

STATUS OF TIBET: ¹ CONSIDERATION OF POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES IN VIEW OF TIBETAN CLAIM OF INDEPENDENCE AND DANGER TO TIBET FROM COMMUNIST-DOMINATED CHINA

693.0031 Tibet/2-1749 : Airgram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, February 17, 1949.
[Received March 4—3 : 13 p. m.]

A-168. Reference Embassy's despatch no. 35 dated January 8, 1949,² entitled "Visit to New Delhi of Tibet Trade Mission".

Tibet Trade Mission has now returned to Delhi from Calcutta and has been carrying on negotiations with GoI³ regarding desire of Government of Tibet to obtain dollar exchange to buy gold to be used as backing for Tibetan currency. According to Mr. V. M. M. Nair, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, GoI, despite strong line taken by Mission, is not disposed to comply with Tibetan request for dollar exchange. Two reasons why GoI does not look with favor on Tibetan demand are (1) its disinclination to reduce India's precious reserve dollar exchange by granting exchange for purchase of unessential commodity such as gold and (2) its belief that Tibetans do not really desire gold as backing for currency but to smuggle it back into [India?] for sale, a transaction that would result in enormous profit for persons involved.

Nair said one of the reasons used by Tibet in support of their request was that they had committed themselves while in US to purchase gold and that it would be embarrassing for them to renege on this agreement. In reply to Mr. Nair's question, Embassy official stated that he doubted extremely that any agreement regarding purchase of gold had been entered into between the Tibetan Mission and the US Government. Embassy would appreciate any information in possession of Department regarding this point and particularly whether Tibet actually reached an agreement with private companies to purchase gold.

GoI, despite its disinclination to grant dollar exchange for purchase of gold, is desirous of doing everything possible to satisfy Mission. It is granting free entry for goods apparently purchased by members of

¹ Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1948, vol. VII, pp. 755 ff.

² Not printed.

³ Government of India.

Mission privately while abroad and has also offered them, in Mr. Nair's words, "several hundred thousand dollars" for purchase of essential commodities such as machinery and agricultural implements from abroad. Tibetans, however, show little interest in this offer but continue to press for dollars to buy gold.

HENDERSON

693.0031 Tibet/1-849

Memorandum by Miss Ruth E. Bacon of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs to the Chief of the Division of Chinese Affairs (Sprouse)

[WASHINGTON,] April 12, 1949.

Reference is made to New Delhi's despatch no. 35 of January 8, 1949⁴ and previous despatches in which New Delhi recommends that the Department review US policy toward Tibet in the light of changing conditions in Asia.

Background

During the visit of the Tibetan Trade Mission to the US in July 1948 the Department sought to show every friendliness to the Tibetan Mission without giving the Chinese Government cause for offense. The Department informed the Chinese Embassy that this Government had no intention of acting in a manner to call into question China's *de jure* sovereignty over Tibet. On January 5, 1949 Ambassador Henderson informed the Tibetan Trade Mission that it was the policy of this Government to recognize the suzerainty of China over Tibet and that for the present relations between Tibet and the US would have to be strengthened by indirect means.

The Embassy at New Delhi has been suggesting for some time that in view of existing conditions in Asia we review our policy toward Tibet. The Embassy now proposes in substance that if for example the Communists succeed in controlling all of China or some equivalent far-reaching development takes place we should be prepared to treat Tibet as independent to all intents and purposes.

Arguments in Favor of the Embassy Proposal

1. If the Communists gain control of China proper, Tibet will be one of the few remaining non-Communist bastions in Continental Asia. Outer Mongolia is already detached. Communist influence is strong in Burma and Communists are infiltrating into Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia. Tibet will accordingly assume both ideological and strategic importance.

⁴ Not printed.

2. If Tibet possesses the stamina to withstand Communist infiltration—and the Embassy in New Delhi seems to feel that it does—it would be to our interest to treat Tibet as independent rather than to continue to regard it as a part of a China which has gone Communist.

3. The Government is relatively stable. The people are conservative and religious by nature and disposed to oppose Communism as in conflict with the tenets of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama's authority extends beyond Tibet over persons who practice the lamaist form of Buddhism in Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Mongolia, etc.

4. The Chinese Government cannot now assert—and there currently appears little likelihood that it ever again will be able to assert—effective *de facto* authority in Tibet.

5. The Tibetans are showing increasing interest in establishing trade and other relations with the outside world. It is to our interest to see that these efforts are oriented to the West and not to the East.

Arguments Against the Embassy Proposal

1. A decision to recognize Tibet involves a reconsideration not merely of our policy toward Tibet but also of our policy toward China. A basic principle of our policy toward China has been respect for China's territorial integrity. This principle has retarded while not entirely preventing the gradual dismemberment of China and it helped China emerge from World War II with the status of a great power. This policy should not be abandoned unless it is clear that a permanent breakup of China is inevitable and that we have a substantial stake in Tibet.

2. Adoption of such a policy would lessen the weight of our objection to current Soviet efforts to detach additional northern areas from China. It would also complicate our position that we are not sufficiently sure of the Mongolian People's Republic's independence to favor the MPR's admission to the UN.⁵

3. Such a policy might lead to intensified efforts on the part of the USSR to take Tibet into the Communist camp. If we carry on toward Tibet much as at present, the Communists might also be content to let the present situation there ride. By recognizing Tibet as independent while we are not in position to give Tibet the necessary practical support, because of its remoteness, we may in fact be pointing the way for Communist absorption of the area.

4. As a practical matter Tibet's importance both ideologically and strategically is very limited. Because of its geographical remoteness, the primitive character of its Government and society and the limited character of its contacts with the outside world Tibet's orientation toward the West cannot be counted upon to endure on an ideological

⁵ United Nations.

basis unless supported by far-reaching practical measures. If we cannot take these practical measures, recognition in itself would not hold Tibet in an alignment with the West and might in fact work against our long-run interests. Similarly, efforts to utilize Tibet strategically as for example as an air base or for the discharge of rockets would encounter not merely formidable difficulties of terrain and weather but also Tibet's objections on religious grounds to the passage of planes over its territory. Unless rare minerals are found in Tibet, the Army does not regard Tibet as of strategic significance.

5. The answer to what measures of a practical nature can be taken appears to lie largely with India which now controls Tibet's access to the West. If India cooperates with the West the importance of Tibet both ideologically and strategically will be considerably less. If India does not cooperate with the West the difficulties in the way of utilizing Tibet as a bastion for the West would be enormously magnified.

Policy of Other States

China asserts that Tibet is part of the territory of China and has no authority to conduct diplomatic negotiations with foreign governments. China has shown strong sensitivity on this point.

Tibet, according to the leader of the Tibetan Trade Mission is completely independent and the Chinese Government has no control whatsoever over the internal or external affairs of the country. However, the Tibetan Trade Mission entered China on Chinese passports and in general avoided raising open conflicts with the Chinese authorities.

India regards Tibet as an autonomous region under the sovereignty of China. India has however been reviewing its policy toward Tibet and our Embassy in Delhi reported in August, 1948⁶ that as a result of this review India might not try to bolster the autonomous status of Tibet as assiduously as the British have done. Tibet has indicated but not pressed a desire to adjust in Tibet's favor the Tibet-Indian border. Tibet has also expressed dissatisfaction with Indian customs policy as it relates to Tibet and to India's control over Tibet's foreign exchange resulting from Tibetan shipments through India.

The UK no longer has an abiding interest in the future of Tibet since British control was withdrawn from India, our Embassy in London reported in August, 1947⁷ on the basis of discussions with a British Foreign Office official.

There are missions or agents of China, Nepal and India in Tibet.

Foreign Exchange Situation

The Tibetan Trade Mission which visited this country in 1948 sought to purchase 50,000 ounces of gold for currency stabilization.

⁶ Airgram No. 434, August 9, 1948, not printed.

⁷ Airgram No. 1841, August 26, 1947, not printed.

The Mission was informed that the US Treasury Department was willing to sell gold to Tibet for this purpose. The Mission then informed the Department that although Tibetan exports had earned ample dollar exchange to pay for this gold India for the the present was withholding this dollar exchange. Accordingly the Mission asked for a temporary loan from the US of \$2,000,000 for gold and machinery.

The Trade Mission maintained that the Tibetan exports which earned the foreign exchange were merely in transit through India from Tibet to foreign markets and that India would not permit Tibet to use this dollar exchange except in such amounts and for such purposes as suited Indian policies. A letter from the leader of the Mission to Secretary Marshall⁸ states "Curiously enough, the Government of India applied these restrictions and controls on the exports and imports of goods from and to Tibet—in spite of the fact that Tibetans use the port of Calcutta only as a centre through which goods are sent and brought to and from other countries of destination and origin, and that these goods are only in transit to and from such countries."

The Indian Government according to an airgram of February 19 [17], 1949 will grant several hundred thousand dollars of exchange for the purchase by Tibet of essential commodities such as machinery and agricultural implements from abroad. India is not disposed, however, to grant the Tibetan request for dollar exchange for the purchase of the gold because (1) India does not desire to reduce its dollar exchange by permitting the purchase of an unessential commodity such as gold and (2) India believes that the Tibetans intend to smuggle the gold back into India for sale at an enormous personal profit.

The full details of the situation with regard to Tibet's foreign exchange are not clear from a brief reading of the files. It may be that Tibet's difficulties stem from a primitive banking and transport system which leads to a relay of the Tibetan foreign exchange into Indian hands.

On the face of the situation, however, Tibet would seem to have a grievance. It is a landlocked state with access to the outside world only through (a) China proper,—now cut off by civil war; (b) the USSR,—a route which we desire to discourage; and (c) India. For India to assume the right to control Tibet's foreign exchange—even with the best of motives—would seem to be a policy which if persisted in would tend to alienate Tibet from the West toward the East. It would also seem to be contrary to the principles of freedom of international trade and intercourse which we are espousing.

Leaving aside the question whether a loan to Tibet would be economically desirable and leaving aside also the political implications

⁸ George C. Marshall, Secretary of State until January 7, 1949.

of such a loan, it is clear that there would be strong objection in this country to the making of any such loan if Tibet actually possesses ample funds which are now locked in India. Exploration of this whole subject with the Government of India would seem to be both necessary and desirable as a preliminary step to any further consideration of measures which might be taken in the matter of Tibet's desire for gold.

Communist Interest in Tibet

There are on two occasions references in the files to possible Communist activities in connection with Tibet. The Embassy has not tended to regard these reports too seriously in the light of Tibetans' known aversion to Communism. In a conversation with Ambassador Henderson on January 5, 1949 the leader of the Tibetan Trade Mission said that the Government of Tibet has recently prohibited the entry into Tibet of persons from Outer Mongolia who in the past had been permitted to come to study Buddhism and to become Buddha monks. Ambassador Henderson said that he gathered from the conversation that the Tibetan Government recognizes the danger to Tibet which will result if the Chinese Communists succeed in taking over China proper.

Chinese Sovereignty or Suzerainty Over Tibet

It is to be noted in the files there are references to China's "sovereignty" or "suzerainty" over Tibet. As is, of course, known the two terms are not synonymous. It is difficult, however, to draw a precise line of demarkation between them. In general "suzerainty" implies less of Chinese authority and more of Tibetan autonomy than "sovereignty". "Suzerainty" would accordingly appear to fit the case quite closely in some respects. "Suzerainty" however carries the connotation of a vassal state and does not fit as well into customary American concepts as into British usage. It is suggested that it might be desirable to avoid a possible controversy over "sovereignty" versus "suzerainty" by referring in future to Chinese *de jure* authority over Tibet or some similar comprehensive term.

Conclusions

A. Under Present Circumstances

1. Without placing too great reliance upon Tibet's ideological or strategic importance, it is believed to be clearly to our advantage under any circumstances to have Tibet as a friend if possible. We should accordingly maintain a friendly attitude toward Tibet in ways short of giving China cause for offense. We should encourage so far as feasible Tibet's orientation toward the West rather than toward the East.

2. For the present we should avoid giving the impression of any alteration in our position toward Chinese authority over Tibet such as for example steps which would clearly indicate that we regard Tibet

as independent, etc. We have recently given renewed assurances to China of our recognition of China's *de jure* sovereignty or suzerainty over Tibet. Any decided change in our policy might give China cause for complaint, might necessitate embarrassing explanations, might stimulate Soviet efforts at infiltration into Tibet and might not in itself be sufficient to hold Tibet to our side. We should however keep our policy as flexible as possible by avoiding references to China's sovereignty or suzerainty unless such references are clearly called for and by informing China of our proposed moves in connection with Tibet, rather than asking China's consent for them. Ambassador Henderson's statement of our policy in his conversation with the head of the Tibetan Trade Mission on January 5, 1949 would seem to cover the situation quite adequately.

3. As Tibet clearly feels that it is being unfairly treated by India in the matter of foreign exchange we should reconsider our present policy of avoiding raising this question with India. We should point out to India the desirability of removing causes of complaint which may serve to alienate Tibet against the West and show an interest in discovering whether some reasonable adjustment of the situation cannot be worked out. We should not give further consideration to the economic necessity or political feasibility of granting a loan to Tibet until the situation with regard to possible release of Tibetan foreign exchange from India has been explored.

4. Our information with regard to Tibet comes for the most part from third parties—China, India, Tibet—and is colored according to the aims and purposes of its source. To secure first-hand information and as an indication of our friendly interest, it would be desirable to send a suitable official or officials to Tibet if this can be done inconspicuously and without giving rise to speculation that we may have designs upon Tibet.

B. For the Future

The nature of developments will affect the policy which we should adopt toward Tibet in the future. If for example the Communists should take over all of China proper and the National Government should disappear we would be faced with the alternatives of (1) treating Tibet as under the authority of the Communist Government—which we should clearly wish to avoid or (2) dealing with Tibet as for all intents and purposes independent. The latter policy would clearly be to our advantage. If however the Communists take over China proper but an *émigré* National Government should continue to exist, we would then have to decide our policy toward Tibet partly in the light of our policy toward the *émigré* Government. The question would arise whether we should place emphasis on Tibet's independence by formally recognizing it and by sponsoring its applica-

tion for membership in the UN or whether we should avoid stressing the matter of independence but should merely maintain direct relations with Tibet without a public change of policy. Decision on this question would involve (1) our estimate whether open recognition of independence might stimulate Soviet activities to take over Tibet; (2) whether we have the practical means to afford sufficient assistance to Tibet to make probable its continuance in a western alignment; and (3) our estimate whether China's dismemberment is likely to be on a fairly permanent basis.

893.00 Tibet/4-1249

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

No. 302

NEW DELHI, April 12, 1949.

[Received May 19.]

Subject: American Policy Towards Tibet

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch no. 250, dated March 23, 1949^o on the subject "Report on Buddhist Areas on India's Northern Frontier with Particular Reference to Tibet" and to submit for the consideration of the Department, and particularly of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs and the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, some tentative observations regarding American policies toward Tibet.

The American Economic Stake in Tibet

Present American economic interests in Tibet are of little importance. Some Tibetan products—musk, furs, skins, yak tails and particularly wool—find their way to the United States through India. Wool is by far the most important of these products and, while exact information regarding the quantity of Tibetan wool which is shipped from Calcutta to the United States is not available, the leader of the Tibetan Trade Mission estimated that annual value of exports of Tibetan wool to the United States is approximately \$2,000,000. Limited quantities of goods manufactured in the United States find their way into Tibet, also by way of India. The quantities of these products, however, are almost infinitesimal.

There is no information available regarding mineral resources of Tibet. Even if it should be found that there are mineral resources of importance in Tibet, it would be almost impossible to exploit them in view of the opposition which their exploitation would arouse among the conservative superstition-ridden Tibetan people.

^o Not printed.

Relationship Between American Policy Toward Tibet and the Establishment of a Communist-Dominated Government in China

According to the latest information available to the Embassy, the United States policy toward Tibet is defined as the recognition by the United States of Chinese sovereignty over the country. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for the adoption of this policy was our desire to strengthen the Chinese Government, in view of the strong ties of friendship between the United States and China, and forestall in so far as it would be possible for us to do so the fragmentation of greater China which would result if Sinkiang and Tibet were to be recognized or treated as independent political units.

I am not certain that the foregoing policy is best adapted to further American interests if the Communists are successful in their efforts to obtain control of the Chinese Government. It might well be asked if the interests of the United States will be substantially affected if the present Government of Tibet is superseded by a Communist government, or if a Communist-dominated China is able to establish control over Tibet. Proponents of the argument that what happens in Tibet is of little importance to the United States could point to the fact that our economic interests in the country are negligible, that it has a population of only about five million, that nothing is known of its resources, and that the country would possibly, or even probably, not lend itself to development as a base for military operations against the U.S.S.R.

Although the foregoing arguments possess a certain amount of validity, I feel that the extension of Communist control over Tibet would adversely affect the over-all position of the United States versus world Communism. In the first place, a Communist-controlled Tibet would constitute a serious threat to the non-Communist areas of Southern Asia and particularly to India. Under present treaty arrangements between India and Tibet, Tibetans are permitted to enter India with no travel documents whatsoever. Consequently, if a Communist Government is established in Tibet, the country will provide a base of great value for Communist agents to infiltrate into India. Moreover, the frontier between India and Tibet is long and ill-defined and it would be impossible for the Government of India, even if it had the best intentions in the world, to prevent the entry of Communist agents from Tibet into India. Finally, if the Communists are able to secure control of the Dalai Lama, their chances of consolidating their hold over the peoples of Central Asia will be greatly strengthened in view of the reverence paid to the Dalai Lama by many of the Central Asian Buddhists, not only in Tibet but also in other areas such as Mongolia, Sinkiang and northwest China.

In the light of the foregoing conclusions it is suggested that the Department give consideration to the advisability of establishing some sort of contact with the Government of Tibet. It might be desirable to establish this contact in the near future in view of the rapidity with which political conditions in China and other parts of Asia are evolving. Moreover, if we make no effort to demonstrate a friendly interest in Tibet until a Communist dominated regime consolidates its hold on China, the impression will be created among the Tibetans that we were moved only by a desire to contain Communism and not to develop cordial relations with the Tibetan people.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:
HOWARD DONOVAN
Counselor of Embassy

693.0031 Tibet/5-349 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in India (Henderson)

WASHINGTON, May 3, 1949—7 p. m.

328. NY FR ¹⁰ Bank has recd request Leader, Tibet Trade Mission to sell some \$US 400,000 of gold for air shipment vaults Hong Kong [and] Shanghai Banking Corp., 31 Dalhousie Square, Calcutta, West Bengal. When Trade Mission in US this Govt inclined to honor such request to Tibetan *de facto* Govt but had misgivings re end use of gold, that is in event premium sales Tibet or elsewhere involved. Pls ascertain discreetly possible end uses and attitude of GoI auths such transaction if approved here. Leader TTM states some dols to be released by GoI.

ACHESON

893.00 Tibet/5-2149

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

No. 420

NEW DELHI, May 21, 1949.

[Received May 31.]

Subject: Transmission of Memoranda of Conversation with Indian External Affairs Officials Regarding Tibet

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch no. 250 of March 23, 1949 ¹¹ entitled "Report on Buddhist Areas on India's Northern Frontier with Particular Reference to Tibet" and to enclose memoranda ¹¹ describing conversations between officials in the Min-

¹⁰ Federal Reserve.

¹¹ Not printed.

istry of External Affairs dealing with Tibetan affairs and an officer of the Embassy.

It will be observed from these memoranda that one of the officials of the Ministry of External Affairs stated that when the United Kingdom informed the Government of India that it desired to send a mission to Lhasa this summer, the latter Government indicated that it would be advisable to postpone the despatch of such a mission until next year. This statement has been confirmed by an official in the United Kingdom High Commissioner's Office, who informed an Embassy officer that the Indians had asked the United Kingdom Government not to send a mission to Lhasa this year. He went on to say that the real basis for the Indian objections stemmed from the fact that the Indian Political Officer in Sikkim was planning a trip to Lhasa this summer and that the presence of a British mission in Lhasa at the same time would detract from the importance of the Political Officer's visit.

The most surprising statement made by either of the two officials was that made by the Maharajkumar of Tehri-Garhwal, an Under Secretary in the Ministry, regarding the determination of the Indian Government to resist, by force if necessary, any attempt by the Chinese to re-establish control over Tibet. The Maharajkumar stated categorically that, if the Chinese tried to invade Tibet, they would find themselves opposed by Indian military forces. He also said that a motor road was being constructed from the road-head in Sikkim to Lhasa and that Indian Army officers were training the Tibetan Army.

While the Embassy has no reason to believe that the Maharajkumar's statement that India would oppose Chinese aggression against Tibet by force was not made in good faith, it is not convinced that policy outlined by him represents the considered views of the Prime Minister¹³ or other members of the Indian Cabinet. It is true that the policy of British Government of India was to strive to prevent any major power from controlling Tibet and that, in the time which has elapsed since Indian independence, the Indian Government's policy towards Tibet has tended to fall into the grooves already marked out by the British. Nevertheless, the obstacle with which the Indian Government would be confronted in obtaining support for such far-flung military operations from a people imbued with the Gandhian principles of pacifism, the logistic difficulties in the way of such operations, the incalculable consequences of an Indian military challenge to Communist forces in Southeast Asia, and the failure of Indian Government leaders to acquaint the Indian people with the threat of world Communism all incline the Embassy not to accept the statements of the External Affairs official as a definitive exposition of Indian policy

¹³ Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

towards Tibet, at least until such time as confirmation from other sources can be obtained.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:
HOWARD DONOVAN
Counselor of Embassy

893.0031 Tibet/5-3149: Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, May 31, 1949—11 a. m.

[Received May 31—10 a. m.]

614. GoI states it has no objection sale gold to Tibet Trade Mission as \$250,000 in dollars exchange has been released by GoI specifically for purchase gold. (Deptel 328, May 3) GoI also informed Embassy that so far as it knew officially on basis information received, TTM gold will be used as backing Tibetan currency. As reported in Embassy's airgram 168, February 17, however, GoI considers it possible some of gold may be smuggled India for premium sales. Embassy would appreciate being informed action taken Tibetan request.

Sent Department, pouched Calcutta.

HENDERSON

893.00 Tibet/6-449: Airgram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kohler) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 4, 1949.

[Received June 10—12: 13 p. m.]

A-577. Reference is made to New Delhi's despatch no. 302 of April 12, 1949, entitled "American Policy Towards Tibet", and to its despatch no. 420 of May 21, 1949, entitled "Transmission of Memoranda of Conversation with Indian External Affairs Officials Regarding Tibet".

This Embassy fully supports the suggestion in New Delhi's despatch no. 302 that the Department give consideration to the advisability of establishing some sort of contact with the Government of Tibet. Although as New Delhi points out, Tibet is of little importance to the United States either economically or strategically, control of that vast Central Asian area by elements subject to the plans and policies of the Kremlin would have an adverse effect on the American position in Asia generally.

In any review of United States policy towards Tibet due consideration might also be given to the advantages which would accrue from initiating an informal exchange of views on the problem with appropriate officials of the Government of India. Indian concern over the

possible impact of recent Chinese developments on the internal situation in Tibet would appear to offer an excellent opportunity for us to show by both word and action a sympathetic understanding of the Indian attitude vis-à-vis Tibet and, by so doing, to help forge a common front against further Communist encroachments in Asia.

KOHLER

893.00 Tibet/7-249 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, July 2, 1949—9 a. m.

[Received 11:10 a. m.]

741. For Butterworth¹⁴ and McGhee.¹⁵

1. We again venture suggest in light present developments China and South Asia reconsideration our policy re Tibet (see Embdesp 302, April 12 and Moscow's A-577, June 4).

2. Our recommendation is that: (a) We endeavor arrange send mission to Tibet to arrive Lhasa not later than September 1; (b) such mission be headed by prominent American experienced foreign relations and with him be experienced member Foreign Service who if it could be worked out with Tibetan Government could be left with small staff in Lhasa for indefinite period; (c) head of mission should bring certain gifts but try effect understanding gifts to be dispensed with in future relationships.

3. Mission should be on relatively moderate scale and given minimum publicity.

4. Advisable arrange for communications with outside world for mission itself as well for personnel left behind. In view slowness and difficulty communications with Tibet, no time should be lost if visit to be made this year. Weather conditions would be extremely trying after October 15.

5. Our recommendations are based on following considerations: (a) Developments in Tibet following victory Communism China proper may have considerable significance for large sections non-Chinese Asia; it would seem advantageous therefore have our own observers in Lhasa; (b) we should not in our opinion continue ignore country and people which likely play more important role Asian affairs future; (c) our observers if of proper type might succeed creating friendly feelings among Tibetans for us which at some time might be extremely useful; (d) if we are [to] make an effort maintain informal relations with Tibet, now would seem be appropriate time when it is obviously useless attempt approach Tibetan Government

¹⁴ W. Walton Butterworth, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs.

¹⁵ George C. McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and African Affairs.

through nonfunctioning Chinese Nationalist Government and when we have no relations any other government. It seems [to] us that it would be much more difficult make approach directly and informally after we have established relations with government in effective control China proper.

6. We realize other factors may make approach to Tibet this time inadvisable; furthermore Tibet may not desire visit. Nevertheless, we submit our recommendations since we believe that now is time try.

7. We believe any approach should be discussed in advance informally and confidentially with GoI which because its monopoly of speedy communications and its influence on Tibet's present foreign relations is in position so to delay negotiations that no visit could be made this year. We have no idea what India's attitude would be. We would be more likely get assistance from GoI if in discussing matter we could tell who chief proposed mission would be.

Pouched Moscow, Calcutta.

HENDERSON

693.0031 Tibet/7-249 : Airgram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in India (Henderson)

WASHINGTON, July 2, 1949.

A-224. In addition to inquiring regarding the purchase of gold for U.S. dollars in the United States of which the Embassy has already been informed, the Tibetan Trade Mission while in the United States also inquired about loans for use in purchasing machinery in the United States and in stabilizing the Tibetan currency. The Mission was informed that it was at liberty to approach the Export-Import Bank of Washington to discuss the possibility of obtaining a loan for financing the export machinery to Tibet and was given general information regarding the operations of the Bank. The Mission was further informed that there are no funds available at the present time to permit a loan to the Tibetan authorities for the purpose of currency stabilization.

During discussion of Government of India restrictions on the use of Tibetan dollar funds, the Mission was informed that it was not believed appropriate under the circumstances for the U.S. Government to raise with the Government of India the question of trade and exchange controls exercised over transactions between Tibet and other countries. The Department is, however, prepared to reconsider its position concerning a possible approach to the Indian Government on the matter of dollar exchange. The Tibetan Trade Mission while in Washington stated that the dollar exchange in question accrued on goods in transit from Tibet to foreign destinations but that its use was withheld by India except for purposes approved by India. The Depart-

ment realizes that this situation may result from lack of adequate banking and trading mechanisms or other sound reasons, and appreciates India's special problems in connection with the gold in question. Furthermore, the Government of India has subsequently released some Tibetan dollar exchange for the purchase of gold in the United States. However, for India to assume, even with the best of motives, control over Tibetan foreign exchange on what is apparently considered by Tibet an arbitrary basis, might tend, if persisted in, to alienate Tibet from its favorable attitude toward the West and would seem to be contrary to the principles of freedom of international trade and intercourse which the United States supports. The Department has supplied this outline of its present views for your background information and for use in your discretion.

For the Embassy's information, the Department does not consider that any of the courtesies extended to the Tibetan Trade Mission while in the United States have the effect of altering the *status quo* among China, Tibet, and the United States. In particular the willingness of the U.S. to sell gold to the Tibetan authorities does not constitute recognition of the Tibetan administration as a sovereign government.

The Department is undertaking a review of U.S. Policy toward Tibet and expects to inform you of the conclusions reached.

ACHESON

711.93 Tibet/7-849 : Telegram

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

NANKING, July 8, 1949—6 p. m.

[Received 6:26 p. m.]

1459. We like suggestion Embassy, New Delhi, to send small mission this summer to Lhasa (Department's intel July 5, 1 a. m.¹⁶). Authority Canton Government over Tibet non-existent and we agree any move with implications recognition autonomous status Tibet should be made before relations established with Chinese Communist government.

Sent Department 1459, repeated New Delhi 6.

STUART

893.00 Tibet/7-249 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in India (Henderson)

WASHINGTON, July 28, 1949—6 p. m.

530. In process reconsideration US long term policy re Tibet Dept appreciates ur contributions Embdes 302 Apr 12 and Embtel 741

¹⁶ Not printed.

July 2. Type Mission you suggest 741 appears polit[ical]ly undesirable view overall considerations.

Dept currently considering and wld appreciate ur comment possibilities covert mission along one of the fol lines :

a) Minimum expedition undertaken immed by Jefferson Jones,¹⁷ perhaps accompanied by similar rep Brit High Commissioner's Office New Delhi ostensibly personally arranged unofficial and during Fon-Serv leave. Actually time not to be counted against Jones' leave and expedition financed by US in whole or in partnership with Brit. This expedition to remain Lhasa perhaps 2 weeks having as its objective survey current polit situation and recommendations re feasibility eventual establishment Consular representation after Chinese suzerainty question no longer obstacle.

b) Expedition headed by experienced explorer-scholar, such as Schuyler Cammann, University of Pennsylvania, with established reputation and *prima facie* justification trip. This expedition also to be accompanied by Jones ostensibly on leave who wld return earliest with prelim report. Cammann to remain major portion year under scientific cover but observing polit trends.

Dept concerned re practicability either alternative this year due climate conditions intervening passes. Pls comment this point as well as ur estimate cost of expedition and suggestions extent GoI shld be taken into confidence. No candidates second proposal being approached prior receipt ur recommendations.

ACHESON

893.00 Tibet/7-3049

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, July 30, 1949.

[Received July 31—1:17 a. m.]

862. Delhi press 30th states "authoritative version" now available of recent events Tibet. Authorities there had asked Chinese mission Lhasa depart because of suspicion mission engaged Communist activity. Simultaneously Indian representative was asked arrange permission Chinese return home via Sikkim and Calcutta.

Report continues India hesitated because delicacy of even indirect assistance in "virtual expulsion of diplomatic representatives of friendly government" but required facilities eventually granted. Indicates representatives expected reach Indian border in fortnight following which India will be only country officially represented Tibet.

Report states official quarters refuse comment on Tibetan action but speculates Tibet seizing opportunity "free herself of Chinese

¹⁷ Second Secretary of Embassy.

suzerainty which though nominal is known to have been regarded as irksome”.

HENDERSON

893.00 Tibet/8-549 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, August 5, 1949—8 a. m.

[Received 1:20 p. m.]

888. 1. We do not believe suggestion (a) would work out particularly this year since two members British High Commission who desired visit Tibet were discouraged by GoI which at present has practical monopoly on Tibet's foreign relations. There might be complications if attempt were made to replace this project by British-American team. Furthermore we doubt Tibet would be pleased at idea first American civilian official entering as member British-American team (Deptel 530, July 28). Nevertheless if Department has reasons for joint American-British visit we shall put out feelers but believe next spring preferable.

2. In our opinion too late in year to organize expedition envisaged in (b). Expedition should enter not later than early September since trails after middle October dangerous and frequently impassable. Impossible get permits and set up properly organized expedition within 3 weeks. Suggestion (b) might be practicable in early May. If (b) decided upon for next spring, suggest we begin making plans without delay and that approach Tibetan authorities be made before end of year since mail goes through up to December. Believe Jones ideal officer accompany Cammonn. Tibet Government might refuse Cammonn visa unless in request for permit it is stressed he will be accompanied by American official such as Jones. Visits foreign non-officials in general discouraged. Permit Lowell Thomas outstanding exception made on basis friendly relations between this Mission and various Tibetan officials.

3. We should take GoI in our confidence at early stage regardless whether we decide on (a) or (b).

HENDERSON

893.00/11-2149 : Telegram

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

NEW DELHI, November 21, 1949—10 a. m.

[Received 6:16 p. m.]

1437. A Tibetan representative, Surkhang Depon, who visited US '48 with Tibetan Trade Mission, called at Embassy 19th to deliver

letter addressed Secretary by Foreign Bureau at Lhasa. Letter dated November 4, and, according Depon, brought by special fast courier. Substance as follows:

1. Chinese Communist troops have invaded Lanchow, Chinghai and Sinkiang, all on Tibetan border, and therefore Tibetan Government has written Mao Tse-tung¹⁸ asking him respect Tibet's territorial integrity.

2. In event Mao ignores Tibetan letter and takes aggressive attitude sending his troops toward Tibet, "then Government of Tibet will be obliged to defend her own country by all possible means. Therefore the Government of Tibet would earnestly desire to request every possible help from your Government".

3. Tibetan Government would be grateful if Secretary would consider extensive aid in regards civil and military requirements and send a favorable reply at earliest possible opportunity. (Aid required is not further defined.)

Copy of letter dated November 2 addressed to Mao Tse-tung, "Chairman of the Chinese Communist Government, Peiping" was enclosed. This letter states Tibet independent from earliest times, that its political administration had never been taken over by foreign country and that Tibet defended her territories from foreign invasion. As Chinghai and Sinkiang are situated on Tibetan border, "we would like to have an assurance that no Chinese troops would cross the Tibetan frontier from the Sino-Tibetan border, or any such military action. Therefore please issue strict orders to those civil and military officers stationed on the Sino-Tibetan border in accordance with the above request, and kindly have an early reply so that we can be assured. As regards those Tibetan territories annexed as part of Chinese territory some years back, the Government of Tibet would desire to open negotiations after the settlement of the Chinese civil war". Texts both letters being pouched.¹⁹

In delivering letter addressed to Secretary, Depon said matter most urgent and he is leaving representative named D. Bhakta at Delhi to receive Secretary's reply. Embassy told Depon must expect delay several weeks before any response from Washington could arrive here.

Depon made no mention of similar letters to other governments but member UK office told us that it has received copy Richardson's monthly report for September to GoI. This report mentioned Tibetan Government had decided appeal to UK, US and GoI for aid against Communists and also to reactivate certain military units.

UK Acting High Commissioner mentioned in informal conversation 16th his office endeavoring assess importance Tibet from standpoint long-term strategy and other considerations. He fears, however, pre-

¹⁸ Chairman of the "Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China" and of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

¹⁹ Despatch No. 1002, November 22, and enclosures, not printed.

vailing opinion GoI is that Tibet must already be written off. According another UK officer, Pannikar,²⁰ on return from Nanking, told GoI Tibet was wide open from east and any efforts help Tibet would merely involve India in conflict with Chinese Communists. This officer also stated study was being given to possibility of reminding GoI it is heir of British policy of preserving integrity Tibet and of proposing UK furnish GoI arms and equipment for latter to give to Tibet. He pointed out, however, this would have to be accompanied by UK guarantee of support in case of complications with Chinese Communists and might therefore be of interest to US.

We believe UK office correct in its evaluation GoI attitude. Several weeks ago San Jevi, Director of Intelligence, told me that at inter-departmental meeting held to discuss Tibet it was decided most GoI could do was send moderate supply small arms plus a few officers to instruct Tibetans how to use them. According San Jevi, it was further agreed GoI could not afford become involved in any military adventures in Tibet.

In my next talk with Bajpai²¹ I plan ask him significance Nehru reference to Chinese suzerainty over Tibet (Embtel 1427, November 17²²) in his press conference Delhi November 16.

DONOVAN

893.00/11-2149 : Telegram

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

NEW DELHI, November 21, 1948—3 p. m.

[Received November 21—2:32 p. m.]

1441. At press conference Delhi 16th Nehru commented as follows re Tibet: "We have got a representative at Lhasa. . . .²³ In a vague sense we have accepted fact of Chinese suzerainty. How far it goes one does not know." I asked Bajpai today what implications these remarks had re GoI policy toward Tibet. He said he had not discussed Tibet with Prime Minister since his return and that Dayal, Indian political agent in Sikkim, had not yet arrived Delhi where he had been ordered for consultation re Tibet. Bajpai said Prime Minister's remarks were purposely vague as final policy had not as yet been evolved.

²⁰ K. M. Panikkar, Indian Ambassador to China.

²¹ Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Secretary General of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.

²² Not printed.

²³ Omission indicated in the source text.

He said that speaking purely personally it should be borne in mind that India had always recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet but that same time Tibet had always exercised a certain independence in its dealings with GoI. He said if Communist Government China endeavored take over Tibet situation would be very difficult. I remarked that probably India would like to see *status quo* maintained with respect its relations with Tibet, to which he replied that my comment "about summarized situation".

Embassy believes GoI greatly concerned over Tibet and realizes that if Communist Government wishes take over Tibet there is practically nothing GoI can do prevent such action. See Embtel 1437, November 21.

Sent Department 1441; Department pass London.

DONOVAN

893.00 Tibet/11-2249 : Telegram

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

NEW DELHI, November 22, 1949—4 p. m.
[Received November 22—12:26 p. m.]

1449. Embtel 1437, November 21. Roberts, Deputy UK High Commissioner, raised question Tibet during course conversation today. I told him Parsons²⁴ was in touch with Selby²⁵ regarding letter submitted by Tibetan delegate for transmission Washington.

I then said it seemed there was very little GoI could do about Tibet insofar as Communist Government taking over. Roberts replied this was probably true but that British Government certainly did not wish encourage tendency on part of GoI "throw up its hands and say nothing could be done and retire to its own frontiers". He then added there was "too much of a tendency in that direction on part of GoI". He said UK High Commissioner had advised GoI that it should endeavor every way possible maintain relations with Tibet on old basis. Roberts then referred complicated relationship between Tibet and Nepal, especially reference special position held by Nepalese in Tibet. If Tibet went Communist, situation Nepal might become embarrassing since its frontier with India was anything but insurmountable and Nepal itself spread over into the United Provinces. Roberts admitted British policy toward issue under changed situation had not been finally formulated.

DONOVAN

²⁴ James G. Parsons, First Secretary of Embassy in India.

²⁵ Ralph Selby, of the United Kingdom High Commission in India.

893.00 Tibet/11-2349 : Telegram

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

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1949—10 a. m.
[Received 12:29 p. m.]

1451. UK office has received sealed communication from Tibetan Foreign Bureau addressed to Foreign Secretary²⁶ which is presumed to contain letters similar to those reported in Embtel 1437, November 21.

Although member UK office claims no guidance re Tibet yet received from FonOff, he believes following summary of tentative views reached by British here in talks with Stevenson,²⁷ in Delhi last week likely to coincide with thinking in London.

1. While no doubt Tibetans viewing situation from within country and in full knowledge their helplessness are genuinely apprehensive of early incursion of Communists, UK can give greater weight other factors. Stevenson believed Chinese Communists would not for some considerable time wish to face cost and difficulty of mounting expedition into Tibet, where no great material advantage was to be derived. Unless question of face raised by Tibetan assertions of formal independence or by injudicious acts of propaganda of anti-Communist powers, Communists might well prefer leave Tibet alone. British inclined feel danger gradual infiltration Communists and weakening of Tibet from within greater than that of incursion of Communist troops.

2. British point out Tibetans should be helped to realize threat invasion not necessarily so imminent as they seem believe. Tibetans should further be dissuaded from provocative action such as proclaiming independence (as they have in fact already done in recent letter to Mao Tse-tung) and from pressing claims to portions Inner Tibet (to east of boundary near Chamdo²⁸ and Jyekundo²⁹) which have probably already been overrun by Communists. From this viewpoint it regrettable they have expelled Chinese mission Lhasa on pretext they were Communists not only because this somewhat provocative but also because it increased incentive Communists assert Chinese right to maintain mission at Lhasa.

3. At same time efforts should be made bolster courage of Tibetans who never offered effective resistance earlier Chinese expeditions. Their wishes receive additional small arms including mortars might be considered this connection. Old British policy of recognizing Chinese suzerainty but facilitating exercise Tibetan autonomy applicable to present situation and should probably be pushed harder than ever. This would involve dissuading GoI from tendency write Tibet off.

4. If situation did not develop as expected and threat of imminent Chinese incursion developed, there were still various possibilities open

²⁶ Ernest Bevin.

²⁷ Sir Ralph Stevenson, British Ambassador to China.

²⁸ Changtu, Sikang.

²⁹ Yushu, Tsinghai.

to India and other powers which might have effect of deterring Communists. Quiet dispatch of sizeable contingent troops to Sikkim border might for instance give pause to Chinese. Latter would not know intentions GoI and degree of support it had from UK and others. Dangers this course and undesirability misleading Tibetans into expecting effective military aid would, however, require very careful consideration.

5. From longer term standpoint, British feel careful assessment actual importance Tibet is required. Re this, Nepal's relations with Tibet and absence barriers between southern Nepal and India are important factors. (Embtel 1449, November 22).

British claim to have no information as to whether Dayal, Indian political agent Sikkim who is now returning to Delhi from Lhasa, engaged in negotiations as well as fact-finding. They think GoI will defer policy decisions on Tibet until his arrival. In course discussion UK officer remarked on handicap of no longer being able talk to Tibetans directly at Lhasa. British evidently fear GoI will not be effective proponent of traditional policy of British Indian Government there.

Sent Department 1451, Department pass London.

DONOVAN

893.00 Tibet/11-2849

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*³⁰

The Secretary of State³¹ has received a communication from the Tibetan Government Foreign Bureau enclosing a copy of a letter to Mao Tse Tung requesting him to respect Tibetan independence. The message to Mr. Bevin states that if Chinese Communist leader takes aggressive attitude the Government of Tibet will be obliged to defend her own country and requests help from His Majesty's Government. The letter also requests us to consider extensive aid in respect of requirements for civil and military purposes and asks for early favourable reply. Mr. Bevin is sending an interim reply saying that their communication is receiving sympathetic consideration.

We should like to know whether the United States Government has received a similar communication and, if so, what attitude will be taken.

[WASHINGTON,] 28 November 1949.

³⁰ Handed to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) by the Counselor of the British Embassy (Graves) on November 28, 1949.

³¹ For Foreign Affairs, Ernest Bevin.

893.00 Tibet/12-149 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 1, 1949—9 a. m.

[Received 10:39 a. m.]

1484. Embtel 1451, November 23.

1. Embassy informed by official UK office that High Commissioner expects call on Foreign Secretary Menon³² as soon as appointment can be arranged to inform GoI of Tibetan request to UK Government for assistance in case invasion Tibet by Chinese Communists.

2. At same time High Commissioner will also give UK suggestions re policy which GoI might profitably adopt in light possibility of invasion Tibet by Chinese Communists. According UK official, GoI requested UK comments on what policy GoI should follow. In general UK High Commissioner will advise Menon along same lines as tentative British policy described Embtel 1451. British believe GoI should follow pre-independence Indian policy of recognizing Chinese suzerainty but supporting Tibetan autonomy, and particularly that GoI should not take any steps which could be considered open defiance to Chinese Communists such as recognition independence Tibet or sending brigade troops to Lhasa. It also believes, however, GoI should not let it be known India has no intention opposing Chinese Communist invasion. For example, should Chinese cross Tibetan borders, GoI might decide send troops to Indo-Tibetan border if it thought at time such action would deter Communists from continuing to Lhasa.

3. UK official deprecated address [of] Governor General³³ in Shillong November 28 in which latter reportedly said Chinese threatened Tibet and Burma was divided, but that Assamese should not fear because GoI would ensure their defense. UK official thought that if Indian leaders continued taking this line Chinese Communists would feel they had nothing fear from India if they decided invade Tibet.

4. Bevin has sent interim reply to Tibetan request for aid, merely acknowledging receipt and stating request would receive "sympathetic consideration" of UK Government. UK official said that while UK hoped it could stiffen Tibetan resistance to oppose any Communist invasion, it did not wish to give Tibet the idea that UK would send troops to Tibet to prevent entry Communist armies as UK had no troops to spare for such an operation.

Sent Department 1484. Department pass London.

HENDERSON

³² K. P. S. Menon, Foreign Secretary in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

³³ Chakravarti Rajagopalachari.

893.00 Tibet/12-149 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 1, 1949—11 a. m.

[Received December 1—10:42 a. m.]

1483. Press reports that in answer question Parliament 28th Deputy Minister External Affairs replied "no representations had been received from Tibet for any sort of assistance, economic or financial".

In conversation with Surkhang Depon (Embtel 1437, November 21), we received impression any request for help from India would be made by Tibetan Government directly to Dayal, Indian political agent Sikkim, who has just visited Lhasa. British here received similar impression in parallel conversation with Surkhang. As Dayal can communicate with GoI by code telegram from Lhasa, Deputy Minister's statement somewhat surprising, in view of various indications Tibetan Government was asking help from India as well as US and UK.

Department pass to London.

HENDERSON

893.00 Tibet/12-249 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 2, 1949—10 a. m.

[Received December 2—6:37 a. m.]

1488. During talk with Bajpai December 1, I referred to problem Tibet. He said GoI has not as yet received expected appeal from Tibet for assistance in resisting possible Chinese Communist aggression. In any event there was little GoI could do. It seemed probable that in no distant future Chinese Communists would take over Tibet. GoI had however suggested to Nepalese Government that it take steps to prevent Communist infiltration from Tibet and warned it that unless it adopted more enlightened and modern regime it might fall as result internal Communist inspired uprisings without any overt closing of frontiers.

HENDERSON

501.AA/12-349 : Telegram

The Tibetan Cabinet Ministers to the Secretary of State

GYANTSE, December 3, 1949.

[Received December 3—1:51 p. m.]

As Tibet being an independent state, we have no dangers from other foreign countries but in view of the spread of Communism and their

successes in China, there is now an imminent danger of Communist aggression towards Tibet.

As all the world knows that Tibet and Communist China cannot have any common sympathy by reasons of religion and principles of life which are just the opposite, therefore in order to defend our country against impending threat of Communist invasion and also to preserve our future independence and freedom, we consider it most essential for Tibet to secure admission of her membership in the United Nations General Assembly.

We are sending a special mission to the United States in this connection but, in the meantime, we shall be most grateful to you and your Government if you would kindly help us and place our humble appeal to the United Nations immediately through your good office so that Tibet could take her place in the United Nations as a member state.

Kindly take immediate action and wire reply.

Kashag (Cabinet Ministers of Tibet, Lhasa)

501.AA/12-649

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Sprouse)

[WASHINGTON,] December 6, 1949.

Participants: Mr. H. A. Graves, Counselor, British Embassy
Mr. Livingston T. Merchant, FE
Mr. Philip D. Sprouse, CA

During a call by Mr. Graves this afternoon on another subject, Mr. Sprouse took the occasion to read to him the telegram, dated December 3, addressed by the Tibetan Cabinet to the Secretary asking the U.S. Government to assist Tibet in obtaining membership in the United Nations. Mr. Sprouse informed Mr. Graves that the Department had not yet reached a decision with respect to its reply to this request and asked whether the British Government had received a similar request and, if so, what its views were. He added that it would be helpful to have an indication of the British views regarding this matter in any event.

Mr. Graves replied that he did not know whether such an appeal had been received by the British Government but that he would inquire of the Foreign Office and inform the Department in due course.³⁴

³⁴ On December 16 such receipt was confirmed by the British Embassy.

501.AA/12-749 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in India (Henderson)*³⁵

WASHINGTON, December 7, 1949—4 p. m.

878. Fyi³⁶ tel addressed Secy, by Kashag, recd Dec 3 from Gyantse states Tibet independent, fears Commie aggression. To defend country and preserve independence, Tibet considers admission UN essential. Tel states Tibetans sending mission US and request US support presenting application UN membership.

Full text msg being forwarded by agam.

Dept requests Emb's comments and suggests you discuss with GoI and UK High Commissioner.

ACHESON

893.00 Tibet/12-849 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

NEW DELHI, December 8, 1949—4 p. m.

[Received 4:10 p. m.]

1523. 1. Embtel 1484, December 1 reported UK High Commissioner would call on Foreign Secretary Menon shortly to tell GoI of Tibetan request for aid from UK. UK officer told Embassy 6th this information had been given Bajpai several days ago together with UK suggestions re future GoI policy as outlined reftel.

4. UK High Commissioner has not yet received further reply from London in response Tibetan request for aid nor has it received instructions re next step in discussing Tibet with GoI. Meanwhile, however, UK High Commissioner fears prevailing viewpoint in GoI will be that Tibet must be written off and it is also fearful that GoI may even take defeatist line in regard to Nepal. Indication that GoI might seek limit Nepalese imports of arms through India (Embdesp 1027, December 1³⁷) seemed a bad sign.

5. UK officer referred to long-standing plan to send small UK mission visit Lhasa and said it now seemed probable this mission would not be sent spring because it might draw too much attention to Tibet and cause Chinese Communists attempt to assert sovereignty over Tibet sooner than they would otherwise do. His emphasis on avoiding "rocking boat" may have been designed to discourage US from sending

³⁵ Repeated to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom as No. 4371.

³⁶ For your information.

³⁷ Not printed.

representatives to Lhasa next summer although neither in this or any other conversation have we mentioned that this possibility is under consideration.

6. Embassy becoming increasingly doubtful re advisability sending proposed US mission to Tibet and suggests Department defer decision on this pending receipt more considered views which will be submitted shortly.

Sent Department 1523; Department pass London.

HENDERSON

501.BB Palestine (E)/12-949: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 9, 1949—6 p. m.
[Received December 9—5:52 p. m.]

4903. Reference Deptel 4371, December 7.⁸⁸ Apparently identical telegram received by Foreign Office same date.

Foreign Office showed Embassy official text telegram of December 8 to New Delhi which expresses opinion USSR would veto Tibetan application UN; suggests that impracticability Tibetan proposal be explained to Kashag, preferably through Indian resident Lhasa; stresses desirability close cooperation with India; and requests that if possible special mission be held up in India and received jointly by UKHC⁸⁹ and Indian Government. If Indian Government agrees, then interim reply will be sent discouraging Tibetan proposal and suggesting special mission be held up pending receipt considered reply. Similar but briefer message sent same date Karachi for information Pakistan Government and to obtain its views.

HOLMES

893.00/11-2149: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in India (Henderson)

WASHINGTON, December 9, 1949—8 p. m.

889. Urtel 1437, Nov 21. Pls inform Tibetan rep that while Dept is not in position at present give definite ans, their ltr to Secy will be given careful consideration. You may add in ur discretion we have noted simultaneous approach to Brit who, with India, traditionally and geographically stand in closer relationship to them than does US.

⁸⁸ See footnote 35 to telegram No. 878, December 7, 4 p. m., to the Ambassador in India, p. 1089.

⁸⁹ United Kingdom High Commission.

Dept suggests you may find opportunity use Commie threat Tibet to emphasize GoI dangers to India itself arising from Commie China and unrealism semi-detached attitude India respecting developments in China.

Having in mind para 6 ur 1523 Dept has refrained mentioning possible visits Lhasa in replying Tibetans.

ACHESON

893.00 Tibet/12-1249 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Holmes) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 12, 1949—4 p. m.
[Received December 12—3: 59 p. m.]

4921. Reference Embtel 4903, December 9. Foreign Office position paper re Tibet categorically states that while British still interested in Tibet maintaining its autonomy, Tibetan problem is almost exclusively of concern to India. Britain is prepared to support any action India may take to assist Tibet in maintaining its autonomy, but would wish to discourage direct military intervention by India.

When asked whether Chinese Communist threat to Tibetan autonomy would cause a revision in the British attitude, Scott⁴⁰ said he believed any British military assistance would be limited to supply of small quantity firearms to India which would enable that country to supply equivalent amount to Tibet. Any training of Tibetan troops would necessarily be undertaken by India.

HOLMES

501.AA/12-1449 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 14, 1949—10 p. m.
[Received December 15—11: 06 a. m.]

1555. 1. Tibetan approach re UN admission and dispatch mission US (Deptel 878, December 7) discussed with Foreign Secretary Menon and Roberts, UK.

2. Menon said admission Tibet hopeless, UN debate would unduly agitate Tibetan question and might provoke earlier action by Chinese Communists.

3. a. Roberts expressed similar view. Draft UK reply to similar approach from Kashag avoids outright rejection Tibetan appeal and

⁴⁰ E. J. F. Scott of the Far Eastern Department, British Foreign Office.

suggests in view serious difficulties presently in way on UN admission that dispatch of proposed mission be suspended.

b. Roberts gave Menon UK draft and sounded him out as to GoI willingness deliver it through GoI representative Lhasa together with oral explanation to Tibetans re probable reaction Chinese Communists. If Tibetans still insisted on sending mission, British suggested GoI representative might propose mission come as far as Delhi and talk with GoI and UK representatives here.

4. Menon's reaction to Roberts' approach was negative but matter in abeyance pending discussion this week end in which Nehru, Panikkar and Menon will participate to settle GoI policy re Tibet.

5. In absence Bajpai, British fear negative viewpoint set forth paragraph 2 Embtel 1523, December 8, will prevail.

6. I believe US reply should take line similar UK draft. Visit Tibetan mission US would be even more undesirable than to UK. Our reply should, however, not be sent in clear telegram to Gyantse and I suggest it be given orally to Tibetan representative here to whom we will within next day or so give oral response (Deptel 889, December 9) to Tibetan request for aid. (We do not, however, plan include reference to closer historical relationship UK and India to Tibet.)

Sent Department 1555, Department pass London.

HENDERSON

893.00 Tibet/12-1549: Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 15, 1949—noon.

[Received December 15—10:27 a. m.]

1558. Because of following considerations, we are becoming increasingly doubtful that it would be advisable for US to send official mission to Tibet next spring (paragraph 6, Embtel 1523, December 8) :

1. In summer 1949 visit would have appeared as gesture of interest in Tibet. Since then, events have moved rapidly and situation is much altered. Official visit in spring might appear to USSR and GoI as first move towards recognition Tibetan independence or as evidence desire obtain foothold Tibet. In any event, it might cause Communists expedite execution their program for conquest Tibet.

2. In spite any declarations we might make, official visit might mislead Tibetans into believing we prepared aid them resist incursion Chinese Communist troops. We doubt US, UK or GoI would attempt meet force with force and there seems little doubt conquest Tibet is within Chinese Communist capabilities if they wish make effort.

It would be unfair for US take any action which might encourage them to resist because of mistaken idea of help from US.

3. In view GoI's probable early recognition Chinese Communist Government and their probable adoption negative policy toward Tibet as described paragraph 2 of reference telegram, GoI would probably not view sympathetically despatch US mission to Lhasa and would possibly withhold its cooperation. We should, of course, weigh carefully adverse effects of sending mission on our relations here against results which we might obtain in Lhasa. Furthermore, we have to recall that, in last analysis, we can communicate with Tibet now only via India, and similarly that Tibet can only communicate with non-Communist world via India.

4. Despatch US mission to Tibet would present Communists as well as other elements in South Asia critical our policy with propaganda opportunity which they would exploit fully.

Consequently Embassy feels that, unless we contemplate adopt stiffer policy than in past re Chinese Communists, we should not make any definite plans just now for despatch of mission to Tibet despite opportunity which it would give of making contacts with higher Tibetan officials and gaining first hand information regarding country about which we know little. Embassy will attempt follow closely evolution GoI and UK policy towards Tibet and will make recommendations to Department at later date if situation should be so altered as to make it advantageous from overall point of view for despatch of some sort of mission to Tibet. We shall take into consideration at that time possible advisability either of sending a covert mission or perhaps attempting obtain permission for non-official make trip with idea his obtaining information of value to US Government.

Department's reaction to foregoing would be much appreciated.

Sent Department 1558; Department pass London, Moscow.

HENDERSON

893.00 Tibet/12-1649: Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 16, 1949—10 p. m.

[Received December 17—7: 12 a. m.]

1564. Following information re Tibet obtained from members British High Commission here (see also Embtel 1555, December 14). They request that information originating with Richardson and Dayal not be discussed with Indian representatives.

1. Richardson, GoI agent Lhasa, believes Chinese Communists likely move into Tibet next summer but British regard this view with considerable reserve. His view probably reflection of prevailing opinion.

Lhasa where threatening broadcasts Peiping radio had created so much alarm. Richardson discounts difficulty of travel from Jyekundo to Lhasa and estimates travel time no more than 2.5 months. Also asserts infiltration Communist agents into Bhutan, Nepal and India is relatively simple. His view is force of 20,000 should be sufficient overcome any likely Tibetan resistance. His last information before leaving Lhasa contradicted earlier reports fall of Jyekundo which he now believes has not yet been taken over.

Despite Richardson's views re timing Communist invasion, British here apparently feel difficulty of terrain, problem of adjustment to extreme high altitudes and constant winds, difficulty of feeding troops, lack of material or accessibility resources to exploit, preoccupation Communists with internal problems all combine render dispatch of Chinese military expedition unlikely in near future and to make alternative infiltration and gradual conquest from within more attractive.

2. Dayal, Indian political agent Sikkim, whose arrival here from Lhasa delayed until today, had long talks with Tibetan Government during which he tried in vain dissuade them from writing Mao Tse-tung (Embtel 1437, November 21) to assert Tibet's independence so provocatively and from renewing claim to inner Tibetan areas. Tibetans asked Dayal for extensive GoI help including aid in building army from reported 13,000 to 100,000. Richardson believes it possible to raise army of 50,000 but help would obviously be needed in equipping it.

3. Dayal was particularly interested in protection Indian trading posts Gyantse and Yatung.

4. Right of GoI maintain resident mission Lhasa was never clearly recognized by China who had only agreed permit visiting mission from time to time. UK believes, however, GoI should maintain resident mission and if challenged by Chinese Communists deal with situation in light then situation.

5. Relationship between Tibet and Nepal continues nominally at least to be governed by Treaty of 1856⁴¹ which was concluded without Chinese participation. This treaty contains provision to effect that Lhasa is holy place of worship for which reason Nepal will grant all assistance in its power against any foreign invaders. This provision has apparently never been invoked successfully but Tibetans would be very likely attempt to do so if Chinese Communists march in.

6. Roberts, Deputy High Commissioner, confirmed UK which has also been considering sending official mission Lhasa next spring un-

⁴¹ Signed March 26, 1856, C. U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1929), vol. xiv, footnote, pp. 41-42.

likely to do so for reasons similar those given in Embtel 1558, December 15. However, no final decision has been reached. Should British go ahead they can leak their correspondence with Himalayan Committee London which will show UK long considering dispatch of mission, thereby demonstrating it was not being sent merely because of development of Chinese Communist threat.

Chinese Ambassador tells me in extreme confidence he is convinced from sources in Lhasa that Dayal has been attempting negotiate treaty defining borders between India-Bhutan and Tibet. He believes such treaty if concluded would give India or Bhutan large slices territory adjacent to Bhutan and Kashmir some of which have been illegally occupied by detachments Indian Army for last 5 years. Although I have indirectly questioned both Indians and British, I have not been able find any confirmation. Ambassador maintains no treaty at present defining Tibet's southern and western frontiers with India and Bhutan although for many years maps prepared in India and China show practically identical boundary lines.

Sent Department; Department pass London.

HENDERSON

893.00 Tibet/12-2149

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Sprouse)

[WASHINGTON,] December 21, 1949.

During the course of a conversation with Mr. Graves⁴² today on another subject I gave him a brief summary (copy attached)⁴³ of the statement the Department had authorized Ambassador Henderson to make to the Tibetan representative at New Delhi in reply to the Tibetan appeal for material assistance. I explained that I would also give him, in accordance with his request, the substance of the Department's reply to the Tibetan appeal for assistance in obtaining membership in the UN when that reply was despatched.⁴⁴

Mr. Graves then launched into a description of the British view of the Tibetan situation, pointing out that the British Government was of the opinion that nothing should be done to discourage the Tibetan authorities and that an effort should be made to give them moral encouragement even though it was not possible to extend material aid. He further stated that the British Government felt that the Government of India should take the lead in this problem and that the UK High Commissioner at New Delhi was making efforts along that line.

⁴² Hubert A. Graves, Counselor of the British Embassy.

⁴³ Not printed.

⁴⁴ This was done on December 28.

He said that the British Government would appreciate whatever action the U.S. Government might be able to take along similar lines.

I informed him that Ambassador Henderson had discussed the problem both with the Indian authorities and with the UK High Commissioner and that I felt certain that his efforts were being made toward the desired end. I pointed out that it was also the opinion of the Department that we should not do anything which would discourage the Tibetans and that the Department's reply which I had given him was framed with that idea in mind. In reply to my query, Mr. Graves said that he did not think that the British Government was prepared to give military aid to the Tibetans or to replace any military materiel which the Government of India might be persuaded to make available to the Tibetans but that the British Government was endeavoring to encourage the Indian authorities to give small arms and ammunition to the Tibetans.

During the conversation Mr. Graves showed me a Hansard report of December 14, 1949, in which was published a letter from Mr. Eden ⁴⁵ to Dr. T. V. Soong ⁴⁶ under date of August 5, 1943 and an accompanying memorandum setting forth the British position with respect to Tibet. Mr. Graves stated that it was his view that this still represented the British position in regard to Tibet.

(Subsequent to his return to the British Embassy Mr. Graves sent me a copy of this letter and the memorandum, a copy of which is attached.⁴⁷)

501.AA/12-1449: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in India (Henderson)

WASHINGTON, December 21, 1949—1 p. m.

919. Dept concurs views para 6 ur 1555 Dec 14. Accordingly desires you convey Tibetan representative fol oral reply Tibetan msg from Gyantse re UN membership (Deptel 878 Dec 7) :

Kashag tel to Sec given sympathetic consideration. Dept convinced Tibetan effort obtain UN membership this time wld be unsuccessful in view certain opposition USSR and Chinese dels, both of whom have veto power in SC.⁴⁸ Moreover, Tibetan plan despatch special mission obtain UN membership may at this time serve to precipitate Chinese Communist action to gain control Tibet.

Dept suggests that, if you consider desirable, you point out in-

⁴⁵ Anthony Eden, in 1943 British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁶ In 1943 Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁷ Latter not printed.

⁴⁸ Security Council.

formally and on personal basis that Tibet now appears enjoy *de facto* freedom Chinese control and that any obvious move this time complete separation from China in form as well as substance wld probably hasten Chinese Commie efforts thereby jeopardizing present status.

In ur discretion you may discuss foregoing informally with UK, HC and GoI.

ACHESON

893.00 Tibet/12-3049 : Telegram

The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

NEW DELHI, December 30, 1949—1 p. m.

[Received 1:56 p. m.]

1619. Embtel 1523, December 8. In conversation this morning with Embassy officer, Jha⁴⁰ of Ministry External Affairs said that following, although not yet approved by Nehru, represented thinking of Ministry re Indian policy towards Tibet.

(1) No purpose would be served in raising question of political status of Tibet at this time. Ministry feels that making issue of Tibetan question at present might precipitate Communist decision invade pursuant their declared intention liberating country.

(2) At some time subsequent Indian recognition of Chinese Communist Government, scheduled take place tomorrow, Indian Government may initiate "diplomatic *pourparlers*" with Chinese re status Tibet as GoI strongly in favor of continuance Tibetan autonomy to same extent as has been case in past.

(3) GoI has received number requests for arms and ammunition from Tibetan Government, has complied with some of these requests, and will send more in future. It cannot, however, render active military assistance in form of despatch troops to Lhasa.

(4) Ministry External Affairs has not considered what action should be taken in connection with Tibetan application for membership UN.

It appears clear from foregoing India is not requesting Chinese Communists to respect Tibetan autonomy, or even to recognize previous treaties between China and pre-independence Indian Government dealing with Tibet, as prerequisite to establishment relations. Embassy inclined doubt GoI will press Chinese Communists strongly re recognition Tibetan autonomy even if "diplomatic *pourparlers*" mentioned by Jha initiated at all, since Pannikar, Indian Ambassador China, will probably not wish allow question future Tibet disturb cordial relationship he hopes establish between Indian Government and Chinese Communists. We have impression amount of arms sent Tibet is negligible.

HENDERSON

⁴⁰ C. S. Jha, Joint Secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in charge of American Affairs.