MESSAGE FORM
OUTGOING

FROM: THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANADA

TO: THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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TIBET.

In view of the possibility that the problem
may be discussed in the United Nations,

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years Tibet has controlled its own internal and
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of international law, qualified for recognition as an
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Illicit
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of international law, qualified for recognition as an
independent state.

2. It would be appreciated if you could obtain
information on the U.S. view regarding the legal
status of Tibet and its relationship to possible
action in the United Nations.
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The Canada Tibet Committee is deeply grateful to a number of individuals and organizations for their support in the preparation of this document.

First and foremost our Past Chairperson Richard Nishimura, whose work, guidance and research will be found on virtually every page.


Various reports, research, and findings by Tibet Support Groups worldwide and the ITSN have also been relied upon.

Photos of the Lhasa railway and Plateau are provided by Rights & Democracy.
Alarmed by continuing human rights violations and lack of democratic freedom in Tibet, the Canada Tibet Committee (CTC) was founded in 1987 as an independent non-governmental organization (NGO) of Tibetans and non-Tibetans living in Canada. The CTC seeks to end the ongoing destruction of the Tibetan culture, alleviate the suffering of the Tibetan people, and support the Tibet Government-in-Exile in its quest for genuine autonomy for all regions of Tibet within China.

The CTC is committed to the principle of non-violence and recognizes the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people.

The CTC offers concerned Canadians an opportunity to work with their Tibetan friends to promote public awareness. Our founding members laid out basic principles which form the framework for the organization today. These principles include: the commitment to non-violence, a spirit of volunteerism, the inclusion of Tibetans in the decision-making process and the goal of Tibetan autonomy.

The CTC presents a unified voice for the Tibetan movement in Canada with the federal and provincial governments. Working relationships have developed with officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, CIDA, the Department of Immigration, and Heritage Canada. The CTC participates annually in government consultations on human rights and facilitates meetings between Tibetan representatives visiting Canada and government officials.

At the Parliamentary level, The CTC encouraged the formation of the Canadian Parliamentary Friends of Tibet (PFT) in 1989. The PFT is one of the largest groups of its kind, including MPs and senators from all parties. PFT has since become the voice for Canadian support for Tibet on Parliament Hill. The group and its members actively encourage greater respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms for the Tibetan people. They also seek to strengthen Canadian government support for a just and principled policy approach to the Tibet issue. PFT collaborates with similar parliamentary groups around the world and is a key player at the World Parliamentarians Conference on Tibet forum.

Internationally, the CTC participates in activities coordinated by the Canadian Network for International Human Rights (NIHR) and the International Tibet Support Network (ITSN).
As a member of the NIHR, the CTC receives information regarding the activities of the United Nations, the OECD, the World Trade Organization and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum. The CTC participates in joint NIHR programs such as urgent actions, letter campaigns, public statements and preparatory work for United Nations conferences and government consultations.

The CTC administers World Tibet News, a global electronic communication system designed to serve the Tibet support community. The CTC also publishes the Canada Tibet Newsletter, distributed across the country and to Canadian MPs twice a year.

There are CTC branches across Canada. Branches organize rallies, lecture series, film festivals, cultural events and more. The goal of CTC grassroots activities is to develop a base of support at the community level which in turn supports national and international campaigns.

As the CTC enters its twentieth year of activities, projects are pursued by a young and dynamic membership. With their efforts and with the compassion and guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibet will once again become a “zone of peace”, valuing universal responsibility welcomed into the international community of nations.

The CTC is funded entirely by private donations, special events and its membership.
October, 2007

On the cover of this document is a reproduction of a 1950 memo from the then Department of External Affairs. There is no ambiguity as to whether Canada should consider Tibet a state, a vassal of China or an integral portion of China: “from the point of view of international law, Tibet is qualified for recognition as an independent state.”

While much has changed since those words were written, the rights and aspirations of the Tibetan people have not. Our values as Canadians are fundamental to our identity as a country. We support human rights. We believe in the rule of law. And we cherish democracy. These values do not stop at our borders. It’s why the Canada Tibet Committee believes our government must move forward on six key priorities for Tibet and on behalf of Tibetans:

1. Canada should support the Dalai Lama’s efforts to reach a negotiated solution with the Chinese government over Tibet’s future.

2. Canada should adopt policy that supports respect for (i) the Tibetan people’s human rights, and (ii) the safeguarding of Tibet’s distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

3. Canada should support environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate development assistance; as well as civil society initiatives for the benefit of Tibetans inside Tibet.

4. Canada should promote Canadian corporate compliance with the highest global standards of corporate social responsibility in Tibet, and support the principles behind the development guidelines issued by the Central Tibetan Administration.

5. 1000 Tibetans from Nepal and/or India should be granted residency in Canada.

6. Canada should find common ground with China in helping to protect Tibet’s environment.

Canada has a chance to help right a historical wrong. And Tibetans deserve no less from us.

Dermod Travis
Tibet Today

• Tibetans are now a minority in many parts of their own country due to the continuous influx of settlement by China. The Tibetan people who have a distinct language, culture, and religion, are faced with powerful measures that encourage their assimilation. They have become heavily marginalized politically and economically.

• Tibetans are imprisoned and routinely tortured for certain religious practices, expressing critical views about the occupation, or questioning official versions of Tibet’s history. Tibet is one of the most heavily monitored and policed places on Earth.

• The Tibetan plateau ecosystem, as well as wildlife and forests, have been damaged and heavily exploited for resource extraction and commercial gain in China. As the world’s highest geographic region and source of Asia’s great river systems, Tibet is particularly susceptible to global climate change.

Tibet in Canada

• Between 1971 and 1972, Canada admitted 228 Tibetan refugees under the Tibetan Refugee Program, with settlement programs in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

• There are now more than 5,000 Tibetans and Tibetan Canadians in Canada, the majority of whom live in the Greater Toronto Area. Smaller groups are found in Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia.

• All of the Tibetan communities in Canada have established active community and cultural associations.
1. **Canada should support the Dalai Lama’s efforts to reach a negotiated solution with the Chinese government over Tibet’s future.**

Since 2002, envoys of the Dalai Lama have met with Chinese officials on six occasions. However, in five years, the discussions have not moved beyond an exchange of positions and an agreement to continue discussions. His Holiness has been unequivocal in seeking autonomy within the framework of the Chinese Constitution.

Canada should encourage a mutually beneficial resolution to the issue, and urge Beijing to engage directly with the Dalai Lama without preconditions.

Granting genuine autonomy for all Tibetans is not only an issue of international expectations, human rights and justice; it supports China’s self-interest in unity and the credibility of its claim to be a multi-ethnic state.

(a). **Policies regarding Tibet should extend to all Tibetan areas within the People’s Republic of China, including Tibetan “autonomous” prefectures and counties in Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Gansu provinces.**

(b). **Notwithstanding the one-China policy, Canada should avoid explicit endorsement of Chinese sovereignty over the region until a negotiated solution is reached, and instead emphasize that Tibetans are entitled to rights as a people under international law even.**

A return should be made to pre-1998 policy articulations on Chinese territorial claims which the government then took no position on.

2. **Canada should adopt policy that supports respect for (i) the Tibetan people’s human rights, and (ii) the safeguarding of Tibet’s distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.**

As a people, Tibetans are entitled to rights under international law regardless of Tibet’s political status. In particular, they have the right to self-determination which entitles them to freely determine their political status and to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. The current autonomy framework has failed to provide durable institutional safeguards for their social, cultural, and economic advancement.
• Human rights should be specifically assigned to a senior diplomat with in the embassy in Beijing who will engage those issues on an ongoing basis.

• Canada should grant political prisoners asylum.

3. Canada should support environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate development assistance; as well as civil society initiatives for the benefit of Tibetans inside Tibet.

Despite overall reduction of poverty in China and its dramatic GDP growth, basic development needs of the Tibetan people are not being met, and are not likely to be met until Tibetans are empowered to dictate more of the policies affecting their lives.

• The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives’ small grants program for grassroots development projects should benefit from a significant increase in funding.

• Eligibility for post secondary scholarships under the Government of Canada Awards Program or a similar program should be extended to bring Tibetan students to study in Canada.

• Foreign Affairs in conjunction with CIDA should support civil society initiatives with China that integrate “minority” and autonomy rights elements into programming.

4. Canada should promote Canadian corporate compliance with the highest global standards of corporate social responsibility in Tibet, and support the principles behind the development guidelines issued by the Central Tibetan Administration.

Canadian corporations have led the way in foreign participation in highly controversial projects in Tibet. Bombardier, Power Corp, and Nortel were involved in producing components for the newly operational railway to Lhasa which threatens to accelerate the pace of Tibet’s assimilation. At least nine Canadian junior mining companies are involved in prospecting or development of mineral deposits in Tibetan areas.
5. **1000 Tibetans from Nepal and/or India should be granted residency in Canada.**

Conditions in Tibet force up to two thousand Tibetans to flee their country every year to escape political persecution or economic marginalization. Most cross over the Himalayas by foot into Nepal before transiting on to India where some live under difficult conditions in settlement camps. In 2004, the Dalai Lama communicated a desire to see Canada accept resettlement of a number of refugees.

6. **Canada should find common ground with China in helping to protect Tibet’s environment.**

Home of the world’s highest geographic plateau, and source of Asia’s great river systems, environmental change in Tibet may have significant regional and global impacts. Canada and China could find common ground on issues of Tibet by focusing on environmental matters, especially in such areas as watershed resource management. China acknowledges that water is a top issue, and India would likely welcome such an effort.
• In 1895, Canadian missionary Dr. Susie Rijnhart became the first western woman to enter Tibet. Her attempt to reach Lhasa ended in failure with the death of her husband and infant son. Years later, she died in Tibet.

• In 1960, 1961 and 1965, Canada voted for United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 1353, 1723 and 2079, which called for the end of practices that deprive the Tibetan people of their human rights and freedoms.

• In 1971 and 1972, over two hundred Tibetan refugees were admitted to Canada from India under a new government program.

• In 1980, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Canada for the first time. He was met by the Governor General.

• In 1990, five representatives from the Canadian House of Commons and the Senate issued a joint invitation for the Dalai Lama to visit Ottawa in the fall of 1990. These five representatives then formed the Canadian Parliamentary Friends of Tibet (PFT).

• On 28 May 1990, Canadian Ambassador to China (Diller) became the first representative of a foreign power to visit Tibet since the imposition of martial law. The visit included the signing of agreements for Canadian assistance to Tibet.

• In October 1990, the Dalai Lama visited Ottawa for the first time. Secretary of State for Multiculturalism Gerry Weiner greeted the Dalai Lama on the government’s behalf, During the visit, His Holiness was invited to speak to the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, at which time his Five Point Peace Plan was tabled.

• After the 1990 visit, Canada’s position on Tibet’s political status was amended to: “In 1970 when Canada established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China, it recognized the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China. Canada takes no position with regard to specific Chinese territorial claims; it neither challenges nor endorses them.”
Canada and Tibet: A Chronological Highlight

• On 12 May 1993, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Human Rights and Development held a hearing on the current situation in Tibet.

• In June 1993, the Dalai Lama visited Montreal and Vancouver where he offered Buddhist teachings. He was met by Canada’s Minister of External Relations Barbara McDougall.

• On 14 June 1995, the Senate of Canada passed a resolution on the situation in Tibet, urging Canada to encourage negotiations between China and representatives of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

• In 1996, Canada de-linked the promotion of human rights from its trade promotion initiatives, with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade stating “the recent Canadian government decision is not to tie its economic relationship with China to the question of human rights”.

• In 1997, with the establishment of Canada’s Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue with China agreement, the one-China policy was emphasized: “When Canada established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China in 1970, we recognized the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China. Canada does not recognize the Tibetan Government-in-Exile led by the Dalai Lama based in Dharmsala, India.”

• In November 1999, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) conducted its first official visit to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

• In December 1999, CIDA announced its first bilateral development assistance project in the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile was not consulted.
• In June 2000, DFAIT Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific Raymond Chan made an official visit to Tibet, the first ever by a Canadian official at the ministerial level.

• On 30 January 2001, more than 80 members of Parliament wrote to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien asking that his office intervene with China in an effort to convene negotiations with representatives of the Dalai Lama regarding Tibet.

• In September 2002, while the Dalai Lama’s Envoys were in Beijing to re-open the stalled Tibet-China dialogue, Prime Minister Chrétien endorsed “China’s Tibet Cultural Week,” an event mounted by the Central Government’s External Propaganda Department. Promotional materials referred to the Dalai Lama as a man “who engages in terrorist activities” and has “organized armed forces”.

• In January 2003, the Government of Canada, via its embassy in Beijing, submitted a formal expression of concern to Chinese authorities following the execution of Lobsang Dhondup and death sentence of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche.

• In 2004, CIDA announced that as part of its China Country Development Programming Framework (2005–2010), poverty reduction would be phased out and future programming would focus exclusively on human rights, democratic development, good governance, and environment issues of critical importance to Canadians. Ethnic minority issues were included as aspects to be specifically considered in programming approaches.

• In March 2004, the Canada Tibet Committee launched a letter writing campaign to the Prime Minister of Canada to be signed by Members in the House of Commons to support an active Canadian role for the Tibet/China negotiations. The majority of MPs (159) sign on.

• On 22 April 2004, the Dalai Lama visits Parliament Hill. Prime Minister Paul Martin becomes the first Canadian Prime Minister to meet His Holiness.


• In May 2004, the Canada Tibet Committee made presentations to the Subcommittee on
Canada and Tibet: A Chronological Highlight

Human Rights and International Trade of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

• On 26 July 2004, at the National Press Club in Ottawa, Champa Phuntsok, Governor of Tibet Autonomous Region, extended an invitation to PFT Co-chair Hon. David Kilgour for a Canadian Parliamentary Delegation to travel to Tibet with unrestricted access.

• In September 2004, Tibet Representatives and Jared Genser of Freedom Now (Washington, D.C.) made presentations to the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Trade.

• On 30 November 2004, PFT adopt a constitution.

• On 2 December 2004, adoption of motions in the Senate and at the Subcommittee of Human Rights and International Trade requesting that “Canada uses its friendly relations with China to urge it to enter into meaningful negotiations, without preconditions, with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet.”

• In December 2004, The Hon. Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Foreign Affairs, makes a public statement requesting China stop the execution of Tibetan Monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche.

• On 10 March 2005, statements were read in the House of Commons and Senate concerning Tibet.

• On 21 April 2005, more than 200 Members of Parliament wore Tibetan scarves (Khatas) in the House of Commons to celebrate the anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s 2004 visit to Canada.

• In June 2005, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs passed a motion to request Ministers Pierre Pettigrew and David Emerson and officials of Bombardier to appear at Committee hearings concerning the Tibetan Railway Project.

• In September 2005, Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, in a joint Press Conference with President Hu Jintao of the People’s Republic of China, raised the issue of Tibet and
specifically encouraged talks between representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and China.

In June 2006, the House of Commons and the Senate unanimously passed motions bestowing honourary Canadian citizenship upon the Dalai Lama.

In October 2006, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter MacKay, condemned the shooting of unarmed Tibetan refugees attempting to flee Tibet into Nepal by Chinese soldiers.

• In September 2006, the Dalai Lama visited Vancouver to host Vancouver Dialogues 2006 – the first in a series of dialogues sponsored by the Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education. He is welcomed to the city by Mayor Sam Sullivan, and is given a copy of the motion bestowing him honourary Canadian citizenship by Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Monte Solberg at GM Place. He meets with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Jason Kenney, who delivers greetings from Prime Minister Harper, and has a private audience with several members of the PFT.

• In November 2006, the Dalai Lama’s Special Envoy, Mr. Lodi Gyari, and the Dalai Lama’s representative to the Americas, Mr. Tashi Wangdi, visit Ottawa for meetings with officials and parliamentarians. Gyari and Wangdi testify before the House Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

• On November 28 2006, the Canada Tibet Committee makes presentations at the House Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

• February 2007, the House of Common’s unanimously passed a motion to “urge the Government of the People’s Republic of China and representatives of Tibet’s government in exile, notwithstanding their differences on Tibet’s historical relationship with China, to continue their dialogue in a forward-looking manner that will lead to pragmatic solutions that respect the Chinese constitutional framework, the territorial integrity of China and fulfill the aspirations of the Tibetan people for a unified and genuinely autonomous Tibet.”
When Chinese troops first entered Tibet, it was generally accepted that Tibet met the conditions of statehood under international law; there was a people, a territory and a government that functioned in that territory, conducting its own domestic affairs free from any outside authority. Foreign relations were conducted exclusively by the Government of Tibet and countries with which Tibet had foreign relations are shown by official documents to have treated it as an independent state. Tibet maintained diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Mongolia, China, British India, Russia and Japan.

A 1950 Canadian External Affairs memo acknowledged the same policy position:

“The question is, should Canada consider Tibet to be an independent state, a vassal of China, or an integral portion of China. It is submitted that the Chinese claim to sovereignty over Tibet is not well founded. Chinese suzerainty, perhaps existent, though ill-defined, before 1911, appears since then, on the basis of facts available to us, to have been a mere fiction. In fact, it appears that during the past 40 years Tibet has controlled its own internal and external affairs. Viewing the situation thus, I am of the opinion that Tibet is, from the point of view of international law, qualified for recognition as an independent state.”

Tibet’s independent foreign policy is perhaps most obviously demonstrated by the country’s neutrality during World War II. Despite strong pressure to allow passage of military supplies through Tibet, Tibet held fast to its neutrality, which the Allies were compelled to respect.

Tibet was a de facto independent State when, under duress, it signed the 17 Point Agreement in 1951, surrendering its independence to China. As the provisions of the agreement were subsequently violated by China, the Government of Tibet was entitled to repudiate the agreement, as it did in 1959. Tibetans are now a people under foreign subjugation, entitled under international law to the right to self-determination by which they freely determine their political status. The Tibetan people have not yet exercised this right, which requires a free and genuine expression of their will.
The Tibetan People and the Right to Self-Determination
Under International Law

The International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the primary treaties that define the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, both begin with the following statement:

“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

In view of this commitment, the United Nations General Assembly passed three resolutions on China’s occupation of Tibet in 1959, 1961 and 1965. The resolutions, which remain active, call for the cessation of practices that deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, including their right to self-determination.

According to a 1960 report by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), “Tibet demonstrated from 1913 to 1950 the conditions of statehood as generally accepted under international law.” The ICJ re-enforced its findings in 1997, stating:

“Tibetans are a ‘people under alien subjugation,’ entitled under international law to the right of self-determination, by which they freely determine their political status. The Tibetan people have not yet exercised this right, which requires a free and genuine expression of their will.”
His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the exiled temporal leader of Tibet and head of the world’s Tibetan Buddhists. He was born in 1935 to a farming family in a small hamlet located in Taktser, Amdo, northeastern Tibet (now part of Qinghai Province). Born Lhamo Dhondup, His Holiness was recognized at the age of two as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso. The Dalai Lamas are believed to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and patron saint of Tibet. Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have postponed their own nirvana and chosen to take rebirth in order to serve humanity.

**Leadership Responsibilities**

In 1950 His Holiness was called upon to assume full political power after China’s invasion of Tibet. In 1954, he went to Beijing for peace talks with Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders, including Deng Xiaoping and Chou Enlai. But finally, in 1959, with the brutal suppression of the Tibetan national uprising in Lhasa by Chinese troops, His Holiness was forced to escape into exile. Since then he has been living in Dharamsala, northern India, the seat of the Tibetan political administration in exile, the Central Tibetan Administration.

**Democratisation Process**

In 1990, reforms called for by His Holiness for greater democratization of the exile administration were put into place. Exile Tibetans on the Indian sub-continent and in more than 33 other countries elected 46 members to the expanded Eleventh Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies (Tibetan Parliament in Exile) on a one-person one-vote basis. The Assembly elected the new members of the cabinet (the Kashag).

In September 2001, a further major step in democratisation was taken when the Tibetan electorate directly elected the Kalon Tripa, the senior-most minister of the Cabinet. The Kalon Tripa in turn appointed his own cabinet who had to be approved by the Tibetan Assembly. In Tibet’s long history, this was the first time that the people elected the political leadership of Tibet.
Peace Initiatives and Calls for Autonomy, not Independence

In September 1987 His Holiness proposed the Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet in Washington, DC as the first step towards a peaceful solution to the worsening situation in Tibet. He envisaged that Tibet would become a sanctuary; a zone of peace at the heart of Asia, where all sentient beings can exist in harmony and the delicate environment can be preserved. The plan was meant as a basis for discussions with China’s government, but at its heart was an appeal for a high level of autonomy within the People’s Republic of China which has become known as the “Middle Path” approach.

In his 2006 annual statement in commemoration of the Tibetan National Uprising on March 10th, he said “I have stated time and again that I do not wish to seek Tibet’s separation from China, but that I will seek its future within the framework of the Chinese constitution.” In his 2007 March 10th statement, he said, “It is true that the Chinese constitution guarantees national regional autonomy to minority nationalities. The problem is that it is not implemented fully, and thus fails to serve its express purpose of preserving and protecting the distinct identity, culture and language of the minority nationalities.”

Whatever form an agreement ultimately takes, the Dalai Lama is the only leader capable of negotiating a credible and lasting solution with the Government of the People’s Republic of China over the future of Tibet. Tibetans inside Tibet continue to revere him despite decades of central government efforts to undermine his influence.
Universal Recognition

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is one of the great peacemakers of our time. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He has consistently advocated policies of non-violence, even in the face of extreme aggression. He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems.

His Holiness has traveled to more than 62 countries spanning six continents. He has met with presidents, prime ministers and crowned rulers of major nations. He has held dialogues with the heads of different religions and many well-known scientists.

In 2006 he was awarded honourary Canadian Citizenship, and on October 17 of that year he received the Congressional Gold Medal in Washington, DC following a high-profile tour of Europe where he was received by several heads of state.

His Holiness describes himself as “a simple Buddhist monk”.

Invaded by China in 1950, Tibet has suffered the loss of life, freedoms, and human rights under communist Chinese domination. In March 1959, an uprising against China’s occupation in Tibet was crushed and the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual leader and head of state, was forced to escape into exile in India, followed by 80,000 Tibetans. In the first twenty-five years of the occupation, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans died in military clashes, in labour camps, and by execution and starvation. Some 6000 religious sites were destroyed, and Tibet’s cultural, political, and social institutions were pulled apart.

**Position Paper, September 2001**
*Reprinted courtesy of the International Campaign for Tibet*

Today, one of the most serious threats to Tibet’s identity is the influx of Chinese settlers. The influx is a combination of the direct transfer of Chinese residents by the government, government-induced relocation, and spontaneous migration with indirect government support. This influx, which has its roots in early Communist directives, is assimilating Tibet and Tibetans into China at a rate unseen in previous decades. The rate has now reached a point where the distinct identity of the Tibetan people and their ancient civilization are being overwhelmed, and Tibet’s separate existence is in jeopardy.

In October 1950, when the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) marched into Tibet, only small numbers of Chinese resided in what is today the Tibet Autonomous Region (T.A.R.). Eastern Tibet, now under the jurisdiction of Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, was home to a small population of Chinese traders. Northeastern Tibet, which is now under the jurisdiction of Qinghai and Gansu Provinces, contained a sizable Chinese population confined to the northwest corner of the province.

**Recent Trends**

In the early 1990s, Beijing implemented significant administrative, infrastructure, and development projects to facilitate large scale Chinese migration to Tibet. Economic construction continues to relocate scientists, teachers, and students from Chinese technical schools into Tibet. In eastern Tibet, the process of the Chinese influx has been marked by the appropriation of Tibetan land for agriculture. Current strategies for economic growth and development rely on and significantly benefit the Chinese settlers. Lay-offs of Tibetans in favour of Chinese workers contribute to the growing unemployment
and increased levels of poverty among Tibetans. Mineral extraction, hydroelectric, and irrigation projects also involve the influx of large numbers of Chinese workers.

Travel restrictions within the People’s Republic of China and checkpoints on inter-province highways have been lifted. In lieu of softening regulations in China proper, Tibetans face identification checks and other harassment while moving within Tibet. In addition, regulations on private enterprises in Tibet are being eased and loans are made readily available to Chinese settlers. Tens of thousands of Chinese petty entrepreneurs and traders flock to Tibet from interior provinces in order to pursue private economic opportunities. Chinese migrants, who dominate commerce in urban centers such as Lhasa, are establishing markets, clothes shops, hotels, and restaurants as well as discos, karaoke bars, and brothels. The opening of rail links to Tibet from China invariably speed the process of Chinese migration into Tibet.

**Chinese Government Policy**

The influx of Chinese to Tibet involves the active participation of the Chinese government. Authorities in Beijing offer an array of benefits, which encourage and facilitate Chinese migration and settlement in Tibet. These incentives are largely financial ones: higher wages, improved pensions, low taxes and land rates, assured employment for family members, quicker promotions, and hardship allowances for people living in remote areas. Annual wages are 87 percent higher in Tibet than in Chinese provinces. Other social benefits include better housing and longer periods of vacation. Benefits available to Tibetan employees are not as extensive as the benefits offered to Chinese employees. As a result, Tibetans are marginalized in the economic, political, and social spheres of contemporary Tibetan society.

The Party regularly recruits Chinese to skilled jobs as cadres, technicians, and scientists while assigning unskilled Chinese to work on construction sites, in factories, and as road workers. Tibetans have expressed anxiety about the government’s active role in taking job opportunities away from Tibetans. They feel that the government prefers to employ Chinese immigrants and does not invest in educating and training Tibetans to compete with the Chinese.
The Chinese government repeatedly denies allegations that it practices a policy of population transfer into Tibet. Meanwhile, Tibetans are currently a minority in five of ten autonomous prefectures. Qinghai Province, 98.5 percent of which is designated as Tibetan autonomous areas, is now ethnically only 20 percent Tibetan.

Official sources understate Chinese presence in Tibet. Authorities have claimed that the total number of Chinese in the TAR is 80,837 (3.7 percent of the total population), compared to a Tibetan population of 2.196 million. Authorities recorded the total Tibetan population of all the areas with Tibetan autonomous status as 4.34 million. The non-Tibetan population in the same area was officially given as 1.5 million. Well-researched and credible estimates put the actual Chinese population at no less than 250,000–300,000 in the TAR and the total number of Chinese in all Tibetan autonomous areas as 2.5–3 million.

Official figures fail to record the non-registered floating Chinese population in Tibet. The floating population includes those who have maintained their household registration in a Chinese province and those who have not been in Tibet for more than one year. This population also includes the large number of settlers who have migrated to Tibet of their
own volition and without legal registration. These settlers are often given preferential treatment for jobs and establish private shops and restaurants. Official Chinese population figures do not account for military presence in Tibet. A 1990 Party document estimated the number of military personnel in the TAR as 50,000. However, other sources estimate the figure to be between 100,000–200,000.

**International Human Rights Instruments:**
**Engaging China’s Minority and Other Rights Record**

China has taken steps towards integrating human rights standards by ratifying five of seven core international human rights treaties. As party to those instruments it has bound itself to three principles relevant to the protection of minorities: (1) the right to equality and non-discrimination, (2) the right to safeguard distinct identities, and (3) participation in decision-making affecting them as a group. In practice, the government has yet to adequately meet these requirements. Numerous recommendations and reproaches have been transmitted through UN reporting bodies which monitor treaty compliance.

**Report by the International Commission of Jurists**
*Excerpt from an authoritative International Commission of Jurists report, released December 1997*

**Tibet: Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

**Threats to Tibetan Identity and Culture**

In 1959 the United Nations General Assembly called “for respect for the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people and for their distinctive cultural and religious life.” In 1961 and 1965 the Assembly again lamented “the suppression of the distinctive cultural and religious life” of the Tibetan people. In 1991 the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the UN Commission on Human Rights was still “[c]oncerned at the continuing reports of violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms which threaten the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the Tibetan people.” Today certain Chinese policies continue to erode or threaten to erode the distinctive elements of the Tibetan identity and culture. These policies include:
Tibet’s Cultural Heritage

A key component of Tibet’s unique culture was undermined in the early years of Chinese rule by the destruction of the monastic system. The Cultural Revolution continued that process with the physical destruction of Tibet’s unique religious buildings and monuments and an assault on the cultural identity of individual Tibetans. By its end, Tibet’s physical and material culture was visibly decimated; few of Tibet’s thousands of monasteries survived. Since 1979 the Chinese government has allowed some cultural freedom in Tibet and many monasteries have been partially restored, but permitted cultural activities are restricted and purged of any nationalist content. Chinese modernisation since 1979 has destroyed much of the surviving traditional Tibetan secular architecture in urban areas. In Lhasa, many Tibetan houses have been demolished and entire neighbourhoods razed.

Language

The predominance of the Chinese language in education, commerce, and administration, combined with global modernization, compels Tibetans to master Chinese and is marginalising the Tibetan language. Virtually all classes in secondary and higher education in the TAR, including such subjects as Tibetan art, are taught in Chinese. Recent measures – apparently following a Communist Party decision linking use of Tibetan language to pro-independence sentiments – include the shutting of experimental middle school classes in Tibetan in the TAR and a further downgrading of the use of Tibetan in education generally.
The Role of the Judiciary

A primary stated goal of the justice system in the TAR is the repression of Tibetan opposition to Chinese rule. A judiciary subservient to Communist Party dictates results in abuses of human rights in all of China, but in Tibet the problem is particularly severe due to China’s campaign against Tibetan nationalism. The recent “Strike Hard” anti-crime campaign has enlisted the judiciary further in the campaign against “splittism.” Many Tibetans, particularly political detainees, are deprived of even elementary safeguards of due process.

Right to Education

The Chinese government has made great strides in providing compulsory primary education to Tibetan children. The education system in Tibet, however, puts Tibetan children at a structural disadvantage compared to Chinese children. The exclusive use of the Chinese language as the medium of instruction in middle and secondary schools in the TAR, the low enrolment and high drop-out rate among Tibetans, the low quality of education facilities and teachers for Tibetans, the difficulties in educational access for Tibetans, as well as a TAR illiteracy rate triple the national average, are indicative of a discriminatory structure. Rather than instilling in Tibetan children respect for their own cultural identity, language and values, education in Tibet serves to convey a sense of inferiority in comparison to the dominant Chinese culture and values.

Right to Housing

The destruction of Tibetan neighbourhoods, the forced evictions of Tibetans and demolition of their homes, as well as preferences shown to Chinese in new housing reveal marked discrimination against Tibetans in the housing sphere.

Since 2000 the Chinese government has been forcibly relocating Tibetan herders on the Tibetan Plateau to urban areas and farmland, destroying their livelihoods and way of life, and denying them access to justice for violations of their rights (Human Rights Watch Report June 11, 2007)
Right to Health

The state of health and healthcare in Tibet is among the most worrisome in the PRC. Tibetans are afflicted by a high occurrence of malnutrition (especially in children), the rare Kashin-Beck Bone disease, and hepatitis B. Rates of cataracts causing blindness, and tuberculosis may be the highest in the world. Child and infant mortality are the highest in China, while life expectancy is the lowest. Inadequate healthcare infrastructure, low education levels, and economic hardship, have all contributed to the poor state of health among Tibetans.

Arbitrary Detention

Tibetans continue to be detained for long periods without charge or sentenced to prison for peacefully advocating Tibetan independence or maintaining links with the Dalai Lama. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has criticized China’s use of broadly-worded “counterrevolutionary” crimes and called without result for the release of dozens of Tibetans detained in violation of international norms guaranteeing freedom of expression and freedom of religion. Most Tibetan political prisoners were arrested for peacefully demonstrating, writing or distributing leaflets, communicating with foreigners or the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, or possessing pro-independence material. Nuns account for between one-quarter and one-third of known political prisoners. In 1997 China replaced the “counterrevolutionary” concept with the equally elastic notion of “crimes against state security,” adding an article specifically targeting acts “to split the nation.”
Torture

Torture and ill-treatment in detention is widespread in Tibet. The use of electric cattle-prods on political detainees appears to be general practice. Torture and otherforms of ill-treatment occur in police stations upon arrest, during transport to detention facilities, in detention centres and in prisons. The documented methods of torture against Tibetans include beatings with chains, sticks with protruding nails, iron bars, and shocks applied with electric cattle-prods to sensitive parts of the body, including the genitals and mouth, as well as hanging by the arms twisted behind the back, and exposure to cold water or cold temperatures. Women, particularly nuns, appear to be subjected to some of the harshest, and gender-specific, torture, including rape using electric cattle-prods and ill-treatment of the breasts.

Extrajudicial and Arbitrary Executions

There have been no confirmed reports of shooting of peaceful demonstrators since the demonstrations and disturbances of 1987-89 when scores of Tibetans, including many peaceful demonstrators, were shot and killed. A number of unclarified deaths of political prisoners, including young nuns, have occurred in Tibetan prisons in recent years, allegedly as a result of torture or negligence. The imposition of the death penalty in Tibet – which was reportedly used 34 times in the TAR in 1996 – is devoid of the guarantees of due process and fair trial.

Freedom of Expression

Tibetans’ freedom of expression is severely restricted. Expression of political nationalism is not tolerated. Neighbourhood committees identify dissenters and instil “correct thought.” Tibetans are arrested and imprisoned, or sentenced to re-education through labour, for the peaceful expression of their political views. Information reaching Tibet from the outside as well as the flow of information out of Tibet is tightly controlled. Restrictions have intensified in recent years through the “Strike Hard” anti-crime campaign, the ban on public display of photographs of the Dalai Lama and the monastic re-education campaign. Forty school children were arrested in a Tibetan area of Gansu province for writing pro independence slogans and calls for the Dalai Lama’s return on government buildings in September 2007. Seven (aged 14 and 15) were detained and three were
released after their parents were forced to pay hefty fines. All children were beaten while in detention – one required hospitalization.

**Freedom of Religion**

The Buddhist religion is a significant part of the lives of the Tibetan people. There is, however, pervasive interference with religious freedom and activity in Tibet. Monasteries are under the purview of local government and Party bodies, Party work teams and police branches. Each is governed by a Democratic Management Committee (DMC).

Since the 1994 Forum, when the Party identified the influence of the Dalai Lama and the “Dalai clique” as the root of Tibet’s instability, Tibetan Buddhism has been subject to intense scrutiny and control. Party dominance over the DMCs has been strengthened; a ban on religious construction without official permission and limits on the number of monks and nuns per monastery are strictly enforced; the screening for admission of monks and nuns has been tightened; and monks and nuns have been asked to denounce the Dalai Lama.

The Chinese government used the search for the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama to intensify its campaign to eradicate the Dalai Lama’s religious as well as political influence. The senior monk involved in the selection process was detained and later sentenced, the Panchen Lama’s monastery was purged and Tibetan cadres’ and religious leaders’ loyalty was tested by requiring them to denounce the Dalai Lama’s interference in the Panchen Lama’s recognition, and to accept the Chinese choice for Panchen Lama. A ban on the public display of photographs of the Dalai Lama was later followed by a sporadic ban on private possession of his photo. Regulations issued by China’s government in 2007 now force Tibetans to submit the selection of their Buddhist reincarnations to authorities for approval.

**Freedom of Assembly**

Peaceful political demonstrations in Tibet are typically broken up in minutes, and their participants arrested and often beaten, as part of a deliberate policy to suppress any manifestation of pro-independence sentiment. In recent years even some economic protests have been violently suppressed. In August 2007, thousands of Tibetan protesters
in Lithang, a Tibetan area of Sichuan Province, gathered to condemn the arrest of Mr. Rungyal Adrak, who called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet at a popular horse festival. Protesters were confronted with thousands of armed police and soldiers who dispersed the crowd. No information has been given about Adrak or his family which has also been detained. In early September, a massive “patriotic re-education” campaign was launched in the area, forcing people to attend political indoctrination sessions.

### Population Control

Although the Tibetan population is small and Tibetan territory sparsely inhabited, China limits the number of children which Tibetan women may have, though these limits are not as severe as they are for Chinese women. The limits, which vary from area to area, are enforced through mandatory fines, abortions and sterilisations, in violation of numerous legal rights and sometimes with adverse health consequences for women. “Unauthorized” children commonly suffer discrimination in access to schooling and other benefits and rights.

### Lack of Political and Government Representation

Tibetan cadres occupy a minority of the positions within Tibet’s bureaucracy. To the extent that political power resides within the TAR, it is held by the regional Communist Party Central Committee, led by the TAR Party Secretary. Legally, the Party is subject to the rule of law, but it exerts authority through placement of members in key government positions. The post of Secretary has never been held by a Tibetan. Nor has a Tibetan ever been appointed Communist Party Secretary in any of the neighbouring provinces containing Tibetan autonomous areas. At the county level, Communist Party secretaries from 54 of the TAR’s 74 counties were fired and replaced with ethnic Chinese cadres from China between July and August 2007.

### Economic Development

Most areas in Tibet are poor. As a group, Tibetans struggle with poverty, unemployment, inadequate skills acquisition, and lack of meaningful input into economic policies affecting their lives. Government control by higher jurisdictions, and now open competition between Tibetans and Chinese are key features of Tibetan economies. Investment in
urban development and large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Tibet railway as part of the Great Western Development scheme have come at the expense of rural needs where the great majority of Tibetans live. Nomads and farmers are particularly hard pressed, as are women and children. The manner in which industries, with growing importance such as mining and tourism impact Tibetans is expected to highlight the gross inadequacy of the existing autonomy framework. Canadian junior mining companies represent the majority of foreign miners active on the Tibetan Plateau.

Right to Go Abroad

In September 2006, shocking video was broadcast of unarmed Tibetans being shot at by Chinese soldiers as they fled through deep snow to the border with Nepal. A 17-year-old Tibetan Buddhist nun was killed and a dozen school children were captured. Some were tortured in detention before being released. Every year between one and two thousand Tibetans flee their homeland, crossing over the Himalayas by foot into Nepal before transiting onward to India. Those who are intercepted face imprisonment, fines, and torture at the hands of their captors.
Environmental Threats: Overview

The Tibetan Plateau is the largest and highest plateau in the world. It sustains a unique, yet fragile high altitude eco-system much of which remains unspoiled due to its remoteness and inaccessibility. However, human impact is now taking an unprecedented and devastating toll on the natural resources – the wildlife, forests, grazing lands, rivers and mineral resources are now at a point where they may never recover.

Wildlife

Pre-1950 travelers in Tibet compared it to East Africa, so vast were the herds of large mammals. Today, the herds are all but vanished, wiped out mainly by Chinese soldiers shooting automatic weapons from trucks in the 1960s. Poaching continues, threatening the survival of some species.

Deforestation

Forests in Tibet are the third largest in China’s present day borders and government lumber operations are cutting at an unprecedented rate. Reforestation is neglected and ineffective, leaving hillsides vulnerable to erosion. Rapid and widespread deforestation has life-threatening consequences for the hundreds of millions who live in the flood plains of the major rivers of Southeast Asia, many of which have their headwaters in Tibet. Clear-cutting also threatens the habitat of Tibet’s other residents: the rare giant panda, golden monkey, and over 5000 plant species unique to the planet.

Nuclear Activities

The northern Tibetan Plateau was home to China’s “Los Alamos,” its primary nuclear weapons research and development plant, and nuclear weapons were first stationed in northern Tibet in 1972. Today there are at least three or four nuclear missile launch sites in Tibet housing an unknown number of warheads. Nuclear waste from the research facility is feared to be dumped on the nearby plains where Tibetan nomads allege they have suffered illness and death from strange diseases consistent with radiation sickness.
Desertification

Government-encouraged population migration into the northern Tibetan plateau, now under control of Qinghai Province, has caused massive and irreparable environmental damage to huge tracts of fragile tableland. Experts attribute the deterioration to overgrazing, irrational land reclamation, and wanton stripping of surface vegetation.

Agricultural Development

Large-scale agricultural development projects are now being carried out in Tibet which are disrupting traditional practices and the ecological balance maintained by farmers for centuries. Motivated by the need to feed the growing Chinese population in Tibet and reduce costly wheat imports, the projects may ultimately harm Tibetans more than help them. One of the projects, which is funded by the United Nations World Food Program, employs hundreds of Chinese and few Tibetans and is opposed by local Tibetans, ICT and other Tibetan organizations.

Natural Resource Extraction

The extraction of minerals and wood from Tibetan regions is largely done by, or at the direction of, newly-arrived Chinese workers and administrators. Some meagre benefit may accrue to local Tibetans, but more often than not, the land is left despoiled and traditional Tibetan livelihoods disrupted. Moreover, roads built to access uncut forests or untapped minerals usually result in an increase in local Chinese government administrators who may then assume more control over the local monastery, probably leading to greater restrictions on religious freedom. Implementation of family planning policies may also increase, which could involve coercive methods.

Hydro-electric Construction Projects

China has plans to build dozens of hydro-electric dams on Tibet’s rivers and export the electricity to Chinese cities such as Chengdu, Xining, Lanzhou and Xian. The most heated environmental issue in Tibet may be a hydro-electric construction project on Yamdrok Tso, a sacred lake between Lhasa and Shigatse. A correspondent for The Independent wrote, “environmentalists fear this giant project will create one of China’s worst ecological disasters of the 21st century.”
In 2006, China completed construction of one of the most contentious infrastructure projects in the world: the Gormo-Lhasa railway to Tibet’s occupied capital. Three Canadian companies – Bombardier, Nortel and Power Corporation – played critical roles in the financing, construction and completion of this project that was undertaken without public consultation by those most affected.

From Gormo in Tibet’s Amdo region (part of Qinghai Province), the 1142 km line stretches across the Tibetan Plateau at an average elevation of 4000 metres. It descends southward through the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), and passes through areas of permafrost, alpine meadows, and watersheds for some of Asia’s great rivers. China pegs the cost at 26.6 billion yuan ($3.2 billion USD).

Canadian expertise was sought in a number of areas. Locomotives capable of operating in thin air were needed, as were pressurized passenger cars, and specialized communications networks. GE secured the locomotive contract, while Bombardier, Power Corp, and Nortel secured the other two, respectively. These are the only outside corporations known to be involved in the project.

The limited size of the TAR’s population and existing conditions do not justify the projected $3.2 billion USD construction cost solely on economic grounds. Jiang Zemin unveiled the rationale in 2001. He told the New York Times that, “some people advised me not to go ahead with this project because it is not commercially viable. I said this is a political decision.”
While the railway to Lhasa, like other flagship projects of Beijing’s Western Development strategy, are new, the politics are not. The end results of those objectives have already been felt in East Turkestan (Xinjiang) and Inner Mongolia. China’s colonization of those regions was hastened by railways, which brought an influx of settlers and bolstered China’s political and military control.

**Impacts**

Under China’s current policy framework, the Gormo-Lhasa railway will have a tremendous impact on the lives and livelihoods of the Tibetans in Qinghai and the TAR as well as on their natural environment. It will travel entirely through Tibetan lands, beginning at Gormo in Qinghai Province, before reaching its southern terminal at Lhasa in the TAR.

The railway’s socioeconomic, environmental, and political impacts will extend across Tibet over a prolonged period. As a railway ministry official put it, the line will “exert a far-reaching impact in political, economic and military terms.” For the Tibetan people, who exercise virtually no independent decision-making, these effects will be devastating.

None of the railway’s consequences described below are included in a 2003 web article about China’s Western Development strategy posted on a Government of Canada website.

**Increased entry by settlers**

Among Tibetans’ chief fears is that the railway will result in an overwhelming influx of settlers from China. While transportation infrastructures are not by themselves sufficient to drive large-scale settlement, other factors make this outcome predictable. They include the existence of preferential housing subsidies and wages, provision of government services, and other forms of official encouragement. In conjunction with improved access to the region from the railway, and the economic activity it will foster, these combined elements could stimulate sudden, massive, and in some areas, unprecedented population influxes.

Many settlers and migrant workers have already moved to areas where the line is passing through in the expectation of finding work on construction. By 2002, the number
had already reached 20,000 according to Chinese media. Thousands more will join them, accelerating the region’s demographic transformation. TAR officials admitted that half of Lhasa’s inhabitants are now Han Chinese. It was a surprising admission even though observers have long noted the changed demographics.

Environmental Impacts

Rail-induced migration and development pressures from activities such as mining, which will be made more cost-effective, will become a source of major environmental damage. Existing population nodes will grow, and the spatial pattern and type of human activity could spread to previously unsettled areas. In either case, environmental conditions could be affected far from the main line, even across international borders, causing pollution of air and water, habitat and biodiversity loss, and land degradation. Environmental risks arise from the susceptibility of Tibet’s high altitude ecosystems. Aside from the warmer southeast, where deforestation is blamed on the Yangtze Rivers’ catastrophic flooding in 1998, much of the Plateau is characterized by low levels of precipitation and cool climate. Historically, the land provided the Tibetan people with natural abundance, but government-introduced population and development pressures are already straining Tibet’s fragile landscape. A 1998 World Bank Report said that in Qinghai Province on the Tibetan Plateau, “increasing cultivation and grazing pressures in mountainous areas are having devastating ecological impacts and there appear to be limited and possibly even no environmentally sustainable options available in those areas.”

Consultation with Tibetans

The Tibetan people neither approved of nor directed the planning of the railway’s construction or operation. Ever since Tibet’s administrative structures were swept aside under Chinese occupation, Beijing’s doctrinaire approach has deprived the Tibetan people of independent economic policy-making power. In the central part of Tibet (TAR), Beijing dictates all major economic policy initiatives through periodic Tibet Work Forums and other mechanisms. It underscores the fiction of autonomy Tibetans are supposedly accorded in the TAR and other Tibetan autonomous areas of the PRC.
All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. (Art 1. – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) Many Tibetans have anonymously expressed fear and opposition to the railway. However, public dissent is not tolerated by the state. Those who speak out against the security, a punishable offence that can result in lengthy imprisonment or placement in forced labour camps, the laogai.

**Misplaced Development Priorities & Economic Inequities**

The railway’s cost is almost triple the amount Beijing spent for the entirety of expenditures in the TAR on health care and education between 1952 and 2000. While massive injections of funds are made in key infrastructure projects of the Western Development Strategy, scarce resources are being directed away from rural development where the majority of Tibetans eke out a living, many as agro-pastoralists. Their access to adequate and appropriate education, healthcare, product and input markets, finance, or political decision-makers will remain limited.

Since railway-facilitated development will concentrate in market towns, industrial centres, and resource extraction points where the machinery of civil administration, settlers and migrant workers have clustered together, it will propagate the segregated economic structures that have marginalized Tibetans for the last five decades. That outcome is foreshadowed by many of the railway’s construction sites where not a single Tibetan worker can be found.

**Social and Political Impacts**

Even within the TAR’s state sector, Tibetans are losing ground to the Chinese. Recent government statistics indicate that Tibetans no longer constitute the majority of state sector workers there. The decline in numbers, which fell below 50 percent for the first time in 2003, coincides with the launch of the Western Development campaign in 1999. Without adequate institutional safeguards, the Tibetan language, community characteristics, and traditional livelihoods will all be exposed to intensified threats from railway-induced settlement and the resulting economic dislocations.
Effects will be compounded due to the scarcity of resources committed to Tibetan education and training. Those with fewer skills will be most vulnerable. They will have to struggle with institutional biases and discrimination, and the increasing marginalization of the Tibetan language in commercial and public affairs. Increased Chinese migration will put at risk any prospects for Tibetans to achieve genuine autonomy. Even if existing provisions of regional autonomy in the Chinese constitution and other laws were treated expansively, autonomous status can be revoked by the State Council.

**Increased Militarization of the Tibetan Plateau**

As with the civilian population, China’s military has been constrained by the constantly crumbling and often treacherous roadways into the TAR. The tremendous hauling capacity of a railway will significantly enhance the mobilization of personnel, heavy machinery, armaments and supplies over the main trunk and feeder lines. Deployments could be made to maintain its iron-fisted rule over the region, and to bolster its forces near the Indian border. It will also enable China to extend its nuclear arsenal further onto the Plateau.
A dramatic exploitation of Tibetan mineral resources is expected soon in central Tibet, especially in areas accessible by newly constructed rail lines, and those under construction. This will mean widespread extraction of Tibetan underground wealth, similar to what is already happening in northern Tibet in Amdo province (Ch: Qinghai).

The extension in 2006 of a rail line from the oil, gas and salts extraction zone of Qinghai to Lhasa opens up the prospect of profitable extraction of central Tibetan minerals Chinese industry urgently needs. Copper, gold and chromium are the likeliest metals to be mined on a world scale, very different to the many small scale mines that have operated in central Tibet (Ch: Xizang Zizhiqiu, also referred to as the Tibet Autonomous Region) for many years.

In addition to the railway, which makes extraction practical and profitable, Tibet saw the arrival of several mining companies, domestic and international, capable of extraction on a large scale (the soaring price of nearly all metals worldwide make extraction from Tibet far more commercial). Mineral commodity forecasters say the sharp price increases of 2005 and 2006 – due to China’s demand – will never return to pre-2004 levels and will remain high until 2020 at least, again due to China’s insatiable demand.

New state-owned Chinese mining companies such as Zijin and Xining-based Western Mining now have ample cash to invest in constructing mines on a much larger scale than ever seen in Tibet, thanks to recent profits from the mining boom, and because they raised capital on Chinese stock exchanges by selling a minority shareholding to Chinese investors. They now have the cash and rail lines to move their products and expand exploitation. The state effectively subsidizes these mines, not only through building rail infrastructure, but also power stations, urban facilities and cheap freight rates well below advertised rates.

The main deposits to be exploited soon are in the copper and gold belt near Shigatse city, due to be accessible by rail by 2010, enabling copper concentrates processed chemically at the mine to be hauled over 2000 kilometres to smelters in Gansu province. The first mine, operated by a Canadian company, Continental Minerals, plans to long haul at least 200,000 tons of copper concentrate a year across central Tibet to Gansu; but in order to produce this tonnage, it will have to dig 10 million tons of rock a year as the proportion of copper in the rock is well below one percent. Other copper, gold and
silver mines in the Shigatse/Shetongmon area are likely, as Chinese geologists are rapidly confirming several mineral reserves.

Chromium, essential for making stainless steel, occurs along the new rail line to Lhasa, at Dongqiao, close to Draknak Amdo village, north of Nagchu, and was mined on a modest scale for some years, then closed over 15 years ago because trucking costs were so high, and steel mills found it easier to import chromite from overseas. The other place where chromite is presently mined is at Norbusa, near the town of Tsethang, downstream from Lhasa on the great Yarlung Tsangpo River, which becomes the Brahmaputra of India and Bangladesh. Many of the major deposits of copper, gold, silver, chromite and even diamonds which have been found in central Tibet are immediately adjacent to this great river, making it very hard to prevent summer storms from washing mine wastes into the river.

The biggest copper and gold deposits in Tibet are in the far east of the TAR, around the town of Jomda in several deposits, the biggest being Yulong, currently owned by Western Mining and Zijin. At present there is no rail line near the mine, nor any plan to construct a smelter, which means concentrates would have to be hauled a long way, also to Gansu. This may slow full scale mine construction until a rail line is built, again at state expense, probably from Nagchu on the Lhasa to Golmud and Xining line, east to Chamdo and Jomda. Production on a smaller scale is already happening.

China has named lithium, boron (much needed to control nuclear reactors from getting out of control), iron ore and perhaps oil as minerals soon to be exported from the TAR for
China’s inland smelters and industrial users. China relies on imports for all the named minerals, and with today’s high prices, may find Tibet a profitable alternative.

When China talks of its long term policy, called xibu da kaifa, or “Opening Up the Great West”, this basically means extraction, with little processing or value-adding in Tibet, little employment or training for Tibetans, little royalty payment to provincial authorities, minimal compensation to those immediately displaced, and a token payment of resource depletion tax to central authorities. Tibet inherits the environmental impacts, long after the mine has come and gone.
Negotiations with China

In 1951, one year after Chinese troops first entered Central Tibet, a delegation of Tibetan officials was sent to Beijing in an effort to negotiate a solution to the conflict. There, they were forced, under threat of full-scale invasion, to sign the Seventeen-Point Agreement. The agreement outlined the terms through which Tibet was to cede control over its external affairs to China. Under international law, agreements between states are considered to be null and void if they are the result of coercion or threat. Within days, the Tibetan government in Lhasa withdrew from the terms and conditions of the Seventeen-Point Agreement.

Although Beijing authorities have never recognized the Tibetan government’s withdrawal from the Agreement and continue to insist that it remains in effect, they have at the same time systematically violated all its provisions. Between 1951 and 1959, the number of Chinese troops in Tibet increased steadily and Chinese officials took over control by force. In March 1959, the situation erupted into full-scale revolt.

After establishing his Government-in-Exile, he began a long and tireless effort to initiate dialogue with Beijing in order to end the conflict and suffering in his homeland.

The Autonomy Solution: China’s System of “Regional Ethnic Autonomy” in Theory

Under China’s “Regional Ethnic Autonomy” framework, autonomy status is granted to ethnic “minorities” living in compact communities. Features of this status are outlined in the Constitution, and the Law on Regional Ethnic autonomy which constitute primary sources of autonomy rights in China. Autonomous status exists not only in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), but also in large areas of neighbouring provinces on the Tibetan Plateau including Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan.

Shortcomings of the Regional Autonomy System

Regional ethnic autonomy has proven to be aspirational in nature. Autonomous areas are subordinate to the central government, must seek approval for passage of regulations, and are obliged to place the interests of the state above their own. Implementation of autonomy in Tibet has been hobbled by inadequate government funds, neglect or
corruption at the local level, and racial discrimination directed at Tibetans. Even when Tibetans are in positions of nominal authority, they are often shadowed by more senior Chinese officials. The racial divide is especially apparent in the powerful Chinese Communist Party which oversees all local bureaucracies.

In the TAR, social and economic policy is largely set by central authorities, while other Tibetan areas are subordinate to non-autonomous provinces within which they exist. There is no explicit legal recourse available for violations of autonomy rights. Further, unimpeded migration by non-Tibetans undermines the viability of the entire autonomy framework.

Under China's occupation, Tibetans have faced ongoing deprivation of rights including their right to self-determination. Meanwhile, their distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious identity is threatened by a deluge of Chinese migration and an array of assimilationist policies. Finding a durable safeguard to these threats are intimately linked with the efforts of Tibet's exiled leader, the 14th Dalai Lama.

Recent Moves Towards Negotiation

Since the late 1980s, the Dalai Lama has specifically and repeatedly called for meaningful autonomy for Tibetans. In his 2006 annual statement in commemoration of the Tibetan National Uprising on March 10th, he said “I have stated time and again that I do not wish to seek Tibet’s separation from China, but that I will seek its future within the framework of the Chinese constitution.”

In September 2002, the Dalai Lama’s Special Envoy, Mr. Lodi Gyari, traveled to several locations in China and Tibet including Beijing and Lhasa with a four-member delegation. The primary objective of the visit was to “re-establish direct contact with the leadership in Beijing and to create a conducive atmosphere enabling direct face-to-face meetings on a regular basis in the future; and to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way Approach towards resolving the issue of Tibet.”

Talks have yet to produce agreements of substance, and Chinese political attacks on the Dalai Lama persist.

Nonetheless, Beijing may also be posturing to maximize concessions before serious negotiations begin. Indeed Mr. Gyari has noted that the Chinese now acknowledge that unresolved questions exist: “In the past, they just [said]: ‘there is no issue of Tibet, Tibetans have been happy to be liberated.’” In a statement released after the 2006 meeting in China, he stated that, “our Chinese counterparts made clear their interest in continuing the present process and their firm belief that the obstacles can be overcome through more discussions and engagements.” Following the sixth and latest round of dialogue in June, Gyari stated, “Our dialogue process has reached a critical stage. We conveyed our serious concerns in the strongest possible manner on the overall Tibetan issue and made some concrete proposals for implementation if our dialogue process is to go forward.”

The Dalai Lama’s Current Position

In recent years the Dalai Lama has emphasized cultural, environmental, and religious protections over political and economic concerns. In a statement made March 10 2007, he said, “it is true that the Chinese constitution guarantees national regional autonomy to minority nationalities. The problem is that it is not implemented fully, and thus fails to serve its express purpose of preserving and protecting the distinct identity, culture and language of the minority nationalities.”

His current position reflects a renewed approach, addressing key Chinese concerns:

1. Demilitarization: He has said that Tibet’s demilitarization was not a demand but a goal to be aspired to.

2. Settlers: The removal of non-Tibetans has not been called for.

3. Borders: The rewriting of Tibet’s borders to extend it beyond the Tibet Autonomous Region (created in 1965) to Tibetan autonomous areas (as designated by China) in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces is no longer a demand. However, autonomy is still sought for all Tibetans.
fine Tibet as ethnographic Tibet, covering all Tibetan areas within the People’s Republic of China located on the Tibetan Plateau.

4. Historic independence: He has not conceded Tibet’s history of independence, but has emphasized the need to put aside differences in historical views. It is an unhelpful issue which should not prevent progress towards solutions.

Whatever its ultimate form, autonomy is endorsed by the Central Tibetan Administration (Tibetan Government-in-Exile) in Dharamsala, India, though it is not universally supported by Tibetans, many of whom remain committed to independence for Tibet.

**China’s Tibet Policy is not Irreversible**

According to a United States government report on the status of Tibet negotiations, released in April 2007, a lack of resolution to the issue “leads to greater tensions inside China and will be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States and other nations.” On October 26, a European Commission statement said the “EU has consistently taken the view that establishing a direct dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities was the only realistic way to find a peaceful and lasting solutions to the questions of Tibet.”

Certainly, redressing over 50 years of Chinese nation-building on Tibetan lands poses a considerable challenge. Yet the notion that China cannot be moved towards fundamental change over the issue is erroneous. In recent years China has conditioned its willingness to engage with the Dalai Lama on his recognition of both Tibet and Taiwan as inalienable parts of China, but leaders from Hu Yaobang, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and now Hu Jintao have all intimated the possibility of compromise.

A grant of genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people with the Dalai Lama’s approval would establish a more substantial veneer of legitimacy to China’s claim to being a stable, multi-ethnic state. While the occupation army has long since evolved into a constabulary force, the cost of maintaining a police state on the Plateau is not without substantial cost to both its national image and financial resources. Finally, as civil society develops within China, a just solution will also forestall the development of widespread domestic criticism over the government’s Tibet policies that can be expected to eventually arise over time.
The Canadian Role in Negotiations

The following paper was presented by the Montreal-based Rights & Democracy and the Canada Tibet Committee at a policy seminar attended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama (Friday, April 23, 2004)

International Response

In the European Union, response to the Dalai Lama’s proposals has included resolutions in the European Parliament and a 2002 budget allotment for the creation of a Special Representative for Tibet. Additionally, the European Commission, as well as Germany, the United Kingdom and France individually, have issued calls for full negotiations to begin at the earliest possible date.

Meanwhile, in the United States, years of bipartisan Congressional support for the Tibetan cause culminated in the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002. Its provisions include the creation of a statutory mandate for the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in the Department of State, the adoption of principles of responsible development for economic activity in Tibet, and a policy statement reaffirming US commitment to promoting dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.

The Congressional initiative mirrored an interest by Secretary of State Powell and the White House early in the Bush Administration’s first term. Both had consistently urged China to respect the distinct cultural heritage and human rights of the Tibetan people. President Bush and the Secretaries of State have officially met with the Dalai Lama during his visits to Washington, DC. A July 2007 State Department report emphasized the lack of resolution of the Tibetan issue, calling it “a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States and other nations.”
Momentum for Canadian Involvement

In the autumn of 2000, the Canada Tibet Committee launched a national campaign to promote the opening of negotiations between representatives of the Dalai Lama and representatives of the Government of China. This “Tibet-China Negotiation Campaign” calls upon the Prime Minister of Canada to serve as a mediator between the two parties. Essentially it asks Canada to use its diplomatic channels to persuade China to respond to the Dalai Lama’s proposals and to come to the negotiation table without preconditions.

The campaign does not require that Canada adopt any political position on Tibet’s legal status. Rather it advocates that Canada seize the current opportunity of renewed dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities, to press for full negotiations between representatives of the Dalai Lama and Chinese authorities.

Canada’s parliamentarians have put their support behind this initiative. 159 Members of Parliament from all political parties and all regions of Canada have written to the Prime Minister urging that he serve as a broker between the two parties. Many prominent Canadians, from all walks of life, have also supported the campaign.

Canada’s active involvement in the Tibet-China Negotiation Campaign would be coherent with its established positions and priorities regarding China and Tibet. Canada is broadly engaged with China in a number of areas including trade and investment, security, development and technical assistance.

Canada’s growing involvement and apparent interest in Tibet, in conjunction with its foreign policy priority with regards to peace-building, make it the ideal broker for Tibet-China negotiations.

Conclusion

High-profile international events, particularly the 2008 Beijing Olympics, will focus the world’s attention on China’s human rights record. With public opinion firmly in support of the Tibetan cause, failure to break the negotiations impasse threatens to undermine the image of reform it seeks to portray internationally.
Clearly, it is also in Canada’s interests that China succeeds in overcoming obstacles to the development of its new image. China is Canada’s fourth largest trading partner and the Canadian private sector would certainly favour strategies to mitigate the negative image associated with doing business in China. Perhaps more compelling, however, is the public stature Canada would portray to a world overwhelmed by the politics of violence. A nation committed to peace-building must step forward to support those causes which strive to develop non-violent strategies to resolve conflict.
**Government Sites**
Parliament of Canada
Prime Minister’s Office
Foreign Affairs Canada
Formerly the Dept. of Foreign Affairs within DFAIT
International Trade Canada
Formerly part of DFAIT

**INTERNATIONAL SITES**
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations

**TIBET LINKS**
Tibet Advocacy Groups
Tibet Online Resource Center
Boycott Made In China
Tibet Justice Center
Students for a Free Tibet
International Campaign for Tibet
www.tchrd.org Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

**Tibet in Toronto**
Canadian Tibetan Association of Ontario

**Tibet’s Government-in-Exile**
Tibetan Government-in-Exile
www.tibet.net

**Human Rights**
Amnesty International (Canada)
Amnesty International site for Drapchi prisoners
Human Rights Watch
Tibetan Centre for Human Rights & Democracy, Dharamsala
Rights & Democracy (Montreal)
Chinese language Tibet site Chinese-language website on Tibet
Tibetan Women’s Association www.tibetanwomen.org
Rangzen Alliance www.rangzen.net

**Youth**
Tibetan Youth Congress www.tibetanyouthcongress.org

**Tibet News**
World Tibet News
A CTC-run service
Times Of Tibet
Daily Tibetan news and articles
Tibet Information Network
Voice of Tibet
Daily Real Audio news broadcasts in Tibetan and Chinese
Chinese language Tibet site
Chinese-language website on Tibet