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SECRET

From: The Officer in Charge,
Indian Mission, Lhasa.

To: The Political Officer in Sikkim,
Gangtok.

Memorandum No. 3(10)-L/51.

Dated, Lhasa, Tibet, the 15th September, 1951.

**Monthly Report of the Indian Mission, Lhasa
for the period ending 15th September, 1951**

I. EXTERNAL RELATIONS:

(a) Sino-Tibetan Relations:

(i) The Chinese in Lhasa are making determined efforts to adjust themselves to their new environment. Their immediate pre-occupation is with the problem of settling down in the weird and unfamiliar surroundings of Lhasa. So far they have not interfered with Tibetan administration. In fact no serious effort has been made on either side to establish more than formal relations.

(ii) General Chang continued to receive during the period under review a number of Tibetan visitors of high official standing, most of whom called

on him, as is customary, with gifts befitting his exalted status. Being suspicious by nature, Chang is highly critical of this much honoured Tibetan custom. He dislikes receiving presents, and hardly conceals his disapproval when visitors unsuspectingly arrive at his door with servants laden with gifts. Besides he is not armed with presents which he could send in return for those he is receiving. One unfortunate visitor, Dzasa Tsarong, who called on Chang with 9 human-loads of presents was singled out for harsh treatment. Tsarong's gifts were returned, and he was warned not to tempt the Chinese with bribes.

(iii) Chang Ching-wu is not even returning calls made on him. Sometimes, his gaunt assistant, Alo Phutang, pays a return call, but not Chang. The only person on whom Chang deigned to call was His Holiness. They met at Chang's request on 22nd August in a room near the barracks of Norbu Lingka where some years back the late Sir Charles Bell used to meet the XIII Dalai Lama. One important result of this meeting seems to be that Chang has temporarily acquiesced in the retention by the Dalai Lama of his body-guard of 4,000 odd men.

(iv) A rather comic feature of the Chinese in Lhasa is their air of boredom, not unmingled with a trace of disappointment in it at finding the Tibetans, unexpectedly as it were, so much below par. The austere Tibetans, and their barren mountains, have little to offer to the Chinese in the way of amusements, cuisine and sophisticated company. But already the Chinese have been quick to revive their national game of Mah-jongg, and have expressed some impatience for a dance and theatre hall, which in the form of a request has already been conveyed to the Tibetan Government for an early decision.

(v) The Chinese are entering Lhasa as if they were groups of migrant-colonists and not invaders, but this, though a matter of convenience to them, has had a soothing effect on Tibetan nerves for the latter would have been gravely alarmed had the Chinese marched into Lhasa in

overwhelming force. The occupation of Tibet by Chinese troops is being wisely stretched out over a period allowing the Tibetans enough time to get used to the change.

(vi) On 7th September an advance party of Chinese troops, a dozen in number, arrived in Lhasa. On 8th September 9 Chinese technicians arrived with their equipment by way of India. On the following day (9th September), a larger party of 573 men and women, headed by General Wang Ching-ming, entered Lhasa with the flourish of trumpets and the beat of drums. The party included a dozen women who are reported to be stage artistes, and officials who will man the administrative and military committee to be set-up under the terms of the Peking agreement.

General Wang is short, rotund and merry, almost like Friar Tuck of fictional fame, and indeed is said to bear a certain resemblance to a bouncing ball.

(b) To house the new Chinese in Lhasa, the Tibetan Government had to remove their wireless station from Maga Sapa. The duty of clearing, renovating and furnishing the main-building and attached barracks of Maga Sapa fell on the Commander-in-Chief, Dzasa Kusangtse, and the Foreign Secretary, Dzasa Liushar, who we learn did a praise-worthy job of it. On arrival, Wang Ching-ming and his party were taken Maga Sapa where they are now living as guests of the Tibetan Government. They lost no time in putting up a telephone line between Trimon House (where General Chang is staying) and Maga Sapa.

(c) In addition to finding accommodation for the Chinese, the Tibetan Government have been favoured with a complementary request to provide food and rations for two months for the entire Chinese party, as Chinese rations will be long in reaching Lhasa. These concessions having been gained, the Chinese went on to sound the Tibetan Government whether they would have any objections if Chinese planes from Kantse air-dropped

supplies in Lhasa. To this they added for propaganda effect that Chinese planes from Kantse could do the round trip to and from Lhasa in about 5 hours. Tibetan Government are not likely to refuse the request which will transfer the burden of feeding Chinese troops, whose numbers are expected to increase, to the Chinese themselves. Indeed, the Chinese pressed home their advantage by informing the Tibetan Government that more Chinese troops are shortly expected in Lhasa from Kham. According to Tibetan sources a few Chinese commissariat officers have already been posted at Nagchuka to arrange transport and supplies for troops moving towards Lhasa via Nagchuka (the Northern route). On the main Southern route the Chinese have left garrisons at all important centers like Pemba Go, Lhariguo and Giamda. At Giamda there are at present 350 Chinese soldiers, and some of these may later drift into Lhasa.

- (d) The Chinese are taking every possible precaution to ensure the safety of roads leading from Chamdo to Lhasa. They are stationing troops in batches of 30 at all important stages on Riwoche-Nagchuka route with the avowed intention of protecting caravans bringing rations from Kham. That route has for long been infested by brigands of the wild Golok tribes. The total number of troops being thus deployed on the Northern route is said to be 700.
- (e) Meanwhile, there appears to be a concentration of about 10,000 Chinese troops in the Chamdo area. They seem to be supervising mainly the construction and repair of roads to Chamdo, and in particular they are said to be extending a cart road from Derge Gonchen to Chamdo. While communications in Kham are being rapidly improved, those in Sikang are said to be in a sad state of disrepair.
- (f) General Chang has also evinced a certain philanthropic interest in the beggars and monks of Lhasa. He has asked the Tibetan Government to supply him with statistics of vagrants (including monks) in Lhasa with the

laudable intention of distributing alms to them. Tibetans suspect him, however, of harbouring other intentions not so laudable.

- (g) The Ladhaki proprietors of the local cinema house have been warned not to exhibit films without having them first censored by the Chinese. The purpose obviously is to make sure that there is no competitive propaganda.
- (h) The Chinese have already made known their intention of showing their own films and of staging dramas in Lhasa for the benefit of the Tibetans. Their intention appears to be to stage these performances first in Norbu Lingka as it is imperative that the education of His Holiness should precede that of His followers.
- (i) The arrival of a large Chinese party under Wang Ching-ming coincided with a poster campaign in Lhasa. The city walls were pasted with bilingual (Tibetan and Chinese) propaganda leaflets and posters on 9th September. These posters which bear the red seal of the People's Republic of China announce the terms of the Peking agreement and call on all races allied to Chinese to rise up and stand united.
- (j) The appeal is racial, ideological and in part an assurance to the Tibetans. It assures Tibetans that the men of the liberation army will conduct themselves in a manner beyond reproach and will cause no inconvenience to the people. The liberation army had entered Tibet with the noble mission of wiping out imperialist influence, and of affording protection to Tibet against rapacious imperialists. It goes on to promise respect for Tibetan institutions and way of life. Forced labour will be abolished, and people's regime established in Tibet.

Some posters feature pictures of Mao Tse-tung and General Chu Teh, the architects of the Chinese revolution.

- (k) One poster is exclusively devoted to a tirade against Anglo-American-KMT imperialists and their arch-agent Robert Ford, whose picture appears on the poster wherein his guilt is revealed. The poster accuses him of having disrupted Sino-Tibetan amity, of having worked for British imperialists while in the pay of Tibetan Government, and of having poisoned great Lama Getak of Kham.
- (l) While the Chinese assiduously paste these posters on the walls of Lhasa, the Tibetans with intrepid zeal continue to remove them as fast as they go up. The posters appear and disappear with amazing rapidity. In this battle of posters, the Tibetan Government have no part, and they show an air of supreme unconcern and disinterestedness. Why, they say, should they interfere when the Chinese did not even consult them before putting up the posters? Why should they preserve them unasked from the claws of the riff-raff? Meanwhile the disconsolate Chinese have asked their compatriots in the bazaar to keep an eye on the posters and to stop people from removing them.
- (m) To sum-up, the Chinese have no cause yet for exultation. They have contend with an unconvinced populace about their rights to rule over Tibet. Their officers move in Lhasa protected by armed guards. A few Chinese soldiers maintain a daily patrol in Lhasa.

(i) INTERNAL:

- (v) In the midst of great popular rejoicing, the Dalai Lama returned to His capital on 17th August after an absence of nearly 8 months. Large enthusiastic crowds thronged the route from Norbu Lingka to far beyond Drepung for a glimpse of the yellow-slik draped dandy which bore away His august person. To the fore and rear of the dandy rode his ministers and other high dignitaries of the land. A reception was held at Kentse Lubting where officials of Lhasa had fore-gathered to pay their homage. From there, His Holiness was carried in a palanquin draped in gold by

attendants dressed in the imperial yellow of the Manchus. The Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa is not without significance; it has put heart into his staunch and unflinching followers who almost despaired of his return. Even those disgruntled sections who were consorting with the Chinese felt the nearness of His presence and became wary, if not less active in the dangerous and highly dubious cause they have chosen for themselves. But the Dalai Lama is not the same man who left his capital hastily for refuge in Yatung: his authority is much shorn. He went to Yatung with the hope of increasing his bargaining power against the Chinese; he returned with much of his authority gone.

(vi) There is much cause for regret and despair, little for hope. The problem that he is facing, young and inexperienced as he is, is not an easy one even for those of riper years. Doubtless, he shares the disappointment of many of his followers in the Government of India, of whom they expected guidance and supporting verging on the miraculous during the critical days of their exile, and in their negotiations in Peking. They went to Yatung, they say, to be near India; but at Yatung they found themselves further away from India than when they were at Lhasa.

(vii) Hope, however has not been abandoned, and it is centred on Ngapho Shape whose popularity with the Chinese is beyond dispute. Ngapho wrote from Giamda with customary humility asking for 3 months leave to grow his hair the full ceremonial length before he ventured to enter Lhasa. But with great show of indulgence, the Tibetan Government assured him that he could enter Lhasa sans the ornamental braid.

(viii) And so Ngapho entered Lhasa on 12th September with an armed escort and his assistants. He was received by Tibetan officials of and below the rank of Dzasa and by Wang Ching-ming and Alo Phutang. Chinese troops provided a guard of honour, and there were other Chinese who carried red banners welcoming the hero back to Lhasa and hailing him as the deliverer of Tibet. 12 Chinese women provided music for the occasion

with drums and cymbals, and danced to the tune. Thus the Chinese contributed in making Ngapho's entry into Lhasa a dramatic and musical event.

(ix) Howbeit, the fact remains that Ngapho allowed Chinese troops under Wang Ching-ming to precede him to Lhasa, thereby suggesting that he is not without some fear of possible attempts on his life. Nor is he quite certain that he will be free of censure for his achievement in Peking. His colleagues at the Peking talks have disowned all responsibility for the signing of the agreement against the express orders of their Government. That responsibility is squarely laid on Ngapho's shoulders.

(x) Tibetans seem to realise that mutual recrimination at this stage will not help their cause. Their task is to enlist Ngapho's help and through him seek to revise some of the unpleasant provisions in the Agreement, particularly those relating to the setting-up of an administrative and military committee and the stationing of Chinese troops in Tibet. With naive confidence, the Tibetan Government hope to reopen talks on these matters with the Chinese through Ngapho's intercession, and have some of the obnoxious provisions of the Agreement revised. Their hope is built on Ngapho's prestige with the Chinese.

(xi) Despite their many distractions, the Tibetan Government continue to function and observe their annual routine as though nothing had happened to disturb their peace. The Shoton dance festival was held on the lawns of Norbu Lingka for 5 days from the 2nd to the 6th September. The Chinese were invited on the 3rd September, and were represented at the festival by Alo Phutang. We were invited on the 4th September and were asked to lunch by the Chikyap Khempo. The seating arrangements were the same for the Chinese, and for members of our Mission.

(c) ECONOMIC:

2. In the first week of September the rate of exchange went up to 4 Sangs and 3 Shokangs to the rupee. In the 2nd week of September, the rate was 4 Sangs and 4 Shokangs to the rupee. This appreciation in the value of the rupee is largely due to the rapid fall in the wool price.
3. A certain amount of Chinese gold has entered Lhasa market. These are being brought by traders from Sikang, Chinghai and Kham, and are sold in bars weighing 13 ½ tolas each at Rs. 115/- a tola. Chinese silver dollars are being sold in Lhasa at 15 Sangs each.
4. Ngapho's trading instincts are no less than those of his colleagues in the Tibetan Government. He sold 2000 Khes of grain to the Chinese from his estate at 'Ngapho', and charged 45 Sangs per Khe.
5. Dzasa Tsarong's latest passion is to promote Sino-Tibetan trade, and have a fair share of the trade in his hands. All is fish that comes to his net. He is trying to rope in through devious methods Chinese officials in Lhasa into his trade plans.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

The following officials were entertained at the Mission during the month:

Dzasa Lobzang Samten (Dalai Lama's elder brother).

Sholkhang Jetung Kusho.

Kazi Tse Ten Tashi.

Dzasa Liushar and Sampho Dzasa.

We made our annual pilgrimage to Drepung on 11th September and handed over Rs. 1057/- to the Abbots for distribution to the monks. The Abbots thanked us for the generous donation, reminded us that it was a long standing practice, and expressed the hope that the Government of India would not allow it to fall into disuse.

I was unwell throughout the month and had to cancel several of my engagements.

(S. Sinha)

Officer in Charge