

April 8, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HARR

SUBJECT: Tibet

1. Situation.

As far as I can determine, mainly from press reports, scattered fighting is still taking place in Tibet and the Chinese, although they hold most of the key areas, do not control the entire country. There has been no indication as to the intentions of the Dalai Lama, whom, so far as I know, no Western official has seen. There are reports that Nehru wishes to play down the uprising in Tibet, even to the extent of urging the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet under certain conditions. Indian reaction to the uprising has been pronounced, and other Asian countries have also voiced their displeasure at Chinese Communist repression of the Tibetan people.

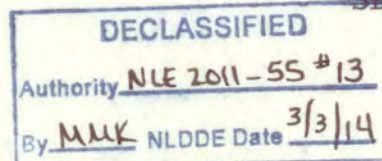
2. The U.S. Position.

Psychologically, the U.S. is playing this in a very low key, primarily for fear that Nehru may think we instigated the revolution and react against us and the Tibetans. Our informational guidance provides for letting Asian leaders take the lead and for holding down statements by U.S. officials; indeed save for two early announcements by Herter and a State Department press officer there ~~has~~ have been no official U.S. statements on the uprising. We are making plans to provide food and other emergency supplies for Tibetan refugees, but will not undertake this except at Indian request and preferably through India rather than directly. There has been no official indication of our policy line with respect to the Dalai Lama; however, I understand that we have considered establishing a Tibetan government in exile, preferably in Burma.

3. Recommended Line of Questioning.

I have no quarrel with the playing of the incident to date; however I do question whether we are prepared to move rapidly and specifically once it appears that we have exhausted the potentialities of letting the Asian leaders take the initiative. Accordingly, you

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might ask the following questions:

(a) Do we know anything concerning the intentions and desires of the Dalai Lama? If not, what are we doing to establish contact with him?

(b) Do we propose to establish or support a Tibetan government in exile? If so, what sort of support are we prepared to give?

(c) Can the case of Tibet legally be taken to the United Nations? Do we propose to do this, and perhaps have the Dalai Lama appear?

(d) What statements, speeches and other measures do we have in mind to continue the psychological momentum so far achieved? Can this be done through discreet encouragement of Asian leaders, or does it require more positive action on our part?

(e) Do we want the Chinese nationals in or out of Tibetan affairs? What are the pros and cons of utilizing them?

4. Possible Action.

(a) Ask for further reports to the Board by the principal agencies involved.

(b) Ask whether it would not be helpful to form now a working group which could do contingency planning for further psychological exploitation.

(c) Ask whether there are any operational decisions which require action by the Board or by higher authority.

(d) Do not attempt to explore covert operations, as CIA would not discuss these in meaningful terms in a full luncheon meeting. Instead, arrange for special pre-luncheon meeting with Herter, Allen Dulles, and Gray, similar to that held last week.

  
VIC

