



# CAHSMUN XIII

The Thirteenth Session | March 31 to April 2

**SOCHUM Background Guide**

## Letter from the Director

Dear Delegates,

My name is Kevin Zuo and I am serving as your director in the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee at Canadian High Schools Model United Nations 2017. I am a grade 11 student at Fraser Heights Secondary, and have been an active MUNer ever since my first year of middle school. During the past three years of attending mock sessions, going to conferences and meeting new people, MUN has truly changed my life. It is an honour for me to staff this committee, and I will ensure that diplomacy and cooperation prevail within this committee!

At CAHSMUN 2017, the SOCHUM committee will be addressing the two pressing issues; the first is the ethnic division and violence in Western China - a problem that has been intensely debated for many decades. The culturally diversified nation has had numerous terrorist attacks on its soil recently, which has left many innocent civilians dead or wounded; thus, it is up to the delegates to work in conformity with each other to prevent further bloodshed from occurring. The second topic is the threat of overpopulation. This topic is very controversial and multifaceted, as countries of different blocs abide by drastically contrasting points of view; thus beginner delegates will have an easy time clarifying the stance of their country, while veteran delegates can exercise their diplomacy skills with a crisis that is complex and thought provoking.

Delegates attending CAHSMUN 2017 will be welcomed by all secretariat and staff members. Not only will you spend several days resolving the issues some of the greatest minds of our societies take years to do, but you will also meet people from across the lower mainland and create friendships that may last you a lifetime. I wish for delegates to express yourselves respectfully, present sophisticated and innovative working papers, but most importantly, take with you the MUN spirit of dedication and cooperation. And remember, have a lot of fun.

If there are any questions regarding the topic, backgrounder, committee, position papers, or just the conference in general, please feel free to contact me at [sochum@cahsmun.org](mailto:sochum@cahsmun.org) at any time. I am beyond excited to meet you all at CAHSMUN 2017.

Best Regards,

Kevin Zuo

SOCHUM Director – CAHSMUN 2017

## Committee Overview

Founded in 1948, the Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) is sometimes referred to as the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The committee boasts all 193 member states of the UN, and its mandates, as suggested by its name, are to resolve human rights abuses and social inequities in the world.<sup>1</sup> In other words, any issues involving gender, racial, social or ethnic discrimination, violent suppression of the masses, unethical behaviour and violation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* are usually processed through SOCHUM. Being a committee with such a broad mandate, the Third Committee often partners with other committees such as UNHRC in order to solve specific problems.

SOCHUM, although sometimes involved in matters of military genocides, deals mostly with civil and political issues. As such, most of its resolutions do not include military intervention; a majority of them provide legal amendments to existing documents. However, when faced with human rights violations such as the ones that occurred in the Rwandan Genocide and the Somali Civil War, SOCHUM is able to authorize humanitarian dispatches such as medical and social workers. Furthermore, the Third Committee can condemn any target on behalf of the international community and can even issue economic sanctions should there be a valid reason. That being said, since SOCHUM is a general assembly committee - any resolutions passed during sessions are non-binding, meaning that they do not take effect until further approval. All successful resolutions are then proposed to the UNSC, where these papers would be revised before being voted on again. It is not required, however, that the delegates consider a resolution's reception inside the UNSC when composing draft resolutions.

Unlike the UNSC, the Third Committee does not bestow veto rights on any nation, therefore guarantees equal say between large and small countries. Being a committee that advocates for equality and freedom, SOCHUM gives delegates an opportunity to express themselves more liberally than any other committee will allow.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://muntr.org/ga-3-sochum/>

## Topic A: Rights and Separatism in Western China

### Overview

China, the most populous nation on earth, boasts a total of 1,383,511,413 people; accounting for 18.72% of the world's headcount as of September 6th, 2016.<sup>2</sup> Out of this number, 91.59% are ethnic Han people, and 8.41% are made up of 55 minority ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup> Many of these peoples speak languages foreign from Mandarin or Cantonese, some even practice their own religions, such as the Tibetan with Vajrayana Buddhism and the Uyghurs with Sunni Islam. Certain groups are granted their own autonomous provinces by the central government, and many times, these ethnic minorities form the majority population in the given region.

Most relevant to the issue at hand are two specific groups, the Uyghurs of the Xinjiang Province, and Tibetans of Tibet. Inhabiting in the far west of Central China, these two groups have rarely been ruled by a Han kingdom historically. Due to the geographical locations of these regions, they have remained largely secluded and free of mainland intervention for thousands of years. Compared to the other minorities, the Uyghur and Tibetan cultures are very distinct from that of the Han. Thus, when Tibet and Xinjiang were formally incorporated as part of Communist China in 1951, the locals feared for the preservation of their way of life. The migration of the Han people to the heart lands of XinJiang and Tibet is seen by many natives as an infringement of their inherit property, and the intolerance of the Chinese government towards religions only amplified the situation. Some resorted to embracing their new Han neighbours, but others led a more radical path. An attack on the KunMing Train Station by Uyghur separatists in 2014 had left 31 dead and the whole country stunned.<sup>4</sup> Police forces were dispatched to every major train station to provide security, and the international community promptly debated the issue via media. While Chinese officials believed it to be a terrorist attack, some Westerners saw it as the result of Han oppression of the Uyghurs. The Dalai Lama is another important figure related to this topic, for his affiliation with the Tibetan independence movement and his reputation among Tibetan Buddhists has caused the Chinese government to exile him

With open protests against human rights violations in Tibet and Xinjiang, to the tension regarding the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, one thing is for certain: the relationship between the 56 ethnic groups is not as harmonious as the Chinese government would like the world to believe.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/china-population/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-29170238>

As the third committee, the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee deals with human rights violations, social injustice and civil instability. Being a General Assembly, SOCHUM is responsible for introducing non-binding resolutions to the UNSC. Thus, it is up to the delegates taking part in this committee to resolve the issues at hand diplomatically. At the same time, the committee must guarantee the people of Tibet and Xinjiang the security and rights mandated by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* regardless of their political status.<sup>5</sup>

## Timeline:

**August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1912** – Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Tibetans led by the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso, ousted Chinese soldiers from Tibet, and negotiated the *Three Points Agreement*, establishing Tibet as an independent state.

**November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1933** – The First East Turkestan Republic was established in west Xinjiang. Centered in the Kashgar region, it was a Uyghur nation that resented both Han and Hui (Chinese Muslims) alike. Three months after its independence, the FETR was annexed by Chinese forces.

**November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944** – After a violent uprising by the Uyghurs in north Xinjiang, the Second East Turkestan Republic was declared independent. This country was backed by the Soviet Union but was largely pacified by Chinese forces in 1947.

**October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949** – The People's Republic of China inaugurated in Beijing; Nationalist Chinese forces retreated to the South and eventually to Taiwan.

**October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1949** – Xinjiang was officially incorporated as part of PRC as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

**April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1951** – The *Seventeen Point Agreement* was signed between the delegates of Tibet and the PRC, ensuring Tibetan autonomy within China, while granting its sovereignty to the central government in Beijing.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.tibetjustice.org/materials/china/china3.html>

**March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1959** – The 14th Dalai Lama escaped to India from Lhasa because of Sino-Tibetan tensions from 1956-1959. He later disavowed the *Seventeen Point Agreement* and proclaimed it to be illegitimate.

**April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1959** – The Dalai Lama and his followers formed the Government of Tibet in exile in Dharamsala, India.

**September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1965** – Tibet was officially established as the Tibet Autonomous Region under Beijing's control.<sup>7</sup>

**May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1995** – Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the boy selected by the Tibetan Government-in-exile to be the 11th Panchen Lama, disappeared on this date. Many suspect that he was imprisoned or killed by the Chinese government.

**December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995** – The Beijing government selected their own Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu, and installed him as the legitimate 11th Panchen Lama.

**May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1996** – The Committee on the Rights of the Child demands the whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, a request of which Chinese media promptly declined, proclaiming that the child and his family does not want to be disturbed.

**February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1997** – Nationalist protests erupted in Ghulja, Xinjiang. Uyghurs marching to the streets against the Chinese government were suppressed by the armed police two days later, with 9 people dead and many wounded. Uyghur Nationalists claim that over 100 people were killed.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008** – A violent protest by Tibetan monks in Lhasa quickly escalated into a region wide riot with murders and looting directed towards the Han and Hui people. Although casualties were relatively low, this event sparked global Anti-Chinese protests organized by Tibetans abroad.<sup>8</sup>

**July 5<sup>th</sup> 2009** – Anti-Han riots in Xinjiang resulted in casualties numbering in the thousands. Uyghur separatists started out peacefully protesting but later resorted to smashing Han shops

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/bjzl/t168663.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/31/world/asia/tibet-protests-timeline/>

and property. A mass deployment of armed polices within Urumqi led to a suppression of the rebellion.<sup>9</sup>

**July 2016** – The state selected Panchen Lama Gyaincain Norbu performs the Kalachakra Initiation, a rite that has not taken place in Tibet for 50 years, and is praised by the Beijing government. Many Tibetan activists see this as an act of appeasement from the communist government and denounce the legitimacy of the state appointed Panchen Lama.<sup>10</sup>

## Historical Analysis:

The animosity between the Han and other ethnic groups is by no means a recent issue. As one of the four most ancient human civilizations, China has roughly 4000 years of traceable history and 5000 years of mythical history. During these millenniums, the Han Chinese frequently came into contact with outside ethnicities; these confrontations, though sometimes diplomatic, usually came through military skirmishes and the subjugation of one another. Because the topic today addresses three ethnic groups specifically, the Hans, the Uyghurs, and the Tibetans, it is essential to define each of their cultures and customs, and to differentiate each from one another.

The Han is the dominant culture of China's population. With a total population of roughly 1.2 billion people, they are the ethnic group typically associated with being a Chinese person. Originally named "Hua Xia", the Han people were little tribes inhabiting the cradle of the Chinese civilization, the Yellow River Basin, around 5000 years ago. These bands spoke a Sino-Tibetan language with a pictographic writing system, which is now known as Ancient Chinese. Around 1600 BCE, the first archaeologically verified dynasty, the Shang Dynasty, emerged in the modern day Henan province in central China. It is recognized to be the first recorded Hua Xia kingdom with a fully developed linguistic system and political hierarchy.<sup>11</sup>

The word "Han" first appeared around 206 BCE with the establishment of the Han dynasty. At the time, being a Han person was not to be a part of an ethnic group, but rather to be the citizen of the Han Empire. Lasting for around 400 years, the Han Dynasty was the second Chinese kingdom to be an absolute, centralized monarchy. It inherited the assimilation policies of the Qin Dynasty and enforced policies that uniformed literature and text, as well as

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/06/world/asia/06china.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/06/world/asia/06china.html?_r=0)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/07/24/487033323/in-tibet-a-long-banned-buddhist-rite-takes-place-but-not-everyones-pleased>

<sup>11</sup> <http://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/ShangDynasty.pdf>

currency and transportation. Through four centuries of gradual centralization, a wide spread nation identity that was previously non-existent emerged, as people start to classify themselves as Han people. This identification lasted even though the Empire did not. Over the years, Han became the description of an ethnicity rather than a nationality. Today, the majority of Han people live within the borders of the former Han Dynasty, and speak either Mandarin or Cantonese. Common heritages like Confucianism, Lunar New Year, written text, historical literature, and Mongoloid physical features are shared by all members of this ethnicity.<sup>12</sup>

Originating around the Anatolia region, the Uyghurs migrated to North Asia in the prehistoric times. They are a predominantly Turkic people who settled in Mongolia and migrated to the Tarim Basin around 842 AD as a result to the collapse of their empire.<sup>13</sup> Much like the Han, the Uyghurs are a mixed ethnic group; their features are a mixture of Caucasian and Mongoloid, and the majority of this people practice Sunni Islam. Now the ethnic majority in Xinjiang, the Uyghurs were truly integrated as part of China by the Qing Dynasty in the 1750's and have been under Chinese control ever since.

The region now known as Xinjiang was inhabited by Buddhist Indo-Europeans known as the Tocharians prior to the Turkic interventions. Earliest recordings of this ethnic group trace back to the 200's CE, when they coincided the Han Dynasty.<sup>14</sup> As an important link on the Silk Road, the Tocharians adopted culture from both China and Persia, and kept mutually friendly relationships with both. During the latter half of the 9th century, as Turkic people from Mongolia fled to Xinjiang, the two groups started to assimilate one another to form the later named "Uyghurs." This new ethnic group replaced the Tocharians in their role on the Silk Road, and remained in contact with Han Chinese for the centuries after. Around the 11th century, Islam began to spread to the Uyghurs, but remained minor in the region. In the 13th century, as Genghis Khan's descents expanded the Mongol Empire at an exponential rate, the Tarim Basin came under the control of the Chagatai Khanate. Tughlugh Timur, the ruler of said Khanate from 1347 to 1363, converted to Islam, and changed the official religion of the Uyghurs to Sunnism; by the 1700's, most Uyghurs became Muslims.

The Xinjiang region, sometimes under a Han protectorate government, sometimes under limited autonomous control, and at other times completely sovereign, was never administered directly by the Chinese central government. Thus when the Qing Dynasty annexed Xinjiang in the 18th century, the local populations did not recognize themselves as Chinese. The Qing

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/who-are-the-han-chinese-people.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.slavorum.org/tarim-basin-in-china-mummies-of-proto-slavs-4000-years-old/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://resobscura.blogspot.ca/2010/06/vanished-civilization-ii-tocharians.html>

Emperors, themselves Manchurian, made no efforts to incorporate the Uyghurs into the Han cultural sphere, and thus when their 268 year reign came to an end with the Xinhai Revolution,<sup>15</sup> the “French Revolution” of China, the Uyghurs wished for no less than independence.

The Tibetans, compared to the Uyghurs, were much more isolated. Living in the highlands of the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas, the Tibetans were nearly inaccessible from every direction because of the high altitudes of their homeland. Thus, they rarely came into contact with the people around the area. The earliest recordings of Tibetan Chinese contact were in the 7th century, when Namri Löntsän, the king and founder of the Tibetan Empire, sent an ambassador to the Tang Empire of China. Prior to the establishment of said empire, the Tibetan people practiced a native religion named Bön, but after the second emperor and son to Namri Löntsän, Songtsän Gampo, converted to Vajrayana Buddhism, Tibet steadily became Buddhist.<sup>16</sup> At its greatest extent, the Empire of Tibet stretched from the Tarim Basin in Xinjiang to Bengal (Bangladesh), but after roughly 300 years of stability, the country collapsed, leaving Tibet fragmented. The relative anarchy of the region remained for 400 years before the arrival of the Mongols, and it was during this period that Tibet developed its theocratic traditions. The Mongols annexed Tibet around the 13th century, and for the first time, Tibet was integrated into a foreign power. Their reign, however, did not last long, as the Mongol Empire quickly deteriorated in both China and Tibet by mid 14th century. With the centralizing power again absent, a new school of Buddhism began to take control. The Dalai Lama lineage originated around 1415 with Gendun Drup being the first of them. They are seen as the reincarnations of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and are the head of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. In the 18th century, the Manchurian Qing Dynasty installed themselves as the overlords of Tibet, and it was during this period of time that it became murky as to who is to appoint the Dalai Lama, the previous reincarnation or the government. By 1912, with revolutions emerging in all over China, the 13th Dalai Lama seized the opportunity to declare independence and oust all Chinese civilians and officials.<sup>17</sup> This government was not recognized by any nation in the world.

From 1912 to 1949, China underwent a period of instability; although professedly unified under the Republic of China, cliques and factions disputed frequently and the country was, in reality, in a decades long Civil War. In 1938, the Japanese, who had previously occupied

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<sup>15</sup> <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/chinese-rev>

<sup>16</sup> [http://studybuddhism.com/web/en/archives/study/history\\_buddhism/buddhism\\_tibet/details\\_tibetan\\_history/history\\_early\\_period\\_buddhism\\_tibet/Part\\_1.html](http://studybuddhism.com/web/en/archives/study/history_buddhism/buddhism_tibet/details_tibetan_history/history_early_period_buddhism_tibet/Part_1.html)

<sup>17</sup> <https://freetibet.org/about/history>

Manchuria, launched a full scale invasion of China and sparked the Second Sino-Japanese War, of which is considered by some to be a part of the Second World War. After the defeat of the Imperial Japanese by the Americans in August of 1945, China enjoyed a brief period of relative centralization and peace under the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-Shek, before the Communist Revolution plunged China into turmoil once more. By 1950, mainland China was under communist control and the Chiang Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan.<sup>18</sup>

It is during this chaos that lasted for nearly half a decade, that Uyghurs and Tibetan enjoyed high autonomy, and in some cases, self-governance. Influenced by the Pan-Turkic movement of the 1920s and 30s, three brothers of the rich Bughra family led a rebellious group of Uyghur miners in Khotan in Western Xinjiang to form the Khotan Emirate on March 16th, 1933. This country was later renamed the (First) East Turkestan Republic, and came into numerous skirmishes with the local Chinese forces. In 1934, a Hui (Chinese Muslims) army under General Sheng Shicai decimated the Uyghur forces, and was able to strangle the control of Xinjiang back from the FETR. Sheng Shicai reigned over Xinjiang as a semi-autonomous governor of the Republic of China for 10 years, during which he kept close ties with both the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communist parties. Fearing the secession of Xinjiang, the president of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-Shek, transferred Sheng Shicai to an administration position in the agricultural department of government in 1944, effectively stripping away all of his power. However, in November of the same year, a Soviet backed Second East Turkestan Republic was established in Northern Xinjiang. This republic lasted until 1946, when it compromised with the central government to be reintegrated into China.<sup>19</sup> From 1912 to 1950, Tibet was independent in all but name.

## Current Situation:

Contemporary Chinese history is considered to have began in 1949 with the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and it is from then on that human rights violations and tensions between the Han, Uyghurs and Tibetans became a UN regarded issue. After their de facto independence during the Republic of China era, the people of Xinjiang and Tibet were unaccustomed and unwilling to be administered by the Chinese central government, with Tibet being the more severe of the two.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/chinese-rev>

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.uyghurpen.org/The\\_Formation\\_Of\\_Uyghur\\_Identity.pdf](http://www.uyghurpen.org/The_Formation_Of_Uyghur_Identity.pdf)

In 1949, the Nationalist government installed within Xinjiang surrendered to the Communist government, and the region was renamed the Xinjiang Autonomous Region on October 1st, 1955. It was during the PRC's regime that the ethnic group "Uyghur" was officially established and documented. Today, Uyghurs consists of around 46% of Xinjiang's total population while Han people takes up about 40%.<sup>20</sup> However, at the establishment of the nation, Uyghurs were the overwhelming majority, composing 73% of all people in Xinjiang. The capital and largest city of the region today, Urumqi, has more Han people than Uyghurs as a result of industrialization and mining enterprises in Xinjiang. As the country's dominant culture group, and usually from the more developed and wealthier inland provinces, Han people are usually better educated and thus, are more affluent than the locals. Many Uyghurs live in relative poverty and are being driven out of large cities because of rising real estate prices. The combination of envy and becoming a minority has driven some Uyghurs into becoming extreme separatists. In the past few decades, many anti-Han terrorist attacks have been conducted all over China to protest against Chinese regime over Xinjiang.

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, an Urumqi riot started out as a peaceful protest, but quickly escalated into an anti-Han attack. The Chinese government claims that there were around 197 people who had died, but exiled Uyghur activist groups claim that there were more casualties. The Human Rights Watch had monitored the issue. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, another attack occurred in the KunMing train station in Yunnan. 10 Xinjiang separatists, armed with cleavers and knives, massacred 31 civilians and injured 143 people.<sup>21</sup> The extremists were quickly pacified, with four being killed and one being detained for life. This attack provoked massive global upheaval, as Western nations proclaimed it to be the result of long time oppression of the Uyghur people, while Chinese abroad accused Western media for using the words "terrorist attack" in quotation marks. The tensions were at an all time high between the Han and the Uyghurs.

Tibetan separatism today is caused largely by the exile of the Dalai Lama, a figure of whom most Tibetan Buddhists exalt. In 1949, at the height of the Chinese Civil War, the Tibetan regional government expelled all Chinese officials from Tibet to solidify its sovereignty. In response to this, the People's Liberation Army (PRC) marched into the Chamdo region of Eastern Tibet to declare its supremacy. The Tibetan guerrilla armies were promptly defeated by the better equipped and professionally disciplined armies of the PRC, and the local government was forced into compromising with the Communist government. In 1951, a

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/geog/downloads/597/403.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3008996/China-executes-three-men-convicted-mass-stabbing-train-station.html>

Tibetan delegation was sent to Beijing to contract the *Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, which ceded Tibetan sovereignty to the central government but guaranteed certain autonomy to the regional administration. The 14th Dalai Lama was the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, and from 1951 to 1959, he was recognized by Beijing. The relations between the two began to deteriorate in 1956, when the socialist land reforms enforced by the PRC was violently repelled by the Tibetans. Skirmishes erupted and local guerrilla armies combatted with the Communist military to wrestle control over the jurisdiction of the area, which would worsen the relationship between the Tibetans and the Han. In March of 1959, fearing that the Chinese government will harm the Dalai Lama, thousands of locals surrounded the Potala Palace to prevent any Chinese forces from entering, thus angering Beijing. The Dalai Lama, conscious of an impending retaliation for this act of defiance, fled to India, where he established the Tibetan government-in-exile and repudiated the *Seventeen Point Agreement*, claiming it to be illegitimate and forced upon the Tibetan people.<sup>22</sup> In the following decades, the Dalai Lama has met with numerous world leaders, including former president of the USA, George W. Bush in July of 2015. Many western celebrities such as Harrison Ford openly support the independence of Tibet. Over his 50 plus years of exile, the Dalai Lama has changed his policy from a sovereign Tibet to an autonomous local government that recognizes itself as a part of China. The Beijing government, however, has not compromised to any of the Dalai's demands, thus creating a long lasting stalemate.

In March of 2008, what started out as a peace observance of the Tibetan uprising day by the separatists, quickly spun out of control. Chinese shops were pillaged and non-Tibetan civilians were attacked. To lessen the damage done by the mob, police forces were dispatched to suppress the rebels. Depending on the source, the death toll of this event ranged from 19 to 80, and overall casualties dwelled in the 300s. This event has been largely censored by the central government from media coverage. Outside of China, Tibetan-independence activists rallied outside of Chinese embassies and consulates in protest of the detainment of personnel by the Chinese police, as well as the injustices and human rights violations in Tibet.<sup>23</sup> In addition to activist movements, the appointment of the Panchen Lama has also sparked Buddhist discontent in China.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1995, the Dalai Lama appointed Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, disappeared mysteriously.<sup>24</sup> It is confirmed that the Chinese government is involved with the potential kidnapping, but the whereabouts of the child remains unknown till this day. On

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.friendsoftibet.org/articles/china.html>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2008/mar/14/1>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-32771242>

December 8th of the same year, the Beijing government selected its own Panchen Lama, a young boy named Gyaincain Norbu, and proclaimed him to be the licit Panchen Lama. Many Tibetans have refused to recognize the officially appointed monk, and along with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, demands the location of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. Han-Tibetan tensions are at an all time high.

## UN Involvement

Having been established prior to Communist Chinese annexation of East Turkestan and Tibet, the United Nations was involved from the very beginning of the conflict. Although neither country has ever become a UN member state, the ethnic tensions that exist in the two regions have long bothered the international community.

In 1950, the Tibetan government led by the Dalai Lama appealed to the United Nations through the country of El Salvador, and requested for aid to counter the Chinese occupation of Chamdo (East Tibet). A draft resolution condemning Chinese actions was proposed, but member states refused to incorporate it into the committee agenda because countries such as India and Soviet believed that the Tibet Question could and would be settled peacefully. Later in the year, Tibet was militarily annexed and the *Seventeen Point Agreement* was signed between Beijing and Lhasa declaring Tibet an official part of the People's Republic of China.

The United Nations was once again alerted by the Tibetan situation in 1959 when mass rebellions were quelled with military forces and the Dalai Lama escaped to India. The General Assembly passed resolution (S/RES/1353) urging for the immediate suspension of all hostile activities performed by the Chinese government; however, without any practical clauses to implement, this resolution did little to change the status quo at the time.<sup>25</sup> A similar resolution was passed on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1961, which further stressed the lack of respect for the *Charter of the United Nations* and the *Universal Declaration of Humans Rights* during Chinese operations in Tibet. It calls upon China to cease all actions that deprive Tibetan people of human rights, and presents a report that indicates that from 1912-1950, Tibet possessed all characteristics of a sovereign nation.<sup>26</sup> The Tibetan Question was mentioned a final time in 1965, when the United Nations General Assembly renewed its condemnation of human rights abuses in Tibet, as well as added a clause convicting the suppression of distinct Tibetan

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<sup>25</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/141/76/IMG/NR014176.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/united-nations/un-general-assembly-resolutions/>

religion and culture.<sup>27</sup> Although official mentions of the Tibet issue became sparse afterwards, protests still frequently occur when Chinese delegations arrive at UN meetings.

Xinjiang on the contrary has received little attention from the United Nations, and although various countries and UN officials have commented on the Uyghur separatist movement, no formal resolutions have been passed regarding the Uyghur Question. The lack of a global figure like the Dalai Lama and the historical diffusion between Han and Uyghur means that the Uyghurs are less inclined than the Tibetans to appeal for independence. Nevertheless, the 2009 riot has brought the tensions in Xinjiang into international attention, and the UN is actively observing the situation.

## Possible Solutions

There are many possible solutions to the ethnic tensions in China - they all have their advantages, but each one presents a difficult challenge to overcome. Thus, it is up to the delegates to develop a multifaceted solution created by many international perspectives.

First is to maintain the current status quo. Under this resolution, countries will continue to consider Tibet and Xinjiang as Chinese territory, while conducting secret operations in the regions to optimize their political benefits. This solution is one that be easily agreed upon but presents numerous issues - first of which being that humanitarian issues in these regions would not be resolved under this motion. Under the status quo, riots such as the ones in 2008 & 2009 are bound to happen once more. There are also the issues of the Dalai Lama succession and missing Panchen Lama, both of which are sure to trigger a violent uprising when the current Dalai Lama dies. A slight alteration of this resolution would be to send humanitarian aid and peacekeepers into these regions while recognizing them as Chinese states. This would, however, infringe upon the national sovereignty of the PRC, and is sure to spark tension between the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc.

A second solution would be the support for either an independent Tibet, Xinjiang or both. This solution will definitely not be approved by the Chinese delegation, but it gives United Nations a reason to intervene in the situation. Delegates must keep in mind, however, that the goal of SOCHUM is to maintain peace, thus any martial activity without proper justification will likely be denied. Even if the UN were to allow peacekeepers to station inside China, the

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<sup>27</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/218/42/IMG/NR021842.pdf?OpenElement>

sheer size and power of the nation make any militaristic approach nearly impossible without leading to all-out war. With enough nations recognizing the sovereignty of these two states, the west would technically be allowed to dispatch non-militaristic humanitarian aid into the areas without the intrusion of China's autonomy. Should this resolution be passed though, it will most likely exacerbate Han hatred towards the Uyghurs, Tibetans and the West. Risk of a re-annexation by Chinese military forces of the two provinces must also be considered when proposing a resolution similar to this one.

Economic sanctions like the ones placed on Russia can be implemented on China should the committee lean towards a less confrontational solution than the previous one, and the boycotting of Chinese goods will most certainly devastate the power house's economy. But since Tibet and Xinjiang are both publicly recognized as Chinese territory unlike Crimea to Russia, to enact a resolution like such will require the international community to overtly support Tibetan and Uyghur independence. This will not only destroy diplomatic relations between the ratifying party and China, but also ruin the livelihood of many Tibetans and Uyghurs because their regional economy is dependent on the well-being on the national one.

The last resolution is to bestow complete recognition of the two regions as Chinese territory. Under a motion like such, the West will cease to acknowledge the Dalai Lama and funding towards the protests in and outside of China. This solution is sure to appease the Eastern bloc, but it also grants them the permission to commit more human rights violations like the oppression of free speech and religion without global condemnation. This solution, depending on the points included, can either pacify or worsen the current situation. To better the violence in Xinjiang and Tibet, this resolution confides in the voluntary submission of the Tibetan and Uyghur people to the central control. But more likely than not, the ethnic tensions will escalate as local minorities become enraged of Western abandonment.

There is not a single optimal solution to this topic, but it is by no means unsolvable. While the solutions provided by the backgrounder can be implemented, they should be seen as references and are by no means the only solutions available; delegates should feel free to explore other possibilities. However, when creating working papers, delegates are reminded to stay within the mandate of SOCHUM, which is the humanitarian and social support of these disputed areas.

## Bloc Positions

### China & Russia

China has always claimed Xinjiang and Tibet to be indivisibly Chinese territory, and has presented historic records to back its statement. It is strictly against any form of separatism, whether organized inside or outside of China, and has openly denounced the current Dalai Lama on several occasions. Russia, as a long time partner of China, supports the Chinese claim on Tibet and Xinjiang, and has attempted to arrange negotiations between the Dalai Lama and Beijing.

### India

Being the host and refuge of the Tibetan exiled government, the Indian government is in favour of an independent Tibet. Incursions on the Indo-Chinese border, namely the Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh regions, have spiked tensions between the two nations; the alliance between China and Pakistan further intensifies the issue. India, although not officially recognizing Tibet as an independent nation, has been avoiding claims of Chinese sovereignty in Tibet.<sup>28</sup>

### Turkey

Because of cultural and religious proximity to the Uyghurs, many Turkish people are in support of an independent Uyghurstan. Demonstrations in front of the Chinese consulate, including the burning of Chinese flags and threatening of Chinese tourists, have created tension between the two nations. Although officially, Turkey does not recognize an independent Uyghur nation, it closely monitors the issues in Xinjiang.

### USA & Europe

The USA has been accused of backing numerous Tibetan rebellions, including the one in 1959. Although formally, its foreign policy recognizes the “One China” idea proposed by the PRC, many of its celebrities and government officials have been in open support of Tibetan independence. Many Western nations, like the UK and USA, allow Anti-Chinese protests and some even provide the funding for these campaigns. They wish for the human rights issues in China such as the oppression of rebels and the limited right of speech, as well as the opacity of the current situation to be resolved.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brahmachellaney/2014/11/27/why-tibet-remains-the-core-issue-in-china-india-relations/#1ed81a6e6a14>

## Africa

Over the past few decades, China has become a major trade partner and funder of many African nations such as Kenya and Ethiopia.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, many of these governments are authoritarian and against Western involvement regarding human rights issues and ethnic tension in foreign countries. Many African countries, with strong commercial relationships with China, have openly declared Tibet to be a problem under China's sovereignty, and that outside intervention should be kept at a minimal.

## Discussion Questions:

1. How much does historical context determine the integrity of Xinjiang and Tibet?
2. Is the independence of the two provinces necessary for the human rights of the Uyghurs and Tibetans to be maintained?
3. How should figures like the Dalai Lama play a role in the ethnic tension of these regions?
4. Does the actions taken by Western countries today aid or intensify the conflict?
5. Should other countries intervene upon China's sovereignty over these regions? Does China have sovereignty over them?
6. Will being assimilated into Chinese culture benefit the local people, or will independence be better?
7. Would countries be willing to aid these countries should they be independent?
8. Is it to one's best interest to recognize these states against China's will?
9. What percentage of the local population is actually in support of defection?
10. Are the suppressions in these regions human rights violations or legal actions taken by a government to provide security to their citizens?
11. Is the Chinese government the only party committing crimes, or are the rebels also to blame?

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35007900>

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