central government will take an even larger role and authorities are determined to overhaul the hukou system within five years.

Another significant reform that came out of the third plenum addresses local government budgets. The plenum pledges to hand over collection of consumption taxes to local governments to strengthen local budgets. In the meantime, it also proposes that all income (as well as debt) raised by government resources be included in the government budget. One implication of this is local governments' commercial debt will be included in local governments' budgets.

This move will hopefully make local debts transparent and thus easier for the public as well as the central government to monitor. Just like the overhaul of the hukou system, the tax reforms are expected to be finished in five years. It will become the ultimate tool to control local debts.

In conclusion, the Communist Party's third plenum laid out a grand plan for China. The proposal to build a high-level socialist market economy system is an

affirmation of the reforms carried out in past decades, cementing their results into the party's theoretical framework. With this goal and the other policy initiatives, it will surely be remembered as one of the most important meetings in the Communist Party's history.

Opinion: India's policy on Tibet remains steadfast

13 August 2024, [The Week](#), Dhundup Gyalpo

India may fine-tune its rhetoric on Tibet but will never adopt an anti-Tibet position

In today's tumultuous global geopolitical landscape, there is growing curiosity on whether the Government of India should revisit its Tibet policy. As a Tibetan, I believe it is essential to contextualise this question accurately.

Changing dynamics in the region have often contributed to heightened media speculation on New Delhi resetting ties with Beijing. I vividly recall a brief period of reports of exaggerated bonhomie between India and China, especially following the Wuhan Summit in April 2018 and leading up to the Mamallapuram Summit in October 2019.

During this period, numerous bilateral meetings between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping suggested a potential reset in Sino-Indian relations. The media also fervently highlighted their personal rapport, showcasing their informal interactions such as tea ceremonies and walks.

At that time, some of our well-wishers expressed concern about whether the Government of India might alter its Tibet policy due to the improving ties with China. I was frequently asked whether there had been any noticeable change in India's policy towards Tibet.

However, following the Galwan Valley clash, relations between the two countries taking a hit dominated media reports.

There is keen interest in deepening India's strategic partnership with the United States, particularly in the military and defence spheres. The U.S. now views India as a key ally in countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, the recent passage of the Resolve Tibet Act, signed into law by U.S. President Joe Biden, which refutes Beijing's claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times, has again intensified calls for a reassessment of India's Tibet policy.

Given that the current policy was framed in an entirely different geopolitical era, and considering China's growing belligerence on all fronts, it is quite understandable why the so-called Tibet card is being invoked in discussion every now and then.

Thus, the question arises again: Will the Government of India change its Tibet policy? My answer—then and

now—has invariably remained the same. When it comes to core issues, India’s stance on Tibet has always been steadfast.

Reflecting the prevailing global geopolitical climate and ongoing border tensions, the Government of India may fine-tune its rhetoric on Tibet, sometimes being vocal and at other times subdued. But I firmly believe that the Indian government will never adopt a position that is anti-Tibet or anti-Tibetan people.

I am confident that my response will remain the same in the future.

What China’s Strategists Think About China-US Relations

13 August 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Shannon Tiezzi

Yu Jie, a senior research fellow on China in the Asia-Pacific Program at Chatham House, analyzes Chinese elites’ perceptions of the bilateral relationship.

Over the past decade, tensions in the China-U.S. relationship have mounted to the point that many now speak of a “new cold war” between Beijing and Washington. U.S. policymakers have leaned into this dynamic, explicitly framing China as a “strategic competitor” and “America’s pacing threat.”

How do Chinese elites view the relationship?

That’s the question Dr. Yu Jie set out to answer in her new report, “China ‘under siege’: How the US’s hardening China policy is seen in Beijing.” Yu Jie, a senior research fellow on China in the Asia-Pacific Program at Chatham House, analyzed publications, officials remarks, and private conversations with top Chinese strategists to understand how elites in China are thinking about the China-U.S. relationship.

In this email interview with [The Diplomat](#), Yu Jie explains common trends in China’s thinking about the United States as well as hotspot issues like Taiwan and the war in Ukraine. Overall, she says, “Beijing’s strategic community does not expect any significant improvement in the Sino-U.S. relationship before and after the U.S. elections in November 2024.”

In 2015, veteran China scholar David Lampton famously warned of a “tipping point” in China-U.S. relations, as American perceptions of China changed dramatically. Your paper traces a similar shift in Chinese perceptions of the U.S. – and hardening of official rhetoric – in the early 2020s. What explains the delay between U.S. and Chinese re-evaluations of the basic state of their relationship?

There are three main reasons of this delay in adjusting their bilateral ties: Firstly, the Chinese political elites didn’t consider the erratic Trump administration would last beyond 2020. They hoped that the election of U.S. President Joe Biden in 2020 might herald a softening of the confrontational China policy of his predecessor. However, these hopes have been dashed

as President Biden has pursued a similarly tough China policy, executed in a more sophisticated, coordinated, and substantive manner. Beijing sees clear evidence of a containment strategy in Washington.

Secondly, Chinese leaders have deprioritized the typical buffers and stabilizers of the China-U.S. relationship such as trade and investment. The tangible benefits of the China-U.S. relationship in the past, namely trade and investment, have rapidly diminished due to increased commercial competitiveness and Beijing’s decisive pivot from low-end, export-led growth to a high-end manufacturing growth model.

And lastly, the thorniest and most risk-laden issues in China-U.S. relations, such as Taiwan and South China Sea, continue to add mistrust and upset the current status quo. Beijing considers stronger deterrence actions should be absolutely necessary to send warnings to Washington and its Indo-Pacific allies.

If most Chinese strategists believe that the deterioration of China-U.S. relations is now more or less permanent, then what is Beijing’s goal regarding China-U.S. interactions? The Biden administration has repeatedly stressed the need for “guardrails” and conflict management. Is that China’s hope as well?

China’s ultimate goal is to ensure that the further erosion of China-U.S. relations does not hinder domestic economic growth, which is key to giving the ruling regime legitimacy. The overall strategy for Beijing to deal with the U.S. is to minimize damage from Washington by maximizing China’s economic and political influence in the rest of the world, most notably with large parts of the Global South. Such a move might well buy time for China to speed up its own economic resilience and technology development.

As for the phrase “guardrails,” it was hugely dismissed by the Chinese political elites. The guardrails implies someone set the rules and others to follow. However, Beijing does not only want to become the follower of rules set by the U.S. in this bilateral relationship. It asks for a significant equity in deciding the rules.

You note a strong pessimism among Chinese experts about the potential of “peaceful reunification,” with many experts arguing that Taiwan’s government would not agree to unification with the mainland absent strong coercion. Is there any introspection about why the DPP has adopted a hardline stance on China – and been re-elected to the presidency three times in a row by Taiwan’s people?

A noticeable feature from Beijing is the growing sense of urgency to deter pro-independence supporters and the sharp criticism of “separatists” inside Taiwan, as President Xi and his lieutenants have made several official comments on various occasions – particularly after Nancy Pelosi, at the time speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, visited Taipei. Both changes

reflect Xi's own belief that there has been a serious deterioration of the Sino-U.S. relationship. Related to this shift, Chinese leaders and official media use coded vocabulary, such as "external forces," to criticize U.S. interference in matters related to Taiwan under both the Trump and Biden administrations.

Despite no formal changes of wording in Beijing's political blueprints on Taiwan, on balance Chinese political elites and influential scholars consider the current situation to be precarious with the pro-independence DPP government in Taiwan, which is likely to result in more active Chinese deterrents to confront the Taiwanese government as well as the incoming U.S. president, irrespective of who that is.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there's a strong sense among European analysts that China has "lost" Europe due to its support for Russia. Do Chinese strategists agree? And if so, how important is this factor for China's national interests?

The Chinese strategic community has intensely debated the three challenges related to the war in Ukraine. The subject has raised many questions that have proven difficult to answer, including: to what extent can China support Russia and maintain stable ties with both the U.S. and Europe, while not facing secondary sanctions from the collective West? When and how will the war end? Should China play a more active mediation role between Russia and Ukraine given the current stalemate on the battlefield?

In fact, Chinese experts' opinions are divided on the fundamental questions of whether China should align with Russia and what the likely repercussions would be for China's ties with the U.S. and Europe. However, there is also a strong view among many Chinese international affairs specialists that even if Beijing sided with Europe, Europeans would not have responded in kind; and the transatlantic alliance countering China would not be weakened by China's stances to this war. One can confirm that Beijing's damage limitation efforts have not been well received in some European capitals.

China's strong inclination to sustain its ties with Russia goes well beyond the Kremlin's military adventure. Its return on investments is still framed by its response to the United States' pursuit of a China containment strategy. Beijing believes its relations with Moscow might well bring a necessary (if imperfect) solution in dealing with U.S. policy in both economic and diplomatic terms.

How does China view the upcoming U.S. election? Is there a clear preference for either Donald Trump or Kamala Harris?

With the U.S. presidential candidates likely to compete with one another to sound tough on China, Beijing's strategic community does not expect any significant improvement in the Sino-U.S. relationship before or after the U.S. elections in November 2024.

With the possible return of Donald Trump, Chinese leaders will likely reinforce the narrative that the U.S. is the single and most disruptive source of global instability, while portraying China as a responsible and confident world power able to stand up to the U.S. hegemony. For Beijing, the return of Donald Trump might well be a rare opportunity to recalibrate its bilateral relationship with the U.S., as he is often willing to make deals outside traditional political parameters. However, his leadership style will cause further anxiety for Chinese leaders as Trump tends to focus on his own interests regardless of the consequences, as was illustrated by the Trump administration ignoring the well-established approach of generations of U.S. and Chinese leaders to Taiwan. On Harris, Beijing naturally considers she will continue to carry forward the Biden administration's China policy and strengthen the United States' influence in the Indo-Pacific. As a result, there is not a clear preference for Harris or Trump.

America's gambit: Putting Tibet in the legal spotlight

13 August 2024, [ORF](#), Udayvir Ahuja

The recently enacted Resolve Tibet Act marks another chapter in America's engagement with the Tibet issue, potentially reinvigorating international attention on the region

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Aside from Nepal and India, which are home to the majority of the Buddhist Tibetan refugees, it is the United States (US), which has arguably played a more significant role in keeping the Tibetan movement alive in the international arena. Most recently, on 12 July 2024, US President Joe Biden signed the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act', also dubbed as the Resolve Tibet Act.

Background

Since the invasion of Tibet by China in October 1950, the region of Tibet has been under Chinese control. For a brief period, a settlement was reached between the Tibetan and Chinese governments, through the Seventeen-Point Agreement, which was signed in 1951. However, due to significant violations of multiple undertakings of the agreement as well as forced reforms in addition to propaganda

campaigns against Tibetan culture and history, the Tibetan government legally repudiated the agreement in March 1959. During the same period, there was a short-lived armed revolt by the Tibetan population, in the aftermath of which the 14th and current Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa and took shelter in Dharamshala, India.

Since the invasion of Tibet by China in October 1950, the region of Tibet has been under Chinese control.

Today, Tibet is governed as an autonomous region of China through the administration of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and 12 Tibetan autonomous prefectures or counties in the nearby provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan.

US and Tibet

Historically, the US's policy towards Tibet has fluctuated drastically depending on its relations with China and its geopolitical outlook. In the 1950s and 60s, it provided military and financial aid to Tibetan guerrilla forces. In the 70s and 80s, however, we witnessed a switch where the US had almost zero contact with the Tibetan government in exile as it was trying to strengthen its relations with China. However, from 2000 onwards, it began to refocus its attention on Tibet with the Tibet Policy Act (TPA) of 2002, a core legislation which still acts as a guiding US policy towards Tibet, which states 'It is the policy of the United States to support economic development, cultural preservation, health care, and education and environmental sustainability for Tibetans inside Tibet'. The enactment further went on to establish the position of Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in the US State Department, talk about the establishment of a US Branch Office in Lhasa and encourage dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama, among other things.

Fast-forward to 2018, the US came out with the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act 2018, which directed the Department of State to report to Congress regarding the level of access Chinese authorities granted U.S. tourists, journalists and diplomats to Tibetan areas in China.

The 2020 Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TSPA) stipulated that the question of the succession of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama, be decided within the Tibetan Buddhist community, without any interference from the Chinese government.

The 2020 Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TSPA) stipulated that the question of the succession of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama, be decided within the Tibetan Buddhist community, without any interference from the Chinese government. The TSPA also imposes sanctions against Chinese officials who engage in said interferences.

Resolve Tibet Act

The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act was introduced as a bipartisan bill by US Senators Jeff Merkley and Todd Young. The Act promotes an unconditional dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the People's Republic of China (PRC) to seek a settlement and further enhance the US's overall support for Tibet.

Key enactments:

1. The definition of Tibet: While the Act does not necessarily change Washington's policy of viewing Tibet as a part of China, it lays down a statutory definition of Tibet that encompasses not only the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) but also Tibetan areas within the Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan. Unlike the Chinese government's typical reference to Tibet, which is limited to the TAR, this broader definition aligns with the regions traditionally recognised as Tibet.
2. Self-determination: Section 2 of the Act underlines the 'Right of Self-Determination' of the Tibetan people as laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The right to self-determination is a core principle of international law which provides that every person has the right to self-determination. By the said right, people can freely determine their own political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. This has been reinforced by the International Court of Justice in the Wall case (2004), in which it states 'the principle of self-determination of peoples has been enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 2625 (XXV), under which "Every State has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to [in that resolution] ... of their right to self-determination". The Act may serve as a catalyst which brings Tibet back into the attention and purview of international law.
3. Tackling Chinese disinformation: The Act amends the TPA by expanding the duties of the Office of the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues to tackle Chinese disinformation about Tibet's history, culture, people, and institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama. This comes amidst a global narrative push by the Chinese government Tibet has "always" been a part of China. A possible reason behind this is to construct a narrative that gives them a

right to be in Tibet and that justifies China's record since its takeover in the 1950s. Thus, delegitimise Tibetan nationalism and any question of independence within the international framework.

Impact

The Resolve Tibet Act, enacted following a high-level US delegation's meeting with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in June 2024, marks another chapter in America's engagement with the Tibet issue, potentially reinvigorating international attention on the region. By emphasising the right to self-determination and challenging China's narrative, the Act raises intriguing questions about Tibet's status in international law. This legislation could serve as a catalyst for bringing Tibet's case before international legal forums, opening new avenues for discourse. However, the practical impact remains uncertain, given China's firm stance and global influence. The Act's effectiveness in opening doors for Tibet in international law will depend on diplomatic manoeuvring, support from other nations, and the complex dynamics of US-China relations. As Tibet remains caught between shifting geopolitical priorities of nations, as with any geopolitical dispute, it is crucial to remember the ongoing toll on the Tibetan Buddhist population since the 1950s.

India Needs To Reset Its Ties with China Instead Of Relying On America

13 August 2024, [Almayadeen](#), Rabi Sankar Bosu

It is hoped that India and China should work to normalize their derailed ties by increasing economic, political, and strategic cooperation as well as people-to-people exchange.

The official diplomatic journey of India and China, the two big neighbouring countries and ancient civilizations in Asia started on April 1, 1950, when India being the first non-socialist country recognized the newly-born People's Republic of China as a sovereign country. During their remarkable journey spanning over seven decades, these two countries have maintained a cordial and close friendship through state-level visits while a burgeoning trade and economic partnership as well as people-to-people and cultural ties have contributed to further blossoming their bilateral bonding.

But no one can dispute that the unfortunate bloodshed in the 2020 Galwan Valley clash between the Indian and Chinese border troops at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh region decimated the India-China relationship. Since then, India has reiterated that the border situation will determine the status of its relations with its northern neighbour until normalcy is restored along the LAC.

On June 11, 2024, after taking charge as India's External Affairs Minister for a second consecutive term in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 3.0 cabinet, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar told Indian journalists: "Our focus regarding China will be on finding solutions to border issues, while with Pakistan, we aim to address the longstanding issue of cross-border terrorism." Jaishankar's comments clearly indicate that India will take a seemingly hard line against China to resolve the border dispute with China. There is no disputing that the Doklam (Donglang) standoff in 2017 and the Galwan Valley standoff in 2020 led to a sharp decline in India-China relations and significantly affected the socio-economic conditions of over 2.7 billion people residing on either side of the Himalayas. Aftermath of the Galwan Valley Clash:

It's really unfortunate that despite a plethora of bilateral agreements on border-related issues, the two countries have not yet reached a complete agreement on the disengagement of troops from all friction points at the disputed LAC in Ladakh. After rounds of talks between military commanders and diplomatic meetings between India and China failed to produce any dramatic breakthroughs, questions continue to haunt Indian and Chinese people alike: How can the two countries manage to improve their ties? Will the sour political and diplomatic relations become the normal state between the two countries? More importantly, what does the Galwan Valley clash signify for the future of Sino-Indian relations?

Right after the Galwan Valley clash, Indian policy towards China entered a dangerous phase when the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government adopted punitive measures such as imposing a range of economic measures against Chinese firms and banning a set of mobile apps linked to China. The Indian political leadership has accelerated its strategic tilt toward the United States and echoing the words of US President Joe Biden, painted China as an "expansionist." On June 21, 2020, India introduced new "Rules of Engagement" for the border areas that give its commanders "complete freedom of action" along the LAC. India's sedulous courtship of the United States, resuscitation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), and cancellation of public contracts with Chinese firms do not promote healthy and stable development of its relations with China. Rather, such a trend could derail India's dream of becoming a "US\$5 trillion economy". The Quad Keeps Eye on China:

It should be mentioned here that the dialogue of the four Quad foreign ministers from Australia, India, Japan, and the United States and the joint statement of the Quad meeting in Tokyo, Japan on July 29, 2024, have clearly shown that it is directed against China to contain the country's rise in the Indo-Pacific region, currently the most active region in the global

geopolitical landscape under the leadership of President Biden. The Quad foreign ministers expressed serious concerns over China's intimidating actions in the South China Sea and pledged to enhance maritime security and stability in the region. Since becoming Indian Prime Minister in 2014, Modi has been working closely with the United States under former U.S. President Donald Trump and current President Biden to check Chinese adventurism and militarization in the frame of Indo-Pacific strategy, including the South China Sea. In terms of security issues, India is more concerned about China's presence in the Indian Ocean and the defense cooperation between China and Pakistan. The Narendra Modi-led government believes that an alliance with America is in its best interests. However, on July 29, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian condemned the joint statement of the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting for chanting "a free & open Indo-Pacific" by stating that "Some countries outside the region have frequently sent advanced military aircraft and vessels to the South China Sea to flex their muscles and create tension, and have formed various groupings and incited division and confrontation in the region, all of which make them the biggest threat and challenge to regional peace and stability." He also condemned the Quad as an exclusive group that incites antagonism and confrontation and hinders the development of other countries.

It is indeed surprising that India, despite being a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS, is irritating China by joining a part of the U.S.-led security alliance against China. Notably, India is going to host the Quad Leaders' Summit later this year. India should not be overly fascinated by the U.S.'s strategic approach to China. India's foreign policy cannot be dictated by the U.S.

Returning India-China Relations to Normal:

Amid continuing border standoff between the two countries, Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on July 25, on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, and discussed various aspects of bilateral collaboration, including resolving the border disputes as soon as possible. After the meeting with Wang, the Indian foreign minister said in a post on X: "The state of the border will necessarily be reflected in the state of our ties."

On the other hand, emphasizing the daunting global challenges, the Chinese foreign minister stressed that the two countries should increase understanding and mutual trust for mutually beneficial cooperation. It is to be noted that the two foreign ministers earlier met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan on July 4 and agreed to work to defuse the border tensions. On both occasions, Wang emphasized that

China values its friendship with India and will work to manage its differences with its neighbour.

Obviously, the two ministers exhibited both hope and confidence in relations between Asia's two biggest countries. More importantly, Jaishankar insisted that India was "not looking to other countries to sort out" the ongoing border dispute with China during the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting on July 25 in Japan. Indian foreign minister is right. India is an independent major country. Its normal relations with China should not be a target for external interference from a third party.

India needs China, China needs India:

The Economic Survey 2024, authored by India's Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran, outlined that it is inevitable for India to plug itself into the global supply chain without increasing imports from China and also said that allowing foreign direct investment (FDI) from China could help boost India's exports to the western nations, according to a report published by The Hindu Businessline on July 23, 2024. The Survey said, "India's economy is still a fraction of China's".

India cannot punish China economically or politically because of its fragile economy. Despite the political frostiness and prolonged border faceoffs, the good news is that India's trade with China is grown fast in recent years. China has emerged as the largest trading partner of India with \$118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24, overtaking the U.S., according to various news reports in India. India's exports to China rose by 8.7 percent to \$16.67 billion in the last fiscal.

On the other hand, China needs to invest more in improving its relationship with India even if the returns aren't immediate. China can take advantage of India's emerging and buoyant consumer market, in particular, the electronics, pharmaceutical, and telecom markets. Judging India's trade figures with China, it can be said that India needs China more than China needs India.

Pushing Forward Bilateral Relations:

Mahatma Gandhi, "Father of the Indian nation", once said, "I must not serve a distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest." India and China are two close neighbours and represent the world's biggest emerging economies. The importance of India-China relations has been increasing to the two countries themselves, to Asia, and to the world. Considering the strength and development of India-China bilateral ties as well as the two countries' respective roles in international issues, Sino-Indian relations cannot be a "zero-sum game" in the era of globalization. It is hoped that India and China should work to normalize their derailed ties by increasing economic, political, and strategic cooperation as well as people-to-people exchange, which are all equally important for the region and for global peace, stability, and prosperity.

US attempt to cause a rift between China and India over border issue deserves vigilance

13 August 2024, [Global Times](#), Su Lun

Amid signs signaling a thaw in China-India relations, the Voice of America (VOA) reported on Tuesday about India's recently released Project Zorawar light tank. The report claimed that the weapon is a direct response to "China's expanding military influence," highlighting the tank as new evidence of the extensive competition between China and India. It portrayed the tank as a clear signal of India's intention to prevent China gaining from advantages in the border crisis. This coverage attempts to use media influence to cause a rift in China-India relations, particularly to heighten border tensions between China and India and give the US a pretext to strengthen its strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

Despite Indian media reporting in July that the Zorawar tank is "expected to be ready for induction into the army by 2027," VOA presented the Zorawar as a "game-changer for high-altitude warfare" without objectively assessing its potential deployment timeline or feasibility.

"The Zorawar tank will not significantly alter the balance of power on the China-India border," Long Xingchun, a professor from the School of International Relations at Sichuan International Studies University, told the *Global Times*, noting that the real factor affecting the border situation is the two countries' respective national strength. "The report by US media aims to sow discord in China-India relations, making it easier for the US to pull India into an anti-China circle," Long added.

Media manipulation, in which the significance of India's Zorawar light tank was magnified, has been used to stir up misunderstandings and tensions between China and India. This strategy aims to deepen divisions and conflicts, thereby sustaining US influence on India and in the Asia-Pacific region.

Over the past three years, China and India have maintained communication and coordination through military and diplomatic channels over the border issue. The foreign ministers of China and India held two meetings in July 2024, where they emphasized the need to step up talks to resolve disputes along their borders. This positive development has not only de-escalated tensions in the border region, improved bilateral relations, but also contributed to greater stability in the region.

However, the momentum has clearly rendered the US on tenterhooks.

The improvement in China-India relations is clearly detrimental to the implantation of the US global strategy. Washington is concerned that the easing of tensions between China and India could weaken US influence and strategic advantage in the Asia-Pacific.

Additionally, India's recent statements dismissing the need for third-party interference in the China-India border issue may also give the US a sense of urgency about losing control in the region.

The US has never been a true friend to India. Its relationship with India has always been based on utilitarian exploitation, with the hope of turning India into a pawn to contain China. However, cooperation and improved relations align more closely with the mutual interests of China and India as representative powers of the Global South.

The recent emergence of positive momentum for the improvement of bilateral ties between China and India should be preserved and strengthened. And both sides must be vigilant against interference from other forces with ulterior motives.

The improvement in China-India relations could serve as a crucial driver of regional peace, and the US attempts at provocation and manipulation of public opinion reveal its hypocritical strategy. In the face of such interference, China and India should resolve differences through dialogue and cooperation and promote the stable development of bilateral relations. Only based on cooperation, can the two countries jointly meet future challenges and achieve a win-win outcome.

The Resolve Tibet Act, a Timely Impetus for Foreign Policy Review

13 August 2024, [Japan Forward](#), Tsewang Gyalo Arya

The "Resolve Tibet Act" defines US policy on Tibet, challenges Chinese claims, and promotes global action for Tibet's rights and international resolution.

President Joe Biden Signs Resolve Tibet Act, Strengthens America's Tibet Policy on July 12, 2024 (Photo: Tibet.net)

July 2024 marks an important milestone in defining the United States' policy on the Tibet issue and its resolutions. US President Joe Biden signed the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act," and the Act became law on July 12. This legislation delineates and will govern the US policy toward Tibet and the Tibetan struggle for freedom and justice.

The Act has six sections:

1. Short title
2. Findings
3. Statement of policy
4. Sense of Congress
5. Modifications to the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002
6. Availability of amounts to counter disinformation about Tibet

The Act is popularly known in its abridged form as the "Resolve Tibet Act." Both its long and abridged forms

succinctly convey the purpose and necessity of the legislation. It aims to settle the ongoing dispute between Tibet and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime. This is crucial due to China's ongoing aggressive efforts to distort and erase the true nature of the issue through disinformation.

Historical Truth vs Diplomatic Deadlock

Section 2 of the Act has 12 clauses explaining how negotiations between 2002 and 2010 failed and why they were impossible. This was due to China's insistence on the illogical precondition that the Dalai Lama recognize Tibet as having been a part of China since ancient times. Clause 5 of the section states, "The United States Government has never taken a position that Tibet was a part of China since ancient times."

Tibet has been an independent country with a long cultural, religious, and political history. Since the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950, China has consistently tried every means to justify its presence in Tibet, including distortion of Tibetan history. Washington reiterated that Tibet has never been a part of China since ancient times. Free and democratic nations around the world should uphold and recognize this historical truth.

This will awaken China from its condescending big bully stupor and arm-twisting maneuver. It will force China to accept the reality that its military occupation of Tibet was brutal, illegal, and against the United Nations Charter.

Recognition, Rights, and Countering Disinformation

Section 3 of the Act, which includes five clauses, states the policy of the US government. It recognizes the Tibetan people as having distinct religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical identities. Moreover, it emphasizes that the Tibet issue must be resolved by international law, including the UN Charter, through peaceful means and dialogue without preconditions. Clauses in Section 2 further refer to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. These covenants establish the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, Tibetans can "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development."

Distorting Tibetan History

Section 4 of the Act rejects the Chinese claim that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times as "historically inaccurate." It also states that US public diplomacy efforts will "counter disinformation about Tibet from the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party." This includes addressing disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, Tibetan institutions, and the Dalai Lama.

This is a clear message from the US government to China to stop distorting Tibetan history and religious culture. Additionally, it calls on China to refrain from interfering in the selection of Tibetan spiritual leaders, including the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama.

Challenging China's Claims

The Act also defines Tibet's geographical area and composition. It has pointed out all the Tibetan regions under the traditional three provinces of U-Tsang, Amdo, and Kham as Tibet. This is a considerable blow to the CCP's policy of limiting Tibet to China's so-called "Tibet Autonomous Region." Furthermore, it also challenges Beijing's efforts to erase the nomenclature "Tibet" and replace it with "Xizang."

Washington's Resolve Tibet Act is about the US policy to resolve the Tibet-China dispute according to International law and the UN Charter through peaceful dialogue. It states that the Chinese occupation of Tibet is illegal, and the Tibet issue is still an unresolved international issue. Significantly, it also states that UN members have an obligation to resolve it.

Disinformation and Militarization

Elsewhere, the Act refers to the UN resolution on Tibet, which China has neglected. The Act also warns China to stop spreading disinformation about Tibet and Tibetans. China uses such disinformation to justify its illegal occupation of Tibet and interference in Tibetan religious matters.

Beijing's militarization of the Tibetan plateau and the volatile situation that we see at the borders of India, Nepal, and Bhutan are concerning. China's heavy military presence in the Indo-Pacific regions and Southeast China Sea raises further alarms. There is also the constant Chinese threat to Taiwan and the Senkaku Islands. None of this bodes well for peace and stability in Asia and the world.

A Call for Global Action

If the international community seeks a world free of violence, injustice, and repression, it must take action. Allowing a destructive authoritative regime like China to continue its arm-twisting hegemonic maneuvering in neighboring regions is unacceptable. It is high time to tame and control the authoritative regimes posing obstacles to world peace and stability. Free and democratic nations must take this US initiative to revise their national policy toward China.

"An evil man will burn his own nation to the ground to rule over the ashes." If what Sun Tzu, the legendary Chinese military philosopher, said is true, it's an alarm bell for all of us. India, Japan, and the European Union should take the lead in Europe and Asia to change their respective policies on Tibet and harness the fiery dragon bent on burning itself and the world.

Did climate change kill the ancient Tibetan empire?

12 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#)

The general narrative on the demise of the Tibetan empire, which pervaded across Central Asia and beyond during the period of 7th to 9th centuries AD, even sacking China's Tang dynasty capital Chang'an—modern day Xian—in 763, is pretty straightforward: It followed the assassination of its Yarlung dynasty King Langdarma and the disintegration of the empire due to the absence of a central authority. However, scientists are said to see the explanation for the collapse of the Tibetan empire lying elsewhere, namely climate change.

The period of its heyday fell on 618-877 AD. However, then it began to fade, and then completely disappeared. For a long time, scientists could not understand what exactly led to the death of the state, noted *newsyou.info* Aug 12.

In order to finally solve the mystery of the collapse of an ancient civilization, scientists from the Tibetan Highlands Research Institute turned to the geological data of lake sediments. As a result, they came to the conclusion that the fading occurred due to changed natural conditions, the report said, citing a *vsviti.com.ua* report.

Warm and humid weather trends were strong during the heyday of the Tibetan empire. This contributed to the development of agriculture and cattle breeding. But later, despite everything, there was a severe drought that coincided with the collapse of the state, the authors of the work were stated to have noted.

The researchers have based their opinion on the remains of microscopic unicellular algae found in one of the lakes of Tibet. They drew attention to clear signs of the transition from planktonic species (drifting inside the lake, closer to the surface) to benthic forms (living near the bottom of the reservoir). This means that its level was once much higher. That is, later the lake partially dried up.

During the analysis of other reservoirs in the region, the authors of the work were stated to have come to the conclusion that climatic changes affected the entire highlands, and were not limited to the place under study.

The drought probably lasted for 60-70 years. This would have caused crop failures, and food shortages in those days often led to social unrest, as well as religious and political problems, the researchers were stated to have concluded.

China's Anti-Religious-Freedom Policy: A Threat to World Peace and Stability

12 August 2024, [Bitter Winter](#), Tsewang Gyalpo Arya

An analysis of the brutal repression of religion in Tibet and beyond, based on the author's panel speech at the July 22 Tokyo's International Religious Freedom Summit Asia.

Why is religion important and why do we need it?

H.H. the Dalai Lama, a Tibetan spiritual leader and 1989 Nobel Peace Laureate, has said that all religious teachings carry important messages of love, compassion, forgiveness, and non-violence. All the major religions in this world have a great potential to generate and contribute peace and harmony at all levels: of the individual, the family, societal, national, and international. To have a peaceful world, we first need peace within ourselves at a personal level. This will have a ripple effect. For this, we need religion and moral ethics to guide us properly to find this peace within and outside ourselves. It is this important sacred potential of religions that we must uphold and promote for a better and peaceful world.

In a free and democratic nation, this religious freedom is respected and it complements social and national harmony. But a dictatorial and authoritarian regime, which wants to have complete control over people's minds and bodies, sees religion as a threat to its authority, hence the religious repression. The very fact that they are against the religious teachings that are based on love, compassion, forgiveness, and non-violence, shows the evil and dangerous nature of such a regime.

Tibet's experience past and present

It's more than 70 years since China occupied Tibet militarily. Despite their propaganda and claims of emancipation, prosperity, development, and socialist paradise, Tibetans are still suffering under the repressive brutal communist regime. The violation of human rights, religious freedom, repression, and destruction of Tibetan identity, which has been going on since the early occupation in the 1950s, has now reached the climax. Today, the situation in Tibet is described by sentences such as "total information blackout," "Tibet has become a police state," "Tibetan plateau militarized," and so on. The US Freedom House survey has described Tibet as the most repressed and inaccessible country in several consecutive annual reports.

When China failed to gain legitimacy to rule Tibet even after 70 years of occupation and indoctrination, the communist regime decided to eliminate the root of the Tibetan identity, i.e., Tibetan language, culture, and religion.

More than 6,000 monasteries and nunneries were destroyed and thousands of monks and nuns were forced to disrobe in the early years of occupation. But

the situation has become worse since the coming of Xi Jinping in 2012. Today, monasteries, religious statues and artifacts, and schools are destroyed in broad daylight before the eyes of the public, and information on these atrocities comes out only after the destruction and despite of cover-up measures.



Tsewang Gyalpo Arya at the Tokyo Summit with Ambassador Sam Brownback, former U.S. Ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom.

CCP's propaganda and misinformation on "separatism"

China insists that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Administration in Exile are separatists and anti-China. But the truth is different. It is the Chinese communist leadership that is separatist and anti-China. Many Tibetans and Chinese lived and studied peacefully and harmoniously together in two large monastic complexes of Larung-gar and Yachen-gar in the Kham region in Eastern Tibet. There were students from South Korea, Taiwan, and other countries too. However, Chinese authorities saw this good relationship between Tibetans and Chinese along with others studying Buddhism together as dangerous.

They started destroying the two monasteries in 2001 and sent the Chinese and the Tibetan students to their respective places. Tibetan monks were not allowed to teach Buddhism to Chinese, and Chinese people were banned from receiving teachings from Tibetan masters. So, who is the real separatist? It is the CCP regime with its "divide and rule" policy that is the real separatist.

Many protested peacefully. Three nuns, Rinzin Dolma, Tsering Dolma, and Semgha committed suicide to protest the destructions and evictions. It was reported that monks and nuns were arrested and forced into indoctrination classes where they were coerced to wear Chinese military outfits, dance, and sing songs praising the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Emboldened China and broad daylight repression

The silence of the international community has emboldened China to commit these religious atrocities in broad daylight.

In December 2021, China dismantled a 99-foot Buddha statue and a 30-foot Maitreya statue and destroyed 45 large prayer wheels and a monastic school in the Drago region in the Kham province of

Tibet. They dismantled a 45-foot statue of Guru Padmasambhava, an Indian saint who introduced Buddhism and was revered as the second Buddha in Tibet, in Nyimo Township.

But very little news or information comes out because of the communication restrictions, strict surveillance, and threat of torture. The world thinks Tibet is safe and at peace because there is no news on Tibet. But the truth is the opposite.

Making laws to justify religious repression

The CCP, although it does not believe in and respect religions, knows the power of religion. To have total control over the people in China and the occupied territories, the CCP is trying to make religion its handy tool. When repressions, indoctrination, and destruction of monasteries, churches, and mosques failed to destroy people's faith in religions, the CCP leadership came up with laws, rules, and regulations to control religions and the religious understanding of the people.

Last year, China came up with Religious Order No.19, the Administrative Measures for Religious Activity Venues, to administer the places of worship in China and in its occupied regions. Through this regulation, China is trying to justify the CCP's interference in religious matters with the people and to stop the international community's criticism by saying that they are acting within the law.

Article 3 of the Order states, "Places of religious activity shall uphold the leadership of the CCP and the socialist system, and thoroughly implement Xi Jinping's ideology of Socialism with Chinese characteristics for the New Era."

Here China has openly made it clear that under this regulation all religious bodies must adopt "Xi Jinping's ideology of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" in their religious teachings and practices. This is ridiculous and unacceptable! Communist ideology and Xi Jinping do not respect and believe in religion. So it is preposterous and sacrilegious on the part of the CCP leadership to dilute and profane the religious teachings for their political agenda.

China also announced a law on patriotic education last year. Articles 3 and 6 of the law say, "Patriotic education shall hold the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, persist in using Marxism, Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of the 'Three Represents', the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era as guidance..."

From this, it is very clear that the CCP's patriotic education is nothing more than indoctrinating and forcing the obsolete communist ideology on the masses and making it a mandatory part of education and social life. By idolizing Mao and Deng, the law also tries to erase the dark memories and records of all the

deaths and sufferings that Mao's Cultural Revolution, the Great Leap Forward, and Deng's Tiananmen Square massacre brought to China.

Forced and repeated use of "Xi Jinping Thought" here and there is aimed at imposing the worship and deification of the Chinese President. This is evident from the fact that Tibetans are forced to make offerings and do prostrations before pictures of Xi Jinping.

Control of religious leaders

As religious leaders are respected and revered, the CCP tries to exert its authority over the selection and appointment of religious leaders and teachers. China Buddhist Association (CBA), the highest religious body theoretically looking after the teachings of Buddha in the country, is strictly controlled by the CCP. Through this body, the CCP is trying to control the Buddhists not only in China but around the world.

Arjia Rinpoche, a prominent Tibetan-Mongolian reincarnate lama, when he came to know that he was going to be appointed the head of the CBA, as he writes in his book "Surviving the Dragon", "could no longer ignore the conflict between government interests and my own religious vows. Rather than betray my faith, I chose to leave my hometown, my friends, and my beloved monks at Kumbum Monastery. I chose the path of exile." He fled Tibet in 1998. His book has now become a testament to the atrocities the CCP has perpetrated and is perpetrating in Tibet since its occupation in 1950.

Buddhism is very popular in China and around the world and Tibetan reincarnated lamas and teachers are highly revered in the Buddhist world. The CCP through their Religious Order No.5 in 2007 has asserted its power to select and control the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist masters. China is now aggressively spreading disinformation that it has historical and political rights to select the next Dalai Lama. This is wrong and completely false. The policy behind this is to produce religious leaders under the guise of reincarnation who will parrot the CCP's dictates. The Chinese-selected 11th Panchen Lama is a typical example of this policy.

Of course, the same is happening with Christian, Muslim, and Taoist communities. The churches, mosques, and temples are all controlled by CCP cadres and the official heads of these religions are all selected and groomed to stick to the CCP version of religion and Xi Jinping's ideology of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. This is very dangerous, and we must not let it continue.

With US keen on military base and China eyeing deep sea port, India must engage with Bangladesh smartly

11 August 2024, [First Post](#), Air Marshal Anil Chopra

If Bangladesh remains unfriendly to India, Pakistan could also take advantage, including in connivance with China

As Bangladesh comes to grips with the violent protests after the resignation and exit of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, international power play is unfolding. Hasina has been ruling the strategically located South Asian nation since 2009 and secured a fifth overall term in the one-sided election in January, which was boycotted by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

China is heavily invested in infrastructure and military hardware in Bangladesh. The US is trying to secure a military base in Bangladesh. India has its longest land border with Bangladesh (4,096 kilometres) that covers its three sides, the fourth being the Bay of Bengal (BoB).

US Favoured a Regime Change

For a long time, the US administration has expressed support for regime change in Bangladesh. They were not very happy with Hasina being pro-India or taking support from China. Various strategies have been tried to get her out of power. Opposition activists had been supported to create a revolt. The US ambassador has been meeting the opposition party, BNP. During the elections, Hasina faced constant criticism from the US over what they called unfair polls.

The US 2023 NDAA Burma Act

Sheikh Hasina recently indicated about a plot by a third country (purportedly the US) that could lead to the division of Bangladesh on religious lines and the creation of a non-Muslim majority country like East Timor. Kuki-Chin rebels are fighting with the Myanmar army to help and promote Christian rebels.

The incorporation of the Burma Act into the US 2023 NDAA had raised strong public opinion in Myanmar that substantial US support would come for the resistance movement in Myanmar. Kuki Chin Province of Myanmar, Chattogram hill tracts of Bangladesh, and Mizoram of India may be the demarcation.

More than one million Chin live in Myanmar, one million Mizo live in Mizoram, half a million Kuki live in Manipur, and tens of thousands of Kuki live in Bangladesh. In addition, due to the ongoing fighting between the Myanmar army and the Chin people, hundreds of thousands of Chin have fled overseas, including 80,000 in the United States". Hasina felt that it was a wakeup call for the sub-region.

Naval and Airbase at Saint Martin's Island

The 3 sq km St Martin Island is in the north-eastern part of the BoB, about 9 km south of the tip of Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula, and is the southernmost part of the country.



The US had reportedly suggested that Bangladesh join the Quad alliance, and there were reports suggesting that they proposed leasing Saint Martin Island for building an air and naval base. The US does maintain military ties with Bangladesh, with both forces engaging in regular visits and joint exercises. Since China is also trying to get closer to Bangladesh, such a US base meant to contain China was not acceptable to them. Some others have suggested that the US actually wants to make Bangladesh a playground to 'dominate' India.

However, during a press conference, Matthew Miller, spokesperson for the US Department of State, asserted that the United States has never engaged in any discussions regarding taking control of St Martin's Island or has any intention to do so.

China-Bangladesh Defence Cooperation

Bangladesh has emerged as an important player in China's political expansion strategy. Military cooperation between the two in the form of arms supply and construction of military infrastructure has increased in the past few years. During the 1971 liberation of Bangladesh, China had supported Pakistan. But today, Bangladesh considers China a trusted ally.

In 2002, China and Bangladesh signed a "Defence Cooperation Agreement", which covers military training and defence production. By 2006, Dhaka had emerged as a major buyer of Chinese-made weapons. China praised Bangladesh Hasina for her decision to deny permission for a foreign military base, commending it as a reflection of the Bangladeshi people's strong national spirit and commitment to independence. Any strategic partnership with Dhaka gives Beijing added leverage to reduce Indian influence and checkmate its forces.

China has emerged as Bangladesh's highest trading partner, with over \$25 billion invested in various projects. After Pakistan, Bangladesh is the second-highest Chinese investment recipient in the South Asian region. China has played a significant role in building bridges, roads, railway tracks, airports, and power plants in Bangladesh. The Padma Bridge Rail Link Project is one of the flagship projects undertaken by China, which connects Dhaka with Jessore through

the Padma Bridge. Importantly, a broad array of products from Bangladesh enjoys zero tariffs in China. China has also continuously enhanced defence ties with Bangladesh and supplies military equipment, which includes fighter jets, battle tanks, and naval frigates, submarines, and missile boats. Bangladesh sources nearly 86 per cent of military hardware from China.

China sold 65 large-calibre artillery systems in 2006. In 2008, Bangladesh set up an anti-missile launch pad near Chittagong Port with Chinese support. In 2014, the two sides signed four military agreements related to setting up military training facilities. In 2016, two Chinese-built 1,350 ton Type 056 corvettes joined the Bangladesh Navy. In the 2018 deal, China agreed to deliver 23 Hongdu K-8 intermediate jet trainers for the Bangladesh Air Force (BAF). Bangladesh imported 36 F-7BGI aircraft from China in 2021. China has played a pivotal role in the development of Bangladesh's military, naval, and airbases. China is also the main supplier of portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and small arms and ammunition.

A deal was signed in 2017 for two submarines that included training and help to let Bangladesh construct its first submarine base. In 2023, PM Hasina inaugurated a \$1.21 billion, six-slot submarine base, built by China at Cox's Bazar off the Bay of Bengal coast, which will provide safe jetty facilities to submarines and warships.

Bangladesh and China conduct their first-ever joint military exercise codenamed 'China-Bangladesh Golden Friendship 2024' in early May 2024. It was to test out United Nations peacekeeping anti-terrorism operations such as the rescue of hostages on buses and the clean-up of terrorist camps. It will deepen bilateral defence cooperation. Although Bangladesh and India have held 11 military drills between 2009 and 2023, China's entry has future implications. Could Bangladesh be drawn into some kind of cold war between India and China?

Substandard Chinese Defence Supplies

In 2022, the Bangladesh Army expressed dissatisfaction with military supplies from Beijing. There have been rejections of tank ammunition supply. Also, there have been issues about spare parts for tank repair and maintenance. The HQ-7 short-range SAMs supplied by China were found to have defects. The two Ming-type submarines procured at a discounted rate also failed to meet operational expectations.

Sonadia Island – Deep Sea Port

Sonadia Island is a small 9 square kilometres size, offshore of Cox's Bazar coast in Chittagong Division, Bangladesh. It is 15 km north-west of Cox's Bazar District Headquarters. China had been eyeing a naval base in BoB and had offered to initially develop the Sonadia Islands as a deep sea port for Bangladesh,

which could have later turned out to be another Gwadar-type headache for Indian defence establishments. The island could have provided a new bead for the 'string of pearls' and could have affected India's clear strategic advantage in the BoB. Luckily, in 2020, Bangladesh finally buried the project. It is hoped that the new government does not reopen the subject.

The Chinese government still wants to extend funds for the design, construction, and operation of the deep-sea port in Bangladesh on a build-own-operate-transfer basis. Chittagong or Sonadia could give China direct access to the BoB and, in extension, to the Indian Ocean.

Payra Port

Bangladesh's third largest seaport, Payra port, now the deepest port in the country, was originally planned as China's bid for another deep seaport in its String of Pearls strategy. The construction of the port, which was being financed on a public-private partnership (PPP) platform, was initially granted to a Chinese company. India, Japan, and the United States opposed the plan. The Payra Port Authority (PPA) then signed a deal with Belgium-based dredging company Jan De Nul (JDN) for capital and maintenance dredging of the 75-kilometre-long main channel of the under-construction Payra seaport. In March 2023, JDN completed capital dredging.

Adani Group Interest in Bangladesh Ports

Adani Group intends to venture into the port sector in Bangladesh through a private partnership. The company is deliberating to invest in Chittagong Port's planned Bay Terminal, a deep terminal proposed to come up near the port. China and India are both vying to invest in the development and modernisation of Bangladesh's Mongla port. Since 2017, Adani Power has supplied 1,496 MW of net capacity under a 25-year contract via a 400 kV dedicated transmission line connected to the Bangladesh grid from its Jharkhand plant.

China-Myanmar Dynamics

Generally, China has maintained positive relationships with both military and elected governments in Myanmar. Bilateral relations between China and Myanmar have faced difficulties due to alleged Chinese backing of rebels in Myanmar's territories. Also due to ongoing clashes between ethnic Chinese rebels and the Myanmar military near the China-Myanmar border. Beijing's recent warm-up with the Army Junta was driven by self-interest and reactionary hedging to America's Burma Act.

China assisted in constructing a naval base in Sittwe, a strategically important sea port close to India's Kolkata port. Beijing also funded road construction to Yangon and Sittwe, providing the shortest route to the Indian Ocean from southern China.

Earlier, Myanmar allowed China to establish monitoring and surveillance facilities at the Coco Islands, just 45 kilometres north of the Andaman Islands. It allows tracking India's missile launches off the Balasore test range in Odisha as well as strategic assets stationed off the eastern seaboard at Visakhapatnam.

Bangladesh-China Closeness: Implications for India

India remains an important factor in the China-Bangladesh relationship. China acts as a counterbalance against large neighbour India. India is conscious that Bangladesh is strategically important for India's connection with its northeast and for its look and act east policy. India had to increase its ties with Myanmar, which is a competitor of Bangladesh, in the wake of growing Sino-Bangladesh ties. But during Hasina's years in power, Bangladesh had carefully balanced the two relationships.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) have seen uninformed negative reactions in Bangladesh. This became a potential for friction. The other points of contention include long-standing bilateral river water disputes, significant trade imbalance in favour of India, and illegal entry of Bangladeshi citizens into Assam and West Bengal.

Complexity will increase if the military or BNP remain in power. Also, the Teesta water management project that involves building a reservoir in Bangladesh, if funded by China, will move Dhaka further closer to Beijing.

Bangladesh remains crucial to the emerging BoB geopolitics. Although the military assets provided by China to Bangladesh don't present any military threat to India, increasing defence ties will put pressure on India's Indo-Pacific strategy. If Bangladesh remains unfriendly to India, Pakistan could also take advantage, including in connivance with China.

Way Ahead India

China's South Asian policy has strategic designs that may harm India's interests in the region. By positioning itself as a protector of Bangladeshi sovereignty, China aims to mitigate American influence, thereby creating indispensability. As China inches closer to Bangladesh and its military, it becomes a reason for India's concerns.

The timing of China's support, amidst Bangladesh's election cycle and tiffs with the US, is a deliberate strategy with its own dynamics. It is best for India to let post-Hasina chaos settle down. Continue its generous approach. Find better consultative ways for development assistance and infrastructure building. Also, the continued presence of Hasina in India could remain an irritant. Her early move to an acceptable country must be hastened.

Bangladesh was born with India's support but gradually leaned towards aggressive and expansionist

China. A hostile Bangladesh is bad for India in view of the narrow Siliguri corridor between China and Bangladesh that connects India's North East. Yet, Bangladesh and India have signalled concerns over Chinese plans to dam and divert water from the Brahmaputra River in Tibet.

The huge trade deficit with China is also a concern for Bangladesh, as it can possibly push Bangladesh into a debt trap. At one stage, China was also keen to build Bangladesh's nuclear plants. Finally, the contract for the Rooppur nuclear power plant was given to the Russian Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation.

China's long-term plan is to cultivate South Asian countries through arms deals and deceptive trade models, which will entangle them in debt traps and misunderstandings. India must keep cautioning Bangladesh. India must continue military engagement by offering more training courses. India's \$500 million credit line to Bangladesh has been operational since 2022. India can offer maintenance contracts for Russian-origin equipment such as Mi-17-1V helicopters, Antonov An-32 aircraft, and MiG 29 jets, which India uses. India is also now in a position to offer defence equipment, including all-terrain special-purpose vehicles, helicopters, BrahMos missiles, radars, arms, and ammunition, at competitive rates.

Efforts must be continued to improve regional connectivity projects and the integration of Bangladesh's economy and its military strategy into India's Bharat Mala and Sagar Mala projects. The two must work on the Look East Act East projects more vigorously under the broad contours of IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). India must exploit the shift in Myanmar's foreign policy to avoid excessive dependence on China. India must also keep good relations with Thailand, the other player in the BoB.

Hasina's Bangladesh had been engaging with China, keeping Indian sensibilities in mind. The same may not happen in the immediate future. India has a Maldives-like situation to handle with maturity. India must remember that Bangladesh needs India no less than the other way around. Strategically, BoB is important for India's second strike capability. India has to keep it secured and dominate it.

By wanting to set up a military base in Bangladesh, the US is perhaps trying to reduce/neutralise Chinese influence. But it is not in India's interest that the US comes in here. They already have bases in Diego Garcia and have access to Australia's Cocos Keeling Island base. The US' global interests keep changing. As a Quad member, it is best if it trusts India to dominate the BoB.

It is time for Indian security analysts to stop painting "doomsday scenarios" in their writings and on TV debates. There are geostrategic ups and downs, but

the world carries on and adjusts to changes. Bangladesh would also have to be part of global geopolitics.

Book Review | When India let Tibet down Books and Art

10 August 2024, [Deccan Chronicle](#), Indranil Banerjee

Time and again history has shown that great powers tend to shape the world according to their interests and rarely on the basis of moral precepts. This, as former diplomat and author Dilip Sinha proves in his book, is precisely what is responsible for the tragedy of Tibet, a nation invaded by a powerful neighbour and abandoned by the world community. Even Tibet's traditional friend, India, badly let down the Tibetans when they most needed assistance and a voice to tell the wider world of their calamity.

Mr Sinha describes how each of the great powers involved in Asia through history treated Tibet, China and India as well as the other related kingdoms of East Turkestan and Mongolia. Put very simply, Britain found itself incapable of fully assimilating or controlling Tibet the way it did India. China too was a distant and vast kingdom that required more power to rule than Britain could expend. Britain which constantly worried about Russian ingress into every part of Asia, including India and China, felt it was best to prop up Beijing's authority over these two regions and thereby pre-empt any Russian creep into India's neighbourhood.

The court at Beijing which traditionally had only limited authority over Tibet and enjoyed a special priest-monarchical relationship was thus thrust into the role of protector and suzerain of Tibet and Xinjiang. The Communists led by Chairman Mao who took control of China after the Second World War believed that any region in the past, no matter how distant, that had once paid tribute to China's imperial court was now an integral part of their country. Tibet had no hope of remaining independent.

India was the first country Tibet turned to for help, before and after the Chinese invasion. But India's Prime Minister Nehru in his wisdom would have nothing to do with it. He even refused to raise the matter in the UN General Assembly after the invasion. "There was internal disagreement over India's policy", writes Sinha. Nehru's foreign secretary Girija Shankar Bajpai "was unhappy with Nehru's decision believing it was not in accordance with India's earlier decision to support Tibet...and even contemplated resigning." Ultimately, it was tiny El Salvador that came to the rescue of the Tibetans in the United Nations, pointing out "the peaceful nation of Tibet had been invaded without provocation" and "called for the formation of a General Assembly committee to recommend measures".

India came to the support of Tibet only in 1965. This time in the UN, “India voted in favour, with its representative accusing China of genocide and violating the seventeen-article agreement of 1951. This change became possible because China had invaded India three years earlier, and there was a new leadership in India: Jawaharlal Nehru had died the previous year and Lal Bahadur Shastri had succeeded him.” By then of course it was too late.

India’s foreign policy misalignment

10 August 2024, [The Kathmandu Post](#), Ajaya Bhadra Khanal

The dramatic turn of events in Bangladesh has shocked many people. But the story, for the Nepalis, is all too familiar. Nepali political leaders, including former monarchs, have not differed from the deposed Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. All of them have blurred the thin line between democracy and autocracy and between good governance and misrule. What is even more striking is the role of India and questions about its foreign policy.

India’s “pragmatic” foreign policy was, to a large extent, responsible for emboldening Hasina’s autocratic tendencies, making her impervious to the demands of democracy and the growing aspirations of the new generation.

Given Bangladesh’s location and strategic importance, India had multiple overriding concerns and security imperatives.

Hasina became India’s trusted ally. Given her historical and personal relations with India, it was easier for her to sympathise with them. India’s support for Hasina and the Awami League (AL) appears logical, given the fact that her party has served India’s strategic and economic interests.

However, in the last round of elections, Bangladeshi people perceived that India had openly sided with the AL. India tried to convince the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party to take part in the elections but without success. India then supported AL’s attempt to hold the elections against the wishes of the larger civil society in Bangladesh. As a result, the voter turnout was very low and widespread irregularities were reported.

Despite Western countries like the US expressing concerns about the legitimacy of the elections, India was instrumental in facilitating legitimacy to the sham election results. Growing disenchantment with Hasina gave a fillip to anti-India sentiments among the people.

India’s foreign policy, in the last decade, has tried to recast itself in terms of pragmatism and flexibility, focused solely on India’s strategic interests. In his book, *The India Way*, India’s Minister of External

Affairs, S Jaishankar, explains the idea of “Krishna’s Choice” as being undeterred by the collateral consequences. This means focusing on the self-defined “righteous” goals rather than on the righteousness of the means.

Adopting such a foreign policy disregards the pervasiveness of anti-India sentiments in South Asia. As per Jaishankar’s philosophy, India does not need to be popular, it just needs to secure its interests.

Such thinking is reasonable. Despite a significant level of anti-India sentiment in South Asia, India’s power and presence remain substantial. It has learnt to secure its interests, in spite of hostile governments.

However, if India wants to claim leadership as a regional power in South Asia and beyond, stand up to global norms, and maintain stability in the region, it must adopt democracy as a pillar of its foreign policy. India’s foreign policy goals must align with the neighbourhood’s broader interests, particularly democracy and economic development.

Without aligning with democracy, “pragmatism” in its foreign policy can only deliver short-term tactical gains that may quickly be overturned. On the other hand, prioritising democratic values and putting the interests of the people rather than the governments can become a long-term evolutionarily stable strategy.

Perspectives from Nepal may offer some insights into India’s growing role in the region and how people from Nepal view India’s foreign policy.

From a Nepali perspective, India’s foreign policy, in its current state, is problematic. For example, in recent years, India has not hesitated to empower Nepali politics and politicians that have hampered democratic values, promoted inequality and harmed people’s interests.

India has been conducting its foreign policy in Nepal in three prominent ways. The first is by engaging with the government, whatever the propensity of the ruling regime and using all available leverages and powers to ensure that the party in power remains “friendly.”

This strategy has often hampered the efforts of the Nepali people to democratise the parties and the country. India’s emphasis on this method has given rise to anti-Indianism as a political platform and as a feature of public psychology.

There is also a more sinister Cold War era style of engagement. In engaging with Nepal’s political parties and ruling regimes, India has frequently resorted to its intelligence wings, whose brash and open interventions have amplified anti-India sentiments and spread them to the grassroots level.

Every new government in Nepal seeks India’s support to ensure its longevity. In a recent closed-door conversation, senior party leaders told us that during state visits, Nepali prime ministers are under tremendous pressure to demonstrate that India supports them and that their visit is a success. They

fear that without India's support no government can expect to be durable.

Another way India has cashed in is by supporting political movements. This has also had mixed results. When India sided with Nepal's democratic forces against the King in 1989-90 as well as in 2005, it enraged the monarchist and nationalist forces. Similarly, in 2015, when it sided with the Madhesh movement, it angered the hill people and hill-centric parties, propelling them closer to China.

The third way India has conducted its bilateral relations is through connectivity and development diplomacy. India has gradually achieved "irreversible" bilateral relations with Nepal through the strategy of improved connectivity, trade and economic integration.

For example, in recent years, India and Nepal have worked on Integrated Check Posts (ICPs), hydro-power projects, petroleum pipelines, payment gateways and transmission lines. These forms of connectivity are gradually making it more difficult for Nepal to swing between India and China as in the past.

In order to sustain its gains, India must demonstrate that its values align with the interests of democracy and the aspirations of the younger generation in the neighbourhood. Such values extend to economic equality, human rights, justice, identity politics and secularism. Unfortunately, the impact of the Indian government's association with the Hindutva movement has spilled over borders; it has alienated Muslim populations in the neighbourhood, including in Nepal and Bangladesh.

The case of Bangladesh also shows that if Hasina had strengthened democratic values and institutions, the social order in Bangladesh would not have come under strain even now.

Another major factor why India must emphasise democracy and align itself to people's interests in South Asia is the presence of China.

China is waiting on the sidelines, biding its time, ready to pounce on the opportunities missed by India.

Experts and policymakers in India do not believe China can gain access to the Indian market, given the current state of Sino-India relations and border disputes. But China is not fazed. It is confident that it has secured its interest in Tibet vis-à-vis Nepal. Now, it has its eyes on the Indian market. China's persistence in investing in border infrastructure in Tibet, as well as in the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, shows its long-term strategy and confidence in its ability to gain access to South Asia.

China's Great Wall of Villages

10 August 2024, [The New York Times](#), Muyi Xiao and Agnes Chang

China has moved thousands of people to new settlements on its frontiers. It calls them "border guardians."

Qionglin New Village sits deep in the Himalayas, just three miles from a region where a heavy military buildup and confrontations between Chinese and Indian troops have brought fears of a border war.

The land was once an empty valley, more than 10,000 feet above the sea, traversed only by local hunters. Then Chinese officials built Qionglin, a village of cookie-cutter homes and finely paved roads, and paid people to move there from other settlements.

China's leader, Xi Jinping, calls such people "border guardians." Qionglin's villagers are essentially sentries on the front line of China's claim to Arunachal Pradesh, India's easternmost state, which Beijing insists is part of Chinese-ruled Tibet.

Many villages like Qionglin have sprung up. In China's west, they give its sovereignty a new, undeniable permanence along boundaries contested by India, Bhutan and Nepal. In its north, the settlements bolster security and promote trade with Central Asia. In the south, they guard against the flow of drugs and crime from Southeast Asia.

The buildup is the clearest sign that Mr. Xi is using civilian settlements to quietly solidify China's control in far-flung frontiers, just as he has with fishing militias and islands in the disputed South China Sea.

The New York Times mapped and analyzed settlements along China's border to create the first detailed visual representation of how the country has reshaped its frontiers with strategic civilian outposts, in just eight years.

Working with the artificial intelligence company RAIC Labs, which scanned satellite images of China's entire land border captured by Planet Labs, The Times identified the locations of new villages and checked them against historical images, state media, social media posts and public records.

The mapping reveals that China has put at least one village near every accessible Himalayan pass that borders India, as well as on most of the passes bordering Bhutan and Nepal, according to Matthew Akester, an independent researcher on Tibet, and Robert Barnett, a professor from SOAS University of London. Mr. Akester and Mr. Barnett, who have studied Tibet's border villages for years, reviewed The Times's findings.

The outposts are civilian in nature, but they also provide China's military with roads, access to the internet and power, should it want to move troops quickly to the border. Villagers serve as eyes and ears in remote areas, discouraging intruders or runaways.

“China does not want outsiders to be able to walk across the border for any distance without being challenged by its security personnel or citizens,” Mr. Akester said.

The buildup of settlements fuels anxiety in the region about Beijing’s ambitions. The threat of conflict is ever present: Deadly clashes have broken out along the border between troops from India and China since 2020, and tens of thousands of soldiers from both sides remain on a war footing.

China’s Eyes and Ears

The first signs of Mr. Xi’s ambitions emerged in 2017, when state media told the story of a letter he wrote to two Tibetan sisters in the remote village of Yume, in a region near Arunachal Pradesh that is blanketed by deep snow for more than half the year.

He praised their family for having protected the area for China for decades, despite the inhospitable terrain: “I hope you continue your spirit as a patriot and border guardian.”

Over the next few years, workers built dozens of new homes in Yume, and officials moved over 200 people there.

Yume, also known as Yumai in Chinese, is among at least 90 new villages and expanded settlements that have sprung up in Tibet since 2016, when China began outlining its border village plan in the region, The Times found. In neighboring Xinjiang and Yunnan, The Times identified six new and 59 expanded border villages. (China says there are hundreds of villages like them, but few details are available and many appear to be mere upgrades of existing villages.)

Of the new villages The Times identified in Tibet, one is on land claimed by India, though within China’s de facto border; 11 other settlements are in areas contested by Bhutan. Some of those 11 villages are near the Doklam region, the site of a standoff between troops from India and China in 2017 over Chinese attempts to extend a road.



China makes clear that the villages are there for security. In 2020, a leader of a Tibetan border county told state media that he was relocating more than 3,000 people to frontier areas that were “weakly controlled, disputed or empty.”

Brahma Chellaney, a strategic affairs analyst based in New Delhi, said that in quietly building militarized

villages in disputed borderlands, China is replicating on land an expansionist approach that it has used successfully in the South China Sea.

“What stands out is the speed and stealth with which China is redrawing facts on the ground, with little regard for the geopolitical fallout,” Mr. Chellaney said. “China has been planting settlers in whole new stretches of the Himalayan frontier with India and making them its first line of defense.”

In a written response to The Times, Liu Pengyu, a spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said that in dealing with border issues with its neighbors, “China always strives to find fair and reasonable solutions through peaceful and friendly consultations.”

India and Bhutan did not respond to requests for comment about the buildup. Indian officials have previously noted “infrastructure construction activity” by China along the border. Local leaders in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh have complained to The Times that China was slowly cutting away small pieces of Indian territory.

India has responded with what it calls “Vibrant Villages,” a campaign that aims to revive hundreds of villages along the border.

But China is outbuilding India, says Brian Hart, an analyst for the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, or C.S.I.S., who recently co-authored a report on border villages in Tibet.

Among other findings, the C.S.I.S. report identified what appeared to be a militarized facility in one such village, known as Migyitun, or Zhari in Chinese, an indication of the settlements’ dual-use nature. The Times studied satellite images of the same village and identified military trucks and tents, as well as what appeared to be a shooting range nearby.

The villages also serve as propaganda: a display of Chinese strength and superiority in the region, said Jing Qian, co-founder of the Center for China Analysis at the Asia Society.

“They want the Indians, Central Asians and others to see and think that Chinese villages are so good, that the China model is working very well.”

Uncertain Future, Unforgiving Terrain

The slice of the Himalayas where many Chinese villages have sprung up has been largely uninhabited for good reason. Its rocky, icy terrain is particularly forbidding in winter, with roads buried many months of the year by deep snow. The air is thin and cold. The land is barren, making farming difficult.

To persuade residents to move there, Chinese Communist Party officials promised them their new homes would be cheap. They would receive annual subsidies and get paid extra if they took part in border patrols. Chinese propaganda outlets said the government would provide jobs and help promote

local businesses and tourism. The villages would come with paved roads, internet connections, schools and clinics.

A local government document reviewed by The Times indicated that some villagers may be receiving around 20,000 Chinese yuan a year for relocation, less than \$3,000. One resident reached by phone said he earned an extra \$250 a month by patrolling the border.

But it is unclear whether the villages make economic sense.

The residents become dependent on the subsidies because there are few other ways to make a living, according to Mr. Akester, the independent expert.

China's relocation policy is also a form of social engineering, designed to assimilate minority groups like the Tibetans into the mainstream. Tibetans, who are largely Buddhist, have historically resisted the Communist Party's intrusive controls on their religion and way of life.

Images from the villages suggest that religious life is largely absent. Buddhist monasteries and temples are seemingly nowhere to be found. Instead, national flags and portraits of Mr. Xi are everywhere, on light poles, living room walls and balcony railings.

"They want to transform the landscape and the population," Mr. Akester said.

Over the years, the government has pushed many nomadic Tibetans to sell their yaks and sheep, leave the grasslands and move into houses, but often without clear ways for them to survive. Instead of herding, residents have to work for wages.

Interviews suggest that many nomads who have moved to the new villages are reluctant to adapt. Some herd yaks for half the year in the mountains; others return to their old homes to live for months at a time.

Residents are often not told about the challenges that moving can entail, Mr. Barnett said, including having to spend more to travel to towns and on electricity, water, food and other essentials.

"The major problem is they are moving them from one lifestyle to another," he said. "They end up with no capital, no usable skills, no sellable skills and no cultural familiarity."

When money isn't enough, Chinese officials have applied pressure on residents to relocate, an approach that was evident even in state propaganda reports.

A documentary aired by the state broadcaster, CCTV, showed how a Chinese official went to Dokha, a village in Tibet, to persuade residents to move to a new village called Duolonggang, 10 miles from Arunachal Pradesh.

He encountered some resistance. Tenzin, a lay Buddhist practitioner, insisted that Dokha's land was fertile, producing oranges and other fruit. "We can feed ourselves without government subsidies," he said.

The official criticized Tenzin for "using his age and religious status to obstruct relocation," according to a state media article cited by Human Rights Watch in a report.

In the end, all 143 residents of Dokha moved to the new settlement.

How we identified the villages

The Times first compiled a list of the locations of 10 border villages in China that had been in earlier news reports and shared their coordinates with RAIC Labs. RAIC Labs used artificial intelligence to scan satellite images of China's land borders, provided by Planet Labs, to look for settlements that had similar features. The area that was scanned extended roughly three miles beyond China's border and 25 miles within the border.

We manually checked the results from RAIC Labs' scan to determine whether each site it had detected was a village. Features in satellite images that pointed to civilian settlements included yards, roofs of homes, cars and sports grounds like running tracks and basketball courts. Where possible, using coordinates identified by RAIC Labs, we looked up village names and searched for social media posts and Chinese media reports about the sites. We categorized the sites based on how much had been built around 2016, when China began planning its border village program. We categorized a village as new if no more than 10 structures had existed before 2016. A village was categorized as having expanded if it had more than 10 structures before 2016 but had grown in the years since. We also treated a settlement as a new village if the Chinese government designated it as such, regardless of how many structures it had before 2016. We found a small number of villages that the algorithm had missed. Our findings still might not be comprehensive. Matthew Akester and Robert Barnett reviewed our analysis and contributed three additional village sites that had not previously been reported.

Stories of Tibet

11 August 2024, [Tricycle](#), Tenzin D. Tsaogong

A collection of fiction from the innovative Tibetan filmmaker Pema Tseden (1969–2023)

In "The Doctor," the final and perhaps most experimental short story of the late Pema Tseden's collection, *Enticement: Stories of Tibet*, Man A and Woman A face an apocalyptic contagion. Discussing the absurdity of life, Woman A says: "When one thinks about it, human life is totally absurd." Man A responds with a heavy sigh: "It is completely absurd." Woman A also sighs: "The world and samsara are utterly meaningless."

Like a chorus, they echo each other's words, as though by mere repetition, truth itself emerges.

The narrator doesn't disclose their names or their relationship. Are they husband and wife? Brother and sister? Two strangers who just met? Descriptions of the setting, like stage directions of a play, are bare. There is a riverbank. It is spring. The leaves of a recently planted tree are beginning to grow.

The man and woman are in a double bind: To escape the contagion, they can either traverse the dangerous river or wait for a doctor to arrive with a cure. Both options threaten death; they choose to wait. As time passes, events occur and recur in an endless loop. The seasons change. They age and wrinkle. Others trying to escape appear and disappear. Some die crossing the river. Prospects of the doctor's arrival appear increasingly bleak. To buffer themselves against the absurdity of their new reality and the inevitability of their suffering, the man and woman repeatedly invoke and insist on their faith in the three jewels.

Characters in the rest of Tseden's sprawling and experimental anthology—his first in English—also confront and cycle through a samsara of suffering. They brush against the alienating forces of the state or the whims of nature, faith, and their bare human desires. Few emerge with their innocence and morality intact, their sense of the world irreparably ruptured.

If stories by exiled Tibetan writers begin with the separation from and fixation on the homeland they knew, writings from inside Tibet are about witnessing and chronicling its changing landscape.

Born during the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution in a nomadic region in Trika County in Qinghai Province, Tseden grew up in a family of herders and farmers. At an early age, he cultivated an appreciation for Tibetan language and culture from his grandfather, who would make the school-aged Tseden copy Buddhist scriptures by hand.

Before earning a reputation as a pioneer and auteur of Tibetan New Wave cinema, Tseden was first a writer and a translator. In the 1980s, as Tibetan and Chinese literature emerged from the twilight of the Cultural Revolution, Tseden attended Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou, where he wrote and translated stories.

If exiled writers read like caricatures as they "shout, trying to underscore our exile," as the writer-translator-editor Tenzin Dickie writes in her introduction to *The Penguin Book of Modern Tibetan Essays*, writings from Tibet are like code that must be deciphered. "There is so much they can't say," writes Dickie, "so little that can be said."

In the more realist and contemporary stories of *Enticement*, Tseden's critique of the Chinese colonial state can be decoded in his focus on the quiet absurdity and alienation of modern Tibetan life. In

"Tharlo," the titular protagonist, a shepherd-orphan affectionately known by local villagers as "Little Braid," travels to the city to obtain a new government-issued identity card. On his journey, Tharlo meets several people: the district police chief behind the local campaign to register villagers for IDs; a photographer who tells him his hair is too messy; and a young, attractive hairdresser. They gently mock Tharlo's small braid, and when he recites the number of sheep he owns or a speech from Mao, they express surprise at his excellent memory. Mostly, they find his pastoral innocence and guilelessness amusing, as though he has just emerged from a cave.

As he spends more time in the city, Tharlo starts drinking. He falls for the hairdresser who persuades him to sell his sheep, the main source of his livelihood. In one heartbreaking scene, he cuts off his braid, lopping off a part of his old self.

In an ironic and absurd twist, when Tharlo visits the police station to collect his identity card, the chief tells him he now looks different from his photograph, and orders him to make a new one. So Tharlo ends up right where we encounter him at the beginning of the story, off to the city to take a new photo. But this time, his innocence is irrevocably lost. The temptations of city life, his carnal desires, and the interests of the state prove to be forces too powerful for Tharlo to overcome.

Despite the decades-long trend of Han Chinese migration into the Tibetan plateau, Chinese characters are noticeably absent from Tseden's depiction of contemporary Tibetan life. If they appear, it is only in marginal roles, like the Chinese tourist in "Tharlo," who, upon seeing the wild-haired Tharlo smoking a cigarette, exoticizes him and tells him he looks like an artist. By erasing or minimizing Chinese presence from the worlds he has built, Tseden's stories are radical exercises in fantasy, underscoring that his concerns as an artist are foremost of Tibetans.

The lives of his characters are of those undeniably touched by the colonial state.

Nonetheless, the lives of his characters are of those undeniably touched by the colonial state. In "Eight Sheep," a young shepherd grieves the loss of his mother and grassland that has been in "disarray" since the government decided to enclose it with a fence. Or in "Gang," a magical-realist tale about two siblings named Gang with translucent bodies that shimmer in the light. After snowstorms and failed crops beset their village, the male Gang decides to exhibit his body to the public to help generate economic prosperity.

But to the dismay of the foreign researchers who want to study their glowing bodies, the journalists who flock to the town for a good story, and the desperate villagers who hope to profit from the tourism, the siblings refuse to be photographed together.

By removing Chinese perspectives, Tseden also avoids making his stories about the pure, innocent Tibetan pitted against the bad-faith Chinese actor. Instead, his work shows how Tibetans—the women who try to civilize Tharlo or the desperate villagers in “Gang”—are also complicit in feeding systems of exploitation and profit. Each is caught in complex calculations of what it means to be a modern Tibetan subject.

It is nearly impossible for the characters in Tseden’s stories to retain moral purity. Only the siblings in “Gang” manage to. But they can do so only by abandoning society and its totalizing and cannibalistic urges.

To confine Tseden’s literary concerns to a primarily political project, however, would be a disservice to his range as a writer. Tseden’s satirical and humorous treatment of Tibetan life also extends to Buddhism and the seemingly irrational nature of faith.

The delightful and charming “Orgyan’s Teeth” begins with the death of the narrator’s childhood friend Orgyan, a reincarnate lama, who many believe has “passed into nirvana.” But the narrator is skeptical. The story occurs mostly in flashbacks, as the narrator, like a detective, exhumes old memories of Orgyan, searching for any evidence that he was or wasn’t a holy being.

He remembers how Orgyan, who wasn’t an especially bright student, struggled with math and often copied his homework. But there’s an equal impulse in the narrator to believe that his friend is special. He recalls one memory of Orgyan resuscitating a fish back to life, or the times when Orgyan, despite his special religious status, treated him as an equal. The story, told through memories in which the narrator seesaws between belief and disbelief, reads like a catalog of faith. The narrator never arrives at a clear answer. But it’s his attempt that matters.

While “Orgyan’s Teeth” is about one man’s ambivalence toward faith, “Enticement,” the collection’s centerpiece, is about the extreme, even violent, measures one can take in the name of devotion. In this dreamlike story, a young man is transfixed by a silkbound book of scriptures that sends him into violent, uncontrollable fits that he can’t remember.

In the meta-narrative “A Golden Corpse Tale: Gun,” Tseden’s twist on a Tibetan folktale, a man named Dega, to repent for his sins of killing, must bring a golden, talking corpse out of the grave to his master. He cannot speak to the corpse, or else he’ll lose possession of it. But the corpse is cunning. To trick Dega into speaking, he tells him a tragic story about two generations of a family stuck in a loop of suffering. Like the people in the story, Dega keeps repeating his error. He remains stuck in transit with the corpse, never reaching his goal—and never atoning for his sins.

In one of the first scenes of “Tharlo,” when asked by the police chief why he never bothered to make a government-issued card, Tharlo poignantly responds, “Isn’t it enough that I know myself?” Of the stories in Tseden’s anthology, this statement feels like his most pointed rebuke of the Chinese state, its insistence that only by being absorbed into its bureaucratic machine and control do people like Tharlo and Tibetans across the plateau matter. Tseden’s stories can thus be interpreted as an intervention against the fate that befalls people like Tharlo, who, in the face of sweeping political and economic changes, become unrecognizable.

Yet to earmark modernity as specifically Chinese and tradition as Tibetan is too facile. It’s a tragedy that Tseden, who passed away just a year ago at the age of 53, is no longer here to contend with this conundrum imposed by colonialism. His work—the ten stories in this collection and his extensive and celebrated filmography—also does not provide an easy fix. But it does give Tibetans a template to interrogate and better know themselves, so they don’t, as Tharlo does, completely self-obliterate in the face of larger structural changes.

In *Enticement*, just as Chinese characters are notably missing from Tseden’s stories, so are contextualizing landmarks. There is a village, a town, a river, but they remain unnamed. There are no mentions of Tibet’s traditional regions—like Amdo (where Tseden was from), Kham, and U-Tsang. There is no mention of dialects. But there are vivid descriptions of the grasslands, the mountains, the snow—topographies synonymous with Tibet.

In the introduction to her anthology of Tibetan essays, Dickie writes, “To speak as Tibetans, and to write as Tibetans, is to continually recreate the nation.” By creating specific but unspecified landscapes, Tseden extends to his Tibetan readers a wide and generous terrain where they can map their own stories; he offers a Tibet they can recognize and claim as their own.

Journey to Tibet

11 August 2024, [Tricycle](#), Judith Hertog

Retracing the footsteps of the French adventurer Alexandra David-Néel

“Our passage in Londre was as inconspicuous as we could have wished. Not one of the villagers whom we met appeared to take any particular notice of us.”

This is how Alexandra David-Néel, a French Tibetologist and explorer, described the beginning of her journey in Tibet in the fall of 1923. She recounts how she and her adopted son, a young Tibetan named Yongden, made their way through the village under the cover of night, trying to find the trail toward a

mountain pass that would allow them to slip across the border into Tibet and reach the city of Lhasa.

The village at the foot of the Himalayas—on English maps of the time transliterated as “Londre”—is now called Yongzhi, a Tibetan farming community at the northern tip of the Chinese province of Yunnan, part of the Tibetan Kham region. The village lies right outside the border of what is officially designated as the “Tibet Autonomous Region.” It is perched on the slopes of a fertile, green valley rich with pomegranates, walnuts, and grapes, its vineyards laden with fruit waiting to be picked for the fall harvest. Many of the villagers also work on the side as trekking guides and drivers for tourists visiting the region.

Yongzhi lies in the special Shangri-La tourism zone, which in recent years has become a busy travel destination. The village of Yongzhi is just outside the tourist circuit, but the nearby town of Deqen hosts countless Chinese tour groups who like to spend a night in one of its luxury hotels to photograph the sunrise over the Kawa Karpo, a holy Buddhist mountain on an ancient Tibetan pilgrimage route.

It was this route that Alexandra David-Néel used to slip unnoticed into Tibet, dressed as a pilgrim, her hair and face darkened to hide her European complexion. At the time, the Tibetan government did not allow foreigners to enter the country and stationed troops along the border to arrest unauthorized travelers. I visited the village exactly a hundred years later wanting to see the place Alexandra David-Néel describes in the opening of her book *My Journey to Lhasa*, which inspired my own obsession with Tibet when I first read it as a teenager.

Together with Yongden, Alexandra set out to be the first Western woman to reach Lhasa. She was 55 years old and had been drawn to Tibet and Buddhism since the time she was a teenager, when she encountered Theosophy, a spiritual movement that purported to come from Tibetan sources.

For Alexandra, Buddhism was an alternative to the suffocating restrictions of the 19th-century bourgeois society in which she was raised. Born in 1868 as the only child of wealthy French-Belgian parents, Alexandra had a deep disdain for ordinariness and the submissiveness expected of women. She longed for freedom and adventure. In her 20s and early 30s she associated with anarchists in Paris and studied Eastern philosophy while earning a living as an opera singer. She stubbornly resisted marriage, which at the time spelled the end of a woman’s freedom. But eventually she wedded a lover, Philippe Néel, a well-to-do railroad engineer based in Tunisia with whom she lived on and off for only the first seven years of their almost forty years of marriage. In 1911, at the age of 42, Alexandra set off for Asia to deepen her study of Buddhism. She spent most of the next thirty-five years

there, supported by her husband, who, from afar, sent her money orders and letters.

Alexandra must have infected me with her dreams of adventure. I too wanted to become an explorer venturing into the unknown, free from the humdrum of regular life.

After Alexandra and Yongden set out from Yongzhi, they walked for more than three months in the middle of winter across the mountains of eastern Tibet, a journey of over a thousand miles. They reached Lhasa in February 1924.

This was not Alexandra’s first attempt to penetrate the “forbidden” land. Alexandra had already spent more than twelve years in Asia, approaching Tibet from all directions. From 1914 to 1916, she lived in Sikkim, where she studied with a hermit lama in the Himalayan mountains near the Tibetan border. But she was expelled from Sikkim after making an illegal trip into Tibet to meet the Panchen Lama, one of Tibet’s highest-ranking incarnate Lamas, who lived just across the border in the town of Shigatse.

After her expulsion from Sikkim, she eventually moved to China in 1917, where she spent the next six years traveling in Tibetan border regions. For two years, she studied at the famous Kumbum Monastery in the northeastern Tibetan Amdo region. Twice she joined caravans to Lhasa but was turned back at the border. If there was anything that provoked Alexandra’s anarchism, it was to be told something was forbidden. “[A]ny honest traveler has the right to walk as he chooses, all over that globe which is his,” she asserted in the preface to *My Journey to Lhasa*.

As the first Western woman to reach the capital of Tibet, where she lived incognito for more than two months, Alexandra instantly became a celebrity in Europe and America. She spent a few years publishing and touring before returning to Asia for another decade of travel.

In 1946, at the age of 77, she finally returned permanently to Europe to settle down in southern France, where she continued writing books that explained the mysteries of Tibetan Buddhism. Alexandra was a master at presenting herself as a no-nonsense narrator who had seemingly rational explanations for the most fantastical supernatural phenomena. Her many books on Tibetan Buddhism allowed readers to believe that there is a place in the world where magic exists, where sorcerers can revive dead bodies, and where meditating monks have to weigh themselves down with chains so they won’t float away in levitation. In the 1960s, when Alexandra was in her 90s, she became an idol to hippies who flocked to her house to meet the aged adventurer and Buddhist authority.

That must be how I encountered her, growing up in bohemian Amsterdam in the 1970s. I remember first reading one of Alexandra’s books, left at our house by

one of my mother's friends, when I was 12. Like so many other readers, I was immediately drawn to the descriptions of the wild landscapes of Tibet and the accounts of magical and spiritual attainment. Alexandra must have infected me with her dreams of adventure. I too wanted to become an explorer venturing into the unknown, free from the humdrum of regular life.

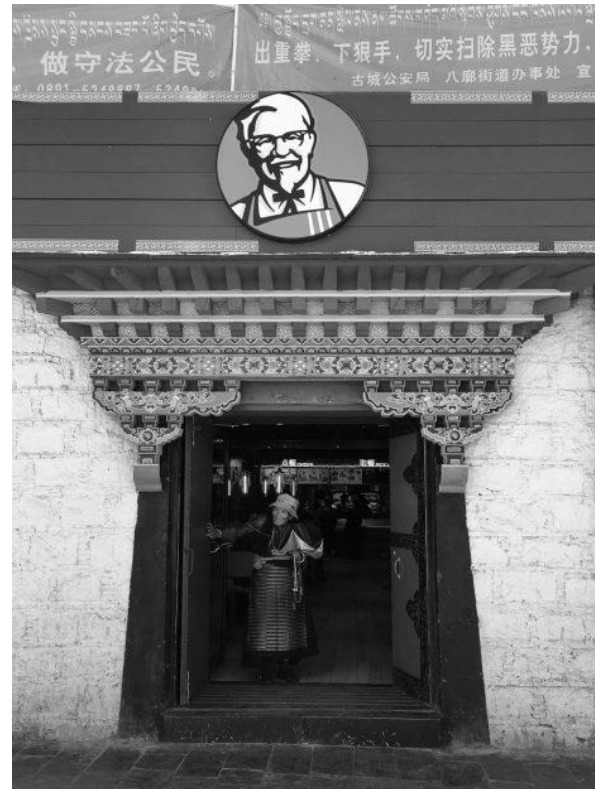
The first time I traveled in Tibet I was right out of college. My boyfriend and I had impulsively gotten married in Hong Kong, and for our "honeymoon" we snuck without a travel permit into Tibet, took a bus to Lhasa, and then hitchhiked from Shigatse to Mount Kailash and into Xinjiang. We could have died when, hungry and sick, we got stuck without transportation in the sparsely populated Tibetan highlands. I felt exhilarated nonetheless.

"I have homesickness for a country that isn't mine," Alexandra wrote in a letter to her husband. "The steppes, the solitudes, the eternal snows and the big skies up there [in the Himalayas] haunt me." Like her, once I had experienced the landscape of Tibet, I kept wanting to return.

Shortly after that first trip, I did the math and discovered that I was born a little over nine months after Alexandra died, just before her 101st birthday. I like to muse that the coincidence of my birth gives me some kind of cosmic connection with Alexandra, and that in my life I have been retracing her travels.

I returned several times to Tibet. In the fall and winter of 1999–2000, I lived for five months in Lhasa as an English teacher. I visited Lhasa again in 2019. But after getting to know the city that had been Alexandra's destination, this time I wanted to see the place from where she had begun her adventure.

When I arrived in Shangri-La, I happened to meet a farmer from Yongzhi who in his spare time freelanced as a guide and driver. He offered to let me stay with his family for a few days. It felt like a magical feat to arrive in the place I had read about so breathlessly as a teenager in Amsterdam. Only, everything was different now.



A woman gazes out from the entrance of a new Kentucky Fried Chicken in Lhasa, Tibet. | Photo by Judith Hertog

The village seemed to be doing well. Instead of the dirt roads on which Alexandra traveled, the area is now connected by highways, with tunnels drilled through the mountains. Next to the stupa that adorned the highest ridge above the village stood a large cell tower that provided 5G coverage. My hosts had furnished one of the rooms in their farm with extra beds, hoping to earn some cash by lodging tourists. Although foreign tourism has almost dried up, Tibet is now a popular destination for Chinese urbanites, and the government has invested billions of dollars to promote tourism in this northern tip of Yunnan. To boost exotic appeal, the county was officially renamed Shangri-La, after a fictional Tibetan paradise in the 1933 best-selling novel *Lost Horizon* by the English writer James Hilton. I could imagine Alexandra's fury at this turn of events. She resented the success of *Lost Horizon*, and would have been piqued that this region, which she knew so well, would be named after an invention by an author who had never been to Tibet and who very likely had read her books for inspiration.

For several days, I became part of village life, in one of those houses Alexandra had been so carefully trying to avoid. I sat with the father of my host when he milked the cows, helped shuck corn, practiced English with my host's son, and hiked in the mountains. On the second day, we visited the village chapel, where a lama from the nearby monastery gave a teaching. The chapel was filled with villagers, all sitting cross-legged on the wooden floor beneath the lama's throne, like a scene

in one of Alexandra's stories. Except that some of the attendees held smartphones in their lap to record the sermon.

What we think of as our "self" is shaped by our time, our culture, and our circumstances.

I was lucky to have arrived just in time for the annual cham dance at the local monastery where my host's brother was a monk. Alexandra called this performance of monks dressed up as spirits and deities "the ceremony of the demons." I may have channeled Alexandra when the crowd parted and ushered me to sit on the temple steps so that I could have a front-row view of the ceremony. This was the kind of treatment Alexandra always seemed to receive. She had supreme self-confidence and considered it normal that everyone would grant her special favors. She never doubted that even the most influential Buddhist masters would regard her with the greatest deference.

When Alexandra met the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in India in 1912, shortly after she had arrived there, she was convinced she impressed him with her superior knowledge of Buddhism. She recounts that the Dalai Lama inquired which Buddhist master had initiated her, assuming she had studied with a Tibetan lama. "It was not easy to convince him that the Tibetan text of one of the most esteemed Buddhist books had been translated into French before I was born," she writes, and describes how she eventually persuaded the Dalai Lama to personally compose written answers to her questions about Tibetan Buddhist philosophy.

It felt strange to be staying in the village of Yongzhi. Looking out of the window, all dimensions seemed jumbled up, as if I could spy on Alexandra and Yongden across time. I imagined them hiding in the vineyard on the slope below the house. They had arrived in the village pretending to be on a botanical expedition, but at night they changed into their pilgrim disguises and sneaked off into the mountains toward the pilgrim's path.

In preparation for my trip, I had spent hours reading Alexandra's account for clues and had zoomed in on Google Earth trying to determine the exact location of that path. I examined every mountain around the village, trying to discern details in the forested slopes, snowy mountain summits and in the shadows of rocky crevices captured in satellite images.

But, of course, a digital map on a computer screen is nothing like actually walking through a landscape. A loudspeaker on the roof of the village's town hall filled the valley with the sound of prerecorded government announcements that were played several times a day, stones dislodged by my footsteps bounced off the mountainside toward the Mekong River in the valley far below, and I was sweating in my long-sleeved shirt that trapped the October heat.

I had pictured myself hiking up the nearby Dokar Pass, which Alexandra describes in her account. But once we reached the turn to the main trail, high up in the mountains above the village, my host didn't want to go any farther. "It's impossible," he said. The other side of the pass was officially the Tibet Autonomous Region, where the Chinese government restricts foreign travel because of the tensions between Tibetans who resist Beijing's control and the Chinese military stationed in Tibet to suppress dissent. I would need to arrange for a government-approved tour guide and apply for special travel and hiking permits.

When Alexandra stood at the head of this trail in the fall of 1923, the situation had been reversed: Back then, it was the independent Tibetan government that jealously guarded its borders. At the behest of conservative Buddhist clerics who feared foreign influences, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had banned foreign travelers from entering Tibet.

During my earliest visits to Tibet, it hadn't been so difficult to sneak in without a permit, but in recent years the surveillance has increased. The last time I was in Lhasa, in 2019, I found police checkpoints throughout the city, monitoring everyone's comings and goings. New high-rise suburbs had been constructed to entice more Han Chinese to move to the city, and flashy shopping malls heralded wealth and modernity. The old city center around the ancient Jokhang temple still throbbed with activity, but now the Tibetan pilgrims were outnumbered by Chinese tourists posing for photographs.

On the map, the places along Alexandra's route had looked immutable and permanent: names with set coordinates. But even the names of the villages that she passed through have been lost. The Chinese government has Sinicized all the Tibetan place names, and the 19th-century English transliterations of old Tibetan names that Alexandra used are often no longer traceable. The landscape of a hundred years ago has changed as well: Creeks and rivers have been dammed, temples have been destroyed and rebuilt, forests have been harvested for timber, and new roads and tunnels are reshaping the mountain slopes. Nothing is permanent. Kawa Karpo's white peak still rises over the landscape, but even the glacier at its bottom is melting due to climate change.

Culture too has changed. When I look back at Alexandra, a revolutionary in her time, she now seems elitist and orientalist. She presumed herself to understand Buddhism better than most Tibetan monks and haughtily educated Tibetan masters about "true" Buddhism while dismissing their traditional customs as "superstitions."

Of course, what we think of as our "self" is shaped by our time, our culture, and our circumstances. Alexandra David-Néel was a 19th-century upper-class European woman, steeped in European prejudices.

Just as I have been shaped by my own background, and by Alexandra's tales, which have inspired my own romantic vision of Tibet.

Standing there at the head of the pilgrim's trail, I considered giving my host the slip and just walking into the mountains. But in these few days he had treated me like a family member. He was hosting me without a permit, and I didn't want to get him in trouble. Besides, there are no longer any anonymous crowds of pilgrims to hide amongst. The cell towers on the mountain ridges would ping my phone and record my location, like everyone else's, all of us little dots on a digital surveillance map.

In the evening, as we drank homemade wine with our dinner, I told my host and his wife about Alexandra and her connection to their village. It almost felt like a betrayal, as if I were exposing her secret plan. I had discovered that *My Journey to Lhasa* had just been translated into Chinese, and I had found a Chinese website with a short documentary about Alexandra. My host's wife pulled up the video on her phone. "That's here!" she exclaimed when the pilgrimage route around the Kawa Karpo was mentioned. I could see an idea forming in her mind: Each village in the area was looking for ways to cash in on the tourist industry. Perhaps she thought this could be a business opportunity.

A few weeks later, she posted on her social media feed pictures of a group of villagers she had organized to fix a bridge on the old pilgrimage route. They were replacing wooden beams that had rotted away after maybe a hundred years of neglect.

I expect Alexandra would be pleased if the villagers enshrined her name in local lore. In *My Journey to Lhasa*, she recounts, with her characteristic lack of modesty, the extraordinary impression she must have made on the people she encountered and concludes: *[My acts] will probably live long in the memory of those who witnessed them. Maybe a legend will arise out of it all; and who knows if, in the future, a learned student of folklore will not offer some interesting commentary on the story, being far from suspecting the truth of it.*

Alexandra was as imperfect a human being as any of us: She could be arrogant, stubborn, and prejudiced. But she definitely became a legend.

China has turned inward to sell Xinjiang cotton after a trade ban. Will it be enough?

11 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Kingling Lo

The US' ban on cotton from China's Xinjiang has forced a shift to the domestic market for the textile industry – and created a gaping shortfall.

After Hong Yongcheng's American customers began to shy away from renewing their orders – a change the

towel factory owner attributed to heightened restrictions on Chinese imports – he responded in unexpected fashion.

Rather than try to win back those skittish buyers from overseas, he started a new production line in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region – an area of China where exports to the US are all but forbidden.

"I don't see much hope in getting American orders back, so producing from Xinjiang does not matter any more, as most customers are domestic," Hong said. "At least we can cut costs."

Hong's new line in Xinjiang made him a perfect fit for the China-Eurasia Expo in the regional capital Urumqi last June, where authorities invited him to display his home-grown wares and help promote the local economy.

In the two years since a sweeping ban on US exports hit the region, however, most of China's textile and apparel makers are struggling to fill the resultant vacuum in demand.

Global retailers have been under pressure to sever their supply chains from Xinjiang – China's largest cotton-growing region – after allegations over the use of forced labour began to surface in the US and European Union as early as 2019.

International clothing brands – most notably Nike and H&M – responded to those concerns in 2020 with statements disavowing any links to the region. The next year, when legislation began to work its way through Western legislatures, those statements resurfaced and sent Chinese internet users into a furore.

Outraged netizens called for a boycott, using the hashtag "I support Xinjiang cotton" to push consumers to avoid products from foreign firms in question and buy local as a form of patriotism.

But even with its considerable size, Hong said, the domestic market does not fill the void created by the departure of foreign customers.

"It is true that we are seeing our costs halved in Xinjiang, but our overall profits are nothing like before," he said. "The orders just don't make up."

'We needed a way out'

Xinjiang, a region in China's far west with a surface area about three times the size of France, supplies one-fifth of the global cotton supply and 90 per cent of China's own stocks. It has made international headlines as governments and media outlets – mostly in the US and Europe – alleged regional authorities have detained an estimated one million members of Muslim ethnic minority groups and subjected many to forced labour.

While Beijing has denied these allegations, the Uygur Forced Labour Prevention Act – a ban of all imports from Xinjiang unless a "rebuttable presumption" of forced labour can be successfully disputed – passed

the US Congress in late 2021 and was enacted in June 2022.

We were losing one-third of our business just from Americans cutting orders

- Hong Yongcheng, towel factory owner
Beijing responded forcefully, saying in a Foreign Ministry briefing companies that stopped using the “best cotton in the world” would only be harming themselves. But for authorities and businesses in Xinjiang, the ban – set to last eight years according to the legislation’s sunset clause, though the likelihood of indefinite renewal is high – has put immense strain on the local economy, which had one of the country’s lowest nominal GDPs even before the ban.

While there is little public data available to gauge the full impact the act had on Xinjiang’s economy, the region has seen a 54.6 per cent drop in foreign direct investment, with only US\$50.14 million invested throughout 2021 according to the local government.

In terms of trade, Xinjiang’s total exports to the US in 2023 were valued at around US\$373 million – a 92 per cent drop from 2020, according to Urumqi customs figures.

Xinjiang has historically relied on help from other regions and the central government to support its economic development. Since 2015, the local authorities have rolled out a multitude of investment incentives, attempting to grow the textile and apparel industry through tax rebates and subsidies for electricity and transport.

Hong and his partners – who have been running their towel business from export-heavy Jiangsu province for over a decade – only considered a move to the faraway arid region last year, when conditions were particularly bleak.

“We needed to find a way out,” Hong said. “We were losing one-third of our business just from Americans cutting orders. We were not even using Xinjiang cotton in our production, we imported it from Pakistan.”

Hong said the drop-off began in 2020 among his customer base, mostly buyers for international hotel brands. “They faced pressure to drop Chinese suppliers.”

Revenues went down 60 per cent. In response, the company has moved the lion’s share of its exports to a mix of closer markets, including South Korea, Japan and several countries in Southeast Asia.

“Before the sanctions, 70 per cent of our business was exporting overseas, half to the US,” Hong said. “Now it’s the complete opposite. Seventy per cent are local orders.”

Hong said his company decided to open a production line in Xinjiang after being offered a rent-free factory by the local government, 10 times the size of their 2,000-square-metre (21,528-square-foot) facility in Jiangsu.

“Electricity and labour costs are half of what we pay in Jiangsu. We just needed to buy our own equipment and use cotton from Xinjiang in production,” Hong said.

Thanks to heavy government subsidies like these, Xinjiang’s textile and apparel industry has grown considerably. By October 2023, there were 3,725 companies registered for the fabrics business in Xinjiang, almost six times the count from 2014. More than one-third came about via investments from elsewhere in the country, official figures revealed.

The region has also ramped up trade with its five Central Asian neighbours – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – which were the recipients of 66.9 per cent of Xinjiang’s exports during the first six months of 2024.

Customs data showed the value of these shipments totalled 147.6 billion yuan (US\$20.7 billion), a 23.9 per cent increase compared to the same period last year.

Apparel and footwear now represent 60.7 per cent of China’s total export value to the five countries, with electronics coming in at 30 per cent, according to 2023 customs figures.

Interwoven with exports

But the surge in trade with Central Asia has only made up for some of the shortfall in China’s textile exports, a problem exacerbated by lethargy in the broader economy.

Manufacturers in the field exported US\$67.2 billion of goods in the first quarter, a year-on-year slump of 6.9 per cent according to Chinese customs data. Shipments to the US, EU and Japan shrunk by 18.4 per cent, 24.7 per cent and 8.7 per cent respectively during the period.

The trend is unlikely to be reversed any time soon, as the US has continued to strictly scrutinise the region’s textile trade and update the scope of its legislation accordingly. The state-owned Xinjiang Tianshan Wool Tex Stock, one of Xinjiang’s largest garment companies, was added to the act’s list of proscribed firms in September 2023 along with two other enterprises. Five metals and chemical companies were added to the list on Thursday, according to Reuters.

A person with direct knowledge of the company’s operations said it exported 20,000 fewer pieces of clothing in 2023 compared to 2022. There is no public information on how many pieces of clothing the company produces each year.

“Orders from the US are now virtually zero. The US and France used to be our biggest customers, but during the Covid period, France started cutting orders, too. Fortunately, Germany’s orders have remained stable,” the person said, adding other export destinations are unlikely to account for the loss of business.

China’s textile sector reported an export value of US\$293.6 billion last year, an 8.1 per cent drop in

export value compared to 2022. Fabrics and clothing contributed 8.6 per cent to the total value of China's 2023 exports – a figure that also fell on a year-on-year basis, but only by 4.6 per cent.

Sheng Lu, a professor of fashion and apparel studies at the University of Delaware, said while China's sector will "undoubtedly remain one of the world's most competitive" given its manufacturing capabilities, geopolitics will continue to be a drag on exports.

"Due to deteriorating relations, sourcing from China is regarded as high-risk for US fashion companies," Lu said. "This pushes [these] companies to reduce their 'China exposure' and move orders elsewhere. For Chinese manufacturers that heavily rely on exports, the worst may be yet to come."

China reported weaker than expected economic growth in the second quarter of 2024, with a 4.7 per cent expansion year on year falling short of the government's annual target of "around 5 per cent". A slackening of demand appears correlative, as retail sales rose 2 per cent in June, year on year – a noteworthy slide compared with the 3.7 per cent growth seen in May, and the slowest rate of increase since China lifted its coronavirus restrictions at the end of 2022.

Clothing sales were hit particularly hard during that month, with a drop of 1.9 per cent reported despite growth of 1.3 per cent in the first half of the year. Of the discretionary items that Chinese consumers said they would cut back on when "uncertain about their financial prospects", clothing ranked near the top. These results were published on July 9 in the 2024 McKinsey China Consumer Report, after a survey of nearly 12,000 respondents was conducted last year.

All these are worrying signs for Chinese policymakers, who have repeatedly stressed the importance of shifting the primary source of economic growth from manufacturing to consumption.

Hong, meanwhile, has been dealing with numerous challenges. On top of receiving smaller orders from hotels and restaurants for his towels this year, fierce competition from domestic players – bordering on "price-slashing", he said – has led him to expect another 30 per cent drop in sales by December.

Chen Li, an analyst from Chinese think tank Anbound, said weak foreign and domestic demand, along with geopolitics-induced shifts in supply chains, would mean more undercutting among clothing manufacturers.

"Low prices lead to a decline in companies' profit margins. In the long run, it will hinder corporate growth because companies are unable to invest more resources in brand-building, product innovation, and marketing," Chen said. "Small and medium-sized enterprises will become extremely fragile, and likely to be eliminated in the market, thus having a major impact on the economy in the long run."

A way out, a way forward

With manufacturers duking it out over a shrinking pool of domestic demand, Zhang Zhiwei, president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management, said many will look to move production out of the country. *Now most of our buyers are Chinese ... This has pushed our prices down further*

- Li Qingrong, Sichuan Firstlady Textile

"Those with access to the international market [will] seek to expand overseas," Zhang said. "It is a trend I expect to continue for the coming years."

Sun Ruizhe, president of the China National Textile and Apparel Council, named "Arabic, Southeast Asian, Central Asian and African countries" as top destinations for Chinese businesses in a July speech to members.

With the broader economic picture still hazy, however, some companies are content to stay put.

Li Qingrong, general manager of Sichuan Firstlady Textile – another company promoting its wares at the China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi – said business went down by one-third since Japanese clothing brand Uniqlo cancelled its orders over cotton sourced from Xinjiang.

"Now most of our buyers are Chinese," she said. "They know how things work and exactly how much production costs, unlike foreign buyers who usually buy at a higher price. This has pushed our prices down further." She expects another 20 per cent drop in sales by the end of the year.

"We don't have particular plans, the economy is not looking great for everyone," she said, adding that her family-owned business has nearly 300 employees.

Hong, still adjusting to running a factory in Xinjiang, said he has started to plan for the future despite this year's gloomy outlook.

"We have to change our business model, from customising for other brands to creating our own brand for domestic customers," Hong said.

"These things take time. We need to produce our products to a higher quality so even if we sell fewer, we can sell it at a higher price," he said. "I think labelling products as 'made with Xinjiang cotton' would still do well in China."

Can democracy in South Asia withstand US-China rivalry?

10 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Sagina Walyat

From rising authoritarianism to political instability, unrest throughout the region has intensified alongside shifting alliances.

Recent developments in South Asia, particularly the uprising in Bangladesh, are transforming regional dynamics with potentially global impacts. Home to

1.94 billion people, South Asia is grappling with rising extremism, democratic backsliding and political instability. As a key player in the Indo-Pacific, the region's turmoil – particularly given Bangladesh's strategic position in the Bay of Bengal – holds profound significance.

The chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's 2021 resurgence, regarded by many as a US foreign policy failure, sparked a refugee crisis and additional security issues involving Pakistan. US sanctions and international isolation worsened the suffering of the Afghan people, especially women and children. The 2021 military coup in Myanmar has added to regional migration pressures.

In 2022, Sri Lanka faced its worst economic crisis since it gained independence, marked by 55 per cent inflation and a debilitating debt crisis, leading to crowds eventually storming the president's official residence. By 2023, Pakistan had sunk further into political and economic turmoil, with foreign reserves falling to US\$3.1 billion and civil unrest erupting after former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested.

In April this year, massive protests gripped Nepal, with demands for the restoration of the monarchy. Amid the unrest, political parties were able to form a coalition government as the country balanced ties between India and China. And now Bangladesh, South Asia's second-largest economy, has experienced bloody regime change sparked by student protests over job quotas that escalated with extremist involvement.

Overall, the outlook for democracy in South Asia appears grim, with ongoing shifts towards authoritarianism and mobocracy showing little sign of reversal. The impact on stability in the region as well as global geopolitics will continue to unfold, as major powers navigate this complex and volatile landscape. South Asia has become entangled in US-China geopolitical rivalry, with significant implications for India. Projected to be the world's third-largest economy by 2028, India has attracted US interest when it comes to countering China. However, New Delhi remains committed to strategic autonomy. Meanwhile, China's growing regional influence poses challenges for India's foreign policy interests.

Recently, Bangladesh has become a victim of great power struggles. Under Sheikh Hasina's administration, Bangladesh's independent foreign policy and tilt toward Beijing have upset Washington. Bangladesh has been reluctant to join the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue – a platform comprising Australia, India, Japan and the US – and is a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Bangladeshi politicians have alleged that the US wants to lease Saint Martin's, an island in the Bay of Bengal – the US has denied this. Hasina has said she rejected an

offer from "a white man" for a foreign country to establish an airbase in Bangladesh. In June, Hasina said she wouldn't agree to leasing Saint Martin's although doing so would make it easier for her to stay in power. She has also said that there are conspiracies afoot to carve a Christian state out of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Meanwhile, over the past decade, China's influence in South Asia has grown through the Belt and Road Initiative, which South Asian nations such as Sri Lanka and the Maldives have joined. Infrastructure projects and cultural exchanges have shifted public perception, advancing China's interests. This growing influence troubles New Delhi, as it affects India's soft power and relationships with neighbouring countries.

Interestingly, China, mirroring the US, has started to play a role in shaping the future direction of these countries. A rumoured diplomatic snub during Hasina's recent visit to China could be one indicator of shifting regional dynamics. As prime minister, she allowed India access to the strategically crucial Mongla and Chittagong ports and favoured India over China for the Teesta River project.

The US, a seasoned player in South Asia, has established a robust strategic nexus with Pakistan, exerted significant influence in Nepalese politics and maintained warm informal relations with Bhutan. The US has aligned with India through the Quad, defence cooperation and joint military exercises in the Indian Ocean. Its reported attempts to gain influence in Bangladesh, freezing of Afghanistan's assets and strategic positioning in Sri Lanka and near the Strait of Malacca serve to maintain its hegemony in the region. The US is engaged in a strategic chess game, with its foreign policy increasingly focused on countering China's growing influence in the region. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor is also one such move to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative in South Asia.

Advertisement

On the other hand, China has effectively utilised its economic power and diplomacy. It has strengthened its all-weather friendships with Pakistan and Nepal. The Maldives, a partner in the Indian Ocean, supports Beijing's ambition for its Maritime Silk Route.

Beijing's diplomatic act in the region has served its interests in Myanmar, while balancing relations with Nepal and managing ties with Sri Lanka in spite of earlier setbacks. The recent developments in Bangladesh could present an opportunity for China to expand its influence, given its good relations with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Notably, China has become South Asia's primary trade partner, with trade reaching US\$197.4 billion in 2022 and growing at an average rate of 8.3 per cent.

Furthermore, the evolving regional landscape may lead India to become more conciliatory towards Beijing over time, though it will maintain its position on the border dispute with China. The onus is on China to act maturely and seize the opportunity to amicably settle the border dispute in a way that benefits both sides.

The competing interests of major powers are reshaping South Asia's dynamics, presenting both challenges and opportunities that will have significant global repercussions.

Fighting for Tibet must be a Team Effort

10 August 2024, [Tibetan Review](#), Robert Vanwey

Back in June, Professor Tenzin Dorjee made an impassioned argument for why Tibet matters. [<https://www.tibetanreview.net/why-tibet-matters/>] He identified several factors that illustrate that the "Tibetan problem" is in fact a global one. As the "Roof of the World," "the Water Tower of Asia," and the "Third Pole," Tibet sits within one of the most environmentally critical places on earth. Saving it means saving the world, as Professor Dorjee eloquently articulated. The human rights situation in Tibet is a repugnant stain on the international community. Religious practice is restricted. The Tibetan language is oppressed, and eroding through forced attrition. The combined assaults on Tibetans' religious practice and use of their own language are the means of eradicating the entire Tibetan culture that has spanned at least a millennium. Relatedly, these forces threaten Tibetan Buddhism, the most potent expression of Buddhism globally.

Given the profundity of each of these matters highlighted by Professor Dorjee, their resolution cannot belong to Tibetans alone. No people should be left to fade away in the dustbin of history as a result of the apathy of those who perceive themselves as not directly affected. For humanity to prosper, it is incumbent upon everyone to contribute to its diversity, robustness, and valor. Team efforts reign supreme over individualized endeavors by virtue of the assortment of expertise. Tibetans most assuredly would benefit from compounded energy applied to the preservation of their culture.

One thing I've learned from my experience working in the Himalayas is this: a sustained response to environmental catastrophes profits most from stakeholder participation. It is the people who live upon a land, those who derive their livelihood from it over generations, that are the people who tend to know best how to sustain it. Swiftly evolving conditions invite new challenges, even for those with generations-long local knowledge. Such local knowledge nevertheless provides an important

supplement to scientists seeking practical ways to mitigate the devastating global effects from climate change. But this is only part of the picture.

Public advocacy for suppression of human rights in Tibet depends upon education. We need experts who can operate effectively within the halls of power—skilled diplomats, politicians, and attorneys—who are educated in the historical details that have produced the current Tibetan situation. Without question, accurate knowledge of current, localized conditions is critical. On the larger scale, false arguments put forth to 'justify' the atrocious policies destroying Tibetan culture are couched within ahistorical narratives that few non-Tibetan public figures have the background to refute. To oppose this many-leveled attack on Tibetan culture, public advocacy needs to be empowered by education in fair renditions of history, not history derived only from Chinese sources, but also from Tibetan, Mongolian, Hindi, Nepali, and even Russian ones.

Resisting the degradation of Tibetan Buddhism seems, in some ways, easier than these other challenges because the Western world has vigorously embraced it. The Tibetan literary tradition grounded in the canon translated from Sanskrit is enormous. Yet only a small portion of Tibetan texts on Buddhism have been translated into western languages. Just as Tibetans worked with Sanskrit scholars for hundreds of years, western translators require guidance by Tibetans fully educated in their tradition. Without fully-educated Tibetans our western translations will be incomplete and Buddhism will suffer for it.

All of this boils down to a simple point. Preservation of one of the world's most exquisite jewels demands a multidisciplinary approach. It is for this reason that I am working to expand an organization comprised of experts of several fields, one that may seem rather eclectic to some. We are led by two of the most accomplished translators of Tibetan Buddhist works. Two of our members are technology experts, a critical skill in this 21st century, particularly for reaching a wider audience. I, myself, have extensive experience in the world of environmental studies in the Himalayas, and am a trained historian of Tibet. I am also educated as a lawyer, and another of our specialists was a practicing lawyer before shedding that day job to commit more time to the highest levels of translation. We bring this wide array of experience into our curriculum of Tibetan studies.

What any of us can do, regardless of our expertise, is to spread the word about organizations like mine and plenty of others. To capitalize on the contributions of skillful advocates, we need to help provide them the resources to do their work. In a world where the news cycle lives by the minute, the Tibetan issue barely treads water. This is not because it is any less relevant or important; it is simply an artifact of the current way

the world functions. People who worry for the future of Tibet, Tibetan culture, and Tibetan Buddhism have an obligation to come together and support the entire community. Perhaps we cannot change the tides of history, but we can diminish their most insidious effects.

Experts discuss China's infrastructural ambitions in Himalayan region during recent webinar

09 August 2024, [ANI](#)

The Stockholm Centre for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA) brought together scholars and experts from Europe, the US, and South Asia to examine China's strategic investments and influence in the Himalayan region.

The webinar titled "China's Himalayan Hustle Part I: Can China Achieve Infrastructural Hegemony?" was moderated by Dr Jagannath Panda, Head of SCSA-IPA. It explored China's multifaceted approach to the Himalayas, focusing on its economic investments, military involvement, and diplomatic strategies. Panda emphasised the need for more in-depth discussions about China's Himalayan strategy, noting a gap in Western and European discourse on the issue. The webinar addressed key questions concerning China's current infrastructural development plans in the Himalayan region, the implications of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the country's long-term goals in this geopolitically sensitive area.

Panda highlighted the strategic importance of understanding China's actions in the Himalayas, particularly in the context of unresolved territorial disputes with neighbouring countries like India and Bhutan.

Matej Simalcik, Executive Director of the Central European Institute of Asian Studies, discussed China's infrastructure projects in the Himalayan region, linking them to the broader context of the Tibet issue and China's border strategy. He pointed out the significance of these projects in influencing regional stability and governance, particularly in countries like Nepal, which has received substantial Chinese investment.

"China's approach to the region is not based merely on territorial disputes, but also on military and economic matters. This is especially evident in Nepal, a country that since 2019 has received investment for many infrastructure projects, including, for example, the trans Himalayan railway network," said Simalcik. Jeffrey Payne, a professor at the Near East South Asia (NESAS) Centre for Strategic Studies, elaborated on China's Himalayan policy as an extension of its broader domestic and foreign policy objectives. He drew parallels between China's approach in the

Himalayas and its actions in the South and East China Seas, suggesting that China's tactics are aimed at asserting control over disputed territories. "A parallel can be made with China's approach in the South and East China Seas and the Himalayan region-- in both disputed areas, the Chinese action is to make the world notice that they can control these regions, and as a result, these territories are by default theirs," said Payne.

Thomas Eder, a senior researcher on China, highlighted China's neighbourhood policy, emphasising the importance of security partnerships with countries like Pakistan. He noted that China's investments in Pakistan, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, are a crucial part of its competition with the U.S. and efforts to secure its periphery.

Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis, a former Fulbright senior scholar at Indiana University-Bloomington in the United States, discussed India's concerns regarding China's infrastructure projects, especially those related to water sharing and transboundary rivers like the Brahmaputra. She pointed out that China's activities in these areas could exacerbate tensions, given the existing border disputes and water rights issues.

Dr. Saroj Kumar Aryal, a researcher at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Warsaw, provided insights from Nepal's perspective, highlighting the growing influence of China in Nepal's internal politics and the challenges posed by China's infrastructure projects near the India-Nepal border. He also noted Nepal's limited capacity to monitor Chinese activities in the northern Himalayas.

The webinar concluded with a call for greater cooperation between the West, India, and other regional players to counter China's infrastructural ambitions in the Himalayas. (ANI)

The geopolitics in 'Tibet border' reference

09 August 2024, [Deccan Herald](#), Jabin T Jacob

Dorjee Tshering Lepcha's speech underlines that India's development policies for its border areas and its policy towards China are connected, and that both are equally important.

Rajya Sabha member Dorjee Tshering Lepcha from Sikkim hit the headlines last week for his call to the Union government to instruct the Indian Army and other agencies working in border areas to start referring to the 'China border' as the 'Tibet border'. However, all of Lepcha's speech — his response to the Union Budget for 2024-2025 — deserves attention. The parliamentarian from Sikkim made other direct and indirect references to Tibet. For instance, Lepcha

called for restarting border trade through Nathu La and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage. He pointed out that the route through Nathu La to Kailash Mansarovar was the best of the three overland routes currently available — the other two are through Nepal and Uttarakhand.

Lepcha also briefly made a reference to Ogyen Trinley Dorje as the 17th Karmapa and called for bringing him to Sikkim. Dorje is only one of the claimants to the title of the 17th Karmapa and leadership of the Karma Kagyu sect of Buddhists, albeit one who has been accepted by both the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. The young Buddhist religious figure later escaped from Tibet to Nepal in 1999, moving to India the following year. However, he left India in 2017, and has not been back since. The Rumtek monastery in Sikkim is a major seat of the Karma Kagyu school, and hence, Lepcha's call.

The Member of Parliament surely realises that any official Indian government action either switching to 'Tibet border' or on the Karmapa would only draw protests from Beijing, and make restoration of border trade and the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage that much harder.

The speech by Sikkim's lone member in the upper house of Parliament — the state will mark 50 years of its accession to the Indian Union in 2025 — must, therefore, be understood in a larger context. The reference to the 'Tibet border' was possibly an attempt to draw attention to arguably more important issues that the speech raises. It highlights the linkages between the Union government's China policy and questions of politics and development in India's border states.

Lepcha started his roughly 10-minute-long intervention with a reference to the problem of unemployment among the educated youth in his state. While he sought to portray this as part of a global phenomenon, it was clear that this was an issue that was uppermost in the minds of ordinary Sikkimese, and one whose solution he made clear needed a non-partisan approach. He framed his request for the Union government's intervention to promote skill development and improve the employability of the state's job-seekers with a reference to *atmanirbharta*. It is also in this context of lack of jobs and need for government support that his call to promote organic farming and his demand for the inclusion of 12 more communities in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list must be seen.

The Sikkimese Member of Parliament then identified problems with the state's infrastructure including the poor state of the section between Sevoke and Rangpo on National Highway No 10 — which he called the "lifeline" of the state — and problems with operations at Sikkim's only airport at Pakyong. Both are issues that Lepcha has raised repeatedly in Parliament but

received only somewhat unsatisfactory answers for. One direct question, for example, on a demand from the Government of Sikkim to transfer the Sevoke-Rangpo stretch from the West Bengal Public Works Department to the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. elicited a non-committal response from Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari.

Economic logic also dominates the Tibet references in the parliamentarian's speech as should be clear from his highlighting of trade and pilgrimage through Nathu La. He further pointed out that while the Chinese were constructing villages all along the Line of Actual Control, India by contrast had kept people from accessing border areas through the notification of these areas as reserved forests and wildlife sanctuaries. This is not an anti-environment complaint but a reference to the fact that the Union government's environment policies are often neither sensitive to local conditions nor acknowledge local knowledge and contributions to conservation and sustainability. Policies that cut off local populations from border areas, forest lands, and traditional grazing pastures whether for national security considerations or environmental ones have implications for local culture, development, and livelihood, as well as for national security, itself.

Lepcha's speech underlines the fact that India's development policies for its border areas and its policy towards China are connected and that both are equally important — one cannot take priority over the other.

To return to the headline of calling India's northern border the 'Tibet border', this could be seen as a response to China's renaming of various places in Arunachal Pradesh, the third instance of which took place in March. However, the question then arises why a government response has been lacking since 2017 when China first renamed places in the northeast Indian state. In fact, it was widely reported in June that the government was planning to rename 30 locations in Tibet according to their names in Indian languages. Nothing has been heard of this idea since.

Renaming the border is probably easy to do and it might even be argued is a necessary reminder of historical facts. But neither the existence of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police nor India's hosting the Dalai Lama for decades has led to any great expertise on Tibet outside of select pockets in India's government and society. Or to sustained political and economic attention to India's border areas or, indeed, to formulating cogent policy towards China. The problem then lies elsewhere.

Dealing with the challenges China poses to Indian interests must not be an episodic affair led by headlines or limited to rhetoric. It demands urgent, sustained action in India's border states in terms of

investments in human resources, improving Centre-State policy co-ordination, and ensuring accountability.

Taiwan should step up transparency amid Chinese 'gray zone' tactics: Expert

08 August 2024, [Focus Taiwan](#)

Taiwan should step up efforts to boost transparency about China's "gray zone" activities to drum up international support and pressure Beijing into not escalating tensions, a maritime transparency project director at Stanford University said Thursday.

To engage the public at home and the international community, the Taiwanese government should release footage and images of China's "gray zone" maneuvers around Taiwan, including standoffs between Taiwanese and Chinese coast guard ships around the Kinmen Islands, Ray Powell, director of Sealight at Stanford's Gordian Knot Center, told a press event held by Forward Alliance in Taipei.

Gray zone activities refer to actions that fall between traditional notions of war and peace. These activities typically involve ambiguous or nontraditional methods that aim to achieve strategic objectives without overtly crossing the threshold into open conflict.

Taiwan's Defense Ministry currently relies mostly on flight maps and press releases of Chinese warplane incursions into its air defense identification zone, however, to get the public and lawmakers on board with projects and items the country is funding with defense spending, Taiwan needs to "show the public what these things look like," he said.

Using China's gray zone maneuvers against the Philippines in the South China Sea as an example, he said that after the Philippine government around February 2023 started to task its coast guard vessels with capturing videos and pictures of blocking and swarming maneuvers employed by the Chinese coast guard against Philippine vessels.

Back then, China had tried to harass Philippine vessels on resupply missions to the Second Thomas Shoal, Powell said.

Manila's response to the Chinese gray zone activities, which garnered international support for the Philippines, influenced the United State's decision in late July to provide the Philippines with US\$500 million to shore up its defense amid ongoing friction with China in the South China Sea, Powell argued.

Over the past 18 months, the international media reported extensively on tensions in the contested waters, garnering wide attention of the international community, which was helped by a keynote speech by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. at the Shangri-la Dialogue in May, he said.

Manila's tactic was accompanied by a robust embedded reporters' program, which spotlighted the issue locally after six years of opacity surrounding such incidents under former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and also in the international community, Powell said.

Although Beijing initially responded by stepping up its "patrols" near the Second Thomas Shoal, Manila's strategy prompted the two countries to each read out its version of an "agreement" on how each side would approach resupply missions undertaken by the Philippines, which went uncontested by China, he said.

"People need to see how Chinese ships and Chinese aircraft are maneuvering in an unsafe manner. Words are important, but images are much more effective," Forward Alliance Director Enoch Wu (吳怡農) said.

"People need to see how Chinese coast guards are forcibly boarding sovereign countries' civilian vessels. Our public needs to see that and the world needs to see that," he said.

India-China: A frozen relationship

07 August 2024, [Modern Diplomacy](#), Pritam Sarbabidya

The India-China border disputes date lower back to the early twentieth century whilst the British colonial rulers drew the McMahon Line as the boundary among India and Tibet.

The India-China border disputes date lower back to the early twentieth century whilst the British colonial rulers drew the McMahon Line as the boundary among India and Tibet. However, China never accepted this boundary and claims vast swathes of territory in the eastern sector of the border, including Arunachal Pradesh. On the western front, there may be the Aksai Chin vicinity, which is claimed through India but occupied by means of China. Despite a couple of rounds of negotiations and agreements, including the 1996 Agreement at the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity alongside the LAC, the border disputes stay unresolved and continue to be a source of hysteria among the two giants.

Number of Chinese Incursions, by Year

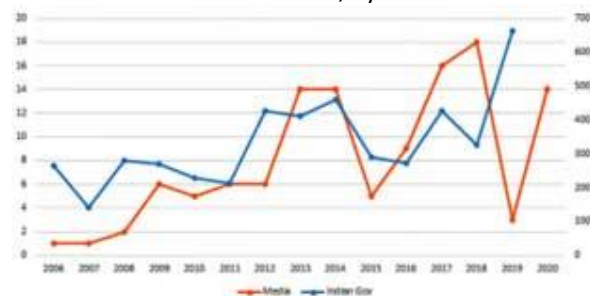


Fig.1 Source: *Rising tension in the Himalayas: A geospatial analysis of Chinese border incursions into India* by Jan-Tino Brethouwer

(Note: Independent data is listed in orange using the left scale, the Indian Government’s data is in blue using the right scale)

The latest escalation in tensions started out in the Covid year of 2020 when Indian and Chinese troops clashed within the Galwan Valley in Ladakh. The violent clashes led to casualties on each facet and brought about a major escalation when the whole world was busy with the first wave of the deadly virus. Since then, both sides have deployed hundreds of troops along the LAC, leading to an anxious and volatile scenario inside the vicinity.

The implications of the border disputes and the current trends on India’s foreign coverage are a ways-reaching. India has historically pursued a policy of “non-alignment” and “strategic autonomy”, with all most important powers at the same time as safeguarding its country wide pastimes.

The India-China border disputes have additionally highlighted the strategic importance of the Himalayan location and the need for India to strengthen its army abilities and infrastructure along the border. In reaction to China’s developing assertiveness in the place, India has stepped up its border infrastructure improvement and army deployments in Ladakh and other touchy regions alongside the LAC. For instance in terms of building roads, India’s Border Road Organisation (BRO) has completed 330 projects at a cost of ₹8,737 crore in the last three years.

Maintaining the channel of communication, both side hold numerous rounds of commander level meetings, the latest one was 21st round taken place on 19th February 2024 at Chushul-Moldo border meeting point, concluded with a hope and statement “committed to maintain peace and tranquillity on the ground” and wanted “mutually accepted resolutions of remaining issue”. But one major question appears at this point – “Is “mutual” solution really possible, when China “unilaterally” violated all the norms?” We have also seen China’s move of unilaterally changing the names of places that belongs to India, objecting Indian PM Narendra Modi’s visit to Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh.

Although the two countries trying to balance out their strategies and counter strategies, its for India to look situations from different perspective. In May, 2024 we came across a report which highlighted the Chinese strategy of building a road in “Shaksgam Valley”. This Chinese physical occupation could potentially threaten Indian defences in Siachen Glaciers. If China has the access there then twin threats on “Siachen” in South “state in mess” Pakistan and in the North “the dragon”. Recently, another media report informed that “China has completed the construction of a 400-metre bridge, connecting the northern and southern banks of the Pangong Tso.” Which can be seen as a concern

for the India side as these actions enhance communication channels.

The recent standoff has also underscored the significance of enhancing security cooperation with nations like Japan, Australia, and Vietnam, which percentage India’s concerns about China’s rising strength and assertiveness in the vicinity. At the same India’s focus in strengthening the idea of “free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific” with the groupings like QUAD.

Despite the border disputes and periodic tensions, India and China have additionally sought to deepen their financial and change ties through the years. China is now India’s biggest trading companion, with \$118.4 billion in two-way trade. But there are areas of concerns in economics as well, the trade imbalance the two countries. For the record, in 2024 India has the highest trade deficit with China. India’s export to China in 2023-24 stood at \$16.65 billion, while import stood at \$101.75 billion. As a result, the trade deficit is over \$85 billion.



Fig.3 Source: Reddit

However, the monetary courting has been marred with the aid of change imbalances, market get entry to issues, and worries about Chinese investments in crucial sectors of the Indian economy. To counter that in recent years, India has sought to diversify its financial and strategic partnerships to reduce its dependence on China and enhance its strategic autonomy. The authorities’ ‘Make in India’ initiative or its new updated version of “Atma-Nirbhar Bharat” to draw overseas investments in key sectors like defence, infrastructure, and era are aimed at decreasing reliance on Chinese imports and promoting self-reliance in important sectors of the economic system. India has additionally bolstered its partnerships with nations like Japan, Australia, and the USA, via tasks like the Quad and the Indo-Pacific strategy, to mitigate China’s developing impact within the region.

The manner forward in resolving the India-China border disputes lies in a complete and sustained speak system that addresses the middle issues of contention and builds mutual consider and self-assurance among the two countries. Both aspects need to stick to current agreements and protocols, which include the 1996 Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC and the 2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question, to save you similarly escalation of tensions and preserve peace and balance along the border, at the same time safeguarding India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

As India continues to rise a major global player resolving the border dispute with China will be pivotal in defining its trajectory in the 21st century.

Explainer: Tim Walz's long track record in China

07 August 2024, [VOA](#), William Yang



FILE - Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz in the press room at the State Capitol, on March 13, 2024, in St. Paul, Minn.

From teaching at a high school in China to his experience serving on a key congressional committee that focuses on relations between Beijing and Washington, Democratic vice-presidential nominee Tim Walz has a decades-long connection with China dating back to the pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

As an educator, Walz taught American History, culture, and English to Chinese students at the Foshan No.1 High School in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong in 1989, the year that saw hundreds of thousands of Chinese students protesting against the ruling Chinese Communist Party in Tiananmen Square. "China was coming, and that's the reason that I went," Walz said in a 2007 interview with *The Hill*, a Washington D.C.-based news website. During his one-year teaching stint in China, Walz was nicknamed "Fields of China" by his students due to his kindness. His time in China had an impact on his perspectives of Chinese people's lives under the ruling Communist Party.

"If they had the proper leadership, there are no limits on what they could accomplish," he said in an

interview with the *Star Herald* in 1990, describing teaching in China as "one of the best things" he has ever done.

His interest in China didn't stop there. Upon returning to the United States, Walz and his wife set up a company named "Educational Travel Adventures" to coordinate summer trips to China for American high school students.

Five years after the Tiananmen Square protests and the Chinese government's violent crackdown, Walz returned to China with his wife for their honeymoon and they brought along two American high school tour groups. Walz continued running the summer exchange program to China for American students with his wife until 2003.

Advocating human rights in China

After becoming a member of Congress in 2007, Walz continued to focus on issues related to China. During his time in Congress, Walz served on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which focuses exclusively on human rights issues in the country.

Walz quickly established himself as a vocal critic of the Chinese government, holding regular meetings with high-profile activists from China and Hong Kong, including prominent Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong and Tibet's spiritual leader Dalai Lama.

In an interview with VOA in 2014, Walz recounted his impression of witnessing the student-led protest in Tiananmen Square unfold. "I remembered waking up and seeing the news on June Fourth that the unthinkable had happened," he said.

While most Americans at the time decided to leave China due to security concerns following the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, Walz said he felt it was "more important than ever to go" to China because he wanted to ensure that "the story was told" and let the Chinese people know that the outside world was with them.

In addition to engaging with activists from China and Hong Kong, Walz also co-sponsored several resolutions on key human rights issues in China, including demanding the release of Chinese Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo and Chinese activist Huang Qi, as well as co-signing the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act in 2017.

In one of his congressional remarks in 2016, Walz highlighted the importance of having "constructive dialogues" with Beijing to ensure "the preservation of traditional Tibetan culture and Tibet's fragile ecology." "The U.S. was founded on the ideas of universal freedom, and I believe that we must continue to urge the Chinese government to provide less regulated religious freedom to the Tibetans," he said at the time.

Foreign policy boost

In addition to being a vocal critique of China's human rights record, Walz also expressed concerns about

China's attempt to expand its presence in the South China Sea in 2016, citing Beijing's efforts to build artificial islands in the disputed water as the reason to oppose Washington's attempt to reduce military spending.

Despite his strong stance on China's human rights record and military posture, Walz continued to stress the importance of maintaining cooperation with China. "I don't fall into the category that China necessarily needs to be an adversarial relationship," he said in a video interview with Agri-Pulse Communications.

"I think we need to stand firm on what they are doing in the South China Sea, but there [are] many areas of cooperation that we can work on," Walz added.

Some analysts say Walz's deep connections to China and track record in U.S.-China diplomacy could potentially help the Democratic presidential pair make more informed decisions on foreign policy, especially on issues related to China.

"I think [his emergence as Democratic vice-presidential nominee] is going to put a lot of people who care a lot about American foreign policy in this part of the world at ease, knowing that there is someone on the ticket who is informed, has spent time in the region, and is not starting from square one when it comes to learning about American foreign policy in East Asia," said Lev Nachman, a political scientist at National Taiwan University.

He said since Walz has expressed many humanistic views of the Chinese people, Tibetan people, and Hong Kongers, the Minnesota governor could add more nuance to the policy debate related to China in the United States.

"He may be able to articulate the need to push back against China's authoritarianism and human rights violations in different parts of the world in a way that doesn't vilify Chinese citizens or doesn't lean antagonistically in this overtly scare tactic rhetoric that I think a lot of U.S.-China discourse has turned into in the U.S.," Nachman told VOA by phone.

The Annexation Of Taiwan In Xi Jinping's Timeline – OpEd

06 August 2024, [Eurasia Review](#), Sarah Neumann

The conflict between China and Taiwan regarding independence or annexation has persisted since the end of World War II. However, since the mid-2000s, this issue has escalated significantly, largely due to the intensifying global competition in economic, political, and geopolitical spheres between the United States and China, which has become a defining element of the new world order. Additionally, Taiwan's transformation into a major hub for semiconductor production—crucial to modern industrial,

technological, financial, and logistical advancements—has heightened tensions among Beijing, Taipei, and Washington.

Taiwan's strategic geographical location further underscores its importance. China is encircled by archipelagos hosting U.S. military bases and allied nations. For the United States, Taiwan serves as a critical pressure point on China's access routes, whereas for China, it represents the "first island chain." By integrating Taiwan and artificial islands under construction, China aims to complete its Anti-access/Area denial (A2/AD) strategy in the Western Pacific, thereby disrupting the U.S. containment efforts.

In 1972, Mao Zedong told Richard Nixon that Beijing could wait a century to reclaim Taiwan. However, Xi Jinping appears far less patient. According to U.S. intelligence, Xi has instructed the People's Liberation Army to be ready for an operation to annex Taiwan by 2027. Various factors, however, could accelerate this timeline, potentially prompting a forcible annexation sooner.

Taiwan seeks independence and requires the support of a major power to counter China, making the United States its best ally. Taiwan leverages its semiconductor production capabilities to gain this support. It manufactures over 60% of the world's advanced digital, analog, and mixed-signal chips, serving as a primary supplier to U.S. tech companies and defense contractors. Moreover, Taiwan fully cooperates with U.S. sanctions against China, especially regarding the use of integrated circuits made by Taiwanese companies like TSMC, thereby intensifying China's determination to pursue Taiwan's annexation more seriously.

China urgently needs specialized microelectronics, currently produced in Taiwan, to develop its military technologies and AI-related industries. To achieve this, China faces two options: either integrate its domestic production with the latest global technology—a challenging task due to Western sanctions preventing companies like ASML from selling chip-making machines to China—or annex Taiwan to utilize its top-tier manufacturing capabilities.

The potential transformation of Taiwan into a strategic military base for U.S. and NATO forces could prompt China to act preemptively. Under the pretext of aiding Taipei against an imminent Chinese attack, the U.S. aims to bolster its military presence on the island, solidifying its foothold near China's borders. Presently, China is surrounded by U.S. and allied forces: to the northeast by Japan, South Korea, and Okinawa; to the south by Australia and New Zealand; and to the east by the Marshall Islands, Mariana Islands, and Guam, home to active U.S. military personnel. Given this encirclement and the placement of nuclear submarines and unmanned underwater vehicles

(UUA), ballistic missiles (IRBM, ICBM, SLBM), B2 bombers in the Andersen Guam base, as well as the deployment of the navy's 7th in the region, China views Taiwan as crucial to connecting with other recently constructed artificial islands to effectively implement its A2/AD strategy.

Considering the geographical positioning of U.S. forces in the Western Pacific, the capabilities of A2/AD systems will be crucial upon the first shot being fired. Advanced weaponry like hypersonic missiles, unless integrated with reliable A2/AD monitoring systems, will be ineffective in detecting, locating, and tracking enemy ships and aircraft. In such a scenario, Taiwan would serve as both the first and last line of defense for both sides. Should Beijing perceive Taiwan as becoming such a strategic position for the Western alliance, it would promptly initiate an early operation against Taiwan.

Another factor potentially accelerating China's 2027 timeline is the U.S. presidential election. If Kamala Harris wins the election, NATO's Indo-Pacific policy and the vision of NATO 2030 will likely continue, intensifying the military presence of the Atlantic alliance in East Asia and the Pacific. Taiwan's geographical significance in this context will be more pronounced than ever. Conversely, if Donald Trump wins, the situation could differ. Trump's non-interventionist rhetoric, aimed at reducing financial and human costs for American soldiers, could create an environment more conducive to China's ambitions. Beijing would exploit the isolationist policies of a new administration to further its goal of reclaiming Taiwan. Currently, China is disinclined to engage in a conflict over Taiwan, which could lead to a direct confrontation with the U.S. and its regional allies, as the economic and financial repercussions would be severe. Instead, China continues to make implicit threats and conduct military drills around Taiwan, such as the "Joint Sword A-2024" exercise, to maintain a constant threat over Taiwan and potential Western actions. However, if conditions change and certain factors emerge, China might act against Taiwan sooner than the end of this decade or 2027. If Western sanctions on Chinese technology intensify and the U.S. significantly widens its technological and military lead, Beijing will take decisive action to annex Taiwan, a key to 21st-century advancements. Should Washington expand the Indo-Pacific NATO idea and integrate Taiwan as a critical military outpost, it would be akin to chaining the wings of the Chinese dragon. In such a scenario, the People's Liberation Army would launch a swift, decisive, and surprise operation to seize Taiwan.

If Trump enters the White House, his anti-NATO, non-interventionist, and anti-coalition policies would offer a glimmer of hope for Beijing. This would embolden Chinese leaders to pursue the annexation of Taiwan. If Beijing realizes that the U.S. is unwilling to bear the

substantial costs of protecting Taipei's political aspirations, it will seize the opportunity to annex the island.

China's Iron Grip on Tibet: A Scathing Indictment of Religious Repression

05 August 2024, [Khabarhub](#), Manoj Ghimire

The United States State Department's 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom, released on June 26, 2024, offers a damning assessment of China's ongoing suppression of religious freedom in Tibet.

This comprehensive review serves as a stark reminder of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) relentless efforts to control and manipulate every aspect of Tibetan Buddhism, effectively strangling the spiritual and cultural life of the Tibetan people.

At the heart of China's oppressive policy lies an insidious campaign of "Sinicization" – a euphemism for the systematic erasure of Tibetan identity and the forced assimilation of Tibetan Buddhism into a CCP-approved version of Chinese culture.

This is not merely cultural imperialism; it is a calculated strategy to neutralize what Beijing perceives as a threat to its authority and to remake Tibetan Buddhism in its own image.

The State Department report highlights the CCP's 2019-2023 five-year plan to Sinicize Buddhism in China, with a particular focus on Tibetan Buddhism.

The requirement for monasteries to obtain official permission for large-scale religious events or gatherings further restricts the free practice of religion.

This plan, far from being a benign cultural initiative, is a blueprint for ideological control.

It demands loyalty to the CCP and the state above all else, effectively attempting to replace spiritual devotion with political allegiance.

The involvement of the state-run Buddhist Association of China (BAC) in this process only underscores the extent to which the Chinese government is willing to co-opt religious institutions to serve its political agenda.

Perhaps most alarming is the CCP's brazen interference in the most sacred aspects of Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

The report details how the United Front Work Department (UFD), an arm of the CCP, has arrogated to itself the power to control the selection of Tibetan religious leaders, including the recognition of reincarnated lamas.

This is not merely administrative overreach; it is a fundamental violation of religious freedom and an attempt to control the very spiritual lineage of Tibetan Buddhism.

The regulations stipulating that reincarnate lamas must be born within China and that no foreign organization or individual may interfere in their selection are particularly egregious.

These rules are transparently designed to prevent the current Dalai Lama, who lives in exile, from having any say in the recognition of his successor.

It is a calculated move to sever the spiritual connection between Tibetans inside Tibet and their exiled religious leader, and to ensure that future religious leaders are compliant with CCP dictates.

The ongoing disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, recognized as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama and most Tibetan Buddhists, stands as a chilling testament to the lengths the Chinese government will go to control Tibetan Buddhism.

Abducted at the age of six in 1995, his whereabouts remain unknown nearly three decades later.

This act of state-sponsored kidnapping not only violates basic human rights but also represents a direct assault on the religious traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

The report also sheds light on the Chinese government's efforts to erase the Tibetan language and culture.

Monasteries are being forced to translate texts from Tibetan to Mandarin, a move that observers rightly identify as an attempt to undermine the Tibetan language.

The forced replacement of images of the Dalai Lama and other revered lamas with portraits of CCP leaders in both monasteries and private homes is a particularly cruel form of cultural violence, striking at the heart of Tibetan spiritual practice.

The ban on images of the Dalai Lama, with harsh repercussions for those who dare to own or display them, is a clear violation of religious freedom and personal expression.

It speaks volumes about the CCP's fear of the Dalai Lama's influence and its determination to eradicate any trace of loyalty to him among the Tibetan people. The report also highlights the intensification of repression around politically sensitive events, religious anniversaries, and cultural events with religious components.

The cancellation or curtailment of lay attendance at religious events, even those that had received official approval, demonstrates the capricious nature of CCP control and the constant state of uncertainty under which Tibetan Buddhists must practice their faith.

The role of the United Front Work Department in managing religious affairs through the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) reveals the extent to which religion in Tibet is viewed as a political matter rather than a spiritual one.

The systematic attempt to control, manipulate, and ultimately reshape Tibetan Buddhism to serve the

political interests of the CCP is nothing short of cultural genocide.

The UFWD's claim to have the right to deny recognition of reincarnations of high lamas of "especially great influence" is a clear indication of the CCP's fear of charismatic religious leaders who might challenge its authority.

The regulations that allow citizens to take part only in officially approved religious practices are a direct assault on religious freedom. By asserting CCP control over all aspects of religious activity, including the management of religious venues, groups, personnel, and schools, the Chinese government is effectively trying to remake Tibetan Buddhism into a state-controlled entity devoid of its spiritual essence.

This comprehensive control extends to the minutiae of daily religious life. The CCP maintains a registry of officially recognized reincarnate lamas, effectively bureaucratizing a deeply spiritual process. Local governments in Tibetan areas are given control over the registration of monasteries, nunneries, and other Buddhist religious centers, subjecting these sacred spaces to constant scrutiny and potential interference. The requirement for monasteries to obtain official permission for large-scale religious events or gatherings further restricts the free practice of religion.

This micromanagement of religious activities not only stifles spontaneous expressions of faith but also allows the CCP to monitor and control the gathering of Tibetan Buddhists, likely out of fear that such assemblies could foster dissent or opposition to Chinese rule.

The International Campaign for Tibet's president, Tencho Gyatso, rightly points out that the suppression of religious freedom in Tibet, including the efforts to control the succession of the Dalai Lama, are core issues for the survival of Tibetan civilization and its future.

The spotlight put on Tibet in this year's State Department religious freedom report is indeed needed more than ever.

As the world watches, China's policies in Tibet continue to flagrantly violate international norms of religious freedom and human rights.

Only through sustained pressure and advocacy can there be hope for preserving the unique religious and cultural heritage of the Tibetan people in the face of such systematic repression.

The systematic attempt to control, manipulate, and ultimately reshape Tibetan Buddhism to serve the political interests of the CCP is nothing short of cultural genocide.

It is a campaign that strikes at the very heart of Tibetan identity and spirituality. China's policies in Tibet are not just a matter of domestic concern; they represent

a challenge to the universal principles of religious freedom and human rights.

The CCP's actions in Tibet reveal a government deeply insecure about its legitimacy, resorting to heavy-handed tactics to suppress a peaceful religious tradition that it views as a threat to its power.

The Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism is not merely a policy of cultural assimilation; it is an attempt to fundamentally alter the nature of Tibetan spiritual practice to serve the state's interests.

By insisting that Tibetan Buddhism "follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "correctly handle the relationship between national law and canon," the CCP is effectively demanding that religious doctrine be subordinated to party ideology.

This approach not only violates the basic tenets of religious freedom but also demonstrates a profound misunderstanding of the nature of spiritual belief.

Religion, particularly one as deeply rooted in tradition and philosophy as Tibetan Buddhism, cannot simply be rewritten to suit political objectives without losing its essential character and meaning.

As long as Tibet remains under the iron grip of CCP control, with every aspect of religious life subject to state scrutiny and manipulation, the rich spiritual traditions of Tibetan Buddhism – and indeed, the very survival of Tibetan culture – remain in grave peril.

The international community must continue to shine a light on these abuses and hold China accountable for its actions in Tibet.

Only through sustained pressure and advocacy can there be hope for preserving the unique religious and cultural heritage of the Tibetan people in the face of such systematic repression.

China's War on the Dalai Lama Stokes Tension with India and Russia

05 August 2024, [Providence](#), Antonio Graceffo

On July 6th, the 89th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was celebrated in Dharamshala, India and observed by the Tibetan diaspora and supporters worldwide. Beyond marking a milestone for the leader of the Tibetan Buddhist faith, this event carries significant political implications for China amid great power competition. Ironically, the one place his birthday was not celebrated was in his native Tibet, where the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) forbids citizens from having any contact with their spiritual leader, who has lived in exile since 1959. Each year, as his birthday approaches, the repression in Tibet intensifies. This year, under the revised espionage law, police have been conducting random cellphone checks to ensure Tibetans have not downloaded his photo to pray for him.

The celebration underscores India's support for Tibetan Buddhism over the wishes of the CCP. Despite India's membership in BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Dalai Lama remains a major point of tension. The Indian ambassador even attended the first large-scale public celebration of the Dalai Lama's birthday in Mongolia, where Tibetan Buddhism is the national religion. Since Mongolia won its independence from the Qing dynasty in 1921, China has tried to control the fiercely independent nation, and the Dalai Lama has been a sticking point. When the Dalai Lama visited Mongolia in November 2016, China responded with economic sanctions. Although Mongolia has avoided inviting His Holiness back to prevent reprisals, this celebration clearly demonstrates Mongolia's refusal to submit to Chinese suzerainty.

In another blow to the CCP, representatives from China's closest ally, Russia, also attended the celebration in Ulaanbaatar. This is because the Mongolic republics within the Russian Federation, including Buryatia, Kalmykia, and Tuva, follow Tibetan Buddhism. While the CCP can exert significant influence over economically dependent states, religion remains a point of resistance.

As the Dalai Lama ages, succession issues become critical, with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) aiming to select the reincarnated monks who will replace key figures in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly the Dalai Lama. The CCP seeks to control not only earthly religious practices but also extends its reach into the next life through harsh laws, ironically referred to by critics as "rebirth control."

Through the state-controlled Buddhist Association of China (BAC), the CCP has long sought to control the reincarnation of prominent Tibetan Buddhist monks in order to suppress Tibetan cultural identity. Violating CCP regulations on recognizing reincarnations carries stiff penalties. In 2022, when 86-year-old lama (lama being a generic term like "guru") Tulku Dawa died in Lhasa, the CCP attempted to keep it secret. He had been arrested in 2010 for seeking guidance from the exiled Dalai Lama in selecting the reincarnation of the Rongpo Chöje, the chief lama of the Shag Rongbo monastery. He was sentenced to seven years in prison, while the monastery underwent a stringent reeducation program, resulting in one suicide and the expulsion of numerous monks.

The Chinese government mouthpiece, Global Times, justified the CCP's control over reincarnations, stating, "Living Buddhas can be a peaceful power, but also a 'weapon of mass destruction' if used by evil or splittist forces." A living Buddha is someone recognized as the reincarnation of a great monk such as the Dalai Lama. By "splittist forces," Beijing refers to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, whom the CCP views as a separatist and has even labeled a terrorist, despite his

consistent advocacy for non-violence and genuine autonomy rather than independence. The Dalai Lama has maintained that while the CCP could handle Tibet's external affairs, he seeks true autonomy, including freedom of religion, culture, and language, within China's framework.

The Global Times article stated, "Some Living Buddhas affirmed by the 14th Dalai Lama, the highest lama of Tibetan Buddhism, have been behind riots or self-immolations that aim to further the cause of Tibetan independence." This quote was from Zhou Quan, a columnist at m4.cn, a Beijing-based political commentary website dedicated to "helping young Chinese build healthy, constructive, and progressive minds." In the CCP's estimation, building a healthy mind includes rejecting religion. Under Chinese law, children under 18 are barred from any religious affiliation. The CCP also believes that for young people to have healthy, progressive minds, they must reject traditional cultures that are not Han Chinese. This particularly applies to Uyghur culture in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), as well as Mongolian culture in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR), and Tibetan culture in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

In 1995, the Dalai Lama recognized six-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama, a Buddhist leader whose role includes identifying the next Dalai Lama. In response, the CCP detained the boy and appointed their own candidate, Gyaincain Norbu. To this day, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima has not been seen. The CCP claims he is alive, well, and uninterested in religion or interviews.

In 2016, a similar conflict arose in Mongolia when senior Tibetan Buddhist leaders, endorsed by the Dalai Lama, recognized a U.S.-born boy of Mongolian descent as the 10th Jebtsundamba Khutuktu, the spiritual head of Mongolian Buddhism. The CCP protested, claiming the right to identify reincarnated lamas not only within China but in other countries as well. Despite China's protests, Mongolian authorities recognized the boy chosen by His Holiness. However, they did not invite the Dalai Lama to return to Mongolia. Instead, in 2023, the boy was formally introduced by the Dalai Lama in a ceremony in Dharamsala, India.

Beijing even attempts to prevent Western governments from meeting with the Dalai Lama in India. The CCP recently lodged complaints when a delegation of U.S. lawmakers, including former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, went to India and met with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. This move followed President Biden signing the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" into law, aimed at "advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage." He reiterated that the

United States had not changed its stance on Tibet being part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) but urged Beijing to open negotiations with the Dalai Lama to find a fair resolution to the dispute.

China warned the US over Pelosi's visit and rebuked the signing of the Tibet Act, viewing it as a violation of China's sovereignty. It appears that China's repression of Tibetan Buddhism, both inside and outside its borders, will continue and likely intensify unless the CCP falls, which currently does not seem imminent.

India cannot afford to lose plot while chasing Chinese investment

04 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Natasha Agarwal

Chinese investment in India's economy would be helpful, but the economic logic behind India's pursuit must be refined and made more coherent.

Of the many strategies to deepen India's integration into the global value chain, the Indian Economic Survey 2023-24 says "it is inevitable that India plugs itself into China's supply chain". To do so, it argues that India must make a choice between relying solely on imported goods from China or attracting Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI).

The report, produced annually by India's Ministry of Finance, favours the latter. Chinese FDI would help India kill two birds with one stone. It would help India address the growing bilateral trade deficit with China while at the same time enabling India to capitalise on the "China plus one" strategy, a strategy being effectively used by other developing economies.

However, the reasons India is seeking Chinese FDI are haphazard and show a lack of coherent economic reasoning. The Economic Survey suggests they stem from being economically submerged in the bilateral relationship with China while missing out on the benefits of "China plus one". Indian policymakers seem to think they have no choice but to pursue Chinese FDI while leaving development of domestic technological capabilities as an afterthought.

India needs to redefine its objectives. Improving the country's technological capabilities should be the focus of India's FDI policies. Accordingly, its strategy towards China should rest on technological transfers and diffusion from Chinese FDI.

A paucity of data means there is little to no evidence to indicate whether wholly owned Chinese subsidiaries are better than joint ventures with Indian firms. Drawing from global studies on the impact of firm ownership on technological transfers in host countries, policies could be directed to encourage joint ventures between Indian and Chinese firms with technological transfers as the fulcrum of such partnerships.

Transfers can be direct through means such as technological handovers, with know-how shared with little restrictions in study groups or corporate joint ventures. Alternatively, transfers can also be indirect wherein the very presence of Chinese firms within India's borders could initiate the process of technological transfers.

The idea is that the technological capabilities and management techniques of Chinese multinationals gradually leak out of Chinese firms and become common knowledge in the domestic Indian market. In other words, Indian firms could enjoy technological spillover benefits from incorporating foreign knowledge into their production processes without having to acquire it via a transaction.

Such technological spillovers can play a critical role. However, the magnitude of the spillover largely depends on a country's ability to absorb and assimilate available knowledge, which in turn relates to the skills of its workforce, the state of its infrastructure, its institutional framework and openness to structural reforms.

For example, the presence and activities of Chinese firms in India could facilitate technological spillovers through imitation, whereby domestic Indian firms could reverse engineer technologies embodied in Chinese FDI. This could close the technological gap, putting domestic laggards onto an innovation trajectory. However, reverse engineering is only possible if the Indian workforce has the necessary skill set to make it happen.

Thus, India must invest time, money and effort in structural and institutional reforms. These reforms need to start delivering high-quality development rather than just ticking government boxes. For example, given India's aspirational growth trajectory, it comes as no surprise that the country is witnessing an infrastructure boom.

In its budget for the coming year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government maintains that infrastructure will continue to receive "strong fiscal support". However, upgrading the country's infrastructure needs to go beyond improving India's position in assessments such as the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index or delving into aspirational projects such as building the country's largest sea bridge or biggest port.

Instead, the focus in infrastructure development should be to deliver seamless, effective and efficient connectivity across the length and breadth of India. This connectivity must go beyond national highways and include local roads that connect the country's interior, leaving no Indian behind. Replacing crumbling infrastructure and ensuring pothole-free roads, especially during wet seasons, could be one ambition at the start of this journey.

India also needs to tap into the role that governments at the state and local levels can play in bringing along the development of the country's infrastructure. While financial transfers and budgetary autonomy are indispensable factors, decentralisation that endorses adaptive governance is also important to promoting good development outcomes.

Much like other multinational firms, Chinese multinationals would do a cost-benefit analysis before entering India. The presumption that Chinese firms are waiting with anticipation for India to open up needs a reality check, especially given India's stringent attitude towards Chinese businesses to suit the government's rhetoric over the border dispute with China.

India's short-sighted approach to Chinese FDI needs to go beyond extending a cautionary welcome. It needs to actively bargain for a higher share in Chinese multinationals' portfolios. The bargaining chip here is a robust and resilient domestic ecosystem, which also helps multinationals in managing their international risk exposure.

A country's absorptive capacity can not only facilitate FDI spillovers within a country but also act as a determining factor for FDI inflows in the country. Essential reforms such as on visas can help ease labour shortages in the domestic economy as well as encourage FDI spillovers. Whichever path India chooses going forward, it will need a holistic approach to FDI policies with policy intervention on all fronts of economic development, domestically and internationally.

Why time is ripe to shun 'One-China policy'

04 August 2024, [FirstPost](#), Maj Gen Ashok Kumar

The passage of the 'Resolve Tibet Act' by the US and the initiation of a large number of other measures from the American side favouring Tibetan struggle are naturally aligned with Indian interests

The recent signing of the 'Resolve Tibet Act' by the US has renewed the focus on Tibet and Tibetan issues concerning China. While the US has extended its support for 'One China Policy' earlier, which literally means recognising all erstwhile countries captured by China that Beijing annexed as part of its expansionist agenda, new contours of this policy are emerging lately.

On one hand, the US is supporting Taiwan being claimed by China as part of one China policy, and at the same time, the US is also supporting Tibet by multiple means. As of now, the public stance taken by the US on Taiwan relates to 'non use of force' by China to occupy Taiwan, but it is OK if the Taiwanese people wish to unify with mainland China of their own free will. In a similar manner, it is advocating the negotiated

settlement to resolve the Tibet issue. Though the US has not clearly denounced its 'One China Policy', its actions on Taiwan and Tibet clearly indicate the weaning support for 'One China Policy'.

This is therefore prudent to have a look at the evolution of Tibet as a sovereign state. A sovereign state as per international norms needs to have a permanent population, defined territory, a government of its own that is not under another government authority, and the capacity to interact with other states on its own free will. Tibet had all these four ingredients of a sovereign state—population, territory, government, and sovereignty—from as early as the seventh century AD, when the Emperor Songtsen Gampo created the unified state of Tibet.

In fact, China and Nepal married their princess to him due to his powerful stature. Tibet captured part of China, which was followed by the boundary settlement of 783 AD and then later in 821 AD, clearly establishing Tibet as a sovereign state since then.

Even thereafter, while Tibet has been able to maintain cordial relations with almost all neighbours, including Mongol Emperors (1240–1350), Ming Emperors (368–1644), and the Qing Dynasty (639–1911), with a primary focus on the priest-patron relationship wherein Tibetans have been ruling their land independently.

A historic connection to Tibet exists not only in the form of the British India-Tibet relationship but both prior to this and after this as well. It is essential to understand this, as this India-Tibet relationship of equilibrium was comprehensively disrupted by the current Chinese regime, which forcibly occupied Tibetan land in 1950-51 and continues to occupy the same till date. In the process, the tranquil borders between India and Tibet have been converted into a Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China. The Qing Dynasty has been one of the most powerful dynasties occupying China. Even though they entered Tibet three times in their regime, but only after being asked for help in 1728 AD, 1752 AD, and 1792 AD in response to the priest-patron relationship. It was for the first time in 1908 AD that Manchus (Qing Dynasty) attacked Tibet to checkmate the increasing British influence. This resulted in the 13th Dalai Lama fleeing from Tibet and taking refuge in India, wherein he stayed in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. He also terminated the priest-patron relationship with the Qing Dynasty, as the patron itself had attacked the state of priest. With the Qing Dynasty collapsing in 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama proclaimed independence on 14 February 1913, which continued till 1950-51 when Tibet was forcibly occupied by the current regime of China.

Therefore, it clearly emerges that Tibet has never been part of China, and the current status indicates the

forced occupation of a sovereign state by China. Not only has China occupied Tibet, it is expanding the areas under its occupation on a regular basis, while India has gone all out to support China since it came into being on October 1, 1949. India's signing of the Panchsheel agreement, responding to the slogan to Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai, and many other actions are testimony to this support.

As against this, China not only betrayed India in 1962, capturing large tracts in Indian areas of Aksai Chin and smaller tracts in other border areas. Indians' effort to establish peaceful relations through bilateral agreements and confidence-building measures failed comprehensively when China transgressed at a number of locations on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in 2020.

The current situation requires a new approach, as it affects India for its own security concerns. In case there is further delay to checkmate the expansionist agenda of China, it will become a serious security challenge in the future.

With the US and West understanding the Chinese design and its agenda, they have already initiated a host of measures to check the unhindered rise of China, which appears to be attempting to dislodge the US from its pole position. The passage of the 'Resolve Tibet Act' by the US and the initiation of a large number of other measures are naturally aligned with Indian interests. India needs to take some or all of the following actions:

- Sign a boundary agreement with the Tibetan Government in Exile aligned to its own claim line.
- Mount diplomatic offensive to get 'Free Tibet Act' passed by the US as a UN resolution.
- Support all governments in exile, like East Turkestan, etc., that have been captured by China going beyond its real extent. Engage with the US and West to take the lead.
- Establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan.
- Raise voices for a unified geographical entity of Tibet to include Tibet Autonomous Region, Amdo, and Kham.
- All communications should mention and use the term India-Tibet border as against India-China Border/LAC.
- Do away with 'One China Policy' unless our claim lines are restored and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Shaksgam Valley are vacated by Chinese from all kinds of its presence.
- Rename all places with Indian names in claimed areas and with Tibetan names beyond that.
- Publish maps as per the claim lines of India and ensure that all countries having

diplomatic relations adhere to this. It needs to be done deliberately in a targeted manner.

- Don't allow visitors of those regions, which have been captured by China, to travel to India on a Chinese visa.
- Focus on infrastructure growth in border areas.
- Reinforce forces and resources in the border areas.
- Enhance support for vibrant villages in the border areas.

The above are some of the measures, and there could be many more. These have to be pragmatically adopted in the national interest. It has to be realised that by supporting Tibet, in a real sense, India will be ensuring its own national security.

Does a deal over 2 fishermen mean Taiwan and mainland China are ready to restart talks?

04 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Lawrence Chung

A five-month crisis over the deaths of two men near Quemoy has ended but one critical obstacle remains, observers say.

It took five months and more than a dozen rounds of talks but officials from Taiwan and mainland China finally hatched a deal for the return of the remains of two mainland fishermen this week.

The fishermen died in waters near the Taiwan-controlled island of Quemoy – also known as Kinmen – on February 14 after their boat capsized during a pursuit by Taiwanese coastguard boats.

The incident set off a barrage of accusations from both sides of the Taiwan Strait but ended in an agreement that raised hopes for the reopening of a dialogue channel between the two.

But analysts remain cautious, saying neither is willing to compromise on the most critical issue.

Under the agreement reached on Tuesday, Taiwan agreed to compensate the victims' families, apologise, and repatriate the bodies of the two men.

Chen Yu-jen, a legislator from the Quemoy constituency and a member of the main opposition party the Kuomintang (KMT), said the settlement marked a good start for mending fences between both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

"This will allow our two sides to accumulate more goodwill, which is advantageous for improving relations," said Chen, who has promoted better communication between the island and the mainland. Her KMT legislative colleague Hsu Yu-chen agreed, saying the incident could pave the way for further dialogue.

"Though the incident created a crisis, its resolution can serve as a stepping stone for re-establishing a cross-

strait dialogue channel based on this format," she said, adding: "This would help ease cross-strait tension."

Communication was suspended in 2016 when Tsai Ing-wen of the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected the island's leader and declined to recognise the 1992 consensus, an understanding that Beijing sees as the foundation for any talks.

The consensus is a verbal understanding reached by Beijing and the KMT in Hong Kong in 1992, allowing the two sides to continue talks under the premise that there is only one China, but each side can have its own interpretation of what that China stands for.

Tsai's successor, William Lai Ching-te, has also avoided the consensus, much to Beijing's ire. Lai, who was elected in January, was inaugurated on May 20 and declared that Taiwan and the mainland "are not subordinate to each other", a declaration that Beijing branded as proof of his "obstinate separatist" intentions.

In a statement on Wednesday, the DPP welcomed the agreement on the Quemoy incident, saying it "indicates that even with differing cross-strait positions, and regardless of political preconditions or labels, communication and problem-solving can occur based on equality and mutual respect".

It said the government "is open to dialogue with the Chinese government without preconditions" and "will manage cross-strait affairs with a rational and pragmatic attitude".

Analysts noted that both sides had softened their position on the February 14 incident, which would help enable cross-strait communication.

"The incident finally came to an end after both sides stopped stubbornly holding onto their positions and were willing to make concessions," said Chang Wu-ueh, a professor of mainland China studies at Tamkang University in New Taipei.

"Cross-strait ties have remained tense and confrontational since May 20. The satisfactory resolution of this issue is a good sign as it could pave the way for normal personnel exchanges between the two sides."

Chang said he thought there could also be a positive outcome in the case of a Taiwanese soldier held by the mainland since March, as well as that of the five crew members of a Taiwanese fishing boat that violated the mainland's fishing ban by operating in waters near Quanzhou last month.

The soldier was detained after his boat drifted near Quanzhou in foggy weather during a fishing trip with a civilian friend. While the friend was released, the soldier from Quemoy remains in custody, accused of "intentionally" concealing his occupation.

Chen Yu-jen, who also helped communicate with the mainland for the soldier's release, expressed

confidence that Beijing would return the man on August 7.

But analysts said it was highly unlikely that the mainland would accept the latest settlement as a new basis for resuming cross-strait talks and improving relations more broadly.

“It would be too optimistic to assume that the resolution could lead to reopening the long-suspended official talks between the two sides, given their thorny political differences,” said Max Lo, executive director of the Taiwan International Strategic Study Society, a think tank in Taipei.

Like Tsai, Lai “is unlikely to accept the ‘1992 consensus’ and will adhere to his hardline counter-China-and-protect-Taiwan stance”, Lo said, adding that the hardcore pro-independence camp also would not allow him to appear to give ground to Beijing.

Bao Chengke, deputy director of the Institute for East Asian Studies in Shanghai, said the February 14 incident was treated as a humanitarian concern and handled as “a special case, a singular, isolated event”.

“I do not believe this is a routine way to solve cross-strait issues. The routine solution should still be based on the 1992 consensus, with the recognition that both sides belong to one China,” he said.

Bao said the incident had dragged on and a settlement was necessary to address public concerns and help the bereaved families.

Chen Binhua, a spokesman for the mainland’s Taiwan Affairs Office, echoed that position on Wednesday, saying the talks in Quemoy “had nothing to do with cross-strait negotiations.”

“The reason for the suspension of institutionalised cross-strait negotiation mechanisms is well known, and only by returning to the political foundation of the ‘1992 consensus’ can cross-strait negotiations be resumed,” he said.

Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, which charts cross-strait policy, also said the incident was a “singular and isolated accidental event”, whose settlement was achieved through “persistent communication and efforts” by “various sectors of society”.

China’s, US’ Indo-Pacific strategies

04 August 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Antonio Graceffo

In January, Beijing re-established formal diplomatic relations with Nauru, following the Pacific island nation’s shift in diplomatic recognition from Taiwan. Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) hosted Nauru’s president in Beijing, welcoming the nation into the Belt and Road Initiative and promising to expand bilateral trade and investment.

Such moves are part of China’s broader strategy to diplomatically isolate Taiwan while expanding its presence and influence across the Indo-Pacific region.

The US and China are locked in a strategic contest of diplomacy, economics and military buildup in this vital area.

The Indo-Pacific region includes South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia — which includes China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan — Oceania and Pacific island nations, as well as the Pacific Rim, which includes the western coastlines of North and South America.

It is home to more than half of the world’s population, including 58 percent of the world’s young people, and accounts for 60 percent of global GDP and two-thirds of global economic growth.

Geographically, it encompasses 65 percent of the world’s oceans and 25 percent of its land.

It is also home to several of the world’s largest and most powerful militaries.

China’s Blue Dragon Strategy seeks to expand its influence across key bodies of water and land in the region, threatening regional security and freedom of navigation.

China has built and militarized artificial islands in the South China Sea, reinforcing territorial claims covering 90 percent of the area.

Taiwan and Sri Lanka are strategic anchors. Controlling Taiwan would give China dominion over the Taiwan Strait, a crucial route for 80 percent of the world’s largest container ships. Sri Lanka, which is in the Bay of Bengal, is ideal for naval bases, enhancing China’s influence in the Indian Ocean.

The Chinese People’s Liberation Army Navy conducts drills off Taiwan and near Sri Lanka, maintaining a dedicated fleet that can include two aircraft carriers.

The Blue Dragon Strategy targets Japan’s Senkaku Islands — known in Taiwan as the Diaoyutais (釣魚台) — and control of inland areas of rivers such as the Brahmaputra and the Mekong, giving China geopolitical leverage over downstream countries. This strategy heightens territorial disputes with India, particularly in Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh.

Projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor dovetail with the Blue Dragon Strategy, leveraging China’s strengths to expand its influence.

More US military personnel are stationed in the Indo-Pacific region than anywhere else outside the US. China’s aggression, including economic pressure on Australia, border conflicts with India, threats toward Taiwan and intimidation in the East and South China seas, has put the US and China on a collision course.

In 2022, the US launched its Indo-Pacific Strategy to counter China. The same year, the Solomon Islands signed a security agreement with China, allowing Chinese naval vessels to dock and replenish at its ports, potentially leading to a Chinese military base in the region. This could extend China’s military reach in the South Pacific.

In response, the US increased its engagement with the Solomons and reopened its embassy in Honiara, which had been closed since 1993.

China also tried to convince the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands to break their compacts of free association with the US. However, the US successfully negotiated to keep them aligned. The compacts provide the US with strategic military positioning in the Pacific, while offering financial assistance and other benefits to the other nations.

Two years into its Indo-Pacific policy, the US released an assessment. During this time, the US Department of State increased regional investment, and humanitarian and military aid. The US Navy upholds international maritime law as outlined in the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the US government publishes detailed studies on maritime claims in the "Limits in the Seas" series. The US and its allies condemned China's repeated harassment of vessels exercising high-seas freedom of navigation and its refusal to comply with a 2016 arbitral award, which rejected China's expansive claims to the South China Sea under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The US supports the ruling, recognizing it as final and binding.

Last year, the US cohosted the Indo-Pacific Business Forum with Japan, launched the US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st-Century Trade to boost economic ties and reaffirmed its commitment to helping Taiwan defend itself against a Chinese invasion.

Additionally, the US signed defense cooperation agreements with Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, held US-Pacific Islands Summits in 2022 and last year, upgraded its relationship with ASEAN to a comprehensive strategic partnership and recognized the Cook Islands and Niue as sovereign nations, establishing diplomatic relations.

Last month, the US opened an embassy in Port Vila, Vanuatu, and plans to open one in Kiribati this year, where China recently signed an expanded fishing agreement.

The US also opened a new embassy in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, to strengthen diplomatic ties. Other achievements of the Indo-Pacific strategy include successfully hosting last year's APEC Ministerial Meeting in San Francisco and advancing the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

The US has also strengthened ties and defense agreements with regional allies. In June 2022, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the US established the Partners in the Blue Pacific to support Pacific priorities. Through this initiative, the US has facilitated cooperation between Europe and the Pacific, including NATO and the G7. Canada, Germany, and South Korea have joined as partners, and the EU has joined as an observer.

The US and the Philippines established bilateral defense guidelines, reaffirming and strengthening the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. The US also established trilateral cooperation with Japan and the Philippines in defense and security to maintain a free and open maritime order.

Trilateral military talks were held between the US, Japan and South Korea. Already bound by a mutual defense agreement, the US and Japan are now establishing a military command in Japan to oversee stationed forces and coordinate more closely with regional allies to better counter China.

Cooperation with Quad partners Australia, India and Japan continues, focusing on investment and maritime security. Bilateral relationships with Vietnam and Indonesia have been upgraded to comprehensive strategic partnerships. Additionally, there have been high-level visits and increased cooperation with India, along with greater participation in the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

Overall, the competing Indo-Pacific strategies of China and the US are reshaping the region's geopolitical landscape. China aims to increase its control, while the US focuses on maintaining a free and open region, striving to avoid triggering a conflict with China.

Xi's Hong Kong letter a gesture to shore up confidence in the private sector

03 August 2024, [SCMP](#)

The president's reply to a letter from Hong Kong business leaders with Ningbo ancestry also sends a message that the city has always been a top source of investment for the mainland over the past 40 years and remains an important bridge between the nation and the world.

There was more than gratitude expressed when Hong Kong's business leaders with Ningbo ancestry received a rare letter from President Xi Jinping in recognition of their contribution to the country's development. It was also seen as yet another politically symbolic gesture by the Chinese leader to shore up confidence in the private sector amid daunting challenges ahead. The timing and choice of the receiver are arguably more significant than what is in the letter. Xi rarely shows this kind of close personal relations with private businesses.

Xinhua news agency reported that a group of businesspeople with familial ties in the mainland port city of Ningbo had earlier written to the president renewing their commitment to serving the country. Responding in a letter, Xi, who was party secretary of Zhejiang province from 2002 to 2007, acknowledged and thanked the group's support in innovation, entrepreneurship, philanthropy and education.

He added that the building of a strong country and rejuvenating it through modernisation required all Chinese to unite and work together.

This is the second time in a decade that Xi has written to the business sector. Such a move is by no means random.

Beijing has been working hard to rebuild confidence in the private sector, which is critical to China's growth and development. The previous crackdowns were targeting individual players that were damaging the market or breaching rules, not the industry per se or the private sector as a whole.

The letter also sent a message to businesses on the mainland and overseas. Hong Kong has always been a top source of investment for the mainland over the past 40 years and remains an important bridge between the nation and the world.

Foreign investors, who admire Hongkongers' business acumen, also take trends and movements in the city as the cue to follow. Restoring confidence among local businesses is therefore also an important step to shore up overseas confidence in China.

The first generation of Hong Kong patriotic tycoons was keen to contribute to China's development rather than seeking profits. Such selflessness and love for the nation was deeply appreciated and has continued, with many standing ready to do their duty should the need arise.

Unlike the early years when foreign capital was in need, the emphasis today is more on the fact that China remains open to the outside world. Xi's reply coincides with the 40th anniversary of late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's 1984 call to mobilise the "Ningbo group" to build the home city.

The letter shows Xi's appreciation of Deng's legacy and clear determination to continue the reforms.

As China, India ramp up naval rivalry, is the Indian Ocean at a maritime crossroads?

03 August 2024, [SCMP](#), Biman Mukerji and Amy Sood

China's ports and ship deployments in India's backyard raise concerns of control and influence in Indian Ocean as next possible flashpoint.

Dangerous squabbles in remote Himalayan borderlands between China and India may, at least for now, have been soothed by a recent meeting between the two nations' top diplomats.

But the Indian Ocean looms as the next potential flashpoint, security analysts say, as New Delhi flashes increasingly anxious eyes at Beijing's ports and ship deployments across a vast expanse of water in India's backyard – but crucial to China's supply of oil.

In July, on the sidelines of an Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) meeting in Laos, S.

Jaishankar and Wang Yi, the respective foreign ministers of India and China, agreed to thrash out differences that have resulted in mobilisation of troops along their shared Himalayan border.

The diplomats agreed "to work with purpose and urgency to achieve complete disengagement at the earliest", according to a statement by India's Ministry of External Affairs.

The meeting – which followed a visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Russia – left hints that their common friend Moscow may have played a role in nudging the two Asian giants towards calming tensions along a border, which flared into war in 1962 and have since seen sometimes deadly skirmishes between rival militaries, the worst in 2020 leaving 20 Indian and four Chinese troops dead.

Russia probably "urged both countries to put aside [their] differences", said Christopher Blackburn, a British political and security analyst. "It looks like they have listened."

With the mountain border spat simmering down, analysts say control and influence in the Indian Ocean presents a new and formidable challenge.

China, which relies on free passage of the ocean for 80 per cent of its crude oil imports, has steadily accumulated strategic ports and related infrastructure in a zone which stretches from the Arabian Sea to the Strait of Malacca, sharply aware of its vulnerability to blockades in vast, open waters in the event of a major conflict.

Yet its investment has raised alarm bells in Delhi which views the Indian Ocean as its home turf yet is playing catch up with its own investments.

"The sea route from the Middle East to the coastal cities of China is running through the Malacca Strait, which is a location that the US and India can blockade," said Satoru Nagao, a non-resident fellow at the Hudson Institute focusing on US-Japan-India security cooperation.

The scenario is dubbed by analysts as the "Malacca Dilemma", in which naval forces of rival powers such as the United States or India could disrupt Beijing's vital supply route.

The Indian Ocean region has thus far been relatively unscathed by the disruptions roiling global shipping routes thanks to the Israel-Gaza and Russia-Ukraine wars.

Indian policymakers are looking to China's frequent run-ins with Southeast Asian neighbours in the South China Sea as a guide to how China's strategic imprints can over time become painful pinch points between nations.

From port projects in Sri Lanka and Sudan, Kenya and Pakistan, China has built a network of assets referred to as a "string of pearls" that is perceived by Delhi and others to have encircled India.

Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative – which has enrolled Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – has further fuelled concerns in India, which lags behind in economic might, diplomatic currency with fractious neighbours, as well as in the capacity to deliver its own state-backed mega-projects, including ports in the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Sittwe in Myanmar.

Wider competition is setting the tone of relations between the world's two most populous nations.

While the Indian economy is largely pegged to the service sector, Modi's government has been vying for a slice of China's global manufacturing pie by doling out incentives and slashing India's notorious red tape to access a large, cheap labour pool.

Meanwhile, Modi and China's leader Xi Jinping have rarely met face to face since the Himalayan stand-off.

"Relations with China are not doing very well," said Jaishankar, referring to the still unresolved border issues between the two countries, at a news conference in Tokyo on the sidelines of a Quad meeting this week.

"For India the primary question in the Indian Ocean region is security," said Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy, associate fellow with the Delhi-based Observer Research Foundation. "For China, it is crucial to win in the Indian Ocean because it cements its position as the Asian power."

'Suspect behaviour'

At the same time as financing and building ports, China's naval presence is growing. The presence of its ships in the Indian Ocean has stirred suspicion from Delhi that so-called "research vessels" deployed by Beijing are in fact spy ships.

Earlier this year, two Chinese research vessels were spotted near India's coast. In March, one was spotted near the Bay of Bengal region, which followed the docking of another vessel at a Maldivian Port.

Beijing says its vessels are simply carrying out ocean-bed surveys for scientific reasons. But Indian officials allege such vessels have a habit of "going dark" or turning off the vessels' automatic identification system transponders.

Shivamurthy says these ships are believed to be manned by the People's Liberation Army "and we don't know much about their use".

A January report by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies alleged that 80 per cent of Chinese civilian research vessels had "demonstrated suspect behaviour or possess organisational links", suggesting that their work was connected to military objectives.

Suspicions intensified last October when Beijing docked a vessel – Shi Yan 6 – at Sri Lanka's main port of Colombo.

It was virtually a replay of another Chinese research vessel, Yuan Wang 5, which docked at Hambantota

Port in August 2022. The port is under a 99-year lease to the Chinese-state owned company that built it after Colombo failed to service a US\$1.4 billion loan to pay for the project.

"India protested but could not succeed in getting the Yuan Wang 5 out of Hambantota," said Srikanth Kondapalli, the dean of the School of International Studies and a professor of China studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in India.

"This incident indicated that China has more rights and say on Hambantota than the Sri Lankans themselves," he added, noting that there was an opportunity for Beijing to move "military-related assets" to such ports in the future.

In January, Sri Lanka declared a moratorium on foreign research ships entering its waters for a year, in a move observers say was linked to pressure from Delhi.

But last month Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry told Japanese state media NHK that it would resume permitting calls from foreign research vessels at its ports from next year as the government "cannot only block China".

Japan – along with India and France – is a co-chair of Sri Lanka's Official Creditors' Committee that in June firmed up a debt treatment deal with Sri Lanka.

China's expanding activities in the Indian Ocean region are viewed as a "big threat" by India, according to Nagao from the Hudson Institute.

No base for conflict

Despite China's accumulation of infrastructure assets in the Indian Ocean region, analysts say most are for commercial and not military purposes. Moreover, without a naval base, Chinese vessels will be dangerously exposed in the event of a violent flashpoint.

"The Chinese navy and the Indian navy can never be in a situation of confrontation unless China has a base in the Indian Ocean," Shivamurthy said. "China might have economic and military leverage but India has geopolitical leverage."

The Pentagon's 2023 China Military Power Report published in October says China's navy has about 370 warships, which is expected to grow to 435 ships by 2030.

The US fleet is smaller, with about 280 vessels and expected to reach only 300 in the early 2030s. In comparison, India possesses around 130 warships that is expected to grow to 160 by 2030.

"India has the advantage of geography because China is a far-off country," said Manoj Joshi, a security expert at the Observer Research Foundation, adding without naval bases in the Indian Ocean any ambitions by China will be limited.

"But China sees itself as competing with the US rather than India."

India could easily defend itself even with a smaller naval fleet size, he said, adding that the chances of a

conflict was likely to arise only if Delhi decided to take a strong stance against Beijing in the event of a future conflict, such as siding with Taiwan.

Beijing sees the island as part of China and has never ruled out the use of force to take it back. Most countries, including the US, do not see Taiwan as an independent state, but are opposed to a change of status quo by force.

In the event of a full-scale war over Taiwan, Chinese oil tankers traversing the Indian Ocean could be sunk or captured, draining their capacity to engage in a sustained conflict, analysts say.

The Pentagon report listed 11 potential Chinese bases in the Indian Ocean, including in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Tanzania. These locations align with Beijing's diplomatic and commercial initiatives under its belt and road programme but have not materialised into military assets.

The report noted that China has "little power projection capability" in the Indian Ocean.

Experts also note that China does not have "tactical air support" for any naval deployments into the Indian Ocean.

"The Chinese may bring the aircraft carriers into the Indian Ocean, but they are sitting ducks," shyam said. Meanwhile, Nagao argues that the Indian navy alone will not be able to deal with China.

"However, China is alone, and India is not ... the number of political partners has been a decisive factor in geopolitical struggles," he added.

Delhi and friends

As Delhi is spooked by China's growing footprint, India may need to tug harder on its partnerships with other countries including co-members of the "Quad" group – the US, Japan and Australia.

"The challenge is bound to get more pronounced," said Harsh Pant, a professor of international relations at King's College London, noting the risk of further Chinese expansion especially if the US-China rivalry again comes to boiling point in coming months.

Donald Trump, the front runner in the US presidential election, adopted a hardline stance towards China in his previous term, lumping blanket tariffs on Chinese goods and talking tough on their rivalry. President Joe Biden has extended the trade war, determined to tuck back in the rise of Chinese tech.

"If US-China rivalry escalates, China is going to push for these [port] projects across the world. India will also have to recalibrate its responses accordingly," Pant said.

Delhi's option to stave off any metastasising presence in its neighbourhood will be to leverage its partnerships with the European Union, Japan and the US and build more strategic assets across nations craving investment but lacking in cash.

"China has more money but we [India] bring different capabilities. We bring partners like the EU, US and

Japan," Pant said, adding that it was vital for India to build outposts.

In October, India will hold naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal region with its Quad group members, manoeuvres which cannot fail to catch Beijing's attention.

At the same time, to avoid onerous state spending and the risk of bungled delivery, the South Asian country may also support private enterprises to build new infrastructure in countries with major needs from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to the Maldives.

Last December, India's Adani group, controlled by one of Asia's richest people Gautam Adani, launched a project to develop the Colombo West International Terminal project in Sri Lanka's capital, backed by more than US\$500 million in funding from a US government agency.

From energy generation to telecommunications, a slew of other private firms are eyeing projects across the region, industry officials say, a potential to outbox Chinese investment in a crucial region.

Last year, Adani's companies faced a major stock rout following accusations from short-seller Hindenburg Research, which alleged widespread fraud and stock market manipulation by the conglomerate. But the group has bounced back on infrastructure bets, with shares of Adani ports jumping to record highs in June. There have also been reports the billionaire shares close ties to Modi, implying his business plans align with Modi's economic growth strategy for India.

China too has marked its presence with projects such as the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge in the Maldives, the first cross-sea bridge built on the Indian Ocean.

Ties between India and the Maldives came under strain after President Mohamed Muizzu was elected on an anti-India campaign late last year. But since then the island country has sought to mend fences with rounds of diplomatic visits and invites by Indian policymakers.

"China's economic footprint will continue to expand in the global South and Central Asia as the US and perhaps Europe become increasingly hostile," said Einar Tangen, a senior fellow at the Taihe Institute think tank in Beijing.

Now there are guide ropes for de-escalation in the Himalayas, experts say China, the world's second-ranked economy, may next have to take the lead in defusing tensions or suspicions over its plans in the Indian Ocean region.

"If China can show a willingness to engage with its neighbours and lower its aggression and expansive policies, then ... I don't see a potential conflict in the Indian Ocean. But the onus is on China to stop being so aggressive," Blackburn said.

"Can it deliver on its promises to India? We shall see."

What Does China's Plenum Mean For The West?

03 August 2024, [Forbes](#), Mike O'Sullivan

If I uttered the word plenum, you might think I was a surgeon or arcane barrister, and not a casual observer of Chinese politics. The 'Plenum' is held seven times during the five yearly policy making cycle that aims to set the long-term direction of the development of China by the Communist Party.

Amidst the generalised chaos of Western politics in recent weeks, China held its most recent plenum (July 15-19), and this was the third plenum of this policy cycle, which typically focuses on economic policy. Though the outcome appeared to have been something of a damp squib, it is worth reflecting on. To many international observers (note that China is becoming much less transparent in its policy process and in the availability of detailed macro data), there are three recurring threads.

The first is to 'make China more like Denmark' (my words not the CCP's), in other words to deepen its social welfare net and to limit inequalities. This has long been a goal of the CCP. In 2018, in the last chapter of the *Levelling* we wrote that *'Another approach is to develop social infrastructure that encompasses many of the elements of intangible infrastructure, such as health-care spending, education, pension plans, and broader financial services.Motivation for building social infrastructure in China may come from stress points uncovered during China's next recession. As such, it would be a logical chapter in China's path to development, and not at all unlike Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The New Deal was a watershed in the United States in many respects, one of which was that it marked the full evolution of the United States from an emerging to a developed nation.'*

The building out of a social infrastructure in China remains a significant project, as does the flattening out of Chinese society. Granted that I wrote the above paragraph in 2017/18, it is striking that a number of basic reforms are still missing – there is very little reform of the hukou system (household registration system that allows internal migrants to work in cities) and children of migrant workers to cities do not receive the same social benefits and education as children of city parents do. In addition, little accommodation has been made for the fact that the ageing of the population will strain the social safety network. In that regard China looks a little like France! So, like the US under Roosevelt, the creation of a formal 'new deal' type social infrastructure, if it happens, could be a (positive) turning point for China. The second challenge is to make China more like Silicon Valley. The plenum underlined the importance of maintaining a laser-like focus on 'high quality development', which translates as the need to make China the leader in new, strategic technologies. In this

respect it is conceptually like the EU's idea of strategic autonomy, but far far more serious in implementation. In addition, the wording of the plenum drafts references 'fierce international competition', which ultimately points to intense competition with European car manufacturers, and in the telecoms and AI sectors. In recent years the number of directives from the CCP on topics that fall under the 'Strategic Innovation' umbrella, has multiplied and state aid for sectors like AI and semiconductors is now burgeoning into the trillions of dollars.

The third element that bears flagging is the ongoing focus on 'reform', and to my limited experience there is a 'lost in translation' element where quite harsh Chinese policies end up being translated as positive, innocuous Western ones. As an example, I recall in the 2010's a very senior Chinese trade diplomat explaining that 'rule of law' did not equate to a Western sense of adherence to established laws, but rather the imposition of the rule of the CCP on business, politics and society. In that context, the idea of 'reform' means the fitting of Chinese society to the will of CCP, and specifically Xi Jinping 'thought'.

My interpretation of all of this is that Xi is shaping China in the form of a more closed state (which again to the tone of my recent note on globalization, makes for a less open world), that curbs the will of those inside, adopts a singularly selfish approach to those outside, and relies on several great strides in technological industrialisation for the prolongation of the 'China Dream'.

The contradiction here, and specifically between the three strands to emerge from the plenum, is that in its policy making (social infrastructure) and economy (high quality development) China needs innovation but is creating a socio-political system that smothers it. This is the fallacy of authoritarian systems.

In this respect, the third plenum missed a trick in not outlining a Keynesian style stimulus for the economy (or even longer-run structural one). The property market is slowing, entrepreneurs are very cautious and the risks associated with local government debt are rising.

I am beginning to wonder if, in the carefully choreography world of Chinese policy making, they need to plan for an 'emergency plenum'.

Taiwan is readying citizens for a Chinese invasion. It's not going well.

03 August 2024, [The Washington Post](#), Christian Shephard and Vic Chiang

The government extended mandatory military service and revamped reservist training in an effort to make Beijing think twice. But it's already falling short.

In the imagined blockade of “Zero Day,” a Taiwanese television drama that will be released next year but is already causing a stir, the Chinese military has encircled Taiwan, cutting it off from the world and plunging the island democracy of 23 million into crisis. In a 17-minute trailer released last week, the public responds to China’s blockade with a mixture of terror and resignation. Young couples ride bikes past tank convoys on empty streets. Criminal gangs stir up chaos on behalf of Beijing and its territorial claims over Taiwan.



Taiwanese military reservists in a training in May 2023 in Taoyuan, Taiwan. (Annabelle Chih/Getty Images)

Taiwanese shouldn’t fight and couldn’t win anyway, an influencer tells her followers in the series. “Those who want us to enter the battlefield — they really don’t care about our suffering,” she says.

It may be fiction, but the show’s bleak assessment of Taiwanese readiness to fight touches upon a very real problem facing President Lai Ching-te, who took office in May and whom Beijing considers a dangerous separatist.

The threat from Beijing has intensified as Chinese leader Xi Jinping has declared China’s “reunification” with Taiwan inevitable. He has underscored his willingness to use force to achieve that goal by sending rising numbers of warplanes and navy ships to probe the island’s defenses.

Taiwan’s government has been trying to improve its defenses by extending mandatory military service and revamping ongoing training for reservists as part of a broader shift in defense strategy designed to make Xi think twice before taking a gamble on using force.

But young Taiwanese are not answering the call, and Defense Minister Wellington Koo recently acknowledged that a lack of equipment and instructors has slowed attempts to professionalize reservist training. “I must honestly say that we need to quickly strengthen [training] as there is still a lot of room for improvement,” he told the legislature in June.

Such admissions may concern Donald Trump, who has signaled a more transactional approach to American

support for Taiwanese defense if he wins a second term as president in November.

Taipei wants to create a professional backup force to support 155,000 active-duty soldiers. All Taiwanese men born in or after 2005 are required to enlist for a year of service, while about 2 million former soldiers are supposed to complete refresher training every two years.

But officials have acknowledged being behind schedule with plans to teach reservists and draftees how to supplement front-line troops in the event of a war. Only 6 percent of eligible conscripts — 6,936 people — took part in the newly implemented 12-month program this year. Most deferred military service to first attend university, meaning the 2005-born intake cohort won’t be fully trained until 2027. Those doing military service this year are not undergoing the anticipated training. A select group of one-year conscripts were supposed to be learning to use drones, Kestrel antitank rockets and surface-to-air Stinger missiles, but there were not enough of this year to begin the training, according to a Defense Ministry officer.

Taiwan’s slow progress on boosting training concerns military experts in Washington and Taipei, who are urging authorities to move faster to deter Xi and prevent a war.

“The last thing that Taiwan wants is for Xi Jinping, as the key decision-maker in China, and for the United States, as the key ally of Taiwan, to doubt Taiwan’s commitments to its own defense,” said Matt Pottinger, who was U.S. deputy national security adviser in the Trump administration and is now a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Pottinger said Taiwan needs the political will and foresight to dedicate some of its best military officers to recruitment and instruction. “I’m really hoping that Taiwan makes these sacrifices,” he said.

China’s military, the largest standing army in the world, has 2 million active personnel and recruits about 400,000 conscripts every year. Its defense budget of \$230 billion was 13 times as large as Taiwan’s in 2023, and its military regularly trains to take the island in a sudden overwhelming assault.

The United States is required by law to help Taiwan strengthen its own defenses, including through arms sales, but it isn’t formally committed to intervening against a Chinese attack, a policy known as “strategic ambiguity.”

While President Biden has repeatedly said he would send the U.S. military to defend Taiwan, Trump has made no such promises. Asked what he would do in an interview last month, Trump said that Taiwan was “9,500 miles away” and should pay for American defense.

Taiwan must be “mentally prepared” for a Trump victory in November — and the scrutiny that will come

with that, said Mei Fu-hsing, director of the Taiwan Security Analysis Center, a New York-based research center.

Trump would “certainly demand Taiwan to significantly increase its own defense spending and be more proactive in preparing for war,” Mei said.

Improved training is a key way for Taiwan to show it is taking military readiness seriously, analysts say. But new programs have continued to face shortages of funding, instructors and equipment, leading to regular complaints from attendees about the quality of instruction, according to reservists as well as official statements acknowledging setbacks.

“It was a complete waste of time,” said Vincent Tsao, a 30-year-old scuba diving instructor who spent most of his five days of reservist training last week sitting idly inside, being taught by retired soldiers who openly acknowledged they weren’t prepared to lead the program.

Taiwanese men who completed mandatory service within the past 12 years are theoretically called back for refresher training every second year, although in practice many attend far less frequently. Only a fifth of the reservists who went through refresher training last year completed the newly extended two-week course, with the majority doing only five or seven days.

Preparing 2 million reservists for “immediate combat readiness” as a second line of defense is “very important for defending Taiwan,” said Han Gang-ming, former director of Taiwan’s All-out Defense Mobilization Office, which oversees reservists.

“Since the reserve force is not the primary combat unit, we are always placed last whenever budgets are allocated,” Han said.

Fighting a ‘defeatist’ attitude

Since taking office in May, Lai has vowed to press ahead with his predecessor’s reforms that will improve readiness and has warned the military to guard against a “defeatist” attitude, telling troops they cannot presume “the first battle will be the last battle” if China attacks.

But the new administration has not announced major changes to training beyond scrapping ceremonial bayonet and goose-stepping drills.

Lai also faces fierce pushback from the Beijing-friendly Kuomintang, which controls the legislature and has accused the ruling Democratic Progressive Party of trying to turn Taiwan into a “powder keg.”

China, which wants to undermine Lai, has claimed that he wants to turn ordinary people into “cannon fodder.” But analysts say Taiwan must prepare for the new realities of an increasingly aggressive China.

Taiwan’s military strategy has long focused on stopping China before its troops cross the 110-mile strait that separates them, but a growing number of defense analysts in Taipei and Washington say Taiwan must

prepare for the worst possible scenario: a protracted battle on the island itself.

“Taiwan’s reservists are going to be mobilizing where the fight is happening, when the fight is happening,” said Michael Hunzeker, a retired Marine who studies military reform at George Mason University.

The island is patently not ready for that, according to people who have completed military training recently. Cony Hsieh, 31, who previously enlisted and served as a soldier for six years, signed up for reservist training as soon as women were allowed to join last year. She returned for a second round in May.

While there were minor improvements, the military was moving too slowly to gain public trust and make training more than a formality, she said. “I don’t even know what I’m supposed to do in my position if a war breaks out,” Hsieh, who is now working on a master’s degree, said in an interview.

Rising public concern about a conflict has left many in Taiwan asking themselves what they would do in a “Zero Day” scenario and how far they should allow China’s invasion threat to infringe on daily life.

Surveys show a majority of Taiwanese support the decision to lengthen mandatory service, but that doesn’t mean they think training is a good use of time or public funds.

“Everyone has their own lives and families. My wife would have to work and take care of the child by herself when I was away,” said Hsieh Yu-hsiang, a 30-year-old salesman at an insurance company who attended 14 days of training in early July.

Even so, he supports government plans to strengthen reservist training. “As the threat increases,” Hsieh said, “it’s inevitable that we need measures in place to respond.”

China needs to pick a side, and it just might pick the west

02 August 2024, [The Conversation](#)

For the Kremlin, its “partner of no limits”, China, isn’t doing enough to aid Russia’s war against Ukraine. So, Russia has signed a peace treaty with North Korea, hoping to pressure China into backing Moscow’s war effort further.

Meanwhile, the west sees China as far too helpful to Russia. The sentiment in the west was best captured on July 10, 2024, during a summit in Washington DC. Heads of state and government of Nato countries jointly proclaimed that China is a “decisive enabler” of Russia’s war against Ukraine, and also called on China “to cease all material and political support to Russia’s war effort”.

To the west, China’s aid, though short of actual weapons supply, is more than enough to fuel Russia’s

war machine. This in turn poses a security threat to Europe.

But Nato's message and Russia's implicit code to China seem to indicate one thing: Beijing's fence sitting days are numbered, and it needs to choose a side. Unfortunately for Russia, China may be forced to pick the west.

Signs that China is already pivoting to the west have started to appear. Speculation was rife in late 2023 that China's panda diplomacy (where it gifts the lease of the bears to foreign zoos) was on the way out amid worsening ties with the west.

But in mid-2024, Beijing sent more pandas to Spain and Vienna, as well as the US tech centre of California. President Xi Jinping also went on state visits to the US, Europe, Australia and New Zealand to mend ties with the west.

Beijing's Russian headache

China knows that the war has had catastrophic consequences for both Russia and Ukraine. Estimates indicate that Putin's conflict in Ukraine could cost Russia US\$1.3 trillion (£1.0 trillion) and at least 315,000 in troop casualties. So, win or lose, the post-war damage to Russia would be immense.

This is bad news for China. Not only will it have a weakened ally, but the west could then have a free hand to consolidate its resources in dealing with the "Chinese threat". This concern isn't unfounded. After all, a substantial portion of Americans view China as the greatest enemy of the US, and China is sometimes characterised as a member of an "axis of evil" alongside Russia, Iran and North Korea.

So, the Chinese government needs to hedge itself against becoming the "target of all arrows" (众矢之的), as the famous Chinese saying goes, resulting from Russia losing the war in Ukraine. Reviving panda diplomacy and sending China's leaders on state visits then become tools to mend ties with the west, and serve as insurance policies.

But Nato's criticism of China in July 2024, which echoes a similar statement by US secretary of state Anthony Blinken in late April 2024, suggest that these soft power initiatives are insufficient to appease the west.

China needs to press Russia to sue for peace with Ukraine. With this, Russia gets to preserve its national strength, while China could concentrate efforts on being the world leader in AI, and healing its ailing economy.

Economic performance

For months, China has been reeling from a real estate crisis, a volatile stock market, a massive 288% debt-to-GDP ratio, as well as high youth unemployment. And recently, Chinese government bond prices soared from increasing demand, suggesting that investors are seeking safer investment alternatives as confidence in the Chinese economy remains low.

But a battered economy isn't the only problem the Chinese government faces. It has traditionally employed economic performance to legitimise its rule. So given the poor economic climate, Beijing needs to jump-start its ailing economy to maintain power.

However, there is one major flaw with Beijing's economic growth strategy: it centres around exports, which relies heavily on western demand. While China has increased its exports to various regions across the world, almost 30% of its exports in 2023 were meant for the US and the EU.

As it stands, cracks are surfacing in Beijing's export plans. In May 2024, the US raised tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles (EV) to 100%. The European Union followed suit by raising its own Chinese electric vehicle tariff from 17.4% to 37.6%, which comes on top of an existing 10% duty imposed on all Chinese electric vehicles coming into Europe.

But things may get worse for China's economy depending on what it does with Russia. A day after Nato's proclamation, US president Joe Biden announced that China's continuous support of Russia will bear dire economic consequences for the Asian superpower. He added that "some of our European friends are going to be curtailing their investment in China", alluding to what China might face if its support for Russia continuous.

For its own sake, China is hoping that the war ends with a peace settlement that favours Russia. Failing this, China's sense of self-preservation will put its partnership of no limits with the Kremlin to the test. After all, as the quote widely attributed to the 19th century British prime minister Lord Palmerston goes, "There are no permanent enemies, and no permanent friends, only permanent interests."

In Xi's China, Politics Eventually Catches Up With Everyone

02 August 2024, [The New York Times](#), Li Yuan

In 1996, when Peter Hessler taught at a small college in Sichuan Province, 90 percent of his students came from villages. Mr. Hessler, 5 feet 9 inches, towered over them by about half a head. They often had just one outfit to wear: a blue suit jacket, or maybe a knockoff Chicago Bulls jersey. One student told him decades later that he could afford only one meal a day. Mr. Hessler returned to China in 2019 to teach at Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute. This time, all his nonfiction writing students came from cities, and some of the women in his class were even taller than him. A couple of students wore retro Air Jordans that cost hundreds of dollars.

The changes he observed reflected how, in a generation, China had transformed. The country's

population flipped from 70 percent villagers to two-thirds city dwellers. Economic output per person rose twentyfold, according to the World Bank. A 2020 study in *The Lancet*, a medical journal, reported that, out of 200 countries, boys in China had the largest increase in height from 1985 to 2019, while Chinese girls had the third largest.

But the political system that defined society had not changed one bit, Mr. Hessler writes in his new book, *“Other Rivers: A Chinese Education.”*

“I still taught next door to the College of Marxism, and the university still hosted old-school Communist rallies,” he writes. “How could a country experience so much social, economic and educational change, while the politics remained stagnant or even regressive?”

That question also puzzles many Chinese people, foreign policymakers, academics and journalists, including me.

In *“Other Rivers,”* Mr. Hessler calls his students from the mid-1990s the “reform generation.” They believed in competition and were largely rewarded for their hard work. He calls his students from the 2020s the “Xi generation,” after Xi Jinping, the leader who has tightened the leash on all areas of Chinese society. They are willing to work hard, just like the students before them, but have few illusions about the system or their own future.

The Xi generation is risk-averse. Its members are more unhappy about their government, but are unwilling to resist. Mr. Hessler assigned *“Animal Farm,”* by George Orwell, to his students. The two characters they most identified with were the donkey, who is skeptical of the new farm but keeps his thoughts to himself, and the horse, who is hardworking but blindly loyal.

In *“Other Rivers,”* Mr. Hessler doesn’t provide a resounding answer to his question. But he believes that now, more than any other time in his nearly three decades writing about China, something fundamental about the country’s political system must change. Young people are increasingly dissatisfied, he said, but they are not ready to try to initiate a change. They know the price people pay for defying the system, and the payoff for going along — even as the payoffs are becoming harder to come by.

In addition to two teaching stints in Sichuan, in southwest China, Mr. Hessler worked as the Beijing correspondent for *The New Yorker* in the 2000s. He has written five books about China, three of which have been translated into Chinese. *“Other Rivers”* has little prospect of being published in China because of its criticism of the government, and Mr. Hessler said his previous books would not be published in China now.

Nevertheless, *“Other Rivers”* is one of the most anticipated new books in the country.

Mr. Hessler, practically a celebrity in China, is known for his perceptive observations and empathetic

portrayal of ordinary people, whom he describes as diligent, tough, pragmatic and, for the most part, apolitical. “Compassion” is a word Chinese readers use to talk about his work. His writing “transcends the binary of yes or no, like or dislike,” a well-known Chinese writer commented on his debut book, *“River Town.”* That book, published in 2001, recounted his experience teaching English in small-town China as a Peace Corps volunteer.

But in an increasingly polarized world, Mr. Hessler and his writing face more criticism inside and outside China. He is labeled both pro-China and anti-China, for being too political and for dancing around politics.

Some nationalistic Chinese, known as “little pinks,” said he was reflexively critical in an article he wrote for *The New Yorker* about the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. When he published another report five months later, about China’s effective control of the outbreak, some fellow Western journalists and China specialists branded him an apologist for the Chinese government.

Mr. Hessler and his family moved back to the United States in 2021 after his teaching contract was not renewed. He didn’t experience the brutal “zero Covid” restrictions that the Chinese government imposed in 2022: frequent testing, lockdowns, quarantines, food shortages and denial of medical treatment.

In an article on the website *ChinaFile* late last month, he responded to criticism, writing that he was unfairly judged, especially by other China experts who had left the country. After many American journalists were expelled in March 2020, he became part of a smaller press corps. He felt that he was still in the game, he told me in an interview on my podcast last month, “while the rest of the former players became sports commentators, nit-picking.”

Some of Mr. Hessler’s Chinese critics said his meticulous descriptions of average citizens in *“River Town”* and other early works faithfully reflected the pulse of that time, when China was more open and people were trying to adapt to fast-paced changes. But in the Xi era, they said, they wished he would address politics more directly. In China today, politics has caught up with nearly everyone.

That’s not how Mr. Hessler sees his role. Trained as a fiction writer, he told me, he was more interested in the people and places than in the issues. “The politics is part of it,” he said. “But I almost never start with an issue.”

I wondered if his approach in *“Other Rivers”* might have been different if he had stayed in China until the winter of 2022. Protesters came out in Chinese cities, including in Chengdu, where he had lived, to demand that the government stop its “zero Covid” policy. Some angry demonstrators called for Mr. Xi to step down.

In *“Other Rivers,”* Mr. Hessler writes that his young students, whom he kept up with through email and

surveys, were angry about the lockdowns, which they often described as having fundamentally altered their perspectives.

A young man wrote to him from Europe: "Most significantly, it has changed my opinions about 'revolt' and 'demonstration.' I think Chinese should more often seek their rights through demonstrations, even though demonstrations in China have been equated with 'revolt.'"

Most of his younger former students were focused on personal concerns like job opportunities, not politics or climate change, Mr. Hessler reports in "Other Rivers."

"You often hear that a lot of people say: 'We don't need to have democracy. We just need to have a little more space and not so much pressure.' But maybe it doesn't work like that," he told me. "Once you break that and you don't know what's coming next, or when it's going to come, then you're going to create instability."

The Jaishankar-Wang Meeting and the Future of China-India Ties

01 August 2024, [The Diplomat](#), Ali Yawar M.

Even if New Delhi and Beijing decide to collaborate on the economic front, it might not be enough to shift the needle on their relationship.

On July 25, in Vientiane, Laos, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the sidelines of ASEAN-related meetings. This was the second such meeting in the last month; they met earlier in Astana on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Heads of State summit. The meetings have brought the spotlight back onto the strained relationship between India and China.

In a post on the social media platform X after the Vientiane meeting, Jaishankar said:

The state of the border will necessarily be reflected on the state of our ties. Agreed on the need to give strong guidance to complete the disengagement process. Must ensure full respect for the LAC and past agreements. It is in our mutual interest to stabilize our ties. We should approach the immediate issues with a sense of purpose and urgency.

Meanwhile, Wang Yi reiterated that it is in "the interests of both sides to get China-India relations back on track."

Although many see this as little more than a routine interaction, which can only lead to marginal progress, if any, this meeting comes at a time when both nations are dealing with complex domestic and international pressures that necessitate a re-evaluation of their bilateral ties.

Although such diplomatic interactions between the two countries have become more frequent, the India-China relationship in the recent past has been characterized by a fragile balance between cooperation and competition. The border disputes between the two Asian giants, particularly in the Ladakh region, have been a persistent thorn in the side of bilateral relations. Despite multiple rounds of talks and agreements aimed at maintaining peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), skirmishes and standoffs have continued to occur, the most significant flashpoint being the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020.

In this climate of mutual distrust, it is difficult to be optimistic about the China-India relationship. However, despite the geopolitical tensions, economic realities present a compelling case for cooperation. Both countries are slowly coming to terms with the fact that cooperation is the only way forward.

India is finding that it has little choice but to allow Chinese investment in its manufacturing sector. India's "Make in India" effort, which aims to transform India into a global manufacturing hub, has failed to pick up the desired steam despite multiple high-profile projects. While India doesn't lack the potential to realize such an ambition, aggregate performance indicators have not been very encouraging. Early reports indicate that "Make in India" has been off to a slow start. The share of manufacturing in the gross value added (GVA) by the economy, for example, showed no improvement after the launch of the Make in India initiative. FDI figures tell a similar tale.

A goal this ambitious requires significant capital, technology, and expertise, areas where China excels. Moreover, Chinese investments in sectors such as telecommunications, infrastructure, and consumer goods have played an important role in India's economic growth over the years. Despite restrictions on Chinese businesses, India's imports from China exceeded \$100 billion last year.

All is not well in Beijing either. China is finding it increasingly difficult to operate in Western markets. The China-U.S. trade war, coupled with growing protectionist policies in Europe, has limited China's access to its traditional export markets. Additionally, China's own economic transition toward higher-value manufacturing and the rise in labor costs have made cheap manufacturing increasingly unviable. China seeks new markets and investment opportunities, and India can be an attractive partner.

Thus, the economic alignment between India and China suggests a pragmatic basis for engagement. The statements by both the ministers reveal an understanding of these mutual interests. Both sides have held multiple rounds of talks to de-escalate tensions and establish protocols to prevent future conflicts. There has been little progress, but the recent

disengagement in certain friction points along the LAC is a positive development. However, this process has been slow and punctuated by setbacks. Trust remains a significant issue, exacerbated by the Galwan Valley clash.

China's incremental territorial advances, often referred to as "salami slicing," are a source of constant concern for India. These tactics involve small, non-confrontational moves to incrementally change the status quo along the border. For India, these moves are not just about territorial encroachment but also about the strategic signaling of China's intentions. In response, India has been enhancing its border infrastructure, increasing its military presence, and forging strategic partnerships with other nations to counterbalance China's influence.

While Jaishankar's emphasis on the importance of three mutuals – "mutual respect, mutual interests, and mutual sensitivity" – during this meeting indicates India's expectations from China, it's clear that India's strategic positioning extends far beyond its immediate neighborhood. The presence of Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval at Nguyen Phu Trong's funeral in Vietnam alongside representatives from China, South Korea, and Japan, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to Ukraine, underscore India's intent to engage with a broad spectrum of global players. By fostering such diverse relationships, India aims to enhance its geopolitical leverage, including with China.

Thus, India's approach to China can be seen as an indicator of a broader strategy to assert its influence in global affairs. A prolonged border dispute with China can exhaust India's resources and focus. Moreover, a strained relationship with China might hurt India's economy. To rally, the Indian economy needs all the resources it can marshal. However, the responsiveness of China and the willingness of Chinese companies to invest in India remain uncertain. Concerns about future restrictions and geopolitical tensions may deter Chinese businesses from fully committing to the Indian market.

Despite the geopolitical tensions, it's clear that economic cooperation remains a potential area of mutual benefit. Sectors such as technology, infrastructure, and renewable energy present significant opportunities for collaboration. China's expertise in large-scale infrastructure projects can complement India's developmental needs. Similarly, India's burgeoning technology sector can offer innovative solutions and market opportunities for Chinese firms.

However, economic cooperation is not without challenges. The Indian government has imposed stricter regulations on Chinese investments following the Galwan clash, citing national security concerns. Chinese companies face increased scrutiny

and regulatory hurdles, impacting their willingness to invest. Moreover, the broader geopolitical context, including China's assertive policies in the Indo-Pacific region, influences the economic relationship. Both nations need to navigate these complexities to realize the full potential of economic collaboration.

However, even if New Delhi and Beijing decide to collaborate on the economic front, it might still result in a "close but no cigar" situation. The fact remains that in international politics, economic interests aren't everything. The rehabilitation of China-India ties is a complex and multifaceted process. Economic necessities, historical grievances, and geopolitical strategies will all play a role.

While there is a pragmatic basis for cooperation, significant hurdles remain. An uneasy peace, characterized by cautious engagement and selective collaboration, is likely to define the relationship in the near future. Both nations will need to navigate this intricate landscape with a long-term perspective, balancing immediate economic benefits against broader strategic interests.

Ultimately, the future of China-India relations will depend on the ability of both nations to manage their differences while capitalizing on areas of mutual benefit. It will require a delicate balance of competition and cooperation, guided by a realistic and levelheaded understanding of each other's strategic imperatives. For now, an uneasy peace seems the most realistic outcome, but with sustained efforts and mutual trust-building, a more stable and cooperative relationship may emerge over time.

Put simply, will mutual collaboration benefit both New Delhi and Beijing? Yes. Will shared interests lead to a thaw in relations? That remains to be seen.

Tibetans hail new US legislation

01 August 2024, [Taipei Times](#), Tenzing Dhamdul

US President Joe Biden signed the Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act, also known as the Resolve Tibet Act, into law on July 12.

However, he made sure to note in his signed statement that the US recognizes Tibet (as referenced in the act) as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Tibetans throughout the world welcomed the act and celebrated it. On Thursday last week, Penpa Tsering, sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration, also known as the Tibetan government in exile, attended a reception in Washington to thank members of the US Congress for making the act law.

The act includes major modifications to the US' Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, all of which strengthens Tibet's hand and position against the PRC, which was only established in 1949.

With the passage of the law, the US government officially recognizes that Tibet is not only comprised of the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region, which was only established in 1965 by the PRC, but now includes areas that Beijing designated as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region in 2018. This more or less states what Tibetans have been saying when it comes to Tibet territorially, which is that Tibet is a country that includes the three provinces of Amdo, Kham and U-Tsang.

They view the claims made by the PRC that Tibet has been part of China since ancient times as historically inaccurate, with the people of Tibet having the right to self-determination as they have a distinct culture and identity.

The law says that the Tibet-China dispute is unresolved and promotes substantive dialogue between the PRC, the Dalai Lama and their representative, which would also include the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community, which in many ways recognizes the Tibetan government in exile based in Dharamshala, India.

The law also requires the US government to combat the propagation of disinformation by the PRC about Tibet, its history, its people, its institutions and the Dalai Lama, and says that the designated US special coordinator to Tibet must work with US Department of State bureaus to implement this.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the US for its backing of Tibet even before the Resolve Tibet Act was signed into law.

Specifically, during the mid-June visit of US representatives Michael McCaul and Nancy Pelosi to India, the US congressional delegation met with Tibetan and Indian leaders at Dharamshala, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India displayed and demonstrated its critical role in resolving the Tibet-China dispute.

In all of its criticisms of this law, Beijing maintains that Tibet is a domestic matter. In actuality, the Tibet-China conflict is a global problem with implications for the world's sanctity, as well as the entirety of Asia. It remains Asia's water tower and is the third pole.

The US law on Tibet comes at a time when there are growing ties between the Tibetans and Taiwan. Major developments appear to be visible on the horizon when it comes to the Tibet-China conflict. With this chess piece being moved forward, it is now up to Beijing to respond.

Is the growth rate of Uyghurs in Xinjiang higher than that of the Han?

01 August 2024, [RFA](#), Shen Ke

Verdict: False

Chinese officials claimed that the Uyghur population in China's autonomous territory Xinjiang increased at a "significantly higher rate" than the Han population since the first national census in 1953.

But the claim is false. Multiple official sources reviewed by AFCL show that the Han Chinese population growth rate in Xinjiang outstripped Uyghurs both over the decades since 1953 and most recently between 2010 and 2020.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on July 1 that China's census data showed that the Uyghur population in Xinjiang had grown from "3.6076 million to 11.6243 million" between 1953 to 2020, adding that the growth rate for the Uyghur population was "significantly higher" than the increase of the Han population in the region.

Mao made the remarks in response to a question from a journalist from Japan's public broadcaster NHK regarding the International Religious Freedom Report released in June by the U.S. State Department that criticized the Chinese government for continuing "genocidal practices" in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang, officially the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, is an autonomous region in northwest China at the crossroads of Central Asia and East Asia.

The Uyghurs are an ethnic Turkic people originating from, and culturally affiliated with, the general region of Central Asia and the broader Muslim world. They are recognized as the titular nationality of Xinjiang.

The Han Chinese, or the Han people, are an East Asian ethnic group native to Greater China. They represent more than 90% of the population of mainland China.

There have been disputes in Xinjiang between Uyghurs and Han Chinese over cultural, religious, and political issues.

Many Uyghurs claim that the Chinese government has engaged in systematic discrimination and ethnic repression in Xinjiang, while Beijing claims that the region needs strict oversight following several attacks carried out by Uyghurs who it terms terrorists and extremists.

In 2009, for instance, rioting in Xinjiang's capital, Ürümqi, broke out as mostly Uyghur demonstrators protested against state-incentivized Han Chinese migration to the region and widespread economic and cultural discrimination.

But Mao's claim about the Uyghur population growth is false.

Chinese official census

A review of China's official census figures cited by Mao shows that the rate of growth of the Han Chinese community in Xinjiang exceeded that of the Uyghurs. Chinese census data is based on the number of "permanent residents" of an area, defined as both people born there and long-term migrants settled in a given province or region for more than six months who may or may not decide to settle there permanently. Although China conducted seven national censuses from 1953 to 2020, AFCL could only find detailed data on the Uyghur and Han populations in Xinjiang from the third census in 1982 to the seventh in 2020.

Over the 38 years between the third and seventh censuses, Xinjiang's Uyghur population increased from 5,955,900 to 11,624,300 with a net growth rate of 95.17%. During the same period, the Han population in the region grew from 5,286,500 to 10,920,100, resulting in a net growth rate of 106.57%.

A closer look at the population changes between individual census years reveals that Uyghur growth rates significantly exceeded those of the Han Chinese in the 1980s and slightly in the 2000s. However, during the 1990s, the Han population increased at more than double the rate of the Uyghurs and also significantly outpaced them in the 2010s.

When asked to clarify Mao's remarks, a representative from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs declined to answer directly, referring the AFCL to the Chinese Embassy in the United States.

The embassy has not responded to AFCL's inquiries as of this writing.

Trends in official statistics

In order to obtain data on demographic changes within Xinjiang in the years before 1982, AFCL consulted the book *1949-2009: A Report on the Development of Ethnic Minorities in Xinjiang*, a monograph published by the Xinjiang People's Publishing House in 2009.

Written by Wu Fuhuan, the former president of the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences and a leading expert on Xinjiang history, the book has been recommended by official publications such as *Studies on the History of the Chinese Communist Party*.

The report contains year-by-year statistics on the population growth for ethnic groups within Xinjiang from 1949 to 2007, citing the *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook* as its source of demographic data.

The report's findings summarized in the below chart show a Han growth rate significantly higher than that of the Uyghurs between 1949 and 2009.

The report shows that between 1949 and 2007, the Uyghur population in Xinjiang nearly tripled, growing from 3,291,100 to 9,650,600. In contrast, the Han population increased over 28-fold during the same period, rising from 291,000 to 8,239,300.

Academic study

The shift in Xinjiang's ethnic demographics has also been a focus of academic study, such as a 2013 paper by Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi, a professor at the University of Freiburg in Germany.

Joniak-Lüthi explained how several waves of Han migrants were brought to Xinjiang following various historical events in the decades following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

She noted that in 1949, Han Chinese made up just over 6% of Xinjiang's total population, while Uyghurs comprised nearly 75%.

But in the 1950s, China established the state-owned Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, recruiting large numbers of Han migrant workers, especially from the People's Liberation Army.

This internal migration was further fueled by nationwide famine in the early 1960s, which brought another influx of Han refugees from eastern China to Xinjiang.

Additionally, during the Cultural Revolution from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, hundreds of thousands of young Han intellectuals were sent to live and work in Xinjiang.

Han growth rates in Xinjiang saw a noticeable decline in the decade following major Chinese economic reforms in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, they once again significantly outpaced Uyghur growth rates in the 1990s.

Joniak-Lüthi described post-1980s Han migration to Xinjiang as being "driven by the search for economic profit," largely organized by individuals and mostly voluntary.

She also noted that due to these waves of Han migrants, Uyghurs likely became a minority in Xinjiang by the mid-2000s.

While China's official statistics currently show the Uyghur population in Xinjiang as larger than the Han population, some scholars suggest that the actual number of official Han residents is considerably higher, as many Han attempt to delay registering their households in the region for a considerable time after migrating there.

Meanwhile, China's state-run outlets such as *The Global Times*, *China News* and *Tianshan Network* reported that the Han population in Xinjiang grew by 24.86% over the previous decade, while the Uyghur population increased by only 16.2%, following the release of data for China's seventh national census in 2021.

Census data used in this fact check was taken from the following sources:

1. Date for 1953 and 1964: *1949-2009: A Report of the Development of Ethnic Minorities in Xinjiang*
2. Data on the Uyghurs from 1982 to 2020 - *Xinjiang Population Dynamics and Data*

3. Data on Han Chinese for 1982 - Third National Population Census, Volume IV: Population of Various Ethnic Groups
4. Data on Han Chinese for 1990 and 2000 - Bulletin on the Fifth Population Census in Xinjiang
5. Data on Han Chinese for 2010 and 2020 - Bulletin on the Seventh National Population Census in Xinjiang

Unmasking the Truth: China's Campaign of Disinformation on Tibet

01 August 2024, [Chennai Centre For China Studies](#), Tenzing Dhamdul

Through the advancement of technology, the dissemination of information has reached unprecedented levels. The popular phrase "at the tip of one's fingertips" aptly describes the easy availability of unfiltered information. Many countries, especially hegemony, have used this to spread their own narratives, including the British Empire, Hitler's Third Reich, the USA, and, more recently, the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The PRC was established in 1949 after the Communist Party of China (CPC), led by Mao Zedong, won the civil war against the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) led by Chiang Kai-shek. Mao Zedong announced the PRC's territorial claims, which included Tibet, East Turkestan, and Southern Mongolia, during his famous "The Chinese People Have Stood Up" address on September 21 at the 1st Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. This showcased a meticulous plan for occupying these independent nations and territories through the tactful usage of information warfare.

In 1950, Beijing among other things used the 10th Panchen Lama's scripted cry for help to invade Tibet, which includes the three traditional provinces of Amdo, Kham, and U-Tsang. And finally, in 1951, Tibetans signed the 17th Point Agreement with the PRC under duress, leading to its occupation. The day of the signing of this agreement has been declared by the PRC as the day it officially "liberated" Tibet, when in fact it symbolizes the day Tibet was occupied by the PRC. These early actions of the PRC under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime, which had established the United Front Work Department to spread its influence and narrative beyond Chinese soil, demonstrates its modus operandi to promote its agenda. When it comes to Tibet, the situation is no different. In this context, I present certain themes and subjects regarding Tibet that the PRC has misrepresented through false narratives.

1. Tibet: A Rich History Misrepresented as Just a Part of China

The PRC, led by the United Front Work Department (UFW), various state-run media outlets, recent YouTube influencers, and even leaders of nations (including the Taliban leaders promoting and praising Chinese state-run colonial boarding schools), have utilized a plethora of disinformation to build the narrative that Tibet is part of its territory and has not been an independent nation throughout history.

This claim is false, as Tibet was historically an independent nation and even conquered large swathes of territory, of what is now Chinese territory during the period of the Tibetan Empire, which flourished under King Songtsen Gampo from the 7th century onward. This clearly dispels the PRC's notion that Tibet was not a nation but part of China throughout history.

Furthermore, to adapt to and embrace the modern concept of Westphalian nation-states, Tibet reaffirmed its independence in 1913 under the leadership of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso. This illustrates that Tibet not only constituted a Westphalian nation-state, meeting the essential criteria of 1. a shared national identity, 2. physical borders, and 3. a single government, but was also a nation-state even before the PRC was established in 1949.

The recent US 'Resolve Tibet Act' further debunks the PRC's claims, with extensive research from Chinese sources by Prof. Hon-Shiang Lau showing that Tibet was never part of the PRC or previous Chinese entities.

2. Is Tibet Truly Liberated from Serfdom, or Is It a Myth?

Another major campaign that the PRC promotes for its political legitimacy over Tibet is the notion of Tibet's liberation, emphasizing the eradication of serfdom following its arrival in the region. This campaign is so entrenched that the now-repudiated 17 Point Agreement, signed under duress by Tibetan officials on May 23, 1951, is still celebrated as the so-called "Peaceful Liberation of Tibet." This agreement marked the first time in history that Tibet officially recognized itself as a province of China.

Each year, this day is celebrated with much pomp by the CCP leadership in occupied Tibet, showcasing how they have "liberated" Tibet from serfdom. This concept is deeply entrenched in communism and Marxism, first articulated by Karl Marx when he researched the political economy of the Western world of his time. However, one misses how Beijing presents only one narrative, using synecdoche to vilify the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government by claiming they had "slaves," when in fact these so-called slaves were workers compensated for their services. If there was any form of serfdom in Tibet's

history, it is the current system—where Tibetans are heavily oppressed by the very communist leaders who control them—that resembles serfdom, with Tibetans entirely under Beijing's control.

This notion of serfdom and liberation has become a tool used by the "50 Cent Army" (internet commentators paid by the PRC to spread their narrative) to disseminate information on public platforms. This influence is now more visible than ever. Whole white papers on Tibet repeatedly mention the so-called liberation of Tibet from serfdom while failing to address the atrocities of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in Tibet. If Tibetans were truly liberated, why do they continue to engage in the ultimate form of non-violent protest: self-immolation?

3. Divided Lands: The Fragmentation of Tibetan Territories

This action has been one of the most successful policies by the PRC in diminishing Tibet's status as an independent nation-state in the minds of the broader public and governmental policymakers.

In 1965, the PRC officially established the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), which is only a portion of Tibet that the Tibetans claim and where they lived and flourished prior to the PRC's illegal occupation by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). For Beijing, this region is considered Tibet, and it continues to remain so officially, despite contradicting the legitimate claims of Tibetans living in the traditional provinces of Amdo and Kham. The TAR largely encompasses the entire U-Tsang province, with some parts of Kham included as well. The current 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, was born in Taktser, Amdo, which is not part of the TAR. Additionally, Andrug Gompo Tashi, the leader of the Tibetan resistance force Chushi Gangdruk and the National Volunteer Defense Army (NVDA), was born in Lithang, Kham, which is also outside the TAR.

Hence, the intended plan to remove and erase Tibetan territories from official maps by labelling them as Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures—despite lying within the official borders of Tibet and China—is a tactical masterclass that many nations have unfortunately accepted. The 2003 India-China joint communiqué stated that *"the Indian side recognizes that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People's Republic of China,"* reflecting a similar stance taken by other nations, including the USA, which viewed Tibet primarily in terms of the TAR then.

However, there is pushback from the international community, including the USA, which explicitly mentioned in the recent "Resolve Tibet Act" that Tibet as a territory is not limited to the TAR but includes areas designated as Tibetan Autonomous by the PRC as of 2018. And also from India with its Prime Minister Narendra Modi openly wishing the Dalai Lama on his

birthday, with many even speculating a possible public official meeting between the two leaders. This marks the first time that a government officially refers to Tibet as encompassing the three traditional provinces, using Beijing's own narrative against them regarding Tibetan territory.

4. From Borders to Schools: The Hidden Costs of Colonial Aggression

If the PRC had legitimacy over Tibet as a sovereign entity, why does it treat the region differently? More importantly, why does it suppress the Tibetan people through severe surveillance, transnational aggressions, and colonial boarding schools? All of these factors contribute to a dystopian world reminiscent of the one George Orwell envisioned in his famous book, 1984.

Firstly, internal suppression is well-documented, and several protests continue to take place in Tibet despite the heavy restrictions imposed since the PRC's illegal occupation. Notable examples include the 1956 Eastern Tibetan Rebellion, the 1959 Tibetan Mass Uprising, the 1987 Tibet Protest, and the 2008 Tibet Protest. Recent testimony from Tibetan political prisoner Namkyi illustrates the situation in Tibet, where individuals cannot hold a picture of the Dalai Lama without facing imprisonment—often unjustly and for no reason at all.

Secondly, we see a rise in transnational aggression as Beijing uses Tibetan family members in Tibet as a tool to pressure and threaten Tibetans living abroad—whether as exiles, refugees, part of the larger Tibetan diaspora, or even citizens of free countries. In February 2024, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) released a report titled "Chinese Transnational Repression of Tibetan Diaspora Communities," highlighting this very tactic that Beijing continues to employ. This approach has been used not only against Tibetans but also against those under their governance, including Han Chinese.

Thirdly, the issue of colonial boarding schools has been exposed by the Tibet Action Institute. One of the main whistleblowers, Dr. Gyal Lo, emphasizes how Beijing, after implementing various tactics to gain legitimacy in Tibet, is now targeting Tibetan children. In these schools, Tibetan parents are forced to send their children, who are not being taught Tibetan; when Tibetan is taught, the syllabus is structured in such a way that little essence of Tibet remains. One example given by Dr. Gyal Lo is that textbooks in these schools teach Tibetan children that the Japanese are their enemies, despite the fact that Tibet and Japan never had any major conflicts in the past. In fact, a Japanese general, under the guidance and vision of the 13th Dalai Lama, established the first modern Tibetan army in the early 20th century.

Hence, through these actions, we can understand how Beijing, knowing that it does not have clear legitimacy among the Tibetan people, is pursuing such repressive policies to control and gain legitimacy by force, even if it means harming Tibetans.

5. Spiritual Suppression: The Fight Over the Dalai Lama's Lineage:

The PRC was established in 1949 and it continues to be led by the CCP. The CCP does not believe in religion, with Mao Zedong famously stating that "Religion is Poison," to the Dalai Lama, echoing the Marxist adage that "Religion is the opium of the masses." He and his party followed this up by destroying religion, including the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism on a grand scale during the Cultural Revolution, an event unparalleled in history.

Tsering Woeser's book "Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution" employs powerful images, detailed interviews, and critical analysis to illuminate what actually occurred during that period and how thousands of monasteries and religious sites in Tibet were ravaged to the ground.

In 2007, Beijing issued Order Number 5 and subsequent orders to control the Tibetan reincarnated lamas, whom they call "living Buddhas." This policy has forced reincarnated lamas - who hold significant respect and reverence among Tibetans - to seek permission from CCP leaders, who officially do not believe in religion or Buddhism, for their status. The centuries-old tradition of reincarnation has now been reduced to a bureaucratic process, with many using this system to bribe Chinese officials and declare their own reincarnated lamas. Consequently, the number of recognized reincarnated lamas has drastically increased since the inception of this order.

Amidst such conditions, they seek to recognize and claim sole authority over the succession of the Dalai Lama. This irony would make Shakespeare himself proud, provoking laughter from the audience. However, it is widely known that Beijing plans to install their own Dalai Lama, with the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama already setting a precedent for this. It is crucial to recognize and support the traditional process of reincarnation, as the Dalai Lama himself frequently states that if he were to reincarnate, he would be born in a free country - implicitly marking/cancelling occupied Tibet (under current system unless it becomes free), which continues to hold the unfortunate title of being one of the least free countries in the world.

Conclusion:

The signing of the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' into law by US President Joe Biden on July 12th is a significant step for towards Tibetans right of Self-Determination, with the USA

once again taking a stand on Tibet's status while competing with China. A particular section of this law mentions how the US will work towards combating disinformation campaigns by the PRC on Tibet.

The recent visit of a US Congressional delegation to Dharamshala, where they met the Dalai Lama and leaders of the Tibetan Government in Exile, followed by a meeting with the Indian Prime Minister, suggests visible progress is being made in the Tibetan freedom movement. With former Indian Ambassador Dilip Sinha stating "India should continue to support the Tibetan cause and bury China's narrative on Tibet."

It has been more than six decades since Tibetans, including their leader the Dalai Lama, were forced to flee their own country. The majority of Tibetans continue to live under Chinese occupation, but as the world gradually awakens to this issue, the experiences of Tibetans become invaluable for understanding Beijing and navigating the challenges ahead, including the tactics and information warfare strategies it has employed and continues to use against Tibet. As the saying goes, to understand the People's Republic of China, one must understand Tibet.

After a population exodus, Hong Kong looks to mainland China for new residents

01 August 2024, [ABC News](#), Kathleen Calderwood and Marty Smiley

Real estate agent Jeffrey Wai is showing me what \$3 million buys in the notoriously expensive Hong Kong real estate market. We're touring a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment with stunning views over Kowloon Bay, one of 1,200 new homes in a high-rise development called Miami Quay.

"This is a good price in this moment," he assures me, noting that similar-sized apartments can fetch well over \$5 million.

The towering residential complex we're touring sits on a thin, 3km strip of reclaimed land that was once the site of Kai Tak airport, for decades Hong Kong's gateway to the world. It was a famously treacherous landing. Passengers steeled themselves for a white-knuckle ride skirting mountains and high-rise buildings, before touching down in the heart of the city.

These days the redeveloped Kai Tak district is welcoming a very specific kind of new arrival - buyers from mainland China snapping up real estate. "Three out of four buyers in Kai Tak district were buyers from the mainland," says Mr Wai.

In the past couple of years, more than 100,000 people have moved to Hong Kong, and the majority have come from mainland China. It's not by accident. Hong Kong's Beijing-controlled government is offering a raft of incentives to lure people to the city, after an exodus

of skilled workers in the wake of the COVID pandemic and China's ruthless crackdown on political dissent following the 2019 pro-democracy protests.

Mostly, it's mainland Chinese responding to the call. Mr Wai has seen the influx of buyers from across the border in his burgeoning real estate sales figures. Earlier this year, after the government lifted stamp duty on property purchases for non-Hongkongers to boost the struggling real estate market, sales in the Kai Tak district skyrocketed.

"There were around 10,500 for the whole year in 2023, but there were 4,200 transactions in March 2024 alone," he says. "I believe that the past few months were the best months in my life, [in terms of] my performance and achievements."

Mainlanders "like Hong Kong very much," he adds, "because Hong Kong is a very international city."

The new face of Hong Kong

On a ferry heading for Cheung Chau island, about an hour from Hong Kong's CBD, Eliana Cheung is admiring the city she now calls home. The 29-year-old is from Guangdong, in southern China, but has been living in Hong Kong for just over two years now. In that time, she's fallen "deeply in love with the place."

"Hong Kong culture has influenced me ever since I was a kid," she says. Growing up in China, she remembers watching *Chungking Express*, a 1994 film set in the city. The Hong Kong she met on screen captured her imagination even then. "It's portrayed as a very glorious yet retro and nostalgic place," she says, "and that people here are friendly and loyal."

Eliana first came to Hong Kong to complete a Master's degree but was able to stay on after finishing her studies thanks to a scheme called "Immigration Arrangements for Non-Local Graduates".

Government data shows migrants from mainland China dominate the list of approved applicants. In 2023, the number of permits issued under the scheme more than doubled to 26,089. Of those, 24,650 were for applicants from the mainland.

Eliana is now working in human resources and eyeing a future for herself long-term in Hong Kong.

"Mainland buyers like Hong Kong very much, because Hong Kong is a very international city."

Other programs are having a similar effect.

In late 2022, Hong Kong's government launched the "Top Talent Scheme" to entice candidates who had either graduated from one of the world's top 100 universities, or earned more than \$HK2.5 million (\$489,000), to move to the city.

Nearly 70,000 applications have been approved since it began, more than 90 per cent of which were for candidates from mainland China.

Eliana's friend Xing Xing, who comes from Guizhou in China's south-west, can understand why people from the mainland want to migrate here. "I think there are more opportunities in Hong Kong, not much pressure

and I think everyone accepts me," Xing Xing says. "As long as I want to work, I will be able to get a job."

Fleeing China's crackdown

The government's eagerness to attract new residents to Hong Kong has its roots in the aftermath of the 2019 anti-government protests, when millions poured into the streets to oppose a bill that would allow Hongkongers to be extradited to mainland China.

For months the city was engulfed in chaos, as clashes between protesters and police grew increasingly violent. Beijing eventually cracked down hard to quell the unrest, bypassing the city's legislature to introduce a draconian "National Security Law" criminalising secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with external forces, in some cases with a maximum sentence of life in prison.

Earlier this year, Hong Kong's Legislative Council passed its own local security law, known as Article 23. Both laws have been criticised by international governments and human rights groups concerned about the chilling effect on the city's freedom of speech, assembly and press.

"The freedoms that we enjoy are sort of evaporating fast," says Emily Lau, a veteran of the city's pro-democracy movement and one of the few activists left in Hong Kong still brave enough to speak out.

I ask her whether she thinks protests like in 2019 could happen again today. "Oh, of course not," she scoffs. "Any protests? Not possible. No protests allowed. It's very sad."

Instead, she senses a climate of fear has gripped the city.

Around 300 arrests have been made under the security laws and a pre-existing colonial-era sedition law that was revived after the protests. But the Hong Kong Democracy Council estimates there are around 1,000 political prisoners in total in the city on a variety of charges. Many have been languishing for years awaiting trials or sentencing.

Regina Ip, a senior member of the Hong Kong legislature, argues that Hong Kong has had to make sacrifices to restore the city's security. "(The police) can't take any chances for the sparks of protest to rekindle the mass upheaval that we saw in 2019," she says. The restrictions are "proportional" and ensure "the overall stability and national security of our city will be maintained," she says. "That's all."

In recent years, mounting concerns over the uncertain security environment, combined with the pandemic, have seen an exodus of residents from the city. How many have left is hard to say, but at least 135,000 people have taken advantage of a scheme offered by the UK government in the wake of the National Security Law giving them a route to citizenship.

In 2022, the city's leader, chief executive John Lee, acknowledged that the city had lost 140,000 workers over the previous two years.

A refuge for the exiles

Some who fled found refuge in nearby Taiwan.

In the capital Taipei's trendy Xinyi district, former Hong Kong journalist Shirley Leung meets me in an underground bar called Revolution Now. She says it's become her "secret haven" because it always reminds her of home. The owners are a warm, welcoming couple from Hong Kong, who often sit late into the night playing Cantonese songs and talking about music and politics with the regulars.

"Whenever you miss your home, you come to the bar," says Shirley. "With people speaking your own language, share the same culture, share the same history or memories. I think it's very important emotionally."

Shirley once worked at Apple Daily, a boldly pro-democracy newspaper that drew the ire of authorities for its criticism of Beijing. Its owner, media mogul Jimmy Lai, and several senior staff were arrested under the National Security Law. Eventually, the paper shut down.

Shirley decided she needed to leave Hong Kong if she wanted to keep working as a journalist. "The whole society is so afraid to talk about anything," she says of Hong Kong today. "And for me, it's so suffocating."

She now reports on Hong Kong from Taipei, running her own news outlet Photon Media. Even here, she has to take special precautions to ensure her staff's safety. All her reporters work anonymously, and the location of their newsroom is kept secret.

Shirley doesn't believe it's safe for her to return home but refuses to give up hope that the city could still change and its freedoms might be restored. "I'm so hopeful, because if I'm pessimistic, it's so difficult to continue working like this."

Her former boss's son, Sebastien Lai, has also found sanctuary in Taiwan. He happened to be in Taipei on the day of his father's arrest and hasn't been able to go home to Hong Kong since. His 76-year-old father Jimmy Lai has been in jail for more than three-and-a-half years and his national security trial has been underway since late last year.

The trial was recently adjourned until November. If convicted, his father could face life in prison.

"It's a show trial," says Sebastien. "It's three government-appointed judges, there's no jury. From my understanding, he's held in the maximum-security prison and at 76 he's the oldest political prisoner. You fear the worst."

Hong Kong's economy takes a hit

The loss of skilled workers delivered a body blow to Hong Kong's economy, which has long built its success on its reputation as an international financial hub. At one point, the stock market plunged more than 40 per cent lower than in 2019.

Vera Yuen, an economist at Hong Kong University, says concerns over transparency are driving foreign

investors away. "For investors, you would need transparency of what the company is actually doing in order to evaluate the assets," she says. "But if now we are into more Chinese business, you don't know which one is connected to the government, which one is not."

"The whole society is so afraid to talk about anything ... it's so suffocating."

And there are other problems too.

On a busy street in Kowloon's Mong Kok district, she points to shuttered shops and vacant commercial premises as visible signs that the city is mired in the economic doldrums. "I see more brick-and-mortar shops closing and there have been fewer people on the streets," she says. "Tourists from foreign countries, they are not very interested in coming to Hong Kong." Dr Yuen believes Hong Kong is still one of the most capitalist cities in the world, but it's facing challenges returning to pre-2019 levels of economic growth. "It will gradually," she says. "I think Hong Kong's economic growth slows down but we still have some growth every year."

Hong Kong authorities' efforts to entice new residents, from the Top Talent Scheme to tax cuts, to holding major events, are all designed to plug the gaps in the economy. Regina Ip, a senior member of the Hong Kong legislature, admits the city has been in a downward cycle, but is confident it will bounce back as it has "many times" before.

"You cannot judge the performance of Hong Kong as a financial centre purely on the basis of the stock market, because we do a lot of other things," she says. "The National Security Law actually affects very few people, so we just have to keep explaining to the business community that life hasn't changed for them at all."

'I feel very free'

Five years on from the protests, Hong Kong is a city being remade.

Back at Miami Quay, the change is visible. The gleaming apartments seem a world away from the heaving, humid old neighbourhoods of Kowloon, just to the west. "Mainland buyers prefer brand new units," says real estate agent Jeffrey Wai.

Already the complex is decked out with pools, elaborate gardens and even a communal mahjong room. Soon it will include more facilities to entice buyers, including "a sports centre next door, a cruise terminal and lots of different shopping malls," he says. "To me, the reason why I want to live in Hong Kong is because it's such a diverse place," says human resources worker Eliana Cheung.

Like generations before her, she came here seeking opportunity and a connection to the world beyond the mainland. But whereas last century's migrants were escaping the People's Republic of China and its

communist government, many today are coming under the direct encouragement of Beijing.

These days a high-speed rail line connects the city with Shenzhen, just 20 minutes away over the border. Most weekends, Eliana makes the trip with her friend Xing Xing to visit family and friends, and shop where the prices are far cheaper.

Eliana's plan now is to live in Hong Kong long enough to get a local passport, so that she can travel more freely and have more opportunities for her family in the future. "I want my child to be born in Hong Kong and have a Hong Kong ID like I do, so they will have more options in their education," she says.

For her friend Xing Xing, Hong Kong has provided an escape from the pressure she felt in her hometown. "People [in Hong Kong] wouldn't question you about your age, they wouldn't ask you to start planning for marriage and having children," she says. "After working in Hong Kong for half a year, I feel very free."

Publications

Muslim, Trader, Nomad, Spy by Sulmaan Wasif Khan

