



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

AUG 19 2016

The Honorable  
Bob Corker, Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Secretary, we are transmitting to you the enclosed report regarding "Tibet Negotiations," as required by section 613 (b) of the Tibet Policy Act of 2002 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2003 (P.L. 107-228).

We hope that this information is useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us again if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Frifield".

Julia Frifield  
Assistant Secretary  
Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:  
As stated.

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**Report on Tibet Negotiations  
P.L. 107-228 Section 613(b), of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act  
of Fiscal Year 2003**

**I. Executive Summary**

The Dalai Lama's representatives and Chinese officials from the United Front Work Department have not met directly since the ninth round of dialogue in January 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in a substantive discussion that will work to achieve concrete results. The U.S. government believes that the Dalai Lama or his representatives can be constructive partners for China as it deals with continuing tensions in Tibetan areas. The Dalai Lama's views continue to be widely reflected within Tibetan society and he represents the views of the vast majority of Tibetans. His consistent advocacy of non-violence is a key in reaching a lasting solution for Tibetans. Chinese government engagement with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to resolve problems facing Tibetans is in the interest of the Chinese government and the Tibetan people. Failure to address these problems will lead to greater tensions inside China and will be an impediment to China's social and economic development, as well as continue to be a stumbling block to fuller political and economic engagement with the United States.

**II. Tibet Policy**

Promoting substantive dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama or his representatives is a long-standing important U.S. foreign policy objective. We continue to encourage representatives of both the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama to hold direct and substantive discussions, without preconditions, toward a solution that allows Tibetans to enjoy genuine autonomy, including in the practice of religion, culture, and language, and thus promotes stability. Such a dialogue provides the best hope for alleviating tensions in Tibetan areas and would contribute to the overall stability of China. We are very concerned that there has been no dialogue since early 2010, and that talks prior to that time did not bear concrete results. The United States believes that a resumption of dialogue and steps to redress Tibetan grievances are critical to reducing the continuing high tensions between Tibetans and Chinese authorities.

We are concerned Chinese officials continue to insist on unreasonable and unattainable conditions in order for China to resume dialogue. We consider this position counter-productive and contrary to the expectations of the United States

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and the international community. We support dialogue without preconditions.

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. Accordingly, the U.S. government does not conduct official diplomatic relations with the Central Tibetan Administration, an organization based in Dharamsala, India. The Department of State maintains contact with a wide range of religious, cultural, political, and other Tibet-related groups and individuals, including Tibetans in the United States, China, India, and around the world. U.S. officials have met with the Dalai Lama in his capacity as an internationally revered religious and cultural leader, and as a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. The Dalai Lama repeatedly has disclaimed any intention to seek sovereignty or independence for Tibet, and has instead said that he seeks for China to preserve Tibetan culture, religion, and its fragile environment through genuine autonomy.

We continue to urge China to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions; respect and preserve the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of the Tibetan people; permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution; allow journalists, diplomats, and other observers unrestricted access to Tibetan areas; and fully respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Chinese citizens, including the freedom of movement domestically and internationally. We welcome the reduction in the number of tragic acts of protest by self-immolation during the reporting period and hope the trend will continue.

Regarding decisions on the succession or reincarnation of the next Dalai Lama, we believe that the basic and universally recognized right of religious freedom demands that any such decision must be reserved to the current Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders, and the Tibetan people. We are concerned that the death of the Dalai Lama in exile without a resolution of differences likely would increase instability in China, and we encourage China to adopt policies that would reduce the risk of unrest and resume dialogue with the current Dalai Lama while he remains healthy.

Details on human rights and religious freedom conditions in, and the level of journalist and diplomatic access to, Tibet can be found in the Department's annual Human Rights and International Religious Freedom Reports.

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### **III. Steps Taken by the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State**

President Obama continues to call for substantive dialogue between the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government to resolve long-standing issues, and stresses that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans. He met with the Dalai Lama June 15, 2016. The President expressed support for the "preservation of Tibet's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions and the equal protection of human rights of Tibetans in China" and the "Middle Way" approach, commended the Dalai Lama's commitment to nonviolence and dialogue, and called for "meaningful and direct dialogue between the Dalai Lama and his representatives with Chinese authorities." In a joint press conference with President Xi Jinping in Beijing on September 25, 2015, the President said, "we continue to encourage Chinese authorities to preserve the religious and cultural identity of the Tibetan people, and to engage with the Dalai Lama or his representatives."

Secretary Kerry consistently raised Tibet in meetings with his Chinese counterparts, including during visits to China and in meetings with Chinese counterparts in the United States and elsewhere during the reporting period, and in public speeches. He consistently called for the protection of human rights in Tibetan areas and for a resumption of dialogue. On April 26, 2016, at a speech at Rice University, the Secretary noted that, "[i]n China, Tibetan Buddhists continue to suffer from official harassment and interference in the practice of their religion."

Serving concurrently as Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights Sarah Sewall coordinates U.S. policy on Tibet to promote substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama, as well as policies that seek to preserve the distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage of Tibetans. The Special Coordinator also coordinates programs implemented by the Department of State's Bureaus of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Population, Refugees, and Migration, and Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and by USAID that promote activities to preserve cultural traditions, enhance sustainable development, expand economic opportunities and support environmental conservation, health care, education, and livelihoods within Tibetan communities inside the People's Republic of China, and for Tibetans in India, Nepal and elsewhere.

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Under Secretary Sewall met with the Dalai Lama twice during the reporting period, on January 16, 2016, in Dharamsala, India and on June 13, 2016, in Washington, to discuss nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution, climate change, and questions of preserving Tibetan culture, religion, and education.

The Office of the Special Coordinator maintained close contact with religious, cultural and political representatives of the Tibetan people. Under Secretary Sewall met with Sikyong Lobsang Sangay three times during the reporting period on humanitarian issues in the Tibetan community. Other senior Department officials met with leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration, including the representative of the Dalai Lama to the Americas, on humanitarian assistance programs in India and Nepal, as well as key civil society leaders active on Tibetan issues. Under Secretary Sewall has coordinated with like-minded governments on Tibetan issues.

On June 15, 2015, Under Secretary Sewall spoke at an event on the margins on the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, in which she addressed the Council's actions on Tibet, the human rights situation, access to Tibet, religious freedom, and dialogue. On July 14, 2015, Under Secretary Sewall testified before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission to update Congress on U.S. policy on Tibet, in which she cited "China's growing interference in a core tenet of Tibetan Buddhism: the recognition of reincarnate lamas" and stated that "right of religious freedom demands that any decision on the next Dalai Lama be reserved to the current Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist leaders, and the Tibetan people."

Following the 19th U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Democracy and Labor Tom Malinowski stated on August 13, 2015, that the U.S. delegation had urged China to renew dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives and provide greater access to Tibetan areas by diplomats and journalists. During an October 14 meeting with the State Administration for Religious Affairs in Beijing, Assistant Secretary Malinowski urged an end to Chinese state interference in the religious process of identifying reincarnate Tibetan lamas. During a visit to China from August 20-28, 2015, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein urged Chinese officials to reassess counterproductive policies that restrict the religious practice of Tibetan Buddhists. At the UNHCR in 2015, the U.S. delegation made statements on the human rights and religious freedom situation in Tibet June 24, September 18, and September 2. On June 15, 2015, Ambassador Keith Harper delivered remarks on Tibet at an event on the margins on the Human Rights Council. U.S. Ambassador to China Max Baucus regularly engages the Chinese

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government on Tibet-related issues.

Travel by U.S. diplomats and journalists to the TAR and other Tibetan areas remained restricted during the reporting period. Access to the TAR has improved, although it remains difficult. U.S. diplomats and citizens (and all foreigners) are required to obtain a special permit to enter the TAR, a measure not required of foreigners to enter any other provincial-level entity in China. While U.S. government officials were granted only three of 34 requests for diplomatic access to the TAR between May 2011 and December 2014, since December 2014, the TAR has approved seven visit requests submitted by Consulate Chengdu. Three of the requests granted were specifically for consular access. In 2015, 16,000 U.S. citizens traveled to the TAR, and we remain concerned about consular officers' ability to provide consular services to them in a timely manner, particularly in an emergency. At the April 2016 U.S.-China Consular Dialogue, the United States proposed the establishment of a mechanism for consular officers and staff to be able to travel to the TAR on short notice to assist distressed U.S. citizens with minimal delay. In the nearly two decades since the position existed, no Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues has been able to visit Tibetan areas in the People's Republic of China. The status of the restrictions on U.S. citizens' travel to Tibetan areas is updated at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

#### **IV. Status of Discussions between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama's Representatives**

Representatives of the Dalai Lama and Chinese officials from the United Front Work Department have not met directly since the ninth round of dialogue in January 2010. The United States continues to encourage both sides to engage in a substantive discussion that will work to achieve concrete results.

#### **History of Discussions between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama's Representatives**

The last three and a half decades have seen intermittent efforts by the Dalai Lama and the People's Republic of China to resolve concerns and differences through dialogue. For a detailed history of such efforts, please refer to the Department's 2010 Report on Tibet Negotiations.