

1952

Speeches/Documents

Title: ON THE POLICIES FOR OUR WORK IN TIBET -- DIRECTIVE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

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Source: SWM V pg 74-75

Description: [Inner-Party directive drafted for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It was sent to the Southwest Bureau and the Working Committee in Tibet and communicated to the Northwest Bureau and the Sinkiang Sub-Bureau.]

The Central Committee essentially approves the instructions which the Southwest Bureau and the Southwest Military Area cabled on April 2 to the Working Committee and Military Area in Tibet. It holds that the basic policies (except the point about reorganizing the Tibetan troops) and the various specific steps set forth in the telegram are correct. Only by following them can our army establish itself in an invulnerable position in Tibet.

Conditions in Tibet are different from those in Sinkiang. Tibet compares poorly with Sinkiang, whether politically or economically. But even in Sinkiang, the first thing the army units under Wang Chen did when they got there was to pay the utmost attention to strict budgeting, self-reliance and production for their own needs. They have now gained a firm foothold and won the warm support of the minority nationalities. They are carrying out the reduction of rent and interest and will proceed to agrarian reform this winter, and by then we can be sure of even greater support from the masses. Sinkiang is well connected with the heartland of the country by motor roads, and this is of great help in improving the material welfare of the minority nationalities. As for Tibet, neither rent reduction nor agrarian reform can start for at least two or three years. While several hundred thousand Han people live in Sinkiang, there are hardly any in Tibet, where our army finds itself in a totally different minority nationality area. We depend solely on two basic policies to win over the masses and put ourselves in an invulnerable position. The first is strict budgeting coupled with production for the army's own needs, and thus the exertion of influence on the masses; this is the key link. Even when highways are built, we cannot count on moving large quantities of grain over them. India will probably agree to send grain and other goods to Tibet on the basis of exchange, but the stand we must take is that our army should be able to carry on even if India stops sending them some day. We must do our best and take proper steps to win over the Dalai and the majority of his top echelon and to isolate the handful of bad elements in order to achieve a gradual, bloodless transformation of the Tibetan economic and political system over a number of years; on the other hand, we must be prepared for the eventuality of the bad elements leading the Tibetan troops in rebellion and attacking us, so that in this contingency our army could still carry on and hold out in Tibet. It all depends on strict budgeting and production for the army's own needs. Only with this fundamental policy as the cornerstone of our work can we achieve our aim. The second policy, which can and must be put into effect, is to establish trade relations with India and with the heartland of our country and to attain a general balance in supplies to and from Tibet so that the standard of living of the Tibetan people will in no way fall because of our army's presence but will improve through our efforts. If we cannot solve the two problems of production and trade, we shall lose the material base for our presence, the bad elements will cash in and will not let a single day pass without inciting the backward elements among the people and the Tibetan troops to oppose us, and our policy of uniting with the many and isolating the few will become ineffectual and fail.

Of all the views set forth in the Southwest Bureau's telegram of April 2 there is only one that calls for further consideration, what I refer to is the feasibility and advisability of reorganizing the Tibetan troops and setting up a military and administrative commission fairly soon. It is our opinion that the Tibetan troops should not be reorganized at present, nor should formal military sub-areas or a military and administrative commission be established. For the time being, leave everything as it is, let this situation drag on, and do not take up these questions until our army is able to meet its own needs through production and wins the support of the masses a year or two from now. In the meantime there are two possibilities. One is that our united front policy towards the upper stratum, a policy of uniting with the many and isolating the few, will take effect and that the Tibetan people will gradually draw closer to us, so the bad elements and the Tibetan troops will not dare to rebel. The other possibility is that the bad elements, thinking we are weak and can be bullied, may lead the Tibetan troops in rebellion and that our army will counter-attack in self-defence and deal them telling blows. Either will be favourable for us. As the top echelon in Tibet sees it, there is no sufficient reason now for implementing the Agreement [1] in its entirety or for reorganizing the Tibetan troops. But things will be different in a few years. By then they will probably find that they have no choice but to carry out the Agreement to the full and to reorganize the Tibetan troops. If the Tibetan troops start one or even several rebellions and are repulsed by our army each time, we will be all the more justified in reorganizing them. Apparently not only the two Silons [2] but also the Dalai and most of his clique were reluctant to accept the Agreement and are unwilling to carry it out. As yet we don't have a material base for fully implementing the Agreement, nor do we have a base for this purpose in terms of support among the masses or in the upper stratum. To force its implementation will do more harm than good. Since they are unwilling to put the Agreement into effect, well then, we can leave it for the time being and wait. The longer the delay, the stronger will be our position and the weaker theirs. Delay will not do us much harm; on the contrary, it may be to our advantage. Let them go on with their insensate atrocities against the people, while we on our part concentrate on good deeds -- production, trade, road-building, medical services and united front work (unity with the majority and patient education) so as to win over the masses and bide our time before taking up the question of the full implementation of the Agreement. If they are not in favour of the setting up of primary schools, that can stop too.

The recent demonstration in Lhasa should be viewed not merely as the work of the two Silons and other bad elements but as a signal to us from the majority of the Dalai clique. Their petition is very tactful because it indicates not a wish for a break with us but only a wish for concessions from us. One of the terms gives the hint that the practice of the Ching Dynasty should be restored, in other words, that no Liberation Army units should be stationed in Tibet, but this is not what they are really after. They know full well that this is impossible; their attempt is to trade this term for other terms. The Fourteenth Dalai is criticized in the petition so as to absolve him from any political responsibility for the demonstration. They pose as protectors of the interests of the Tibetan nationality, being aware that while they are inferior to us in military strength, they have an advantage over us in social influence. We should accept this petition in substance (not in form) and put off the full implementation of the Agreement. The timing of the demonstration to take place before the Panchen's arrival in Lhasa was deliberate. After his arrival they will probably go all out to work on him to join their clique. If on our part we do our work well and the Panchen does not fall into their trap but reaches Shigatse safe and sound, the situation will then become more favourable to us. Nevertheless, since neither our lack of a material base nor their advantage over us in social influence will change for the time being, neither will the unwillingness of the Dalai clique to carry out the Agreement fully. At present, in appearance we should take the offensive and

should censure the demonstration and the petition for being unjustifiable (for undermining the Agreement), but in reality we should be prepared to make concessions and to go over to the offensive in the future (*i.e.*, put the Agreement into force) when conditions are ripe.

What are your views? Please consider and wire your reply.

NOTES

1. This refers to the Agreement Between the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, May 23, 1951.

2. The "Silons" were the highest ranking administrative officials under the Dalai. The two Silons referred to here were the reactionary serf-owners Lukhangwa and Lozang Tashi.

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Source: *Xuanji*, V, pp. 61-64. Available English Translations: *SW*, V, pp. 75-76; *JPRS, Selections*, pp. 12-14.

According to the *Xuanji* source, this is an intra-Party directive that Mao drafted for the Central Committee of the CPC that was sent to the Southwest Bureau and the Work Committee in Tibet, and further transmitted to the Northwest Bureau and the Xinjiang Sub-bureau.

Notes

1 The Tibetan Work Committee was a later incarnation of what was known as the Tibetan Work Team (Xizhang gongzuo dui), a team set up by the Culture and Education Commission of the State Council of the PRC to go to Tibet and do investigative studying of the local conditions with a view to "assisting in the future political, social, cultural and economic development of Tibet." This team left Beijing on June 7, 1951, and arrived at Lhasa, via Chongqing, on November 9, 1951.

2 The Tibetan Military Region was established on February 10, 1952, in accordance with Article 15 of the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (see text May 24, 1951, source note). For more details, see *RMSC* (1952), p. 209.

3 In October 1949, the First Division of the First Field Army of the PLA moved into Xinjiang under Commander Wang Zhen (see text Nov. 14, 1949, note 4). It carried out Mao's directive issued in December of that year (see text Dec. 5, 1949) of having the army units actively take part in labor and production. With regard to Tibet, PLA troops under the command of Zhang Guohua and Tan Guansan (the latter as political commissar) began to enter Tibet on the mission of "liberating" the region in the spring of 1950. Before much could be done, the Sichuan-Xikang highway had to be arduously built, and it was not until October 26, 1951, that these PLA units arrived at Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet. On December 1, 1951, they were reinforced by troops under the command of General Fan Ming. For more details on these events, see *RMSC* (1952), pp. 205-211 (a PRC description), and H. E. Richardson (1962), ch. XII (an "opposition" description).

4. Mao uses the term *guannei* here, which we have translated as "China Proper." Literally the term means "within the passes." This refers to fortified passes along the Great Wall, such as Shanhaiguan at the extreme eastern tip of Hebei Province and Yanmenguan in northern Shaanxi Province, which have traditionally been invasion routes taken by the tribes on China's northern frontiers. Consequently, the term *guannei* has traditionally meant the provinces south and southeast of the Great Wall.

5. Mao is here referring to the building of the Xikang-Tibetan and Qinghai-Tibetan highways, which were ultimately completed in December 1954. See text Dec. 25, 1954, source note.

6. See text May 24, 1951, note 2. The Dalai Lama had been titular head of the Tibetan government since the mid-eighteenth century. In the winter of 1950, the fourteenth Dalai Lama and his entourage was forced to leave Lhasa for Yadong, where in February 1951 a governmental authority under the Dalai Lama was established. On August 17, shortly after General Zhang Jingwu, representative of the PRC's Central People's Government to Tibet, arrived in Lhasa, the Dalai Lama was escorted back to Lhasa and since then a full Tibetan government, under the Dalai's rule and committed to the Agreement with the PRC on the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was established in Lhasa.

7. This refers to the question of organizing the local Tibetan troops into regular units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

8. This refers to the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. See text May 24, 1951, source note.

9. "The Silons are the highest administrative officials under the Dalai. At that time the two Silons were Lukhangwa and Lozang Tashi." (*Xuanji*, V, p. 64.)

10. In Article 9 of the Agreement, the Central People's Government pledged to promote, on the basis of prevalent conditions in Tibet, the culture, literacy, and education of the Tibetan people. In practice, suggestions were made to establish primary schools in Tibet. Prior to this, however, power over education in Tibet had been the private preserve of the Lama monks, and on the promulgation of the Agreement, the Lama order protested that the accompanying suggestions violated their own unique prerogatives.

11. On April 1, 1952, a People's Assembly was formed in Lhasa which demanded of the PRC Central People's Government delegation to Tibet the complete withdrawal of the PLA units from Tibet.

12. The relationship that existed between Tibet and China during China's Qing dynasty (1644-1911) was one of many changes. For the most part prior to the later part of the reign of the Kangxi Emperor (1662-1722) the Chinese emperor possessed a form of suzerainty over Tibet, which they inherited from earlier dynasties but did not exercise much actual control. Toward the end of his reign, Kangxi established a protectorate over Tibet in 1710. In 1721, after the Dsungar uprising, a Chinese garrison was stationed in Tibet. In the early years of Kangxi's successor, the Yungzheng Emperor (1723-1735), the Chinese troops were withdrawn, but toward the end of that reign, owing to the recurrence of civil strife in Tibet, the garrison was reinstated and two officials of the Chinese *Li fan yuan* (Court of Administration for Barbarian Affairs) were stationed in Tibet with no powers of intervention, but for the purpose of keeping the Chinese emperor and his court informed. These were known as ambans in Tibetan. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, these officials took on the activities of actually supervising the government of what had become in all senses a full protectorate, and in 1792 they began to participate directly in the governance of the region. This continued until the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911. For more on the subject, see L. Petech (1972) and T. T. Li (1956).

13. See text Dec. 13, 1951, source note.

14. The second largest city in Tibet next to Lhasa and approximately 120 km. southwest of Lhasa.

