

Full Text of White Paper on Tibet's March Toward Modernization

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BEIJING, November 8 (Xinhuanet) -- The Information Office of the State Council issued a white paper on the Modernization Drive of Tibet.

The following is the full text of the white paper entitled "Tibet's March Toward Modernization":

Foreword

Modernization has been an important issue confronting countries and regions worldwide in modern times. Since the invasion of the Western powers in the mid-19th century, it has been the most important task of the people of all ethnic groups in China, the Tibetan people included, to get rid of poverty and backwardness, shake off the lot of being trampled upon, and build up

an independent, united, strong, democratic and civilized modern country. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and especially since the introduction of reform and opening to the outside world, the modernization drive in China has been burgeoning with each passing day, and achieved successes attracting worldwide attention. China is taking vigorous steps to open even wider and become more prosperous. China's Tibet, with its peaceful liberation in 1951 as the starting point, has carried out regional ethnic autonomy and made a historical leap in its social system following the Democratic Reform in 1959 and the elimination of the feudal serf system. Through carrying out socialist construction and the reform and opening-up, Tibet has made rapid progress in its modernization drive and got onto the track of development in step with the other parts of the country, revealing a bright future for its development.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet. Looking back on the course of modernization since its peaceful liberation, publicizing the achievements in modernization made by the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet through their hard work and with the support of the

Central Government and the whole nation, and revealing the law of development of Tibet's modernization—these will contribute not only to accelerating the healthy development of Tibet's modernization but also to clearing up various misunderstandings on the "Tibet issue" in the international community and promoting overall understanding of the past and present situations in

I. The Rapid Social Development in Tibet

Modernization has been the fundamental question in the social development of Tibet in modern times. The feudal serfdom under theocracy, which had lasted for several hundred years in Tibet, became an extremely decadent social system that contradicted the progressive trend in the modern world, for it stifled the development of the social productive forces of Tibet, seriously hindered social progress, relegated Tibet to the state of extreme poverty, backwardness, isolation and decline, to the point verging on total collapse.— Backward social system and harsh economic exploitation. The society of old Tibet under feudal serfdom was even more dark and backward than in Europe in the Middle Ages. The three major estate-holders—officials, nobles and upper-ranking monks in monasteries—accounted for less than five percent of Tibet's total population but owned all the farmland, pastures, forests, mountains and rivers, and the majority of the livestock. The serfs and slaves, accounting for more than 95 percent of the population, owned no land or other means of production. They had no personal freedom, had to depend totally on the manors of estate-holders for livelihood or act as their family slaves from generation to generation. They were subjected to the three-fold exploitation of corvee labor, taxes and high-interest loans and their lives were no more than struggles for existence. According to incomplete statistics, there were over 200 kinds of taxes levied by the Kasha (the former local government of Tibet) alone. Slaves had to contribute more than 50 percent or even 70 to 80 percent of their labor free to the Kasha and estate-holders, and over 60 percent of the farmers and herdsmen were burdened with similar high-interest loans.—Rigid hierarchy and savage political

oppression. The "13-Article Code" and "16-Article Code" of old Tibet divided the people into three classes and nine ranks, enshrining social and political inequality between the different ranks in law. These codes explicitly stated that the life of a person of the highest rank of the upper class was literally worth his weight in gold, while that of a person of the lowest rank of the lower class was worth only the price of a straw rope. Serfs could be sold, transferred, given away, mortgaged or exchanged by their owners, who had the power over their births, deaths and marriages. Male or female serfs belonging to different owners had to pay a "redemption fee" if they wished to marry, and their children were doomed to be serfs for life. Serf-owners could punish their serfs at will. The punishments included flogging, cutting off their hands or feet, gouging out their eyes, chopping off their ears or tongues, pulling out their tendons, drowning them and throwing them down from cliffs.—Theocracy and the fetters of religion. Religion and monasteries "commanded the highest respect" in old Tibet with its theocratic socio-political structure. As the sole ideology and an independent politico-economic entity, they enjoyed immense influence and numerous political and economic privileges and had control over people's spiritual life. The upper-class monks and priests were Tibet's principal political rulers and also the biggest serf-owners. The Dalai Lama, as one of the heads of the Gelug Sect of Tibetan Buddhism and concurrently the leader of the local government of Tibet, had all the political and religious powers in his hands. The former local government of Tibet practiced a dual clerical and secular officials system, in which the monk officials were senior to the lay officials. According to the 1959 statistics, of the 3.3 million kai (unit of measurement for area used by the Tibetan people, 1 kai=1/15 hectare) of cultivated land in Tibet, 1.2144 million kai were owned by monasteries and upper-class monks, accounting for 36.8 percent of the total cultivated land, while aristocrats and clerical and secular officials owned 24 percent and 38.9 percent, respectively. The Drepung Monastery owned 185 manors, 20,000 serfs, 300 pastures and 16,000 herdsmen. According to a survey conducted in the 1950s, Tibet had more than 2,700 temples and monasteries and 120,000 monks, or 12 percent of the total population in Tibet, and about one-fourth of the male population were monks. In 1952, Lhasa had an urban population of 37,000, of whom 16,000 were monks. The widespread temples, numerous monks and frequent religious activities consumed a huge amount of manpower and the greater part of material wealth in Tibet, greatly hindering the development of the productive forces there. According to the American Tibetologist Melvyn C. Goldstein, religion and the monasteries were "extremely conservative" and "played a major role in thwarting progress" in Tibet; "This commitment...to the universality of religion as the core metaphor of Tibetan national identity will be seen...to be a major factor underlying Tibet's inability to adapt to changing circumstances."

II. Low level of development and a precarious life.

Cruel oppression and exploitation by the feudal serf-owners, and especially the endless consumption of human and material resources by religion and monasteries under the theocratic system and their spiritual enslavement of the people, had gravely damped the laborers' enthusiasm for production, stifled the vitality of the Tibetan society and reduced Tibet to a protracted state of stagnancy. Even in the middle of the 20th century, Tibet was still extremely isolated and backward, almost without a trace of modern industry, commerce, science and technology, education, culture and health care; primitive farming methods were still being used; and herdsmen had to travel from place to place grazing their livestock. There were few strains and breeds of grains and animals, and some of them had even degenerated. Farm tools were primitive, grain yield was only 4 to 10 times the seeds sown, and the level of both the productive forces and social development was very low. Deaths from hunger and cold, poverty and diseases were commonplace among the serfs, and the streets in Lhasa, Xigaze, Qamdo and Nagqu were crowded with beggars of both sexes, young and old. Imperialist invasion brought more disasters for the Tibetan people, and deepened the social contradictions in Tibet, making it go from bad to worse. From the middle of the 19th century, China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, and Tibet, just like most other parts of the country, was invaded by the Western powers. In their invasions of Tibet British imperialists made no scruple about burning, killing and looting, secured many privileges through a number of unequal treaties, and carried out colonialist control and exploitation by wantonly

plundering Tibet's resources and dumping their goods on the Tibetan people. At the same time, they fostered their trusted followers from among the ruling class and groomed their agents, in an attempt to divide Tibet from China. Weighed down by the internal and external double oppression and exploitation, the masses of the serfs fared worse and worse, driving them constantly to present petitions to the government, flee from the land, refuse to pay rent or offer corvée service and even raise armed revolts. Danger lurked on every side in Tibet and "the theocratic system is declining like a lamp consuming its last drop of oil."² Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme, once a Kaloon (council minister) of the former local government of Tibet, pointed out in the 1940s several times that if Tibet "goes on like this, the serfs will all die in the near future, and the nobles will not be able to live either. The whole Tibet will be destroyed."³ So there was a historically imperative need for the progress of Tibetan society and the happiness of the Tibetan people to expel the imperialists and shake off the yoke of feudal serfdom. The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 brought hope for the deeply distressed Tibetan people. In conforming to the law of historical development and the interests of the Tibetan people, the Central People's Government worked actively to bring about Tibet's peaceful liberation. After that, important policies and measures were adopted for Tibet's Democratic Reform, regional autonomy, large-scale modernization and reform and opening-up. All this has contributed to changing the lot of Tibet and propelling Tibetan society forward in seven-league boots.—The peaceful liberation opened the way for Tibet to march toward modernization.

On May 23, 1951 the "Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" (hereinafter referred to as the "17-Article Agreement") was signed by the Central People's Government and the local government of Tibet, marking the realization of the peaceful liberation of Tibet and opening a new page for the development of the region. The peaceful liberation of Tibet, which was a part of China's national democratic revolution, enabled Tibet to shake off the penetration of imperialist forces and the political and economic shackles imposed by them, ended the discrimination and oppression against the Tibetan ethnic group in old China, safeguarded the national sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity of China, realized the unity of all ethnic groups in China and the internal unity of Tibet, and created the essential prerequisites for Tibet to join the other parts of the country in the drive for common progress and development. After the peaceful liberation, the People's Liberation Army and people from other parts of China working in Tibet persisted in carrying out the 17-Article Agreement and the policies of the Central Government, actively helped the Tibetan people build the Xikang-Tibet and Qinghai-Tibet highways, the Damxung Airport, water conservancy projects, modern factories, banks, trading companies, post offices, farms and schools. They adopted a series of measures to help the farmers and herdsmen expand production, started social relief and disaster relief programs, and provided free medical service for the prevention and treatment of epidemic and other diseases. All this has promoted the economic, social and cultural development of Tibet, created a new social atmosphere of modern civilization and progress, produced a far-reaching influence among people of all walks of life in Tibet, ended the long-term isolation and stagnation of the Tibetan society, paved the way for Tibet's march toward a modern society, and opened up wide prospects for Tibet's further development.—The Democratic Reform cleared the way for the modernization of Tibet. In 1951, when Tibet was liberated peacefully, in consideration of the special history and reality of Tibet the "17-Article Agreement" affirmed the necessity of reforming the social system of Tibet and, at the same

time, adopted a prudent attitude toward the reform. It stipulated that "the local government of Tibet shall carry out reform voluntarily, and, when the people demand a reform, shall settle it through consultation with the Tibetan leaders." However, some people in the Tibetan ruling group were totally opposed to reform and raised a hue and cry about their determination never to carry it out, in order to perpetuate the feudal serf system. Faced with

the Tibetan people's ever-stronger demand for a democratic reform, instead of following the popular will they ganged up with overseas anti-China forces and raised an armed rebellion on March 10, 1959, in an attempt to split Tibet from the motherland and seek "independence" for Tibet. In order to safeguard the unity of the nation and the basic interests of the Tibetan people, the Central People's Government took decisive measures to suppress the rebellion together with the Tibetan people, and carried out the

Democratic Reform of the Tibetan social system. The Democratic Reform abolished the feudal serf-owners' right to own land and the serfs and slaves' personal bondage to the feudal serf-owners, repealed the old Tibetan laws and barbarous punishments, and annulled the theocratic system and the feudal privileges of the clergy. The reform liberated Tibet's million serfs and slaves politically, economically and spiritually, making them masters of the land and other means of production, giving them personal and religious freedom, and realizing their human rights. The reform greatly liberated the social productive forces in Tibet, and opened up the road toward modernization. According to statistics, the former serfs and slaves got over 2.8 million kai of land in the Democratic Reform and, in 1960, when the Democratic Reform was basically completed, the total grain yield for the whole of Tibet was 12.6 percent higher than in 1959 and 17.7 percent higher than in 1958, before the Democratic Reform. Moreover, the total amount of livestock was 9.9 percent more than in 1959. The implementation of regional ethnic autonomy provided a firm institutional guarantee for the modernization of Tibet. After the Democratic Reform, the Tibetan people, like people of all other ethnic groups throughout China, enjoyed all the political rights provided by the Constitution and law. In 1961, a general election was held all over Tibet. For the first time, the former serfs and slaves were able to enjoy democratic rights as their own masters, and actively participated in the election of power organs and governments at all levels in the region. Many emancipated serfs and slaves took up leading posts at various levels in the region. In September 1965, the First People's Congress of Tibet was successfully convened, at which the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Regional People's Government was officially proclaimed. The founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region and the implementation of regional ethnic autonomy institutionally ensured the realization of the policy of equality, unity, mutual help and common prosperity among all ethnic groups in the region, and guaranteed the Tibetan people's right to equal participation in the administration of state affairs as well as the right to independent administration of local and ethnic affairs. In this way, an institutional guarantee was provided for Tibet to develop along with the other parts of China, with special support and assistance by the state and according to its local characteristics. The policy of reform and opening-up gave a powerful impetus to the modernization of Tibet. The 1980s witnessed a great upsurge of the reform, opening-up and modernization drive in Tibet, as in the other parts of China. To promote the development of Tibet, the Central Government formulated a series of special favorable policies, such as "long-term right to use and independently operate land by individual households" and "long-term policy of individual households' ownership, raising and management of livestock." These policies promoted the reform of the economic system and opening-up in Tibet. Since 1984, 43 projects have been launched in Tibet with state investment and aid from nine provinces and municipalities. The implementation of the policy of reform and opening-up and the state aid have strengthened and invigorated Tibetan industry, agriculture, animal husbandry and the tertiary industry with trade, catering and tourism as its mainstays, raised the overall level of industries and the level of commercialization of economic activities in Tibet, and helped Tibet take another step forward in its economic and social development. The modernization drive in Tibet has entered the new stage of rapid development with the strategic decision of the Central Government to accord special attention to Tibet and get all the other parts of China to aid Tibet. In 1994, the Central Government held the Third Forum on Work in Tibet, and set the guiding principles for work in the region in the new era as follows: Focusing efforts on economic construction, firmly grasping the two major tasks of developing the economy and stabilizing the situation, securing the high-speed development of the economy, overall social progress and lasting political stability in Tibet, and ensuring continuous improvement of the Tibetan people's living standards. At the forum, the Central Government also adopted the important decision to devote special attention to Tibet and get all the other parts of China to aid Tibet, and formulated a sequence of special favorable policies and measures for speeding up the development of Tibet. The forum formed a mechanism for all-round aid to the modernization of Tibet, by which the state would directly invest in construction projects in the region, the Central Government provide financial subsidies, and the other parts of the country provide counterpart aid. Since 1994, the Central Government has directly invested a total of 4.86 billion yuan in 62 projects; 15

provinces and municipalities and the various ministries and commissions under the State Council have also given aid gratis for the construction of 716 projects, contributing a total of 3.16 billion yuan; and over 1,900 cadres have been sent from all over the country to assist in Tibet's construction. As a result, the production and living conditions in Tibet have been greatly improved and its social and economic developments revved up. In the meantime, Tibet has promoted all-round reform in its economic and technological systems, adjusted its economic structure and mechanism of enterprise operation and management, set up a complete social security system, enlarged its scope of opening-up, and actively encouraged and attracted funds from both home and abroad for its economic construction. In this way, the economy with diverse forms of ownership has developed rapidly, and Tibet's inner vitality for growth has been strengthened. In June 2001, the Central Government held the Fourth Forum on Work in Tibet, at which it drew up an ambitious blueprint for Tibet's overall modernization in the new century, and decided to adopt more effective policies and measures to further strengthen the support for the modernization of Tibet. With attention from the Central Government, aid from the other parts of the country and the efforts of people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, the development of the region's economy has been speeded up, the people's living standards have been greatly improved, and the modernization drive is vibrant with life as never before. According to statistics, from 1994 to 2000, the gross domestic product (GDP) in Tibet increased by 130 percent, or a yearly increase of 12.4 percent, changing the situation in which Tibet had lagged behind the other parts of China in the GDP growth rate for a long time in the past. Urban residents' disposable income per capita and the farmers and herdsmen's income per capita increased by 62.9 percent and 93.6 percent, respectively; and the impoverished population decreased from 480,000 in the early 1990s to just over 70,000.

To sum up, the development history of Tibet in the past five decades since its peaceful liberation has been one of proceeding from darkness to brightness, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity and from isolation to openness, and of the region marching toward modernization as a part of the big family of China.

Tibet's Modernization Achievements In the past 50 years, thanks to the leadership of the Central Government, the aid of the whole nation and the unremitting efforts of the people of all ethnic groups in the region, Tibet has kept marching forward along the road to modernization and made significant achievements that have attracted worldwide attention.—The economy has progressed significantly. During the past 50 years, Tibet has witnessed tremendous changes in its economic system and economic structure and significant progress in its aggregate economic volume.

Having thoroughly eliminated the former closed, natural economy based on the manorial system, Tibet is fast on its way toward a modern market economy. In 2000, the region's GDP reached 11.746 billion yuan, twice as much as in 1995, four times as much as in 1990, and over 30 times as much as in the pre-peaceful liberation period. The economic structure is becoming more and more rational. The primary industry accounted for 30.9 percent in the GDP, as against 99 percent 50 years ago, and the proportions of the secondary and tertiary industries rose to 23.2 percent and 45.9 percent, respectively. Modern industry, having grown from nothing, has gradually become an important pillar of the rapid economic development in Tibet. So far, over 20 branches of the industry have been set up, including energy, light industry, textiles, machine building, lumbering, mining, building materials, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, printing and foodstuff processing. This modern industrial system with Tibetan characteristics has produced some nationally famous brand names, such as Lhasa Beer, Qizheng Tibetan Medicine and Zhufeng Motorcycles. By 2000, Tibet had 482 enterprises at and above the township level and the added value of its secondary industry reached 2.721 billion yuan. Basic industries, such as energy and transportation, have thrived. Power industry has developed rapidly, and a new energy system has been formed, with hydropower as the mainstay backed up by supplementary energy sources such as geothermal power, wind energy and solar energy. By

2000, there were 401 power plants in Tibet, with a total installed capacity of 356,200 kw and an annual energy output of 661 million kwh—a world of difference from before the peaceful liberation, when there was only one 125-kw power plant, which worked irregularly and supplied electricity only to a handful of aristocrats. Putting an end to the history of Tibet having not a single highway, a three-dimensional transportation system is now in place, with highway transportation as the major part, and air and pipeline transportation developing in coordination. A highway network now extends

in all directions with Lhasa as the center, including such trunk roads as the Qinghai-Tibet, Sichuan-Tibet, Xinjiang-Tibet, Yunnan-Tibet and China-Nepal highways and 15 main highways and 375 branch highways. These roads total 22,500 km, and reach every county and over 80 percent of the townships in the region. The two civil airports in Tibet, Gonggar

Airport in Lhasa and Bamda Airport in Qamdo, operate domestic and international routes from Lhasa to Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Xi'an, Xining, Shanghai, Deqen and Kunming in Yunnan Province, Hong Kong, and Kathmandu of Nepal. Meanwhile, a 1,080-km petroleum pipeline has been built from Golmud in Qinghai Province to Lhasa, the highest-altitude pipeline in the world. It carries over 80 percent of petroleum transported in the region. In June 2001, work started on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway, and the days when the region was inaccessible by rail will be gone for good in the foreseeable future.

The tertiary industry has become the largest industrial sector in Tibet. Such newly emerging industries as modern commerce, tourism, postal services, catering, entertainment and information technology, unknown in old Tibet, have grown by leaps and bounds. Telecommunications have developed particularly speedily, and an advanced modern telecommunications network covering the whole of Tibet has taken shape, with Lhasa as the center, and including cable and satellite transmission together with program-controlled switching systems, digital and mobile communications. In 2000, Tibet Telecom business totaled 384 million yuan-worth and its income was 123 million yuan, 179 times and 1,086 times the 1978 figures, respectively, and on average increasing by 26.6 percent and 24.3 percent respectively each year over the past 22 years. By the end of 2000, the total installed capacity of fixed telephones reached 170,200, and 111,100 telephones were installed. The total installed capacity of mobile telephones has reached 123,000, with 72,300 mobile telephone users. There are also nine Internet websites and 4,513 users. By 2000, the added value of the tertiary industry had reached 5.393 billion yuan, the highest among all the constituents of the region's GDP. The mode of production in agriculture and animal husbandry has changed radically, and the productive forces and production returns have risen by big margins. Since the peaceful liberation, the state has invested heavily in water conservancy works, and put great efforts into a number of capital construction projects for agriculture and animal husbandry, especially in the comprehensive development of the middle reaches of the Yarlungzangbo, Lhasa and Nyangqu rivers. These endeavors have greatly improved the agricultural and animal husbandry production conditions in Tibet, and are changing the Tibetan peasants and herdsman's traditional lifestyles of living at the

mercy of the elements. A series of agricultural and stockbreeding technologies have been spread widely, including scientific fertilization, improvement of breeds, pest control and stockraising. The mechanization of agriculture and production efficiency have both improved by a large margin, and farming and animal husbandry are advancing along the line

of modernization. By 2000, the added value of the primary industry in Tibet had reached 3.632 billion yuan, the total grain yield had reached 962,200 tons, the total amount of livestock had come to 22.66 million head, self-sufficiency in grains and edible oils had been basically realized, and the distribution of meat and milk per capita had risen above the national average.—The level of urbanization has constantly improved. With its natural economy old Tibet lacked the dynamics of urban development and had only a few small cities and towns. Lhasa, the most populous urban center, had a population of just over 30,000. Other places with comparatively large populations were big villages rather

than cities, each having only a few thousand residents. Even Lhasa lacked a sound urban operating mechanism of any sort and had scarcely any of the amenities of a proper city. At present, the urban scale of Tibet is expanding constantly together with industrial growth. By 2000, there were two organic cities in Tibet, 72 counties and districts and 112 organic towns. Moreover, the urban population totaled 491,100, and the total urban area was 147 sq m. The comprehensive functions of the cities and towns have improved steadily, and

complete systems have taken shape in various fields, such as roads, water supply, public security and community services, basically satisfying the needs of the lives of the urban residents and the economic development of the cities. Tibet is now marching toward modernization in urban appearance and environmental protection. Its urban environmental index now ranks first in the country with the per capita area of its urban public lawns reaching 10.27 sq m and a greenbelt coverage of 24.4 percent. Urban development groups radiating from Lhasa have come into existence in Tibet, while efforts are being made to form an economic pattern centered on cities and towns to promote economic development in neighboring areas and stimulate mutual development through the integration of urban and rural areas.

Remarkable achievements have been made in opening up. The policy of reform and opening-up has promoted the unprecedented development of Tibet's commerce, foreign trade and tourism, and strengthened its interrelations and cooperation with the inland areas and the rest of the world. The regional market system has taken initial shape, and is gradually being integrated into the market system of the whole country and even that of the world. A great number of farmers and herdsmen have become businessmen, throwing themselves into the mainstream of the market economy. Commodities from other parts of the country and the world are flowing into Tibet in a continuous stream to enrich both the urban and rural markets and the lives of the local people. A great quantity of Tibetan famous-brand products, and special local products and handicrafts have entered the domestic and international markets. The flourishing of commerce and trade has given a powerful impetus to the development of the farm and stockbreeding products processing industry and, as a result, agriculture and animal husbandry are going market-oriented. The state has formulated a series of preferential policies to encourage domestic and foreign enterprises to invest in enterprises in Tibet, and expand both domestic and international economic exchanges and cooperation. Tibet has attained the contractual value of US\$ 125 million in overseas investment over the past five years. By 2000, its total imports and exports had reached US\$ 130 million-worth, of which the total export value came to US\$ 113 million.

The "roof of the world" has become one of China's most popular tourist destinations, attracting numerous tourists from both home and abroad with its unique natural views and places of cultural interest. In 2000, Tibet received a total of 598,300 tourists from both home and abroad, of whom 148,900 were overseas tourists, earning a direct income of 780 million yuan, and an indirect income of 2.98 billion yuan, accounting for 6.6 percent and 25.38 percent of the region's GDP, respectively.

Environmental and economic development has progressed in coordination.

Large-scale development and construction will be certain to bring enormous pressure to bear on the fragile ecological environment of Tibet. Since the initiation of the policy of reform and opening-up, the Central Government and the local government of Tibet have consistently adhered to the strategy of sustainable development, simultaneously planning and implementing environmental protection and economic construction as an integral whole, to guarantee that the demonstration, design, construction and operation of engineering projects would give full consideration to eco-environmental protection to promote coordinated environmental and economic development. The "Regulations on Environmental Protection" and the "Regulations on the Administration of Geological and Mineral Resources" have been formulated and implemented in Tibet, to form a complete system together with such state laws as the "Agrarian Management Law," "Water Law," "Law on Water and Soil Conservation," "Grassland Law" and "Law on the Protection of Wildlife." Now, with the introduction of an effective supervision and management system for environmental protection and pollution control, most of the forests, rivers, lakes, pastures, wetlands, glaciers, snow mountains and wild animals and plants in the region are well protected, and the water, air and environmental quality is excellent. Eighteen nature reserves at the national and provincial levels have been established, including those in Changtang, Mount Qomolangma and the Yarlungzangbo Grand Canyon, whose combined area accounts for half of the total area of China's nature reserves, playing an important role in the protection and improvement of the fragile plateau eco-environment. Over the past few years, Tibet has invested over 50 million yuan in the control of waste water and gas at enterprises and

institutions such as the Lhasa Brewery, Yangbajain Power Plant, Lhasa Leather Plant, People's Hospital of the Autonomous Region and Lhasa Cement Plant, effectively improving the urban environment and the quality of the region's water.

Since 1991, Tibet has invested a total of 900 million yuan in carrying out the development projects in the areas of the Yarlungzangbo, Lhasa and Nyangqu rivers, playing an active role in the prevention and control of soil erosion and the halting of desertification through the construction of water conservancy works, the improvement of pastures, the amelioration of medium- and low-yield fields, and large-scale afforestation, achieving remarkable comprehensive benefits for coordinated social, economic and environmental development. According to the environmental evaluation indices, Tibet's ecology, which basically remains in its primordial condition, is the best in China in terms of environmental conditions. With the implementation of the state's strategy of large-scale development of the western region and the carrying out of the essential points of the Fourth Forum of the Central Government on Work in Tibet, the region is strengthening its eco-environmental protection and planning to invest 22.7 billion yuan and launch 160 key projects for ecological protection by the mid-21st century to further protect and improve its ecological environment. Rapid progress has been made in education, science and technology, and medical and health care. In old Tibet there was not a single school in the modern sense, and education was monopolized by monasteries. The enrollment ratio of school-age children was less than two percent, and the illiteracy rate of the young and middle-aged people reached 95 percent. But now, education has been widely popularized, and the broad masses of the people enjoy the right to receive education. The state has invested enormously in developing education, and a complete education system is now in place, covering regular education, preschool education, adult education, vocational education and special education. By 2000, Tibet had set up 956 schools of all kinds, with a total enrollment of 381,100 students; the enrollment ratio of school-age children had increased to 85.8 percent; the illiteracy rate had declined to 32.5 percent; and 33,000 persons had received education above the junior college level, accounting for 12.6 per thousand of the region's total population and higher than the average national level. Now Tibet not only boasts its own master's and doctorate degree holders, but also a number of nationally renowned experts and scholars.

Growing out of nothing, modern science and technology have been developing rapidly. There was no modern scientific research institute in Tibet before its peaceful liberation, and even such applied technology as astronomy and calendrical calculation were monopolized by the monasteries behind a mysterious religious facade. Attaching great importance to scientific research and the popularization and application of science and technology, the Central Government and the local government of Tibet have set up 25 scientific research institutes over the past half century, employing 35,000 professional scientific and technical personnel in disciplines such as history, economics, population, linguistics and religion, and dozens of sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, ecology, biology, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, salt lakes, geothermal and solar energy, among which studies in Tibetology, plateau ecology, Tibetan medicine and pharmacology take the lead in the country. Besides, a number of academic achievements made in Tibet are of worldwide influence. Enditem

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Medical and health care has grown vigorously. In the old days, when traditional Tibetan medicine was monopolized by feudal nobles and monasteries, the region was extremely short of doctors and medicine, and most sick people lacked both money for medical care and access to doctors.

Now a medical and health network has been established in Tibet, integrated with traditional Chinese, Western and Tibetan medicines, covering all the cities and villages in the region, with Lhasa as the center. Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, with unique ethnic

features, are promoted all over China and abroad. By 2000, the medical and health organizations in the region had increased to 1,237, with 6,348 beds and 8,948 professionals. The numbers of hospital beds and health workers available per thousand people in Tibet exceeded the national average level. At present, the cooperative medical service program covers 80 percent of the Tibetan rural areas, and 97 percent of children have been immunized against epidemic diseases. There is no longer any lack of medicine, and the level of the Tibetan people's health has improved substantially. The incidence of various infectious and endemic diseases prevalent in old Tibet, such as smallpox, cholera, venereal diseases, macula, typhoid fever, scarlet fever and tetanus, has declined to eight per thousand, and some of the diseases have been wiped out. The childbirth mortality rate has dropped from 50 per thousand in 1959 to approximately seven per thousand; and the infant mortality rate, from 430 to 6.61 per thousand. The average life expectancy of the people has increased from 35.5 years in the 1950s to the present 67 years. The population of old Tibet had increased rather slowly; over the 200-odd years before the 1950s, it had fluctuated at around one million. (According to the census of the Qing Dynasty government from 1734 to 1736, Tibet had a population of 941,200, and the population reported by the Tibetan local government headed by the Dalai Lama in 1953 was one million, an increase of only 58,000 in 200 years.) However, over the 40-odd years since the Democratic Reform, Tibet's population had increased to 2.5983 million by 2000, or an increase of more than 160 percent. Considerable achievements have been made in sports. A number of sports facilities up to the international standards have been built in Tibet, and traditional Tibetan sports have been revived, standardized and popularized, some of them even having been included in national competitions. Some excellent athletes from Tibet have scored outstanding achievements in various national sports games and competitions, and in mountain climbing in particular Tibetans have always taken the lead in the country. In 1999, the Sixth National Ethnic Games were held jointly by Tibet and Beijing, further improving the level of Tibetan sports.—The fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture have been explored, protected and developed.

The state has invested a huge amount of capital, gold and silver in the maintenance and protection of the key historical monuments in Tibet. The Potala Palace and Jokhang Temple have been included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List. The collation of the Tibetan-language Tripitaka (Gangyur and Tengyur) has been completed. Known as an "encyclopedia" of ancient Tibet, the Bonist Tripitaka has been sorted out in a systematic way and published in its entirety. The Life of King Gesar, which had been handed down orally for centuries, has reached the grand total of more than 200 volumes. Thanks to the great support of the state and unremitting efforts in the past few decades, more than 300 handwritten and block-printed copies of this "Homeric epic of the East" have been collected, of which more than 70 volumes have been published in the Tibetan language, over 20 volumes in the Chinese language, and several volumes in English, Japanese and French. Folk songs, dances, dramas, tales and other forms of artistic expression have been refined and imbued with new ideas and higher forms of expression for enjoyment by the general public. The state has invested in the construction of a large number of cultural and recreational facilities with complete functions and advanced facilities in Tibet, such as museums, libraries, exhibition halls and cinemas, in sharp contrast to the old days when Tibet almost had no cultural and recreational facilities to speak of. By 2000, the Tibet Autonomous Region had more than 400 public cultural centers, more than 25 professional theatrical troupes of various kinds, such as the Song and Dance Ensemble, Tibetan Opera Troupe and Modern Drama Troupe of the Tibet Autonomous Region, more than 160 amateur performance troupes, and 17 itinerant performance troupes at the county level. They can meet the demands of the broad masses of the people for cultural entertainment.—Tibet's characteristics and traditions have been respected and carried on in a scientific way.

The Tibet Autonomous Region has the right to decide its local affairs and work out relevant laws and regulations in accordance with the law and local political, economic and cultural characteristics, as well as the right to flexibly implement or cease to implement relevant decisions of the state organs at the higher levels, upon approval by the higher authorities. Since 1965, the Regional People's Congress and its Standing Committee have formulated and promulgated more than 160 local laws and regulations, involving the building of political power, economic development, culture and education, spoken and written language, protection of cultural relics, protection of wildlife and natural resources and other aspects, thus effectively safeguarding the special rights and interests of the Tibetan people. For instance, the power and administrative organs of the Tibet Autonomous Region have designated the Tibetan New Year, Shoton (Yogurt) Festival and other traditional Tibetan festivals as the region's official holidays, apart from the official national holidays. Out of consideration for the special natural and geographical factors of Tibet, the region has fixed the work week at 35 hours, five hours fewer than the national work hours per week. The Tibetan people's freedom of religious belief and their traditional customs and habits have been respected and protected. According to statistics, since the 1980s the state has allocated more than 300 million yuan and a large amount of gold, silver and other materials for the maintenance and protection of the monasteries in Tibet. For instance, the state allocated more than 55 million yuan for the repair of the Potala Palace, and the renovation lasted more than five years, being the largest project and involving the largest amount of capital in the maintenance history of the palace in the past few centuries. At present, Tibet has 1,787 monasteries and sites for religious activities, and over 46,000 resident monks and nuns; the region's various important religious festivals and activities are held normally; and every year more than one million Tibetan people go to Lhasa to pay homage. While maintaining the traditional Tibetan ways and styles of costume, diet and housing, the Tibetan people have absorbed many new modern civilized customs in the aspects of clothing, food, housing and transportation, as well as marriage and funerals, thus greatly enriching their lives. The Tibetan people's freedom to study, use and develop their own spoken and written language is fully protected. The government has established the special Tibetan Language Work Guidance Committee and editing and translation organs so as to promote the study, use and development of the Tibetan language. The Tibetan language is a major course of study for schools at all levels in Tibet. Tibetan textbooks and reference materials have been compiled, translated and published for all courses at all levels of schools from primary to senior high. Tibet University has compiled 19 varieties of teaching materials in the Tibetan language, which have already been used on a trial basis. The laws and regulations, resolutions, announcements and other official documents issued by the Regional People's Congress and the Regional People's Government, and the name plates and signs of public institutions and sites are written in both the Tibetan and Chinese languages. The courts and procuratorates at all levels handle cases and issue legal documents in the Tibetan language with regard to the Tibetan litigants and other participants. Newspapers, and radio and TV stations use both the Tibetan and Chinese languages. The Tibet People's Radio Station broadcasts Tibetan-language items 20.5 hours a day, making up 50 percent of the station's total broadcasting hours and amount. The Tibet TV Station releases 12 hours of programs in the Tibetan language every day, and the channels in the Tibetan language were formally relayed via satellite in 1999. Now Tibet has 23 Tibetan-language newspapers and magazines, and the Tibet Daily has installed computer editing and typesetting in the Tibetan language. Great progress has been made in the standardization of information technology in the Tibetan language. The Tibetan code has been brought up to the national and international standards, becoming the first minority written language in China to reach the international standards.—The people's quality of life has greatly improved.

Social and economic development has improved the people's material and cultural life remarkably. In 2000, people of all ethnic groups in Tibet had basically shaken off poverty, and had enough to eat and wear; and some people were living a fairly comfortable life. Along with the improvement of the people's livelihood,

diversified consumption patterns have appeared, and such consumer goods as refrigerators, color TV sets, washing machines, motorcycles and wristwatches have entered ordinary families. Many farmers and herdsmen have become well-off and have built new houses; some have even bought automobiles. Currently, Tibet ranks first in per capita housing in the country. Radio, television, telecommunications, the Internet and other modern information transmission means, which are at the same levels of the country and the rest of the world, are now parts of the Tibetans' daily life. By 2000, the coverage of radio stations had reached 77.7 percent of the population in Tibet, and that of TV stations, 76.1 percent. News about the rest of the country and other parts of the world reach most people in Tibet by means of radio and TV, and they can obtain information from and make contact with other parts of the country and the rest of the world through telephone, telegram, fax or the Internet at any time. The people's political status has been constantly raised, and their participation in political affairs is becoming more extensive with each passing day. Like the people of other ethnic groups in China, the Tibetan people have the right to vote and stand for election, and extensively participate in the administration of state and local affairs according to law. Of the deputies to the National People's Congress, 19 are from Tibet, of whom over 80 percent are of the Tibetan ethnic group or other ethnic minorities. Of the deputies to the people's congresses at the regional, county and township levels, those from the Tibetan ethnic group and other ethnic minorities make up 82.4 percent, 92.62 percent and 99 percent, respectively. The main leading posts of the people's congresses, governments, political consultative conferences, and courts and procuratorates at all levels in the region are filled by Tibetan citizens, and Tibetan cadres also hold leading posts in all the state organs at the central level. Of the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Tibetans and people of other ethnic minorities make up 71.4 percent; of the members of the Standing Committee of the Regional People's Congress, 80 percent; and of the chairman and vice-chairmen of the Regional People's Government, 77.8 percent; of the total cadres in Tibet, 79.4 percent; and of all the technical personnel in Tibet, 69.36 percent. Tibet is still an underdeveloped area in China, because it is located on the "roof of the world," which is frigid, lacks oxygen and has bad natural conditions. Another reason is that Tibet had very little to start with and its social and historical conditions were burdened with the legacy of centuries of backward feudal serfdom. Tibet's economy is small; its development level is low; agriculture, animal husbandry and the ecological environment are fragile; the infrastructure facilities are weak; and science and technology and education are backward. In addition, Tibet lacks the ability for self-accumulation and development, and its modernization level lags far behind that of the southeastern coastal areas of China. But it is beyond doubt that the development of Tibet in the past half century has greatly changed its former poor and backward features, and laid a solid foundation for realizing a leapfrog development in its modernization drive.

III. The Historical Inevitability of Tibet's Modernization

Fifty years is a short period in the long process of human history. However, in the past 50 years Tibet, an ancient and mysterious land, has undergone tremendous changes far beyond comparison with those in any other era. Tibet has bidden farewell to the poor, backward, isolated and stagnant feudal serf society, and is forging ahead toward a modern people's democratic society featuring constant progress, civilization and opening-up, and its modernization drive has won world-renowned achievements. First, the situation in which a small number of feudal serf-owners monopolized Tibet's political power and material and cultural resources has been thoroughly changed, and all the people in Tibet have become masters administering Tibetan society, and the creators and beneficiaries of the society's material and cultural wealth. As a result, the people's status and quality have greatly improved. Second, the isolated, stagnant and declining old Tibetan society has been thoroughly smashed; economic development has advanced by leaps and bounds; people's material and cultural life has greatly improved; the modernization drive has developed in an unprecedented way; and an overall-progress situation has appeared in the constant reform and opening-up. Third, Tibet has thoroughly abolished ethnic oppression and discrimination and cleaned up the filth and mire left over from the old Tibetan society; Tibet's ethnic

characteristics and the fine aspects of its traditional culture have won full respect and protection under the regional ethnic autonomy system; with the progress of the modernization drive, they have been imbued with the current contents that reflect the people's new life and the new requirements of social progress, and have thus been carried forward in a process of scientific inheritance.

The development in the past 50 years has demonstrated the historical inevitability of Tibet's march toward modernization, and revealed the objective law of Tibet's modernization.—Tibet's march toward modernization conforms to the world historical trend and the law of development of human society, and embodies the internal demands of Tibet's social development and the fundamental interests and wishes of the Tibetan people.

Realizing modernization has been a common issue facing all countries and regions in the world in modern times, as well as a natural historical

course when human society is changing from an underdeveloped state to a developed one, from ignorance and backwardness to civilization and progress, from relatively independent development in a closed society to high-speed development in an all-round way in opening-up, cooperation and competition. At the very beginning, modernization appeared following

the rise and expansion of the capitalist countries in the West. For a considerable length of time, the big powers in the West monopolized the fruits of modernization and used them in the invasion and colonial rule in the Third World countries. With the rise of the decolonization movement in the 20th century, getting rid of poverty and backwardness and realizing modernization became the road that the Third World countries had to take to realize their complete independence and the invigoration of their nations. Historical development has proved that the modernization tide is enormous and powerful, that those who go with it will prosper while those who go against it will perish. Tibet's productive forces, mode of production and social and political systems in the modern era were in the extremely backward state of the Middle Ages, and came near the verge of collapse after Tibet was subject to imperialist invasion and control. Ending imperialist invasion and control, reforming the backward social and political systems and mode of production and realizing modernization have historically become the only way out and the most urgent question for social progress in Tibet.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Tibet, through the peaceful liberation, Democratic Reform, socialist construction, and reform and opening-up, has broken away from the clutches of imperialism, entered the modern society of people's democracy from the feudal serf society that lagged far behind the times, realized high-speed economic development and all-round social development, and headed toward modernization step by step. All these comply with the world tide of modernization and the law of development of human society, and embody the demand for social progress in Tibet and the fundamental aspiration of the Tibetan people.—Tibet's modernization is an inseparable part of China's modernization drive, and the inevitable demand from the people of all ethnic groups in China to realize common prosperity and the Chinese nation to realize great rejuvenation. In the centuries-long course of historical development, our 56 ethnic groups, including the Tibetan ethnic group, have jointly developed China's territory, and formed the big family of the Chinese nation, in which all the ethnic groups share weal and woe, and are inseparable from each other. As an integral part of Chinese territory, Tibet has always gone through thick and thin together with the motherland for common development. Tibet's progress and development are closely related to those of the motherland, and the motherland's destiny directly affects Tibet's future. In modern times, China was reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society; Chinese territory, including Tibet, was subject to invasion and devastation by the big powers of the West; and China was confronted with the fate of being carved up and dismembered because of its weak national strength and the corruption and incompetence of feudal autocracy. Along with the victory of the national democratic revolution in China and the founding of the People's Republic of China, Tibet realized peaceful liberation, drove away the imperialist forces, took the course of modernization, threw off the heavy shackles of feudal serfdom through the Democratic Reform, and smoothed the road to modernization. As Tibet is a relatively backward area, its development has always been the concern of the

Central Government and the people of all ethnic groups in China. In the past 50 years, the state has paid special attention to the social and economic development of Tibet. It has given a powerful impetus to Tibet's modernization by granting it special preferential policies in terms of finance, tax revenue, banking and other aspects, offering energetic support in capital, technology and human resources, investing an accumulative total of close to 50 billion yuan, sending a large amount of materials and dispatching a large number of cadres and technical personnel to help Tibet. We may well say that Tibet's progress and development in the past 50 years has been achieved under the correct leadership of the three generations of leading collectives of the central authorities, with Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin at the core in different periods. This has been inseparable from the unification and development of the motherland and the selfless support of the whole nation; it is also a vivid embodiment of the new ethnic relations of equality, unity, mutual help and common development among all ethnic groups in China.

History has proved that Tibet's modernization cannot be separated from that of the motherland, and the motherland's modernization cannot be realized without that of Tibet. Without Tibet's modernization, the motherland's modernization would be incomplete and incomprehensive. Without the independence and prosperity of the motherland, Tibetan society would not have new life and development. Only when Tibet's modernization drive is merged with the motherland's modernization and wins the support and help of the people throughout the country, can Tibet tightly grasp the historical opportunities, realize speedy development, and achieve constant progress and prosperity. The vigorous development of the motherland's modernization is powerful backing for Tibet's modernization. The correct leadership and sturdy support of the Central Government and the selfless support of the people of all ethnic groups in China are the powerful guarantee and necessary conditions for the speedy and healthy development of Tibet's modernization drive.

The modernization drive of Tibet is the common cause of the people of all the ethnic groups there. The focus must be put on man, so as to promote the all-round social progress and sustainable development. The course of Tibet's development over the past 50 years has been a process of continuous human emancipation and advance, as well as the all-round progress of society and the harmonious development of modernization and the environment. The people of all ethnic groups in Tibet have always been the mainstay and basic motive power behind the region's modernization drive, and also the beneficiaries of the results of its development. Tibet's peaceful liberation and the Democratic Reform emancipated the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet from imperialist invasion and the inhuman bonds of the feudal serfdom, making them masters of the nation and the Tibetan society. They showed enormous enthusiasm and exerted all their strength, and became the principal force propelling Tibet's modernization. With the sense of responsibility as the masters of their society, they took an active part in the great cause of building a new Tibet and a new life. They struggled in concert, advanced with a pioneering spirit, laid the first stone for the construction with arduous efforts, and upheld the principle that economic construction and social progress should be undertaken simultaneously, and the economy and environment developed harmoniously. In this way, they gave a mighty thrust to the modernization process of Tibet. The achievements attained in the 50 years of Tibet's modernization drive have fully demonstrated the success of the struggle of the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet and embodied the enormous strength of the Tibetan people. Experience has shown that the concerted struggle of the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet is the dynamo propelling the region's modernization drive. Only by maximizing the zeal, initiative and creativity of the people in Tibet and channeling the concern of the Central Government and the support of other parts of the country into Tibet's own advantages for development can miracles be created in Tibet's modernization drive. Moreover, only by proceeding from the fundamental interests and needs of the Tibetan people and adhering to the sustainable

development strategy can Tibet's modernization drive develop quickly and soundly.—As Tibet's modernization drive is unfolding in the unique area of Tibet, it must proceed from Tibet's actual conditions and take the road with Tibet's local characteristics. Located on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Tibet is completely different from other regions in geographic

environment, natural conditions, historical development, ethnic composition, religious beliefs, cultural traditions, lifestyle and customs. The region's modernization drive must proceed from the actual conditions of Tibet and take into account Tibet's history and reality.

Its primary aim should be to spur the development of Tibet's productive forces and social progress, as well as the development and welfare of the people of Tibet. The adverse natural conditions, backward social and economic basis and the complicated background of

Tibet's historical development in modern times dictate that Tibet must take modernization as the key link and realize rapid development with special support and help from the Central

Government and the rest of the country. In addition, to realize the sustainable, all-round and harmonious development of society and the economy, Tibet must correctly handle the relations between reform, development and stability, utilize natural resources rationally and

protect the ecological environment. For historical reasons, most of the Tibetans in the region are religious believers and religious influences have permeated Tibetan culture, art,

social customs and daily life. How to correctly handle the ethnic and religious problems is a long-standing issue of great importance in Tibet's modernization drive. The 50-year development of Tibet shows that accelerating modernization is where the basic interests of the people in Tibet lie, and also the key to the realization of ethnic equality and common development. It is an important guarantee for the sound development of Tibet's modernization drive to uphold the system of regional ethnic autonomy, ensure in practice

that the people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, especially the Tibetan people, exercise the right of self-government in administering local affairs according to law, and completely respect their culture and traditions, customs and habits, spoken and written language, and religious beliefs.

Only by observing the following principles can a modernization road with Tibetan local and ethnic characteristics be opened up: Focusing on economic construction; upholding the policies of reform and opening-up; combining the protection of the freedom of religious belief with separation of religion from politics; actively guiding religion to gear to the needs of modernization and social progress; and maintaining and promoting Tibet's ethnic characteristics while energetically developing modern industries, science, education and culture, and propelling the modernization of Tibet's traditional industries and culture.—The modernization drive of Tibet has been forging ahead consistently during the protracted struggle against the Dalai Lama clique and international hostile forces. As the question of Tibet's modernization emerged against a complicated historical background, it was inevitable that the modernization in Tibet was connected with international struggles.

Over a long period of time, between the Dalai Lama clique and international hostile forces on the one hand and the Chinese Government and people on the other, there have been struggles on the "Tibet issue," with the former trying to split Tibet from the rest

of China and halt its modernization, and the latter trying to maintain the unity of the country and promote Tibet's modernization. In modern times, a handful of the political and religious rulers in Tibet, in order to safeguard the vested interests of the serf-owner class and the crumbling feudal serfdom, tried by hook or by crook to hinder the modernization of Tibetan society, and even went so far as to collaborate with the imperialist aggressor forces to unleash the "Tibet independence" campaign, in an attempt to split the country and prevent the peaceful liberation of Tibet. After Tibet's peaceful liberation, the Dalai Lama clique, regardless of the patient forbearance of the Central Government and the strong demand of the Tibetan people, spared no efforts to try to check the Democratic Reform and modernization drive, and, with the support of international hostile forces, stirred up an armed rebellion for the purpose of splitting the motherland. When the rebellion had failed and the Dalai Lama clique fled abroad, it even did not scruple to collude with the

international anti-China forces to constantly whip up world opinion, wantonly conduct activities aimed at splitting China, slander Tibet's achievements in economic construction and social progress, and by every means hinder

and sabotage the modernization of Tibetan society. The Dalai Lama clique and international hostile forces slandered the peaceful liberation of Tibet and the expulsion of the imperialist forces from Tibet as "China's occupation of Tibet"; denigrated the Central Government's efforts to propel Tibet's modernization as the "elimination of Tibet's ethnic characteristics"; misrepresented the rapid growth of Tibet's economy as "destruction of Tibet's environment"; vilified the concern and support of the Central Government and the whole nation for the modernization of Tibet as "plundering Tibet's resources," "intensifying control over Tibet" and "Han-Chinese assimilation of Tibet"; calumniated the abolition of theocracy and the secular privileges of the clergy and monasteries as "extinguishing religion"; distorted the promotion of traditional Tibetan culture in the new era and the unprecedented development of modern science, education and culture in Tibet as "extirpation of Tibetan culture," and so on and so forth. In a word, whatever was beneficial to Tibet's modernization and social progress and the happiness of the Tibetan people, they willfully misrepresented and left no stone unturned to oppose. This fully reveals the reactionary nature of the Dalai Lama clique, which represents the backward relations of production of feudal serfdom, the retrogressive religious culture of the theocratic system, and the interests of the dying privileged few of the feudal serf-owner class. Besides, it fully exposes the sinister mentality of some hostile foreign forces in their vain attempt to utilize the "Tibet issue" to sabotage the stability of China, split China's territory, and prevent China from developing and prospering. Facts speak louder than words, and people have a sense of natural justice. It is universally acknowledged that Tibet is a part of China's territory, and the progress made by the Tibetan community is there for all to see. China has conformed to the trend of the times and followed the wishes of the people in its efforts to promote the modernization of Tibet and combat the Dalai Lama clique's separatist activities. It is only right and proper to do so. The history of 50 years since the peaceful liberation of Tibet shows that the trend of the times cannot be checked, and the tide of history is irreversible. Tibet's modernization and social progress are part of the general trend and popular feeling. Any lie will certainly be revealed by the objective facts of Tibet's development; any perverse acts to turn the clock back, prevent Tibet's modernization drive and separate Tibet from China are doomed to ignominious failure. Human society has ushered in a new century, and peace and development are the two major themes in the world today. China has embarked upon the new development stage of building, in a comprehensive way, a society in which people enjoy a fairly comfortable life, and of accelerating the reform and opening-up and modernization—a stage in which the strategy of large-scale development of the western region, as a part of the third-step development strategy of China's modernization drive, is being carried out in an all-round way. With a view to national development and the actual conditions in Tibet, the Fourth Forum on Work in Tibet convened by the Central Government set the strategic objectives for promoting Tibet's modernization in the new century, from simply speeding it up to ensuring a leap forward. The forum also determined to further intensify support for Tibet's development. In this regard, during the Tenth Five-Year Plan period (2001-2005) the Central Government and various parts of the country are to invest 32.2 billion yuan to assist Tibet in constructing 187 projects, and the Central Government is to subsidize Tibet to the tune of 37.9 billion yuan. In addition, other special preferential policies and measures are to be formulated. All this has created new and favorable conditions and rare opportunities for Tibet's modernization drive. It can be confidently asserted that, on the solid foundation laid over the last 50 years and with energetic support and help from the Central Government and people all over the country, Tibet will ultimately realize vigorous development in the process of its modernization drive through arduous efforts, and witness a still more brilliant and splendid future.

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