EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A SUPPLY ROUTE TO CHINA THROUGH TIBET; ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES TOWARD STATUS OF TIBET  

893.24/1506a: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Personal Representative of President Roosevelt in India (Phillips)

WASHINGTON, January 22, 1943—11 p. m.

41. We would like to know whether overland shipment of non-military war supplies through Tibet for China has materialized. Will you please contact Chinese Commissioner Shen ² regarding this matter as contemplated in discussions with Commissioner Shen last August by Franklin Ray? ³ Should this be the case, please notify us quantities and types of such goods as have been shipped to date. Please give this information by months.

We would like to know whether such forwardings have included any Lend-Lease supplies.

Hull

893.24/1507: Telegram

The Personal Representative of President Roosevelt in India (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, January 26, 1943—4 p. m.

[Received 4:27 p. m.]

75. Chinese Commissioner, just returned from consultation at Chungking, says no supplies have yet been shipped to China through Tibet. Practicability of this route is now being reconsidered in Chungking and from Commissioner's remarks it is inferred decision of Chinese Government likely to be negative (reference Department's 41, January 22, 11 p. m.).

Commissioner believes that after allowing for essential Tibetan traffic the actual annual capacity of this route, so far as through ship-

¹ Continued from Foreign Relations, 1942, China, pp. 624–631.
² S. H. Shen, Chinese Commissioner in India.
³ J. Franklin Ray, Jr., Lend-Lease Administration representative.
ment to China is concerned, would be nearer 1,000 tons than the 3 to 4,000 originally estimated.

Political difficulties are also involved. Tibetans are uncooperative apparently distrusting intentions of both India and China and fearing undue expansion of their influence. India lays blame for this attitude on China, and vice versa. Tibetans apparently made difficulties over proposed stationing of British, Indian and Chinese officials along route to check shipments and for a time consideration was given to possibility of turning goods over to ordinary caravans for unsupervised transportation to Chinese border. A trial shipment of 50 tons was made ready in India but is being held up pending Chungking decision expected within a month.

Suggest if you have not already done so, you check with Victor* for possible reports on this route from two representatives* now at Lhasa.

PHILLIPS

---

893.21/1529 : Telegram

_The Personal Representative of President Roosevelt in India (Phillips) to the Secretary of State_

NEW DELHI, February 8, 1943—7 p. m.
[Received 9:55 p. m.]

113. Report on supply routes to China by Gordon Bowles is being air mailed. He quotes Foreign Office official here as saying Government of India has no objection to use of Tibetan routes but refuses to reopen discussions except on basis of joint arrangements with both Chinese and Tibetan Governments. Bowles understands from Chinese Commissioner that his Government, considering Tibet an integral part of China, will reject any proposal for tripartite negotiations including Tibetan Government. Commissioner believes China will not sacrifice principle involved for the small quantity of goods which might thus be received.

Inform Stettinius* and Stone.* Also refer Department’s 41, January 22, 11 p. m.

PHILLIPS

* Code name for Office of Strategic Services.
* Capt. Ilii Tolstoy and Lt. Brooke Dolan.
* Not printed: for correspondence on this subject, see pp. 614 ff.
* Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Lend-Lease Administrator.
* William T. Stone, Assistant Director, Board of Economic Warfare.
803.00 Tibet/77

The Tibetan Foreign Office to Captain Ilia Tolstoy and Lieutenant Brooke Dolan

[Translation]

On the 21st day of 12th month, the year of Water Horse (corresponding to January 1943), you two came to the Foreign Office and brought a letter. We sent it to the Regent through Kashag. When you arrived at Delhi the British Foreign Office, through Mr. Ludlow, said that two American gentlemen wanted to come to Tibet with the purpose of giving a letter and present to the Dalai Lama from Mr. Roosevelt. When the letters would be delivered you promised to return to India if the Tibetan Government does not want you to go to China. Now you said that you have received a telegram from the American Government saying that you must go to Kansu Country of Lanchow, and ask Tibetan Government to allow you to go straight to China.

This is the first time that friendly relations were established between Tibet and the U. S. A. and Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt also has sent letter and presents to the Dalai Lama. For above reasons the Tibetan Government allows you to go through and will not set a precedent which other foreigners can claim. So according to your wishes, you and your servants can proceed via Nagchu to Jyekundo and up to Sining. There are many dangers from robbers and thieves, so we are sending one of our monk officials or lay officer and one sergeant of Tashi Fort and 5 soldiers by the order of the Tibetan Government.

13th Day of 1st month, Water Sheep Year. (Corresponding to February 1943.)

803.00 Tibet/77

The Tibetan Regent (Tak-dak Pundit) to President Roosevelt

[Translation]

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Your Envoys, Capt. I. Tolstoy and Lieut. Brooke Dolan, arrived here safely with your letter and presents to His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet. I was also present when they had an interview with His Holiness and very pleased to learn that you, being most fortunate, are in perfect enjoyment of your health and carrying on the great work for the good of mankind.

Tibet, which has been free and independent from her earliest history, devotes her entire resources in the cause of religion, and being the great seat of Buddhism, we are striving to maintain and strengthen

*This note and the letters from the Regent and the Dalai Lama, infra, were transmitted to the Department by the Office of Strategic Services in a letter dated April 6, 1944.
our national and religious status. I hope and pray for an immediate cessation of hostilities so that the world may enjoy peace and prosperity. It is hoped that you will take the greatest care of your health and that I may often have the pleasure of hearing from you personally.

As a token of my regard I am sending you herewith a scarf of honour and a hand sewn thanga (depicting the man blessed with long life and other lucky signs, framed in blue brocade silk, etc.).

Yours very sincerely, 

TAK-DAK PUNDIT

Dated 11th Day of the 1st Tibetan Month, Water Sheep Year, corresponding to 15th February 1943.

The Dalai Lama of Tibet to President Roosevelt

[Translation]

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We received with the greatest gratification your letter and the tokens of goodwill (your autographed photo and an exquisite gold watch showing phases of the moon and the days of the week) through your Envoys, Capt. I. Tolstoy and Lieut. Brooke Dolan, who arrived here safely for the purpose of visiting the Pontificate and the city of Lhasa.

We are happy to learn that you and the people of the United States of America take great interest in our country and it is of special significance that the people of the United States of America, in association with those of 27 other countries, are now engaged in a war for the preservation of freedom, which has been thrust upon them by nations bent on conquest who are intent upon destroying freedom of thought, of religion, and of action everywhere.

Tibet also values her freedom and independence enjoyed from time immemorial and being the great seat of the Buddhist religion I am endeavoring, in spite of my tender age, to uphold and propagate our religious precepts and thereby emulate the pious work of my predecessors. I earnestly hope and pray for a speedy termination of hostilities so that the nations of the world may enjoy a lasting and righteous peace, based on the principles of freedom and goodwill.

As a token of my regard I am sending herewith a scarf of honour, three Tibetan coins of the first precious metal (gold), my photo, and three hand sewn thangas (depicting the sextet blessed with long existence, the 4 dutiful brothers (friends), and the 8 lucky signs, all framed in blue brocade silk, etc.).

Yours sincerely,

DALAI LAMA

Dated 19th Day of the 1st Tibetan Month, Water Sheep Year, corresponding to 24th February 1943.
Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by Mr. Alger Hiss, Assistant to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck)

[WASHINGTON,] March 20, 1943.

Colonel M. Preston Goodfellow of O.S.S. called me on the telephone and said that the two men from O.S.S. sent to Tibet have reported that the Cabinet of Tibet has through them requested a complete radio transmitting set for use for broadcasting within Tibet. Colonel Goodfellow went on to say that O.S.S. has such a set which could be made available for this purpose, and that Colonel Donovan and others in O.S.S. consider that the two men now in Tibet have done a good job of establishing friendly relations with the Tibetan authorities and that it would be helpful to our war effort in “the general area” if the set should be sent. Colonel Goodfellow asked whether I thought the Department of State would be interested in this question and upon my saying that in my opinion we would, he asked me to ascertain informally the views of the Department or the manner in which the Department would like to have the question raised with it by O.S.S. I undertook to do this and to inform him of the results of my inquiries as soon as possible.

Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Atcheson)

[WASHINGTON,] March 30, 1943.

Reference the suggestion made by the Office of Strategic Services to ship to Tibet a radio transmitter which the Cabinet Ministers of the Tibetan Government have requested through the two representatives of the Office of Strategic Services who are now in that country.

After careful consideration of this matter in so far as it may affect our relations with China, we are of the opinion that to supply a radio transmitting set to the Tibetans would be politically embarrassing and cause irritation and offense to the Chinese for the following reasons:

(1) In November 1941 the Chinese requested that we allocate under Lend-Lease and ship to them a radio transmitter. This request we have not complied with because of shipping and air transport limitations.

(2) The question of supplying China with the equipment she desires is a particularly delicate one at the present time. It is almost certain that to supply the Tibetans with a radio transmitter when we have
failed to meet a similar request made by the Chinese over a year ago would give offense to the Chinese.

(3) The Chinese Government claims suzerainty over Tibet. Therefore, in all probability, the Chinese Government would not welcome the introduction into Tibet of such a potent facility as a radio transmitter, particularly as the Chinese are not likely to have any actual control over the transmitter or the material broadcasted.

(4) The Chinese probably have no objection to and may even welcome the dispatch of American “visitors” to Tibet from time to time but it is hardly conceivable that they would look with favor upon our supplying the Tibetans with any equipment which might be used against them in any way.

We therefore recommend, from the point of view of our relations with China, that these considerations be brought to the attention of the Office of Strategic Services; that that agency be urged to drop the proposal to ship a radio transmitter to the Tibetans and that some other gift be substituted therefor.

G[Eorge] A[tkisson], JR.

893.01/945

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Alger Hiss, Assistant to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck)

[WASHINGTON,] April 3, 1943.

I called Colonel Goodfellow and informed him of the view which had been expressed by officers of the Department. I then asked him whether O.S.S. would desire to receive the Department’s views in some more formal manner stating that unless O.S.S. should decide to drop the matter of sending transmitting station to Tibet, I believed that the Department would wish to press its objections more strenuously.

Colonel Goodfellow was most agreeable and reasonable about the matter and seemed to perceive the cogency of the objections to the proposed action. He said that he would pass our views on to the interested officials in the O.S.S. and that he would let me know if there was any disposition to continue favorable consideration of the project.

Colonel Goodfellow made only one statement of significance that we have not already been familiar with. He said that it had been the thought in O.S.S. that the transmitter would be available in Tibet for American use. I did not comment on this point and he did not seem to think that it warranted any reconsideration on our part.
The Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan) to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck)

WASHINGTON, April 12, 1943.

My Dear Dr. Hornbeck: We have received a cable from two of our representatives in Lhasa relaying a request by the National Assembly and the Tibetan Cabinet that we obtain priorities so that they may purchase three fully-equipped portable wireless stations to set up a trans-Tibet network. These stations will be 100 watts each and the equipment requested can be purchased for a total cost of $4500.

An historical precedent is broken by this request which, if complied with, will open the Tibet region 1200 miles east and west for Allied influence and further modernization of territory which will be strategically valuable in the future.

Our authorities in New Delhi and the Government of India both agree in principle.

We have the equipment which they have requested on hand in this office and would like to provide it to the Tibetan Government as a gift from the United States. I believe that this would have a very wholesome effect upon our relations. We have furnished communications equipment to the Chinese in excess of $50,000.

The two representatives of this office in Lhasa, through whom we received this request, have presented to the Delhi Llama [Dalai Lama] a letter of greetings from the President of the United States, which was received with much ceremony.

If you approve of our proposal, we will proceed to ship the equipment to our representatives in Lhasa for presentation with the compliments of the United States to the Tibetan Cabinet.

Sincerely,

William J. Donovan

---

The British Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

On the 15th March, Mr. Eden ²⁰ had a conversation in Washington with Dr. T. V. Soong ²¹ during the course of which the latter raised the question of Tibet. Dr. Soong said that Mr. Eden would doubtless be aware of the fact that the Government of China had always regarded Tibet as a part of the Republic, and that during his visit to

²⁰ Anthony Eden, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
²¹ Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs.
India Chiang Kai-shek\textsuperscript{12} had not been wholly reassured by what he had learnt of the attitude of the Government of India on this question. The Generalissimo had said that when a suggestion had been made for opening up a route through Tibet to China, the British Government had appeared reluctant to agree. Mr. Eden replied that his impression was that the reluctance referred to was caused by the physical difficulties involved and not by any political ones. As, however, Mr. Eden was not sufficiently fully or recently briefed on this subject, the point was not discussed further.

On receipt of an account of the above conversation the Viceroy\textsuperscript{13} has telegraphed from New Delhi giving the facts on the Tibetan question and adding his comments on Dr. Soong’s remarks regarding firstly, Tibet’s position on the map of Asia, and secondly, the attitude of the Government of India to trans-Tibetan communications. Lord Linlithgow adds that he does not consider that Dr. Soong’s remarks represent accurately the real position, which is briefly as follows.

1. Tibet acknowledged the suzerainty of the Manchu Empire: when, however, that Empire fell the Tibetans expelled the Chinese troops that were at that time in Lhasa and secured the return of the Dalai Lama from China [India?]. In 1913 a Tripartite Conference was held in Simla between representatives of Tibet and of the Chinese and British Governments in an endeavour to resolve the existing differences relating both to the constitutional position as between China and Tibet and to the boundaries separating Tibet from India and China. The resulting convention, which was initialled by the delegates of all three parties, recognised that Tibet was under the suzerainty of China but acknowledged the autonomy of Outer Tibet. The convention was ratified by Tibet and the Government of India; the Chinese Republic, however, declined to ratify and the Tibetan attitude has subsequently been that, in view of this Chinese refusal, Tibet is not bound to admit Chinese suzerainty and is an entirely independent state. In 1934 the Chinese Government sent Huang Mu Sung to Lhasa on a mission of condolence on the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama; through Huang Tibet was offered a settlement of the boundary issue in return for Tibetan acceptance of subordination to China, with Chinese control of Tibet’s foreign relations. This overture the Tibetan Government rejected. Shortly before the installation of the new Dalai Lama in 1940 the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs,\textsuperscript{14} explaining the intention to send a Chinese representative to the ceremonies, stated that: “The representative has been instructed by the Chinese Government to say that China would at all times be ready

\textsuperscript{12} Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, President of the Chinese Executive Yuan (Premier), visited India in February 1942.
\textsuperscript{13} Marquess of Linlithgow.
\textsuperscript{14} Wang Chung-hui.
to help Tibet, if Tibet desired it, but that China promised not to interfere in the development of Tibet along Tibetan lines”. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also said: “The Tibetan Government must not continue to think that China has any bad intentions towards Tibet”. The British representative who attended the ceremonies was instructed to inform the Tibetan Government of these statements of the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Ever since the abortive 1913 Convention the attitude of the Government of India has been that they wished to secure agreement between China and Tibet and were willing to advise the Tibetan Government to admit formal Chinese suzerainty, although such an admission would in no sense constitute Tibet a Province of China. The Government of India have always held that Tibet is a separate country in full enjoyment of local autonomy, entitled to exchange diplomatic representatives with other powers. The relationship between China and Tibet is not a matter which can be unilaterally decided by China, but one on which Tibet is entitled to negotiate, and on which she can, if necessary, count on the diplomatic support of the British Government along the lines shown above.

II. On the question of trans-Tibetan communications, Lord Linlithgow recalls that, for purely practical reasons of geography and meteorology, the Government of India was unable to encourage the Chinese suggestion of building a highway from Western Szechuan through Eastern Tibet to Assam—a project which, if not entirely impossible, would have taken years to complete. It should on the other hand be recalled that the initiative for the organisation for a pack route from Kalimpong via Central Tibet to China was taken by the Government of India. In spite of two rebuffs from Lhasa, the Government of India persisted and was finally successful. The Chinese Government on the other hand, although their representative in Lhasa was kept informed of these negotiations, made no effort to participate in them: when the time came to work out practical details the Chinese Government made certain stipulations in regard to supervision of this route by Chinese officials, stipulations which the Tibetan Government were unable to accept. The Chinese Government moreover opposed any form of tripartite agreement in which the British Government would participate. In spite of this attitude taken up by the Chinese Government, the Government of India did not cease to exhort the Chinese Commissioner in India to continue his efforts to despatch goods to China via Tibet through trade channels, and promised all assistance from the Indian end. Lack of further progress has been due to the unforthcoming attitude of the Chinese and to the Tibetan Government’s suspicion of Chinese intentions.

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1943.
The Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) to the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan)

WASHINGTON, April 23, 1943.

My dear General Donovan: The receipt is acknowledged of your secret letter of April 12, 1943, addressed to Mr. Hornbeck, stating that you have received from two of your representatives in Lhasa a cable relaying a request by the National Assembly and the Tibetan Cabinet that you obtain priorities so that they may purchase three fully equipped portable wireless stations to set up a trans-Tibet network; that these stations will be 100 watts each and the equipment requested can be purchased for a total cost of $4,500; and that you would like to provide this equipment to the Tibetan Government as a gift from the United States.

Tibet is, as you know, regarded by the Chinese as a dependency of China, and the Government of the United States has never taken action in contravention or disregard of that Chinese view. The susceptibilities of the Chinese Government are of importance to this country and to the United Nations in connection with the war effort as a whole. It therefore is desirable, in any relations which we may have with the Tibetan authorities or in any action which we may take vis-à-vis them, to avoid gratuitously or inadvertently giving offense to the Chinese Government. In the light of those facts, it is believed that effort should be made to ascertain whether supplying of this equipment by this Government to the Tibetan Government as a contribution to the war effort would or would not be likely to offend Chinese susceptibilities. It therefore is suggested that this matter be referred through the War Department to General Stilwell. If, then, it is ascertained that the proposed action appears to be unobjectionable from the point of view referred to above, this Department would suggest that the project under reference be regarded thereafter as a military matter and that decision be made on that basis.

Sincerely yours,

Adolf A. Berle, Jr.

893.24/1592: Telegram

The Chargé in India (Merrell) to the Secretary of State

New Delhi, May 14, 1943—4 p. m.
[Received 8:50 p. m.]

340. Government of India press note announces Tibet has agreed to transportation through its territory of non-military supplies for China.
Chinese representatives here were not aware that these arrangements had been concluded until press article appeared, and they believe Chungking was similarly uninformed. They have subsequently been told that Government of India pressed Tibet to act favorably on this long standing question on grounds that continued refusal would lead to serious deterioration in relations between Tibet and China. Tibet finally agreed but only on condition that (1) no military supplies of any sort be thus transported; and (2) no foreign supervision of shipments while in Tibet would be permitted. It accordingly does not appear likely that Lend-Lease goods will be shipped from India to China via Tibet. In opinion Chinese officers here, the route with annual capacity estimated at from 1 to 3000 tons will probably be used only for Chinese civilian supplies purchased in India.

Repeated to Chungking with request Bowles be informed.

Merrell

893.24/1594

_The Department of State to the British Embassy_

**AIDE-MÉMOIRE**

The Department of State appreciates the courtesy of the British Embassy in acquainting this Government, in the Embassy's aide-mémoire of April 19, 1943, with the attitude of the Government of India in regard to the Tibetan question and with developments in the project of a pack animal supply route to China via Tibet.

The Government of the United States has made note of the steps taken and the attitude shown by the Government of India toward establishing a supply route to China through Tibet. This Government of course hopes that any existing difficulties may be resolved in a way acceptable to all concerned.

With regard to the position of Tibet in Asia, the British Government has been so good as to give an account of its historical attitude. For its part, the Government of the United States has borne in mind the fact that the Chinese Government has long claimed suzerainty over Tibet and that the Chinese constitution lists Tibet among areas constituting the territory of the Republic of China. This Government has at no time raised a question regarding either of these claims. The Government of the United States does not believe that a useful purpose would be served by opening at this time a detailed discussion of the status of Tibet.

Washington, May 15, 1943.
SUPPLY ROUTES TO CHINA

893.24/1593: Telegram

The Chargé in India (Merrell) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, May 15, 1943—7 p. m.
[Received May 16—12:46 a.m.]

344. I was informed by Weightman, Joint Secretary External Affairs, in strictest confidence this morning that the announcement regarding a route through Tibet reported in my 340, May 14 was made at this time in order that China might not attempt to justify any aggression against Tibet by saying that all possibility of transport from India across Tibet was denied China. British Government had endeavored last August to persuade Tibetan authorities to open such a route and latter had said they would do so only if a tripartite agreement between Tibet, China and India were reached. Chinese Government had declined to consider such an agreement on ground that Tibet is considered a part of China. As a result of the announcement, Weightman states, [that?] Generalissimo recently made of his intention of retaking all lost territory including Tibet and of a report heard through “a leak” to effect that [he?] ordered governors of Sikang, Yunnan and Chinghai to send troops to Tibetan border (only the last mentioned complying), British through their Mission at Lhasa successfully prevailed upon the Tibetans to agree to consent to the use of a route under the conditions mentioned in my telegram 340.

Weightman believes that Embassy in Chungking has been informed of information obtained through the leak and that British Ambassador in Washington\(^{15}\) has discussed matter with Department.

I have just received a letter from Tolstoy dated Sog, Tibet, April 17 in which he says that he had heard night before that Tibetan and Chinese troops are advancing toward each other and that Chinese troops had received their orders from Central Government. He also had heard a rumor from a Tibetan officer that Chinese had asked Government to invade Tibet and had been refused. Weightman states that no such request was received.

Tolstoy has apparently informed British at Lhasa that he is reporting on situation in a telegram which is presumably one Mission is relaying to Victor under today’s date. Weightman requests that substance of this telegram be retransmitted here in one of Mission’s codes or conveyed to British Embassy in Washington.

Repeated to Chungking.

\(^{15}\) Viscount Halifax.
WASHINGTON, May 18, 1943—7 p.m.

633. British Embassy here has received information from British Embassy at Chungking to the effect that a force of 10,000 Chinese troops has been concentrated along the Tibetan borders. British Embassy stated this information is based on a report received from "an American officer" who recently returned to Chungking from Sining, Chinghai. It has also been learned from the British Embassy that this report has caused the British Government some concern and that in consequence the British Ambassador recently called on the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs to discuss this matter; that the Vice Minister indicated he had no information substantiating this report but took occasion to reiterate the position of the Chinese Government vis-à-vis Tibet.

The Department would appreciate receiving any information the Embassy may have in regard to the foregoing, but desires that you not make inquiries in this connection except very discreetly in official American circles.

HULL

CHUNGKING, May 25, 1943—2 p.m.

[Received May 25—11:25 a.m.]

777. Department's 633, May 18, 7 p.m. American officer referred to is an Assistant Naval Attaché who visited Sining briefly in latter part of April in company with an Assistant Military Attaché. Information given former by Secretary of Chinghai Government was that 10,000 Chinghai troops had been moved toward Tibetan border (actual location is probably north border of Sikang as shown on Chinese maps) in obedience to Generalissimo's orders. Governor of Sikang is also understood to have been asked to permit passage of Central Government troops toward Tibet or in lieu of this to despatch his own troops. Governor Liu Wen-hui has reportedly refused to do either (see New Delhi's 344, May 15, 7 p.m.).

Chinese objectives in these moves seem to be: (1) to bring pressure on Tibet to permit opening two nd [to the?] Central Government [and?] control of transportation routes and transit of military supplies (Tibetans apparently remain intransient on this question and

"Lt. S. H. Hitch, Assistant Naval Attaché in China.
in 1942 attacked Ministry of Communications route survey party, killing chief); (2) to gain a foothold for the Central Government in the presently independent province of Sikang and Chinghai; (3) eventually to bring Tibet under effective Chinese control. Chinese pretext is that Tibetans instigated by Japanese agents and aided by Japanese arms and planes are planning offensive action against Chinese border provinces.

While there is some basis for belief in presence in Tibet of a few Japanese agents, reports of Japanese activity and Tibetan aggressiveness are believed exaggerated.

In their present nationalistic state of mind the Chinese may be expected to resent any active British interest in Tibetan affairs.

More detailed report follows by despatch.  

Aitcheson

893.00 Tibet/04

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Joseph W. Ballantine of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] May 31, 1943.

Sir George Sansom 19 called at my request and I told him that we had received a telegram dated May 15 from our Mission in New Delhi (New Delhi's 344, May 15, 7 p.m.) in which telegram it was stated (1) that the American representative at Lhasa had informed the British that he was reporting on the situation in Tibet and (2) that Weightman, Joint Secretary of External Affairs at New Delhi, had requested that the substance of that report be conveyed to the British Embassy in Washington. I told Sir George that we had made inquiry of the War Department and had obtained a paraphrase of a telegram which embodied the report apparently referred to (a message from Ferris, 20 dated New Delhi, May 16, to the War Department). I let Sir George read the telegram. He said that he had had practically all of the information in the telegram except the statement contained in the last sentence to the effect that according to the British the reincorporation of Tibet was among the objectives laid down by General Chiang Kai-shek in a book recently published, presumably by the Chinese Government.

Sir George then told me that at a Pacific Council meeting in Washington on May 20 Mr. T. V. Soong had said in reply to Mr. Churchill 21 that there was not and would not be a concentration of Chinese troops

19 Apparently not sent.
20 Brig. Gen. Benjamin G. Ferris, Acting Chief of Staff to General Stilwell.
21 Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister.
against Tibet though the Chinese Government claimed that Tibet was a part of China; and that the Prime Minister had replied that no one contested Chinese suzerainty and that the essential thing now was to avoid making any new difficulties.

Sir George also let me have an extract from a telegram dated May 25 from the British Foreign Office. He said that the matter was of no importance but he thought that the Tibetan reply quoted therein was rather amusing. This extract was as follows:

“As regards assurance concerning alleged Japanese activities in Tibet, Tibetan reply states in part as follows. ‘Tibet being a country entirely devoted to religion we rigorously guard our frontiers from intrusion and emphatically deny having any dealings or understandings with other foreign powers.’”

JOSEPH W. B[ALLANTINE]

740.0011 Pacific War/3272: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in China (Atcheson)

WASHINGTON, June 6, 1943—noon.

730. Chungking’s 777, May 25, 2 p.m. On May 31 an officer of the British Embassy, in conversation with an officer of the Department, stated inter alia that during the course of a recent meeting of the Pacific Council held in Washington Dr. T. V. Soong had replied to an inquiry made by Prime Minister Churchill that, notwithstanding the Chinese Government’s claim that Tibet was a part of China, Chinese troops were not and would not be massed on the Tibetan borders; and that the British Prime Minister had rejoined that Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was not contested by anyone but that it was essential at the present time to avoid any new complications or difficulties.

HULL

893.00 Tibet/70

The British Embassy to the Department of State

STATUS OF TIBET

(Policy of His Majesty’s Government towards Tibetan relations with China).

Until the Chinese Revolution of 1911 Tibet acknowledged the suzerainty of the Manchu Empire and a measure of control from Peking which fluctuated from military occupation to a mere nominal link. Since 1911 Tibet has enjoyed de facto independence. His Majesty’s

H[andled to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck) on September 14 by Sir George Sansom of the British Embassy.]
Government made repeated attempts after 1911 to bring the Chinese Republic and the Tibetan Government together on the basis that Tibet should be autonomous under the nominal suzerainty of China, but these attempts always broke down on the question of the boundary between China and Tibet, and eventually in 1921 His Majesty’s Government presented the Chinese Government with a declaration to the effect that they did not feel justified in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous state under the suzerainty of China, and that they intended dealing on that basis with Tibet in the future.

2. The Chinese Government have since 1921 attempted to an increasing extent to import some substance into their suzerainty over Tibet, while the Tibetans repudiate any measure of Chinese control. There have been several recent indications that the Chinese Government intend to press their claim that Tibet is part of China, and the point is likely to come up whenever any question affecting Tibet is under discussion with the Chinese Government. Thus, last year they proposed, contrary to the wishes of the Tibetan Government, to post officials in Tibet to supervise the organisation of a supply route to China, and when Mr. Eden was in Washington in March, Dr. T. V. Soong said in connexion with this route that his Government had always regarded Tibet as part of the Republic of China.

3. In these circumstances His Majesty’s Government have reconsidered their attitude towards this question, having regard in particular to the consideration that any unconditional recognition of Chinese suzerainty would weaken their position in defending Tibet’s claim to autonomy. While they are bound by a promise to the Tibetan Government to support them in maintaining the practical autonomy of Tibet, which is of importance to the security of India and to the tranquility of India’s north east frontier, on the other hand Great Britain’s alliance with China makes it difficult to give effective material support to Tibet. It is therefore desirable so far as possible to prevent the dispute between China and Tibet regarding the latter’s status coming to a head at present. Nevertheless, at some stage discussion with the Chinese Government regarding this matter is probably inevitable. It has therefore been decided that in any such discussions the following line should be taken in so far as the circumstances render it necessary:—

(a) It should be pointed out that Tibet has in practice regarded herself as autonomous and has maintained her autonomy for over 30 years.

(b) It can be stated categorically that neither His Majesty’s Government nor the Government of India have any ambitions in Tibet other than the maintenance of friendly relations.
(c) It should be recalled that the attitude of His Majesty’s Government has always been that they recognize Chinese suzerainty, but that this is on the understanding that Tibet is regarded as autonomous.

(d) It should be stated that this is still their position and any unconditional admission of Chinese suzerainty should be avoided. Any amicable arrangement which China felt disposed to make with Tibet whereby the latter recognised Chinese suzerainty in return for an agreed frontier and an undertaking to recognise Tibetan autonomy would be welcomed by His Majesty’s Government and the Government of India. The two latter Governments would be glad to offer any help desired by both parties to this end.

4. The foregoing would make it clear that His Majesty’s Government do not feel themselves committed to regard China as the suzerain unless she in turn agrees to Tibetan autonomy. For the present, it is better that the matter should be left at that. But at a later stage it may prove necessary to add that:—

(e) If the Chinese Government contemplate the withdrawal of Tibetan autonomy, His Majesty’s Government and the Government of India must ask themselves whether in the changed circumstances of to-day it would be right for them to continue to recognise even a theoretical status of subservience for a people who desire to be free and have, in fact, maintained their freedom for more than thirty years.

5. His Majesty’s representatives should be guided by the foregoing considerations in any questions regarding the status of Tibet which may arise.

FOREIGN OFFICE, [LONDON,] 22 July, 1943.

893.00/15110

The Chargé in China (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State

No. 1482

CHUNGKING, August 17, 1943. [Received September 3.]

Sir: I have the honor to refer to the Embassy’s airgram A–20, July 31, noon, in regard to Sino-Tibetan relations, and to transmit here-with a copy of despatch No. 7, July 10, 1943, from the Embassy officer at Lanchow, which was summarized in this airgram.

Especial attention is invited to the last paragraph of the despatch in which Mr. Service describes the attitude of Captain Tolstoy and Lieutenant Dolan as being strongly pro-Tibetan and critical of China and of what appear to be Chinese intentions in regard to Tibet. During the course of a recent conversation in Chungking with officers of the Embassy Captain Tolstoy strongly intimated that he felt that

---

*22 Not printed.
*24 John S. Service; enclosure not printed.
the United States should support the Tibetans vis-à-vis the Chinese Government.

As of further interest in this connection it may be mentioned that during the course of a recent conversation Dr. Victor Hoo, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated confidentially that he had received reports to the effect that Captain Tolstoy has assured the Tibetans that the United States would support them in their desire to remain independent of China; that he was very surprised at these reports because the United States had always shown a "very correct attitude" in regard to Tibet; and that he would obtain more specific information in the matter and communicate it to us in due course.

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE ATCHESON, JR.

The British Embassy to the Department of State

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE TO THE BRITISH EMBASSY, WASHINGTON, (AUGUST 28, 1943)

The Government of India have received information from reliable sources in Tibet stating that the number of Chinese troops in the Jyekmago [Jylekundo] area is considerably greater than the garrisons of former years and that additional troops are being recruited and additional arms are arriving. The Tibetan Government are said to have found it necessary to increase their own forces and there is considerable nervous tension.

The Government of India are instructing their representatives at Lhassa to inform the Tibetan Foreign Office that they have taken note of this information, that they advise them to verify it and to ensure that their own troops do nothing to provoke a frontier incident.

The British Embassy to the Department of State

TIBET

Since the Chinese Revolution of 1911, when Chinese forces were withdrawn from Tibet, Tibet has enjoyed de facto independence. She

25 Handed to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck) on September 14 by Sir George Sansom of the British Embassy who stated that the British Foreign Office "wish to know whether we would think it possible to have our representative in Chungking express interest in this matter."

26 Brackets appear in the original.

27 Notation at top in ink, presumably by Sir George Sansom of the British Embassy who handed this paper to Dr. Hornbeck on September 14: "Copy of memorandum sent to Dr. Soong (in London) by Mr. Eden August 5, 1943, in personal letter."
has ever since regarded herself as in practice completely autonomous and has opposed Chinese attempts to reassert control.

Since 1911, repeated attempts have been made to bring about an accord between China and Tibet. It seemed likely that agreement could be found on the basis that Tibet should be autonomous under the nominal suzerainty of China, and this was the basis of the draft tripartite (Chinese-Tibetan-British) convention of 1914 which was initialled by the Chinese representative but was not ratified by the Chinese Government. The rock on which this convention and subsequent attempts to reach an understanding were wrecked was not the question of autonomy (which was expressly admitted by China) but was the question of the boundary between China and Tibet, since the Chinese Government claimed sovereignty over areas which the Tibetan Government claimed belonged exclusively to their autonomous jurisdiction.

The boundary question, however, remained insuperable and, since the delay in reaching agreement was hampering the development of more normal relations between India and Tibet, eventually in 1921 the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Curzon) informed the then Chinese Minister (Dr. Wellington Koo) that the British Government did not feel justified in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China, and intended dealing on this basis with Tibet in the future.

This is the principle which has since guided the attitude of the British Government towards Tibet. They have always been prepared to recognise Chinese suzerainty over Tibet but only on the understanding that Tibet is regarded as autonomous. Neither the British Government nor the Government of India have any territorial ambitions in Tibet but they are interested in the maintenance of friendly relations with, and the preservation of peaceful conditions in, an area which is coterminous with the North-East frontiers of India. They would welcome any amicable arrangements which the Chinese Government might be disposed to make with Tibet whereby the latter recognised Chinese suzerainty in return for an agreed frontier and an undertaking to recognise Tibetan autonomy and they would gladly offer any help desired by both parties to this end.
The Chargé in China (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State

No. 1598  Chungking, September 20, 1943.

[Received October 14.]

Sir: I have the honor to enclose 28 a copy of despatch No. 117, August 11, 1943, from the Embassy officer at Chengtu 29 entitled “Four Facets of the Tibetan Problem”. The four “facets”, or points of view, mentioned by Mr. Smith are those of (1) the Central Government, which desires the extension of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet in fact as well as in name, (2) the Tibetans, who apparently want only to be left alone, (3) the British, who oppose direct Chinese control over Tibet, and (4) the Chinese border war lords who are busy “playing both ends against the middle” in an effort to bolster their own positions.

Summary. Information obtained from an advisor on Tibetan affairs to the Szechwan Provincial Government and former minor official in a border region of Tibet is to the effect that there are at least eight Japanese bonzes living in Tibet but that they are so closely watched that their activities are not dangerous to the cause of the United Nations; that, probably in April of this year, Chiang Kai-shek issued orders to the Chairmen of the three provinces bordering on Tibet to move their troops further into Tibetan controlled areas; but that due to lack of ability or desire on the part of the Chairmen the scheduled “drive” amounted only to a few minor border incidents. This informant, as well as President Y. P. Mei of Yenching University and another Yenching professor with special knowledge of Tibet, 30 expressed the opinion that any attempt to extend Chinese control over Tibet by force would be bitterly resented by the Tibetans (enclosure No. 2). In background “Notes on Tibet” (obtained from a British Indian official) written by a private scholar who is said to have access to official British sources of information (enclosure No. 3) the nationality and culture of the Tibetans as distinct from those of the Chinese are stressed; mention is made of the “British policy of supporting Tibetan independence or complete autonomy . . . 31 based on the interest of India in peaceful and orderly conditions along the frontier”; and it is pointed out that as “the new China” (as contrasted with the “Manchu dynastic empire”) “is based on a purely Chinese nationalism and as Tibet . . . has now for a generation been independent de facto of Chinese rule, there does not seem to be any good ground on which China can now assert an unqualified right of sovereignty . . .”. A quotation from a translation of China’s Destiny by Chiang Kai-shek (enclosure No. 4) indicates that the Generalissimo feels that China should make “plans” for “the restoration of our national sovereignty” over Tibet. End of summary.

28 Enclosures not printed.
29 Horace H. Smith.
30 Professor Li An-che.
31 Omissions indicated in the original.
There have been increasing indications in recent months that the Chinese Central Government desires, and as soon as it feels in a position to, will attempt to extend its control over Tibet by force of arms. It is almost a foregone conclusion that Tibet will resist such encroachment by all means at its command, including, presumably, appeals to Great Britain and to the United States.

For over a quarter of a century Great Britain has opposed the exercise by China of direct control over Tibet and there has been no indication that this policy will be modified in the near future.

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE ATCHESON, JR.

740.0011 Pacific War/3272 : Telegram
The Secretary of State to the Chargé in China (Atcheson)

WASHINGTON, September 21, 1943—10 p. m.

1340. Reference Embassy’s 777, May 25, 2 p. m., in regard to reported Chinese troop concentrations along the Tibetan border.

1. British Embassy has brought to the Department’s attention a further report received from the Government of India to the effect that the strength of Chinese troops in the vicinity of Yushu, Chinghai, has been considerably increased; that additional arms and supplies are being shipped into that area; that the Tibetans are reported to have increased their own forces and that considerable tension exists. The Government of India has instructed its representatives at Lhasa to endeavor to verify the above information and to suggest to the Tibetan authorities that they take steps to prevent their own troops from provoking frontier incidents.

This further report regarding Chinese troop concentrations in the Chinghai—Tibet border area appears to be substantiated, at least in part, by the information contained in the Embassy’s despatch no. 1482, August 17.

2. The Department suggests that the Embassy if it perceives no objection make inquiry of the Foreign Office in regard to these reported troop concentrations and discreetly indicate as on your own initiative a concern over the possibility that these troop movements, if they are actually being carried out, might result in armed clashes between Chinese and Tibetan troops and furthermore that such an unfortunate development could not fail adversely to affect the cooperative efforts being made to defeat the Japanese and restore peace and tranquility in the Far East.

HULL
WASHINGTON, September 27, 1943—4 p. m.

1374. Reference Department’s 1340, September 21, 10 p. m. The British Embassy has informed us of a recent informal conversation with Dr. T. V. Soong and of a reassuring affirmation made by Soong of confidence on his part that Chinese troops are not being concentrated in the area under reference and that China will not initiate trouble there, together with statement by Soong that China regards Tibet as “a part of China”.

With reference to the suggestion conveyed in numbered paragraph 2 of Department’s telegram under reference, you would probably find it advantageous to keep in close touch with the British Embassy.

BERLE

CHUNGKING, September 28, 1943—10 a. m.

[Received 5:37 p. m.]

1817. Department’s 1340, September 21. At a suitable opportunity during a dinner party on September 25 Counselor mentioned to Vice Foreign Minister Victor Hoo that we had heard reports emanating from India to the effect that there had been some additional troop concentrations on the Chinghai-Tibetan border. Dr. Hoo did not at first deny the reports but said that the Chinese troops “will certainly do nothing” and then said that there had been some Chinese troops near the Tibetan border, that he had not heard this latest report, and that the report was incorrect. He made a further statement that “in any case we will do nothing”.

We have not received here any confirmation of the British reports.

GAUSS

WASHINGTON, September 29, 1943—10 p. m.

1398. Reference Department’s 1374 of September 27, 1943, 4 p. m. and prior communications.

In a conversation with an officer of the Department on September 28 Dr. T. V. Soong introduced the subject of Tibet. He said that while
in London he had talked with the BFO\(^{32}\) on that subject and that a few days ago Sir George Sansom of the British Embassy here had come to him under instructions and had spoken of the BFO's uneasiness in the presence of rumors that the Chinese were assembling troops on the Tibetan border. Dr. Soong said that he had stated to Sir George that the Chinese regard Tibet as an integral part of China; regard relations with the Tibetans as an internal problem; and that, although he, Soong, is not fully informed regarding troop movements, he doubts the rumors regarding massing of troops, he is not aware of any reason why there should be trouble with the Tibetans, etc., he would suggest that the British not make representations at Chungking implying a special British interest in Tibetan problems as problems involving an area or a people independent of China. Dr. Soong went on to say that in their study of geography the Chinese have long been taught that Tibet is a part of China and they have no thought whatever that this is open to question; and he further said that the question of Tibet is obviously of greater practical importance to the Chinese and the Tibetans than to the people of any other country.

It was pointed out to Dr. Soong, without argumentation, that by virtue of its geographical position, Tibet naturally is a subject of particular interest not only to China but also to India. Dr. Soong readily admitted this but affirmed that politically and in law Chinese claims regarding Tibet stand on far firmer ground than do British claims.

If you have not already made an approach along the lines suggested in the final paragraph of the Department's 1340, September 21, 10 p. m. you are authorized to leave in abeyance for the present any action on that suggestion.

BERLE

740.0011 Pacific War/3505: Telegram

The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, October 4, 1943—3 p. m.

[Received October 27.]

A-67. Department's 1398, September 29, Embassy's 1817, September 28, and previous. We have been informed by a high Gov[ernmen]t official that he has not heard of recent additional troop concentrations on the Tibet-Chinghai border but that he understands that "some" airfields are being constructed there by the Chinese. He intimated that the fields are possibly for the purpose of "pressure" to be applied later on. The informant remarked incidentally that it was curious

\(^{32}\) British Foreign Office.
how much trouble was taken over outlying regions such as Tibet and Outer Mongolia which are of absolutely no economic value to China.

GAUSS

The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State

No. 1752

CHUNGKING, October 29, 1943.

[Received November 18.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that a director of the China National Aviation Corporation in a confidential conversation has informed me that the Calcutta office of the Corporation recently received a communication from the Government of India authorities complaining that C. N. A. C. planes have been flying over Tibet on the route between India (Assam) and China, and that such flying over Tibet should be discontinued.

I learn that in good weather the C. N. A. C. planes operating on the new route between Assam and Suifu do at times fly over part of Tibet, taking a route through a pass in the mountains with resulting greater safety for the pilots, planes, and cargo.

The director of the Corporation tells me that he referred the matter to the head office of the Corporation at Chungking, suggesting that for the time being no reply be given to the letter of the Government of India authorities and that if those authorities press the subject further they be informed by the Calcutta office that it is not competent to deal with it and any representations should be made to the Chinese Government.

The matter is reported for the confidential information of the Department as a further small indication of British interest in Tibet as opposed to China's claim to suzerainty over that special area.

Respectfully yours,

C. E. GAUSS

The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State

No. 1810

CHUNGKING, November 13, 1943.

[Received December 3.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch no. 1598, September 20, 1943 in regard to Sino-Tibetan relations and to enclose a copy of despatch no. 170, October 28, 1943 from the Embassy officer at Chengtu in regard to a proposed missionary sponsored edu-

*Not printed.
cational mission to Tibet. The despatch contains a summary of its contents.

In spite of the alleged willingness of some Tibetans to welcome foreign educational missionary work in their country, the Embassy has received no information indicating that a relaxation may be expected of the well known Tibetan policy of exclusion (see, for example, Embassy's despatch no. 1482, August 17, 1943). The history of missionary effort in China does not provide any basis for assuming that the proposed educational mission under reference (or the contemplated Seventh Day Adventist medical mission mentioned in Mr. Smith's despatch) is likely to be conducted with sufficient tact to avoid arousing Tibetan opposition. The projects under reference may therefore very well develop, even if the good intentions of the initiators are taken for granted, into attempts at missionary penetration of Tibet which are likely to give rise to Tibetan opposition and result in friction and situations which cannot but be embarrassing to the American Government. It is also possible that the missionary interests concerned may find it necessary, as the price they must pay for indispensable Chinese support, to allow themselves to be used to some extent as agents of Chinese political penetration of Tibet.

The usual Chinese approach to the Tibetan problem is well illustrated by the incident reported in the enclosure to the Embassy's despatch no. 1793, November 9, 1943. Chinese authorities in Kansu, wishing to discourage Tibetan assistance to rebels operating in areas adjacent to those inhabited by Tibetans, dropped leaflets in which the Tibetans were addressed as "barbarians" and threatened with bombing if they sheltered rebels.

It is the Embassy's opinion that under present conditions American interests would not benefit from the missionary projects under reference but on the contrary the projects might result in serious embarrassment to the Government. Therefore, if and when the Embassy is approached by the missionary interests concerned, we will expect to offer them no encouragement in regard to the projects.

Respectfully yours,

C. E. Gauss

---

*E. H. Cressy of the National Christian Council of China was sponsor of the proposed mission.
*Not printed.