

**Document 13.5: Excerpt from Mao Zedong's speech "On the Policies of Our Work in Tibet," April 6, 1952**

*This document was written by Mao Zedong for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It was sent to the Southwest Bureau and the Working Committee in Tibet and communicated to the Northwest Bureau and the Xinjiang Sub-Bureau.*

Conditions in Tibet are different from those in Xinjiang. Tibet compares poorly with Xinjiang, whether politically or economically. But even in Xinjiang, the first thing the army units under Wang Chen did when they got there was to pay the utmost attention to strict budgeting, self-reliance and production for their own needs. They have now gained a firm foothold and won the warm support of the minority nationalities. They are carrying out the reduction of rent and interest and will proceed to agrarian reform this winter, and by then we can be sure of even greater support from the masses. Xinjiang is well connected with the heartland of the country by motor roads, and this is of great help in improving the material welfare of the minority nationalities. As for Tibet, neither rent reduction nor agrarian reform can start for at least two or three years. While several hundred thousand Han people live in Xinjiang, there are hardly any in Tibet, where our army finds itself in a totally different minority nationality area. We depend solely on two basic policies to win over the masses and put ourselves in an invulnerable position. The first is strict budgeting coupled with production for the army's own needs, and thus the exertion of influence on the masses; this is the key link. Even when highways are built, we cannot count on moving large quantities of grain over them. India will probably agree to send grain and other goods to Tibet on the basis of exchange, but the stand we must take is that our army should be able to carry on even if India stops sending them some day. We must do our best and take proper steps to win over the Dalai [Lama] and the majority of his top echelon and to isolate the handful of bad elements in order to achieve a gradual, bloodless transformation of the Tibetan economic and political system over a number of years; on the other hand, we must be prepared for the eventuality of the bad elements leading the Tibetan troops in rebellion and attacking us, so that in this contingency our army could still carry on and hold out in Tibet. It all depends on strict

budgeting and production for the army's own needs. Only with this fundamental policy as the cornerstone of our work can we achieve our aim. The second policy, which can and must be put into effect, is to establish trade relations with India and with the heartland of our country and to attain a general balance in supplies to and from Tibet so that the standard of living of the Tibetan people will in no way fall because of our army's presence but will improve through our efforts. If we cannot solve the two problems of production and trade, we shall lose the material base for our presence, the bad elements will cash in and will not let a single day pass without inciting the backward elements among the people and the Tibetan troops to oppose us, and our policy of uniting with the many and isolating the few will become ineffectual and fail....

Source: Mao Zedong, "On the Policies of our Work in Tibet," 6 April 1952. Transcribed by the Maoist Documentation Project.