CONCLUSION

Question of Tibet is one of the major issues in the world that remain unresolved so far. Efforts of worldwide network of Tibet Support Groups activists, Tibetan exiles and sympathizers have been instrumental in attracting international attention to the Tibet issue. Though this increased awareness and attention has led to many international resolutions and recognition on Tibet issue, it has not attracted effective international intervention pressurizing China to respect human rights, cultural and religious freedom and to reach a negotiated settlement.

The issue of Tibet is very complex one and multidimensional. It involves issues of historical status, human rights violations, environmental degradation, population transfer and curb on religious freedom and civil liberties, coercive birth control and many other issues. On these issues Chinese and Tibetan have different and opposite views.

There has been a long historical association between Tibet and China. But Chinese and Tibetan perception of this association differ with each other. China claims Tibet to be its integral part on the basis of the theory that Tibet became an integral part of China seven hundred years ago. Tibetans call the relationship between Mongol rulers of China and Tibetan as Cho-Yon relationship or Patron-Priest relationship instead of ruler and ruled one.

From 1911 to 1949 Tibet enjoyed full independence. Subsequent to the Communist revolution in China, People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet in
1949 crushing weak Tibetan resistance. China signed "17-Point Agreement" with the Dalai Lama in 1951, which established Chinese rule over Tibet. Tibetan uprising of 1959 was suppressed and the Dalai Lama fled into India and set up Tibetan government-in-exile. Since then Tibet is under complete control of People’s Republic of China.

Chinese authorities have refuted Tibetan allegation of widespread human rights violations in Tibet. But investigation reports of many human rights organizations confirm such violations. There is some truth in Chinese claim of socio-economic development in Tibet under Chinese rule. But the environmental, human and cultural cost Tibetans has paid for this development is much higher than the gain. There has been widespread deforestation, river pollution and nuclear dumping in Tibet. Tibetan people do not enjoy religious and cultural freedom, an allegation authenticated by international agencies. There has been a constant campaign for Han population transfer into Tibet which has disturbed the demographic composition severely affecting Tibetan interests. Birth control measures are coercive and inhuman.

Opening of Tibet exposed the world to the plight of Tibetan people. Threat to a unique culture was widely recognized. Tibetan government in exile led by the Dalai Lama also made effort to generate international support for Tibetan cause once the negotiation with China failed. Dalai Lama expected United States to play a significant role towards solving the Tibet issue and he has been visiting US almost every year. Response of the people, media, Congress and government of the United States has been quite encouraging.
Second World War and communist victory in China made United States interested in Tibetan affairs. When Washington started taking interest in Tibet in 1940’s it did so largely on Nationalist China’s terms with a significant qualification of Tibetan autonomy. After Communist victory in China, outbreak of Korean War and Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, US government began to show more interest in helping Tibet as part of its strategy to fight Communist expansion in Asia. With 1959 crackdown, the US government refused to accept China’s occupation of Tibet and referred to Tibetan autonomy within Chinese suzerainty. Between 1956 and 1961 United States clandestinely organized guerrilla training camps and dropped arms and ammunitions for them, under the project ‘Garden Operation’. But after 1972, with the deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations, United States began to befriend China in an effort to counterbalance Soviet influence in Asia. Tibet issue was sacrificed for this larger interest. In 1978 the United States government recognized unequivocally Tibet as a part of People’s Republic of China. But after the disintegration of USSR and the end of Cold War, US government has again starting taking interest in Tibet issue especially when China is perceived to be rival super power positioned against United States.

Tibet issue has got a widespread public support in the United States. Role of Tibet Support Groups, Dharma Centers, movie stars, media in generating this public support is highly commendable.

Tibet Support Groups of United States have been instrumental in raising awareness through demonstrations, cultural events and media briefings.
Media of the United States has provided wide coverage to the issue of Tibet, publishing stories of human rights violations, cultural and religious repression, and environmental degradation as well as about the peace initiatives of the Dalai Lama. Dharma Centers situated in the United States have attracted many Americans to Tibetan Buddhism. Though these Centers concentrate only on religious activities, followers of such Centers have extended their political support to the Tibetan cause too. Films and documentaries on Tibet have also played an important role in inculcating interest in Tibet among Americans. Many Hollywood stars have become ardent supporters of Tibetan cause. Among religious communities other than Buddhists, Episcopal Church and Jewish community of the United States have strongly advocated for the Tibetan cause. Apart from these organized efforts, some individuals have also taken initiatives for protection of human rights, preservation of cultural traditions and religious freedom and peaceful negotiated settlement of the Tibet issue.

Public support to Tibet issue has made US Congressmen and policymakers take notice of this issue. A quite vocal group of Tibet supporters emerged in the US Congress. These Congressmen made floor statements and brought resolutions supporting Tibetan cause. In US Congress Tibet became a recurring issue in late 1980's.

From 1989 to 1997 the Congress has passed many resolutions censuring China for its human rights violations and religious repression. Congress has also recommended US government to initiate actions against
China and to persuade Chinese authorities to start negotiations with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. US Congress has also generously granted refugee assistance and other humanitarian aid to Tibetans. Apart from collective initiatives few Congressmen have also taken individual initiatives by making floor statements, visiting Tibet and presenting an eyewitness account of the situation, writing letters to Chinese authorities and requesting the US government for proper action. One bill which can be cited as a glaring example of Congressional support to Tibet issue is the one which was part of the State Department’s Foreign Relations Authorization Act for the fiscal years 1992 and 1993. This bill declared Tibet an occupied country whose true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile.

US government officially recognizes Tibet as a part of China with the status of an autonomous region. Because United States does not recognize Tibet as an independent state, the US government does not conduct diplomatic relations with the Tibetan government-in-exile. However United States does maintain contact with representatives of different political groups inside and outside China with views on Tibet.

Despite its ideological commitment for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, US government’s treatment of human rights violations in Tibet has not been consistent. However, the State Department publishes the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices every year and Tibet gets a prominent place in it. Though contradicted by China, these reports go a long way in authenticating Tibetan allegations of human rights violations.
in Tibet by Chinese authorities. These reports also become the basis for governmental actions. Officials of US Embassy in China as well as officials of State Department have raised issue of human rights violations in bilateral discussions with Chinese authorities. But United States knows that it can promote respect for human rights only by maintaining good bilateral relations with China. Hence US government does not press the matter too hard. US government has always protested against cultural and religious repression in Tibet and has appealed to Chinese authorities to relax its tight control over religious and cultural activities. One instrument, which could have been used effectively, was the Most Favored Nation trading status to China. Though once its extension was linked with considerable improvement in human rights situation, due to intense lobbying by traders and industrialists extension was continued to be granted every year despite State Departments reports indicting China. The President and other officials have met and discussed with the Dalai Lama whenever he has visited United States. But he has always been received as a religious head of Tibetan Buddhists and not as the head of Tibetan government-in-exile. The Dalai Lama has never been given Oval Office reception. United States has acknowledged the fact that improvement in living standards due to economic policies has disrupted traditional living patterns, disturbed demographic composition and has degraded the environment in Tibet. Voice of America and Radio Free Asia broadcasts into China including Tibet in Tibetan language for the people of Tibet. It interviews ethnic Tibetans and has also interviewed the Dalai Lama several times. Aid and assistance to Tibetan refugees by United States has been generously granted. More than
1000 Tibetans have been given immigrant visas. USIA is providing scholarship for at least 30 Tibetans per year to study in the United States. US government has consistently encouraged both China and Tibet to come to negotiating table for a peaceful settlement of the issue. In 1997 US government created a post of Special Coordinator for Tibetan Affairs with the objective to promote substantive dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama or his representative. Special Coordinator is also responsible to coordinate and harmonize US policy on Tibet seeking to protect religious, cultural and linguistic heritage and improvement in human rights situations.

Lord Palmerston, the 19th century British statesman, in his formulation of British imperial policy, said that there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only eternal national interests. The flip-flop US policy toward Tibet is a testimony to this wisdom. The United States cannot be faulted for changing friends or enemies. But more than any other country, the United States has injected a set of high sounding moral principles into its foreign policy. Like individuals, nations too are judged by the degree to which they practice what they preach.

United States does not have geopolitical interests involved in Tibet in a manner India has. Chinese occupation of Tibetan plateau does not affect the immediate security interests of the United States. Therefore one cannot expect United States to sacrifice New York or Washington for the freedom of Tibet. This does not mean that Tibet serves no interest of the United States.
US intervention in Tibet serves two major interests. First, US is one of the oldest and largest democracies in the world and champions the cause of freedom, democracy and promotion of human rights worldwide. American public too perceives their country this way. Thus United States feels it is its moral obligation to ameliorate the plight of suffering humanity in Tibet. US stand against human rights violations, cultural and religious repression, environmental degradation not only enhances its image among the democratic countries of the world but also enhances its self image.

Second, in post Cold War era China has emerged as a rival power of United States. If Tibet gets independence it is more than likely to join liberal democratic group of countries. A friendly country in the neighborhood of China can be of great use for the United States in case of any hostility with China. Even if a negotiated settlement takes place, granting Tibet a genuine autonomy, Tibet is likely to emerge as a demilitarized and denuclearized Zone of Peace. This will strengthen the position of India vis-à-vis China, countering Chinese influence in Asia that is in the interest of the United States.

US policy towards Tibet issue is an effort to balance its economic interests and political interests. China, being most populous country with immense economic and military strength poses a challenge to the US dominance of world politics, particularly in Asia. China wants to be regional superpower in the Asian region, which goes against the interests of the United States in the region. United States has a longstanding policy not to encourage developments of regional superpower. It is precisely because of this policy
that United States encourages Japan and India in Asia. In post Cold War world
China is perceived as the biggest threat to US security interests. China
possesses nuclear-headed missiles capable to hit all major cities of the United
States. This security threat from China is among major factors resulting into
proposed National Missile Defense System of the United States. Hence post
Cold War reality and threat on security interests makes it imperative for the
United States to take measures to encircle and contain China. United States
friendly gestures towards India in last decade can be seen in this perspective of
counterbalancing China in Asia. Tibet provides an important leverage to the
United States against China. Issues of human rights violations, cultural and
religious repression etc. can be used effectively by the United States to
embarrass China. In extreme conditions, with India’s cooperation Western
countries led by the United States can physically intervene in Tibet. But
United States is unlikely to annoy China beyond a limit. It has important
economic interests in China. Size of annual trade between two countries is
huge. While forming and executing its Tibet policy US cannot afford to ignore
its trade interests in China. A strong business lobby, favoring smooth trade
relations with China, has emerged in the United States. They want government
to be pragmatic and not to sacrifice trade interests for the sake of human
rights, civil liberty or environment in Tibet. Previously human rights and
security conflicts were largely considered and resolved within the legislative
and executive branches. Some businesses were affected, but the private sector
was largely a bystander. In the era of free global economy this is not the case.
If United States impedes trade opportunities, many competitors lie in wait. In
China, large contracts and jobs are at stake. US policy makers cannot ignore these realities. Most of the goods imported from China are low cost goods commonly used by lower income groups. Any disruption in trade relations will affect them badly, which will have political repercussions in turn. Hence US policy towards Tibet issue has to be a good balance between its political interests and economic interests. Another reason is unwillingness of the policy makers and the people of the United States to get into another cold war rivalry. They do not want the relations with the China to deteriorate so much that a warlike situation is created. US has burnt its hand in Vietnam War in the past. Their experience in the Kuwait-Iraq conflict too has not been very good. They don’t want to get involved into similar kind of situation in other parts of world. American public opinion is also against such adventures.

This does not mean that United States will not make any meaningful interventions in Tibet in future. In fact United States seems to have adopted two pronged strategy. First, direct intervention by pressurizing China through diplomatic means to negotiate and settle the issue. Second, indirect intervention through encouragement to pro-democracy and liberal elements in China. A large number of Chinese specially the younger generation is disenchanted with the one party communist totalitarian rule and demanding for personal freedom. With economic liberalization it is not unlikely that political liberalization will take place in China. United States wants to play catalyst to this process. Nature and intensity of US intervention in Tibet will also depend on the state of Indo-US relations. If there is convergence of Indian and US
perceptions and interests, the United States can make more effective interventions in Tibet.

As mentioned earlier United States has little strategic, economic or geopolitical interests in Tibet. Still US Congress and administration has taken important actions on the Tibet issue. Classical realist theory is unable to explain this phenomenon as it believes that every action in the international relations is motivated by national interests. Tibetan case is unique one and explanation of US interest can also be found elsewhere other than the realist theory. In the post Cold War and post communist international situations United States actions cannot be fully explained with “eternal fixations”.

Explanation of United States interest in Tibet can be traced to the strong public support in US for the Tibetan cause. American public are attracted to the Tibetan culture and they like Tibetan people. The Dalai Lama’s visits and efforts of TSGs and Tibetan exiles has generated such strong support. This support has always been there since the invasion of Tibet. Even when Cold War realities and improved Sino-US relations changed the US government attitude towards Tibet, it could not change American people’s supportive attitude. This can be illustrated with an example. Former US President Carter and his wife visited Tibet in June 1987. In China addressing a press conference later, he told “the most difficult issue is Chinese government’s contention that Tibet is not an independent country”.¹ It is evident from these words the Carter, though, could not do much to further the

¹ Tibetan Bulletin, vol. XVIII, no. 2, July-August, p. 6
Tibetan cause, as President of United States, as an individual he thinks Tibetans claim to self-determination and independence as just and legitimate. But during Cold War American public understood the constraints of the US government.

But in present post Cold War and post communist international environment many Americans believe that the Tibet issue, which was sidelined, should be given due consideration by the policy makers of the United States. Congress has reaffirmed this sentiment. It is because of this internal public pressure rather than eternal fixations that US administration is taking increasing interest in Tibet.

Guided by its limited interests and strong public opinion in favor of concrete actions, United States government has made limited but meaningful interventions in Tibet, raising the hope of six million struggling Tibetans. Though these measures have gone a long way in helping Tibetan cause, Tibetans, Tibet support groups and common Americans expect a more vigorous and effective actions from the government of the United States of America. In future, United States interest in Tibet will be contingent on how it reconciles with the dilemma of promoting trade and human rights, together.
TIBET

U-TSANG

TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGION

KHAM

KEY

+= International Border of Tibet

- = Provincial Boundaries as redrawn by China

 Minor without Tibet Autonomous Status

Major Town

Tibet after the Chinese invasion in 1949 has been divided into six Divisions. Central Tibet is basically Tibet Autonomous Region. The major portion of Amdo has been renamed Qinghai with some portion incorporated into Chinese Gansu province. Eastern Kham region has been absorbed into Sichuan and Yunnan province, hence Chinese title in "Tibet" may mean the "Tibet Autonomous Region". 
Map 2: showing position of Tibet