

March 12, 1951

**The US Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the
Department of State, 'Transmitting Monthly Report
of Indian Mission at Lhasa, Tibet, for Period Ending
January 15, 1951'**

Citation:

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Summary:

Report of the Indian Mission in Lhasa from January 1951

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Amconsul, Calcutta

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429

March 12, 1951

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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PRIORITY

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REF : Calcutta's Secret Despatch No. 343 dated January 25, 1951, and Department's Telegram No. 279 of February 27, 1951

For Dept. Use Only

SUBJECT:

Transmitting Monthly Report of Indian Mission at Lhasa, Tibet, for Period Ending January 15, 1951.

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There is transmitted herewith a copy of the monthly report of the Indian Mission at Lhasa, Tibet, for the period ending January 15, 1951, which has just been obtained from the Office of the Deputy High Commission for the United Kingdom, Calcutta. A brief summary of the report has been telegraphed to the Department in accordance with the request contained in the Department's telegram No. 279 of February 27, 1951.

The following are the highlights of the situation in Tibet as reported by the Indian Mission for the period under review:

(1). Chinese Communist tactics have been characterized by a marked element of surprise and by enveloping operations taking the defenders unaware, creating terror and a sense of utter helplessness.

(2). The Communist offensive is accomplished by a subtle propaganda campaign aimed at reducing the defenders' morale. Especially effective is the Communist practice of releasing prisoners after they have been indoctrinated.

(3). The Tibetans have succeeded in denying the Chinese their biggest prize--the Dalai Lama, since without him the conquest of Tibet would be only partial.

(4). Nothing could be easier for the Chinese now than to over-run Tibet but the "fire of resistance" will not be put out for a generation or two.

(5). The Government of India sought to dissuade the Dalai Lama and his advisers from leaving Lhasa prematurely but was unsuccessful in this.

(6). In Western Tibet, the military situation continues obscure, while in the Eastern part of the country

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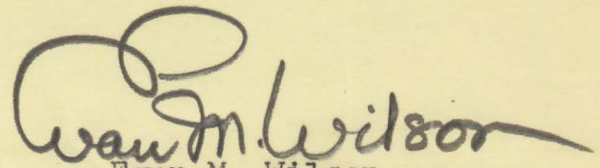
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the Communists are encountering difficulties in building up supplies and in coping with the "atrocious" weather.

(7). In Lhasa there has been a deterioration in public order as well as a large influx of foreigners from China, many of whom are suspected of being Communist agents.

The Consulate General will endeavor to secure and forward to the Department copies of subsequent reports of this nature.



Evan M. Wilson
American Consul General

Enclosure: *att.*

✓ Copy of the Monthly Report of
The Indian Mission at Lhasa for the
period ending January 15, 1951.

Copy to New Delhi

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Enclosure to Despatch 429 from Amconsul, Calcutta, March 12, 1951

MONTHLY REPORT OF THE INDIAN MISSION, LHASA,
FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 15, 1951.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Relations between Tibet and China

There is a marked element of surprise in everything that the Chinese do; they attack, capture and unexpectedly abandon a place, and move on with incredible rapidity to new and remote quarters for fresh operations. Their novel strategy is not to march straight to a target but to envelope the enemy and appear mysteriously at a number of places almost all at once. They take the enemy unawares, overwhelm small garrisons, penetrate deep into undefended areas and generally create terror and a sense of utter helplessness among the defenders.

While the Tibetans were closely watching Chinese progress on the Chamdo-Giamda route, the Chinese were active elsewhere in Dzayul, Pomako and Poyul in South Eastern Tibet, and in areas near Rudok, and even Gartok in Western Tibet. Garpon Marlampa laconically asked his Government's permission to surrender to the Chinese, and the Radio station at Gartok had to be removed to Chaprang. From the West a possible threat lay on Shigatse, while from the South East - though the difficulties are enormous - a threat to the Chumbi Valley appears to be in the offine.

The objective of an army that attacks and retreats at will, reappears at the most unlooked for places, and combines subtle propgaganda with offer of tempting terms could only be to reduce the enemy's morale to such an extent as would lead them to despair and seek peace at any price.

To this may be added the equally baffling policy of not keeping prisoners, for the Chinese generally release captured soldiers who receive not only the usual sermon but a dole that never fails to impress. High officials who are taken captive are given high rank and honour and made to serve the Communist purpose. Such, for instance, are the roles of Ngapho Shape and his assistants, and Garpon Marlampa might easily have followed the same path.

From Kumbum in Sining appeared a party despatched by the Chinghai Governor with terms so attractive that not even the most irrational among the Tibetans were taken in by them. The leader

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of the party, Taktser Rimpoche, who had been fully tutored to sing the praises of Communism and dispel fears of oppression, reached Lhasa on the 8th December and promptly discarded the role he has assumed. He proved a broken reed, much to the disillusionment of his Chinese patrons. The Rimpoche, significantly chosen for this role, was expected along with his two monk colleagues to make a joint appeal to the Dalai; but on his arrival in Lhasa, and while his companions were still travelling, he met Tibetan officials and his brother, the Dalai, in solemn conclave and reviled the Communists for their unmitigated villiany.

Though the Tibetans have suffered serious reverses, they have not been deceived; they can now gleefully turn back and say that they have at least succeeded in denying the Chinese their biggest prize - the Dalai and his treasures. Without the Dalai, the conquest of Tibet would only be partial, for among the simple superstitious inhabitants of this veiled kingdom the Dalai will continue to receive homage and divine worship.

Meanwhile the pretense of negotiation continues, though Ngapho Shape's task has been rendered infinitely more difficult with the departure of the Dalai from Lhasa. The Tibetans have shrewdly appointed Ngapho as Chief Negotiator to be assisted by two junior officials from Lhasa viz. Thupten Lingmyo (The Regent's Nendron) and Sumdup Photrang Se. The last two left for Kham on 2nd January.

Nothing can be easier for the Chinese now than to over-run Tibet but the fire of resistance will not be put out for a generation or two, as long, that is, as those who are now alive continue to live.

Indo-Tibetan Relations

Indo-Tibetan relations continued to be cordial. Tibetan officials met regularly at our Mission for discussions, and duly reported proceedings to the National Assembly.

The Government of India was at some pains to dissuade the Dalai and His Government from leaving Lhasa prematurely. They thought it inadvisable to send an Indian plane to evacuate the Dalai from His Capital, which, however, did not cause any resentment.

The arrival of the Taktser Rimpoche in Lhasa caused a flutter of excitement and officials daily congregated at the Potala to listen to his experiences under Communist rule. His views hardened their

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hearts, and they firmly resolved to remove His Holiness out of harm's way; and from the relative security of Yatung, free from the ubiquitous threat of being over-powered, to direct the course of negotiations. The National Assembly, summoned to discuss the proposed transfer of Government to Yatung, approved the proposal as a temporary measure. On the 17th December we made a further attempt to delay the flight but the Tibetan Government were adamant.

On the 18th December towards evening orders were circulated to all important officials to be ready to leave Lhasa early on the following morning.

That morning a messenger arrived from the Foreign Bureau with a personal letter from the Chief who regretted that he was unable to communicate earlier the decision which had been finalized the previous evening. He tried to make amends for this by keeping me informed of the progress of the party on the road to Gyantse.

Under recent orders issued by the Government of India, all Tibetans have to register themselves as aliens in India.

Relations with Nepal

The Nepalese Legation in Lhasa has brought up their Wireless equipment and two operators, but they are not making use of their set for fear of irritating the Communists.

INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS IN LHASA

I met Lukhangwa, the new Prime Minister, on 19th December and discussed with him plans for maintaining law and order in Lhasa. He promised to increase the skeleton police force of the Capital, but advised me to bring up a few men from Gyantse for our protection.

MILITARY SITUATION

In Western Tibet the situation continues to be obscure. We have been told that a Tibetan patrol shot a 'Communist' camel near Tingung, but there were no repercussions.

Despite Communist efforts to improve communications in Kham, and build up stocks of essential supplies, they seem to be running

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short of stores. In consequence, they are said to be buying, requisitioning and taxing the local people. They brought large quantities of barley from Pashu. However, they seem to be pulling out men from forward areas in Kham. The weather in the last few weeks has been atrocious, and it is not inconceivable that roads on the Sikang side have become impassable. Anyhow, Communists are still busy building a road between Kanze and Chamdo. Loads of silver dollars are being dropped from the air at Chamdo to meet local requirements, and the rate has been fixed at 18 sangs for a dollar.

INTERNAL SITUATION

There were some minor disturbances and a few cases of armed dacoity. Lhasa authorities have recruited an additional police force and an order has been circulated exhorting all concerned not to disturb the peace by firing in the evenings without provocation.

We caught two thieves - a man and a woman - inside our compound and handed them over to the local authorities. They were stripped bare and given 20 lashes each.

Following new appointments for Lhasa have been made recently:-

Rimshi Thro-gawo - Tsipon
Lachang Mento-pa - Officiating Tsipon
Lachag Thupten Sangye - Officiating Trungyik Chhempo
Khenchung Thupton Gawa - Officiating Trungyik Chhempo

Under orders issued by the Tibetan Government, all foreigners arriving in Lhasa are now being registered at the Foreign Bureau. Foreign Bureau officials say that there has been a large influx of foreigners from Sining in the past few days. They fear that quite a number of these are Communist agents.

Five monks who were out one evening with rifles were disarmed by the Police.

Ragashar Shape left Dam for Shigatse on 10th January. It is not known why he decamped, but his move will leave the north-eastern route to Lhasa open. There are rumours that Lhalu Shape is also returning to Lhasa in a day or two.

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It is understood that the annual new year ceremonies in Lhasa will be held as usual.

ECONOMIC

The rupee is fast depreciating in terms of Tibetan currency. It now fetches less than 4 sangs, while local prices continue to rise. Trade in Lhasa is dull, and most traders are merely watching the situation. No fresh goods are coming in from outside, while high wool prices in India are helping to keep the value of the rupee down.

MISCELLANEOUS

Yolbuz Khan, ex-Governor of Hami, General in the Sinkiang army, and a member of the KMT Control Yuan, has arrived in Lhasa with his two sons, his Secretary and a few servants. He escaped from Sinkiang 6 months after the Communists had taken over the Province. He decided to leave Sinkiang because he found conditions under Communist rule unbearable, particularly in the manner in which it affected his religion. Yolbuz Khan has asked for entry visas for India for himself and party. He will wait for the visas at Yatung. He is a mine of information on Sinkiang and regards Burhan's ill wife more dangerous than Burhan himself.

An escort party of 1 Jemadar, 2 sepoy and 1 medical orderly arrived in Lhasa from Gyantse on the 3rd January 1951.

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