

Official Tibetan and Chinese positions on the issue of Tibet

Comments on a Xinhua interview on Tibet

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Foreword

Propaganda is the time-tested tool used by colonial powers to justify their occupation and rule over colonies. The common tactic is to present themselves as benevolent and civilising balm, playing the compassionate role of liberating the subjugated people from utter backwardness.

Hu Yaobang, the late Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, labelled Chinese attitude to Tibet as "pure colonialism". He made this statement on seeing the abject poverty in Tibet in 1980 — thirty one years after the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

It is in this context that the readers must view the Chinese propaganda with regard to Tibet. This includes their claims of Tibet being an "inseparable part of China", the armed invasion of Tibet as a peaceful liberation, and the forced "Seventeen-point Agreement" as a legally-binding agreement.

The list continues with claims of Tibet today being a socialist paradise, abounding in human rights, religious freedom, industrial development, bumper crops, etc. China wants to whitewash all their misdeeds with the stroke of a brush.

On April 28, 1994 the Xinhua News Agency published a long interview with the spokesman of the United Front Works Department of the Chinese Communist Party. The spokesman had restated the usual Chinese colonial claim regarding Tibet.

In this paper, we have examined these claims, point-by-point, with the aim of putting the issues in their proper perspective. It is to enable the unbiased and fair-minded people of the world to arrive at a correct understanding of the issue of Tibet and the true aspirations of the Tibetan people.

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July 1994

Xinhua: What profound changes have taken place in Tibet over the past 43 years?

Chinese Spokesman: *On 23rd May 1951, the central government and the Tibetan local government signed a 17-article agreement on the peaceful liberation of Tibet, realizing the liberation of Tibet by peaceful means.*

The peaceful liberation of Tibet is an important component of the Chinese people's liberation cause. Since then, as other nationalities in China, the Tibetan people have fully enjoyed all rights of equality among all nationalities and have embarked on the road of freedom and happiness.

Over the past 43 years Tibet has undergone sweeping changes, from the extremely backward serf system to modernization. Millions of serfs have become masters of their fate, while large numbers of Tibetan workers, intellectuals and officials have taken up the task of building and managing Tibet.

With the assistance and support from the central government and other parts of China, and through the common efforts of the Tibetan people, Tibet has scored great achievements in construction in various fields.

In 1993, Tibet harvested a record 620,000 tons of grain; the number of large domestic animals in Tibet rose to 23.2 m; its modern industry, which started from scratch, manufactured 470m Yuan-worth of goods; and its energy, transportation and telecommunications conditions improved markedly.

Meanwhile, the fine traditional Tibetan culture has been inherited and developed, and big strides were made in education, science, culture, public health and other undertakings. The Tibetan people's living standards have improved markedly, with the Tibetan population soaring to two million from one million in the 1950s.

The policies of the Communist Party and the government on nationality and religious affairs enjoy whole-hearted support of the Tibetan people and all patriotic persons in Tibet. All parts of Tibet are now a picture of vitality and prosperity.

The Tibetan people have made great contributions to maintaining the motherland's unity, the unity among the people of various nationalities and the country's modernization drive.

In the future, in the course of reforms, opening up and establishing a socialist market economic structure, the central government will continue to pursue policies conducive to Tibet's economic growth and the improvement in living standards of the Tibetan people.

It will continue to mobilize people of various nationalities in China to assist Tibet in speeding up its development. It will also combine its assistance with Tibet's self-development efforts and gear its economic assistance with the great environment of reforms in order to lay the ground-work for sustained economic development in Tibet so as to achieve common prosperity.

Tibetan Comment: The so-called Seventeen-Point Agreement was imposed on the Tibetan Government and people by the threat of arms after 40,000 PLA troops had already seized

Tibet's eastern provincial capital, Chamdo. The Tibetan delegates were threatened with physical violence and virtually kept prisoners. Even the seal of the Tibetan Government affixed to the "Agreement" was forged in Peking.

Before the "Agreement" was signed, the Government of India had foreseen that China would foist unequal negotiations on Tibet. The Indian Foreign Ministry expressed this fear in a letter written to the Chinese Government on October 26, 1950. Excerpts:

Now that the invasion of Tibet has been ordered by Chinese Government, peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronized with it and there naturally will be fear on the part of Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress.

In Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama did not have the opportunity of expressing himself freely. However, as soon as he came into exile, he repudiated the "Agreement" formally on June 20, 1959, and said that it was "thrust upon Tibetan Government and people by the threat of arms".

This is clear from the Directive of the Central Committee of the CPC on *Policies for Our Work in Tibet*, issued on April 6, 1952, by Mao Zedong.

Excerpts:

(N)ot only the two Silons (i.e. prime ministers) but also the Dalai lama and most of his clique were reluctant to accept the Agreement and are unwilling to carry it out. ...As yet we do not 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. [*Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, Vol.5, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1977, p. 75]

The "liberation" of Tibet has brought about the death of 1.2 million Tibetans and the destruction of over six thousand Tibetan monasteries and cultural centres. According to a PLA secret document, in Lhasa city and the vicinity alone, 87,000 Tibetans were killed between March 1959 and October 1960. Therefore, Tibet has been reduced to a colony of China and the Tibetan people marginalised as second-class citizens.

The following statements bear out how peaceful the "liberation" of Tibet was:

Alexander Solzhenitsyn:

The Holocaust that happened in Tibet revealed communist China as a cruel and inhuman executioner — the most brutal and more inhuman than any other communist regime in the world. [Tokyo, October 9, 1982]

The Panchen Lama:

...If there was a film made on all the atrocities perpetrated in Qinghai province (North-Eastern Tibet), it would shock the viewers. In Golok area, many people were killed and their dead bodies were rolled down the hill into a big ditch. The soldiers told the family members and relatives of the dead people that they should all celebrate since the rebels had been wiped out. They were even forced to dance on the dead bodies. Soon after, they were also massacred with machine guns.

...In Amdo and Kham, people were subjected to unspeakable atrocities. People were shot in groups of ten or twenty. I know that it is not good to speak about these things. But such actions have left deep wounds in the minds of the people. [Address to the 'TAR' Standing Committee Meeting of the National Congress, held in Peking on 28th March 1987]

Prior to the Chinese invasion, Tibet was a simple and self-reliant nation with one of the world's richest cultural heritages. Though not a model of democracy, its citizens enjoyed much greater freedom than those of the neighbouring countries at that time. Over the past four decades, this independent nation has been reduced to a colony of an alien occupation power where the people have become veritable serfs.

In this context, we would like to ask how have "*Millions* of serfs become masters of their fate" when in the same "interview" the Tibetan population is mentioned as just "soaring to *two million*"? [Emphases added]

When Chinese Communist Party Secretary Hu Yaobang visited Lhasa in 1980, he found no evidence of Tibetans having gained from China's financial assistance. Hu noticed that the living standards in Tibet had gone down from the pre-invasion period. Expressing his shock at the abject poverty of Tibet, Hu publicly said, "This is plain colonialism". [*Emancipation Review*, Hong Kong, December 1980]. He asked the local Chinese officials whether the assistance from China had been "thrown into the Yarlung Tsangpo (river)?"

Similarly, the Panchen Lama, in the course of his last recorded speech in 1989, remarked, "The price Tibet paid for this development was higher than the gains". This speech was reported in *China Daily*, by its staff reporter Guo Zhongshi.

Whatever little development Tibet has seen is aimed chiefly at supporting the Chinese population in Tibet, which is increasing at an alarming pace. For instance, it is a well-known fact that the benefit of the World Food Programme's Agricultural Project Number 3357 in the Lhasa valley is illegally diverted to the Chinese settlers, though it is meant for Tibetan villagers.

The Chinese Government released similar statistics of bumper crops in the sixties and seventies when there were widespread famines in Tibet, a phenomenon unheard of in

independent Tibet. In June 1989, it denied the loss of any life in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, when thousands were gunned down in full view of onlookers and TV cameras.

Any increase in food production or "domestic animals" has not improved the lives of common Tibetans. These increases would have only shored up the transfer of Chinese population into Tibet.

Industrial development in Tibet has been in the field of mining for the exploitation of Tibet's natural resources for the benefit of China. Tibet, in turn, has to import all its need for manufactured goods from China.

The UNDP's report for 1994 shows Qinghai and Tibet Autonomous Region at the bottom of HDI ranking among all the areas under Chinese rule.

It is only the urban areas with their predominant Chinese settlers that are provided with electricity, transportation and telecommunications facilities. The majority of rural areas in Tibet are yet to see electrification, not to speak of any other aspects of developments.

Tibetan culture and religion continue to be undermined and perverted through various subtle and insidious means. A member of the EC delegation to Tibet of May 1993 said there was considerable doubts on "whether religion receives the freedom of action and funding at an organizational level, which would allow religion to achieve its full potential as a fundamental part of Tibetan culture and identity."

A member of the first officially invited foreign journalists to Tibet in the late eighties described Tibet as a "graveyard of civilization."

It is worth noting that since 1980, over 10,000 children have either escaped or been smuggled out of Tibet to India by their parents so that they can receive education in the Tibetan refugee community.

During the thirty five years of their rule, the Chinese authorities have not produced even one fully-qualified *Geshe* (a doctorate in Buddhist philosophy). Hardly any Tibetan in Tibet has had a chance to do a doctorate in modern education. In contrast, over 1,000 monks among the exile population of just over 120,000 have received the *Geshe* degree, while about a dozen Tibetans have graduated with doctorates in subjects ranging from socio-economic development to particle physics.

Health service in Tibet is biased strongly in favour of urban areas inhabited predominantly by the Chinese settlers. Only ten percent of the financial outlay for health goes to rural areas. The health service, even in urban areas, is prohibitively expensive for Tibetans whose average per capita income is estimated at 250 Yuan, per month. In 1993, the state-run

hospitals charged upwards of 5,000.00 Yuan per month, per bed, with consultation fees being 70 Yuan per visit.

The population of Tibet, consisting of the three provinces of Amdo, Kham and U-tsang, was six million before 1959. Therefore, if the Tibetan population is only two million at present, it has decreased and not soared.

The policies of the Chinese Government do not even enjoy the "wholehearted support" of Tibetan cadres, let alone of the Tibetan people in general. China has yet to find a trustworthy Tibetan to man the post of the secretary of the regional communist party either in the "TAR" or the Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu. In a highly classified speech in December 1992, Chen Kuiyuan, the current first secretary of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" criticized Tibetan cadres for displaying their loyalty to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. At the public level, in 1993 alone, over 40 confirmed demonstrations against Chinese rule took place in different parts of Tibet.

The reforms and opening up of Tibet's economy is actually aimed at inundating the country with Chinese settlers and destroying the Tibetan cultural and ethnic identity. When the economic opening was first announced in August 1993, the local Chinese authorities asked the Tibetans to welcome "skilled" Chinese workers to help Tibet's development.

Similarly, in the name of mobilizing "people of various nationalities" for the development of Tibet, the Chinese Government is actively sponsoring the transfer of Chinese population and exploitation of natural resources. If China is genuinely interested in the development of Tibet, the emphasis should be on allowing the Tibetans to become self-reliant and chief players in their own development.

The delegation of EC (now EU) ambassadors in Beijing who visited Tibet in May 1993, reported on the following findings:

- There are obvious discrepancies between official information and information obtained through other sources and through visual observations.
- Harmonious relations between Tibetans and Chinese living in Tibet are not existing.
- Official figures that Chinese make up three percent of the population are understated. Many Chinese in Tibet are not registered locally.
- Increased economic activity has brought more benefit to Chinese newcomers than Tibetans.

Xinhua: It is a historical fact that Tibet is an inseparable part of China. However, even today, the Dalai Lama is still in exile and engaged in activities to split the motherland. What are the policies of the central government concerning the Dalai Lama? Have there been any changes in these policies?

Chinese Spokesman: *The principled stand and basic attitude of the central government regarding the Dalai Lama and his followers have been consistent and clear, with no changes at all.*

As long as the Dalai Lama recognizes the fact that Tibet is an inseparable part of China, totally abandons his idea of "Tibetan independence" and stops engaging in activities to split the motherland, the central government would welcome his stopping to live in exile as soon as possible, returning to China to contribute to upholding the unification of the motherland, national unity and economic development and do something good for the prosperity and happiness of the Tibetan people.

In 1979 Deng Xiaoping made it clear to a private representative of the Dalai Lama that the question of overriding importance is that Tibet is part of China, and this should be the criterion to judge what is right and what is not.

In answering a question from a Xinhua reporter on 19th May 1991, Premier Li Peng reiterated the policies of the central government, saying that there is only one fundamental principle - that Tibet is an inseparable part of China.

On that question there is no room at all for bargaining, Li said, adding that the central government is always ready to contact the Dalai Lama, provided that he must stop engaging in activities to split the motherland and change his position of "Tibetan independence".

Negotiations can be held on any questions, but definitely not on "Tibetan independence", the premier stressed.

The above policies of the central government remain unchanged.

Tibetan affairs are China's internal affairs. Any attempts to "internationalize the Tibet question" will never succeed and will be opposed resolutely by the Chinese people.

Tibetan Comment: The Chinese Government's stand on the Tibetan issue has not been positive. A peaceful and negotiated resolution of the Tibetan problem will not be reached if China consistently holds on to such a hard-line attitude.

To ask His Holiness the Dalai Lama to recognise Tibet as part of China is tantamount to asking him to distort history.

Let us examine the facts: Until recently, the Communist Chinese based their claim to Tibet on the marriage of Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo to a Chinese princess in the seventh century, conveniently forgetting the Tibetan king's senior bride, Princess Brikuti Devi of Nepal. When they could not sustain this position any longer, they shifted the period of their claim to the thirteenth century, basing it on the establishment of Mongol influence in Tibet. However, the Mongols are a different nation and the Chinese have always considered them as aliens. In 1911, when the Nationalist revolution toppled the Ch'ing dynasty, Sun Yatsen said that China had been occupied twice by foreign powers: the first by the Yuans (Mongol emperors) and the second by the Ch'ings (Manchu emperors).

In any case, the Mongol influence in Tibet came to an end in 1350, eighteen years before China overthrew them.

If Tibet was just another part of the Chinese territory, there would have been no need for the Communist China to impose the "Seventeen-Point Agreement" for the "liberation" of Tibet. The Communist forces did not feel the need for such agreements with the other areas they "liberated".

In 1949, when Nepal applied for the UN membership, it cited its diplomatic relations with Tibet to prove that it was a sovereign nation. The UN accepted this argument and thus effectively recognised Tibet's status as a sovereign nation.

During the UN General Assembly debate on Tibet, Irish Representative Frank Aitken stated:

For thousands of years, or for a couple of thousand years at any rate, (Tibet) was as free and as fully in control of its own affairs as any nation in this Assembly, and a thousand times more free to look after its own affairs than many of the nations here. [UNGA Docs A/PV 898 1960; A/PV 1394, 1401 1965]

The studies of International Commission of Jurists, the German Bundestag and many other independent bodies testified to Tibet's independent status at the time of its invasion by China.

The issue of Tibet is not that of the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His Holiness cannot return to Tibet under the prevailing circumstances. Tibetans inside Tibet fear that if he even visits Tibet under the present circumstances, he will only be made a puppet in the hands of the Chinese authorities.

In 1979 the Chinese Government invited Mr. Gyalo Thondup, the elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to Beijing, where Deng Xiaoping told him that all issues except the question of independence could be discussed.

His Holiness responded positively to Deng Xiaoping's overtures and came up with a series of initiatives, including the Strasbourg proposal of June 15, 1988, whereby he had proposed for an association with China, and said that the Government of the People's Republic of China could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy. This proposal was welcomed not only by the international community, but also by the free thinking Chinese people. However, the Chinese Government rejected the proposal and said that it asked for a "disguised form of independence".

Tibetans have the right to engage in legitimate activities as long as there is no satisfactory solution to the sufferings of the six million Tibetans.

Free democratic countries are fundamentally different from the repressive, totalitarian and regimented society of China. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who has always encouraged democratic traditions among the Tibetan people, would never impose his will on the people.

It was the Chinese Government's repeated rejection of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's efforts to bring it to the negotiating table that forced him to appeal to the international community to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese Government. Over the years, governments and parliamentarians of many countries have come out with strong statements in support of the just cause of Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's initiatives.

Xinhua: According to reports by foreign wire services, the Dalai Lama has claimed on different occasions that he has made "maximum concessions in a series of initiatives and proposals which clearly lie within the framework for negotiations" in which all questions except the independence of Tibet can be negotiated. Is that true?

Chinese Spokesman: *It would be the Dalai Lama's maximum progress if he has genuinely abandoned his stand for "the independence of Tibet". But it is regrettable that we have seen no signs of such progress up to now. The Dalai Lama has never admitted that Tibet is an inseparable part of China since he went into exile, neither has he stopped the activities to split the motherland.*

His various claims or proposals have always centred on the "independence of Tibet". Recently, he referred to Tibet as a "captive nation", saying that "I firmly believe...will eventually lead our captive nation to freedom and peace in dignity" [as received]. His so-called "concessions" are nothing but an adjustment in tactics, essentially still sticking to his claims of "independence of Tibet".

Tibetan Comment: His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been pursuing forward-looking course of action and solution. He has initiated a series of positive proposals, made in a spirit of reconciliation and association. These proposals have been hailed by the international

community as constructive, realistic and reasonable. It is only the Chinese leadership which sees ghost in its own shadow.

We have left our options open on the matter of future status of Tibet. But we cannot wipe out the fact that Tibet was an independent nation, made captive by China. The people of Tibet have no freedom of speech or movement. Is this not a nation in captivity? Every suppressed people, including the Chinese people, would naturally yearn for freedom and peace.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's middle path approach is of course a major concession and not a change of tactics. The Strasbourg proposal was a substantive initiative incorporating these concessions in clear terms. As stated earlier, it is absurd to ask His Holiness the Dalai Lama to change Tibet's past history of independence.

Xinhua: It is said that the central government has made painstaking efforts for negotiations with the Dalai Lama. But the Dalai Lama has alleged on many occasions that the central government is unwilling to negotiate with him. What are the actual facts?

Chinese Spokesman: *Up to now the Dalai Lama has not abandoned his stand for the "independence of Tibet". This is the largest obstacle to negotiations. The central government has worked hard to bring about the result that through negotiations, the Dalai Lama and his followers are reunited with the motherland after they abandon their independence stand. This has demonstrated the sincerity and patience of the central government.*

Since 1979, the central government departments have agreed and actually received the Dalai Lama's private representatives back in the motherland and listened attentively to their reports of the Dalai Lama's intentions. Some representatives have been greeted by leading members of the central government.

Early in 1989, the Panchen Lama died. Zhao Puchu, president of the China Buddhist Association, personally handed a letter of invitation to the private representatives of the Dalai Lama inviting him back home to attend the funeral ceremonies.

Such a solely religious invitation provided an excellent opportunity for the Dalai Lama to meet with people in Buddhist circles at home after spending over 30 years in exile. However, the Dalai Lama, turned down this invitation.

After the changes in the international situation in the later half of 1989, the Dalai Lama suspended contacts with the central government.

In the same year, the Dalai Lama brazenly split China into several parts, like "Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, Manchu", etc. in maps in his book "Freedom in Exile".

In 1992, as China's domestic situation had not turned in the direction which the Dalai Lama had anticipated, he asked to resume the contacts with the central government. On two occasions in 1992 and 1993, central government departments received the Dalai Lama's private representatives.

The reason that the central government did not publicize the over a dozen years' talks with the Dalai Lama's private representatives was that the central government departments explained on various occasions during the talks with the Dalai Lama's private representatives that the contacts were secret and should not be publicized. The Dalai Lama's private representatives made the same promises. We regret that the Dalai Lama's side has broken its promises. It not only publicized such contacts, but distorted the talks so as to mislead the public.

Tibetan Comment: In the Strasbourg proposal His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated unequivocally that he was prepared to negotiate a status other than independence. It is precisely for this reason that many Tibetans, both in and outside Tibet, have severely criticized this proposal. If the Chinese Government were sincere, this would have opened the way for talks.

It may be made clear for the umpteenth time that the issue at stake is not the return of either His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Tibetans in exile. The basic issue is the well being of the six million Tibetans inside Tibet. At present, they are denied their fundamental human rights and being speedily rendered an insignificant minority in their homeland. The Tibetans in Tibet are also deprived of any say in matters directly concerned with their own future. Instead of beating about the bush, the Chinese Government must demonstrate their sincerity by redressing these serious issues.

Indeed a number of delegations have visited Beijing since 1979. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the undisputed leader of the Tibetan people, the delegations sent by him must represent him in that capacity. We reiterate that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has absolutely no interest in discussing personal issues or status with the Chinese Government.

The Chinese Government's invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to attend the funeral ceremonies for the late Panchen Lama came when Tibet was under martial law. Naturally, it was not a conducive atmosphere for visit.

As far back as 1982 His Holiness suggested a visit to Tibet, and continued to follow up on this initiative with the Chinese Government till 1985. He did not receive any positive response. The suggestion for a visit to Tibet was repeated in 1992 and was, once again, turned down, by the Chinese Government.

On the contrary, the Chinese Government sought to derail His Holiness the Dalai Lama's initiatives for negotiations by refusing to lift martial law in Lhasa till 1990.

Despite this provocation, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has continued in his search for a peaceful solution. On April 19, 1989 it was again His Holiness the Dalai Lama who took the initiative to contact the Chinese Government through its Embassy in New Delhi to convey his willingness to "send some representatives to Hong Kong in order to resolve the procedural issues with respect to the negotiations". The Chinese Government was further informed of the Tibetan Government's belief "that the obstacles to start the negotiations could be resolved by such face-to-face consultations". This suggestion was also turned down.

Then, on March 25, 1991, we got in touch with the Chinese authorities, through their Embassy in New Delhi, in connection with the search for the authentic reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. At that time we had expressed a desire to send a delegation of high lamas and abbots to a sacred lake near Lhasa to pray for guidance in the search of the reincarnation. This was a confidence building measure from our side. Three months later, we received a response from the Chinese authorities rejecting our proposal.

Similarly, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama learnt of Chinese Premier Li Peng's visit to India, he sent a message expressing his desire to meet him. This was also rejected.

Apart from the invitations extended to Mr. Gyalo Thondup in 1979 and 1992, all the initiatives for contact and dialogue came only from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Chinese persistently rejected all his initiatives, leaving him with no alternative but to declare the Strasbourg proposal invalid in Switzerland on August 18, 1991.

The map used in *Freedom in Exile* was merely the reproduction of a historical map of the region.

In 1992, the Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi visited Mr. Thondup at his residence in the Indian capital and told him that in the past the Chinese side had been 'conservative', but that they were willing to be 'flexible' if the Tibetans were 'realistic'. The Ambassador suggested that Mr. Thondup visit Beijing to meet with senior Chinese officials.

In response, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile sent Mr. Thondup to Beijing to listen to what the Chinese had to say. Instead of demonstrating any flexibility, the Chinese leadership reiterated the self-same hard-line position and even made unfounded allegations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Thereafter, His Holiness wrote to Mr. Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin with a detailed memorandum refuting the allegations with full explanations of his past efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution. A high-level delegation was sent to deliver these messages to the Chinese leadership in July 1993.

In this memorandum, His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked the Chinese Government to come forward with its own proposals for consideration by Tibetans. The Chinese neither accepted His Holiness the Dalai Lama's proposal, nor came up with their own initiatives.

Again, on April 27, 1994, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, while addressing the New York Lawyers Alliance for World Security and the Council of Foreign Relations, said he was willing to "meet any member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo in a third country" to "make a breakthrough in our relationship".

The foregoing facts clearly show that since 1979 His Holiness the Dalai Lama has persisted in opening the line of communication with China.

In 1982, when the first exploratory talks were held in Beijing, both the parties agreed to keep the proceedings confidential. However, soon after the Tibetan delegation reached India on June 8, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman gave a distorted version of the talks, alluding that our delegates had asked for the same status for Tibet as had been promised to Taiwan if it accepted the unification. The Chinese spokesman was quoted in the Associated Press news dispatch of June 18, 1982 as having said, "There simply does not exist the question of applying the nine-point policy to Tibet as in the case of Taiwan."

Again, in December 1982, China's official weekly, *Beijing Review*, published another distorted version of the proceedings of our talks.

Nevertheless, the Tibetan side strictly adhered to its agreement of confidentiality and did not divulge the content of the talks even in response to queries from the press. As a result, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile suffered strong criticism from Tibetans and our supporters. The editorial of the independent monthly, *Tibetan Review*, July 1982, said:

Even before Dharamsala issued its apology for a statement, Peking informed foreign correspondents that the delegation had asked for Tibet a status similar to the one promised to Taiwan, and that they flatly rejected the request.

...So the question arises what did Dharamsala hope to achieve by making this extraordinary proposal. The idea of treating Tibet and Taiwan as identical cases is highly ludicrous; and when such an idea emanates from Ministers of the Tibetan government-in-exile, no one can be blamed for doubting their sanity.

Then, in 1984, the Chinese authorities surprised the second Tibetan exploratory delegation by deviously inviting a large number of Chinese media personnel to the venue of talks in Beijing without informing the Tibetans. This was a violation of our mutual understanding and aimed at giving one-sided views of the talk. Naturally, the Tibetan delegation was forced to issue a press statement in Beijing to clarify our position.

By the mid 1980s the Chinese Government made it quite clear that they were no longer interested in continuing bilateral talks with Tibetans. This forced us to make public the content of the talks in order to clear any misconceptions or misgivings in the minds of the Tibetan people and the rest of the world.

Xinhua: Why have the bilateral contacts not produced any results?

Chinese Spokesman: *The reason that the contacts have not produced any results and we cannot start our negotiations is that the Dalai Lama's side has not reached a common understanding with us on the fundamental issue that "Tibet is an inseparable part of China".*

They have even referred to the fundamental principles held by the central government as "preconditions and obstacles to negotiations".

We think that the fundamental principle is not a so-called precondition and obstacle to hinder negotiations, but the basis and guarantee for successful negotiations.

Tibetan Comment: Since 1979, we have repeatedly stated that we were ready to invite a committee of unbiased historians and international lawyers for their views on the historical relations between Tibet and China if the Chinese Government was willing to give them free access to all the relevant documents in Tibet and China.

As stated earlier, none of the Chinese arguments to support their claim on Tibet is tenable, historically or legally.

Tibet has never been an "inseparable part of China". Therefore, asking us to re-write our history to suit the Chinese interest is an unacceptable pre-condition, and thus, an obstacle to the negotiations.

It would seem that "the basis and guarantee for successful negotiations", as China wants it, is for Tibetans to put a stamp of legitimacy to their dictates. Such an expectation goes against the fundamental principle of negotiations.

Xinhua: It is clear that the responsibility for not being able to hold negotiations lies with the Dalai Lama's side. But is there any possibility for progress as the situation stands now?

Chinese Spokesman: *In China, we have a saying: "When the melon is ripe it falls off its stem; when the water flows, a channel is formed," which means that when conditions are ripe, success will come.*

Everything has its own laws of development. But some things will not be obvious or widely perceived as long as they have not developed to a certain stage. The central government will continue its efforts with sincerity and patience.

After all the Dalai Lama is a Chinese citizen. We still hope that he will abandon his idea of "independence of Tibet", stop living in exile and return to China for his remaining years.

Negotiation is the only appropriate method for making arrangements to resolve this question. We hope that the Dalai Lama will size up the situation, go with the tide of historical development and make a correct choice.

Tibetan Comment: The responsibility for stalling the negotiations lies solely with the Chinese Government. Whenever the Tibetan issue comes into international limelight, China announces its willingness to engage in dialogue with us. However, such announcements have proved to be nothing more than empty rhetoric, aimed at manipulating the international public opinion and bidding for time.

The Chinese Government cannot always rely on force and subterfuge. Ultimately, truth and justice will prevail as surely as melon will fall off its stem. This is already becoming evident in the support that is growing for the Tibetan cause among the international community and the Chinese people.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not a Chinese citizen. He will continue to lead the struggle of the Tibetan people and return to Tibet only when an amicable solution to the Tibetan problem is found.

For the last fifteen years, we have made a number of proposals for negotiations to resolve the Tibetan issue for the mutual benefit of Tibet and China. Only dialogue and willingness to look with honesty and clarity at the reality of Tibet can lead to a viable solution. We hope the Chinese Government will respond positively to our proposals. This, we believe, is the historical contribution Tibetans and the Chinese can make to the stability of Asia and the world.