

TIBET—A FIRST-HAND LOOK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to have this time.

I recently returned from a journey to Tibet where I visited during the period of August 9-13 this summer, accompanied by a member of my staff and another Western man who was fluent in Tibetan and steeped in the culture. At no time while I was there did I tell the Tibetan and Chinese Government that I was a Member of Congress. I wanted to just kind of bring the body up to date on some of the things that we had an opportunity to see.

At the outset, one of the first things I would show the Members is a picture of a monastery in ruins. The Chinese Government has ruined several thousand monasteries and is trying to eradicate the Buddhist faith.

The second picture is a picture of an individual who was showing us a picture of the Dalai Lama. It is against the law to have a picture of the Dalai Lama and to show a picture of the Dalai Lama.

The next picture is a picture of the Potala and then the marketplace. Around the marketplace, the Chinese are bulldozing a lot of the buildings and turning what was a Tibetan culture into a Chinese culture.

This next picture is of a guard tower. If there is one growth industry in Tibet, it is prisons. It is a guard tower of the Sangyip prison complex. We went out and visited a number of prisons outside to take pictures.

The last picture is the main gate of the Drapchi prison, which is a particularly brutal place that we heard stories of terrible, terrible punishment and types of torture that are really almost beyond the imagination.

An approved delegation would have been very difficult to have been there because the Chinese have a history of denying Members of Congress who want to visit, visit Tibet. I cannot think of any other place in the world where a tighter lid is kept on open discussion. Government agents and spies and video cameras guard against personal outside contact. Offenders and even suspected offenders are dealt with quickly and brutally.

In Tibet, humane progress is not even inching along and the repressed people live under unspeakably brutal conditions in the dim shadows of international awareness. One of the purposes of the trip is so that the world will know and will have to face and have to address, and the Clinton administration, which will be meeting with the President of China at the end of next month, will have to confront and address the horrible situation that is taking place in Tibet. We hope that when the American people know and when the Clinton administration

knows that they will demand that China change its policy of boot-heel subjugation and end what one monk I met termed "cultural genocide."

What they mean by cultural genocide is the Chinese are coming in and stripping the Tibetan society of its culture and trying to turn it into a Chinese society. The fact is Lhasa, the capital, is really no longer a Tibetan city. It is more a Chinese city than it is a city from Tibet.

We found that the People's Republic of China has a near perfect record of vicious, immediate, and unrelenting reprisal against the merest whisper of Tibetan dissent. We met with monks and men and women on the streets and others who I may say risked their personal safety and well-being to just give us a few minutes alone to tell us how bad the conditions are in Tibet and to petition and urge that there be support from the West.

Tibet is about the geographic size of Western Europe with a Tibetan population of around 6 million. It has been estimated that in the past 2 decades, nearly 1 million Tibetans have been killed, starved, or tortured. That is 1 million out of roughly 6 million have been killed under the occupation of the People's Republic of China, of the Chinese Government. Let me just say that the Clinton administration ought to make it perfectly clear that 5 million Tibetans are of no danger to 1.2 billion Chinese. Tibet is about the geographic size of Western Europe with a population, as I said, anywhere from 5 to 6 million. The People's Republic of China has undertaken a program of mass infusion of Chinese people who probably now outnumber Tibetans in their own country. There are no valid census data, but some estimate that in the capital of Lhasa there are about 160,000 Chinese and only 100,000 Tibetans.

In this market, many places would be Tibetan merchants but interspersed would be Chinese merchants. But yet when we went into the parts of town that were Chinese, there would be almost no Tibetans and the stores and the karaoke bars and different things like that would be all over the place. We have seen that change, the startling change that is taking place by the stripping away of the culture. Stores, hotels and bazaars and businesses and tradesmen are largely Chinese. Storefront signs bear large Chinese writings beneath much smaller Tibetan inscriptions. Driving out from Lhasa, one encounters as many Chinese villagers, shepherds, farmers, construction workers, and travelers as Tibetan. In short, Tibetan culture is rapidly disappearing.

What do the Tibetan people say? Before my trip, I was told that individuals would seek me out, an obvious Westerner, visitor, to hear their story. I might say at no time did I ever tell anyone in Tibet that spoke to me or anyone else that I was a Member of Congress. I was told that it would be very dangerous for them, that inform-

ers were everywhere and being caught talking to a Westerner was a guaranteed ticket to prison and more. Frankly I was skeptical that anyone would approach us and yet I was wrong. Someone took advantage at almost every opportunity for a guarded word or two.

During our first encounter with a Tibetan who realized we were Westerners and one of us was fluent in Tibetan, we found that he could not contain himself. He said, "Many are in jail, most for political reasons." We saw the Drapchi prison which is off the beaten path in a slum area. Guards in pairs were ever present as we showed in the photo. We saw the Sangyip prison complex, which I also put in the photo and then Gusto prison.

As I said, prisons certainly appear to be a growth industry in that area. We were told that Tibetans would not take chances, and yet they did take chances. The man went on to tell us that it was important that we see these places. He did not care and he wanted us to see what a nightmare tour this was going to be. We passed the main security bureau, the intelligence headquarters, and then the prison bureau, each heavily guarded. All the while, we heard about monks and nuns and common men and women who were dragged away to prison and tortured. He said to us, "Don't worry about me at all," and continued to tell about the torture that was taking place of Tibetan monks and nuns and the Tibetan people.

□ 1515

They are routinely beaten with sticks, kicked and poked with electric sticks, cattle prods with huge electric charge. Political prisoners are isolated from the general prison population and kept in unlighted and unheated areas with no sanitary or medical facilities, almost no food or water at times. He added that the people have no rights. They cannot talk freely.

Even though Tibetans view the Dalai Lama as their spiritual and political leader, they are forbidden to show their affection and love for him, and possessing a picture of the Dalai Lama could be an offense which could draw harsh and brutal punishment and imprisonment.

He went on to say, "We Tibetans must have permission from the Chinese to do everything, and we can do nothing on our own." So when Clinton gets the opportunity to meet their President, when our President meets their President, he should make the issue of the Tibetan people a priority issue, not privately, but publicly; not behind the scenes, but in front of the scenes.

Strangely enough, strangely enough, the Chinese Government officials have gotten to visit the White House to meet with the President, and yet when the Dalai Lama came, they had what they called a "drop-by," where the President dropped by another office,

but would not see him in the Oval Office, as he did some of the people from China.

Why should the Tibetan people have to go through and suffer under this type of oppression? The Dalai Lama has asked for help. They have asked a number of Western countries for help, and a number of Western countries are helping.

All of this story that I was telling came from one man. The agony, the agony of his people, the agony of his family. Yet he ended by saying, "I am not afraid. Some day the sun will again shine in Tibet." And throughout we found overwhelming support for the Dalai Lama by every single Tibetan that we talked to.

Yet, if you read the Chinese newspapers, they give the impression that the Dalai Lama is not supported. Quite frankly, the PRC Government is wrong, and the people of Tibet support the Dalai Lama.

On the issue of religious persecution, next week this body will hold hearings on a piece of legislation introduced by about 115 members of this body, Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, liberals, Independents, across the board, which will set up a special office in the White House to look at the religious persecution.

As many people know, there are perhaps more Christians being persecuted today than at maybe any other time in the history of this country in so many other countries, and last year this Congress proudly put the Congress on record to deal with the issue of the persecution of people of faith of whatever faith. And one of the faiths that we discussed in the last Congress, and we will deal with in this legislation, will be those of the Buddhists in Tibet.

We visited numerous monasteries where monks and nuns would talk to us. Their stories amplified what we had already learned. Every monastery we visited was tightly controlled by a small group of Chinese overseers, who have a cadre to report. And how would you like to have a cadre at your church, a cadre at your synagogue, a cadre at your mosque? Why does the Chinese Government have to put cadres at all the monasteries in Tibet?

I call on the government to demonstrate that they should withdraw and pull these people out, whereby these Buddhist monks and nuns can worship without having Chinese overseers watching everything that they do.

Every report we heard told of a dramatic reduction in the number of monks at the monasteries. Many were imprisoned for not turning their backs on the Dalai Lama. It would almost be like somebody asking you to deny something, to deny your family, to deny your mother, to deny your father; and they refuse to deny them, and thereby they are taken away to prison.

Many are in prison for not turning their backs on the Dalai Lama, or even refusing to give up the pictures of him.

Young monks, some under 15, are turned out, and since the Cultural Revolution, many monasteries have been destroyed. Rebuilding, although there is some rebuilding, rebuilding has been painfully, painfully slow.

We were told on several occasions that the monks are afraid. When asked what message they would like me to take back to America, I was told that they are not allowed in many cases to practice their religion and that their people are suffering. Their biggest hope is to be free, free to practice their faith, free to travel, free to teach their children their culture.

My goodness, how does that harm China? Under the Chinese constitution, under their constitution that they sometimes will refer to, Tibet ought to have the freedom whereby they can do these things. They want the opportunity to be free.

At one place we met a woman at worship. When she realized we were Americans, she burst forth. She started to talk and then began to sob and tears poured down her face as she told us of the conditions.

She said "Lhasa may be beautiful on the outside, but inside it is ugly. We are not allowed to practice what we want to practice. Senior monks are gone, and there are no replacements, and they are our teachers."

Asked for a message to America, she said, "Please help us, please help the Dalai Lama. When there is pressure from the West," and I would urge this administration that has not put pressure, and she said, "Many times when there is pressure from the West, things loosen up a bit before returning to as before. Please have America help us."

Every single person with whom we spoke had very positive feelings with regard to America and with regard to the American people. We were always given a thumbs-up or a smile with a comment, "America is great."

The people would not stop talking to us, even when their safety could have been potentially threatened. But when they knew that we were from America, they were pleased, they smiled, because they have great respect. They listen to Radio Free Asia and they know about America, and they were pleased to see that somebody was going to go back and take the word back.

The Chinese stranglehold, the Chinese assault is on the cities, the countryside, the environment. It has been no less harsh than its assault on the people.

What they are doing to the environment of Tibet is terrible. Tibet areas in Lhasa are being demolished and replaced with smaller and more confined structures, with remaining space being given over to Chinese users. The area in front of the Potala Palace has been bulldozed and leveled and turned into sort of a minimum or small Tiananmen Square, with a MiG, a Chinese MiG, in the middle, like it is something that people want to see, some MiG on stilts. All of the Tibetan buildings in front of

the Potala have been destroyed or demolished.

This is not a pretty picture. The glowing reports of progress from Beijing or Shanghai, where business is booming and skyscrapers may be rising and industry and education perhaps is increasing, have certainly not reached Tibet. It has not reached Tibet.

I am not connecting this to the issue of MFN and everything else, but I have heard Members say that conditions were improving in China, and they actually had laptop computers and things were wonderful. Those conditions, if they exist, have not reached Tibet.

America and the rest of the free world should help and urge China to back off from its clear goal to plunder Tibet. The true story of Tibet is not being told, aside from a few courageous journalists. Many times people in the political process can complain about the press.

I say, as Thomas Jefferson said, "God bless the free press, because if the press were not going in and covering many of these cases, the world would not know about it."

So the press, whenever they can get in, are attempting to tell the story, but the Chinese Government will not allow the press in.

The U.S. Government's policy seems many times to be based on economics, to open more and more markets with China and to ignore every other aspect of responsible behavior. Men cannot live by bread alone, and economic growth, while it is important, is not the main thing in life. Also, the spiritual aspects and the opportunity for faith are important, and the United States Government and President Clinton, when he meets with the Chinese, should raise this issue.

The clock is ticking. The clock is ticking for Tibet. If nothing is done, a country, its people, its religion, its culture, will continue to grow fainter and fainter and could one day disappear. That would indeed be a tragedy.

Based on the observations, I will submit a complete copy of the report for the RECORD at the summation of these comments, here are some of the observations and recommendations.

First, the administration must appoint a special representative for Tibet who will both understand the conditions there and who will aggressively pursue improvements. The person that they should appoint for Tibet should be someone like Richard Holbrook, somebody who is strong and knows the issue, somebody who speaks out, somebody like that, and not somebody who will just go along and get along and not do anything.

Second, the administration should raise with the People's Republic of China the issue of Tibet, both before and during the forthcoming visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin to Washington. Efforts to obtain the release of political prisoners must be part of that initiative. We know of approximately 700 political prisoners that

are rotting away in the jails of Tibet, and these political prisoners, their cases should be raised.

Third, efforts to open Tibet to the international press and human rights groups must go forward. As long as the Chinese continue to exercise power away from the public scrutiny, brutal excesses will continue.

Asia Watch should go in. The American Red Cross, the ICRC, the Swiss Red Cross, religious groups, different people should all ask for the opportunity to go and visit Tibet, see if the people in Beijing are being true when they say that Tibet is open and you can travel.

You should ask to travel. You should ask for a visa. You should ask for a permit and see if you are able to go.

Fourth, I urge my colleagues in the House and in the Senate to make every effort to travel to Tibet. Congressional delegations traveling into Tibet could very well make a difference. Even though they may have a Chinese handler with them, the very nature of an American Member of Congress or a Western member of the parliament coming in, being there, walking through the markets, walking through the town, being seen, sends a message to the Tibetan people that the people of the West and the people of the United States care.

I urge my colleagues in the House and in the Senate to adopt a prisoner of conscience and contact the People's Republic of China time and time again on his or her behalf.

When Perm Camp 35 in the Soviet Union existed during the dark days of communism, we went in and met with the prisoners. The prisoners told us they knew when a family in the United States or the West adopted them and wrote to them. They knew about it. Sometimes the letters got to them, sometimes they just got to the warden. If the warden knew that 10 or 20 letters a week or a day were coming in for prisoner X or Y, the warden was careful how they treated that prisoner. If it never got to the Perm Camp, but it got to Moscow, then the word came forth from the Communist official, be careful what you do to prisoner X or Y.

So we in the Congress and the American people should adopt prisoners of conscience and write to them and send them messages and try to visit them, send them magazines, write to the Chinese Government, write to the Chinese Embassy here in Washington, because we have to let the world know.

If you can imagine you are in the darkest, most dingy place almost on the Earth and nobody cares, you wonder, does anybody care? So by adopting these prisoners of conscience, as we did in the Soviet Union in the 1970's and 1980's, we make a difference.

Just talk to Natan Scharanski, who was so courageous, in Perm Camp 35. He knew the West was thinking of him, was praying for him, was remembering him. He was so proud and so bold and encouraged that when he got out of

Perm Camp 35, on the bridge in Berlin going from East to West Berlin, the Communist officials told him to walk straight across the bridge. What did Scharanski do? He walked this way and then that way, and he zigged and zagged, because he was a free man, and he remembered that the people of the West stood with him, and we should stand with the prisoners of conscience in Tibet.

Sixth, we urge a strong effort that officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the ICRC, and the American Bureau of Prisons visit the Tibetan prisons to observe the condition and treatment of prisoners and urge and push for improvements.

□ 1530

If the Chinese want to come into our prisons, fine, let them come into ours, and we will go into theirs.

Seventh, I urge the administration and the press for representatives from the free world to attend the trials of Tibetans accused of political crimes, as has been done in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

During the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe we would send an American representative of the American Embassy who would go and sit in the courtroom, be at the trial, which would put some restraint on the Communist officials.

Eighth, I urge religious leaders of all denominations around the world to pressure the Peoples Republic of China for permission to visit Tibet.

Last, I urge the administration and others to press the Chinese Government to engage in negotiations and in dialogue with the Dalai Lama concerning the future of Tibet, and to give the people of Tibet their freedom.

I close by saying to the Chinese Government, 5½ million Tibetans are of absolutely no threat to 1.2 billion Chinese.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BALLENGER (at the request of Mr. ARMEY) for today after 10:30 a.m., on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FILNER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. UNDERWOOD, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FLAKE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PAUL) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. DIAZ-BALART, for 5 minutes each day, on September 9 and 10.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. FILNER) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. COYNE.

Mr. POSHARD.

Ms. BROWN of Florida.

Mr. LAFALCE.

Mr. BONIOR.

Mr. STOKES.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts.

Mr. FARR.

Mr. BORSKI.

Mr. TOWNS.

Mr. STARK.

Mr. SCHUMER.

Mr. BERMAN.

Mr. MOAKLEY.

Mr. PALLONE.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PAUL) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. HANSEN.

Mrs. KELLY.

Mr. NEY.

Mr. CAMP.

Mr. PACKARD.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WOLF) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. PALLONE.

Mr. SCHUMER.

Mr. HOYER.

Mr. TORRES.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, September 8, 1997, at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour debates.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XXIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4809. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—National Poultry Improvement Plan and Auxiliary Provisions [Docket No. 96-070-2] received August 20, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4810. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, transmitting the Service's final rule—Mexican Fruit Fly Regulations; Removal of Regulated Area [Docket No. 97-085-1] received August 20, 1997, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

4811. A letter from the Administrator, Farm Service Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Upland Cotton Marketing Year Transition Procedure for Import