



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable
Robert Menendez, Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

MAY 30 2019

Dear Senator Menendez:

Consistent with section 13 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act (P.L. 115-94), please find enclosed a report on steps taken to encourage the Government of the People's Republic of China to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, as well as the status of Tibet discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Elizabeth Taylor", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary Elizabeth Taylor
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:
As stated.

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**2019 Report to Congress on Tibet Negotiations
Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017
Improvements Act PL 115-94, Sec. 13**

Section 13 of the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017, Improvements Act (P.L. 115-94), enacted on December 18, 2017, requires the President to provide reports to Congress concerning: (1) the steps taken by the President and Secretary of State in accordance with subsection (a)(1) to implement the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002; and (2) the status of any discussions between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives. A report is due annually until December 31, 2021. The Department of State submits this report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

Executive Summary

Chinese government officials and the Dalai Lama or his representatives have not met in formal negotiations since 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue, without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences. The U.S. government remains concerned by the lack of meaningful autonomy for Tibetans within China, ongoing violations and abuses of the human rights of Tibetans in China, and efforts by Chinese authorities to eliminate the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans. The United States believes the Chinese government must address these concerns to create conditions for a sustainable settlement, which is essential to the long-term stability of the region. The U.S. government has maintained close contact with Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders to underscore U.S. support and has expressed its concerns regarding Chinese government actions in bilateral, multilateral, and public venues. The following report describes activities undertaken by senior U.S. officials from May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019 to encourage dialogue and create conditions for a sustainable settlement.

U.S. Policy on Tibet

The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties in other provinces as part of the People's Republic of China. The United States' long-standing policy is to encourage meaningful and direct dialogue between Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences. The U.S. government believes a negotiated resolution that leads to meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and ensures they are able to practice freely their religion, culture, and language provides the best hope for long-term stability in the region. The United States believes that the most effective way to reduce tensions is for formal dialogue to resume and for the Chinese government to take steps to address Tibetan grievances.

The United States continues to urge the Chinese government to change its policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions; respect and preserve the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of the Tibetan people; and permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution. The United States urges the Government of China to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in China. The U.S.

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government continues to call upon Chinese authorities to allow diplomats, journalists, tourists, and others to have unrestricted access to Tibetan areas.

The United States remains concerned by Chinese government interference in the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders. The U.S. government believes that respect for Tibetan Buddhists' universal human right of religious freedom dictates that the succession or identification of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, including the Dalai Lama, should occur without interference, in a manner consistent with their beliefs.

The Department of State maintains close contact with a wide range of Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders, including Tibetans in the United States, China, India, Nepal, and elsewhere around the world.

Information regarding human rights conditions in Tibet, including those related to religious freedom, appears in the Department of State's annual Human Rights Report and International Religious Freedom Report. Information regarding access to the TAR and other Tibetan areas of China appears in the Department of State's report to Congress on Section 4 of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018.

Steps Taken by Senior U.S. Officials to Encourage Dialogue and Establish Conditions for a Sustainable Settlement

The United States encourages direct and meaningful dialogue between Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, and calls for the establishment of conditions necessary for a sustainable settlement. During the reporting period from May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019, such activities included the following:

- In remarks on March 11, 2019, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom publicly called upon Chinese authorities to resume formal dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. He also underscored U.S. support for meaningful autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China.

Senior U.S. officials publicly highlighted China's violations and abuses of the human rights of Tibetans, including their religious freedom, and called for the Chinese government to respect those rights on multiple occasions, such as the following:

- At the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom on July 24-26, 2018, the Vice President expressed concerns about the Chinese government's attacks on the religious freedom of Tibetan Buddhists and members of other religious minority groups. The Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom highlighted restrictions imposed on Tibetan Buddhists in organizing their own faith. The United States and three other countries issued a joint statement expressing concern about the Chinese government's longstanding efforts to suppress Tibetan Buddhists' religious, linguistic, and cultural identity, and calling on China to respect the human rights of all individuals.
- The Vice President highlighted the Chinese government's crackdown on Buddhism in a

speech on October 4, 2018, noting that more than 150 Tibetan Buddhist monks had self-immolated in the past decade in protest against the Chinese government's repression of their beliefs and culture.

- The Secretary of State raised concerns about Chinese government efforts to persecute Tibetans and others who espouse views different from those of the government, during remarks on March 13, 2019 to mark the release of the Department's Human Rights Report.
- The Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom underscored China's longstanding interference in Tibetan Buddhist practices and Tibetan culture in remarks on March 8 and March 11, 2019. This included concerns with the Chinese government's appointment of Communist Party officials to lead local monasteries, bulldozing of Tibetan Buddhist institutes, and denigration of the Dalai Lama, among other issues.
- During testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on December 4, 2018, a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and an Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs both highlighted U.S. concerns about the lack of meaningful autonomy for Tibetans, the Chinese government's violations and abuses of the human rights of Tibetans, and its efforts to restrict the unique religious, linguistic, and cultural identities of Tibetans.

U.S. officials regularly expressed concerns to the Chinese government regarding severe restrictions imposed on Tibetans' ability to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms:

- In November 2018, the Consul General in Chengdu met with the Lhasa Party Secretary and Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the TAR's People Congress. U.S. officials emphasized the importance of upholding cultural and religious rights in Tibet, and expressed concern about the TAR government's failure to protect the rights of local Tibetans to worship freely and assemble in public places.
- In his engagement with Chinese officials, the Consul General in Chengdu called for the TAR government to respect the rights of Tibetans to practice their religion freely.

The United States raised concerns at multilateral venues over the treatment of Tibetans in China, and called for China to provide access to Tibetan areas for United Nations (UN) officials:

- At the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of China on November 6, 2018, the United States recommended that China release Tibetan human rights defenders imprisoned for their work, called for China to cease interference in the selection and education of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, and highlighted the Chinese government's failure to protect the human rights of Tibetans, including freedom of religion and belief.

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- In its UPR advance questions, the United States asked China to commit to facilitate a visit to the TAR and other Tibetan areas by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

U.S. officials maintained close contact with Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders. This engagement underscored the United States' commitment to protect the distinct identity of Tibetans, improve respect for their human rights, address their humanitarian needs, and enhance their economic opportunities. This engagement included the following:

- Numerous U.S. officials met with Lobsang Sangay, the Sikyong (President) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). These included the Acting Deputy Administrator of USAID, the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, and senior officials from Department of State's Bureaus of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; East Asian and Pacific Affairs; and Population, Refugees, and Migration; as well as the National Security Council.
- Department of State officials met regularly with the Dalai Lama's Representative to North America, CTA representatives, Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leaders, Tibetan human rights activists, and members of the Tibetan-American community.
- The U.S. Consul General in Chengdu, other U.S. Consulate officers, and U.S. Embassy Beijing officers maintained contact with a wide range of Tibetan civil society representatives, religious leaders and practitioners, and entrepreneurs in the TAR and other Tibetan areas of China, although travel and other restrictions made it difficult to visit and communicate with these individuals.
- The U.S. Ambassador to India met with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in April 2018. In the following year, U.S. Embassy Delhi officers had contact with the Dalai Lama and met regularly with the Office of the Dalai Lama, Lobsang Sangay, and CTA representatives in Delhi and Dharamsala.
- The U.S. Ambassador to Nepal and U.S. Embassy Kathmandu officers met with the Dalai Lama's Representative and CTA representatives.

USAID and the Department of State continued to assist Tibetan communities in China, India, and Nepal:

- USAID programs sought to support sustainable livelihoods, environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and enhanced educational and public health systems in Tibetan communities in China, India, and Nepal.
- Department of State programs funded livelihoods, health, education, water/sanitation, and local NGO capacity-building activities for Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal; provided educational opportunities for Tibetans in the United States; increased engagement and mutual understanding between Tibetans and the American people; and advanced the human rights of Tibetans.

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Status of Discussions between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama or His Representatives

Although the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives have made intermittent efforts over the past four decades to resolve concerns and differences through dialogue, they have not met in formal negotiations since 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in meaningful and direct dialogue, without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences.

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