

Proceedings of the 2nd World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet 26-28 March, 1995, Vilnius, Lithuania

Introduction

In March 1994 the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet, under the stewardship of Mr. George Fernandes and Mr. Mohan Singh, organised the first World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet in New Delhi. Parliamentarians from 25 countries participated in the convention and adopted a ten-point action plan and one of the strongest ever resolutions in support of the Tibetan cause.

At the time, the Lithuanian parliamentary group for Tibet, headed by Dr. Liama Andrikiene, offered to organise the second convention in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. And in May 1995 we had over 80 parliamentarians from 21 countries converging on this great Baltic capital for the Second World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet. For three days, from 26-28 May, the parliamentarians discussed the plight of Tibet and chalked out a plan for co-ordinating international efforts in support of the Tibetan people's non-violent struggle to regain their freedom.

Re-affirming its support for the New Delhi Statement on Tibetan Freedom and the Action Plan for Tibet, the resolution passed by this convention called on "governments of other states to support by all effective means possible the efforts of the Tibetan people and their legitimate representatives, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile".

In this document, we have put together the proceedings of the Second World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet. While efforts have been made to include the complete proceedings, we were forced to leave out some statement as they could not be transcribed due to poor recording quality.

We hope the contents of this document will serve as a useful reference material to all those interested in Tibet and its freedom struggle.

In conclusion, I would like to express the heartfelt appreciation of the Tibetan people to Mr. Liama Andrikiene and her colleagues for their unstinted efforts in bringing together the Second World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet, which has contributed immensely to the deepening understanding of the issue of Tibet and generating greater support among parliamentarians around the world.

Samdhong Rinpoche
Chairman
Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies
Dharamsala
India

Inaugural Session

Dr. Laima Andrikiene, M.P., Lithuania: Good day to all of you who have come here to the Second World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet.

On behalf of the organising committee, I welcome all of you to Vilnius, especially those who have come from foreign countries, particularly those whose have travelled a long distance – from New Zealand, Japan, etc. – to be with us today.

We are expecting Indian parliamentarians and we are delighted that representatives of the United States Senate and Congress are with us. And we welcome all of you who came from the European countries. We hope that this convention will be very fruitful.

To open the convention officially, I invite our priest, the Reverend Grigas, to the floor for the convocation for suffering nations.

Reverend Alfonsas Grigas: I have been invited here as a Catholic priest in a Christian country to start the convention with a prayer. This is not very usual in our secularized century. But there are enough reasons for this. This convention seeks to defend the right to existence of physically small nations and a convention like this is attended by people who uphold the principle of the right to existence, no matter what religion we practice, Buddhism, Islamism or any other.

God knows that the situation in Lithuania at one time was very similar to that of Tibet. We had to fight for our right to be a creative and useful nation. I do not think we will change if we prosper. But I pray that our nation always understands those who suffer and those who are persecuted.

We live in a world, which is quite cynical as the fate of the Tibetan people or the Chechen people shows. We pray that God gives us love and strength so that our consolidated efforts change the world. We pray that God gives us enough wisdom and strength in order to enable us to fight for people who are suffering, so that the persecution of a people is never considered the internal affairs of a particular country.

Amen! Also, I invite the participants of the convention to stand up and pay respects to those Tibetans who suffered and those who were killed after the occupation of Tibet by China. Thank you.

Dr. Andrikiene: To Continue our official opening, I would like to welcome those who are gathered here, particularly the representatives of Tibet who are present in this convention: Minister of the Tibetan Government –in-Exile, Mr. Tashi Wangdi; Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, Mr. Tempa Tsering; Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Central Europe and the Baltic States. We are delighted that we shall be able to be with you all these days.

I would like to inform all of you that the Chairman of the Tibetan Parliament, Professor Rinpoche, is coming tomorrow. Even if there was a design to prevent Rinpoche from coming here, I hope this design fails and from tomorrow onwards Professor Rinpoche will be working with us at the convention.

I would also like to inform you that although parliamentarians from some countries could not come due to various circumstances, we have received quite a number of appeals and statements of support from parliamentarians, organizations and individual from various countries.

Please allow me to read some of these:

Joint message of the Presidents of the Parliamentary Study Group on the Question of Tibet of the National Assembly of the French Republic and the Parliamentary Friendship Association for Tibet of the Senate of the French Republic:

We wish to convey our regrets for not being able to be with you to show the support of the French parliamentarians for the cause of Tibet and the Tibetan people.

On behalf of the 157 Deputies and 32 Senators, who are members of the National Assembly and Senate support organizations, we join you to salute the courage of the Tibetan men and women who sacrificed everything for the principles of non-violence, for their country, for their religion and culture. Their example demands our support and encouragement in defence of their survival.

At this time, it is very important to ensure that Tibetan women have access to the United Nations World Conference on Women, which will take place in Beijing in September, and that they be not excluded.

Our relations with China are important, but it should not be normalized at the expense of the principles of freedom and fundamental rights which are enshrined in our constitution.

We fully support His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan, presented to the U.S. Congress in 1987 and to the European Parliament in 1988. We call on our parliamentary colleagues to intensify our co-operation to more efficiently support the Tibetan people's rights.

Long live the right of Tibet to self-determination!

(This letter is dated 24 May 1995 and signed by Deputy Loise de Broissia, President of the Tibetan Parliamentary Study Group on the Question of Tibet; and Senator Jacques Golliet, President of the Parliamentary Friendship Association for Tibet.)

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, United Kingdom

As Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet in the House of Commons, I send my apologies for my absence at this very important conference and also my best wishes for its success.

Tibet continues to suffer destruction of her culture and her people are living under oppression – we must continue the struggle for self-determination in which the international community must play its full part.

I also hope your discussions are fruitful and that through this event the plight of Tibet and its people is given the attention it so rightly deserves.

(This letter is dated 25 May 1995 and signed by George Stevenson, M.P.)

Dr. Andrikiene: I would like to add that Lord Ennals wished to come to Lithuania. But his ill-health prevented him from coming here. But his ill-health prevented him from coming here. If you agree with me, we can send him a letter-our best wishes and hope that next time his health will not prevent him from being with us.

I would like to remind you briefly why this convention is taking place in Lithuania and why the title of the convention is as you see it on the programme, i.e., Tibet: Saving A People From Annihilation.

The first World Parliamentarians' Convention took place in New Delhi, India, two years ago. And there were representatives from 25 parliaments. At the time we adopted a resolution and action plan consisting of ten points. We discussed the possible venues for the second convention. Then, one of the candidates was Lithuania.

We are delighted that this convention is taking place in Lithuania because; there are a lot of parallels between the history of Tibet and Lithuania. The Lithuania Parliamentary Support Group for Tibet is the largest among all the parliamentary groups for Tibet. It is larger than the British and French parliamentary support groups. This shows that the Lithuanian Parliamentarians and people are really concerned about the future of Tibet.

You have the programme of our convention. We now have to discuss the right to self-determination of the people of Tibet, the current situation in Tibet, as well as what can be done by joint efforts – how the situation can be changed as well as the aspect of foreign policy, whether the independence of Tibet will destroy the balance of power in Asia. We can also adopt a resolution which is expected of us by the people of Lithuania as well as by journalists. This would serve as a guideline for our future action.

I think it is time now to give the floor to the former Head of State, President of the Supreme Council of Lithuania, now the Leader of the Opposition, Professor Vytautas Landsbergis, for the keynote address of the convention.

Professor Vytautas Landsbergis: Distinguished Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, dear parliamentarian colleagues and

guests, I have been slightly misled by the text of the invitation which said that the official language of the convention will be English. Therefore, I am going to speak in English and I will request the interpreters to interpret accordingly.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you here in Vilnius to enjoy your presence and wish you the most fruitful work.

I remember, early in 1991, I stated that Iceland was the most independent Western country. Today we are here, really independent parliamentarians from many countries, to discuss one of the most painful problems of the world.

It is a pity that the Lithuanian Parliament, which met His Holiness in 1991 as the highest guest of spiritual authority radiant from Tibet, and enjoyed His Holiness' soul and wisdom shared directly with Lithuania, the same Parliament today is closed to parliamentarians of the world. If allowed, I would like to express my personal sorrow.

You will speak here about politics and international law, about human rights, environment and the changing world. In what direction is that world changing? If indeed it is for the better, how great are the losses? Can they be justified by any reasons? In my mind is the wish to help not only Tibet, but to help China too. The way of non-violence and peace is not an easy one, especially for those who have the force to back violence. If our advice of goodwill were heard there, beyond the Great Wall, it would help to breach the wall of misunderstandings.

Tibet is not unique in its tragic fate. But Tibet is unique in its spiritual and cultural heritage and importance for all of mankind. What would be done to find ways to preserve and continue that unique soul, spirit and wisdom? It is an issue above all the political motives and arguments.

The day will come to look for a way not from a distance, but together with China. Now we can only suggest for the peoples and nations not to lose the awareness of the difference between evil and good.

Dr. Andrikiene: If any of you want to read statements or addresses which you have brought with you from your parliaments, or on behalf with you from your parliaments, or on behalf of your political party, I will request you to read them now.

Pieor Verni reads the message of Adelaide Aglietta, MEP: I would like to express that I have not been able to be here in Vilnius due to a health condition. But I send my best wishes to all the parliamentarians and the representatives of the Tibetan people who are present in this conference. I pray to my close friend and my advisor on the Tibetan issue, Mr. Piero Verni, with whom I share years working closely in the field of defending the rights of the Tibetan people, to represent me in this World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet. He will briefly inform you about the works that I am doing and will participate to find the new initiatives to enable us to strengthen and resolve the difficult and delicate issue of Tibet.

The next year, perhaps the next month, could be crucial for Tibet. Also the most expert China Watchers cannot say with certainty what the political situation in China will be after the passing away of Deng Xiaoping: whether the situation worsens or improves, in the sense the new Chinese leadership will concede some democratic reforms. The Tibetan people, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and their Government-in-Exile will need stronger support than now.

According to my opinion, foreign supporters of the Tibetan cause should help Tibetans to create links with all the parts of the Chinese society that oppose the present Communist regime. The so-called national minorities – the Mongols, Uighurs, Manchus, etc. – the movements of democratic students and all the people fighting for democracy and human rights.

I think the struggle for self-determination and freedom of the Tibetan people will lead to some political alliances with all the dissidents opposing the Beijing Government. During the past European Parliament, I had been actively involved in resolutions condemning human rights abuses in Tibet and China. I had also been the Rapporteur on the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security or Relations between the European Union and the People's Republic of China. And I had been to China and Tibet as a member of an official delegation of the European Parliament.

During these activities, it came to my notice that few European parliamentarians have a real knowledge of the actual situation in Tibet. To contribute updated knowledge on various Tibetan issues, from October 1994 I started to publish Tibetan News, bi-monthly newsletters in the English and Italian languages, covering the happenings in and outside Tibet. Copies of these newsletters are available to every parliamentarian or political organization interested in the Tibetan issue. It is also published in the newsletter of the Transnational Radical Party. I think the members of the Group on Tibet in the European Parliament must strive to take initiatives to impart knowledge on Tibetan issues among other parliamentarians. From my side, I am trying to produce a video documentary relating to the political struggle of the Tibetan people.

In conclusion, I would like to propose to create an international group of parliamentarians who will keep close and permanent contact with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his Government-in-Exile to be ready to put into practice extraordinary actions at the United Nations or other places to attract the awareness of governments and public opinion to the Tibetan issue. The first such action could be organized on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women, being held in Beijing in September, where Tibetan women's representation has been excluded.

Thank you very much and once again I send you my warm wishes.

Dr. Andrikiene: Some time earlier, before this convention started, we received a letter from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is addressed to the members of the organizational

committee, and to all the participants of the convention. I would like to invite Mr. Tashi Wangdi to read this letter.

Kalon Tashi Wangdi, Minister, Tibetan Government-in-exile, Dharamsala, India:
President Landsbergis, Chairperson Dr. Andrikiene, members of the steering committee, distinguished parliamentarians from different parts of the world, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Before I have the honour of reading His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message to the conference, I would like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of my delegation, our deep appreciation to the organizing committee for organizing this very successful Second Convention of World Parliamentarians on Tibet. I know it involves a great deal of work and dedication. I am sure that the next two days of deliberations will be worth your efforts.

I wish also to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to President Landsbergis. As he mentioned, soon after Lithuania regained its independence, he invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama as one of his first guests to this country. President Landsbergis has not only championed the cause of freedom and independence of his own people, but he continues to champion the cause of downtrodden people all over the world. His words of address at the inaugural session will be a great inspiration to all of us. He has correctly said that the issue of Tibet can be resolved through peaceful and non-violent means and that it can be resolved through joint efforts of the Tibetans and Chinese. This is the wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama also.

Unfortunately, at this point of time, Tibet, with its nation, its people and unique culture, is on the threshold of total annihilation or survival. And we feel that it can be only saved by raising your voice against the cruelty, inhumanity and injustice, which is being perpetrated. This second convention of the world parliamentarians, I am sure, will be major step in this direction.

As His Holiness often said, in Buddhism we have three refuges: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. But in the Tibetan Political struggle, we have to have a fourth refuge, which is the international community. Your voice will make a difference as to whether this ancient nation and its people will survive or not.

Now I will have the pleasure of reading His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message, addressed to Chairperson Dr. Laima Andrikiene:

Thank you for your letter of invitation to inaugurate the Second World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet from May 26-28, 1995.

I am pleased to learn the preparations for the convention are being carried out with dedication and conscientiousness. It is also encouraging to learn that prominent personalities from the fields of culture, religion, education and sciences are supporting the convention by becoming members of the preparatory committee.

I regret that my tight travel schedule makes it impossible for me to journey to Vilnius. In May and June 1995, two visits to Europe are scheduled: one in the beginning of May and the second in the middle of June. Despite our best efforts, it has not been possible on the part of host organizations to re-schedule the dates for these visits to coincide with the date for the World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet.

However, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and share my thoughts on the issue of Tibet in a message to the participants of the convention. Moreover, I will instruct some members of my Cabinet and our Parliament-in-Exile to represent us at this important international gathering.

I take this opportunity to thank you and members of the preparatory committee for their dedication and support.

The World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet plays a vital role in the protection of the survival of the Tibetan nation, with its unique cultural heritage and in enhancing the prospect for a just and negotiated solution to the issue of Tibet.

With my best wishes and prayers for the success of the convention.

Lauri Vahtre, M.P., Estonia: In a sense, we represent the conscience of our nation. There is no freedom and peace in the world as long as things like in Tibet can happen. Tibet is the heart of Asia and when you kill the heart the body will be heartless. But sometimes things next to miracles may happen. We Baltic nations know it.

Dear Tibetans, I bring you the best wishes from Estonia.

Juris Sinka, M.P. Latvia: On behalf of the Latvian support group in our Parliament, I would like to express great pleasure that the second parliamentary convention of the world on Tibet is being held in the country of our brother-nation, Lithuania. That, in itself, is a great achievement due to your efforts, I am sure, Madam Chairperson. I am glad that your authorities have allowed us to meet in this place.

I remember last year in Delhi several delegates had to send their apologies because they could not arrive. There was one, and I am reminded of the Nepalese delegate, who got as far as New Delhi at the hotel. And I understand the delegation was put under house arrest and could not get to the venue of the convention.

Nations like Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and now the Chechen nation have suffered under the arbitrary rule of the bigger and stronger nation. One feels that there is a mesh of something evil that surrounds us all and yet we manage to scrape through. And scraping through is the means like this convention. And I am very, very glad that this convention has taken place and that evil does not get the upper hand. I hope the third convention will take place and some of those who could not manage to get here will be there.

Yes, I remember also that the Estonian delegation was refused tourist visas. We in Latvia have been trying to support the Tibetans, the Chechens, and also other oppressed peoples. And we do not always succeed completely. Nevertheless, when we enter the Council of Europe or the West European Union, or various committees, we do manage to remember Tibet, Chechnya, and other oppressed peoples.

From one point of view, last year was certainly not the happiest year for Latvia, because we were under direct pressure from Beijing to break our ties with the Consulate General of Taiwan. And, of course, although our president went to Beijing, I think that he, in his mind, was not all that happy with the present persecution of the political dissidents in China, which he was able to express.

There are different opinions amongst us whether that is the best way of influencing the Chinese Government at this moment. It still has to be debated. Nevertheless, I hope Latvia will not become forgetful of its own past, its own suffering and its moral obligation to support other nations, which are still under the yoke of other nations. I can only express the hope that in the next century the expression “Might is Right” will be reversed to “Right is Might”.

Henryk Wujec, M.P., Poland: I welcome you on behalf of the Polish parliamentary group on Tibet. We, the members of the Polish Parliament, declare that we are convinced that every nation has equal rights to preserve its freedom, identity and cultural heritage. We call on the People’s Republic of China to stop this persecution of Tibetans and begin dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the political and spiritual leader of the Tibetan nation.

For us members of the Polish Parliament who come from the Solidarity Movement, the greatest Eastern European movement defending the nation’s political and civic rights, this particular phase of Tibet lies in the middle of our concern. During the Lithuanian anti-Soviet revolution, the Polish independence movement gave its support to Lithuania. I was here in 1990-1991 to support your struggle. Now our support for the aspirations of the Tibetan people may be recognized as an act of obvious human solidarity towards those who do not feel secure in their own country, who feel forced to live in exile, and who finally lack the basic human right: the right to choose.

All countries have different political and economic interests towards China. We understand this. But having said this, I have to mention that the future will show us all, and this is my detached concept, that we can sacrifice some of our interests for the most important values known to human beings: freedom and independence. And I and my friends from Poland – Mr. Borowik and Mr. Potocki, who was in Delhi too – will do everything possible to make our government recognize the Tibetan authorities in exile, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, spiritual and political head of the Tibetan nation, as the full guarantors of a future democratic organization.

Let me state that those of you who have gathered here are worthy of our great admiration and we all hope that the day will come when we all shall gather in Lhasa.

Ms. Kara-Kys Arakchaa, Tuva, Russian State Duma: Today I am here as a representative of the Tuvian people. My Republic, small Tuva, is at the very heart of Asia. Our religion is Buddhism, the Yellow Sect of Lamaism. This root connects us very closely with the Tibetan people. In 1992 Tuva was visited by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He consecrated our flag and a very important building.

At that time, our people expressed support to the Tibetan people's struggle for freedom and independence. When the Dalai Lama addressed a rally, the inhabitants of our city held banners with a slogan, "Freedom to Tibet".

I thank the organizational committee for the invitation to attend this convention. I also extend my gratitude to the Representative of the Tibetan Centre and their help and assistance, which enabled me to participate here.

Ole Johs. Brunaes, M.P., Norway: This is the most important continuation of the World Parliamentarians Convention in New Delhi in March 1994. Parliamentarians from around the world are invited to discuss further steps for the important and peaceful struggle for self-determination and human rights for Tibet and the Tibetan people.

The Chinese destruction of the Tibetan environment is a serious attack on the health and natural resources of Tibet. The settlement of millions of ethnic Chinese in Tibet destroys the traditional Tibetan landscape and threatens the Tibetan people's national, cultural and religious identity.

Tibetans do not use weapons in their struggle for human dignity and survival. They use arguments, law and peace under the wise political and spiritual leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The world community has a moral obligation to support the Tibetans in their struggle. The Nobel Peace Prize and other highly deserved awards to His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a continuous process of strengthening the international awareness of, and support for, the non-violent Tibetan struggle for freedom.

Let us hope that this World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet will contribute to increased international awareness of the situation in Tibet and lead to increased pressure on the Chinese government to respect the human rights and self-determination in Tibet and to accept negotiations without pre-conditions with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Lithuania and other Baltic States have had bad experiences of occupation by an external force, with cruel damage to their countries as a result. Your country is today free and democratic with a huge task to help this nation. Therefore, the All-Party Support Committee for Tibetans in the Norwegian Parliament warmly appreciates that the Lithuanian Parliamentarians supported the Tibetan struggle for freedom by organizing this convention.

Michael Ferris, M.P., Ireland: Coming from Ireland, as you know, we have had a history of struggling and struggle against probably one of the most powerful empires of

its day, and we had to struggle to gain our freedom. As a result of that struggle, Ireland's sympathies are always with small struggling people and the nations of the world, which are still struggling to gain recognition. We have been sympathetic to Tibet, and indeed to Lithuania, for very many years. We have never recognized the annexation of Lithuania or indeed the other Baltic States.

In Ireland, we have a very articulate and active Tibet Support Group. It has access to the Parliament's Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which I am a member. And Mrs. Kesang Takla, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Representative for Europe, is a regular visitor to Ireland. Indeed, recently she visited Ireland with the Venerable Palden Gyatso, a Tibetan monk who was imprisoned in Tibet for 30 years. Both of them visited the Irish parliament in the past few weeks. As a result, the Foreign Affairs Committee has raised important questions with the Foreign Minister, and particularly relative to the question of the use of torture and the manufacture of instruments of torture.

In September, last year, my party leader, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland and Minister of Foreign Affairs, had a long discussion with the Chinese Vice President, the Foreign Minister of China, and discussed with him at length the question of Tibet. He reminded China of its obligation to Tibet in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides for the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom from arbitrary detention.

Ireland's delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has also been very active in the work on the EU's draft resolution on human rights in China. And at the 54th session in Geneva, this year, the resolution specifically addressed the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity of the Tibetans.

This year, a delegation from the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs will travel to China at the invitation of the Chinese. As Chairman of the European Affairs Committee, I hope to be also a member of that committee on foreign affairs who will travel to China. And I will personally raise the question of Tibet with my Chinese counterparts.

Ireland and Lithuania are living proofs that small nations and people do achieve their rights, and we hope that Tibet will also have this great good fortunate soon.

A Delegate from East Turkestan, President of the Interstate Uighur Association:

As a representative of the Uighur nation in East Turkestan, I welcome you. In the so-called Xinjiang Autonomous Region, the Uighurs comprised 93 percent of the population; that was a long time ago. And now the proportions of the Uighurs and Chinese have changed considerably. Now, the Uighurs, like the Tibetans, are in the minority in their historical homeland. The violation of human rights is going on in all directions. First of all, the mass transfers of Chinese population from the central region.

Environmental pollution happens all the time. There was a conference in New York on NPT, which concluded on 12 May. A few days later, China conducted the 42nd nuclear test and there are ecological diseases in our region on a massive scale. Just like in Tibet,

the policy of birth control imposed by Beijing decreases the birth rate. The culture and language policy and the militarization of the national bordering regions have had catastrophic results on our people. Because our culture and religion have been destroyed, there are only 30 Islamic shrines that are open and all kinds of other problems are very acute there.

I am deeply grateful to the organizers of this conference and the parliamentarians of Lithuania. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Landsbergis for his speech. We know very well about his activities during the independence struggle of the new State.

I extend my best wishes to the Tibetan people in their struggle for independence and freedom. Eastern Turkestan is also fighting for independence in a peaceful and non-violent way.

Mrs. Aminat Saijeva, Foreign Ministry Representative of Chechenya based in Lithuania: In this forum, I represent the government of the Chechen Republic. As you all know, war has been raging in my homeland for more than half a year. And to come to Lithuania for this convention from the Chechen Republic was impossible. I accepted the kind invitation of the organizational committee and I am deeply grateful for this.

I welcome all the guests at this forum and I welcome the guests from Tibet. I wish you all success today. I hope for resolutions to the problems of Tibet, which are of great concern to justice-loving people. I hope the problems of the Chechen people will also be given attention.

Working Session:

Dr. Michael van Walt, Secretary General, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO):

First, I would like to thank both Dr. Landsbergis and Dr. Laima Andrikiene for honorary chairing and chairing the parliamentary support group and for inviting me, both as an individual and as a representative of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, to this conference.

It is good to be back in Lithuania. I have been here several times. Whenever I come back to a country where I have been to for a while, and where I have enjoyed and made friends, it is little bit like coming home. And this time, I am so happy to be here for the second time since Lithuanian independence, although I was here also in the less pleasant days when Lithuania was struggling hard to regain its independence.

I am also glad to see many friends, people I have known for some time, both here in Lithuania and people who have come from abroad.

As many people have said, the history of Lithuania, and in fact of the Baltic States, bears many, many similarities to that of Tibet. So, I think nobody can understand better not

only the plight, but also the reasons why there is a problem in Tibet, as the people in the Baltic States. And that is why I think it is going to be much easier for me to talk about the whole question of the status of Tibet, and why it is that Tibet is independent and why it is that the Tibetan people have the right to self-determination, and what the consequences of that is than it would be if I were to address people who do not have a similar type of experiences.

I think we are in a very important time in history, as some of the earlier speakers alluded to a kind of crossroads after a fairly clear situation, internationally, when there was the Cold War. Although people did not like the Cold War, many governments and many countries felt they knew the situation and they knew how to act or react. We are now in a situation where States, individuals and political leaders are trying to assess and are trying to develop a new way of dealing with international political problems and with international relations.

So, today, the policies of the future and, as many people call it, the new world order of the future are being decided, are being prepared. This is particularly true in relations between nations and people and rulers. It is crucial and what will happen on the international level globally is going to influence what happens in Tibet. What happens in Tibet and the way Tibet regains independence is going to affect what happens elsewhere internationally as well. That is why this conference is important not only to the people of Tibet, it also has global and international importance.

When I say we are at a crossroads, we are at a time when a number of issues are being polarized. The right and the principle of territorial integrity is being opposed to the right and principle of self-determination. And at this particular time, it is very clear that according to the main powers that be, governments in power, territorial integrity is winning the day. The situation in Chechnya, the awful war in Chechnya, has been a manifestation of the support if not only the western powers, including the United States, but also of China, many Asian powers, and even the Muslim world, through their silence, that the principle of territorial integrity should be regarded as the absolute principle, for which the government has the right even to destroy a people.

This is in contrast to the way the international law was meant to be, which is a balance between the principle or right of self-determination, a balance, which can bring peace and stability. The other opposition is that of violence and non-violence, where again violence seems to be gaining an acceptance as a method to resolve political conflicts as opposed to non-violence, including negotiations and other methods. The war in Chechnya is again an example of that.

The fact that so many countries and international organisations have not questioned the right of the Russian government to use force in order to resolve the political issue is in itself a very dangerous development. The fact that concern has been expressed about human rights violations and so on is a different issue. But very few governments have questioned the right of Russians to use force, certainly at the beginning of the conflict. Now it is changing somewhat. The same is true of the Turkish invasion of Northern Iraq.

The United States, in fact, reaffirmed that Turkey has the right to use force in Northern Iraq in order to resolve that problem. And I think these are both dangerous tendencies.

On the other hand, efforts by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, efforts by others to use non-violent means to resolve the conflict are not getting the support they deserve. Both these tendencies put together, if they are allowed to continue – and I think the gathering of parliamentarians here can make a difference in that direction – is going to impact and influence relations, both international relations and State-people's relations in future.

So the question of Tibet is important not only from that perspective, it is also important for regional peace and stability in Asia. I understand the speakers from India will elaborate on this. But, of course, it is of vital importance to the survival of the Tibetan people. So one can talk about it in a global, political and legal sense. But simply the human survival of the people is at stake. Lots of efforts are being made to save species of animals and plants. But I believe not enough attention is being paid to secure the survival of people.

I will discuss the status of Tibet, not only because it is of interest in itself, but also because it forms the basis for almost all the other discussions which we are going to have in the course of the conference. It is the basis for discussion on self-determination of the Tibetan people; also its impact on the discussion on population transfer which we are going to have, and on the question of human rights. It is also that human rights, population and cultural alienation, for example, environmental destruction as well, are only symptoms of a much deeper problem, and that deeper problem is a status of Tibet. It is the question of why China is ruling Tibet in the first place. It is also the question of why Tibetans are consistently resisting Chinese rule in Tibet.

And finally, it is important, because it determines in this particular gathering and in relation to governments that it is the status of Tibet which helps in determining whether the issue at hand is one of domestic, internal jurisdiction of China or whether it is of international concern. This besides the point that, of course, anything that touches on human rights and rights of peoples is by definition an issue of international concern and cannot, by definition, ever be part of the domestic affairs of a State.

Despite what many countries say, and what the United Nations says, that when there is an issue involving human rights and self-determination of people it is an internal matter of a State, by definition it is not. Because human rights are part of international law, a very essential part of international law, and international law would not be called international law if it was not international. It is the States, governments and international organisations who have the duty and responsibility to maintain international law and it is not the domestic jurisdiction of States only.

So the question of the status of Tibet can be boiled down to what right does China have to be in Tibet? China claims that it has a right to be in Tibet on two grounds, and two grounds only. One, Tibet has always been a part of China. Two, Tibet was backward,

economically and socially. And, therefore, China has the right to intervene to help the Tibetan people to liberate themselves.

The first issue, namely that Tibet has always been a part of China, is based on a number of periods in Tibetan history. Although if one were to study in detail the history of Tibet-China relations, and also take a short cut and simply visit Tibet, one would be overwhelmed by the sensation that Tibet is obviously not a part of China. Because it is so different and the Chinese don't view it as being part of China, although officially, according to their propaganda, it is supposed to be.

It is also necessary to look at the arguments put forward by the Chinese and see whether they make any sense or not.

So the first argument is that during the very early period of Tibetan history Tibetans has ties with China in the form of weddings between the Tibetan emperors and the Chinese princesses in the seventh and eighth century. If a wedding of royal families should be determinative of whether a country becomes a part of another country, then most European countries would be part of each other at this point. Holland, from where I come, would certainly be part of both Germany and Spain, if not some other countries as well. But anyway, it also ignores the fact that the same emperors wedded many other princesses of surrounding States and therefore should also become part of those other countries, including Nepal.

But what is more important is the argument the Chinese put forward that the Mongol domination in the 13th century was the time when Tibet really became politically part of China. Because the Great Mongol Khans established strong links with Tibetan lamas and later conquered China – and as you know, conquered most of Asia and large parts of Europe, all the way into Eastern Europe – the claim is made that Tibet is, therefore, a part of China. This is not logical. If anything, this argument should mean that Tibet is part of Mongolia. But to say that because the Mongols has an authority in Tibet, and because the Mongols conquered China, Tibet became part of China does not by any stretch of imagination make sense.

In fact, as I mentioned, since most of Asia and most of Europe were under Mongol influence or Mongol rule, this could be applied to any part. Hungary would be part of China. By this argument also, I think Britain and France today should be part of Italy since both came under Roman influence.

The next argument that China uses is the Manchu influence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The situation is a fairly complex one in that the Manchu emperors established relationships with Tibetan spiritual leaders, with the Tibetan Dalai Lamas. This was a unique type of relationship in Central Asia, and therefore must be seen in that context. That relationship, as our colleague from Tuva would know more about, was one between the patron and priest, where the priest was a spiritual master and gave blessings and performed prayers and protection in the spiritual sense to the lay person, usually a

prince or a ruler, and the prince or the ruler, in exchange, protected the priest and his church.

The Dalai Lamas had this relationship with a number of rulers, particularly the Mongol princes, and the Manchu emperor was but one of the late patrons. And, of course, once the Manchu took power in China, they used this relationship for political gains and to develop political influence. But never did the Manchu emperor and never did China at that time consider Tibet as part of China. But in the historical records of that time, Tibet was never described as a part of China.

In fact, at the height of Manchu power, the relationship could be best described, if one were to use western terms of international law, as some kind of protectorate relationship between the Manchu emperor and Tibet, not between China and Tibet. In fact, a very clear distinction was made throughout that time between the Chinese and the Manchus – the Chinese were the subjects of Manchus and not vice-versa. For example, there was a rule or edict from the emperor that Manchus were not allowed to marry Chinese, because it was below them to do so. But the Manchu could marry Tibetans, because the two were considered to be kindred peoples.

As we know, neither the protectorates nor the modern version of protectorate satellites lose their independence. And so, if one were to look at Tibetan history, up to and including the Manchu period – and the Manchu period really stretches until 1911 when the revolution in China brought the Nationalist government – throughout this period Tibet came under the influence both the Mongols and the Manchus, and in the later part of the last century and the beginning this period, under British influence. But Tibet never lost its independence during that period. The reason being that under international law, statehood is not easily lost. Once a State has been established and created – the Tibetan State has been established over a thousand years ago – it takes a tremendous amount for that State to cease to exist. Why? Because international law is a system created by States to protect their own interests. So the system is created in such a way that it is almost impossible to lose your statehood unless you want to do so yourself.

This is why, although the Baltic States were occupied and ruled by the Soviet Union for so long, they never lost their independent statehood. In law, they remained independent States that only waited for the moment to regain effective independence, which they had not been able to exercise for all those years.

In the same way, although Tibet came under the influence of different foreign powers, it was for a very short periods of its history. Because in two thousand years of history of statehood, Tibetans can under some form of foreign influence or other for perhaps a total of only two hundred years. There are very few countries who can claim such a long period of full independence and freedom. In fact, to quote Aitken, the great man from Ireland, who as an ambassador of Ireland in the United Nations, stated during a debate on Tibet in the United Nations that Tibet was for two thousand years free and in full control of its own affairs and a thousand times more free and in full controls of its own affairs and a thousand times more free than many members of the United Nations.

And this is true. If you were to look at the history of many members of the United Nations today, you will find that Tibet has a better claim to independence from the historical context than the majority of the States at the United Nations.

From 1911 to the invasion of 1949, Tibet was in fact entirely independent, which was also recognized by the Chinese representative in Lhasa, who after he left that post as an ambassador, wrote, a book in which he fully admitted that Tibet was independent at that time. Sadly, even though Tibet was then independent, the Tibetan government never made an assertion of that independence and that was a great mistake for which the Tibetan government should be criticized. Because Nationalist China, for the first time in Chinese history, claimed Tibet to be a province of China, an integral part of China. Rather than very assertively and openly rejecting that claim of China, the Tibetan government of that period chose isolationism as a policy to protect their interests. Although isolationism has worked for China for a long time, in the long run it turned against Tibet.

Despite the fact that the Chinese government was issuing maps showing Tibet as part of China, the Tibetan government did not issue and widely circulate internationally its own maps in which the contrary was shown.

And so the impression was created, at least among some people in the world, that there was some relationship there which the British described as suzerainty and the others described as sovereignty, which entitled China to have a special relationship with Tibet. Even though it may have been true in the past with respect to some of the Manchu emperors, it was not true between 1911 to 1950.

You may then ask why the British, who had the most influence and most importance in the region in that period, since they ruled the Indian sub-continent, did not recognize that China was a suzerain of Tibet? When Tibet was invaded and this issue was brought before the United Nations in 1949, an advice was asked both from the Indian and British governments as to whether the issue should be put on the agenda of the General Assembly. And both countries advised that Tibet should not be put on the agenda of the General Assembly, because, in their views, Tibet did have a suzerainty relationship with China, and that therefore it has best be dealt with between those two parties, not by the international community.

So, in fact, the recognition by Britain of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet had an impact which was partly determinative of today's situation in Tibet. Britain recognized the suzerainty as a fiction. It was something that served British interests at that time as part of the Great Game. In other words, it was called a struggle between British and Russian imperialism at the time, and to some extent, Chinese imperialism.

Since Britain, at the beginning of this century, was particularly concerned with Russian expansionism into Central Asia, and was determined to stop it, but not willing to take control of Tibet and colonize it, it developed the fiction that China had a suzerain right of

some sort and that Britain has rights as a sphere of influence over Tibet in order to exclude Russia from that part of the world. It had nothing to do with the reality of the situation in Tibet. And so you can see how a fiction develops into reality, simply because it was not effectively challenged at that time, and was not effectively challenged by the international community even in 1949 when China invaded Tibet.

Finally, Tibet was invaded in 1949/1950 by the armies of the People's Republic of China. It is important to remember that China did not and does not today claim that it obtained sovereign rights over Tibet or title over Tibet as a result of its invasion of Tibet in 1949 or 1950. In other words, according to the Chinese it is not the military occupation of Tibet that gives China the right to own or govern Tibet. They could not claim that. Because the Chinese, under their political doctrine and their interpretation of international law, rejects in the strongest terms any right to annex territory by the use of force. In fact, this is the part of international law – certainly, after the Second World War, since the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations – which outlawed the annexation of territory by use of force. China supports this, and therefore cannot claim that it annexed Tibet by the use of force.

Secondly, China forced the Tibetan government, after sending troops and defeating the Tibetan army to sign what is called the Seventeen-point Agreement or Treaty, whereby Tibet agreed to be a part of China with a certain degree of autonomy within China. But that agreement was forced upon the Tibetan government and was a form of coercion – a physical coercion in terms of relationship between the negotiators, but this is not so important. What is more important is a form of coercion in terms of the relationship between China and Tibet at that time. China had defeated the Tibetan army, the Chinese armies were in Tibet and ready to move into the capital city of Lhasa. The Chinese simply stated to the negotiators that unless they signed this document, the armies would move further into Tibet.

So the Tibetans had two alternatives, either agree to the military invasion which they could not under any possibility prevent – because the Tibetans had only 8,000 troops who were ill-equipped, ill-armed and ill-trained and China has a huge People's Liberation Army which had just won victory over the whole of China after the Long March – or agree to what is called the peaceful liberation of Tibet, which meant the armies could move into Lhasa without resistance.

Had the Dalai Lama been consulted about this 17-point Agreement, he may have agreed to it simply in order to save his people from total destruction. The fact is that he was not consulted, and the Chinese did not allow the Tibetan negotiators to make contact with their government and forged the seal and forced them to sign the treaty. So the treaty had no legal validity to start with. It makes no sense today to be debating whether that treaty acquired or ceased to acquire any validity. Because it has no validity in the first place. According to its own interpretation of international law, China is very strongly against any form of coerced treaties. As you may know, if you follow the developments in Hong Kong and Macau, China has taken the position that Hong Kong was actually never

transferred to Britain, because the treaty by which transfer was effected was done under coercion and intimidation.

Any treaty concluded under the conditions as China did in Tibet is invalid and illegal.

So, here you have two possible reasons why Tibet would have become part of China, namely the military occupation, and secondly, the signing of the treaty which even by China's own standards is void and illegal.

The last possible reason why Tibet could be a part of China is a theory that exists in international law, although it is somewhat questionable; that if something, whether legitimate or not, last long enough, it gains some legality at some point.

In other words, because China has ruled Tibet for over 40 years now, therefore Tibet is now part of China. There comes a point in time when it simply is a fact which must be accepted. It means that international law does not accept an illegal act, like invading and occupying a country, but if you do it long enough, if you continue the illegality long enough, it becomes legal. In other words, if I beat somebody up I can be put into a jail. But if I do it long enough and sustain it, then at some point it becomes okay and I do not go to jail anymore. It is an absurd principle and does not make any sense.

From a practical perspective, there could be reasons to accept it, but only under certain conditions. One condition is that at some point, the people concerned, and in this case Tibetans, accept the situation. In other words if after 40 years the Tibetans no longer challenge Chinese claim that Tibet is part of China, then China's rule over Tibet would become legal. But on the strength of Tibet's acceptance of that situation, both in terms of the Tibetan population inside Tibet, which have until now shown rejection of China's rule over Tibet, and the acceptance by the legitimate government and representative of the Tibetan people, namely, the Dalai Lama and Government-in-Exile.

Now the very existence of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, which functions entirely as a government and is a legitimate continuation of the government which existed for centuries in Tibet, and its continuing challenge to Chinese rule over Tibet takes away any possibility for China or others to claim that under international law Tibet has in fact become a part of China.

China always claims that because no country recognizes the independence of Tibet, it is part of China. Recognition, under international law, has only evidentiary values, declaratory values. In other words, it can help to indicate what does and what does not exist as a fact.

But in itself, recognition can neither create a State nor destroy it. How else can you explain that 50 percent of countries recognize a particular country and others don't. Obviously, we cannot say this or that country exists or doesn't exist, on the basis of recognition. It is true of the Palestinian state, which is recognized by some and not by others. It is true of the Western Sahara. The Sahara Democratic Republic is recognized by

70 countries of the world and not recognized by about the same number of countries. Does it mean that the Sahara Democratic Republic exists or it does not?

So, the existence of a State is not determined by recognition. But, of course, its international ability to deal as an independent State is affected by recognition and non-recognition. The very fact that China maintains a heavy concentration of troops in Tibet, between 200,000 and 500,000 for a population of about six million, is in itself a sign that the Tibetans reject the annexation and occupation of their country.

As I said, the second argument put forward by China that Tibet should be part of China is not a legal one, but is simply the argument that Tibetans were backward, culturally, economically, socially, and needed to be civilized and developed by China. Therefore, they liberated Tibetans from themselves essentially. This argument can be dealt with very easily, because it is the typical argument that any colonial and imperialist power uses for its actions in any of the areas it conquered.

I come from the Netherlands, and as you know, it used to be a colonial power. It had exactly the same argument with respect to Indonesia. We brought toilets to Indonesia and the Dutch are extremely proud of it. And that was one of the reasons why it was so important for Holland to rule Indonesia. The Indonesians couldn't rule themselves, and we really had to lift them up and civilize them, I suppose, to bring them to a point where they can suppress and colonize other people. But it is a typical and classical notion of any imperial or colonial power that they are there in the interests of the people they are colonizing.

One must look at the ground reality in Tibet. I had been fortunate enough to be in Tibet twice. I would have liked to be there more but it is not easy to travel to Tibet. My last visit was in September. If one visits Tibet, I think one is left with very little illusion of what China has brought to Tibet in terms of either civilization or in terms of economic development or in terms of social development.

You have heard a lot about the Panchen Lama. Three days before he died, the Panchen Rinpoche made a final public statement in which he stated very unambiguously that the Tibetan people suffered greatly more than they could ever have gained from the Chinese rule over their country. This statement was made despite the fact that the Chinese have always tried to use the Panchen Lama to put their arguments forward and as an alternative leader to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. And three days later, under suspicious circumstances, he died.

So the consequence of China's claim to rule Tibet and treat Tibet as part of China, has been the gradual disappearance of the Tibetan nation and the Tibetan people. I say gradual because it has taken several decades for the international community to wake up to what is happening in Tibet. This is not simply a case of military occupation and it is not simply a question of trying to establish power or rule over any strategically located area in Asia. But what is increasingly happening in Tibet is the systematic transfer of Chinese colonists into Tibet. Other small nations, especially here in the Baltic region,

have had a similar experience. If this is allowed to continue, it can lead to the ultimate destruction of the nation or people concerned.

As I have stated earlier, Tibet is an independent State under illegal occupation. Therefore, the transfer or civilian population into an occupied territory is a clear violation of the Geneva Convention of 1959.

Even if Tibet were to be considered a part of China, for those governments who do consider Tibet to be part of China, this is a violation of human rights, not only of the people being transferred voluntarily - but also of the people into whose territory an alien group is being transferred. This is a notion which is being transferred. This is notion which is being increasingly accepted at the United Nations by the Commission and Sub-commission on Human Rights.

This is new development in international law. Although its essence is clear, it is new in terms of its expression. This is very much the result of lobbying that is done, particularly on behalf of the Tibetan people. So, here again, you can see that the work which is being done for Tibetans has an impact also on the overall perception of international law, and can have influence on other peoples in a similar situation.

So, in conclusion, what I am suggesting is that results and consequences should be in terms of action. Obviously, I am not suggesting international military and other types of interference inside Tibet. But if one were to suggest a realistic approach, there are a number of things that need to be done in the interest of Tibetans and, as I said, in the interest of regional stability, and in the interest of simply developing international law and practice which is based on principles and on laws to protect all peoples.

In the first place the Tibetan question cannot and should not be considered an internal affair of China. A statement of this sort runs entirely contrary to international law. It makes a mockery of international law.

Secondly, governments should take a position of strength, and not one of weakness, towards China. China is a country or its leaders are a people who are extremely capable of intimidating or bullying others into getting what they want. And you can see that when they have to deal with a country they will create a trouble which only they can solve. They do it as much with the United States as they do with Latvia. This is a well-known tactic used by the Mafia and others. You create the problem and you are the only solution to it. But that solution has a price and the price is what the Chinese want from you. They do it again and again and everybody falls into the trap every single time.

But if you work from a position of strength, and if you have something which the Chinese want, it puts the Chinese on the defensive. And those few governments that have tried it have achieved other aims which they want to achieve simply by raising the Tibetan question as the question they want solved.

China today needs the west much more than the west needs China. Contrary to expectations, this is certainly true at a economic level because every country that trades with China has a negative trade deficit. And the volume of trade with China is not the big volume that people think it is. It is only the idea of a future Eldorado, of being able to sell toothbrushes to a billion people, that makes people put up with the type of problems they have when they try to do trade with China. And, believe me, by the time you think you can sell a billion toothbrushes to China, they will be making better toothbrushes than us, and they will be selling them in Europe and elsewhere.

So, all we are doing now, in fact, is to assist China in developing its economy to such an extent that they can compete with us more effectively later. So the economic argument does not work. Therefore, work from a position of strength and tell China what it is you want, as opposed to being told by China what it is that you should be doing.

The west, in particular, has been kowtowing to China far too long. It has taken abuse and disregard of international law in return.

Finally, I believe small countries, in particular, have a very special responsibility. Let us forget Russia, the United States and other big powers for the time being. They have their own political situations to deal with. They have their own interests to deal with. But small nations are in a better position than big ones to develop a principled foreign policy, a foreign policy in relation with each other that is based on the fundamental principles of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit and international law, including the right to self-determination of peoples.

Small States are in a better position to do this, as they have shown in the past. I would particularly like to point to Ireland, which has always been championing the Tibetan cause at the United Nations. A number of other small States, like Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also supported the Tibetan cause. And Lithuania received His Holiness the Dalai Lama four years ago with all the honour given to a head of state. It was one of the most emotional moments in my career of supporting the Tibetan cause. When we arrived at the Parliament building here, there were the Tibetan and Lithuanian flags on the building next to each other. And this was the first time it had happened in an official visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to a foreign country.

So, it is the small countries that are capable and have the guts to stand for principles. Not only are they more capable in this. Ultimately it is in their own enlightened self interest. Because if the small nations cannot stand by each other, then, believe me, big countries are not going to do it.

Therefore, it is a question of supporting issues that may ultimately affect your own existence as a small nation. You need to plant the seeds from right now so that in future you are going to be protected. This is also the basis for the initiatives taken by Liechtenstein and other small nations at the United Nations to promote, strengthen and engrave in international law the principle of self-determination. Liechtenstein says that a State's life itself is dependent on respect of that principle, and that if this principle

disappears from international law in favour of might is right, then small nations everywhere are under threat.

Dr. Andrikiene: Before ending this session, I would like to read another telegram from medical doctors who sincerely welcome the convention and wish it fruitful work and good results. They hope that the President and the Government of Lithuania will support the Tibetan people in their relations with China. This telegram is signed by the chairman of the medical club.

Ms. Kara-Kys Arakshaa, M.P., Tuva, Republic of Russia: The world is on the threshold of the 21st century and the main issue on the agenda is the sustainable development of the world. Sustainable economic development cannot be achieved without solving a number of important ecological issues. This is one of the key points in the development of mankind.

Our country has been marked by the disintegration of major colonial empires and many new nations have emerged, while some nations are still fighting for their sovereignty. At the same time, our century has been marked by a spiraling arms race. All these developments have shown that without taking the ethnic factor into consideration, mankind cannot achieve any progress.

The progressive forces of the world community are well aware that they cannot ignore the fact that the world does not so much consist of big States as it consists of peoples or nations. Freedoms and rights of all nations must become the determining factor in defining the relationship between the governments and large and small nations, especially the nations under occupation.

The end of the 20th century, especially the year 1995 and the year 2004, have been declared by the United Nations as the decade of the indigenous peoples of the world. During this decade, a new relationship or partnership will be developed between the indigenous peoples and the governments of big nations. The right to existence and development, the right to sovereignty, the right to existence and development, the right to sovereignty, the right to possession of one's natural resources and riches, and also the right to be different from other nations are the inalienable rights of all peoples.

The term indigenous people has not been fully interpreted yet. Nevertheless, Article 4 of the ILO Convention on indigenous people and ethnic groups in independent countries, says that this convention embraces all indigenous peoples who have been living on a certain territory or geographical area during the period of their colonization or seizure by another, and who, irrespective of the changes brought about by this colonization, have managed to maintain their ethnic identities, cultural heritages and languages.

This principle has also been written into the Charter of the United Nations. On the basis of this convention, new documents were adopted in the 1950s and 1960s. The rights of nations under colonial rule are defined in these documents. The declaration of the principle of international law in 1970 is also included here.

According to this principle, every nation is obliged to ensure self-determination to another nation. The disintegration of the colonial system in the middle of our century, and the emergence of independent nations have borne witness to the impact and strength of the principle that has been outlined in the above convention. Inviolability and integrity of a country's border is perhaps opposed to some of the ideas that are outlined in the principle of self-determination for indigenous peoples or nations. But the contradiction between these two principles is only formal. The subject of law under international law is State and this state is usually the result of the development of some nations.

We know that the rise of new Germany and various other countries is the proof of the vitality of self-determination of nations. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the leader of Tibet. This nation has preserved its national identity, culture and language for four hundred years. The political structure of Tibet is also the proof of Tibet's status as an independent country. Tibet has the Parliament and Government-in-Exile.

For many decades, the people of Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Parliament and Government-in-Exile have been struggling peacefully for the independence of its nation. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to His Holiness The Dalai Lama is a gesture of appreciation for his service to his nation and mankind in general. This is also the symbol of the global recognition of the problem of Tibet.

The world is subject to change and its priorities change. Relations between nations and governments and various ethnic groups also undergo numerous changes. The present gathering in Vilnius is also a recognition of the rights of the Tibetan people.

Dr. Michael van Walt: Both in legal and political circles, a distinction is being made between certain different categories of peoples. Many lawyers and governments admit that peoples within a federation – because of the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia – have the right to self-determination, but only if the constitution of that federation allows it. There is an increasing feeling that other peoples' right to self-determination should not be recognized.

This type of distinction is not valid from the perspective of international law. Either there is such a thing which can be defined as a people or there is not. If there is, then it makes no difference whether that people is under a certain type of colonial domination or a different type of colonial domination, imperialism or occupation.

It also cannot make a difference whether that people is within a federation, of which the constitution grants the right to self-determination. Because that is a domestic law issue. An international law cannot be dependent on national law. Therefore, from the international legal point of view, the right to self-determination is a fundamental right of all peoples.

So, the issue is what is a people and what is not a people. Two years ago, in London, there was a conference of international lawyers on the question of self-determination for

the Tibetan people. One of the leading speakers in that conference was Justice Michael Kirby. He was part of the UNESCO group of experts on rights of peoples, which developed a workable definition of a people with the right to self-determination. This is contained in a book called *Tibet: the Position of International Law*, and also in the UNESCO document.

For a long time, the Tibetan people clearly fall within any definition that one might use to describe what a people or a nation is. Therefore, their right to self-determination is beyond doubt.

There is again a confusion as to what is the right to self-determination. Today it is often equated with separatism. The people, press, lawyers, and politicians would say that group does not have the right to self-determination, meaning that group cannot secede from the State.

The right to self-determination is defined by the United Nations and others as the right of all peoples to determine their own political status and their economic, social and cultural development without external interference. This is the accepted definition of right to self-determination. I think one should add, especially after the last speaker, the right to manage one's own environmental policies. But this was not very much in the minds of people when the definition was created.

In other words, the right to self-determination is a process right. It is not the outcome which is determined by that right. This means the right to self-determination is not the right to secede, or the right to be autonomous or the right to anything else. It is the right to decide for oneself what that status is going to be. If people want independence, it is integration. If people want autonomy, it is autonomy. So, the right to self-determination should be associated with secession as it is done today.

Finally, what that means in practice is that the right to self-determination is a fundamental right. Just like all the other fundamental rights, it cannot be absolute. The right to free speech is also not absolute, not even in the United States, where you cannot say certain things for which you can be sued for libel. In European countries, racist remarks or other utterances which can create hatred are not permitted. So the right to free speech ends where another right clashes with it.

The same applies to the right to self-determination. It is not an absolute right. It has to be weighed with other rights and principles of international law, including territorial integrity and the right of other peoples. But that does not take away the fact that it is a fundamental right. The only question is how, in its expression and implementation, is this right weighed with the rights of other peoples and States.

Kalon Tashi Wangdi: After Dr. Michael van Walt's presentation on the status of Tibet yesterday, I felt that at this point it may be necessary to say a few words on the position of the Tibetan government. Because in the course of my discussions after yesterday's presentation, questions were asked as to what is the position of the Tibetan government

on the issue of independence and self-determination. Apparently, there is some confusion on this. So, I felt that before going into the discussion, it may be helpful to say a few words.

I will try to be brief to explain a very complex issue. I don't know whether I will be able to state my points very clearly. But I will try my best.

The basic problem between the Chinese government and us is that China claims Tibet to be an integral part of China by stating that Tibet has always been part of China. Our position is that Tibet was a sovereign nation, which was forcibly annexed and is now under illegal occupation.

The reasons for our claim to sovereign rights was stated very clearly by Dr. Michael van Walt yesterday. So there is no need to dwell on this further.

It is precisely this contention which forms the stumbling block on the path to negotiations between the Chinese government and us. The Chinese government repeatedly says that they will start negotiations as soon as the Dalai Lama declares Tibet to be part of China. And this is a public statement. I am sure many parliamentarians and others who engage in discussions with the Chinese representatives will be faced with this argument.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has very clearly stated over the years that he cannot distort history. He also said that even as a Buddhist monk, it will go against his vows. But he has taken the next important step and said that whatever may be the historical arguments, it is important to see the possibility of finding a solution to the present problem and to develop a relationship for the future. Towards this end, he said that as far as he is concerned he is willing to negotiate a settlement based on what he calls a middle path approach.

The middle path approach is very clearly described in his Strasbourg Proposal, which was presented to the Chinese government officially, through the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi, and subsequently made public at the European Parliament in 1988.

As far as the future relationship between Tibet and China is concerned, His Holiness expressed willingness to see the possibility of looking at various options, whereby Tibet and China would have relationship of what he calls association. In other words, not separation.

This position, as I said, was elaborated in the Strasbourg Proposal. His Holiness continues to adhere to this position. His Holiness waited for the Chinese response for three years, after which he said he is no longer bound by the concessions he had made in that proposal. However, His Holiness said that he is willing to find a solution in the spirit of the Strasbourg Proposal.

Therefore, our present position is that historically and legally, Tibet is a sovereign State under illegal occupation. But so far as the future relationship between Tibet and China is

concerned, we are willing to look at any number of options: proposals put forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as any proposal the Chinese government may like to put forward.

Since the issue of independence and the Chinese claim of Tibet being an integral part of China seems to be the main stumbling block for any kind of dialogue and negotiations, His Holiness went one step ahead and suggested negotiations without any preconditions. In other words, to go for negotiations with an open agenda. This is again an attempt on the part of His Holiness to open up possibilities for negotiations.

In this context, the position of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile reflects the resolution passed by our Parliament in exile about a year ago. This resolution stated very clearly that Tibet is a sovereign nation under occupation and that the Tibetan people's struggle is aimed at regaining this right. At the same time, the resolution gives authority to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the executive branch of the government to enter into negotiations with China without making the issue of independence part of the agenda.

So, our position at the moment is that we are ready to enter into negotiations without preconditions. We are willing to look at any number of options: a) options formulated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his Strasbourg Proposal, b) options the Chinese government may suggest, and c) options some Chinese scholars have suggested.

As you may know, about a year and a half ago, a number of Chinese intellectuals, professors of political science and international law, etc. met together on their own and wrote a future constitution for China. This constitution envisages federalism for China. But within that they suggested a confederal status for Tibet as a special case and then allowing the Tibetan people to decide after twenty years whether they want to remain within the confederal framework or secede completely to reassert their sovereign rights.

All these options are open for negotiations. But this has to be based on the firm conviction that Tibet is historically an independent State.

Now the right of self-determination, as Dr. Michael van Walt suggested, is not the end solution, but means to achieving a solution. It is a determining factor. On the question of self-determination, I may briefly mention here that before coming to power, the Chinese Communist Party, in successive resolutions, very firmly supported the right to self-determination of what they term minorities. And they have very specifically mentioned Tibetans.

President Chiang Kai-shek issued a public statement in 1959, soon after the Tibetans came into exile, in which he stated his government will respect the right to self-determination of the Tibetan people as soon as it regained control of China.

Then, of course, we have the three resolutions of the UN General Assembly which among other things very clearly supported the right to self-determination of the Tibetan people. At that time, when these resolutions were passed, the Government of the Republic of

China, or Taiwan, was a member of the United Nations and also of the Security Council. It fully endorsed these resolutions.

We raised this issue with the present Chinese government in Beijing when our delegation went to Beijing in the early 1980s for exploratory talks. When we drew their attention to the resolutions of the Communist Party in the 1930s and 1940s, they replied that in those years they were like small babies learning to walk and that now that they are fully grown they have changed self-determination to the status of autonomy.

Now the question is if the Tibetan people, or any other people, do not want to be an autonomous region of China, then they must have the right to determine this. This question was put to the Chinese and they had no answer to this. So the right to self-determination is accepted by the Chinese government at various stages.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we would like to see a very clear statement from this convention. I think the New Delhi declaration and resolution clearly states that Tibet was and is an independent, sovereign State under occupation, and that the people have the right to self-determination. The New Delhi convention also urges the Chinese government to enter into negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama for a solution to the Tibetan problem.

As I mentioned earlier, there are a number of options and we are willing to explore all these options to find a solution. It is between the Chinese and us. But there must be a very clear message to the Chinese government that their claim on Tibet is not acceptable to the international community. This message is very important and must be sent to the Chinese government.

Dr. Povilas Jakucionis, M.P., Lithuania: I would like to address the issue of Tibet through the statements of three very important international documents. These are: a) The Statute of the United Nations, b) The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms and c) the Athens' Declaration on Minority Rights.

These documents were adopted by the international community over a period of fifty years. This means they were adopted by different generations of politicians and the concern for human rights is strong in all of them.

Although the world has celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of the introduction of democracy in Athens, we can still see how difficult it is to eradicate conflicts. We also see how much loss conflict brings. We need only to look at Bosnia, Chechnya, etc.

I hope this convention on Tibet will contribute to the consolidation of democracy in general and assist the Tibetan people in concrete ways. I hope the awareness created of the suffering of the Tibetan people and danger to their nation will encourage people to make concrete efforts.

First of all, we would like to draw the attention of the Chinese government to the fact that they are responsible for the genocide in Tibet and that the survival of Tibet depends on their goodwill. The Chinese Ambassador in Lithuania said about this convention that all that is happening in China is an internal affair of China. The Russian government says the same thing about the war in Chechnya. The Russian government annihilates people with fire arms. The Chinese government behaves differently. But their result will be the same: very tragic.

China is not only a member of the United Nations; it is also a permanent member of the Security Council. Therefore, her responsibilities are even greater. She cannot ignore the Charter of the United Nations. The very first article of the Charter says nations must develop friendly relations on the principle of equality and respect for self-determination. It also urges the nations to desist from using threat and force against the independence of another nation.

We know that Tibet was conquered after the revolution in China. Therefore, this government is particularly responsible for what is happening in Tibet. We ask China to adhere to articles 11 and 12 of this Charter and to respect the right of indigenous peoples to develop free political institutions, to support progressive political developments with the aim of establishing local governments and independence.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms declare that freedom is the basis of justice. Wars and conflicts are the result of injustice. They are caused because the interests of nations are ignored. Just as each person has to be protected from unlawful violence, nations too have to be protected. No one can be tortured, humiliated, or debased. But the torturers deliberately humiliate peoples and nations to break their spirit of resistance. No one can be kept in slavery or prison. Everybody has the right to express his views freely. No one can be deported from his country.

A nation is a people's community. This means human rights are also people's rights. The occupiers who annihilate the historical heritage, culture and traditions are violating the Charter of the United Nations. The UN Charter also speaks about minority rights and says that the protection of minority rights is also part of human rights. Human rights are the fundamental rights of minorities. Minorities have the right to be respected and they have the right to develop their culture, language and tradition, be free from assimilation, and I emphasize this word.

Efforts should be made to protect people just as historical monuments and the cultural heritage are protected by UNESCO. A lot of attention is given to political conflicts between States, and recently to human rights. But too little attention is given to inter-ethnic conflicts within a State. This is the syndrome of so-called internal affairs. As a result smaller nations suffer violence from bigger nations.

The Chinese government carries out passive cultural, social economic assimilation in Tibet. This passive subjugation causes hostility which grows into uprisings and local

warfare goes on and on. We can mention Afghanistan and Bosnia. And local conflicts demoralize all the belligerent parties. This is extremely dangerous.

There should be a prevention of such conflicts, and this must be done by international organizations. Under the disguise of so-called humanitarian purposes and economic developments, huge enterprises, which the indigenous nations do not need, are being built on the territory of enslaved nations. Alien infrastructure are created in these territories and waves of colonizers follow such constructions.

Then the composition of the indigenous population changes and they become a minority in their own territory. When they are in a minority they can no longer resort to democratic means to evict the occupants. Sometimes they resort to violence and force which the occupiers term as rebellions and separatist banditry. The international community keeps quiet because it cannot side with so-called bandits. These examples abound in Lithuania and its close neighbours.

When flora and fauna become rare and valuable, they are included in the red book, and the community takes care of them and huge penalties are imposed if they are destroyed. But what about nations? Each person, according to national and international law, has the right to establish himself materially and spiritually. A nation loses its rights when it falls under the rule of a more powerful nation. But no one says anything about it since big powers do not want to interfere in the so-called internal affairs of other big nations. This situation cannot be allowed to continue.

When big powers, due to their self-interests, do not give attention to small nations, the small nations have to unite their efforts and help each other I believe that Lithuania, by helping Tibet and Chechenya, helps itself as well as other nations. The resolution of this convention should invite the Chinese Government to stop the colonization process of the Tibetan territory and to withdraw from Tibet quietly, just as the Russian armies withdrew from Lithuania. I endorse the proposal of Mr. Romualda to initiate an international action which will guarantee the rights enslaved nations.

Hans Goran Franck, Former M.P., Sweden: This is the decade of international law, as proclaimed by the United Nations. This has to be taken into account and used in connection with Tibet.

We have experienced during recent times many violations of international law. These violations were more widespread during the Second World War than now.

The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle in international law and must be defended more strongly. This principle is being violated by the Chinese Government in Tibet. Tibet has the right to self-determination. I want to underline this fact, considering the different aspects of the problem.

In accordance with the Chinese constitution itself, Tibet has the right to certain self-determination as the so-called Autonomous Region in China. But this right is only or mainly on paper.

The international community has the duty to act, through political and economic means, to ensure the realization of self-determination by the autonomy of Tibet. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile has agreed to negotiate with the Chinese Government without any pre-conditions. The starting line for peace means accepting that China has the right to decide Tibetan foreign and defense policy, and as far as the internal matter is concerned it will be left to the Tibetan people to decide. In the present situation, this is a reasonable base for a peaceful solution.

Many governments, as well as international bodies, for instance, the European Union, have called for dialogues and negotiations between the Chinese and Tibetan leaders. The Chinese government has, however, refused to respond, more because of its own strength. They have also taken a negative attitude to a recent initiative by the Swedish government. The most important need now is to work to the full capacity at our disposal to put pressure upon the Chinese leaders to accept dialogues and negotiations with the Dalai Lama and his Government-in-Exile. A Draft Resolution, signed by many nations, should be presented in the UN General Assembly as soon as possible. When I get back home, I will work for such an initiative from the Swedish government.

The UN Secretary General can also be requested to act and at a certain point to take part in the negotiations in the same way he is doing in the case of other conflicts, like in East Timor. The issue of gross violations of human rights in China, including in Tibet, has to be on the agenda of UN Commission on Human Rights and there will be a good chance of a majority of nations endorsing it. Last time it was rejected by a single vote.

The release of political detainees and other political prisoners and restoration of human rights in Tibet is an urgent matter, and an international campaign to attain that goal is very essential. This is an important matter not only from the human rights angle but also from the viewpoint of international law.

It is necessary to send a new mission from this body to Tibet in order to increase the pressure on the Chinese authorities who are occupying Tibet with a heavy military presence. Early this month, the Swedish Foreign Affairs Committee stated that the Swedish government has to observe and take into consideration views and proposals of non-governmental organizations. Among these organizations, a particular mention was made of the World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet.

Therefore, what this body is doing is important and I hope that this will spread widely to different parliaments and governments who are in solidarity with the people of Tibet. I hope we can, in the near future, achieve the goal of getting the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile accepted all over the world as the representatives of the Tibetan people.

Juris Sinka: First, I must say that Dr. van Walt's paper gave us some very simple truths of which some of us had not been aware, the truth that seems to have been forgotten by our friends, like the United States, Britain, and France, Germany and other important democratic States. They remember human rights, which actually also embraces a nation's rights and right to self-determination.

When it comes to two totalitarian States, Russia and China – now one of them has become democratic while the other, China, still remains totalitarian – one wonders whether at the end of this century, they still lack the moral fibre to realize that big nations, either because of their numerical strength or because of their economic importance or whatever, should not be allowed to get away with it. There doesn't have to be a military action. Nobody is suggesting that.

Our Tibetan friend referred to how His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people, in a gesture of goodwill, are prepared to give some concessions to China. But our Swedish friend has too hastily embraced this, I must say. It should be left to the Tibetan people to decide what concessions they want to give to China.

But one point that seems to have been forgotten so far, and I should be glad if it is included in the final resolution, is that before any negotiations begin, the Chinese settlers who have been artificially relocated in Tibet should be withdrawn. They have almost turned Tibetans into a minority.

If the transfer of the Chinese population to Tibet is allowed to continue, then in twenty years' time or so, when the Tibetan people are finally allowed to decide whether they want to be completely independent or part of the federation, the majority will be against them because the original Tibetan population will have been far outnumbered by the new inhabitants.

The flooding of Tibet with the people from the occupying power is a crucial point. We Latvians and Estonians, and Lithuanians to some extent, have suffered from this angle. Now, we are reminded of the territorial integrity of Russia, which forces us to ignore the annexation of parts of our territories by the Soviet Russia.

But why? Why at the end of this century should there be double moral standards and morals? I wonder if our main speaker can reflect on these purely moral questions.

Rita Tveiten, M.P., Norway: I would like to draw your attention to some of the issues raised by Dr. Michael van Walt yesterday. Particularly, I would like to focus on two issues.

One is the question of human rights. We must see that it becomes part of the international law. I mention this because I was one of the delegates to the UN session last year. On several occasions, at that time, this issue of human rights was looked upon as an internal

matter of the national concerned. I think it is very important to underline that human rights cannot be left to each country's own interpretations.

Another issue that needs rethinking is the agreements effected by use of force. Such agreements are not valid. This should also be considered as an international matter. At the moment, what stops international society from acting when a small nation is attacked is the notion that it is an internal matter.

I hope these two issues will become a part of the conclusions of this Convention.

Finally, I would like to say that environmental issues should be part of self-determination. But I would like to sound a note of caution here, because this issue can be used both ways. Environmental matters, pollution for instance, know no border. Therefore, this should absolutely be part of international law.

Prof. Algirdas Tomas Genuisas, President, United Nations Association of Lithuania:
I would like to briefly take up two points that figured prominently in yesterdays' deliberations.

One was put forward by Mr. Michael van Walt. He said that small nations should act in solidarity with each other and urge adherence by both small and big nations to international standards set by international organizations, such as the United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, etc.

The other point was stressed by Professor Ozolas. He said that the United Nations documents turn nations into objects. This is a controversial point and very difficult to agree with. I am very glad to say we have this convention being held in Lithuania, one of the small nations, which understands the importance of solidarity and not seclusion. Because small nations, by themselves, can stand by the strength of spirit, but they lack the political and military force to gain and maintain their independence and statehood. To do so they need the solidarity and support of international and world community.

The same holds good in the case of restoration of the time-honoured Statehood of Tibet and the current struggle in the Chechen nation for its self-determination and Statehood.

In this connection, I would touch upon one more aspect, namely the principles enshrined in the United Nations' instruments must be the basis for human and international relations. All nations should strive and insist that all powers – especially the big ones, members of the Security Council, with their right of veto and other privileges – should abide by the moral principles of these documents and not go by interests of economic, political, and military domination.

As has been pointed out, a security council of small and vulnerable nations should be established to protect them and to coordinate their activities. Perhaps, such a council could question the authority of the big powers when the principles of human rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter are flagrantly violated.

Summarization of the morning proceedings and closing contribution by Dr. Michael van Walt: I just want to let you know that I have noted down the suggestions that have been made for issues to be included in the final resolution and, if you so wish, I will continue to do so throughout the session. There are a number of issues raised yesterday and today, to which I wish to respond very concisely.

A couple of speakers spoke about minority rights and one mentioned indigenous rights. I know this is a delicate and different issue. I think it is important to be conscious of the distinction between minority rights that we are taking about with respect to Tibet. I say this is sensitive, because it is often misunderstood when Tibetans state that their issue is not a minority rights issue or it is not an issue of indigenous people. This is sometimes wrongly interpreted to mean Tibetans wants to disassociate themselves from minorities or indigenous people.

That's not the case. The point is Tibet is a state, was a state and has a right to independence. Politically, the issue is distinct from the issue of minority rights and what is nowadays called indigenous people's rights. I have worked with Tibetans for a long time and I am convinced that Tibetans feel, in many ways, emotional, historical and cultural affinity with indigenous people. And in many respects they consider themselves to be an indigenous people.

However, politically, their struggle is one for the restoration of the full rights of Statehood, in the same way as Afghanistan was struggling for its independence from Russia and the Baltic States were struggling for their independence. And it is a politically different road to follow than that of the indigenous people's rights or minority rights. For that reason only the distinction is made, but legally it has a far-reaching implication.

I think this needs to be made clear in terms of the way that we all argue for Tibet's rights. It is important that we don't argue from the perspective of indigenous or minority people's rights, because that may help the Chinese to put the Tibetan issue in the context of Tibetans being part of China. The Chinese may say, "Let us talk in terms of what rights we can grant to minorities" and not talk about the fact that Tibet is illegally occupied.

Now regarding the question of ethnic rights or ethnic conflicts which was referred to earlier, there is a tendency, particularly after the situation in Yugoslavia, among the press and also among politicians to interpret a lot of what is happening as ethnic conflicts or issues of ethnic identity and ethnic rights. This has a fairly negative connotation, the connotation of the negative aspect of nationalism, etc. In most of the situations, actually from my experience and the experience of UNPO, I can say the issue of one state or government or group in power wanting to have power over another. It is territorial, it is political and it is sometimes economic.

Ethnic issues are used and abused in order to create the right emotional climate to do what people want to do. Sometimes religion is also used and abused in order to get

people to fight against another group. But the issue is mostly and usually not an ethnic one, and certainly it is not so with respect to Tibet. The Tibetan people's struggle is not one for ethnic recognition or for struggle against ethnic Chinese. The representative from Tibet very candidly said yesterday that it is not an anti-Chinese struggle. It is simply a political and very human struggle for survival.

With respect to needs for conflict prevention and conflict resolution, it was mentioned that the United Nations and other international organizations should do this. This is true. But one has to be realistic about it. The United Nations, the OSCE and other inter-governmental organizations are essentially – if one is very realistic about it – clubs, and exclusive clubs of people who are in power, whether legitimately or illegitimately. They are in that organization to protect their own interests. Past experiences have shown that when an issue poses a threat to the power of a particular established group, organizations like the United Nations do not intervene.

The United Nations has said nothing about Chechnya. It refused to say anything in the first three months of the fighting, despite the fact that it was on everybody's television screen. It is because both Russia and the United States had told the UN General Secretary not to say anything on the subject. And this is logical. When the interests of one of the member States of the United Nations is at stake or challenged, the United Nations is not the most obvious organization to get involved in what we call inter-State conflicts. It is incapable of doing so. It is always being seen as biased in favour of member-States by non-State groups.

This is where the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization is starting to play a role, together with the United Nations and other organizations, to create teams that are trusted by both the non-States and the States in terms of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

At one point, the issue of democracy was stressed, and rightly so in the context of the interpretation and implementation of democracy being important. If by democracy one means the rule of the majority, it is clearly not the solution. Because with respect to Tibet and population transfer, if Tibetans become a minority due to population transfer, then the majority rule is no longer relevant.

Here you do not resolve the issue by applying the principle of democracy in terms of the majority making the decision. Obviously because 99 percent of the population is Chinese, they will decide that Tibet is part of China and it will be a fully democratic decision.

So democracy in that context must clearly mean a participatory form of democracy where each unit, and each nation, has an equal voice in the collective destiny of the nation.

A reference was made to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. It was asked whether the same problem applies there as well. Unfortunately, since China has a very strong position as a permanent member of the Security Council, it has made it very difficult to raise the question of Tibet at the United Nations.

The last attempt at the Commission on Human Rights, as you mentioned, was defeated by one vote. Actually, it was by two votes. Interestingly, the votes that made it fail were those of Russia and Peru. Peru was not quite clear why. Russia's vote may have had something to do with Chechnya. And also because Russia is inclined more and more to side with China on this type of issue rather than with Western Europe as it had in the past three years or so. But I would encourage parliamentarians in every country to urge their governments to raise the question at the United Nations and would very strongly endorse this as one of the very important approaches that needs to be made.

I was urged to reflect on the double standards between large and small countries, etc., and the question of moral values. And it refers to the last speaker as well. I did not want to be misunderstood yesterday when I talked about small nations and the need for both small and large States to abide by international standards and so on. I actually did not use the words international standards yesterday. And that was purposefully so. Because if one interprets international standards as being purely international treaties that have been adopted, then again many of them are biased in favour of the maintenance of status quo and in favour of the rights of governments as opposed to the rights of peoples.

But what I was really referring to, and I understand the last speaker to be saying the same thing, is the fundamental principles on which conventions and the Charter of the U.N. are based. And the essential principles are reflected in those charters, rather than the interpretations given to those fundamental principles by a number of states and by a number of international instruments. What I have noted down as some of the issues that need to be included in the resolution are:

There should be a clear statement on the question of the status of Tibet as an independent country under illegal occupation. There should be a clear recognition of Tibet's rights to self-determination. There should be also an unambiguous call to the Chinese government to enter into negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile without preconditions. The world's attention should be drawn to the responsibility of China for the genocide in Tibet. In this context and in any other context, particularly in the context of human rights, there should be a clear statement that it is not the internal affair of any state. If you like, there should be some reference to China's special responsibilities or increased responsibilities, because of its status as a permanent member of the Security Council, to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. There should be a call for an end to the colonization of Tibet through population transfer and for the withdrawal of armed forces.

The duty of the international community to act for the realization of the self-determination of Tibet was highlighted at the conference and should be mentioned in the resolution. Action to be taken with respect to the United Nation's General Assembly. In other words the participants of this conference should call on governments to raise the question of Tibet at the United Nations General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights as soon as possible. Perhaps they should also request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to play an active role, and the example was mentioned of

East Timor as the type of ways in which the General Secretary can proactively work towards involvement in negotiations or in promoting negotiations. There was also a mention that perhaps out of this body of members of parliament, a mission should be sent to Tibet. At least, that was the implication I understood.

Besides the notion that human rights is part of international law, and therefore, not an internal affair, there should be some reference to the fact that an agreement entered into under coercion should not be considered as valid or is not valid under international law and is, therefore, also not a matter of internal concern.

I think this is the list of many of the requests for inclusion in the final resolution.

George Fernandes, M.P., India: I must start by apologizing to all the participants here that we could not make it yesterday. We are very happy to be here. There are five of us from India, including four members of Parliament. One is not an MP, but has been totally involved in the work we all do for Tibet in India.

The first WPCT took place in Delhi from 18 to 20 March. I am sure all of you have the proceedings of that conference. One of the more important things we did in that conference was to adopt what came to be called as the 10 Commandments. In other words, the whole list of programmes that we committed ourselves to undertake is listed.

From the headquarters, if one may say that Delhi or India is the headquarters, because the seven-member steering committee we set up at the end of the conference in Delhi asked me to look after the work of that committee, and I live and operate in Delhi, we forwarded the resolutions that were adopted in that conference to all those to whom they are meant to be sent, i.e., to participants, the U.N. Secretary General and the parliamentarians who have been friendly with us but could not attend the conference in Delhi.

There was not much feedback or response from those to whom those resolutions were sent, in terms of action on the decision of the conference. We had at the first meeting of the Steering Committee, decided that, apart from the convention planned in Lithuania and which is now taking place, we will have a review done of the activities by the Steering Committee with a meeting in Venezuela. Our colleagues from Venezuela were very keen that such a review meeting should take place there and the idea was that it should coincide with the Latin American meeting on Tibet, with all the support groups from various parliaments and guests from North America participating in that meeting.

Unfortunately, that meeting could not take place. Now whether that meeting did not take place and therefore the Latin American meeting could not take place and therefore, that meeting did not take place is something I cannot enlighten this body. Because in all our efforts to establish contacts with our colleagues, we did have indications that the meeting would be held and then at a certain point, communications ceased. Hence the proposed midterm review and planning for this meeting at the central level could not come about.

In December, there was going to be the premiere of a film on Tibet and along with it was planned some kind of debate which one of the television stations located in Strasbourg had organized. His Holiness was the principal person they were going to invite for the discussions. I was also invited. I thought that would be an ideal opportunity for our Steering Committee to meet and finalize the preparations for this convention and also review the work we had done so far. One member of the committee, Lord Ennals, had taken seriously ill and could not attend that meeting. We hoped that someone from Britain could deputize for him, but that was not possible. Laima, who is also a member of the committee and who has been very active in all that we have been doing since last year, had some engagement in the United States and she was unable to participate in that meeting. But she deputed a colleague of hers, Andrius Kubilius, to be there. And our colleague from Sweden, Eva, also came for that meeting. The Tibetans were there. The Tibetan parliament was represented. That was where we decided on this meeting, reaffirmed the date, and other nitty-gritty aspects of organizing this convention.

I want to repeat that there has not been much interaction between those colleagues who had participated in the conference in Delhi and therefore, whatever reports we have in our possession have been made by Tibetan groups that are operating all over the world. In other words, the Tibetans themselves or the support groups which are very closely working with Tibetans, are the ones who have supplied us with the information about various activities that have taken place.

Now, we have reports that in the last year, i.e. since the last conference, resolutions on Tibet have been passed in the parliaments of Belgium, Australia, Norway, the E.U. and the U.S. Congress. These are resolutions. Then Tibet was discussed as an issue in the parliaments in New Zealand, Canada, Venezuela, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Denmark and Sweden. There was a hearing in the House of Commons in Britain. Five new parliamentary support groups have been formed since our last convention. These are in New Zealand, France, Poland, Estonia and Latvia.

Among other things, we had decided that parliamentary delegations would go to Tibet. There was a U.S. Congressional staff delegation. Paul is here and I think he was part of that delegation went to Tibet. The U.N. sent a special support rapporteur to Tibet to study the human rights situation there. One of the decisions we had taken was to put pressure by governments on China to enter into negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Though I am unable at the moment to make any statement on the number of governments that have made such an effort, we are aware that efforts of that nature have been made at various levels on various occasions by various governments.

This is what I have to report in terms of what we have done in the last 14 months. I would like to make only two observations: 1) That we have not been as vigorously active as we should have been. That co-ordination among the various parliamentarians as groups or as individuals has been next to nothing. Due to the lack of coordination, much of the work that we have done so far could not be projected as an achievement of the new initiatives that we have taken as parliamentarians since last year.

I feel this needs to be rectified. In the discussion that we will now be having, two things will have to be taken up. One is that a lot of other activities must be taking place, but we have not been able to collect the information. Therefore, we could like to have reports from colleagues about the activities that have taken place in their respective countries. And the other is how do we rectify the ways or our work so that we are able to interact more effectively. We held our first conference in India, an Asian country, and I think it was appropriate that it should take place in India, next door to China and bordering on Tibet.

The second conference is taking place here in Europe. While planning our activities for the coming 12 months, I feel it is necessary for us to think of holding a conference which takes place in a country which can play perhaps that most significant role, next only to India. I am saying next only to India in all seriousness, because India has to play the most significant role in the ultimate fight (I'm using the word fight in all its ramifications) to see that Tibet achieves independence.

I do not make any proposal to start with, but I'm sure there will be some suggestions in this regard in the course of the discussions.

Senator Consiglio Di Nino, Canada: At the present time, on the floor of the Senate of Canada, there is a resolution that I introduced. There are number of points in that. But the point on which we all can agree is the one which calls on the Canadian government to pressure China to commence negotiations without preconditions with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Government-in-Exile of the Tibetans. This is currently being debated. So, by the time we meet next year, I shall hopefully be able to report that a resolution has been passed at least in one of the Houses of the Canadian parliament.

Ian Ravell, M.P., New Zealand: Can I say that in New Zealand I am preparing, in consultation with the Tibetan support group on New Zealand, a resolution. I hope to be able to transform this into a debatable motion. But it will require some government acquiescence. It will be on the lines of the Canadian resolutions, where we will be calling upon the New Zealand government to put pressure on the Chinese to enter into negotiations with representatives of Tibet without preconditions. We are pursuing this line and we have an enthusiastic support group in the parliament in New Zealand.

Another thing I would like to share with the colleagues here. Twelve months ago I joined the Speaker of our House of Representatives and went to China. As the Speaker was the head of the delegation, we got to meet some very senior people in China, starting from Vice-President Rong, the Chairman of the People's Congress and Deputy Chairman of the People's Congress in Beijing.

And I had the opportunity many times to put the issue of Tibet directly before the Chinese leaders and groups, I went to such an extent that I annoyed the Chinese leaders considerably. In fact, the Deputy Chairman of the People's Congress was very rude to me at a meeting in Beijing in the Great Hall of the People and the Ambassador for New Zealand, who as with me, explained that the Chinese protocol had lost a great deal of face

by taking out his anger on a visitor to the Congress. Thus, we are using every opportunity to raise issue of Tibet with China and whenever we come across the Chinese Ambassador in New Zealand, we press the issue of Tibet and demand negotiations without preconditions.

Paul Berkowitz, International Relations Committee, House of Representatives, U.S.A.: It is a great honour to speak so soon after a representative from India, the world's largest and most vibrant democracy, and the nation that provides home and safe haven to our Tibetan friends and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Bonnie Coe and I bring you the warmest regards and best wishes from Congressman Benjamin Gilman, the Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, and Senator Pell, who is Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for 12 years.

The United States is celebrating Memorial Day this weekend and any good politician especially veterans of World War II, such as Benjamin Gilman and Pell, know that they had better be home marching down the main street with their fellow veterans of foreign wars.

But it is unfortunate that the Leader of the Tibetan Parliament was not able to join us yesterday. The U.S., and especially the U.S. Congress, supported Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Russia and other nations around the world in their struggle for freedom. Accordingly, I do not understand why Rinpoche was delayed from joining us.

In 1987, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution condemning the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Soon after I participated in a congressional visit to India and Nepal to meet with our Tibetan friends.

In Nepal, I visited some of the Tibetan freedom fighters whom the United States supported during their struggle for Tibet. And I will never forget that visit. We went into the leader's office and there was a long period of silence. Behind him, on the wall, there was a picture of His Holiness and a candle below it. A few inches below there was an old picture of John F. Kennedy.

I looked at the picture and I looked at the man in the room. And after a long period of silence, the leader said to us: "We knew you would come back, because friends don't abandon friends. And America stands up for what is right".

America does not always stand up for what is right. But on this occasion it did. I felt very ashamed and embarrassed. All of us did. Perhaps the White House does not consider Tibet to be an independent country. But we were very determined at that time that we would make sure that the U.S. Congress would make that statement. And I would like to read to you the resolution that we passed in 1991.

"It is the sense of the Congress that Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai, is an occupied country under the established principles of international law;

“Tibet’s true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile as recognized by the Tibetan people;

“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;

“historical evidence of this separate identity may be found in Chinese archival documents and traditional dynastic histories, in the United States’ recognition of Tibetan neutrality during World War II, and in the fact that a number of countries including the United States, Mongolia, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, India, Japan, Great Britain and Russia recognized Tibet as an independent nation or dealt with Tibet independently of any Chinese government;

“in 1949-50, China launched an armed invasion of Tibet in contravention of the International law;

“it is the policy of the United States to oppose aggression and other illegal use of force by one country against the sovereignty of another as a manner of acquiring territory, and to condemn violations of international law, including the illegal occupation of one country by another; and

“numerous United States’ declarations since the Chinese invasion have recognized Tibet’s right to self-determination and the illegality of China’s occupation of Tibet.”

This month the U.S. Congress has acted on a legislation, instructing the White House to establish a special envoy for Tibet. Permit me to read this to you.

“The Congress makes the following findings:

“The Government of the people’s Republic of China withholds meaningful participation in the government of Tibet from Tibetans and has failed to abide by its own constitutional guarantee of autonomy for Tibetans.

“The Government of the People’s Republic of China is responsible for the destruction of much of Tibet’s cultural and religious heritage since 1959 and continues to threaten the survival of Tibetan culture and religion.

“The Government of the People’s Republic of China, through direct and indirect incentives, has established discriminatory development programs which have resulted in an overwhelming flow of Chinese immigrants into Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai in recent years, and have excluded Tibetans from participation in important policy decisions, further threatening traditional Tibetan life.

“The President and the Congress have determined that the promotion of human rights in Tibet and the protection of Tibet’s religion and culture are important elements in United States-China relations and have urged senior members of the Government of the People’s Republic of China to enter into substantive negotiations on these matters with the Dalai Lama or his representative.

“The Dalai Lama has repeatedly stated his willingness to begin substantive negotiations without pre-conditions. The government of the People’s Republic of China has failed to respond in a good-faith manner by reciprocating a willingness to begin negotiations without preconditions and no substantive negotiations have begun.

“There will be within the Department of State, a United States Special Envoy for Tibet, who shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

“The United States Special Envoy for Tibet shall hold office at the pleasure of the President.

“The United States Special Envoy for Tibet shall have the personal rank of an ambassador.

“The United States Special Envoy for Tibet is authorized and encouraged to promote substantive negotiations between the Dalai Lama and or his representatives and seniors members of the government of the People’s Republic of China, to promote good relations between the Dalai Lama and his representatives and the United States Government, including meetings with members or representatives of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and to travel regularly throughout Tibet and Tibetan refugee settlements.

“The U.S. Special Envoy for Tibet shall consult with the Congress on policies relevant to Tibet and its future welfare of all Tibetan refugees”.

If I can have a few minutes, I would like to speak on China in the larger context. One of the World’s most important initiatives in recent years has been to curtail proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. But who do we find as the most persistent and cunning at undermining this policy? It is China. And to whom are they selling these weapons and missile technology? To nations engaged in the destabilization and provocative agitations in South Asia and the Middle East.

In Burma, the regime hold Aung Sang Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1990 and duly elected head of state, under house arrest. Since 1993, Burma received as much as \$ 1 billion worth of arms from China. There is today no trouble spot in the world that I can think of where China is not actively engaged on the wrong side, i.e. on the side of totalitarianism.

The idea that today’s China is not expansionist and not aggressive is simply a fallacy. The Chinese are acquiring advance fighter planes, air-borne refuelling capability, guided missiles, warships and advance missile guidance and radar technology. China’s recent

show of strength in the South China Sea proves that they are willing to project their forces.

China's far-reaching improvement in its armed forces leaves many Asian countries feel increasingly threatened by this giant in the neighbourhood. Who are these Asian countries which feel increasingly threatened by China? They are the emerging democracies in the region: countries like Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, even Japan. In South Asia, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the northeastern provinces of India all show up as parts of China on the map of Greater China, published in a 1954 Chinese textbook.

Is China destined to become a great aggressive superpower of the 21st century? Not necessarily. But any American foreign policy that doesn't take seriously the reality of that threat is a policy with its head in the sand. A forward looking policy towards China, a policy not based on comforting lies that we tell ourselves, must come to grips with the real dangers that a powerful totalitarian China represents. And we must come to grips with the flaws in our current policy under which we may be actively helping to bring about this dangerous state of affairs.

The first myth we must dispel is that free market reforms in China will eventually lead to democracy. The controlled free market experiment in China has one preeminent goal: to enable the ruling class, the Communist Party of China, to stay in power in China. There are ample historical precedents for a totalitarian government harnessed to a power of capitalistic engine. It is known as fascism and Adolf Hitler was its most successful practitioner. What is happening today in China is the progressive establishment of the world's first successful fascist State that is accepted and fully integrated into the world economy and the community of nations.

Don't think this fact is being missed by other former Communists and would be dictators. The Chinese model of political oppression and free market is being increasingly looked at as a shining alternative to the unpredictable freedoms of democracy. And why not? The Chinese economy is growing at a rate of 12 percent per year. And America is feeding that roaring engine with unencumbered trade. So much so that the American trade deficit with China is increasing faster than with any other country. So, why shouldn't future despots all over the world look to the Chinese model: in economics, let the market decide and in politics, crush the opposition without mercy.

The bottom line in my message today is this. The American strategic policy towards China over the last 20 years is no longer serving the vital national interests of the United States. We have been conciliatory and the Chinese have taken it for weakness. We have sought mutually beneficial commerce and the Chinese have taken us to the cleaners, using unfair trade rules and slave and prison labour.

Most important of all, we are fuelling the success of a potentially vast and powerful enemy: the totalitarian State, call it communist or call it fascist, with an expansionistic history and ruthless disregard for all the human values that we have fought too many

wars to protect. With an eye on short-term profit and the lack of political imagination, we traded with and built up Saddam Hussain, and we paid the inevitable price of war. But Desert Storm was a mere exercise in comparison with the crisis we will face if the totalitarian China succeeds, and having digested Tibet, if it decides to invade another of its neighbours.

The policy of containment of the Soviet Union was a policy based on a cold assessment of the threat and determined toughness in standing up to that threat. Our policy towards China today must be just as determined and just as tough. If we do not now turn our energy and our courage to the task of pushing China towards real democratic reforms and real improvements in human rights practices, then we will be a generation that failed to protect our long-term vital national interests of our nations.

We have the tools to non-violently push China towards freedom and democracy. We have failed only to use them. If we fail to see the threat and we fail to take early measures to avert that threat, the future generation will pay a high price for our failure.

Juris Sinka: Before I eat humble pie on behalf of our support group in Latvia, let me say that I was greatly impressed by Mr. Berkowitz's statement. I am beginning to despair that no good signal would be forthcoming from the United States of America.

Now, also having read the report that the Congress and the Senate, under the inspiring leadership of Mr. Gilman, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, have adopted a decision favourable to Tibet. So, although still despairing about the present U.S. Administration, there is hope yet.

Now the humble pie. Latvia has been preoccupied with its own internal matters. So no resolutions or decisions have come out of our Parliament yet. However, the Tibetan support groups here had an important visit by the representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Riga. He was able to address the public of Latvia at the university. And apart from that our society has also a couple of Tibetan support and religious groups; our parliamentary support and religious groups; our parliamentary support group's activities have otherwise been confined largely to individual efforts.

Wherever we go, now are in the Council of Europe and in various committees, Tibet is always on our lips as is the name of Chechnya. In the case of Chechnya, I must honestly say that our parliament has been more forthcoming and we have and had several decisions and resolutions.

At the moment what is actually happening in Tibet is that genocide is still in progress and in Chechnya also there is a terrible genocide. These go hand in hand. Sometimes, one gets almost confused in despair to think of these two nations, not to mention many others places in a similar situation.

Again I return briefly to what I said earlier today. Where are the morals of our big nations, which apparently ruled the world and determined its progress in the United

Nations and the Security Council, the nations who supported the Baltic States in all those years as our friends? But where are they now? Can't their morals be changed? Can't Might is Right be reversed to Right is Might at the end of this century?

There are all sorts of ways, economic and other, of influencing China and Russia. Because there the thinking still belongs to the past. We feel it every day.

Mohan Singh, M.P., India: I would like to add only two things to what Mr. George Fernandes said. In India, Shri S.P. Malviya, who is sitting behind me, moved a resolution in support of the Tibetan cause in the Upper House of the Indian Parliament. In the Lower House, during the discussion of the Presidential address, I tried to circulate a cut motion regarding the Tibetan refugee problems, their human rights problems and their right to self-determination.

Apart from this, we started a signature campaign throughout the country and nearly two million people and about 100 parliamentarians belonging to different political parties signed a memorandum in favour of the Tibetan people. And this memorandum was handed over to the Speaker of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament through a delegation led by us. We are making efforts for a mass mobilization in support of the Tibetan cause.

I must admit that we could not do as much as we should have done. Even then, we are trying our best. I request this august house to send a fact-finding delegation of parliamentarians throughout the world into Tibet with the support of the UN Human Rights Commission. It will be a gesture of goodwill in favour of the Tibetan people. This is my request to the house and I hope the house will pass a resolution to this effect.

Maret Guhttor, M.P., Sami Parliament, Norway: As a member of the Sami Parliament in Norway, I am very happy to be able to participate in this convention. An annual convention on the Tibetan issue is very important to enable us to fight the Chinese occupation of Tibet peacefully. I look upon this convention as an opportunity for parliamentarians from many countries all over the world to raise their voice in support of the Tibetan people and their rightful leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in their fight for independence.

In May, last year, the Sami Parliament passed a resolution on the Tibetan situation. I would like to quote from this resolution:

"The Sami Parliament supports the basic rights of the Tibetan people to decide upon their own development in accordance with the principles of self-determination as laid down by the United Nations. Today Tibet is an occupied country. The Chinese invasion is a breach of international law and a threat to the security of nations.

"The Sami Parliament condemns the constant breaches of human rights, perpetrated by the Chinese authorities against the Tibetan people.

"The Sami Parliament protests against the Chinese occupation, demands its immediate withdrawal and the return of a free Tibet to the Tibetan people.

"We request the release of political prisoners and the rights of foreign delegations to travel freely in Tibet without restrictions.

"The Sami Parliament gives its support to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the rightful leader of Tibet and his campaign of non-violence in the pursuit of a free and independent Tibet.

"The Chinese authorities must unconditionally undertake negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his Government-in-Exile with a view to finding quick solutions.

"The Sami Parliament backs the declaration and plan of action decided upon in New Delhi, India, in March 1994, pledging its support for Tibet's struggle for freedom and independence."

The Sami Parliament received an answer from the Chinese Ambassador in Norway. We have made copies of the resolution and the Chinese answer to this, and these we will give to you all.

Since then, we have heard that the situation in Tibet is constantly becoming worse. China has shown no willingness in any way to make the conditions for Tibetans better. The Sami Parliament is deeply worried about the future development for the Tibetan people under Chinese rule.

The Chinese occupation of Tibet is in the process of becoming a complete genocide, wiping out a whole people with their long history and culture. The headline for this year's convention, "Saving a People from Annihilation", should be taken very seriously and we must really have this in mind during these three days of discussions.

Once again, I would like to express the Sami Parliament's strongest support to the Tibetan people and their struggle for freedom.

George Fernandes: The theme of our convention says it all: "Tibet, Saving A People From Annihilation". It is a cause as great and noble as any that humanity has been called upon to espouse. And it is this that has brought us all to Vilnius.

There are today communities and ethnic groups in many parts of the world which are fighting to assert their separate identities. Some of them may not be entirely justifiable struggles. Nevertheless, the world is witnessing the drawing of new boundaries, following the breakup of the nation-states that came into existence as a result of empire building. Of the 185 member-states of the United Nations, 27 have sought and secured membership in the last one decade.

The Chinese empire, for that is what it is, is also going through its own convulsions. The people in the provinces that have become affluent have begun to openly ask why they have to share their riches with the underdeveloped parts of the country.

These are developments foretold. The artist who drew the map of China, showing the cracks on its face, for the cover of the Far Eastern Economic Review of 11 May 1995, was not indulging in map bashing. He was drawing a message that has been coming loud and clear from China for more than five years now. The Review sums up the first part of its three parts focussed on China with the following comments, and I quote, "As China's increasingly wealthy regions go their own ways, Beijing is fighting to preserve its political authority and economic control. It will be a long and perhaps futile battle."

A secret report submitted to the Government of India by a very senior public official, after an official visit to China in September 1994, says, "Concern and apprehension have also been expressed in respect of growing regional disparities as between the prosperous economic zones and other areas of China. There are increasing concerns about the unity and integrity of the country in this context. There is also concern for the overall growth of employment which has implications for social cohesion and political stability. Increasingly, the prosperous provinces are also asserting their autonomy.

"In the matter of employment also, provinces have come to be increasingly protective against entry of people from outside their area. Sons of the Soil policy is being increasingly taken recourse to by the provinces in the matter of providing employment."

I may add that this is a report submitted by a member of the Cabinet of the Government of India.

There is, however, another view of China which will cause deep worry to those who are concerned about peace in Asia and in the world. It is a view that finds articulation in The Economist of London of 19 April 1995, which has China as its cover story. Taking note of the economic growth achieved by the people of Asia, who account for three-fifths of the world's five billion people, it says, "Whether the economic boom continues, or eventually turns to bust-up, depends on how all the countries of Asia learn to manage its most troublesome power, China."

That its internal problems have not inhibited China from becoming a troublesome power is a fact that does not need any great elucidation. From the fateful day, 7 October 1950, when the Chinese armies invaded Tibet, an act that was then described by the Indian Socialist leader, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, as babay murder, China has been engaged in one unmitigated saga against its neighbours while at the same time indulging in mass killing of Chinese People from the day of the proclamation of the Chinese Peoples' Republic to the day of the massacre at Tiananmen Square.

India has been perhaps the worst victim of China's cartographic and military aggression. It first laid claim to Indian territory on 17 July 1954, and soon after began a series of

aggressive incursions into India. It unleashed a full-scale war on India on 10 October 1962 and continues to illegally occupy 1,19,000 sq. km. of Indian territory.

Korea, Vietnam and the then USSR have been at the receiving ends of China's guns. Today, its territorial claims to everything in the South China Sea has placed it on a confrontationist course with Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Indonesia. Its occupation of the Paracel Islands, partial seizure of the Spratleys while laying claim to all the islands and the recent punch in the nose it delivered to the Philippines demonstrate that China means to have its way with whatever it claims as belonging to it.

Mongolia, a country that been independent since 1921, is beginning to feel the pressure of the Chinese. An Asian diplomat in Ulan Bator is quoted by The Review as saying, "The Mongolians have seen what has happened to Inner Mongolia and Tibet. They know that there is precious little they can do to keep out the more powerful and much more numerous Chinese once the Russians are gone."

Another foreign diplomat in Ulan Bator is quoted as saying that the Dalai Lama's visit to Mongolia in September 1994 made the Chinese really furious. The Chinese empire may be approaching the Armageddon. But that has not changed the attitude of its rulers towards the Tibetans.

Every effort on the part of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to enter into talks is being rebuffed with verbal violence of increasing intensity. Yet, the Chinese never tire of saying, "Except for the independence of Tibet, all other questions can be negotiated and the door to negotiations remains wide open."

The Dalai Lama has pointed out that the last such statement was made by a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman on 25 August 1993. It will soon be eight years since the Dalai Lama spelled out on 21 September 1987 the following Five Point Peace Plan for resolving the Tibetan question:

1. Transformation of the whole of Tibet into a Zone of Ahimsa (peace and non-violence).
2. Abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.
3. Respect for the Tibetan people's 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 relations between the Tibetan and the Chinese peoples.

As an agenda for a peaceful solution, these five points were unexceptionable. But they did not evoke a positive response from China. Instead there was a display of more cussedness through wide and baseless charges against the Dalai Lama. Undaunted by this

response, His Holiness on 15 June 1988, in a speech to the European Parliament, went on to further elaborate his plan. He said in so many words, "China could remain responsible for Tibet's foreign policy and maintain a restricted number of military installations in Tibet for defence until a regional peace conference is convened and Tibet is transformed into a neutral peace sanctuary."

When His Holiness the Dalai Lama declares that a free Tibet can be the best guarantor of peace in Asia, his first thought must be to see the normalization of relations between India and China. He knows better than most other that the September 1993 agreement between India and China on maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China border areas is for the Chinese just one more piece of paper like the many such agreements they had signed earlier to buy time or to lull the other side into inaction. The agreement may have enabled India to transfer 35,000 troops from the Himalayan ranges into other active sectors. But it has not in any way dealt with the question of over 119,000 square kilometres of Indian territory presently under Chinese occupation.

The uneasy relations based on territorial disputes between India and China are the root of some of the military alliances that have emerged in Asia. China sees in Pakistan an ally who can be activated in any eventual confrontation with India to decide the unfinished war of 1962. China has been a major arms supplier to Burma and is presently engaged in various activities to make the Burmese armed forces dependent on it. Besides arming the Burmese army with the latest weaponry, it is upgrading its naval and air force capabilities. Its assistance to Burma to build a naval base on the Cocos Islands, close to the Andamans, is not as innocent as both may wish to suggest. China is on the threshold of acquiring a blue water naval capability and Burma's military rulers are willing to oblige China with bases for favours received.

On 15 May 1995 China carried out one more underground nuclear test explosion at Lop Nor. This is the first of the planned five tests China intends to carry out before the end of 1996. The test came within four days of the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. What needs to be noted is that the explosion came after China, along with the United States, Russia, Britain and France, agreed to the UN-convened convention to work towards total nuclear disarmament, including the completion of a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by next year. Dr. Gill of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has said that the primary aim of these tests is for modernization of China's nuclear arsenal with particular emphasis on miniaturization.

Between 1989 and 1993 China has also emerged as the sixth largest weapons exporter in the world. Though its sales worth US \$ 5,742 million cannot be compared to those of the United States and the USSR (now Russia), it is in the same league as the other three major arms exporters, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, with the defence budget variously estimated between US\$ 25 and 30 billion for the last year. China is the most armed nation in the entire Asian region, with a nuclear arsenal that includes Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles.

What all these demonstrate is that China would pursue policies, nuclear or otherwise, as suit its own domestic and extra-territorial interests as it has always done.

SIPRI reports that on 8 July 1996, James Woosley, CIA Director, told the US Congress that China is "a country that is most aggressively recruiting CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) scientists to help with a wide number of weapons programs". China has also approached Russia to improve the range and accuracy of its ballistic missiles, and Ukraine to improve its ballistic missiles technology.

China's unconcealed ambitions to be a global superpower and a regional bully are at the root of the arms build-up it is engaged in. At the end of the conference which decides to extend indefinitely the NPT, the 178 nations that have signed the treaty agreed to recognize China along with the United States, Russia, Britain and France, as the only five legitimate nuclear powers.

China has indeed come a long way from that day in July 1971, when Henry Kissinger, the U.S. Secretary of State, made his secret visit to Beijing to recruit China as an ally in America's efforts to overwhelm the USSR and pull it down from its superpower status. Today, insofar as China is concerned, the United States has jettisoned all its expressed human rights and all other civilizational concerns, because it considers the former as a market that should be cultivated to enrich itself. Mr. Ron Brown, the present Secretary of Commerce, has made a statement almost in these words to that effect.

With the USSR disintegrated and a debilitated Russia still trying to come to terms with itself, China has acquired the political and military clout with which it seeks to terrorize its neighbours. In the process, it has become the biggest threat to peace in Asia.

Appeasement of China may buy some time for those indulging in it. But history is full of instances which show that those who appease a bully live only to regret it.

Against the backdrop of the attitude of the United States and European powers, who have chosen to put profit before human rights in their approach to China, the stand taken by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the question of Tibet's freedom and identity must command the respect and admiration of all those concerned with freedom and peace in the world.

This month, the world is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II. For the countries of the western world, it is an occasion to rejoice at the triumph of liberal, democratic values over fascism.

But for the countries which were still under colonial rule, the end of the war saw the emergence of the forces that enabled them to secure their independence, for some through non-violent struggles, for others after bloody conflicts of high or low intensity.

The last five decades have seen most of these newly-independent countries of Asia strive to create a better life for their people with varying degrees of success.

Therefore, for the people of these countries, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war has a very special meaning. About the same time, the world, or at least a major part of it, should have been celebrating another anniversary. Forty years ago, from 18 to 24 April 1955, the first Afro-Asian Conference took place in Bandung. It was convened by the prime ministers of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia and Pakistan.

In addition to the sponsoring countries, 24 countries, the People's Republic of China, participated in it. India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said at the end of the conference, and I quote: "We have reasons to feel happy that at this conference representatives of half of the population of the world has declared its adherence to tenets that should guide their conducts and govern the relations of the world if world peace and cooperation are to be achieved."

A year before that, on 29 April 1954, India and China had signed an agreement on trade and intercourse between Tibet Autonomous Region of China and India. It was this agreement which for the first time enunciated the following five principles, Panch Sheela, to govern mutual relations. The five principles are: Mutual respect of each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence.

It was these five principles that formed the basis of the Bandung Declaration on the promotion of world peace and cooperation. India's then President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, observed on 21 February 1955 that this "agreement confirmed the friendship between these two great countries which is so important for peace in Asia and the world. China's Prime Minister Chou En-Lai stated on 28 November 1954 that "the friendship and co-operation between India and China, which were the first to initiate the five principles of peaceful co-existence, are of special significance to the promotion of world peace and international co-operation."

True, these declarations and agreements had a surrealistic air about them. China had already overrun Tibet in 1950. If they are cited here it is only to emphasize the point that peace, not only in Asia but peace in the world, hinges on the relations between India and China, which together account for every two of five persons living on our planet. And there is no denying that Tibet holds the key to those relations and therefore to the future of peace.

In an essay he wrote in mid-1964 on some aspects of India's China policy, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia had stated that India helped China do baby murder in Tibet. She must atone as best she can. She must strive to prevent the total disappearance of a whole people from history.

This view was echoed by the representative of the Indian government in the UN General Assembly in 1965 when he said, "the naked truth which all of us must face is that the Chinese government is determined to obliterate the people of Tibet."

I have always held that India owes it to the Tibetan people, to itself and to the freedom-loving people of the world, to do everything in its power to restore to the Tibetan people their lost freedom.

No price can be considered too great for India to achieve this objective. India's own security is closely linked with a free and neutral Tibet. That India has not lived up to the expectations of the Tibetan people is an unpleasant fact of history, particularly when one knows that the world will respond when India takes the initiative on Tibet.

Be that as it may, I believe the time has come to make clear to China that the world cannot sit back and look at the annihilation of the Tibetan race taking place before our eyes, a crime as reprehensible as another effort at extermination of race that was enacted before a world that has chose to appease. That proved to be a prelude to the launching of the war that ended this month, 50 years ago.

As a body of persons who represent the will of vast sections of the peoples of their respective countries, the World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet meeting in Vilnius must express itself clearly without any equivocation that 1) we stand for the freedom of Tibet; 2) we endorse the peace proposal of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; 3) we commend the democratic constitution, proposed for Tibet by the Tibetan leadership; 4) we call upon the Chinese government to end forthwith the repression of the Tibetan people; 5) we demand that China end its aggression against Tibet and negotiate with the representatives of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and 6) we urge the governments and the peoples of the world to exert every possible pressure to make China vacate Tibet and abandon its aggressive designs on its neighbours.

In pursuance of these commitments I propose that the convention resolve 1) that all the parliamentarians present here, and those supporting these propositions, exert continuing pressure on their respective governments to grant recognition to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; 2) that the cause of Tibet's freedom and the plight of the people of Tibet be constantly brought up for discussion in our respective parliaments; 3) that a delegation of parliamentarians be organized under the auspices of the World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet to visit Beijing and to persuade China to open talks with the Representatives of the Dalai Lama; (5) that a collective statement on the conclusion of this conference be sent to heads of state and heads of governments of all countries of the world.

Seishu Makino, M.P., Japan: It is a great pleasure and honour for me to get an opportunity to speak at this convention. I am Seishu Makino, a member of the House of Representatives in Japan. I am attending this convention as an individual and not as a representative of the Japanese government or parliament or any of the political parties.

I can point out that the Japanese interest in Tibet is growing nowadays. However, this interest is more on the tourism value of Tibet, which is one of the world's unexplored regions. This interest is also because of the cultural interest in Tibetan Buddhism and the person of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a receiver of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The majority of Japanese have not shown much interest in the Tibetan political issue, raised and supported widely by the international community today.

I can say that discussing the Tibetan issue deeply is considered taboo in the Japanese Parliament. This is because Tibet is far from Japan and it is thought to be a part of China. The indifference is also because of the recent economic progress made by China. The Japanese are more interested in seeking business opportunities rather than in the protection of human rights, environment and Tibetan culture. In other words, people find no merit in getting involved in the Tibetan issues.

Frankly, till last September, I was as indifferent to the Tibetan issue as any other average Japanese today is.

Last September, I witnessed His Holiness the Dalai Lama getting actively involved in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, and that made me more determined to devote myself, since then, to activities in support of the Tibetan cause.

After returning home, I studied the Tibetan issue and discussed it deeply with members of the Representatives Office in Japan.

Last December, from 23 to 27, I visited Dharamsala in India and met His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I also had a meeting with the Tibetan government officials and visited many institutions there. I had an in-depth discussion with young exiled Tibetans and many other young people who had come from abroad as volunteers.

After visit to Dharamsala, I realized that:

1. In spite of the difficult circumstances and shortage of resources and funds, the Tibetan people are optimistic about their country's future. They are also very much positive in their conviction of holding on to the ideals of their country.
2. Dharamsala is managed through a good and impressive administrative system. It is clean at every spot and comfortable to live in.
3. Not only the members of the Exile Government, but every Tibetan in Dharamsala is confident in his life and committed to his cause, which makes me think of it more as a sovereign state rather than a Government-in-exile.

In April of this year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Japan after a gap of ten years. The visit was purely religious in nature.

It was my privilege that I could see His Holiness during that visit. I report to you that at the welcome reception held for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2,000 people turned up, which was double the figure expected.

I also visited Tibet for five days from 2 May. During the visit, I verified with my own sensibilities and faculties the things I had heard in Dharamsala and from Chinese propaganda. Consequently, I can say:

1. I am convinced that a nation that doesn't believe in religion can never rule a country in which Buddhism plays a strong role.
2. It is my belief that China invests so much in Tibet merely to strengthen its control over Tibet and not so much to improve the lives of the Tibetan people.
3. There is a great danger that the Tibetan cultural will completely disappear on account of its destruction by the Chinese, as clearly illustrated by renovated temples, which were erstwhile destroyed by the Chinese. The temples renovated by the Chinese visibly lack Tibetan cultural touch.
4. It is a great source of reassurance and encouragement to see pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in such temples rebuilt by Chinese. The firm spirit on Tibetans in their reliance on Buddhism is remarkable though they may be quiet in the _expression of their aspirations.

From my experience with the Tibetan people in Dharamsala and Tibet, I can say that their eyes and smiles are the most beautiful thing.

I am attending this convention after all such experiences and smiles. I am well determined to devote myself to the issue of Tibet and participate vigorously in pro-Tibet activities upon my return to Japan, and:

1. I will pool the goodwill of the other members of Parliament in establishing an Association of Parliamentary Tibet Supporters, which will support the activities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and/or to start a society to study the Tibetan issues.
2. I will ask members of the Parliament to participate in conferences, held in support of Tibet, as frequently as possible.
3. I will ask the Japanese Government to adopt a strong policy, underlined by its commitment to justice, in its dealing with China. The Japanese Government, however, always expresses strong opposition to Chinese nuclear tests.
4. I will ask the Japanese Government authorities to work towards establishing a funding for the Tibetan Government out of our Overseas Development Aid fund.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to emphasize the fact that there are people who risk their lives to protect their religion, (Buddhism), under the most severe circumstances, and who are devoted, heart and soul, to rebuild, through non-violence, their country that has been actually invaded. There are also people who are devoted and committed to support and stand up for a cause like this.

It will be my great pleasure to meet such people and to introduce each other in order to widen such exchanges.

It is my fervent hope that an independent and free Tibet will be realized through the collective effort and goodwill of people all over the world.

T.N. Chaturvedi, M.P., India: Mr. George Fernandes has given the historical origin of the problem, the future that not only India committed but also many other countries. He has laid down for us the perspective or the position as it is today and outlined what can be done in the future.

I would like to add one or two things. In the first place, I would like to mention, Mr. Chairman Sir, that not only is China becoming a grave danger through its armament programmes, it is also spreading this danger throughout the world by selling conventional arms as well as ballistic missiles and by promising to build atomic reactors in various other countries. And that is why Mr. Fernandes has rightly said that it was almost a slap on the face of the entire world community when China exploded or experimented the latest series of nuclear bomb explosions and that it is the first in the series of five tests that will come.

Secondly, I would like to draw your attention to the misfortune of Myanmar or Burma, which was expected to play a key role in the region on account of its strategic geographical position. Unfortunately, its leader, who is not only a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, but was elected by the voice of the people, is behind the bars today. It was hoped that she would take up the reins of the affairs of the region, but the same person on whom so much hope was pinned is behind the bars.

It is most unfortunate that many of the countries should pay lip service for the release of that distinguished and daring lady while at the same time ignoring fact as to who is really providing the strength to the group of people who are trying to strangle the voice of people in that country.

It has been very rightly said that, somehow or the other, the opportunities for market exploitation or commercial openings have blinded what are known as the very powerful nations (I do not know how to define it) and lured them to side with China.

What is happening today in Tibet is really the violation of all norms and values. Whether it is the question of peace in the world or the question of dismantling the arms arsenals in the world; whether it is the question of respect for human rights or the question of cultural preservation of the entire people, all human concerns, for which, as I said earlier, lip service is paid, are being ignored.

The entire issue of Tibet has been put on the back burner. This, I think, is a challenge to the conscience of humanity today, because the problem of Tibet is human problem and is a problem of human destiny and human conscience.

As my friend, Mr. George Fernandes, has very aptly said, while a lot of work is being done by the NGOs outside parliaments, somehow or the other, limited attempts are being made in parliaments, though much more could be done there. But I think a little bit more insistence and efforts on the part of parliamentarians can certainly underscore and highlight the seriousness of the problem, not as a problem of history, but as a problem of the present and for the future.

This is what is important and that is why a much greater effort should be made, apart from the specific proposals and suggestions made to highlight this problem in the international press.

I know the difficulties in making this particular effort. But galvanized public opinion has to accompany any effort that has to be made within the parliaments themselves. That is why I feel that the peace proposals that His Holiness the Dalai Lama made and his captivating, elevating and charismatic presence always helps in eliminating and diffusing tensions, which are otherwise inherent in discussions of any disputed problem. But here is a situation when his pervading influence still exists.

Unfortunately, the world opinion, and particularly, the leading powers of the world, do not realize that they should try to make use of his presence, of his tranquillizing influence on his people, not only in the interest of the people of Tibet, but, I think, for peace in the world as a whole.

That is why this convention is crucial at this time when there is a general feeling that the problem of Tibet has been relegated to the background and that the problem of Tibet is a matter of only history books. But we know that many things which were earlier considered impossible did happen. It is the assertion of human dignity, human personality and human conscience which makes it possible for many things to happen and I think that the issue of Tibet is one such instance, which we know is going to be a determining point in history. Only we have to wake up and try to rededicate ourselves to the resolution of this issue on the level of the entire world and entire humanity through parliamentary institutions.

Algirdas Endriukaitis, M.P., Lithuania: It is difficult to look at the beautiful sky and the sun of Lithuania when we remember that over a million Tibetans were annihilated.

Here, I want to refer to the covenant adopted at the United Nations in December 1948, concerning the prevention of genocide and punishment for genocide. Please allow me to put a question to ourselves as parliamentarians: What has the world community done to implement this covenant? This covenant clearly states that whatever the size and identity of the offender, it is the responsibility of the international court and other international institutions to bring them to book.

China is responsible for its actions in Tibet, and it should have been held responsible. Why do we have such covenants if they are dead and cannot be applied to China, who is also the member of the Security Council? This is a question to all of us. How should we move in this matter? If there is no moral, political or legal responsibility for this, all our discussions remain fruitless.

In December 1966, an international pact on economic, social and political rights, as well as another covenant on legal rights, were signed under the United Nations' auspices. Even if one were to accept the Chinese claim that Tibet is part of China, the international

legal principle has precedence over the national law of China and, thus, China cannot ignore this covenant. I can give reasons and basis for the enforcement of this covenant.

I would like to ask if any of the participants of this convention could raise the question of holding a referendum in Tibet? Today the number of Chinese population is 6-7 million and in a few years time this number will rise and then it will be too late to do anything. Therefore, the idea of holding a referendum in Tibet should be taken up by us.

Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, Chairman, Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, Dharamsala, India: At the outset, I must apologize for not being able to come here with preparations. I do not have a script which could be systematically presented here. My thoughts are still disorganized. I thought that I would be reaching here one day earlier which would have enabled me to understand the trend of the convention, its discussions and the interests of the participants. Then I could have prepared a presentation which is suitable for the deliberation of the convention.

Since I was delayed by one day, I am not much aware of the discussion which you have had till now. I have been able to hear our great old friend, Mr. George Fernandes, who is a Member of Parliament from India. Therefore, please bear with me for two things: Since I am speaking without a script, I might take a little more of your precious time, and perhaps, some of my statements will be a repetition of what you have already discussed yesterday and this morning.

Anyway, I will try to be brief, and then if there is any point requiring clarifications from me, I would welcome questions after my statement. Here, all the fellow parliamentarians and other participants are very well versed with the problem of Tibet. Therefore, I would like to very briefly mention the perception of the problem by the Tibetans in exile. The occupation of Tibet by the Chinese Communist forces and the ensuing unprecedented human rights violations, destruction of the cultural heritage and human dignity, exploitation of natural resources and degradation of the environment for the last 40 years are now well known to everyone.

In our perception, it is not an isolated case. It is a symptom of a very big civilizational problem, which the entire humanity is facing today. Therefore, we think that it should not be taken as a problem between the Chinese and Tibetans or as a problem of the Tibetan people alone. Unless and until every single human being on this earth is able to enjoy the minimum human dignity, humanity cannot rest and claim that we have established norms of universal human rights or universal human dignity. So, we have to look upon this problem as a problem of humanity as a whole and as a problem of the civilisation which needs to be tackled right at its very source and not at the symptomatic level.

The problem of Tibet is neither a political, nor an ethnic or a racial problem. Tibetans and Chinese had been very good neighbours for more than 1,000 years. Since the 12th Century, we had a very cordial and special relationship as priests and patrons. This priest-patron relationship was a very special relation between two independent sovereign countries. In this relationship, one country looks up to the other country with a sense of

devotion, respect and love. The people of China consider the people of Tibet as their priests, teachers and guide. Therefore, the people of China feel that they have a special responsibility to serve, protect and look after the people of Tibet. We are still grateful to those Chinese emperors, Chinese people, Chinese scholars and many other Chinese artisans and workers who had contributed a great deal in building the civilization of Tibet and its cultural and spiritual heritage.

But in recent times, this relationship was grossly misinterpreted. Claims to Tibet as a part of China amount to the denial of not only our political freedom, but also our right to live, right to survive and the right to a separate identity.

In the world there have been many historical incidents of one country attacking another, ruling it for a number of years, and then the ruled country gradually regaining its freedom. But the Tibet's case is very unique and unparalleled, because China has taken away not only our political freedom, but our entire way of life and way of conscience have been subjected to annihilation.

India was ruled by the British for around two centuries, during which only the political independence or sovereignty of India was taken away. Its way of life, its spiritual heritage, its social structure and everything else was kept intact. Similarly, Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan for quite a number of years. But its ways of life, its civilisation, its cultural heritage, its human dignity and everything else was not destroyed during its rule by Pakistan. The only difference is that the people of Bangladesh did not have political freedom under Pakistan rule.

But in the case of Tibet, it is entirely a different story. Tibet is not only occupied politically by the Chinese force, its national and cultural identity is also being wiped out systematically. China has already declared that the final solution to the Tibetan problem is to make the Tibetan population a tiny minority in their own country so that no one is left to preserve the Tibetanness or to claim the Tibetan identity. This is a very peculiar case of ethnic cleansing which has till now been very successfully implemented by the Chinese authorities.

The most urgent problem facing us today is the Sinification through a policy of demographic change by transferring an enormous number of Chinese population into Tibet. I do not have up-to-date statistics. But according to a one-and-a-half year-old data, the population of Chinese in Tibet is around 7.5 million while the Tibetan population is around six million.

The entire economic development programme in Tibet is designed in such a way that China's population could be consciously or unconsciously transferred to Tibet in the guise of skilled workers, organizers, managerial staff, technicians, and so forth. The entire infrastructural and economical development is to benefit the Chinese and to sustain the population transfer policy which has been very quickly and efficiently implemented during the last two to three years.

Not only that, the Chinese have recently launched a new programme by which the entire military personnel posted in Tibet has to be settled in Tibet after retirement. Their residential permits have to be transferred to Tibet. If they go back to China after their retirement, they will not get any retirement benefit.

And recently, they have been planning to bring several thousand Chinese personnel as support cadres in Tibet. This means they will be posted in all the key positions at district and sub-district levels. Till now only higher-level officials were Chinese, but at the grass-roots level there were Tibetan workers. This is now going to be changed soon.

Since last year, the Chinese government has intensified its repression of Tibetan monasteries, religious freedom and especially the people's devotion to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In their official documents, the Chinese authorities have clearly mentioned that the movement led by the "Dalai clique" is dangerous to the national integration of China, and that, therefore, it must be crushed.

Comparing the Tibetan freedom movement to a snake, the Chinese have said that to kill a snake, its head must be crushed. This refers to their aim of causing physical harm to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Till this time, the Chinese authorities have never been so explicit about their design on the person of His Holiness.

Although only a few Tibetan parents have managed to send their children for education outside Tibet, the authorities have asked them to recall their children to Tibet or be ready to face dire consequences. This despite the fact that no education facilities are made available to Tibetans living inside Tibet. The language, dress, food habits, the way of life, and everything Tibetan is fast being changed. It will not be long before the Tibetan identity is completely lost.

The question now is whether the historical, spiritual and cultural heritages of Tibet have any right to survive, or whether they have any relevance in the 20th and 21st century? This is a very serious question and we have to look at it with all the seriousness due to it.

With this brief statement on the present situation, I would like to talk about our commitment to non-violence as a means of regaining our freedom and keeping our struggle alive."

Our basic commitments are of three things: first the truth, second non-violence, and third democracy. With a commitment to these three basic principles, we are moving ahead with a philosophical background to all our actions. The philosophy background of our action and commitment are the philosophy of interdependence-origination.

The interdependence-origination is a universal philosophy on which we can build cultural, religious, political and social structures in harmony. Unless and until we realize the basic nature of interdependence, there will always be disharmony and imbalance in our daily life as well as in our social and political systems.

However, on top of this commitment and philosophical background, we need a source of inspiration for untiring efforts. We consider that source to be the realization of universal responsibility and a mind of loving kindness: loving kindness to all sentient beings, not only to human beings.

These are the value system of all the Tibetan who follow the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and are endeavouring to regain our freedom through total non-violence.

At this crucial movement, we need your support. Last year a parliamentarian's convention was held in New Delhi. It had been a source of great strength and inspiration not only to the Tibetans in exile, but it was also very highly appreciated by the Tibetans living inside Tibet.

I am very happy that the second convention is convened in this great country, where the memory of occupation is fresh and the realization of the value and importance of freedom is great.

I am very grateful to all the organizers and the parliamentary group of Lithuania convening this second convention. They have worked very hard and untiringly to make this possible and a great success.

I am also glad that inspite of the initial difficulties I have been able to come here and share my thoughts with you.

As I have mentioned in the very beginning, the problem of Tibet is the embodiment of a problem that is pervasive to humanity and civilization as a whole. The peace-loving people, who care for democracy and freedom, must come forward to rescue all the peoples suffering in a similar manner. We have to help not only the Tibetans, but all the peoples who are suffering in the different part of the globe. We must come together and raise our voice with love and compassion and through non-violence. This, I think, is the only remedy to this kind of problem.

In our opinion, except for non-violent resistance, there is no other effective and lasting solution to a problem like this. All those who believe in the civilizational value must come forward to support to the suffering people. In her Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Elie Wiesel said, "Neutrality helps the oppressor never the victim. Silence encourages the tormenter never the tormented." I think this is very true in today's situation. If we do not support the human right violators, or the oppressors and their uncivilised behaviours, we must speak out against them. Taking the role of a silent onlooker is tantamount to supporting the oppressors.

I think I will conclude my statement here. I would welcome questions from you.

Hans Goran Franck: I have four questions. First, what is the strength of Chinese troops in Tibet and has it increased or decreased recently? Secondly, how many political

detainees are there in Tibet? Thirdly, has the death penalty been used in recent times? Finally, how big is the police force in Tibet today?

Prof. S. Rinpoche: The movement of Chinese military forces inside Tibet has always been fluctuating and is kept secret. So we don't have a precise number of military forces inside Tibet. But on a rough estimate, they may not be less than 400,000 or 500,000. Especially, since April 1994, there has been an increase and according to very authentic information, 36,000 new army personnel have been despatched to various areas of Tibet. This was witnessed by people. 36,000 is a definite number. It may be much more. So on the rough estimate, the overall strength of Chinese armed forces in Tibet is not less than 500,000.

Regarding your second question about the political prisoners, we don't have a very definite number. But you can see that large portions of land all around the Lhasa area are occupied by jails and all jails are full with political prisoners. We have with us a list of names and particulars of over 6,000 political prisoners throughout Tibet.

As for the death penalty, this is an expression used where the rule of law prevails. However, no rule of law prevails in China. So, people are killed in various ways. People simply disappear, get lost, etc. These are not death penalties in the Chinese interpretation. The death penalty would connote that there would be a trial and then the passing of a sentence, etc. This procedure does not take place in China. But the killing of people goes on.

To answer your last question now, it is very difficult to differentiate between the army and the police force. The police force is armed and the army is very easily used for police work. One remark which I have heard from western visitor to Tibet is very illustrative. She told me that when martial law was imposed the military was in the street; when martial law was lifted, the military shifted to the terrace, and that is the only difference.

While I don't have the number of police force, I can say that strict vigilance is kept on almost every individual by the police force. The police and military forces are almost interchangeable.

Andrzej Potocki, M.P., Poland: First, I want to ask whether there have been cases of religious institutions like monasteries being dissolved in Tibet? Secondly, are the Tibetan youth, especially young monks, still being forced to serve in the Chinese army? Thirdly, attempts to support resolutions on Tibet at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in the last two years failed because of China's power. Do you think that this lack of success will have a negative impact on the political future of Tibet and on the possibility of negotiations between the Tibetans and the Chinese government?

Prof. S. Rinpoche: For quite sometime now, China has been claiming that it is allowing old monasteries to be rebuilt and that a number of monks are allowed to reside in these monasteries. But there is a ceiling on the number of monks each monastery can admit. We have reports that this ceiling is enforced very strictly nowadays and that the excess

monks and nuns are either disrobed, or expelled, or refused ration cards and other essential supplies.

Many young Tibetans are forced to serve in the Chinese army. But we do not have specific evidence and names of young monks inducted into the Chinese army.

With regard to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, in spite of China's tremendous pressure, political and otherwise, there has been a notable improvement in the situation. Last year, the "no action" motion lost and the motion came for discussion and voting during which China won only by one vote. Twenty countries supported our efforts while 21 supported China. If we continue the efforts and increase the support from parliamentarians and Tibet support groups, I think we will be able to get a resolution in the next few years.

I do not think the past failure of our efforts to get a resolution would have any negative impact. This is because it is very clear that the commission on Human Rights could not deal objectively with the human rights issue and that it was always influenced by political motivations.

Consiglio Di Nino: I have four questions. First, has any progress been made in respect of the attempts of your Government-in-Exile to deal with the Chinese?

Secondly, has there been any change in China's position in admitting Tibetan women's organizations into the forthcoming Women's Conference in Beijing?

Thirdly, are you aware of any products being manufactured in Tibet for world markets?

And lastly, all of us feel a sense of frustration I am sure you and your colleagues feel even more so—about what appears to be from time to time, efforts which don't seem to be achieving the objectives. I wonder if you could share with us any experiences that you had where certain initiatives or events have been more successful in reaching what I would refer to as the Chinese Achilles' Heel or a soft spot?

Prof. S. Rinpoche: Our direct dialogue with China has been suspended for the last time more than one-and-a-half years. I think it was in 1993 that the last delegation went there and could not make any progress. Since then, the dialogue has been kept in suspension.

From our side, we have given up the initiative to renew the dialogue. But His Holiness and the Government-in-Exile have made it very clear that we are still open if China comes forward with a sincere motivation for discussion and dialogue without any preconditions.

His Holiness is still very hopeful for the resumption of the dialogue, because he has always believed that a mutually agreeable solution can be found only when we sit down and discuss the matter. He says that if the discussion does not take place, then the solution cannot be found.

But all our efforts so far have failed. Therefore, His Holiness has appealed to the world community to persuade China to come back to the negotiation table. And we are waiting for that. Our position is very clear. His Holiness has mentioned more than once that if China comes forward for negotiations, our position would be a middle way: neither continuation of the present situation, nor complete separation from China.

But if you ask for the option of the majority of Tibetans, they are now very pessimistic and they do not think that any positive result will come from negotiations with the present regime of China.

Regarding the Tibetan Women's Association, the position has not changed as yet according to my information, and I don't think it will change. They will not allow any delegation from the outside: from the Tibetan Women's Association or any NGO. I am not aware of any massive production taking place in Tibet for the international market.

But we are aware of a number of plans and proposals which might subsequently lead to production of such goods. At the moment they have identified 62 major projects, which are all infrastructural in nature.

Regarding your fourth question, Tibetans are of course concerned that our time is running out. But we are not feeling frustrated. Thirty or forty years is not long time in the life of a nation and there are many nations who had to struggle for a couple of centuries to regain their freedom. Our only concern is that because we are fighting against time, if something untoward happens in the very near future, there will be nothing left which could be identified as Tibet or Tibetans. That is our only concern. Otherwise we are ready to keep up our struggle for hundreds of years.

George Fernandes: I do not wish to ask any question. I just want to make a brief statement. Yesterday, I had an opportunity to be with the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow. It is a part of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Tibet naturally figured in our discussions, because I told them that I was on my way to this conference. I raised the question of Tibet's significance in the on-going or in the developing situation between Russia and China. I know that there are areas of co-operation but there are also areas of conflict. The point that emerged was that it was Xinjiang, not so much Tibet, with which the Russians are concerned.

But the other point that emerged was that between Xinjiang and Tibet, if any kind of co-operation or any kind of understanding develops, then the possibilities of carrying forward this struggle from the Russian point of view are greater. The other point I want to make is only to further elaborate what Prof. Rinpoche stated here. Two years back, almost years ago, in June 1993, I was in Tibet. Mrs. Jaya Jaitley here, who is not a parliamentarian but who is part of our Tibet movement, and her daughter were also with me. We walked into Tibet without a passport, without a visa, without any kind of sanction and took certain risks in the process.

We went up to Khasa. What we saw on the way to Khasa and what we saw in Khasa, where we spent the whole day meeting with lots of people, was that Tibetans were not just second grade citizens but they were almost non-persons in their own country. The Chinese military was in evidence everywhere, the check-posts, the customs posts, you name it, they were all manned by the Chinese military.

Senator Di Nino asked about the Chinese army presence and so on. But here was the situation where it is the army everywhere. We saw a hospital. The hospital was exclusively for the Chinese and not for the Tibetans. New shops were being built for Chinese traders and not for the Tibetans. Tibetans were non-persons in their own country and in a town about six kilometres beyond the border with Nepal. We are therefore faced with the situation where health, education, jobs, you name it, are simply not made available to the Tibetans. We are eyewitness to this. We met and spoke with a large number of Tibetans. We were very fortunate that we had a Nepalese guide who had Tibetan relations and he also took great risks in taking us inside.

One last point, and that is regarding the non-violent that Professor Rinpoche spoke of. I feel that this should not remain only as a thought. It should now be translated into action and this conference should also apply its mind to how it can be made into a wider movement in which there is participation by people from all over the world.

Juris Sinka: As you said, 40 to 50 years is perhaps not a very long time in a nation's life and the Tibetans have infinite patience to put up a long struggle. But a day may soon come when there are not many Tibetans left to protect.

My question is that if we succeed in persuading our governments to take action on Tibet, what sort of pressure can they put on China to change its policy towards Tibet and to withdraw its forces and illegal citizens from Tibet? How do you visualize this? I realise it is not an easy question to answer.

Prof. S. Rinpoche: While answering the previous question, I could not explain this properly because I was conscious of the time. I think the people's support for Tibet's cause is increasing day by day and this certainly has an effect on the governments wherever the governments are democratic. No democratic country can ignore the will of the people. If the people have a will, they can pressure their governments which in turn can pressure Chinese.

At the moment there are two great obstacles in our struggle. Most of the western countries do not see China as China. They only see a vast potential market. And the Asian countries do not see China as China. They see it as a great threat. With these two delusions, nobody deals with China as it is.

But both of these delusions will not remain for long. In many places in the west, the idea of China as a vast market is losing ground. Secondly, public opinion definitely matter to the governments. I have personally witnessed this in a number of European countries. Last year and this year the attitudes of governments have shifted very much to the

positive side, because of public opinion should be maintained. It would have a great effect. All the activities and support work which may appear very inadequate or insignificant are in reality of great significance.

Whatever is being done by supporters in the international arena is causing great concern to China. Five to ten years ago China used to ignore such international public opinion. Now they cannot and they do not. Whenever Tibet support activities take place, the Chinese react by way of protests or some kind of action. This shows that the activities in support of Tibet are very effective. I am very happy to tell you that everywhere public support is increasing.

Take the example in India. It is a vast country. It has a vast border with China and is facing Chinese military threats everyday. Yet, the public support in India is tremendous. You might have heard that this year a few Indian Support Groups have launched a signature campaign to make an appeal or petition to the Indian parliament. Despite very meagre resources, they have collected 500,000 of the Indian people within four months. And this was from various segments, right from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Assam to the Punjab. From every state to every walk of life, they have come forward without any hesitation.

And, when we organised a peace march from Dharamsala to Ludhiana, people all along the route welcomed these peace marchers very warmly, and they expressed solidarity with the Tibetan cause. This kind of people's consciousness is growing. I think this is a very good sign and we feel encouraged.

The parliamentarians' convention is particularly significant, because it represents the will of people. It doesn't represent a mere policy made by an executive. I consider the people's support much more important than government support. Government support might be more effective in the short run, but it can change easily. The support of people is more valuable.

Rita Tveiten: What is the status of children in Tibet? Issues such as this move us in the western part of Europe and probably the whole world. Are the children in Tibet entitled to health care at a reasonable level and are they entitled to education? Are they entitled to have their lessons in their own language? I think the Tibetan issue is highly regarded among the youngsters in Europe. They are fed up with commercialisation in Europe; they have everything they need. They want to address themselves to more basic and fundamental issues.

Prof. S. Rinpoche: Entitlement is an expression which can be used in free and democratic countries. But in Tibet, nobody can talk about entitlement. The children in Tibet do not claim any entitlement for health care, education or for anything. Even women cannot claim the right to give birth to babies. They are subjected to forced sterilization and forced abortions which greatly harm to the health of mothers. A number of deaths have taken place during these forced sterilization and abortions. Birth control for the Tibetan ethnic group is very strictly implemented throughout Tibet.

I think not more than 30 percent of the children of school-going age has an opportunity to go to school. Around 70 percent of children are illiterate. Schools are few in number and children are many. The infrastructural facilities are simply not there to provide education.

The same is the case with health care. The hospitals throughout Tibet are meant first for military personnel, second for Chinese civilian personnel and Chinese traders. Thereafter, as mentioned by Mr. George Fernandes, very few so-called privileged Tibetans might have access to health care. Otherwise, villagers and grass-roots level people do not have any health care. Some European NGOs and some foreign governments have initiated some health schemes in Tibet but they are finding a lot of difficulties to implement their projects.

Their support of youth to the Tibetan cause are very encouraging. You mentioned the youth in western countries. The same is the case in Asia, especially in India. Many Indian student organizations are very actively participating in Tibetan support work.

Algimantas Tauras. M.P., Lithuania: You have mentioned that a section of the Tibetan population is disappointed. I wonder if there is any possibility for the parliamentarians to inform those Tibetans in Tibet about the current conference to let them know that they are fully supported by a sizeable group of world parliamentarians and the second group of world parliamentarians and the second conference of WPCT is taking place in Lithuania, the country that several years ago was also in a hopeless situation, but is now independent and can express support for Tibet. I just wonder if there are any means to let Tibetans know about the current conference?

Prof. S. Rinpoche: Definitely. Whatever communication channel we have at our disposal will be used to inform this to the people living in Tibet. We have certain publications and also periodicals and newspapers. All of them will be covering this second conference extensively. These will be smuggled or sent to Tibet. Apart from this, VOA has a Tibetan language programme for two hours a day, one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening this is invariably listened by Tibetans living in Tibet. It is quite popular and people have access to it. I was told this morning that VOA Tibetan Programme has been covering this conference for the last three to four days and it will continue to broadcast the news. As I mentioned before, these are really very great sources of encouragement and we will make very effort to send this message into Tibet.

Henryk Wujec: Is it possible that His Holiness will go back to Lhasa because his authority is so high and his influence in Tibet is unimaginable? I remember that during our struggle in Poland against the Communists, our spiritual head, the head of the Catholic Church, was inside and so was our leader of the Union, Mr. Walesa.

Prof. S. Rinpoche: If Tibet becomes free, I think most of the Chinese settlers will go back of their own volition. With regard to His Holiness going back to Tibet, it is not out of the question. This was on His Holiness' agenda for sometime. When the efforts at dialogue—his Five Point Peace Plan, Strasbourg Proposal and everything—failed to elicit

a positive response from the Chinese side, he offered to visit Tibet, perhaps in 1991, at Yale University in the United States. It was a kind of indication or gesture that an unconditional return of His Holiness might cause a greater change inside Tibet. This kind of idea was tossed about by many Indian and western friends. But at the moment, we cannot say that this is a practicable proposal, because the Chinese are not trustworthy. Under such circumstances, we have to think about all pros and cons.

His Holiness' return to Tibet will definitely bring a great strength to, and change among, the Tibetans inside Tibet. But at the same time we cannot rule out greater risks to His Holiness' security. So, we have to carefully examine this kind of proposition before taking a decision. I am unable to make any definite statement on this.

Dr. Michael van Walt: I have something to say in regard to the type of action that we should take that would have a telling effect on China. I would fully endorse what Rinpoche said. What is being done is having effects on China. There is no doubt about it.

Let us take the example of our efforts to get the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to pass a resolution. Every year the pressure is high on China to try to prevent such a resolution from getting passed. China has to make tremendous efforts towards this every year by sending its Foreign Minister and others to different parts of the world.

Many of you are aware, in your countries China exerts all kinds of pressure in order to prevent such resolutions and other activities from taking place. This should be seen as a sign of the extent of the effectiveness of these activities. From a purely monetary point of view, China spends a lot of money in trying to prevent the Tibet lobby, if I may call it so, or the international activities for Tibet from being effective and achieving their goals.

If you really want to get at China's Achilles' Heel, you have to get to the core of the problem. And that is the legitimacy of China's rule over Tibet. It is this issue that affects China's rule over Tibet. It is this issue that affects China the most. So, you can talk about human rights. But at this point China is so used to criticism on human rights that it is not affecting China that much anymore. In fact, in secret meetings of the Politburo, there have been discussions on the fact that the Chinese government has to get used to this type of criticism and that its officials have to learn to deal with it.

But what they do not want to, or cannot, deal with—and this has also been stated in Politburo meetings—is the challenge to China's "legitimate sovereign rights" over Tibet. There are two reasons for this. First, the Chinese government officials are very well aware that they have no legitimate right to rule Tibet. It is not something that only Tibetans and their supporters are stating. The Chinese know very well that their claims are extremely weak, if of any validity at all. And so they are very afraid of being challenged on that point. At the moment they are not being effectively challenged on this point.

The second reason has to do with Chinese philosophy and political mentality. Throughout its history and Chinese dynasty—or any dynasty that has ruled over China—has had to

have a mandate for ruling the Chinese people, and in the past it was in fact to rule the world. Today, I think it applies mainly to China. This mandate has always been dependent, at the beginning of any dynasty, on the expansion of control over territories. The mandate has always ended when the dynasty has started losing territories. And so, this mandate is for the entire Chinese people, and not only for Tibetans.

Once China's claim to legitimate sovereignty over Tibet is sufficiently challenged, it will be seen by the Chinese leadership as a sign of challenge to the legitimacy of that particular dynasty, in other words now Deng Xiaoping's dynasty and in future whatever else is going to be there to rule not only over Tibet, but over China as well. The Chinese know that this is the way the people are going to interpret. Therefore it is a very sensitive issue for the Chinese rulers.

Coming to the point, therefore, I would suggest that in our deliberations in terms of resolutions and actions, we try to focus on how parliamentarians and governments could take action in terms of calling for recognition of Tibet or the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Even if this was achieved in only one country, it would send a signal to China that the tide is changing.

Secondly, for those places where it is not achievable - and I realize it is not achievable in the next week—we must convince our governments to stop stating that they recognize Tibet as a part of China, and instead make a statement which is in accordance with international law and that is that they recognize that China has effective control over Tibet at this time and that from this effective control flow certain obligations and rights under international law. This is a very different statement from the one which states you recognize Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, because certain rights and obligations flow from sovereignty.

The actual situation today is that China has effective control over Tibet. This can be recognized, but from that flows rights and obligations. This would also be a very important signal to China that the tide is changing.

A delegate: Having grown up in exile and attended a great school in the United States with the first Tibetan born in the United States, I have known the plight of the Tibetan people from my early childhood. The Tibetan people in that area knew the plight of the Baltic countries. As stated yesterday in the overview of international law, I see that too often small nations look upon large nations for protection and security. But here we can take the initiative and take the support of smaller countries to make a difference. We can take this matter to the organization that did not help the Baltic countries, but needs to help the Tibetan people at the United Nations. Small nations cannot be members or representatives in the current Security Council. But we can form another Security Council, elected probably on regional basis.

The second suggestion I have regarding the United Nations is that many people have mentioned about the forthcoming Women's Conference to be held in Beijing. The women at this conference who are going to attend the Beijing conference should release

and distribute the resolution of our convention to other women at the Beijing conference. They can receive an official mandate from our convention here. Also, the Baltic countries may join together and pass a resolution by the three-country assemblies. The Baltic assemblies have already shown a lot of courage in passing a resolution on Chechenya....

In conclusion, I hope that the miracle that the Baltic countries have recently been blessed with also comes to the Tibetan people.

Prof. S. Rinpoche: What I want to mention at the end to all the participants is that His Holiness has tried for the last 14 years to negotiate with China. And the proposition of negotiations with China was not an easy one. It amounted to a great sacrifice.

Right at the beginning, what Deng Xiaoping said the elder brother of His Holiness was the famous statement which was quoted by Mr. George Fernandes this morning: “Except for independence, everything is negotiable”. That meant we had to accept some kind of association with China by accepting the basic principles of negotiation.

With that condition His Holiness has agreed to negotiate with the Chinese authorities. It meant that if the negotiations had met with success, and both sides had come to an agreeable solution, the Chinese would have control over Tibet, whatever form it may be.

Thereafter, the political situation in Tibet would be forever comprised with Chinese forceful occupation. But this effort of middle way negotiations did not make any headway. It could not ease the situation inside Tibet and no benefit derived out of it.

Finally, His Holiness had to accept that the effort had been a total failure. And now, in future, he would like to ask the people of Tibet—mainly the Tibetans in exile and also, as far as possible, Tibetans inside Tibet—to decide what kind of future action should be taken since the approach to negotiate with China had miserably failed and did not bring about any result. He announced this intention in the 10th March statement of 1994 and he repeated it in the 10 March statement of 1995. It is a very important statement for all the Tibetans inside and outside. The people of Tibet, especially the Tibetan diaspora is actively and seriously considering as and when His Holiness will ask them to offer their opinion on what should be the future course of action to resolve the problem of Tibet.

I myself, along with a few of my friends, have been working on a proposal for the last year to undertake a totally non-violent resistance called satyagraha. Satyagraha is a Sanskrit or Hindi word which, unfortunately, does not have a very good translation in English. We may take it to mean “insistence on truth” or “truth insistence” as adopted by Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian Freedom struggle. A large number of Tibetans may join this.

We are making many detailed plans on how to take out individual satyagrahas and also how to take out collective satyagrahas. Also, whoever is willing to join the satyagraha should go back to Tibet and a peaceful resistance should take place inside, which may

include civil disobedience, non-cooperation and peaceful non-violent resistance in all forms.

Many people think that it would be suicidal, because China has tremendous military and population power. They do not have the rule of law and do not care for world public opinion. Under such circumstance, people say that it would be suicidal to undertake a resistance movement inside Tibet. But then, Tibetans are going to be finished off in any case. Therefore, it would be better to die while undertaking non-violent resistance than to die without doing anything.

This may sound like some kind of a desperate action. But we do not consider this as a desperate action. But we do not consider this as a desperate action. Rather we consider this as a higher spiritual practice. I call this Bot Mukti Sadhana in Sanskrit, which means spiritual practice for Tibetan freedom.

I mentioned this because it appears to be the only remedy which might be effective and positive. We do not care whether it brings positive results or not. But it will definitely give us satisfaction that we have done our own duty without fearing for our lives and comfort.

I am just making this statement to let you know the thinking of a section of people in the Tibetan diasporas and which might be joined by a larger number of Tibetans inside and outside. This was quite amply demonstrated when the eight Tibetan non-governmental organizations planned a peace march from Delhi to Lhasa, which, unfortunately, had to change later on and it took place from Dharamsala to Delhi. But it attracted the attention of a large number of Tibetans in India, Nepal and places around. This has caused great concern and anxiety among the Chinese authorities, because peaceful movements have a tremendous impact and power which is difficult to face and resist by the mighty Chinese. They would not be afraid of any violent or military action, for they know their own source of power and the strength they enjoy at the moment. But they do not have the moral strength and authority to face a movement which is based on truth and non-violence.

So, if His Holiness asks for the public opinion in the near future, and in response the Tibetan people come forward to launch such a non-violent resistance movement, satyagraha, I think the world public opinion and support for such a movement would be abundantly forthcoming. All the parliamentarians who are here, and through you other support groups and parliamentarians, may be informed of our intention and our future plans for the resistance movement.

I once again thank you very much for your attention and I am grateful to you for giving me this chance and I apologize for not having come prepared for a such a presentation.

Dr. Andrikiene: For the Drafting Committee to draft the resolution, I propose George Fernandes, India; Senataor Di Nino, Canada; Michael Ferris, Ireland; Andrius Kubilius,

Lithuania; Ian Revell, New Zealand; Juris Sinka, Latvia; Tashi Wangdi, Tibet; and Michael van Walt, UNPO.

Dr. Alfonsas Vaisnoras, Parliamentary Tibet Support Group, Lithuania: We are happy that distinguished guests from 21 nations have come for this convention. This shows that issue of Tibet is not a local phenomenon, that it is just a question of relations between Tibet and China, but that it is a global issue.

We, as mankind, have much the same experience all the time and the discussions that have taken place here concerning Tibet are similar to those about the problems of people who are enslaved and whose territories are occupied by powerful neighbours, and whose natural resources are exploited.

From the point of view of international law, the problem of enslaved nations is very important. First of all, this problem is created when a country is occupied by a stronger power. And attempts are made to solve that problem. At the international level, it is being stated that an occupied country, which had a determined statehood, now has to make a new decision concerning its statehood.

I think that both history and the experience of Tibet shows that Tibet is a very old state and it does not need to determine its statehood anew. What has not been fully understood today is that the occupiers of Tibet are in a privileged situation and the priorities are not clearly set out. On the basis of moral principles, the occupiers should not only withdraw, they should also compensate for the loss suffered by the occupied country, although no amount of money can compensate for suffering.

I think that the document adopted at the United Nations on decolonisation should be enforced even now. However, the situation in the world is such that the “right” of the powerful one prevails. We can see this on the territory of Russia, where the Russian State wages a war and carries out genocide against the small Chechen people, who in their history have suffered genocide three times at the hand of Russians.

Now, everybody feels that additional legal measures are needed for the occupied state to be able to decide on their own future. If we care for moral principles, the occupiers first of all, should withdraw their forces and claims. One of the goals and tasks of this convention, with regard to Tibet and with regard to all other occupied countries, is to do as much as we can and do more than what we have done so far. Because we haven’t used all our potentials yet.

The choice of Lithuania as the venue of this convention on this issue of Tibetan independence puts a very heavy responsibility on us, the Lithuanian Parliamentarians. Our Tibet support group is very large. We have close relations with the Lithuanian and Estonian Tibet support groups as well as with Mr. Tsering, who is the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Central and Eastern Europe. And we shall do our very best so that the rights of the indigenous people are not only declared, but also implemented.

I thank all of you for coming here and participating in the convention.

Juris Sinka: As Mr. George Fernandes mentioned yesterday, we should not despair. But at the same time, there is an urgent need for action now. This is the second convention and the text of its draft resolution, when you get it, will invite parliamentarians to initiate hearings and investigations by parliaments in their respective countries on the illegitimacy of China's claim to Tibet and for according recognition to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Mr. Van Walt's excellent paper talked about statehood, which cannot be denied to Tibet since its statehood was established 2,000 years ago. It is really food for thought that once statehood has been obtained you cannot practically lose it. Of course, it applied to the three Baltic states, and it should definitely apply to Tibet, with so much history behind it.

The draft resolution will also reflect the current state of human rights in Tibet I hope it will then go to all those who should see it and hear about our convention. It is also proposed to organize a delegation of parliamentarians, which will then go to Tibet, Beijing and Dharamsala, and write a report on its finding for general publication. And, of course, all the international organizations, including the United Nations, will be informed.

Pressure on China in this case should not diminish, and it should not be confined to statements which never leave the office shelves. There have been too many nice conferences and conventions with very little show for them, although they have been instructive for the people who attend them.

Since time is running out for Tibet and its people, as much as time is running out for the people of Chechenya at this very moment, the peoples of the world who consider themselves free, democratic and full of compassion should do something about it.

Kalon Tashi Wangdi: First of all, on behalf of the Tibetan delegation—led by the speaker of our parliament, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche—and on behalf of all the six million Tibetans, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants at this second convention of parliamentarians on Tibet and also parliamentarians all over the world who could not be physically present in this convention, but have conveyed their support and solidarity through their messages.

A question was asked yesterday as to what influence or impact such a conference or convention would have on the present Chinese leadership.

It would appear from my experience since the first convention held in New Delhi that it has had little impact in terms of improving the situation in Tibet. In fact, since the last convention, the situation has deteriorated considerably both in terms of violations of basic fundamental human rights and also in increasing the threat to the very survival of

the Tibetan nation, with its people and unique culture, through the systematic and massive transfer of the Chinese population into Tibet.

The economic development programmes the Chinese have initiated in Tibet are not intended to benefit Tibetans, but are designed to facilitate and encourage the resettlement of Chinese in Tibet. I may recall that in May 1993 the Ambassadors of the European Union in Beijing visited Tibet and their report, which was submitted on June 1 to their respective governments and to the European Union, very clearly stated, among other things, that the economic activities in Tibet do not benefit Tibetans, but have helped the Chinese newcomers in Tibet.

But, on the other hand, such conferences and such international condemnation and persuasions on the Chinese leadership to seriously consider resolving the Tibetan issue, and a support like this for the human rights of the Tibetan people have, to a great extent, helped to minimize the ferocity of the repression and human rights violations. Of this we are quite sure.

About eight or nine years back, an internal document circulated by the Chinese government among the Chinese local administrators in Tibet stated that they have to be very careful of what they do in Tibet. Let me quote from the document: "If a pin drops in Tibet, it reverberates around the world." I think this clearly indicates that in spite of the apparent insensitivity and arrogance of the leadership in Beijing, international opinion does have some influence on their thinking, particularly after China came out of its isolation.

We are very happy to have had some reporters from the Chinese press at the press conference. As I said at the press conference, the Tibetan issue is not an anti-Chinese issue. I do not think the people who have come from far and wide to this conference are against the Chinese nation or the Chinese people, and certainly we Tibetans are not against them. Unfortunately the present leadership – in their internal propaganda to confuse public opinion in China and divert the people's attention from their ever increasing internal problems to some kind of imaginary external threat – use the issue of Tibet to make it as some kind of western imperialist bid to undermine China and its national progress.

I do not know to what extent our Chinese friends or reporters at this conference will be able to print in their publications the true nature of the Tibetan people's struggle. The genuine humanitarian and legitimate concerns of the world, such as Chechnya – which have been expressed in this conference cannot be ignored. I think it is very important for the Chinese leadership to realize that they will not be able to wish away the Tibetan problem by distorting facts and creating confusion.

Professor Rinpoche mentioned yesterday that this conference would be a great source of solace, inspiration and encouragement to the six million Tibetans inside Tibet. I remember that about six years ago, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was invited as the chief guest of the Czechoslovakian President Havel, I was travelling with His Holiness

then. I asked the officials at that time as to what was the single most important factor which had influenced the changes in Czechoslovakia then. They replied that it was the Government's decision to stop jamming the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe.

I would like to say here that the support and sentiments you have expressed here will go out of this conference and reach the ears of six million Tibetan people living from moment to moment desperation. These would certainly be a great source of inspiration for them.

Of course, there will be a formal vote of thanks at the end of the concluding session. But I will use this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the people of Tibet, the Parliamentarians of Lithuania, the people of Lithuania and particularly the people involved in organizing this second convention.

I have been here for a few days before most of the delegates arrived and I know they have been working very hard for months, and as the inauguration day of the conference neared there were many uncertainties regarding the arrival of delegates and working out of details of the arrangements. I was most impressed by the dedication and working out of details of the arrangements I was most impressed by the dedication shown by the organizers and the sense of calmness and efficiency of our present chairperson, Dr. Laima Andrikiene. At the moments of disappointment due to the lack of communication and uncertainty about the arrival of delegates, she went about her face and with great efficiency. This has touched us deeply. Then of course, the dedication and support of her colleagues were also commendable.

We Tibetans are very happy with the deliberations of the second convention and the resolution, which I am sure will be adopted and which very clearly recognizes the sovereign legal status of Tibet, expresses in the strongest terms the urgency for finding a solution to the Tibetan problem and reaffirms the commitment to do everything possible towards this goal. It will certainly make a great difference to the very survival of Tibetan nation.

The Tibetan people and the Tibetan culture are on the threshold of either survival or total annihilation at this point of time and your support and your voice will help to make a difference.

George Fernandes reads of the draft of second WPCT's letter of greetings to His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his birthday:

Your Holiness,

Assembled here in Vilnius for the second meeting of World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet, we have been constantly thinking of you and your struggle for the liberation of Tibet. In a few weeks from now, on 6 July, the world will be celebrating your birthday. Some of us may be privileged to greet you in person when you cross this important landmark in your eventful and inspiring life.

However, all of us, who are now in Vilnius, send you our respectful greetings for your birthday. While wishing you a long and fruitful life in the service of your people and of humanity as a whole, we want to assure you that we shall continue with our efforts to see that your dream of a free and independent Tibet becoming a beacon of peace and tranquillity for the rest of the world comes true sooner than most people think is possible.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Fernandes. I think it will readily meet with our approval as indicated by the applause of those assembled here. I want to inform the convention that roughly over 1,000 parliamentarians worldwide, including representatives of the U.S.A. Congress, are now actively engaged in the campaign on behalf of Tibet.

Some of you may have wondered why there is no representatives from Germany. You all know that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was recently in Bonn and was received at the government level. This was an occasion for satisfaction for the friends of Tibet, because, as you know, there were other occasions when it was somehow conveyed to His Holiness that his visit to Bonn would not be opportune. Now that his official visit did take place, it is a moment to cherish.

I am also happy to report that a Bundestag committee has actually organized a Hearing on Tibet and it is happening now. Therefore, I suppose we could take it that the German Parliament is also with us, if not physically present here, at least in spirit.

I hope the representatives assembled here may also be able to persuade their respective parliaments to hold hearings or other investigations on Tibet. Because, as stated by the Tibetan Minister, Tibetan freedom as stated by the Tibetan Minister, Tibetan freedom does not mean a threat to China in as much as freedom of the three Baltic states constituted no threat to Russia. Put in the right perspective and given goodwill on all sides, we should see the fulfilment of basic human rights, which include national rights.

A Representative from East Turkestan: As a representative of East Turkestan, I am very fully aware of the magnitude of the Tibetan problem. The Second World Parliamentarians' Convention has highlighted many important issues and I would like to extend our gratitude to all those people who support the Tibetan cause.

The Tibetan issue is not a local problem. It is an international problem. It is the problem of a country under the occupation of an aggressive foreign force. Other territories in the region, like Mongolia and Turkestan, with over 30 Million people, are also under foreign occupation.

I agree with the assertion that such an ancient nation as China, with such a rich history, should first of all respect the rights of those people who find themselves under occupation. It should grant them the right or the opportunity to decide their own fate. China, with its continued occupation of Eastern Turkestan, Tibet and other areas, and

with the attendant violation of human rights and nations rights, cannot be a democracy. It cannot be a free country if it imposes its will on other countries.

In order to understand better the internal policy of China, one has to get a measure of what is really happening there. With the process of assimilation being constantly underway in occupied territories, the people of these nations face the threat of total extinction.

Today, the territory of East Turkestan has also suffered assimilation and the Chinese population exceeds the indigenous population by one and a half times. The territory has been heavily militarised. The needs of the local population have been neglected, the environment is threatened by military activities. 42 underground and overground nuclear tests have been conducted on that territory and the area contaminated by nuclear wastes stretches for tens of thousands of kilometres. After one of the recent tests, the radiation levels have increased to a very high level.

No nuclear power during the recent two years has conducted as many nuclear test as China. On 15 May, the most recent nuclear was carried out. The American and European democratic countries have not voiced their protest to this recent test. These tests are constant threats not only to territories under occupation, but also to the neighbouring areas.

The continuing humiliation of the local population by the occupier, the disintegration of normal social relations, the decline of the environment and other threats to the environment, to society, to normal human relations and human rights, the neglect of the cultural heritage of the people in those territories, are a real danger. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that if this problem is not solved in any way and if nobody prevents this tragedy, the population of Central Asia – of East Turkestan and other countries of this area – will be greatly endangered.

No other country in the world is so heavily armed and the armed presence of China is so impressive, especially in the occupied territories. No other superpower has such large military contingents in the occupied territories. In 1990, South Turkestan was subjected to heavy humiliation by the policy of forced sterilisation, and many other instances of such humiliating behaviour can be listed.

People have tried to protest against these outrages. But China is such a closed society and the suppression of information is so complete that information of what is happening in China, about the political prisoners and about other violation of human rights, cannot reach the outside world. Special laws exist concerning the political organizations and social organizations in the territories I am speaking about.

Almost half a million Uighurs from those territories have emigrated. I am really pleased with the fact that our World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet has explored the problems of Tibet in a comprehensive way. I think it is a most welcome feature of the convention of that we are looking at the non-violent protest, non-violent struggle, that the

Tibet support groups are adopting and trying to spread among other people of the world who are in support of Tibet. We are really supporting every effort of the convention, exert pressure on China, perhaps through your governments and through your influence in other countries so that the Chinese government is prevented from committing atrocities that it has committed so far. And perhaps by the turn of the century, the Chinese government will be forced to change its policies.

Kara-Kys Arakchaa: With regard to the situation in Russia and in Tibet, I would like to say the following. In Russia, there is a friendship association for Tibet which is particularly in the Republic of Tuva. And in May this year, the association held a meeting in support of Tibet. Last year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Moscow and we deputies of the State Duma's two committees, one of ethnic affairs another on religious affairs, organized a meeting with him, although the Minister of Foreign Affairs advised us against this meeting.

Besides, last year, while in Geneva at the 12th session of the UN working on indigenous people to the Tibetan problem. This year, on the occasion of the 60th birthday of His Holiness Dalai Lama, there will be meetings, celebrations, and exhibitions devoted to the philosophy and history of Buddhism. As a participant in this Convention of World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, I take upon myself the responsibility of disseminating the resolution in the State Duma, in the Council of Federation and also in the legislative institutions of the Russian Federation. I shall initiate hearings on the claims of China on Tibet, although I am not quite sure whether the Council of the State Duma will support my initiatives. Nevertheless, such hearings will take place in the parliament of the Republic of Tuva.

The position of Russia on the issue of Tibet is known to all of us. It is similar to the Japanese position, about which we heard from our colleague yesterday. And as they say, water cannot pass through rock. But the Deputies of the State Duma – there are a small number of them – will continue with their efforts to highlight the problem of Tibet within the Russian Federation.

I would like to take note of the following: Here the Parliamentarians from the whole world have gathered, for whom the independence and freedom of peoples is very important. And here, while discussing the problem of Tibet, we have in one way or other touched the problem of the Chechen Republic.

The war in the Chechen Republic is very disastrous for the people of Russia. We, many deputies of the State Duma, protested against this. And in January 1995, at the sitting of the State Duma, I personally after my visit to Chechenya said very clearly and unambiguously that this is a State military crime. I, therefore, propose to the parliamentarians to adopt a second resolution on the Chechen Republic on this situation and probably adopt recommendations for a similar conference in support of Chechenya.

Senator Michael O' Kennedy, Ireland: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity and privilege to address this conference at such short notice as I arrived here only yesterday evening. I was very anxious to attend with my colleague, Deputy Michael Ferris, who is

the Chairman of our European Committee and involved with our Foreign Affairs Committee, so that we could demonstrate, once again, the support and solidarity of the Irish people to the Tibetan people and to people anywhere in the world who are suffering from deprivation of fundamental rights and liberty. And I would just like to tell you that it is a privilege, particularly, to be here in Lithuania because of the coincidence, if one might say so, that the people who have now emerged into full democracy and freedom anywhere in the world, which in my view is entirely appropriate and consistent.

I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the organizers here in Lithuania for the conference, which has given us the opportunity of showing our solidarity with the people of Tibet, the people of Chechnya, or wherever in the world where there is oppression and deprivation. As a former Foreign Minister, who had the privilege of meeting – I just reminded him a few minutes ago – our distinguished Chairman, Mr. George Fernandes, on a visit to India as Foreign Minister in 1978 or 1979, I can't help noting that it is very reassuring to find the same people, wherever they are. And I come here to give that signal of support from our people to the people of Tibet.

We know what the deprivation of civil and religious liberty means; for hundreds of years that was the experience of the Irish people. Fortunately, that period has passed, but because of that historical experience we want to ensure that wherever we can express our voice against it, reject it, and hopefully bring about the change that is necessary, we will do that. Ireland is a small country and a long way from Tibet. But this issue is as vital as if we were neighbours of Tibet, because we are in the real sense neighbours in terms of the fundamental rights. This is because human rights and freedom are indivisible whether it is in Tibet, East Timor, Chechnya or wherever else.

I am very happy to convey to you that in our country there is a constant sense of obligation, a fellow feeling, towards people like those in Tibet who are being deprived of that fundamental right. And it is a privilege for us here to be associated with these positive actions.

I want to particularly say that I am impressed by the point made in the morning that this is not an attempt to express antagonism or opposition towards the People's Republic of China. I can say that the predecessor of mine, a foreign minister, a very distinguished foreign minister from Ireland, Frank Aitken, was the one who sponsored the admission of the PRC in the United Nations, co-sponsored at least. And there is no suggestion that we are trying in any way to express antagonism against the PRC. But equally we have to be consistent and point out that if there are actions undertaken by the representatives of that government that offend the fundamental principles, then we must be honest, vigorous and strong in opposing them.

I just want to make one final comment, i.e. I would like to assure the colleagues of the fact that Deputy Ferris and myself have both been sent. I hope there is evidence enough in itself. But we will certainly continue to raise these issues in our own Parliament. We had the privilege of greeting His Holiness in Ireland on two occasions in recent years. But not only that, we will also press our colleagues in the European Union to ensure that the

resolutions that come before the UN will have the solid support of all the Member-States of the Union.

So, Chairman, because of the lateness of the hour and the fact that you have this very important resolution to put forward, could I just tell you, once again, that I thank you for the opportunity to address the conference expressing our solidarity and to assure you that we will support vigorously, both in principle and in implementation, the general elements that are so fundamental to this conference.

Romualda Hofertine, M.P., Lithuania: I am grateful for being allotted these two minutes. I would add to the title of our convention, 'Tibet, Saving A People From Annihilation', with 'Saving Chinese Authorities from Sin'. Because by annihilating the Tibetan people, the sin of the Chinese authorities will fall on the millions of well-wishing Chinese people.

Since those who have gathered here are concerned over the future of our world, I would request the convention to adopt a resolution on the Chechen issue, or at least approve the idea of convening another conference on Chechenya, under the title 'Russia, Saving People from Annihilation' or 'Russia, Saving the Russian People from Committing Sin'.

I met Dudayev on several occasions and I would like to remind you that it was Dudayev, the leader of this nation, who first of all was saving the Estonian people and the Baltic States from annihilation. He refused to carry out genocide in Estonia, which would have undermined the situation in Lithuania and Latvia. In March, the American Baltic League awarded him a prize for his assistance in the liberation movement of the Baltic States.

I, once again, appeal to all of you to think about the Chechen people, I know that those of you who have come here are not afraid of Russia and China. You are the hope of all the suffering peoples.

Chairman: If the feeling is very strong, and I am sure it is, for some sort of message, if not a resolution, to be adopted to express our solidarity with, and support for, the Chechen people, it might be considered. Our time is really running short. After we have considered our main resolution, we could have a short discussion whether our drafting committee can cope with this. That is another question to be considered.

George Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, yesterday the convention appointed a nine-member drafting committee. This committee had two meetings: one yesterday, deliberating far into the night and one this morning as happens in these committees, most people do the talking and someone does the donkey's work, and I must thank Dr. Michael van Walt for the effort that he had put into the drafting of the resolution. We gave him as much trouble as we possibly could, both with ideas yesterday and then correcting those ideas this morning.

This draft is, therefore, the end result of a lot of interaction and subsequent corrections wherever it was felt necessary. So I now read the draft. I am sorry we don't have copies made, and only a couple of copies have been done for translation purposes. So I will read

it very slowly so that if anyone has any suggestions to offer, they could perhaps make a note. But I would, once again, like to state this comes from the drafting committee.

Draft Resolution: The members of Parliament and their representatives who gathered in Vilnius on behalf of their respective parliamentary groups of over 1,000 parliamentarians worldwide to discuss the threat to the survival of Tibet and the Tibetan people.

Reaffirming their support for the New Delhi statement on Tibetan freedom and the action plan for Tibet adopted at first Parliamentarian Convention on Tibet in New Delhi held on March 18-20, 1994;

Reaffirming the illegality of the People's Republic of China's invasion and occupation of Tibet which was an independent state in 1949 when the People's Liberation Army first entered Tibet;

Recognizing that under international law, Tibet is today an independent State under illegal occupation and that the PRC has no legal title to sovereignty of Tibet;

Condemning, as a serious violation of international law, the large-scale population transfer of Chinese into Tibet, implemented by various methods including the replacement of responsible Tibetan administrators by Chinese officials at different levels of government and the recent decision by the Chinese authorities requiring that all Chinese military personnel serving in Tibet must retire and settle there or forfeit their pension rights;

Condemning the discrimination practiced by the Chinese authorities with respect to education by lack of adequate educational facilities for Tibetan children, discrimination against Tibetans wanting to study their own language and culture, and forceful recall of Tibetan children studying outside Tibet and China;

Condemning other gross and systematic violations of human rights in Tibet, including the arbitrary arrests, detention and torture of Tibetans for political offences, the violation of rights of women, including the practice of involuntary sterilization and abortion, the prohibition of religious freedom, all of which, together with the destruction of Tibet's rich culture and the population transfer, threaten the continued existence of the Tibetan people and therefore, amounts to genocide;

Reaffirming the inalienable right of the Tibetan people to self-determination and independence;

Emphasizing that violations of human rights, including the right to self-determination and all other violations of international law, are by definition the legitimate concern of all the members of the international community and can never be regarded as belonging to the internal affairs of any state.

Therefore,

Call on the PRC to stop immediately all policies and practices which violate the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Tibetans, including, in particular, population transfer and the use of all forms of violence against Tibetans;

Commend His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's continuing efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the question of Tibet;

Call on governments of all other States to support by all effective means possible the efforts of the Tibetan people and their legitimate representatives, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to restore the rights of the Tibetan people through a peaceful exercise of the right to self-determination;

Resolve to initiate investigations, hearings and inquiries of the legitimacy of the PRC's claim that Tibet is a part of China in every parliament represented at the convention and to persuade members of other parliaments to do the same as a prelude to according recognition to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

Resolve to persuade respective governments to pressure the PRC Government to stop the policy and practice of population transfer;

Commit to undertake efforts to raise the question of Tibet at the coming session of the UN General Assembly and at the Commission of Human Rights;

Commit to undertake efforts to obtain observer-status membership for the Tibetan Parliament at the International Parliamentary Union;

Resolve to send an international delegation of parliamentarians to visit Tibet, Beijing and Dharamsala to investigate and publicly report on the current situation, to meet with the Chinese government, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and to call on the UN Secretary General in order to urge and promote a prompt start to substantive negotiations without preconditions to seek a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the Sino-Tibetan Conflict in accordance with the terms of this resolution;

Resolve to present or forward this resolution to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to the President and the government of the PRC, to the Secretary General of the UN and to the governments and parliaments of all states represented at this Convention.

Chairman: Thank you Mr. Fernandes. I would like to point out that our drafting committee was fairly representative of various parts of the world and interests. So, unless there are some very essential additions or amendments you want to voice now, we would rather you did not put them forward, because we haven't had much time.

T.N. Chaturvedi, M.P., India: Thank you Mr. Chairman, I must congratulate the Drafting Committee for doing such a wonderful work, but I have a few suggestions to

make. I do not want to go into the entire spectrum of the resolution. I just want to make three or four comments.

In the first place, I feel that the word self-determination has been used much too often. As was pointed out earlier and very rightly, it is the question of the restoration of statehood and not the question of a fresh decision this way or that way by permitting the people to exercise the right of self-determination. I think this word has been used and can also be misused. Because, according to international law and in history, Tibet has always been a separate and independent state. I think this point was made earlier also.

The second point that I want to make is: although there is a reaffirmation of the Delhi Declaration, I think one point that needs to be reiterated is that the mandate of the Committee on Decolonisation should be expanded to include Tibet, because this again highlights and underscores the point that there is something that the UN and its agencies can do.

Thirdly, some reference ought to be made to the latest nuclear explosion and the environmental pollution, etc., besides the cultural vandalism and social disintegration etc. that find mention in the draft resolution.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer to the point made very aptly by the distinguished minister of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile about the so-called development or deceptive development. This development is regressive and exploitative in character, leading to other evils like social disintegration, ethnic genocide and particularly the population transfer, etc. I would like a reference to this.

A delegate: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I don't suggest alterations in the text of the resolution. This convention may record that the Decolonisation Committee of the U.N. should extend its mandate to include Tibet.

A delegate: We may decide to send our resolution to the forthcoming Women's Conference in Beijing and seek their support for it. It may be good to send it to the Inter-parliamentary Union as well.

Chairman: Only yesterday, it was suggested that the women delegates who will be going Beijing should take with them the resolution and perhaps other documents and distribute them in Beijing.

George Fernandes: I think Mr. Chaturvedi made very valid points and they could be incorporated into the resolution.

Any brief message for Chechenya from this convention? How do you feel? It cannot be anything long, because it would have to be considered by the draft committee.

A delegate: Mr. Chairman, I propose that we do not include Chechenya in this meeting. The Chechen problem is a very serious problem and it needs a different platform. While

not under-rating the seriousness of the Chechen problems, its inclusion in the resolution may lessen the priority of the Tibetan problem.

George Fernandes: Sir, I would like to make a suggestion. The issue of Chechenya has figured since I have been here yesterday forenoon. And I am sure that many of us feel very strongly about it. However, I believe that this conference has a specific purpose and that purpose should, in no case, be diluted. I believe that nothing should go from this convention which would take the focus away from Tibet.

If we were to say something on Chechenya, there will be people who have stakes in maintaining the status quo in Tibet, and they will immediately divert the attention of the world to what this convention had to say on Chechenya and thus keep Tibet aside and perhaps make it a secondary issue. Any person with an elementary knowledge of strategy would adopt that kind of a diversionary tactic. I do not think we should make it possible for such people to divert the attention of the world from the purpose for which we have assembled.

My suggestion, Mr. Chairman, would be that there is a press conference tomorrow and in the course of the press conference one could make a reference to the Chechen problem on which the delegates have expressed themselves very strongly.

Chairman: Thank you very much. I think it is an excellent suggestion. So at tomorrow's press conference this point will be expressed. Otherwise, we all feel a little bit inadequate if this problem is not mentioned at all, particularly when during our discussions Chechenya cropped up side by side with Tibet.

Dr. Michael van Walt: I would also like to mention that many members of parliament have expressed very strong feelings towards and support to the Chechen people and wish to do something. As you know, there was a statement of intent which was circulated to a number of parliamentarians, many of whom signed it, saying that they would like to support or be involved in the future activities in regard to the Chechen situation.

If I might make two suggestions, one would be before this conference ends, these people may meet somewhere on the premises here, may be during the coffee break or during the lunch, and discuss what it is that they feel they could do to support the Chechen people at this very important point of time. The possibility of arranging a conference somewhere on the question of Chechenya could be considered, and this may be considered as an urgent matter. These are my suggestions.

Chairman: It could still be considered. But, in five minutes time Dr. Laima Andrikiene will take over the chairmanship for the closing ceremony. Let us see whether we can manage what Dr. Michael van Walt just said, during the lunch hour.

Dr. Andrikiene: Today is the last day for our convention, and, as the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee, I would like to thank our Tibetan friends for giving us this great privilege of organizing this important convention in Lithuania. I thank all of you for

coming to Vilnius and hope that some day you will come back here. On behalf of all of you, I would like to thank my team.

Vote of thanks by George Fernandes:

Madam Chairperson and dear colleagues,

On behalf of the participants of this convention, both parliamentarians and other colleagues who have joined us here from various countries of the world, it is my privilege to propose a vote of thanks. First and foremost, to you, Laima, for all that you have done during this last year and more to see that this conference takes place here. Our thanks to colleagues, to the members of the organizing committee and a whole lot of friends who have taken specific responsibilities to make this conference possible.

We have representatives from 21 countries here and many colleagues who should have come have not been able to make it to the convention. But one part of the world which should have been represented, but which is not, is Latin America. At the Delhi Convention we had colleagues from Latin America. And as you know, we had then decided to have a mid-term meeting of our group, the steering committee, in Latin America.

My colleague, Ms. Jaya Jaitley – who is not a member of parliament but whose involvement in the cause of the Tibetan people is as much as that of any one of us – sent me a small note while I was sitting on the platform there, saying it is very important that we devote some attention to Latin America vis-à-vis Tibet. And the point that she made in the note was that at the voting in Geneva on the human rights issue last year, while India's vote defeated the resolution on Tibet, there were four or five Latin American countries that abstained. Therefore, an effort to involve Latin America is not going to be confined to having a wider base for this convention but it also means winning some of the battles that are being fought constantly at various levels, in which some of us may not be directly involved but where we can influence the course of events. Therefore, I do not know whether when we sit later informally as the steering committee, or as any other form, we could think of some meeting in Latin America. As a part of our effort, it is necessary that we concentrate there because we have friends there in Chile, Venezuela and a couple of other countries. They did come all the way to Delhi. If any problem arises subsequently, we should apply our minds to the problems and do something to bring these people also into this fold.

The resolution talks about at least a thousand members of parliaments being represented here through various parliamentarian groups. I feel that apart from thousand members of parliaments, we also represent several hundred million people. For instance, there are four of us members of parliament from India assembled here. Each Member of Parliament from India represents two million people. Our constituency has a population of two million. So, between the four of us, we represent people numbering two and a half times the population of Lithuania. So therefore, it is not merely a thousand members of parliaments, but it is also millions and millions of people. In my view, the population

whose size would not be any less than the size of the population of China is represented here.

We have our frustrations, we have our disappointments and we have goals which, we often feel, are taking time for us to achieve. Yet, we have reasons to feel happy and satisfied that our work has the support of several hundred million people all over the world. I am sure that this convention has attracted the attention not only of the people of Lithuania and of Europe, but also of people all over the world. Since the day before yesterday, I am told, the international media has been concentrating on this convention. I was told this morning that in yesterday's news the convention and all that transpired here were given a very positive presentation. It was the third most important news of the day on the Lithuania radio and television. I am sure that the same kind of treatment will be given to this conference resolution and to the press conference that we are going to have tomorrow. I personally feel that from Delhi to Vilnius we have traversed a lot.

In comparisons with what we achieved in Delhi, this conference has achieved much more. It has built on what we started in Delhi and I am sure that in the coming one year, between now and the next convention, wherever we have it, we will see that the decisions that we have taken here are implemented.

When I say all of us who have assembled here are committed with much greater determination than we were earlier to see that the Vilnius decisions are implemented and the resolution is acted upon, I am sure that I am not making overstatement. I once again thank you and all those who made this conference a success and an occasion to remember.

Resolution of the Second World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet Vilnius, Lithuania, 26-28 May 1995

The members of Parliament and their representatives who gathered in Vilnius on behalf of their respective parliamentary groups of over 1,000 parliamentarians worldwide to discuss the threat to the survival of Tibet and the Tibetan people,

Reaffirming their support for the New Delhi statement on Tibetan freedom and the action plan for Tibet adopted at the first Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet in New Delhi held on March 18-20, 1994;

Reaffirming the illegality of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) invasion and occupation of Tibet which was an independent state in 1949 when the People's Liberation Army first entered Tibet;

Recognizing that under international law, Tibet is today an independent state under illegal occupation and that the PRC has no legal title to sovereignty over Tibet;

Condemning as a serious violation of international law, the large-scale population transfer of Chinese into Tibet, implemented by various methods, including the

replacement of responsible Tibetan administrators by Chinese officials at different levels of government; and the recent decision by the Chinese authorities requiring that all Chinese military personnel serving in Tibet must retire and settle or forfeit their pension rights;

Concerned about the destruction of the natural environment on the Tibetan plateau, which has ramifications not only for Tibet itself, but also for the region and the world;

Condemning the discrimination practiced by the Chinese authorities with respect to education by lack of adequate educational facilities for Tibetan children, discrimination against Tibetans wanting to study their own language and culture, and forceful recall of Tibetan children studying outside of Tibet and China;

Condemning other gross and systematic violations of human rights in Tibet, including the arbitrary arrests, detention and torture of Tibetans for political offenses; the violation of rights of women, including the practice of involuntary sterilization and abortion; the prohibition of religious freedom; all of which, together with the destruction of Tibet's rich culture and the population transfer, threaten the continued existence of the Tibetan people and therefore, amounts to genocide;

Reaffirming the inalienable right of the Tibetan people to self-determination and independence;

Emphasizing that violations of human rights, including the right to self-determination and all other violations of international law are, by definition, the legitimate concern of all the members of the international community and can never be regarded as belonging to the internal affairs of any state.

Therefore,

Call on the PRC to stop immediately all policies and practices which violate the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Tibetans, including, in particular, population transfer and the use of all forms of violence against Tibetans;

Commend His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's continuing efforts to seek a peaceful solution to the question of Tibet;

Call on governments of other States to support by all effective means possible the efforts of the Tibetan people and their legitimate representatives, His Holiness Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, to restore the rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people through a peaceful exercise of the right to self-determination;

Propose that the mandate of the United Nations Decolonisation Committee be expanded to include the issue of decolonisation of Tibet;

Resolve to initiate investigations, hearings and enquiries on the legitimacy of the PRC's claim that Tibet is part of China, in every parliament represented at the convention and the persuade members of other parliaments to do the same as a prelude to according recognition to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile;

Resolve to persuade respective governments to pressure the PRC Government to stop the policy and practice of population transfer;

Commit to undertake efforts to raise the question of Tibet at the coming session of the UN General Assembly and at the Commission of Human Rights;

Commit to undertake efforts to obtain observer-status membership for the Tibetan Parliament at the International Parliamentary Union;

Resolve to send an international delegation of parliamentarians to visit Tibet, Beijing and Dharamsala to investigate and publicly report on the current situation; to meet with the Chinese government, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; and to call on the UN Secretary General in order to urge and promote a prompt start to substantive negotiations, without preconditions, to seek a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the Sino-Tibetan conflict in accordance with the terms of this resolution;

Resolve to present or forward this resolution to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; to the President and Government of the PRC; to the Secretary General of the UN; and to the governments and parliaments of all States represented at this Convention.