

Questions Pertaining to Tibet, 1969–1972

273. Editorial Note

On August 1, 1969, the CIA prepared for the 303 Committee a 14-page update on regional intelligence activities that included information and recommendations concerning the Tibetan operations. The report stated in part:

“Since 1958, CIA has been supporting guerrillas of the Dalai Lama’s Tibetan resistance movement, the bulk of whom are now located in a safehaven in Nepal just across the Tibet/Nepal border. They are conducting intelligence collections and minor paramilitary operations against Tibet and constitute a force which could be employed in strength in the event of hostilities [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], or in the event of a partial collapse of Chinese control of Tibet resulting from other causes. The above combined [Tibetan and other regional paramilitary] programs were approved by the 303 Committee for a three-year period in 1966 at a cost of [*dollar amount not declassified*]. The Fiscal Year 1969 expenditure was, however, only \$2,500,000 and it is proposed to continue the program at this level in Fiscal Year 1970.”

The report noted that the CIA had provided military equipment, training, communications, and money to Tibetan resistance guerrillas in the Mustang area of Nepal. Approximately 1.5 million [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] was spent on the Tibetan force during the 1966–1969 period, often passed to leaders in local currencies to purchase food or animals. The current force had 1,800 men, “well above the optimum size considering the current targets and the increased Chinese control of Tibetan territory opposite Mustang.” The CIA noted that it had been discussing with the Dalai Lama’s representatives, guerrilla leaders, and others a plan to reduce the force to “300 well-equipped and combat ready men, the remainder being resettled as civilian ‘reserves.’” The CIA requested \$500,000 per year for the Tibetan program, with the expectation that the force reduction “might involve a termination and resettlement payment of \$2,500,000, spread over a number of years, but the eventual effect would be to cut our annual cost to under \$100,000.” In considering alternatives, the report stated: “In light of current conditions in South Asia it is not deemed necessary to discuss the alternative of more extensive support than that outlined in the ‘Proposal’. Should current indications of Soviet plans for subversion in Sinkiang and Tibet sharply increase, a plan to augment the present proposals could be quickly developed.”

The CIA stated that there were few risks involved with these programs. The U.S. Ambassadors to India and Nepal, as well as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, had been kept apprised of this program. The report concluded by requesting \$2.5 million for the Tibetan and a related paramilitary program for Fiscal Year 1970, while the CIA explored “ways to reduce the force level of the Tibetan guerillas, and to resettle them as appropriate.” (Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, 303/40 Committee, 1969 Minutes)

In a September 12 memorandum to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Joseph Sisco noted “reservations” about the CIA claims that the force could be used in the event of a conflict with China or the weakening of Chinese control over Tibet stemming from “other causes.” (Ibid.) In a subsequent September 15 memorandum to Johnson, Sisco raised other concerns related to the possible use of these forces “given the state of Sino-Soviet relations.” He predicted that the Soviets would encourage an internal uprising in Tibet in the event of hostilities with China and urged that “The Committee make clear that it would reserve its judgment on any use of the Kampa Force [Tibetan guerrillas in the Mustang Valley in Nepal] in Tibet pending an extremely careful analysis of the circumstances existing at the time the issue comes up.” Sisco also suggested that the CIA emphasize to other governments in the region that the Tibetan border force was “defensive” in nature and that caution should be exercised before its use. (Ibid.) These memoranda were forwarded to the 303 Committee for a September 23 meeting.

Tibet was not discussed until the September 30 meeting of the 303 Committee, when Henry Kissinger, Richard Helms, John Mitchell, David Packard, and George C. Denney, Jr., Deputy Director of Intelligence and Research, concluded that “the operation is well worthwhile, [*1 line of source text not declassified*].” The recommendations for reducing the Tibetan and related regional paramilitary programs in the August 1 CIA paper were approved. (Memorandum for the Record by Frank Chapin, 303 Committee Meeting of September 30; National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, 303/40 Committee Files, 1969 Minutes)

274. Editorial Note

During the first Nixon administration (1969–1972), the U.S. Government continued its decade-long support of the Dalai Lama and his followers, including political action, propaganda, and paramilitary

activity. Weapons and assistance were provided to Tibetan guerrillas in areas of Nepal located near the border with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Funds also were provided to the Dalai Lama for his propaganda efforts among exiled Tibetans in the United States and elsewhere. This operation began during the second Eisenhower administration (1957–1961) and continued through the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

During the first Nixon administration, the value of direct U.S. support of 1,800 Tibetan refugee guerrillas was examined and a consensus was reached that the force was generally ineffective and that intelligence and potential stay-behind functions of the Tibetan exile paramilitary forces could be accomplished by a much smaller number of men. Therefore, in 1971, the 40 Committee accepted the recommendation of the CIA that the paramilitary forces be reduced from around 1,800 men to 300. This was accomplished by a reduction in financial support. The total cost of the Tibetan program until this decision was approximately \$2.5 million per year with \$500,000 of that figure for non-guerrilla political, propaganda, and intelligence operations. Under the revised plan, after a resettlement payment of \$2.5 million spread over a number of years, the costs of maintaining 300 guerrillas would be \$100,000 per year and non-guerrilla operations would be reduced from \$500,000 in FY 1970 to \$363,000 in FY 1971 and \$263,000 in FY 1972.

President Nixon, Henry Kissinger and the NSC staff, the Department of State, and the CIA all agreed that the Tibetan operation was an unsuccessful irritant to the PRC that was unlikely to influence that nation's policy, except by hampering rapprochement with the United States. This operation was reduced during the first Nixon administration, as the President sought to improve relations with the PRC Government.

275. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, March 23, 1970.

SUBJECT

Visit of the Dalai Lama to the United States

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Country Files, Middle East, India, Box 600, Dalai Lama (possible 1971). Secret. Sent for action. Initialed by Kissinger. A notation on the first page reads: "To HAK."

Tibetan representatives have informed us that the Dalai Lama wishes to visit the United States and Europe this coming Autumn.² The trip will be a “private” one but the Dalai Lama would hope to call upon U.S. public officials. The Dalai Lama’s visit to the United States would be intended to focus attention on the Tibetan issue in the Human Rights Commission.

State opposes the visit on the grounds that it would generate support for and attention to the Tibetan cause and “would create, gratuitously and without a compensating gain, a further point of friction between us and Communist China.” State seeks clearance on a telegram to our Embassy in New Delhi asking how to forestall the visit. (Tab A)³

There is no doubt that the timing is unfortunate, coming as it does when we are in the midst of an effort to improve relations with Communist China. On the other hand, the Chinese have hardly abandoned their basic positions in order to talk with us and we should perhaps avoid precipitate decisions to abandon points of principle to accommodate them. We have for years supported resolutions in the United Nations pointing to denial of human rights to the Tibetans. We have endorsed the principle that they should have the right of self-determination (while making clear that we believe Tibet has traditionally been under Chinese suzerainty) and we have made substantial contributions to ease the problem of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal.

The Dalai Lama’s previous performances abroad suggest that he would handle himself discreetly during a U.S. visit and would not seek to embarrass us if the ground rules of the visit were made clear.

Rather than simply turning off the proposed visit in the cursory manner proposed, I believe that it would be more in keeping with our

² Gyalo Thondup, brother of the Dalai Lama, raised the idea of a visit during his meeting with Rostow on December 6, 1968. See *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XXX, Document 343. Rostow emphasized to Gyalo that the incoming administration would have to consider this issue. The problem of the Dalai Lama’s visit lay dormant during 1969. Embassy officials met with the Dalai Lama’s representative in New Delhi, Thupten Ningee, in early January 1970. Thupten suggested a “private, informal” visit to meet Tibetan communities in the United States and scholars interested in Tibet during the autumn of 1970. (Telegram 162 from New Delhi, January 6 and telegram 294 from New Delhi, January 9; both in National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET) The Department of State’s initial reaction was to seek an opportunity to “subtly” discourage the visit. (Telegram 3304 to New Delhi, January 8; *ibid.*) Phintso Thonden, the Dalai Lama’s representative in the United States, also asked that the Dalai Lama meet with high-level United States officials during his visit. (Telegram 54 from USUN, January 15, and telegram 7917 to USUN and New Delhi, January 17; both *ibid.*)

³ Attached at Tab A but not printed was a February 19 memorandum to Kissinger from Eliot, outlining the Department of State position and reviewing previous requests by representatives of the Dalai Lama for a visit to the United States, and a draft cable.

past positions to keep the prospect of a private visit open. As a practical matter, we hardly wish to be exposed to the charge of acting on the basis of expediency to woo the Chinese Communists. Moreover, in our present euphoria concerning Sino/U.S. relations, we should not lose sight of the likelihood that we may yet have reasons to want good working relations with the Dalai Lama and his entourage.

In fairness to State's position, I would emphasize that too close an identification with Tibetan separatist aspirations would rank with our Taiwan policy as key road-blocks to any improvement with relations with Communist China.

To resolve the conflicting U.S. interests, I propose that, instead of flatly opposing the concept of a visit we indicate a willingness to look forward to such a visit on the following terms:

1. It would be a private visit.
2. The Dalai Lama would not expect to see officials higher than Ambassador Yost or Under Secretary Johnson. (This is about the level which we usually deal with the Dalai Lama's elder brother and personal representative. This is also the top career as opposed to political level.)
3. The Dalai Lama and his entourage would be given to understand that we would not expect the question of the political status of Tibet to come up during the visit. If it did, we would go no farther than to repeat our present position.
4. The visit would be inconvenient this year but we would wish to consider it seriously in 1971 (after the UNGA session is over).

Recommendation

That you authorize me to tell State that the position on the Dalai Lama's visit should be as described in the numbered points above.⁴

⁴ Haig initialed the approval option for the President on March 28. The four points listed above were included verbatim in an April 1 memorandum from Kissinger (signed by Haig in his absence) to Rogers. This memorandum concluded: "I should appreciate it if the proposed outgoing telegram to New Delhi could be revised to make it somewhat less negative, in line with the four points above." The instructions were forwarded to New Delhi in telegram 50041, April 6. Both the telegram and memorandum are in National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET.

276. Telegram From the Embassy in India to the Department of State¹

New Delhi, April 8, 1970, 1427Z.

4018. Subject: Dalai Lama Visit to US. Ref: State 050041.²

1. I am aware that reftel had been cleared at White House level and I appreciate Washington's concern over possibility that the Dalai Lama's visit might become additional point of friction with Peking with whom we are attempting to develop useful dialogue. But there are other factors which in my view strongly militate against a flat rejection of the trip this year:

A. The Department should be aware that historically for past several years [*1 line of source text not declassified*] actively encouraged the Dalai Lama to make a trip to the US. Given the operating style of the Dalai Lama's brother, Gyalo Thondup, it is possible that certain offices of the GOI are aware of this background, although we have no such evidence.

B. CAS is currently reducing its contribution to certain sensitive Tibetan programs [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*].³

C. There is a strong likelihood, therefore, that taken together with our recent gestures toward Peking a total rejection of even a private visit at this juncture would be interpreted by the Tibetan leadership and the GOI not only as an insult to the Dalai Lama but also evidence that Washington has really gone soft on the Chicom issue to the point of "appeasing" Peking. As suggested by FonSec T.N. Kaul's remarks during last year's Indo-US bilaterals,⁴ there are those in the GOI who are increasingly prone to ask where shifting US position on China leaves India. I do not wish to dramatize this point, but as Indians examine the Nixon Doctrine it is a problem which we must handle with extreme care. (This, of course, is not to suggest that the GOI wants the Dalai Lama to make the trip. Indians have their own sensitivities re keeping the door open for dialogue with Peking.)

D. I realize that our free press and what might be characterized as a Tibetan lobby in the US would make it difficult to avoid USG attention to the Dalai Lama during his visit. Nevertheless, I believe that this problem can be resolved tactfully yet firmly, without unduly

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET. Secret; Exdis. Also sent for the White House.

² See footnote 4, Document 275.

³ See Documents 273 and 274.

⁴ See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. E–7, Documents 29 and 30.

upsetting Peking (certainly not as much as recent revelations of US arms supply to Taiwan).

2. Therefore, I urge that:

A. The Department revise its position to permit at least a private visit this year.

B. Both Department and Embassy make it clear to Tibetans that while USG will quietly provide appropriate security protection, we wish the visit be kept private with courtesy calls on USG officials limited to level stated reftel, and that we would expect the Dalai Lama and his entourage to refrain from using US as a forum for attacking Peking or generally engaging in politicking.

3. Pending reply this message, I am deferring approach to Tibetans.

Keating

277. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in India¹

Washington, April 14, 1970, 2102Z.

54905. Subject: Visit of Dalai Lama. For Ambassador From the Secretary. Ref: (A) New Delhi 04018;² (B) State 50041.³

1. I value your forthright discussion of Dalai Lama visit and have reexamined question in light of your recommendations. However, I must reaffirm decision, which was made by President, that we do not wish to have Dalai Lama come to U.S. this year and ask that you arrange to inform Tibetans of this as soon as possible, following guidance ref B.

2. In considering pros and cons of 1970 visit, we have carefully weighed all factors, including those highlighted by your message, in our relations with both GOI and Tibetans against factors pertaining to Communist China. Regarding past USG encouragement of such a visit,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Thayer on April 10; cleared by Kreisberg, Brown, Schneider (NEA/INC), and Getz (J); and approved by Rogers. This telegram reflects the advice of Green and Christopher Van Hollen (NEA), as explained in their April 10 memorandum to Rogers. (Ibid.)

² Document 276.

³ See footnote 4, Document 275.

[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] has been able to turn up any oral or written confirmation that we have given such encouragement in recent years.

3. In conveying our attitude about visit to Tibetans, we would make clear, pursuant ref B, that we would want to consider visit seriously next year and that we have not altered our traditional sympathetic attitude toward people of Tibet or our plans to continue substantial financial aid to refugees. (No specific U.S. commitment for visit should, however, be implied.)

4. Both Dalai Lama and GOI presumably have been aware for some years that relations with Communist China have inevitably been an element in our approach to Tibetan question. We believe that both parties will understand—even if Tibetans do not approve—that USG must give this weight. This aspect of course is of growing concern to us not only because of our developing dialogue in Warsaw but now because of increasingly explicit Peking involvement in politically complicated and vexing situation in SEA. These current significant problems involving both USG and PRC militate against a visit this year from which we would derive no counterbalancing gain. We hope that situation may be different next year.

5. We would not want to schedule visit later this year because of coincidence of UNGA, including celebration of 25th anniversary of UN which will witness procession of visiting dignitaries.⁴

Rogers

⁴ This message was followed up by telegram 55544 to New Delhi, April 15, which reads in full: "In conveying U.S. views on Dalai Lama visit, you of course should not mention Presidential involvement in decision." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET)

278. Memorandum Prepared for the 40 Committee¹

Washington, January 11, 1971.

SUBJECT

Status Report on Support to the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Operations

1. Summary

CIA Tibetan activities, utilizing followers of the Dalai Lama, have included in addition to guerrilla support a program of political, propaganda, and intelligence operations. These activities are designed to impair the international influence of Communist China by support to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exiles in maintaining the concept of an autonomous Tibet, [4 lines of source text not declassified].

From its inception the Tibetan operations program has been coordinated with the Department of State and appropriate U.S. Ambassadors. Since 1959 these activities have been approved and reviewed by predecessor bodies of the 40 Committee and were most recently endorsed by the 303 Committee in March 1968.²

Funds programmed for these Tibetan operations (other than guerrilla resistance support) have been gradually reduced from over \$500,000 yearly before 1969 to \$363,000 proposed for FY 1971.³

¹ Source: National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, Tibet. Secret; Eyes Only. A handwritten note on the first page reads: "Approved by the 40 Committee on 31 March 1971." This issue was discussed briefly at the March 31 meeting of the 40 Committee held in San Clemente, California. According to the minutes of the meeting, Kissinger asked, "Does this have any direct benefit to us?" U. Alexis Johnson replied, "It keeps him [the Dalai Lama] alive." David Blee of CIA added, "It helps in Buddhist countries." Kissinger then asked what would happen if the Dalai Lama died. Blee replied that a committee of lamas would meet to find a new Dalai Lama. Kissinger asked, "He will be one of the people outside Tibet?" Blee replied, "Yes, They have lots of people outside. The program this year amounts to \$363,000. It will go down to \$263,000 in FY 72." Johnson, representing the Department of State, said, "We have no problem with this." Kissinger asked if everyone agreed on this item, and the minutes indicate that "All agreed." The 40 Committee also discussed Tibetan paramilitary forces at this meeting and approved a CIA proposal to continue to reduce the forces from 1,800 to 300 over the next 3 years (see Document 273). (Minutes of the 40 Committee meeting, March 31; National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, 303/40 Committee Files, 1971 Minutes) The CIA report on U.S.-supported paramilitary activities in the region is in Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, 40 Committee Files, 1971.

² See *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XXX, Document 342.

³ In an April 6 memorandum to Van Hollen, David T. Schneider wrote that the reduction in the Tibetan operation would not be as fast or as extensive as he and others in the Department of State had recommended. "I am distressed at his outcome and will be discussing with EA what, if anything, we can do to pick up the pieces." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 19 TIBET)

2. Status Report

(a) Background

Following up earlier U.S. support to his followers in Tibet, upon the Dalai Lama's escape to India in 1959 we instituted a covert subsidy to him and his immediate entourage, and funds and guidance to maintain Tibetan social and political institutions in India and abroad. With Indian asylum and U.S. support, the idea of Tibet as an ethnic and cultural entity with a widely-acknowledged claim to freedom from Chinese Communist rule has survived. The figure of the Dalai Lama, still revered as the spiritual leader of his people, has been effective as a reminder of the threat Communist China represents to its neighbors and to non-Chinese minorities. The existence of a free Tibet in exile has also helped to expose the hollowness of Communist China's pretensions to sponsoring "national liberation" movements around the world.

In the years after the Dalai Lama's escape, our Tibetan political operations have been built round efforts to gain support for the Tibetan cause [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. Propaganda operations have aimed to enlarge world awareness of and sympathy for the Tibetans. Intelligence operations have aimed to place reporting agents within Tibet to gather political and military information. [*6½ lines of source text not declassified*]

(b) Policy Approvals

In April 1959 the Special Group (5412) approved CIA support to the Tibetan resistance movement, and in May 1959 approved our covert support to the Dalai Lama. Status reports on Tibetan political, psychological and intelligence operations were reviewed and endorsed by the Committee in February 1964 and March 1968.⁴

(c) Developments During Fiscal Year 1970

During the past year our efforts to foster the continued existence of a Tibetan entity and exploit it against Communist China have been abetted by significant developments in both Indian and Soviet attitudes. Resolutions favoring Tibetan rights, which succeeded in the United Nations in 1959, 1961 and 1965, had been opposed by the USSR and India either abstained or withheld active support. The persistent efforts of the Dalai Lama and his brother Gyalo Thondup have lately been rewarded by growing support from Indian officials. Perhaps more significant has been the approach of senior Soviet diplomats to Gyalo Thondup proposing joint Soviet-Tibetan intelligence operations into

⁴ See *Foreign Relations*, 1964–1968, vol. XXX, Document 337.

Sinkiang and Tibet. The Soviets also stated that the USSR would consider abstaining from voting against any resolution in the United Nations censuring China on human rights in Tibet. Thondup has remained interested but non-committal to Soviet overtures for joint operations.

We have continued to pay a [*dollar amount not declassified*] yearly direct subsidy to the Dalai Lama and his entourage to maintain him in India where he strives to keep alive the will, the culture, and the religious traditions of his people in exile. He does not account to us for this sum and it is not used in our Tibetan operations. In addition to the Dalai Lama's subsidy, we have funded political and propaganda activities of the Tibetans. [*3½ lines of source text not declassified*]

The first class of young Tibetans graduated from a training course in administration which we sponsored [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] last year. Some are administering the Tibetan Bureau in New Delhi, which conducts the Dalai Lama's business with the Indian Government. Others are working for its cultural center in New Delhi which serves Tibetologists and has become an important tourist attraction. The Tibetan Bureau also publishes an English language newspaper which has been distributed internationally to institutions to publicize the Tibetan cause abroad.

The New York Office of Tibet has continued to keep the Tibetan cause before international leaders, and to treat with organizations interested in refugees and relief. A well-known international lawyer, formerly a member of the U.S. United Nations delegation, continues to assist the Tibetans in New York [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. An Office of Tibet in Geneva serves Tibetan refugees in Europe, arranges scholarships and vocational training, and treats with international refugee agencies.

For intelligence collection on the Chinese presence in Tibet we have worked [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] independently with Tibetan leaders [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]. Our independent operations with Tibetans [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] have concentrated on attempts to place resident agents in Tibet. Chinese security in the border area and travel controls within Tibet have made such agent operations extremely hazardous. CIA-trained radio teams of Tibetans along the Nepal border of Tibet have continued to report [*3 lines of source text not declassified*] continues in radio contact with these teams as well as the paramilitary resistance force in the Mustang valley of Nepal.

(d) *Planned Continuation of Program*

The Tibetans will continue to seek Government of India support for a new resolution in the United Nations in the hope of recording a Soviet abstention against China. [*9½ lines of source text not declassified*] We shall continue the subsidy to the Dalai Lama at its past level, but

shall somewhat reduce funds for other activities. Intelligence collection costs are being reduced [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] by eliminating unproductive agent personnel.

3. *Alternatives*

At the present time the effectiveness of the Dalai Lama's presence in exile is maintained by [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] U.S. subsidy [*7½ lines of source text not declassified*]. The U.S. alone provides all the costs of promoting the Tibetan cause internationally [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. A withdrawal of U.S. support to the Tibetans would reduce but not eliminate the effectiveness of the Dalai Lama's presence in exile; however, the Tibetan cause as a world issue would probably fade rapidly because the Indian Government, as the only reasonable alternative source of support, would not likely undertake the foreign exchange costs involved. The Tibetans would no longer willingly provide the personnel and expertise required by our unilateral and joint intelligence efforts [*1 line of source text not declassified*].

Elimination of the intelligence collection operations would not seriously diminish coverage of Western China for U.S. needs, [*3 lines of source text not declassified*].

4. *Risks and Contingency Planning*

[*8½ lines of source text not declassified*] The risk of public disclosure of CIA subsidy to the Dalai Lama is small. CIA support to the Dalai Lama is assumed by the Chinese, and there is some evidence that the Chinese have tried to put pressure on the King of Nepal to inhibit U.S. and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] operations. However, the King has not found these operations to be intolerable, and therefore we do not regard them as jeopardizing U.S.-Nepal relations.

5. *Coordination*

This proposal was coordinated in September 1970 with State Department officials Messrs. Christopher Van Hollen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, David Schneider, Country Director for India, and Alfred Jenkins, Director for Asian Communist Affairs. They agreed to its submission to the Committee.

6. *Costs*

The total cost of the proposed Tibetan operations for Fiscal Year 1971 will be \$363,000 [*4 lines of source text not declassified*] These funds have been programmed by CIA for Fiscal Year 1971.

7. *Recommendation*

It is recommended that the 40 Committee endorse the continuation of the subsidy to the Dalai Lama and support to other Tibetan operations, and approve the funding level.

279. Editorial Note

From late 1970 through late 1972, the Nixon administration and the Department of State tentatively accepted, then postponed, a visit by the Dalai Lama. In a December 26, 1970, memorandum sent through Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson to Secretary of State William Rogers, Marshall Green and Joseph Sisco wrote that “We believe that notwithstanding the risk of irritating Peking we should approve a private, strictly non-political visit to the United States by the Dalai Lama next spring. Our concerns regarding possible politicking by the Dalai Lama during a US visit are less than they were last year, when an October visit was proposed.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET) On January 13, 1971, Rogers suggested that President Nixon approve a visit in the spring of 1972 “solely for educational and cultural purposes.” (Ibid.) Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama’s brother, and Ernest Gross, a lobbyist for the Tibetans, spearheaded the effort to arrange a visit. (Memorandum from Jenkins to Green, January 26; *ibid.*)

While no action was taken on Rogers’ January 13 memorandum, Executive Secretary of the Department of State Theodore Eliot sent a February 18 memorandum to Henry Kissinger, noting that Gyalo Thondup had visited the Department of State and “indicated that the Dalai Lama did not plan to visit the United States this spring and perhaps not at all this year.” Eliot suggested that, if the Dalai Lama did renew his request, that it be approved, subject to three conditions: “a) it should be a private visit, b) we expected the issue of Tibet’s political status would not arise, and c) the Dalai Lama could not expect to make courtesy calls on USG officials higher than Under Secretary Alexis Johnson, i.e., our highest Foreign Service career official.” He concluded: “We realize that Peking may register some irritation at a visit at any time, but we believe that it can be handled so as to avoid a major adverse impact on the Sino-US dialogue.” (Ibid.) After reviewing a February 23 memorandum by John Holdridge of the NSC staff summarizing the plan for a proposed visit, Kissinger wrote to Eliot on March 1 that “A visit under the conditions specified in the memorandum would be acceptable.” (Both *ibid.*, NSC Files, Country Files, Middle East, India, Box 600, Dalai Lama (possible 1971)) On March 9 Johnson wrote to Gross: “As I stated the other day over the telephone, we would be happy to discuss arrangements for a private visit by His Holiness The Dalai Lama to the United States early next year after the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly.” (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 30 TIBET)

In a July 22 meeting with Kissinger and President Nixon to discuss Sino-American relations, Rogers stated: “We have the Dalai Lama scheduled for the spring sometime, we ought to postpone that, I’ll take

care of that." (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation among Nixon, Rogers, and Kissinger, July 22, 1971, 3:49–5:05 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 543–1) On August 27 Green wrote to Johnson that "We believe that the PRC might take offense at a Dalai Lama visit to the U.S. prior to or immediately following President Nixon's trip to Peking." On the same day, Green drafted a memorandum from Eliot to Kissinger, suggesting that the visit be postponed until late 1972 or early 1973. (Both *ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 TIBET) Jeanne W. Davis of the NSC staff replied to Eliot on September 21: "Dr. Kissinger concurs in your recommendation that Under Secretary Johnson take the steps necessary to postpone the Dalai Lama's visit to the U.S. The trip should now be considered for early 1973." (Ibid.) Johnson reported that "In September 22 telecon between Under Secretary Johnson and Ernest Gross, it was agreed that recent developments have created situation in which visit to U.S. by Dalai Lama could be misinterpreted from political point of view and will, therefore, be postponed." (Telegram 178762 to New Delhi, September 28; *ibid.*, POL 30 TIBET)

In an October 5, 1972, memorandum to Kissinger, Eliot reported that "We have just received an inquiry from Mr. Ernest Gross, our former Ambassador to the UN, and Chairman of the Tibetan Foundation, whether we are agreeable to a non-political visit to the U.S. by His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the spring of 1973." Eliot suggested approval of the visit, noting that "Given the fact that we have already twice put off such plans, a further postponement, in the absence of some overriding reason, would be viewed as a slight by the Tibetans and could create a harmful impression on Buddhists elsewhere." (Ibid., POL 7 TIBET) Holdridge forwarded the memorandum to Kissinger under an October 10 covering memorandum. He recommended that the visit be approved, but no action was taken. According to a November 14 memorandum to Haig from Holdridge, Haig had suggested that a decision be delayed until mid-November. Holdridge again recommended approval of the visit and noted that U. Alexis Johnson urged an affirmative response. Although the November 14 memorandum was addressed to Haig, Kissinger initialed the disapproval line. A handwritten comment by Haig reads: "This could drive our New York friends wild." (Both *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Country Files, Middle East, India, Box 600, Dalai Lama (possible 1971)) On November 18 James Hackett of the NSC staff sent the following memorandum to Eliot: "The proposed visit to the United States by the Dalai Lama for non-political purposes has been given careful consideration and, in light of the current world situation, has been disapproved at this time." (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 TIBET)

280. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)¹

Washington, September 6, 1972.

SUBJECT

CIA Program of Support to the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Operations, and the Tibetan Forces in Nepal

In the attached memorandum² CIA reports on its Tibetan activities and asks 40 Committee approval to continue the program, in a reduced form, for FY 73. The program, begun in 1959, was last considered by the Committee in March 1971. Expenditures amounted to \$557,000 in FY 72; \$437,000 is budgeted for FY 73.

During the past year CIA has: provided the usual subsidy for the Dalai Lama and his entourage; continued to maintain, at a reduced level, a Tibetan contingency force in Nepal; and supported press activities; a [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], administrative training, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] and unilateral intelligence activities, and Tibetan offices [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] New York. Support for a Tibetan office in Geneva ceased in 1970. During FY 1972 expenditures for the Tibetan contingency force were further reduced in accordance with a plan for the gradual phasing out of the force approved by the Committee in 1969. Maintenance of the force will come to an end in FY 74; current funds provide for the training and resettlement of approximately 500 men per year of the original 1800 man force.

For FY 73 CIA proposes to continue the subsidy to the Dalai Lama [*dollar amount not declassified*], again reduce support for the contingency force [*dollar amount not declassified*], and fund intelligence activities and the New York office [*dollar amount not declassified*]. Support would cease for press activities, a political party, administrative training, and the Tibetan office [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

At the Department's instance, CIA has agreed to put the Tibetans on notice that support for the New York office will be phased out over the next three years, beginning with the current fiscal year. The New

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Files, Tibet, 1969–1976. Secret; Eyes Only. Sent through McAfee (INR). Concurred in by Van Hollen and Schneider (NEA) and Hummel and Jenkins (EA).

² Attached but not printed is a 10-page report, September 6, which is similar in format to Document 278.

York office is the only part of the program which the Peoples Republic of China might assume to be US rather than Indian sponsored. This will leave a program which supports the Dalai Lama's efforts to preserve Tibetan cultural, ethnic, and religious identity, but without involving the US in aggressive propaganda activities or political action.

There is little political risk in the program. [3 lines of source text not declassified] International refugee programs provide an additional shield.

Recommendation

We recommend that you support continuation of the Tibetan program for FY 73 at a projected cost of \$437,000.³

³ A handwritten notation on another copy of the September 6 CIA report reads: "Approved by the 40 Committee on 5 October 1972." (National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, Subject Files, Tibet)