Since the flight of the Dalai Lama in 1959 there has been no contact between the Chinese government and the Tibetan government-in-exile. However, Deng Xiaoping initiated a dialogue between the Chinese authorities and the Tibetan government-in-exile, as a part of his liberalization and open door policy, introduced in the whole of China. Along with 'the four Modernization' Deng also took bold initiatives to resolve some of the outstanding "National" problems such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Tibet. In December 1978, he initiated a dialogue with the Dalai Lama, through Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's elder brother. Gyalo Thondup was contacted through a common friend in Hongkong, who conveyed the message that Deng wished to end the 20 years of hostility with Tibetans.

Deng Xiaoping took special interest in Tibet. It is true that other 'minority nationalities' are quite well integrated with the Hans, but the Tibetans have never recognised any affinity with the Chinese. Even the language, culture, religion, history, and political institutions etc differ from Han China. They have always challenged Beijing's sovereignty rights and have always expressed a desire for national independence. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan issue had become a constant source of embarrassment and a thorn in their throat, which needed to be removed.

Therefore, Deng and the Chinese leaders' primary motive - behind their willingness for a dialogue was and still is to persuade the Dalai Lama to "return to the
great Motherland” and legitimize China’s rule over Tibet. If the Dalai Lama is persuaded into “returning to the Motherland,” it would put an end to his diplomatic offensives of visiting Western countries for the support of the Tibetan cause and would also halt the continuing nationalist resistance over China’s rule inside Tibet. It would also put an end to China’s fear of hostile powers planning to use Tibet for anti-China purposes, which particularly worries the Chinese given the Soviet interest in the Tibetan question up to 1986. If the Dalai Lama could be persuaded to return, it would be a feather in the cap of the Chinese regime and for Deng Xiaoping. Normalization would give him the success that eluded Mao and Zhou, thus diffusing much of the worldwide criticism of China’s handling of Tibet. It’s source of potential danger and embarrassment would cease automatically and would also lead to an improvement of Sino-Indian relations, which have been either cool or downright hostile for the past thirty years or so. Moreover, the Dalai Lama can contribute to the development of Tibet and the PRC as a whole, China has nothing to lose and everything to gain from normalization of relations to the eventual return of the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama too welcomed the idea of engaging in a dialogue as he and his people have arrived at the conclusion that there is no alternative but to negotiate for a greater degree of autonomy from the PRC. This need and realization for a dialogue became more imperative with the US abandonment of the Tibetan cause in the early 1970’s when the Sino-American rapprochement began, and with most of western

European countries and the US maintaining diplomatic relations with China, which implies recognition of Tibet as an integral part of China. Owing to these changes in circumstances, the Dalai Lama has altered his position on the Tibetan question, avoiding the word "independence" when talking of Tibetan problems, giving priority to economic welfare and happiness of his people. In fact, he has said on more than one occasion that his main concern was the welfare of Tibetans whereas the issues of his own return is of secondary importance.

It is true that popular western moral support for the Dalai Lama and his peace initiatives has increased, since the mid 1980’s with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989. It is to be noted that, no citizen of the PRC has ever been awarded a Nobel Prize in any field at all. The Western Mass Media’s love affair with the Dalai Lama has increased all the more. Nevertheless, no country in the world has recognized the Dalai Lama’s Tibetan government-in-exile. Even the ‘other China’, the Koumintang government in Taiwan considers Tibet an integral part of China. Moreover, taking into consideration the realities of China’s political situation and the PRC now being a member of the security council, the Dalai Lama also has come to the realization that, there would be no chance of raising the Tibetan issue at the United Nations, unlike on earlier occasions, when the UN passed three resolutions on Tibet.

In the light of all these drawbacks, the Dalai Lama, being the pragmatic leader that he has displayed commendable and growing moderation with the hopes of arriving at a negotiated solution with Beijing by scaling down his stand on the Tibetan question. By the late 70’s, he had shifted the essence of his struggle from claims for
independence to concern about economic welfare. On March 10, 1978, he declared, “if the six million Tibetans in Tibet are really happy and prosperous as never before, there is no reason for us to argue otherwise”. A year later he explained that “the main reason why we are in exile is the welfare of the six million Tibetans”. And in 1980, he explicitly declared that, “the core of the Tibetan issue is the welfare and ultimate happiness of the six million Tibetans in Tibet”. Form the very outset, China indicated that the Dalai Lama would have to abandon any notion of independent Tibet, if the Tibetans wanted a dialogue to resolve the problem. Thus, the above announcement the Dalai Lama satisfied Beijing’s basic pre-condition for negotiations: leaving absolutely no room to raise the question of Tibetan independence in the dialogue.

Limits of Negotiation:

Although there has been no direct contact between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government, it is obvious that by the late seventies, both sides were planning to break the ice. The Dalai Lama started talking about the importance of allowing Tibetans in exile to visit their relatives in Tibet to assess the conditions for themselves, and for the Tibetans in Tibet to visit their relatives outside to find out how the exiles were living. It is believed that China too had made such a proposal through Gyalo Thondup.

Gyalo Thondup accepted Deng’s invitation with the Dalai Lama’s approval and met the Chinese leaders in Beijing to discuss Tibet’s problem on 3 December,

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4 Ibid., p.53.
5 Ibid., p.59.
6 *The Dalai Lama Statement, March 10, 1978.*
1978. Deng Xiaoping being a seasoned politician and a pragmatic leader broke the ice by admitting the past “mistakes” made in Tibet. However, with the improvement in Tibet since the reform, he invited Tibetans of all ages to visit Tibet and see the actual situation with their own eyes. He then declared that the “Door to negotiations remains wide open”, but to have a meaningful talk between the two parties, Deng stated, “The basic question is whether Tibet is a part of China or not. This should be kept as the criteria for testing the truth...so long as it is not accepted that Tibet is an integral part of China, there is nothing to talk about”.

China’s messages is clear: Everything can be discussed and negotiated except the question of complete independence of Tibet. The Tibetan side has always gone by this statement, emphasizing that the Dalai Lama’s demands and proposals were very much within the parameters of Deng Xiaoping’s statement to Gyalo Thondup in 1978.

Secondly, the Dalai Lama may send delegations to Tibet to investigate the actual conditions there, to show the Dalai Lama that all is well in Tibet. China apparently believed that the delegations would be favourably impressed by the progress made in Tibet. Third, Deng accepted the Tibetan suggestion that fifty Tibetan teachers from India would be permitted to teach in various parts of Tibet.

The Tibetan Government replied to Deng’s overtures by sending a series of fact-finding delegations to both inner and outer Tibet in 1979 and 1980. The first

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7 “Gist of the Chinese views conveyed by Jiang Ping, Deputy Head of the Central Committee United Front to the Three Representative sent by Dalai Lama (October 28, 1984)” Beijing Transcript, 1984) p.4.

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1979, delegation was headed by Lobsang Samten, one of the Dalai Lama’s brothers. The proposal called for a total of four delegations to take stock of the situation in Tibet. At the same time, Beijing made it obvious that the decisions on boundary definitions and identifying the issue-areas of Sino-Tibetan dialogue, would entirely rest on Beijing alone and not on the Tibetan delegations findings.

Along with the delegation, Beijing invited forty-four foreign journalists based in Beijing to visit Lhasa. Seymour Topping of the New York Times wrote a long report supporting the Chinese claims of happiness in Tibet, to which Dharamshala did not give any rejoinder. Instead, the delegates secretly informed the Chinese of their shock and dismay at seeing the current conditions in Tibet. The overwhelming excitement and open rejoicing with which the masses received the fact-finding missions from Dharamshala was an unwelcomed evidence – a rude shock rather, which the Chinese government could not ignore. It is obvious that the Dalai Lama and Buddhism continue to hold a very high place of value - even after twenty years of Chinese Communist rule. China panicked on seeing the Tibetan peoples’ reaction at the delegations’ visit and cut short the second and third delegations visit of 1980. The fourth delegation, led by the former Kalon (Minister) W.G. Kundeling, was allowed to visit only the north-eastern region of Tibet in July 1985, that too with reluctance. Nevertheless, the delegations had observed enough to inform the Chinese government of their findings and problems faced by Tibetans in Tibet which needed to be attended to.

The outcome of the delegation’s visit was that, between May 22-June 1, 1980,

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General Secretary Hu Yaobang undertook China’s own fact-finding delegation to Central Tibet and based on his own findings, Hu issued a six-point policy directives for Tibet, which have been discussed in the 2nd chapter. As far as China is concerned, it is satisfied with having made necessary economic concessions, which might have met the Dalai Lama’s basic demand made in 1978 and 1979.

As for the Tibetan side’s offer of sending fifty trained teachers to help in Tibet, China conveyed its apprehension to receive them. In a message to Gyalo Thondup from Beijing through the Xinhua News Agency in Hongkong. China said that, “since these Tibetan youths were brought up and educated in India with good facilities, they would face difficulties in adjusting to the poor living conditions in Tibet”. Hence, China proposed that the teachers should be first sent to teach in various nationalities’ schools within China. The exile government replied that the Tibetan volunteers were fully aware of the poor facilities in Tibet, to which the Chinese government put forward an unacceptable pre-condition by suggesting that the Tibetan teachers must first accept Chinese nationality.

Hu Yaobang, after making special privileges and economic concessions for Tibet, went on to specify the party line on the Dalai Lama’s personal status upon his return to China. On July 28, 1981, Hu conveyed to Gyalo Thondup a document entitled “five-point policy towards the Dalai Lama”, which he emphasized is “our sincere and serious decision”, thus reducing the whole of the Tibetan issue to the personal status of the Dalai Lama. The first point contains the assurance that China has now entered ‘a new stage of long term political stability, economic prosperity and friendly relations among all the nationalities. The Dalai Lama and his entourage being
“intelligent” should believe in what the new era promised, otherwise they can wait and see what happens.

Secondly, the Dalai Lama and those appointed by him to represent him at talks must be “sincere” and must not bargain like businessmen and there should be no more quibbling over the events in 1959. Further, China will not punish those Tibetans who took part in the 1959 Rebellion.

Third, “we sincerely welcome back the Dalai Lama and his entourage” to permanently live in PRC, “based on the hope that the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetans will contribute to upholding China’s national unity, and promote solidarity among nationalities” and accelerate the progress of the four modernization.

Fourth, if and when the Dalai Lama returned to China, “he will enjoy the same political status and living conditions as those of pre-1959. He will be appointed as Vice-President of the National People’s Congress as well as the Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultation Committee. China also suggested that the Dalai Lama should not go to live in Tibet or hold any post there’.

Fifth, the Dalai Lama could decide when he wanted to return, and say whatever he wanted to at that time. China would organise a grand reception and hold a press conference, which will allow the Dalai Lama to make press statement before entering China.9 Beijing’s proposal for the Dalai Lama’s place of residence was later

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modified, probably due to discreet international pressure. On 4th April, 1988, prior to the Dalai Lama’s visit to U.K, the Panchen Lama, on China’s behalf announced that the Dalai Lama would be free to settle in Tibet upon his return if he wished to do so.\textsuperscript{10} Later though, China again suggested that the Dalai Lama would nevertheless be advised to live in Beijing.

There was really nothing new in their offer, the Chinese leaders clearly misunderstood the Dalai Lama’s perspective or chose to ignore it. From where he stands, what is at stake is not his own future status. Whether he (the Dalai Lama), and the Tibetans in exile can go back is secondary to the fate of his entire people. The challenge before the Chinese leaders is to show to the outside world that the six million people inside Tibet enjoy human rights and freedom and are happy with the Chinese rule. The Dalai Lama’s only reaction to the Chinese five-point proposal was summed up in brief, “Instead of addressing the real issue facing the six million Tibetan people, China has attempted to reduce the question of Tibet to a discussion of my own personal status”.\textsuperscript{11}

Besides the four fact-finding delegations to Tibet as well as Gyalo Thondup’s own meetings with the Chinese leadership – two exploratory talks were held in Beijing between the CCP Central Committee functionaries and the Dalai Lama’s delegates in 1982 and 1984. These talks covered more concrete and specific issues, which could become the agendas for future Sino-Tibetan negotiations, provided the

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Renmin Ribao}, 5\textsuperscript{th} April, 1988.

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{The Dalai Lama, Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet} (New Delhi: Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1988), p.4.
two parties show serious interest in a compromise solution to the Tibetan question.  

In 1982, the Dalai Lama sent a three member high level delegation to Beijing, to put forward a number of broad proposals for consideration. Juchen Thubten Nangyal, one of the delegates stated that the PRC had given a nine-point proposal to Taiwan, and Tibet, owing to its historical status and special characteristics is entitled to even more grant and special treatment. China replied that the case of Tibet was different – that China’s relation with Tibet was determined by the Seventeen Point Agreement signed between Beijing and Lhasa in 1951, and Tibet had already been “liberated” since 1950. It added that, Tibet now is on its way to socialism, whereas Taiwan is yet to be liberated. “Tibetans must or should not turn back the wheel of history”.

To all these arguments, the Tibetan side asserted that they were compelled to repudiate the Seventeen-Point Agreement as it was signed “under duress” and also because the Chinese authorities in Tibet had betrayed “every clause of the agreement”. The delegation then urged the PRC to respect the Tibetan Peoples’ right to national self-determination, and pointed out that even the Resolution of the first All-China Congress of Soviets on the Question of National Minorities (Nov. 1931) which says that the Chinese Communist Party “categorically and unconditionally recognizes the right of national minorities to self-determination. This would mean that districts like Mongolia, Tibet, Sinkiang, Yunan, Kwaichow and others with majority

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12 China’s Dialogue with the Dalai Lama 1978 – 90: Pre-negotiation Stage or Dead End? Dawa Norbu, Pacific Affairs, Vol.64, No.3, Fall 1991, p- 357.
13 See Xinhua, Beijing, September 30, 1981.
14 PTI (Press Trust of India), Beijing, July 11, 1988.
population of non-Chinese nationalities, shall have the right to determine for themselves whether they wish to leave the Chinese Soviet Republic and create their own independent states, or whether they wish to join the Union of Soviet Republic, or form an autonomous area inside the Chinese Soviet Republic".  

China was unyielding to the Tibetan suggestions and excused themselves by replying in short that: “We (CCP) were a child at that time but now we are grown up”.  

The delegation also proposed for the re-incorporation of Kham and Amdo (Inner Tibet) into TAR (Outer Tibet) – so as to unite the entire Tibetan-speaking people on the Tibetan plateau into one administrative unit. The status would be subsequently negotiated between Beijing and the Dalai Lama. China rejected the suggestion, as according to them, it would be administratively impossible since the territory covered by inner and outer Tibet was so vast: despite Hu having told Gyalo Thondup in 1981 that “this is a new idea which needs to be considered”. Ulan Fu also reportedly supported the Tibetan demand when he recalled that the late Zhou Enlai assured the Tibetan delegates to the Seventeen - Point Agreement in 1951 that the question of reunification of inner and outer Tibet “would be separately looked into”.  

The same delegates were again sent by the Dalai Lama to Beijing on October 24, 1984, to convey the Tibetan views and proposals on various subjects. The delegates met Jiang Ping, deputy director of the CCP Central Committee United Front Work Department in Beijing. Besides raising some other major issues, the delegates

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17 Cited in Dawa Norbu’s China’s Dialogue with the Dalai Lama 1978-90, p. 359.
asked the Chinese government to end its latest political repression under the so called anti-pollution campaign and release the arrested Tibetan dissidents in order to create a proper atmosphere for earnest negotiations. The delegates also discussed arrangements for the possible visit of the Dalai Lama to Tibet around 1985, as he had expressed his desire to visit in order to take stock of the actual situation himself, an idea which was welcomed by China. The delegates also called for more fact-finding delegations visits to Tibet so as to explore possibilities for further talks and to maintain Sino-Tibetan relations. Finally, the delegates declared that the Dalai Lama rejected China’s five-point proposal and reiterated some of the basic Tibetan demands of reunification of inner and outer Tibet, higher degree of autonomy etc.

Jiang Ping on October 28, 1984, convened China’s official views on the Tibetan demands. It said that the Central Committee welcomed the Dalai Lama’s return either to settle down permanently or only as a visit to China. China also acknowledged that the Sino-Tibetan dialogue over the years had promoted mutual understanding, despite the differences of opinion on certain issues and wished to continue the exchange of opinions through contact. Jiang also reiterated Hu Yaobang’s Five-Point Proposal made to Gyalo Thondup in 1987, with regard to the Dalai Lama’s status on his return.

Further, Jiang Ping with tremendous patience went into the history of Sino-Tibetan relations from the seventh century AD to 1950 to “prove” that Tibet has been an integral part of China for centuries, quoting even the British India’s Viceroy Hamilton and Nehru who stated that China had “sovereignty” over Tibet. Therefore, the Tibetan exiles are well urged to accept this “undisputable” historical “fact” and to
cease their activities aimed towards Tibetan independence – activities which violated Deng’s basic pre-condition for dialogue.

The Tibetan demand for greater degrees of autonomy and the reunification of Inner and Outer Tibet were also rejected. It stated that the establishment of “Greater Tibetan Autonomous Region” is not feasible as:-

1. Though the areas inhabited by the Tibetans are contiguous, they have not been unified for a long time. Thus the local economy and culture of inner Tibet has developed differently from outer Tibet.

2. Due to the vastness of the area, there would be no benefit for joint economic and cultural developments if Kham and Amdo were united with the Tibet Autonomous Region. And so long as the Tibetans demand for Greater Tibetan Autonomous Region, “We cannot have negotiations”. Jiang then pointed out that since “liberation” the Tibetans had been already granted with one autonomous region, comprising ten districts, and there would be no change to these administrative statutes in any of the Tibetan speaking areas. Jiang also harped on the economic progress made in Tibet – the amount of money and materials that were poured in to improve Tibetan living standards – bringing about all-round development in the region. Therefore, Tibetans were well advised to concentrate only on the question of “Tibetan happiness” as the Dalai Lama indicated in 1978 and 1979. Finally Jiang concluded that, “since the door is wide open, you are welcome to return. But the solution lies with you, you must change your stand and attitude, otherwise, there would not be any agreement”. The Chinese message on this is consistent

19 “Gist of the Chinese Views Conveyed by Jiang Ping”, p.3.
20 Ibid., pp.1-8.
and has been reiterated by various Chinese officials over a period of time.

Dalai Lama’s Five-Point Peace Plan:

The Dalai Lama had gone a long way in accommodating Chinese interest and demands, in his series of initiatives without any success. Yet, again the talks in Beijing in 1982 and 1984, failed to resolve the Tibetan question. The Dalai Lama therefore had no alternative but to make his position public and appeal for international support. On 21st September 1987, during a visit to the US Congressional Human Rights Convention, the Dalai Lama laid out an important and well constructed five-point peace plan for Tibet:

1. Transformation of the whole of Tibet (inner and outer) into a zone of peace;
2. Abandonment of China’s population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people;
3. Respect for the Tibetan peoples’ fundamental Human Rights and democratic freedom;
4. Restoration and protection of Tibet’s natural environment and the abandonment of China’s use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste;
5. Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between Tibet and Chinese peoples.21 He declared, “We wish to approach this subject in a reasonable and realistic way, in a spirit of frankness and conciliation and with a view to finding a solution that is in the long-term interest of all the Tibetans, the Chinese and all other people concerned”.

China’s official reaction to the Dalai Lama’s proposal was one of flat rejection. In fact, when riots broke out in Lhasa, six days after the Dalai Lama announced his proposal, Beijing blamed him for the violence linking the unrest with his statement and accused him of widening the gulf between himself and the government.

Through a memorandum from Yang Minfu, Head of the United Front Work Department of the CCP Central Committee, to the exile Tibetan administration, China gave their reply through Gyalo Thondup. It said that the Dalai Lama and his group had made “Tibet’s independence” a major issue in foreign countries and bolstered by foreign support, harboured an empty hope of sponsoring “splittist activities” in Tibet. The Lhasa disturbances on September 27 and October 1, 1987, were the direct result of the Dalai Lama’s splittist campaign conducted as a political exile. However, China will never allow the Dalai Lama to spread his activities to destroy the unity and stability of Tibet or that of the unity of the Motherland.

China then accused the Dalai Lama of “choosing to ignore the Central government’s sincere and kind gestures as unconsequential and did not correct his mistaken behaviour”, in spite of the central government’s consistent efforts to improve relation with him since 1979, and had also “sent messages welcoming him back to the Motherland to preserve the unity of the Motherland and promote good relations between the nationalities”.

As usual, China reminded the Tibetans of the massive financial and material aid pumped into Tibet for development “as a result of which the Tibetan people today
are leading happy lives and working hard”. The Dalai Lama, according to China, overlooked all these obvious changes and persisted in humiliating the government by fabricating lies that “Tibet is under military occupation and that nationality discrimination is being practised”. All these were due to the Dalai Lama’s insistence on splitting the motherland for “his personal status and for the vested interest of his coterie”. China declared.

Therefore, China warned that, “if the Dalai Lama continues to engage in splittist activities, China will be forced to take even more serious measures”. And more importantly, “we want to point out emphatically that there is absolutely no scope for discussion as far as the question of the national ownership and territories are concerned”. The CPC and the peoples’ government are determined to defend the ownership and national integrity of China. On this, our nation will not tolerate interference from any quarter”.

Finally, it declared that China stands firmly on its “five-point policy” towards the Dalai Lama and repeated that “Tibet is an integral part of China”, hence Tibetans should give up the struggle for “Tibet’s independence”, or there will be no negotiations whatsoever, which indicates that there will be no change in the central government policy towards Tibet and the Dalai Lama.

In response to China’s accusations and misunderstandings of the Dalai Lama’s peace plan, the Dalai Lama and his government clarified the Tibetan position in a detailed fourteen-point note, to the Chinese government on December 17, 1987.
The Tibetan side denied that the Dalai Lama was ever involved in “splittist activities”. On the contrary, his five-point peace plan outlined the direction for achieving long-term mutual benefits and good relationship between the Tibetans and Chinese and strongly denied having instigated or planned the demonstration in Lhasa.

As to the accusation of the Dalai Lama “choosing to ignore the central government’s sincere and kind gesture as inconsequential and did not correct his mistaken behaviour”, is untrue. Since 1979, the Dalai Lama in an effort to keep contact with China and to find a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibetan problem had, sent four fact-finding delegations, two groups of emissaries to Tibet and Beijing.

It is also not true that the Dalai Lama overlooked the changes in Tibet. In fact, the Dalai Lama had even personally written to Deng Xiang on March 23, 1981, to convey his appreciation stating that he is “pleased with and applaud comrade Hu Yaobang’s efforts to make every possible attempt to right the wrongs by frankly admitting the past mistakes after his visit to Lhasa”. He has also made no secret of the fact that he saw much good in socialism, and that he welcomed changes in China’s policies in Tibet.

Further, in his March 10 statement of 1984, the Dalai Lama acknowledged the release of many innocent Tibetans imprisoned unjustly for about twenty years and the comparative degree of freedom of movement between Tibet and the outside world enabling long-separated relatives and friends to meet. The Dalai Lama also made known his approval of the improved livelihood of people in towns and villages, the restoration of the Tibetan language, educational development and a modest acceptance of religious practice and restoration of some monasteries etc.
The Dalai Lama had also stated time and again that he would not be holding any political office and that he was merely a spokesman of the Tibetan people, and that the Tibetan issue will be decided by the people of Tibet for their own welfare. Neither has the Tibetans side ever featured in the discussion, nor has the personal status of the Dalai Lama, figured as an issue, but the plight of the six million Tibetan people was always the core issue. Rather, it is the Chinese themselves, who have attempted to reduce the Tibetan issue to the personal status of the Dalai Lama and his "group" by putting forward a five-point policy towards the Dalai Lama.

As for the Dalai Lama’s call for the commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet, China responded with intimidation that continued engagement in "splittist activities" would force China to take even more serious measures. In reality, the Dalai Lama has repeatedly stated that if China did not want Tibet to split, it should act accordingly, by giving Tibetans equal rights and the right to self-determine their own future etc.

However, the Dalai Lama’s option for the transformation of Tibet into a demilitarized zone of peace seem a little unrealistic and needed to be explained. To China, the Tibetan plateau has always been a area of high importance from a strategic point of view, and as soon as it took over Tibet, Beijing ensured that Tibet would not fall or be taken over by hostile or potentially hostile forces. So, with tremendous speed China opened up Tibet by building roads, airports and other logistic requirements of the PLA to absorb Tibet completely into the Chinese defence system. Now, China uses Tibet as an area for the construction, testing and deployment of their nuclear weapons as well as for dumping nuclear waste. Therefore, it is most unlikely
that the PLA would withdraw from an area in which they have invested over a period of five decades.

However, the Dalai Lama argues that his concept of ‘peace zone’ would be “in keeping with Tibet’s historical role as a peaceful and neutral Buddhist nation and buffer state separating the continent’s great powers”. It would also be in keeping with Nepal’s proposal to proclaim Nepal a peace zone, a proclamation supported by China. He proclaimed that the establishment of a ‘peace zone’ in Tibet would also require withdrawal of Chinese troops and military installations from the Himalayan regions bordering Tibet. “This would be achieved under an international agreement which would satisfy China’s legitimate security needs and build trust among the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and other peoples of the region”.22 China’s response to the Dalai Lama’s proposal to turn Tibet into a zone of peace, is summed up in Sha Zhou’s article stating that, “no country has ever set apart one of its own regions as a peace or neutral zone in order to separate itself from its neighbouring countries. No sovereign country can accept such a situation”.23

Strasbourg proposal
China did not respond positively to the five-point peace plan, and under the circumstances, the Dalai Lama felt compelled to make public appeal for direct international support yet again after a long wait for China to come around. The Dalai Lama was now left with no alternative but to outline another framework for the Sino-Tibetan negotiations, which is an elaboration of his peace plan regarding negotiations.

22 The Dalai Lama, five point peace plan for Tibet, p.6.
The Dalai Lama announced this proposal at the European parliament at Strasbourg (France) on June 15, 1988. And as a gesture of good will – copies of the proposals were given to Chinese government through the New Delhi embassy, before they were made public.

The Dalai Lama proposed that the whole of Tibet known as cholka-sum (u-Tsang, Kham & Amdo) should become a self-governing democratic political entity founded on law by agreement of the people for the common good and the protection of themselves and their environment, in association with the PRC.24

Under the Dalai Lamas' proposal, the government of the PRC could remain responsible for Tibetans foreign policy, but the government of Tibet should be permitted to develop and maintain its own relations in the fields of religion, commerce, education, culture, tourism, science, sports and other non-political fields through its foreign Affairs Bureau.

The system of government in Tibet would be “a self-government democratic entity founded on a constitution and basic law, which would comprised popularly elected chief executive, a Bi-cameral legislative branch, and an independent judicial system. It would have the right to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and the Tibetans” and “the social and economic system of Tibet would be determined in

accordance with the wishes of the Tibetan people”.

The Dalai Lama also placed particular emphasis on the protection of human rights and individual democratic freedom, and the protection of environment. He stated that the future goal of Tibetans government would be to ‘transform Tibet into our planet’s largest natural preserve’. The government of Tibet would also pass strict laws to protect wildlife and plant life. The exploitation of natural resources would also be regulated and the manufacturing stockpiling and testing of nuclear weapons would be prohibited in Tibet; regarding defence, the Dalai Lama said that ‘a regional peace conference should be called to ensure that Tibet becomes a genuine sanctuary of peace through demilitarization. Until such time as demilitarization and neutralization be realized, China could have the right to maintain a restricted number of military installation in Tibet solely for defence persons.

Further, in order to create an atmosphere of trust conducive to fruitful negotiations, the Dalai Lama called on China to put an end to its Human Right Violations in Tibet and to abandon its policy of transferring Chinese to Tibet. Finally, the Dalai Lama urged the Chinese leaders to realize that colonial rule over occupied territories is anachronistic today. A genuine union or association can only come about voluntarily where there is satisfactory benefit to all parties concerned. 25

25 Ibid., pp.2-3.
The Strasbourg proposal could be termed as a political bombshell: The Chinese were probably taken by surprise, as they took a long time to respond. Not even in their wildest dreams China could have imagined that the Dalai Lama would be willing to compromise for a ‘self governing democratic Tibet’ in association with the PRC. Probably, the Chinese leaders at that time had not resolved the internal differences on the best course to follow in order to resolve the Tibetan problem. Hence, they could reply only in February 1990. The proposal remained the focus of heated discussion for a long time among the Tibetan refugees in exile and the Tibetans particularly in Lhasa. They could not accept the prospect of giving up the goal of complete independence, they had been fighting for decades. The Chinese government announcement of its willingness to negotiate with the Dalai Lama was viewed with suspicion. Their years of experience in dealing with the Chinese convinced them that this was just a propaganda ploy to quell the demonstrations in Lhasa. As far as the Dalai Lama was concerned, his proposal represented the best compromise solution to the long-standing controversial Tibetan questions.

**China’s Response to the Proposal:**

At the outset, China publicly rejected the proposal dismissing it as nothing less than ‘disguised independence’. The Chinese embassy at New Delhi also informed the Dalai Lama’s representative Tashi Wangdi that neither the five-point peace plan nor the Strasbourg proposal could be the basis for negotiations. They also took exception to the Dalai Lama’s statement that “whatever the outcome of the negotiations with the Chinese may be, the Tibetan people themselves must be the ultimate deciding authority”. It is a well known fact that the Tibetan people will not settle for any thing
other than complete independence and any proposal which stops short of it would be rejected. China is well aware of this and the implication in the Dalai Lama’s speech is enough for them to reject his proposal. Later, they admitted that they were seriously studying the Dalai Lama’s proposal and on 23 October 1988, announced that China was willing to meet with the Dalai Lama or his representative at any place of the Dalai Lama’s choosing.26

The Tibetan side took China’s offer at face value and with great expectations, the Dalai Lama on 25 October, 1988, informed the Chinese government through its New Delhi Embassy that the venue for talks should be Geneva. It was considered the most convenient and neutral place and proposed that negotiations should began in January 1989.27 The names of the Tibetan team for negotiation were also announced.

China’s offer for talks at the Dalai Lama’s chosen time and place sounded too good to be true and sure enough, there was a pre-condition for its willingness for a dialogue or a meeting with their Tibetan counterparts. China’s willingness to hold dialogue was subject to the condition that the Dalai Lama accepts and support the unity of the Motherland. The Dalai Lama should ‘sincerely wish to improve his relations with the Chinese authorities and contribute to the preservation of the unity between Tibetan and Hans’. China made it clear that it “cannot accept any calls for independence or semi-independence for Tibet as a basis for the talks”. Further

progress for talks also stalled over China’s dissatisfaction with the composition of the Dalai Lama’s team member of the Kashag and western legal adviser. It wished to talk directly with the Dalai Lama or to his own trusted representatives, Gyalo Thondup preferably, and stated explicitly that ‘China will not entertain any delegation from the exile government ‘complaining that the six member negotiating team appointed by the Dalai Lama had always engaged in “splittist” activities and that ‘there can be no foreign involvement in the talks either’. China also conveyed its disapproval of the way the venue and date for the proposed talks were announced, and offered Beijing or Hongkong as the suitable venue for talks.

The Dalai Lama’s acceptance of China’s offer for talks and his announcement of the venue and time for talks was delivered by a ‘Minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile’ Ala Jigme Thondup, sending a loud and clear message that these were bilateral talks. As the New Delhi Chinese Ambassador could not see ‘Minister’ Ala, the message was delivered to councillor Zhou, who enquired whether the Dalai Lama would participate in the talks. Ala replied negatively but added that the ‘Tibetan government had earlier announced the formation of the six-member negotiating team ‘appointed by the Dalai Lama to represent him and Ala himself was one of the team members. To Zhou’s inquiry of ‘foreign involvement, a Dutch lawyer being included as member of the team, Ala answered that he was ‘one of three aids assisting the team and not one of the negotiators’.

28 See Fam Cheukwan, Basic Differences Stall Tibet Talks, Hongkong Standard 23 December, 1988, quoting Ren Yinong.
China took Deputy Minister Ala's answer to councillor Zhou's question as a confirmation of a violation of the conditions laid down by China in its September 23, 1988 Message. The Vice-Minister of State Nationalities Affairs Commission Chen Xin on November 1988, accused the Dalai Lama of being "insincere" towards the proposed talks in Geneva as he was not going to attend the talks personally. He stated, "we have never recognized the government-in-exile headed by the Dalai Lama. That is why we will only hold talks with the Dalai Lama himself and will not hold talks with the so-called government delegation sent by the Dalai Lama". The inclusion of a foreigner in the Tibetan delegation also "contravenes the principle adhered to by the central peoples' government". 30

China's objection to the Dalai Lama's appointment of his legal advisor, a Dutch national was because of China's apparent fear of the Tibetans asking a third party, a government of the UN to mediate or preside over negotiations, which was never suggested by the Tibetans before. China's refusal to talk to the appointed member of the Tibetan government-in-exile was also "for fear that this could be interpreted as an implicit recognition of that government" implying China's recognition of the ongoing dialogue was as one between the PRC government and the person of the Dalai Lama in exile and not of the 'leader' or head of the 'Tibetan government-in-exile' as assumed by Deng Xiaoping's initiatives in 1978.

China also complained that the Dalai Lama’s statement contained no new contribution but was an attempt to distort the present status of Tibet with the intention of legitimizing some type of ‘semi or disguised independence’ as well as ‘internationalizing’ the Tibetan issue, which according to China was purely a domestic issue. It claimed that contrary to the Dalai Lama’s assumptions of Tibet’s historical independence prior to 1950, Tibet was incorporated into China in the thirteenth century when the Mongolians established the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).\(^{31}\) The communist party had already decided that Tibet was an integral part of China and it does not matter what Tibetan people thought or whatever historical evidence the Tibetans showed.

The Tibetan government was naturally very disappointed by this communication. Meanwhile, in Lhasa there were more killings as the local authorities were instructed to use ‘merciless repression in handling anti-Chinese activities. On April 12, 1989, the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (New Delhi) issued clarification on the three objections raised by China and explained the Dalai Lama’s position. It says, “we have conveyed to the Chinese government on numerous occasions through their embassy in New Delhi that, 1. The framework for negotiations proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama refer(s) specifically to the positive notion in association with the PRC; 2. The Tibetan negotiating team has been appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and it is within His right to appoint

whosoever he considers competent to represent Him; and 3. There is no foreign participation in the negotiating team. There are both Tibetan and non-Tibetan advisors to the team. It is quite natural for the team to seek advice from qualified person regardless of their nationalities.32

The Dalai Lama's Strasbourg proposal provided the most reasonable and realistic basis for negotiations, and is definitely not a 'call for independence' as claimed by China. In fact, there is no mention of independence in his proposal as a result, the Dalai Lama had to face a storm of negative reactions from Tibetans. It has caused controversy among Tibetans from all quarters- those in Tibet as well as those living in exile. Some believe that the Dalai Lama was being realistic and is attempting to achieve some settlement, whereas others strongly criticized it as a total abandonment of the demand for independence they have been struggling for. They believe that foregoing independence has to a certain extent weakened Tibet's bargaining positions.

Deng Xiaoping himself set the Chinese government's only condition for negotiation in 1979, which was also repeated by Chinese officials just before the Dalai Lama made his proposal that 'anything except total independence' for Tibet was open to discussion. China changed its stance only after the Dalai Lama announced his proposal for a 'middle-way' between total independence and integration into the PRC. The Chinese leadership rephrased the pre-conditions to exclude also 'semi-

independence’ and even ‘disguised-independence in any form’. 33

What China wants is that the Dalai Lama should declare to the world that he completely relinquishes once and for all the very concept of Tibet’s independence as something inherent in the pre-1950 Tibetan history or as a future goal, if at all the Dalai Lama wants to continue the dialogue. China says that, “on the question of such major importance to the future of the Chinese nation, there is no room for bargaining”. 34

On the other hand, the Dalai Lama adamantly asserts that Tibet has always been an independent nation prior to Chinese takeover in 1950. But he now recognizes the reality of the Communist Chinese rule over Tibet, and on that basis, he would be willing to negotiate the future status of Tibet in association with the PRC, but there will be no question of him re-writing Tibetan history as China wants.

There is no end to pleasing the Chinese; the truth is China interprets anything short of total integration into the PRC as a form of ‘semi distinguished independence’. The Dalai Lama’s reference to Tibet’s past independence is also interpreted as a necessary part of his continuing plan of separation”. 35 It is simply obvious that China wants to avoid negotiations. Otherwise, if Ding’s assurances and past Chinese leaders statements are to be taken seriously, China is obliged to discuss the Dalai Lama’s proposal and even the seventeen-point Agreement which Tibet was forced’ to sign in

33 See Xinhua, 21 and 22 June, 1988.
35 ibid p.22
1951, provided for semi-independent status.

However, following the bloody upheavels and the imposition of martial law in Lhasa on 7 March, 1989 and the Beijing massacre of June 1989, the Dalai Lama cut off all contact with Beijing and joined the rest of the world in condemning China. Whereas Beijing sent a message to the Dalai Lama through its embassy in New Delhi that although the Chinese government disagreed with the Dalai Lama’s Strasbourg Proposal as the basis for negotiation, at the same time “China still insisted that they wanted dialogue”. A week after the imposition of martial Law in Lhasa, Beijing declared that “the channels for a dialogue remain open” so long as the Tibetan leader renounces Tibetan independence. Then to confirm that there would be no change in the central government stance towards the Tibetan problem, Ngapo reiterated the much repeated Dang’s and past Chinese leaders’ statements. He stated in March 1989 that “we welcome the Dalai Lama to return to China as long as he renounces advocating the independence of Tibet and contributes to the unity of the nation and the country and to the building of the motherland and new Tibet”.

China refuses to budge even an inch- their policy towards the Dalai Lama and Tibet still remain unchanged. Yet as late as May 1990, after the Dalai Lama cut off all contact, a Chinese official was quoted as stating, “the central government has upheld an open attitude towards the talks with the Dalai Lama and we have never changed our eagerness to hold negotiation” blaming the Dalai Lama who “has closed the door

on negotiation himself by cutting off all those healthy contacts after the imposition of martial law in Lhasa last march".  

The Dalai Lama waited in vain for a positive response from the Chinese side to his proposal as the basis for negotiation. On his 10 March speech in 1991, years after he announced his proposal, the Dalai Lama was forced to warn China that unless the Chinese government responded positively to his Strasbourg proposal without further delay, he would consider himself free from any obligations to abide by the concessions he had made in Strasbourg.

Over the years, the only official channel for Sino-Tibetan contact remains the Bureau of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Embassy in India, although there have been private contacts through Gyalo Thondup. The Dalai Lama on 25 March 1991, informed the Chinese government, through the New Delhi embassy that he wished to assist in the search for the authentic re-incarnation of Panchen Lama. But China rejected the request saying that there was no need for outside interference in this matter. Further, in his address to Yale university in October 9, 1991, (New Haven, Conn., USA) the Dalai Lama made new overtures to the Chinese government by suggesting a personal visit to Tibet accompanied by some senior Chinese leaders along with outside observers including the Press, to make an on the spot assessment of the actual situation in Tibet. He wanted to communicate with his people directly to

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39 *Hong Kong standard may 9, 1990.*
advise and persuade them not to abandon non-violence as the appropriate form of struggle. The Dalai Lama also requested a meeting with Li Peng during his visit to India in December 1991. Beijing rejected both request, probably because of the Dalai Lama's failure to keep his promise to visit Tibet in 1985, doubting the Dalai Lama's sincerity towards reconciliation.

However, it is to be noted that, though the Dalai Lama had announced that he could no longer consider his Strasbourg offer valid, since the Chinese government had not expressed the wish to reply, he had not given up the non-violence approach. The Dalai Lama and his government maintain that they would still be prepared to initiate discussions with Beijing on the basis of the Strasbourg proposal. The Dalai Lama remains entirely committed to the non-violent approach and believes that the authentic path towards a solution is based on dialogue and negotiation.

At the same time, in view of the above reasons, the Assembly of the Tibetan People’s Deputy on 23 January 1992, passed a resolution stating that the Tibetan government-in-exile would not initiate any new move for negotiations with China unless there was a positive change in the attitude of the Chinese leadership. The resolution however noted that the Tibetan government would have no objection to negotiation if the overtures came from the Chinese government, either directly or through a third party.40

In April 1992, the Chinese embassy in New Delhi called on Gyalo Thondup and conveyed that the Chinese government’s position in the past had been “conservative” but was now willing to be “flexible” if the Tibetans were prepared to be “realistic” and invited Gyalo to visit China. Gyalo Thondup went with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exile government’s approval, but his report on return, showed no flexibility in the Chinese government’s attitude. On the other hand, serious accusations were made against the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exile government, which was a total disappointment and frustration for the Tibetan side.

In reply, the Tibetan government sent a two-member delegation to China in June 1993, to explain and clarify their view on the points raised by the Chinese government to Gyalo Thondup. The delegation also carried the Dalai Lama’s personal letter to Deng Xiaoping and Jing Zemin which contained a detailed memorandum, clarifying his position and stand on the future of Tibet. However, China continues to ignore the Dalai Lama’s suggestions and the leaders did not even bother to acknowledge his letter. Judging from the Dalai Lama’s March 10, statement of 1994, he has truly come to the realisation that China will not move from their stand and will continue to impose pre-conditions, so as to avoid dialogue inspite of their repeated statement that they want to negotiate. The Dalai Lama stated: I must now recognise that my approach has failed to produce any progress either for substantive negotiation or in contributing to the over all improvement of the situation in Tibet. Moreover, I am conscious of the fact that a growing number of Tibetans, both inside as well as outside Tibet, have been distorted by my conciliatory stand not to demand complete
independence for Tibet. However, the Dalai Lama is still convinced that in the long run, justice will triumph in Tibet, though his message of peace had divided the exile community as well as those inside.

One of the main factors which hampered the start of early negotiations was also probably because of the factions within the Chinese leadership. Various Chinese leaders have taken different positions in dealing with the Tibetan problem – which blatantly reflect opposing strategies of rival factions. For instance, during certain periods, certain leaders in power are more oriented towards a more soft line, pragmatic approach, whereas during other periods, leaders take on a historically and ideologically rigid approach to the Tibetan question.

The Chinese leadership’s divide on the Tibetan question is discernable and real. For example, Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang were for resolving the Tibetan issue through dialogue and negotiation with the Dalai Lama. As a result, Deng Xiaoping after having taken personal initiative in 1978-79 on the Tibetan problem handed it over to Hu, who remained in charge till 1981 and outlined China’s Dalai Lama policy. Deng Xiaoping declared in 1979 that the Dalai Lama could discuss with the Chinese leaders “anything except the total independence of Tibet”, and Hu was receptive to the idea of Tibetans demand for the reunification of Inner with outer Tibet. In 1981, Hu told Gyalo Thupden that “this is a new idea which needs to be considered”. Ngapo had also implied that the Dalai Lama’s Strasbourg proposal was

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41 Ibid., p.116.
more acceptable than his five-point peace plan because at Strasbourg, the Dalai Lama had said that he was “willing to talk to the central government of China to allow the central government to take care of Tibet’s diplomatic and defence issues”.

Qiao Shi, during his inspection tour of Tibet in July 1988, called for a closer supervision of the masses, the strengthening of the party and intensified ideological work. In contrast, Yan Mingfu, head of the United Front Work Department of the CCP, made an inspection tour of Tibet in November 1988, and emphasized in his speech the strategy of the UF for securing the loyalty of Tibetans. Yan stressed the need for continuing economic development in Tibet blaming “mistakes” resulting from “leftist influence” for the Tibetan discontent, resulting in the first demonstration in 1987. During this tour, he announced that Beijing was willing to negotiate with the Dalai Lama. Yan personally handled the communication preparing for negotiations from the Chinese side. A pre-condition for the negotiation was that the Dalai Lama renounces any claim to independence for Tibet. Moreover, when the pragmatic Chinese leaders had the upper hand, they allowed four fact-finding delegations, who were members of the Tibetan administration in Dharamsala to visit various parts of inner and outer Tibet. Besides, two preparatory talks were held in Beijing in 1982 and 1984 between the Chinese and Tibetan delegations.

42 Ngapo reiterates...Xinhua Beijing, March 3, 1989.
However, the hardline position is in sharp contrast to the approach taken by the pragmatic leaders. For instance, according to Zhao Ziyang and Sha Zhou, the Dalai Lama should return to China and the condition for his return is that he should stop working for the independence of Tibet.\(^{44}\)

By June 1986, the Chinese government began to harden its position in Sino-Tibetan dialogue. China made a new rule requiring exile Tibetans wishing to visit China to take Chinese-issued travel documents describing them as an “overseas Chinese” China refused to receive the fifth fact finding Tibetan delegation on the ground that the delegates must travel on overseas Chinese passports.\(^{45}\) But China’s pragmatic leaders did not have any problem in allowing the six previous delegations to travel on “identity certificate” issued by the Indian government, describing the Tibetan delegates on “Tibetan nationality” born in “Tibet”. In September 23\(^{rd}\), 1988, the Chinese government’s message to the Dalai Lama’s representative stated that “we will not receive any delegation or fact-finding group designed by the “Kashag government”.\(^{46}\) This indicated China’s hardline position on the Tibetan issue. The fall of the pragmatic leader Hu Yaobang from the party position also accelerated the shift in the Han – decision, i.e. hardliners from the government party and army gained greater say in the Tibetan issue. But the biggest blow which sounded the death-knell to the pragmatic line was the pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa on September 27 and October 1, 1987. The pro-independence demonstration was used by the hardliners as proof that the pragmatic approach towards the Dalai Lama was wrong.

Hardliners in the party even objected to the very concept of independence that might have existed in the pre-1950 Tibetan history, unlike pragmatic leaders who were contented with the Dalai Lama’s acceptance of the fact that since 1950, China had gained sovereignty over Tibet and on that basis he wished to negotiate an “associate” status for Tibet. At the same time, one should keep in mind that all factions of the Chinese leadership are unanimous in their view and insistence that Tibet is an inseparable part of China and that any question of Tibetan independence must be rejected outright as the basis for pre-condition for dialogue. It should also be noted that most Chinese leaders have made no such differentiation, but they have rejected both statements of the Dalai Lama. Hardliners included not only top Han officials in the party and army but also some young Tibetan cadres who had made it to the top hierarchy in Lhasa, and felt threatened and insecure should the Dalai Lama return to Tibet. In fact, the top Tibetan local cadres in Lhasa were more vociferous in condemning the Dalai Lama and the demonstrations allegedly “instigated and engineered by the Dalai clique”.

These Han and Tibetan leaders’ arguments of the alleged Dalai Lama’s hand in pro-independence demonstrations prove their point that the Dalai Lama had violated Deng’s cardinal condition for a dialogue – no discussion of Tibetan independence. Thus, by February 1990, the hard-line position was strengthened, the evidence of which can be drawn from the long delayed reply to the Dalai Lama’s proposal, clearly ending the two-line debate on how to deal with the Tibetan question.

However, the Dalai Lama said that his intentions had been misinterpreted by

the hardliners in the party. He stated that the Chinese had interpreted his statement wrongly. “I am not demanding independence for Tibet. The Chinese say that they want to develop Tibet. That is a good thing. We Tibetans will gain more if we retain our relationship with China. But the present system of autonomy is meaningless. If the present structure satisfied the majority of Tibetans, there would not have been such a widespread unrest.”

Hardliners also object to the Dalai Lama’s concept of domestic autonomy in association with the PRC saying it envisages a “western capitalist political system” which negates the superior socialist system established in Tibet.” The systematic change in Europe and Soviet union did not help either as it created panic among the ideological conservatives, tightening their grip on Tibet.

Dharamsala, on the other hand is most persistent on the question of reunification of inner and outer Tibet, first raised by Gyalo Thondup to Hu Yaobang in 1981. It was also repeated by the Tibetan delegates of the 1982 and 1984 talks in Beijing. The Dalai Lama made the same demand in his Strasbourg and Washington statements. Tibetans are likely to continue to press the issue, because common language, religion, culture and race bind the people of inner and outer Tibet as one identifiable ethnic group.

The only way to start negotiation for a peaceful solution to the Tibetan

48 Newsweek March 27, 1989, p. 56
50 Dawa Norbu, China’s Dialogue 1978-90, p. 368.
problem is without pre-conditions from either side, as the case is up till now. After initial rejection, Chinese authorities have considered certain issues such as the demand for more domestic autonomy and rectification within the scope of further discussion. Nevertheless, they have refused to touch other issues made in the Strasbourg proposal and out-rightly refused to reply to the Dalai Lama's five-point proposal. Even after twenty years of contact and exchanging dialogue verbally as well as in written between China and the Dalai Lama government-in-exile, the two parties had not arrived at resolving the Tibetan question.

It is true that China had always demonstrated her eagerness to hold talks with the Dalai Lama. But hardliners in Chinese politics are not prepared to give away any quarter and apart from a few empty gestures, China's basic policy remains visibly very much the same as it was in the early eighties. Her motive still is to persuade the Dalai Lama to return to the "great Motherland", and not about finding a compromise solution to the Status of Tibet. China insists that the basic terms and conditions for such talks must be Chinese dictated ones. Thus it is clear that the pre-conditions for any agreement with the Dalai Lama remains unchanged in the nineties too, and there is no reason to think that China is preparing to make any special concession in the near future. The Dalai Lama on his part has shown willingness to compromise and made a major political concession to China, in his proposals, with a view to defining a durable compromise solution for Tibet's future.

However, Beijing had always responded to his overtures in a negative manner.
Beijing is obstinately unyielding as far as a compromise is concerned as it would clearly be a great gain for China to hold the frontiers of Tibet, because of its strategic importance. The vast snowland country has the potential capacity to accommodate the expansion of China's economy, their ever growing population, and military ambition. These are the reasons why Beijing has unrelentingly pursued a policy designed to secure Tibetan integration. China has probably calculated that time is on their side, and there is no hurry for negotiations. The Dalai Lama is already in advanced age, and China can hold on for some more years, by which time they can complete their demographic invasion of Tibet, and hope that the Dalai Lama will not be around to irritate them.

It is true that there is popular western moral support for the Tibetan cause, with actions taking place in a number of Capitals to keep up the pressure for changes in Chinese policy towards Tibet. There have been many well publicized encounters all over the world between the Dalai Lama and world leaders, public figures, non-governmental organisations including celebrities from all walks of life, thus internationalising the Tibet issue. The Dalai Lama's peace initiatives have been lauded by the international community - several governments including those of the United States, the EU countries, the European Parliament and many national parliaments have extended explicit support and recognition.

The US Congress on May 23 1991, adopted a bold text declaring Tibet an
occupied country under the established principles of International Law; and that 'Tibet’s true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government — in — exile'. The resolution goes on to say that ‘Tibet has maintained throughout its history a distinctive and sovereign national, cultural and religious identity separate from that of China and except during periods of illegal Chinese occupation, has maintained a separate and sovereign political and territorial identity’.

Further, in 1993, when President Clinton announced the renewal for one year of China’s MFN status, it was on condition that China make ‘overall significant progress’ with respect to human rights, including ‘protecting Tibet’s distinctive religious and cultural heritage’. For the first time in decades, Tibet has reappeared on the agenda of bilateral US — China relations.

The European Parliaments Tibet Intergroup and several other western European Parliament have set up committee or study group on Tibet. Criticism of China on human rights has been growing in volumes. Several governments have expressed their support for a dialogue with no pre-conditions between China and the Dalai Lama, besides endorsing the demands raised by the Dalai Lama in his proposal. The Supreme Council of Lithuania, the nation’s parliament adopted a declaration in 1992 in which it ‘hold(s) His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government as the true representative of the nation of Tibet,’ and expressed ‘support for the legitimate aspirations of the Tibetan nation in international organisation and

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52 Clinton Conditions MFN on Preservation of Tibetan Culture, I C T, 28 May 1993, Washington D.C.
Thus, the Tibetans’ cause seems to be making headway and international opinion is coming out in its favour.

However, it is to be noted that, while informal recognition and sympathy are growing, official diplomatic recognition from the western government is yet to come. The support and pressure on China has to be elevated to political and diplomatic level in order to produce adequate impact on Chinese policy towards Tibet. But chances of this happening in the near future are remote. China always raised diplomatic pressure on countries that receive or support the Dalai Lama’s cause, and threatened to cut off economic as well as diplomatic ties. With them some governments are so anxious not to harm relations with China that politicians, have publicly extended support to the Chinese position in Tibet. China remains an attractive market for the west with advanced industrial economies, which cannot be sacrificed for the sake of Tibet. Thus there is no likelihood of the west and the US applying strong diplomatic pressure on China, which would compel China to compromise with the Dalai Lama.

China was also embolded with the normalization and improvement of Sino-Soviet relations since 1986, the Soviet Union being the only country that has historically shown strategic interest in Tibet. Beijing was thereby assured that the greatest threat behind the Dalai Lama in exile was taken care of, and that China now faced no major external compulsion to make concessions to the Dalai Lama. Since the resumption of good relations between Moscow and Beijing, the USSR has expressed

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support for the Chinese presence in Tibet. As for India, Rajiv Gandhi on his visit to Beijing declared publicly that Tibet was an integral part of Chinese territory and that India "would not allow the Tibetan separatists in India to indulge in political activism designed to break up China".\(^5^4\) Nepal for its part would never dream of annoying China, - the same goes for the rest of the neighbouring countries.

Further, the disparity in the number of Tibetans and the Chinese means that present policies will, in time deliver the absorption of Tibet as they have the absorption of Manchuria and inner Mongolia. The events of riots and the series of protests show that many Tibetans still do not accept Chinese rule. But the Tibetans resistance to Chinese rule is confined to Lhasa and a few places of Tibet. The PLA’s concentration and the development of necessary Chinese strategic infrastructure throughout outer and inner Tibet, makes widespread popular resistance inside Tibet problematic. Instead of negotiation, China chose to restore stability in Tibet by preserving tough policies as demanded by the politburo- member Qiao Shi, who called for ‘merciless repression’ in Tibet.\(^5^5\) At the same time, it is unlikely that any such policy will effectively squash the growing unrest among the Tibetans struggling for freedom and independence.

There is also very little chance of the pro-democracy movement in China succeeding, as the movement is limited to the student community and does not

\(^{54}\) Xinhua, 19 December, 1988.
\(^{55}\) South China morning Post, 20 July 1988.
include the masses. So, the chances of being granted higher autonomy or semi-independence to Tibet if the pro-democracy movement succeed is unlikely, in the near future. Thus, the inevitable conclusion we arrive at, is that, there will not be any further Sino-Tibetan negotiation, at least as long as the present regime in Beijing remains in power.

The Dalai Lama has time and again said that, Tibet was a sovereign independent country, which had every right to claim for independence. He has however, decided to abandon demand for independence and kept all options open but the possibility of rewriting Tibetan history in accordance with China's demands which is out of question. The problem can be resolved only through an agreement between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government in Beijing. This agreement between the two will only achieve its purpose if it recognises the Tibetans legitimate rights and aspirations as well as the desire of the Chinese people. China stands to gain internationally if it manages a negotiated settlement with the Tibetans for the sake of peace and justice.