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E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
 TAGS: CH, PREL, IN, PGOV, PINS, SREF, SHUM, SOCI
 SUBJECT: EMBASSY OFFICERS' VISIT TO TIBET

1. (C) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: A RECENT TRIP BY TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS TO TIBET REVEALED MODEST BUT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN BEIJING'S HIGHLY TOUTED LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM IN TIBET. TIBETANS ENCOUNTERED SAID TIMES WERE BETTER THAN BEFORE. CONTROLS HAD RELAXED. MORE FOOD WAS AVAILABLE. ABOUT TWO HUNDRED TIBETANS PER YEAR, MOSTLY KHAMPAS WHO LED THE REVOLT AGAINST THE CHINESE IN THE 1950S, WERE OBTAINING VISAS AT THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI AND RETURNING FROM

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INDIA AND ELSEWHERE FOR FOUR OR FIVE MONTH VISITS TO THEIR VILLAGES IN TIBET. A NUMBER OF OTHER TIBETANS WHO ENDED UP IN THE WEST WERE ALSO TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE 1979 DECISION BY BEIJING TO PERMIT "COMPATRIOTS" LIVING

ABROAD TO RETURN FOR VISITS. EMBASSY OFFICERS CONFIRMED THAT A GREAT DEAL OF WORK IS BEING DONE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE TO TIBET'S MONASTERIES DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. THE CHINESE ARE PROCEEDING MORE CAUTIOUSLY, HOWEVER, IN ALLOWING LAMAS TO INHABIT THEM. /EXCEPT FOR TASHILUMPO, THE PANCHEN LAMA'S MONASTERY IN SHIGATZE, THERE WERE FEW LAMAS IN ANY OF THE MONASTERIES VISITED. THOSE ENCOUNTERED WERE ALMOST ALL ELDERLY AND OF A LOW ECCLESIASTICAL STANDING. THEY COMPLAINED ABOUT THE BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES TO RECRUITING NEW LAMAS. TIBETANS ON THE STREET STATED THAT THERE REMAINED "NOTHING LEFT," OF THE LAMANISTIC BUDDHISM PRACTICED BEFORE, A REFERENCE PROBABLY DIRECTED AT THE ELIMINATION OF THE PRE-"LIBERATION" THEOCRATIC STRUCTURE IN TIBET. RELIGIOUS FERVOR AMONG TIBETANS REMAINS STRONG AND WAS MANIFESTED EVERYWHERE. THE GAP BETWEEN TIBETANS AND CHINESE IN TIBET SEEMED VERY FORMIDABLE. BOTH STUCK TO THEIR OWN GROUPS ON THE STREET AND SEEMED TO PREFER IT THAT WAY. EMBASSY OFFICERS OBSERVED NO SIGNS OF TIBETAN UNREST OR AN ORGANIZED CHINESE SECURITY PRESENCE.

3. THE CHINESE SEEM DETERMINED TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THEIR INVESTMENT IN THE LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM LAUNCHED BY THE CURRENT REFORM LEADERSHIP IN BEIJING IN 1980. TIBET IS OBVIOUSLY GETTING MORE ATTENTION AND FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT. MORE TIBETANS ARE BEING MOVED INTO THE BUREAUCRACY, ALTHOUGH THIS IS OCCURRING MOSTLY IN RURAL AREAS OR AT THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE REGION'S OFFICIALDOM. THE LOW EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AMONG

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MOST TIBETANS ARE IMPORTANT OBSTACLES. THE CHINESE ARE ALSO VERY MINDFUL OF SECURITY CONTROLS, ESPECIALLY IN THE MONASTERIES BUT ALSO IN UPPER BUREAUCRATIC LEVELS. THE DALAI LAMA REMAINS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURE IN TIBET AND HIS NIGHTLY CULTURAL-RELIGIOUS LECTURES CARRIED ON ALL-INDIA RADIO ARE THE MOST POPULAR MEDIA PROGRAMS IN TIBET. THE TIBETAN RELIGIOUS LEADER'S TOUGH CONDITIONS FOR HIS RETURN AND HIS 1982 TRIP TO ELEVEN COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE USSR AND MONGOLIA APPEAR TO HAVE ANGERED THE CHINESE. BEIJING'S IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION WITH TAIWAN AND NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH INDIA, HOWEVER, STRENGTHEN THE DALAI LAMA'S HAND. HIS RETURN WOULD GIVE IMPETUS TO THE LIBERALIZATION PROCESS UNDERWAY IN TIBET. END

SUMMARY.

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4. TWO EMBOFFS RECENTLY COMPLETED A ONE-WEEK TRIP TO TIBET. A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THEIR FINDINGS ON THE INDUSTRIAL, AGRICULTURAL, FOREIGN TRADE AND DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN THE TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGION (TAR) ARE CONTAINED IN 82 BEIJING 15262. THIS MESSAGE BRINGS TOGETHER THEIR OBSERVATIONS IN POLITICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS AREAS, BASED ON VISITS TO LHASA, SHIGATZE AND GYANTZE (ABOUT 140 AND 100 MILES EAST OF LHASA RESPECTIVELY).

A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL NOTE:

5. NOT ONLY WITH RESPECT TO CHINA BUT ALSO IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT, TIBET REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST INACCESSIBLE AND CULTURALLY UNUSUAL REGIONS OF THE WORLD. IT IS ALSO EXTREMELY BACKWARD. ILLITERACY IS WIDESPREAD. THE WHEEL - PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN IN MOST OF TIBET BEFORE 1/50 -- REMAINS OUT OF VOGUE IN MUCH OF THE REGION. NINETY PERCENT OF TIBETANS LIVE IN RURAL AREAS AND OVER
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SIXTY PERCENT OF THEM ARE NOMADS FOLLOWING SHEEP AND YAK ACROSS THE REMOTE AREAS OF THE GREAT TIBETAN/QINGHAI

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PLATEAU.

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6. TIBET'S IMAGE OF A DISTANT SHANGRI-LA ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD, ITS UNIQUE PRE-"LIBERATION" THEOCRACY AND THE MYSTICAL FORM OF TANTRIC BUDDHISM PRACTICED IN ITS NUMEROUS MONASTERIES (AN ESTIMATED ONE OUT OF FIVE WERE EITHER MONKS OR NUNS BEFORE 1959) FUELED THE IMAGINATION OF THE WEST FOR CENTURIES, ATTRACTING WESTERN ADVENTURERS, SCHOLASTIC AND POPULAR ATTENTION. AN AMERICAN TRAVEL AGENT SPECIALIZING IN CHINA STATES THAT TIBET IS THE SINGLE MOST REQUESTED DESTINATION FOR AMERICANS TRAVELING TO THE PRC, DESPITE THE COSTS (\$150 PER DAY AND UP).

7. THREE DECADES OF HAN CHINESE RULE HAVE NOT ERASED THE FEUDAL (AND PRE-FEUDAL) NATURE OF TIBETAN SOCIETY.
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THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE EXIT OF THE CHINESE AND THE RESTORATION OF THE DALAI LAMA'S THEOCRATIC RULE WOULD BE WELCOMED TODAY BY THE DEEPLY RELIGIOUS, SUPERSTITIOUS TIBETAN SOCIETY. SOMETIMES IN A WHISPER, OFTEN OPENLY, TIBETAN PILGRIMS APPROACHED EMOFFS AND REQUESTED PHOTOS OF THE DALAI LAMA. SOME ASKED FOR NEWS CONCERNING HIS WELL-BEING AND POSSIBLE RETURN.

THE MOST POPULAR RADIO PROGRAM IN TIBET IS A HALF HOUR EVENING LECTURE BY THE DALAI LAMA BROADCAST OVER ALL-INDIA RADIO. FLOCKS OF ILLITERATE TIBETAN PILGRIMS POUR INTO THE MAIN TIBETAN TOWNS OF LHASA, SHIGATZE AND GYANTZE TO VISIT AND GAWK AT THE GREAT MONASTERIES TWIRLING THEIR PRAYER WHEELS, REVERENTLY PROSTRATING THEMSELVES ON THE STREET AND POURING DONATIONS OF YAK BUTTER INTO PRAYER CUPS INSIDE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

8. FOLLOWING A 39-YEAR CHINESE ABSENCE DURING WHICH TWO STRONG DALAI LAMAS -- THE 13TH AND 14TH -- RULED TIBET FROM THE POTALA, THE CHINESE MARCHED BACK INTO TIBET IN 1950. THE TAKEOVER WAS A NATURAL PROGRESSION IN A CENTURY-OLD PROCESS IN WHICH THE THREE GREAT EMPIRES OF ASIA, CHINA, THE USSR AND INDIA, HAD BEEN EXPANDING TOWARD EACH OTHER ACROSS BACKWARD, TRIBAL INHABITED LANDS IN CENTRAL ASIA - A COLONIAL AND LATER INDEPENDENT INDIA IN ITS PRESENT DAY NORTHEAST FRONTIER PROVINCE AND MOST RECENTLY SIKKIM, THE CHINESE IN TIBET AND THE CZARIST-SOVIET RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN PRESENT DAY SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA AND, MOST RECENTLY, AFGHANISTAN. FOR CHINA, TIBET HAS IMPORTANT STRATEGIC VALUE AS HIGH

ALTITUDE REAL ESTATE WITH APPROACHES TO SOUTH-SOUTHEAST ASIA. BYHOLDING ON TO TIBET, CHINA DENIES IT TO A POTENTIAL ANTAGONIST.

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9. CHINA HAD INTERMITTENTLY INFLUENCED TIBET POLITICALLY SINCE THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY, IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY EVEN SENDING AN ARMY TO THE RIM OF THE KATHMANDU VALLEY IN RESPONSE TO A GORKHALI INVASION OF TIBET (THE NEPALIS SUED FOR PEACE). THE TINY CHINESE MILITARY GARRISON AND TWO IMPERIAL ENVOYS FROM THE MANCHU COURT (AMBANS) WERE EXPELLED IN 1911 WHEN THE DYNASTY WAS OVERTHROWN. RUSSIAN INTRIGUE THROUGH BURIAT MONGOL LAMAS AT THE DALAI LAMA'S COURT IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY ALARMED THE BRITISH AND CHINESE, BUT RUSSIAN INTEREST IN TIBET DIMINISHED AND ULTIMATELY VANISHED AS THE THREAT FROM THE RISING POWER OF IMPERIAL GERMANY NECESSITATED COMPROMISE WITH THE BRITISH, AND A REVOLUTION AT HOME DIVERTED ATTENTION TO INTERNAL PROBLEMS. THE CHINESE TAKEOVER OF TIBET IN 1950, AS WITH XINJIANG IN 1949, WAS FACILITATED BY THE EMERGING ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST REGIMES IN MOSCOW AND BEIJING, AS WELL AS NEHRU'S BENIGN OUTLOOK ON CHINA.

9. AS IN NEIGHBORING XINJIANG, THE CHINESE RULE IN TIBET WAS EXERCISED BY THE PLA THROUGH THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION; AND WAS VERY HARSH. DIFFICULTIES WITH THE DALAI LAMA LED TO HIS FLIGHT TO INDIA FOLLOWING A POPULAR REVOLT AGAINST CHINESE EXCESSES. THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION FURTHER STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN HAN AND TIBETANS. THE MAY 1980 VISIT TO TIBET BY PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY HU YAOBANG AND SECRETARIAT SECRETARY WAN LI USHERED IN A NEW PHASE EMPHASIZING INCREASED TIBETAN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNING THE AUTONOMOUS REGION, RESTORATION OF MANY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND HELP FROM THE CENTER IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. PLA GENERAL AND FIRST SECRETARY OF THE TAR, REN RONG, WHO HAD RUN TIBET THROUGH THE

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CULTURAL REVOLUTION WAS REPLACED BY YIN FATANG,
 ANOTHER PLA OFFICER WITH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN TIBET,
 WHO HAD BEEN PURGED IN 1968. AN EIGHT-POINT POLICY
 DIRECTIVE FOR TIBET ACCOMPANYING THE HU/WAN VISIT
 POINTED TO A LESS HAN-CENTERED ADMINISTRATION OF THE
 AUTONOMOUS REGION WHICH WOULD BE MORE SENSITIVE TO
 TIBETAN CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES. THE
 DIRECTIVE'S SECOND POINT SPECIFICALLY DECLARED THAT
 CADRES MUST NOT BLINDLY AND RIGIDLY APPLY THE HAN
 CHINESE EXPERIENCE IN TIBET.

TIBETANIZATION: AN UPDATE:

10. AFTER 3 YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION, THE TIBETANIZA-
 TION OF THE REGION'S BUREAUCRACY SEEMS TO HAVE MADE
 SOME MODEST BUT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS, PARTICULARLY IN
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THE RURAL PREFECTURES AND COUNTIES (WHERE HAN IN ANY CASE AVOID SERVING). THE CHINESE INTENTION TO MAINTAIN UNQUESTIONABLE SECURITY/POLITICAL CONTROLS DESPITE THE OFFICIAL LIBERALIZATION POLICY AND THE LOW NUMBER OF TIBETANS ABLE TO SPEAK CHINESE AND SKILLED IN TECHNICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE WORK ARE THE MAIN OBSTACLES. THE NEPALI CONSUL IN LHASA TOLD EMBOFFS THAT, WHILE ALL HEADS OF REGIONAL DEPARTMENTS IN TIBET ARE NOW TIBETAN, THE CHINESE CONTINUE TO RUN THE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY IN ACTUAL PRACTICE. XINHUA REPORTED THE PANCHEN LAMA AS STATING IN LHASA LAST AUGUST 2 THAT MORE THAN 54 PERCENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE DRAWN FROM THE REGION'S TIBETAN AND OTHER MINORITY NATIONALITIES. WHILE THIS MAY REPRESENT AN ADVANCE OVER PREVIOUS YEARS, IT STILL LEAVES A LARGE NUMBER OF HAN ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE IN PLACE. TIBETAN GAINS HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY REGISTERED IN RURAL AREAS AND IN THE LESS IMPORTANT JOBS IN TIBET'S CAPITAL AND KEY TOWNS. THE ONGOING DEPENDENCE ON TECHNICALLY SKILLED HAN CADRE WAS EVIDENCED IN A DECEMBER 8, 1982 LHASA RADIO BROADCAST (FBIS HONG KONG R 091455Z DEC 82) IN WHICH FIRST SECRETARY YIN FATANG CITED THE LACK OF TECHNICIANS AS ONE OF THE THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS TIBET FACES (THE OTHER TWO WERE TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY). YIN STATED HIS HOPE THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND "FRATERNAL" PROVINCES, MUNICIPALITIES AND AUTONOMOUS REGIONS WOULD "LEND THEIR SUPPORT," PRESUMABLY TO CONTINUE TO SEND SKILLED MANPOWER TO MAKE UP FOR THIS SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCY IN TIBET.

11. WHILE THE MAJORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND SKILLED WORKERS ENCOUNTERED DURING EMBOFFS VISIT WERE HAN, THERE WERE NEVERTHELESS SOME SIGNIFICANT EXCEPTIONS

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TO THIS PATTERN. ALL OF THE LEADING CADRES AT A SMALL HYDROELECTRIC PLANT NEAR LHASA WHICH EMBOFFS VISITED WERE TIBETAN. (THERE ARE NEARLY 800 SMALL HYDROELECTRIC STATIONS IN TIBET -- THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE FOR POWER IN THE REGION.) EACH HAD RECEIVED ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING FROM HAN CADRE WHO HAD SINCE DEPARTED. EMBOFFS HEARD

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THAT THE TIBETAN HEAD OF THE TAR'S GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICE STOOD OUT AS ONE OF THE MORE INFLUENTIAL TIBETANS IN THE REGION. THESE INSTANCES APPEARED TO BE "BEST CASE EXCEPTIONS." HAN CADRE STILL PREDOMINATE IN THE SKILLED TRADES, DOWN TO TRUCK DRIVERS AND MECHANICS. THE DIFFICULT TASK OF TRAINING AND INTRODUCING TIBETANS INTO RESPONSIBLE POSITIONS WILL BE REALIZED ONLY GRADUALLY AND WILL PROBABLY TAKE GENERATIONS.

SCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS:

12. THE BARRIER BETWEEN HAN AND TIBETANS APPEARED FORMIDABLE AND ONE WHICH BOTH SIDES HAD NO INTEREST IN TEARING DOWN. IN EACH OF THE TOWNS VISITED - LHASA, SHIGATZE AND GYANTZE - THERE WAS A CHINESE SECTION OF ONE-STORY BRICK OR CONCRETE BUILDINGS WITH TIN ROOFS IN SYMMETRICAL ROWS SURROUNDED BY WALLS. OCCASIONAL OPEN DOORS REVEALED GLIMPSES OF VEGETABLE GARDENS AND CHINESE FAMILY LIFE INSIDE. PLA PERSONNEL FAR OUTNUMBER HAN CIVILIANS AND THE FEW VEHICLES ON THE STREET WERE INVARIABLY MILITARY. THE TIBETAN SECTIONS CONSIST OF TWO OR THREE-STORIED WHITEWASHED BUILDINGS WITH A STORE (IN TOWN) OR LIVESTOCK (IN VILLAGES) ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS ABOVE. THE STRUCTURES ARE INTERCONNECTED, AND FOLLOW UNPLANNED WINDING PATHS THAT CONVERGE ON A CENTRAL COLORFUL AND BUSY BAZAAR. WOOD

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AND OTHER ITEMS ARE STORED ON FLAT ROOFS.

13. IN LHASA, THE TIBETAN TOWN IS LOCATED AT THE FOOT OF THE POTALA. THE SPRAWLING CHINESE PLA/CIVILIAN AREA COVERS A CONSIDERABLY LARGER AREA UP AND DOWN THE LHASA VALLEY EXTENDING TO THE EAST AND WEST OF THE CITY. RURAL TIBET, VILLAGES AND NOMADIC LIFE, BEGIN WHERE THIS TAPERS OFF. AN EVEN GREATER PROPORTION OF SHIGATZE IS CHINESE. TIBETAN QUARTERS EXTEND OUTWARD FROM THE TASHILUMPO MONASTERY ON THREE SIDES. AN ENORMOUS MILITARY AREA OF BARRACKS AND TRUCK PARKS BEGINS ABOUT ONE-HALF MILE FROM TASHILUMPO ON SHIGATZE'S MAIN EAST-WEST THOROUGHFARE AND EXTENDS FOR SOME THREE MILES IN A SOUTHWESTERLY DIRECTION TOWARD GYANTZE. THIS CONCEN- TRATION APPEARS TO BE ONE OF THE MAIN MILITARY CENTERS BETWEEN XINJIANG AND LHASA, SUPPORTING TROOPS IN SINO- CONFIDENTIAL

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INDIAN FRONTIER AREAS. AS IN LHASA, THERE ARE PERIODIC SIGNS IN LARGE CHINESE CHARACTERS ON THE EXTERIOR WALLS SURROUNDING THESE CHINESE MILITARY ENCAMPMENTS EXHORTING READERS TO "DEFEND THE MOTHERLAND." THE HAN-TIBETAN GAP IS REFLECTED IN THE LACK OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO ON THE STREET. ONLY ONE HAN ENCOUNTERED BY EMBOFFS - A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR IN SHIGATZE WHO MARRIED A TIBETAN - SPOKE TIBETAN. TIBETANS ENCOUNTERED ON THE STREET SPOKE NO CHINESE.

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14. THE MOST RELIABLE INSIGHTS FROM THE TIBETAN "MAN ON THE STREET" WERE OBTAINED FROM CONVERSATIONS IN HINDI AND SOME RUSTY TIBETAN BETWEEN AN EMBOFF AND SEVERAL KHAMPAS WHO HAD FLED TO INDIA WITH THE DALAI LAMA AND RETURNED FOR VISITS UNDER THE CHINESE PROGRAM INITIATED IN 1979 PERMITTING TIBETANS TO RE-ENTER TEMPORARILY ON THE BASIS OF DOCUMENTATION OBTAINED AT THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI. SOME TWO HUNDRED TIBETANS PER YEAR, MOSTLY KHAMPAS, ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY, RETURNING TO INDIA AFTER A THREE TO FOUR MONTH VISIT TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES AND RELIGIOUS CENTERS IN LHASA AND SHIGATZE. THE SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF THE RETURNED EXILES TO EMBASSY OFFICERS FOLLOWED AN IDENTICAL PATTERN: IN GENERAL, THINGS ARE BETTER TODAY THAN BEFORE. THERE IS MORE FOOD, EASIER LIVING CONDITIONS AND FEWER CONTROLS. THE DOORS OF MONASTERIES IN THE VILLAGES REMAIN CLOSED, AS THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE THE 1960S. NOTWITHSTANDING RENOVATION OF SOME MONASTERIES, THERE IS "NOTHING LEFT" OF THE TIBETAN RELIGION. (NOTE: THIS COMMENT PROBABLY REFERRED TO THE CHINESE ELIMINATION OF THE THEOCRATIC STRUCTURE THAT RULED TIBET FROM THOUSANDS OF MONASTERIES BEFORE 1950, AND NOT TO THE POWERFUL FOLK RELIGION STILL MANIFESTED

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EVERYWHERE IN THE REGION, FROM NUMEROUS ILLITERATE TIBETAN PILGRIMS FILLING LHASA'S STREETS TO PRAYER FLAGS FLUTTERING AT THE TOP OF MOUNTAIN PASSES AND OVER VILLAGES. END NOTE).

15. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT, SHANG YANG, SUPPORTED THE KHAMPAS' REMARKS ABOUT A LIFTING OF CONTROLS AND IMPROVING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. SHANG ECHOED THE BARRAGE OF MEDIA STORIES CARRIED IN THE CHINESE PRESS ABOUT PROGRESS IN TIBET, HIGHLIGHTING A DOUBLING OF GRAIN AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SINCE 1980 AND AN INCREASE IN PER CAPITA INCOME FROM \$63 IN 1979 TO \$100 IN 1981. SHANG SAID THAT 82 PERCENT OF TIBETAN PEASANTS AND HERDERS HAVE ADOPTED THE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM IN AGRICULTURE. WHEREAS BEFORE COMMANDS FROM LHASA USED TO SET AGRICULTURAL GOALS, NOW HOUSEHOLDS SIGN A CONTRACT AND MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS. PRIVATE PLOTS COVER 8.2 PERCENT OF THE CULTIVATABLE LAND. TWENTY PERCENT OF THE ESTIMATED FIVE MILLION DOMESTIC ANIMALS IN TIBET ARE PRIVATELY OWNED. SHANG SMILED THAT IN HIS OPINION THESE FIGURES ARE IN

FACT HIGHER SINCE TIBETANS LIVING IN RURAL AREAS WHERE FEW OUTSIDERS APPEAR ARE NOTORIOUSLY CAPABLE OF FALSIFYING FIGURES WHICH ARE HARD TO CHECK. HE ALSO POINTED TO THE BENEFITS TO TIBET DERIVED FROM A HIGHER PROCUREMENT PRICE FOR GRAIN, THE ELIMINATION OF CENTRAL TAXES AND LEVIES, THE LARGE CENTRAL SUBSIDIES (DURING 1980-82, 1.6 BILLION YUAN OR 800 MILLION US DOLLARS, CONSTITUTING 98 PERCENT OF THE REGION'S BUDGET) AND FREE SCHOOLING IN TIBET. SHANG MENTIONED THAT THREE COLLEGES ARE NOW OPERATING IN TIBET - A TEACHERS COLLEGE AND MINORITIES INSTITUTE IN LHASA, AND AN AGRICULTURAL

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COLLEGE IN EASTERN TIBET. (NOTE: IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT A PORTION OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES MAY NOT BE REACHING THE TIBETAN PEOPLE DIRECTLY BUT COULD BE GOING TO MILITARILY-RELATED PROJECTS SUCH AS ROAD BUILDING IN BORDER AREAS OR MINERAL EXTRACTION PROJECTS. IT IS ALSO MOST UNLIKELY THAT EDUCATION IS VERY ACCESSIBLE TO TIBETAN CHILDREN LIVING OUTSIDE THE MAJOR TOWNS, GIVEN THE MOBILITY OF TIBETAN NOMAD SOCIETY AND THE REMOTENESS OF MOST TIBETAN VILLAGES. ADDITIONALLY, SHANG ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A DROUGHT WAS AFFECTING THE 1/82 CROP AND PREDICTED THIS WILL PRODUCE A DOWNSWING IN PRODUCTION STATISTICS FOR 1982. END NOTE).

IMPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS REFORM

16. A RECENT ARTICLE IN "BEIJING REVIEW" ANNOUNCED
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THAT REPAIRS ON TIBET'S MAJOR MONASTERIES WILL BE COMPLETED "BEGINNING NEXT YEAR." IN ALL, THE ARTICLE STATED, THE TAR HAS "DECIDED TO REPAIR 53 LARGE MONASTERIES AND TEMPLES." WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PROMINENT SAKYA MONASTERY NORTH OF SHIGATZE AND GANDEN MONASTERY JUST OUTSIDE LHASA, THE EMBASSY OFFICERS VISITED ALL OF THE PRINCIPAL RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN TIBET: THE SERA AND DREPUNG MONASTERIES IN LHASA, WHICH HOUSED THOUSANDS OF LAMAS BEFORE THE "DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION" LAUNCHED BY THE CHINESE FOLLOWING THE DALAI LAMA'S 1959 FLIGHT TO INDIA, THE POTALA AND NOBULINKA, THE WINTER AND SUMMER PALACES OF THE DALAI LAMA RESPECTIVELY, THE ANCIENT 6TH CENTURY JOKHANG MONASTERY IN THE CENTER OF LHASA, TASHILUMPO IN SHIGATZE, XIA LU NEAR SHIATZE AND PALGOR MONASTERY IN GYANTZE. OFFICIALS TURNED DOWN EMBASSY OFFICERS' REQUEST TO VISIT SAKYA. GANDEN HAD BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS CLEARLY THE REASON FOR ITS CLOSURE TO FOREIGN VISITORS, LOCAL TIBETANS AND CHINESE OFFICIALS SAID IT WAS BEING REBUILT. THE REST OF THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS VISITED WERE IN VARIOUS STAGES OF RENOVATION. THE POTALA, NORBULINKA, AND JOKHANG, ALL NEAR THE CENTER OF LHASA WERE ONLY marginally DAMAGED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND ARE OPEN TO THE

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TIBETAN PUBLIC AND FOREIGN VISITORS. SERA AND DREPUNG SUFFERED MORE DAMAGE BUT ARE IN AN ADVANCED STAGE OF REPAIR. A MAJOR EFFORT TO RENOVATE TASHILUMPO IN SHIGATZE WAS MADE BEFORE LAST JULY, WHEN THE PANCHEN LAMA RETURNED FOR A VISIT AFTER A NINETEEN YEAR ABSENCE TO RECEIVE THE KING OF NEPAL. SIX OF THE EIGHT CHAPELS IN GYANTZE'S PALGOR MONASTERY WERE DESTROYED BY RED GUARDS. PALGOR IS 30 PERCENT

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RENOVATED AND WORK IS PROCEEDING SLOWLY.

17. THE CHINESE HAVE EXHIBITED MORE WARINESS ON THE QUESTION OF PERMITTING LAMAS TO RETURN TO THE MONASTERIES. EXCEPT FOR TASHILUMPO, THERE WERE FEW MONKS IN ANY OF THE MONASTERIES VISITED. THEY SEEMED TO BE FULFILLING LARGELY A SHOWCASE ROLE, WORKING SHIFTS, AND STANDING AROUND THE MAIN ALTARS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS OR SITTING NEAR THE ENTRANCES OF TEMPLE ROOMS INSIDE THE MONASTERIES. THE SENIOR MONK AT PALGOR COMPLAINED ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF RECRUITING EVEN OLDER LAMAS FOR SERVICE IN THE MONASTERY. HE SAID THAT NINETEEN FULL AND PART-TIME LAMAS WERE NOW ATTACHED TO THE MONASTERY, NONE OF A HIGH ECCLESIASTICAL RANK. ONE MONK ENCOUNTERED IN THE JOKHANG STATED THAT HE HAD FLED TO THE COUNTRYSIDE WHEN THE "GREAT BATTLE" IN LHASA BROKE OUT IN 1959. MOST OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES SETTLED DOWN TO WORK IN THEIR VILLAGES. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES WERE PROSCRIBED. MANY MARRIED. IN 1981, HE HAD SUCCESSIVELY SUBMITTED A SERIES OF PETITIONS TO HIS BRIGADE, COMMUNE AND TO COUNTY AND PREFECTURAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ASKING TO RETURN TO LHASA AS A LAMA. IT WAS A LENGTHY PROCESS BUT PERMISSION WAS FINALLY GRANTED.

18. ONE KHAMPA ENCOUNTERED IN LHASA WARNED AGAINST "BELIEVING" WHAT WAS RELATED INSIDE THE MONASTERIES, AND A PROPAGANDISTIC FLAVOR DID OCCASIONALLY ACCOMPANY LECTURES GIVEN BY THE GUIDES, MOST OF WHOM WERE HAN. FOREIGN VISITORS ARE CONSTANTLY REMINDED OF THE ALLEGED KEY ROLE TANG PRINCESS WEN ZHENG PLAYED IN INTRODUCING BUDDHISM TO TIBET AS THE WIFE OF THE

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FIRST TIBETAN KING, AND STATUES OF HER ARE NUMEROUS.
A TREE OUTSIDE THE JOKHANG, CONSIDERED TO BE HOLY
AND WORSHIPPED BY PILGRIMS, WAS DESCRIBED AS A GIFT
TO THE KING BY WEN ZHENG. (THE NEPALI CONSUL HOTLY
CONTESTED WEN ZHENG'S CONTRIBUTIONS, ARGUING THAT
THE KING'S NEPALI WIFE WAS MORE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM TO TIBET AND MOREOVER BORE
THE KING A SON WHEN WEN ZHENG COULD NOT.)

19. THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION TO THIS PATTERN WAS
TASHILUMPO, WHICH STRUCK EMBASSY OFFICERS AS THE
ONLY MONASTERY PRACTICING A SEMBLANCE OF THE RELIGION.

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A GUIDE IN SHIGATZE TOLD EMOFFS THAT THERE ARE 570 MONKS IN TASHILUMPO, 300 OF WHOM ARE YOUNGER AND MUST ALSO WORK OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY. SIXTEEN LAMAS HAVE A "GISHI" (EQUIVALENT OF A PHD IN RELIGION) DEGREE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE HIGHEST OBTAINABLE IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM. A "DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE" OF 25 MEMBERS, MOSTLY LAMAS, ADMINISTER THE MONASTERY'S 950,000 YUAN (ABOUT \$470,000) ANNUAL BUDGET. WHILE VISITING THE MONASTERY, EMBASSY OFFICERS WITNESSED A GATHERING OF ABOUT 80 MONKS IN THE MAIN PRAYER ROOM, CHANTING MANTRAS IN CELEBRATION OF THE 4TH PANCHEN LAMA'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY. HEY XSO OBSERVED A LIVELY RELIGIOUS DEBATE AMONG SOME OF THE YOUNGER MONKS, PRESIDED OVER BY MEMBERS OF THE MONASTERY'S ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY. A LARGE JAPANESE MOVIE CREW WAS BUSILY FILMING BOTH FUNCTIONS. WHILE THE PRAYER CEREMONY AND DEBATE MAY HAVE BEEN STAGED PRIMARILY FOR THIS PURPOSE, BOTH NEVERTHELESS HAD A REALISTIC, /HEHEARSED FLAVOR AND SEEMED TO BE AUTHENTIC. ON LEAVING THE MONASTERY, THE GUIDE POINTED TO A BUILDING WHICH HE SAID WAS AN ECCLESIASTICAL COLLEGE WITH THIRTY STUDENTS AND FIVE PROFESSORS. OPENED IN 1981, PLANS CALLED FOR ITS EXPANSION TO 100 STUDENTS, HE STATED.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

20. THE KEY QUESTION IN THE POLITICAL DOMAIN REVOLVES AROUND THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE DALAI LAMA AND HIS ADVISORS IN INDIA CAN REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE ON THE CONDITIONS FOR HIS RETURN. A DELEGATION SENT TO BEIJING BY THE DALAI LAMA LAST MAY LAID THREE CONDITIONS BEFORE THE CHINESE: INCLUSION WITHIN THE TAR OF TIBETAN AREAS IN NEIGHBORING GANSUX SICHUAN AND YUNNAN PROVINCES, GRANTING TO TIBET OF THE SAME PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE NINE-POINT PROPOSAL OFFERED TO TAIWAN, AND WITHDRAWAL OF THE PLA FROM TIBET. SINCE THE TALKS, THE CHINESE HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLICLY REJECTED THE FIRST TWO REQUESTS. IT IS

INCONCEIVABLE THAT THEY WILL GRANT THE THIRD ONE, A POINT UNDERSCORED BY THE PANCHEN LAMA DURING HIS TRIP TO TIBET BY HIS EFFUSIVE PRAISE OF THE PLA'S "ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS" TO TIBET.

21. CHINESE INTEREST IN A NEGOTIATED RETURN OF THE DALAI LAMA SEEMS TO HAVE WANED AFTER THESE TALKS AND THE DALAI LAMA'S SUBSEQUENT ELEVEN-NATION TOUR OF THE -
SOVIET UNION, MONGOLIA AND WESTERN EUROPE. RESPONDING TO PUBLICITY ABOUT THE TRIP, THE CHINESE PRESS ATTACKED THE DALAI LAMA'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ABROAD. BEIJING FORMALLY PROTESTED MEETINGS BETWEEN THE DALAI LAMA AND THE MAJORS OF PARIS AND ROME. A XINHUA ITEM ON THE SOVIET LEG OF THE VISIT CONFINED ITSELF TO THE OBSERVATION THAT "PEOPLE CANNOT BUT CONSIDER THE POLITICAL INTENTION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS FORMALLY RECEIVED THE VISITING DALAI LAMA." THE TRIPS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND MONGOLIA SEEMED TO HAVE ESPECIALLY PIQUED THE CHINESE. A CHINESE SPECIALIST ON TIBET IN THE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES GRUM&LED TO EMBOFFS OVER LUNCH THAT THE DALAI LAMA'S INCLUSION OF MOSCOW AND MONGOLIA IN HIS ITINERARY MAY HAVE BEEN NECESSITATED BY FINANCIAL SUPPORT MOSCOW PROVIDES TO THE DALAI LAMA.

22. OBVIOUSLY ANGERED BY THE DALAI LAMA'S TRAVELS ABROAD, THE CHINESE MUST STILL CONTEND WITH THE FACT THAT HE IS BY FAR THE MOST FORMIDABLE POLITICAL FIGURE IN TIBET. BEIJING IS MOST UNLIKELY TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN ATTRACTING POPULAR TIBETAN SUPPORT UNTIL

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HE RETURNS. FOR HIS PART, THE DALAI LAMA ALSO FACES A DILEMMA. TO RETURN WOULD PLACE HIS PHYSICAL SAFETY IN CHINESE HANDS. HE WOULD ALSO BE IN A DIFFICULT POSITION TO RESIST SHOULD CHINESE BACKSLIDING OCCUR ON THE LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM. BUT TO STAY ABROAD WOULD DIMINISH THE INFLUENCE HE COULD BRING TO BEAR ON TIBET DURING A PERIOD OF MORE TOLERABLE LEADERSHIP IN BEIJING. THE FUTURE MAY NOT OFFER A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE THE TIBETAN CULTURE AND RELIGION. HIS CONTINUED ABSENCE COULD THEREFORE LESSEN THE POTENTIAL SCOPE OF LIBERALIZATION.

23. THE HIGH PRIORITY BEIJING NOW GIVES TO TAIWAN REUNIFICATION AND NORMALIZATION WITH INDIA STRENGTHENS THE DALAI LAMA'S BARGAINING POSITION, BUT IT IS RISKY TO SAY HOW MUCH. ALTHOUGH THE TWO SITUATIONS
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ARE HARDLY COMPARABLE, A SUCCESSFUL MODUS VIVENDI WITH THE DALAI LAMA WOULD GIVE CREDENCE TO CHINA'S OVERTURES FOR A PEACEFUL ACCOMMODATION WITH THE KMT REGIME. CHINA WOULD ALSO LIKE TO REDUCE TIBET AS AN IRRITANT IN RELATIONS WITH INDIA, WHERE THE DALAI LAMA

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HAS LIVED SINCE 1959, FACILITATING A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ITS POPULOUS ASIAN NEIGHBOR. CHINESE OFFICIALS HAVE CAUSTICALLY HINTED THAT NEW DELHI IS USING HIM AS A PAWN IN SINO-INDIAN NEGOTIATIONS. WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS THE CASE, NEW DELHI'S RELATIONS WITH THE DALAI LAMA WILL BE AN INEVITABLE FACTOR IN THE MANEUVERING OVER THE TIBETAN RELIGIOUS LEADER'S POSSIBLE RETURN. THE INDIANS SEEM TO HAVE SHOWN REGARD FOR CHINESE SENSITIVITIES ON THIS SCORE. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE AVAILABLE HERE THAT THE DALAI LAMA OR HIS "GOVERNMENT IN EXILE" IS USING INDIA AS A POLITICAL BASE TO PROMOTE TIBETAN INDEPENDENCE. ACCORDING TO TIBETANS ENCOUNTERED BY EMBOFFS, THE DALAI LAMA'S LECTURES BROADCAST TO TIBET BY ALL-INDIA RADIO WERE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL IN NATURE, NOT POLITICAL.

FUTURE PROSPECTS:

24. BEIJING AT LEAST NOW, SEEMS DETERMINED TO PURSUE ITS LONG-TERM LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM IN TIBET, ONE WITH WHICH THE CURRENT REFORM LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING PARTY CHAIRMAN HU YAOBANG, IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CHINESE PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO FEEL THEIR WAY CAUTIOUSLY IN TIBETANIZATION OF MIDDLE AND UPPER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, AND IN THE PACE OF PERMITTING LAMAS TO RETURN IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, WEIGHING THE RESULTS IN TERMS OF THE IMPACT ON SECURITY-POLITICAL CONTROLS AND TIBETAN CONFIDENTIAL

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NATIONALIZATION. THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY WATCH CLOSELY FOR ANY SIGNS OF UNREST, PARTICULARLY IN THE MONASTERIES AND WILL REMAIN ACUTELY SENSITIVE TO ANY INDICATIONS OF INSTIGATION OF LOCAL DISCONTENT FROM INDIA OR THE SOVIET UNION.

25. RELATIVE TO THE 1960S AND 1970S, THE REFORM PROGRAM HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, BEST REFLECTED IN THE GENERAL LOOSENING OF CONTROLS ON RELIGION AND THE ABILITY OF EXILES IN INDIA, MANY OF THEM FORMER GUERRILLAS, TO RETURN TO TIBET FOR LENGTHY VISITS. THE RETURN OF THE DALAI LAMA, IF IT COMES ABOUT, WOULD PRESENT THE CHINESE WITH PROBLEMS AS WELL AS BENEFITS; BUT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY GIVE EXTRA IMPETUS TO THE LIBERALIZATION PROCESS. FREEMAN