**05NEWDELHI5480**

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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

 C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 005480 SIPDIS E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/30/2015 TAGS: PREF PREL IN NP BT SUBJECT: BHUTAN REITERATES COMMITMENT TO DEWEY-WANGCHUCK AGREEMENT REF: A. STATE 126204 [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480#parB) B. STATE 117685 [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480#parC) C. STATE 106121 Classified By: Charge Bob Blake for Reasons 1.4 (B, D) [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480#par1) 1. (C) Summary: The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) remains committed to resolving the refugee problem using the Dewey-Wangchuck framework and is ready to meet with its Nepalese counterparts to hash out the modalities of the agreement, Bhutanese Ambassador Tshering told us on July 13. After receiving A/S Dewey's letter to King Wangchuck (Ref A), the Ambassador asserted that Bhutan has attempted to engage with Nepal on the issue a number of times, but has been "stonewalled" in its attempts. Tshering was noncommittal on Bhutanese plans to continue verification of the remaining six camps, restating security concerns. End Summary. RGOB Committed to Resolving the Refugee Problem --------------------------------------------- -- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480%22%20%5Cl%20%22par2) 2. (C) Ambassador Tshering underlined that the RGOB is committed to resolving the refugee problem and will abide by the plan conceived by King Wangchuck during A/S Dewey's October 2004 visit to Thimphu. Tshering expressed frustration that he had requested an audience with King Gyanendra, as well as meetings with Foreign Minister Pandey and a number of other cabinet-level officials in the Nepalese government, but has not received a response. Tshering told us that Bhutanese Foreign Minister Wangchuk requested a meeting with King Gyanendra during the June 12-16 Second South Summit of the G-77 in Doha, but that also was rebuffed. Tshering said the RGOB is frustrated at being "stonewalled" in their attempts to meet with the RGON on the issue. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480#par3) 3. (C) Upon reading A/S Dewey's letter in regards to Nepalese Foreign Minister Pandey's willingness to meet, Tshering expressed hope that such an encounter would take SIPDIS place. When PolCouns inquired whether the RGOB would immediately repatriate the Category 1 refugees from Khudunabari camp if Kathmandu agrees, Tshering responded that Thimphu would stand by the Dewey-Wangchuck framework. Next Steps ---------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480%22%20%5Cl%20%22par4) 4. (C) Tshering commented that the RGOB has not been in recent contact with either UNHCR or Kathmandu about continuing the Joint Verification Team (JVT) process at the other refugee camps in Nepal. He expressed concern over the security situation in the area and logistical problems that might hinder future JVT efforts. Tshering acknowledged that a solution to the problem must be found, stating that resolution of the issue would create a "win-win situation." He concluded that the RGOB has "an open mind" and is ready to discuss the issue, but that Nepal seems to have other, more pressing, problems to deal with. We are prepared to move ahead, Tshering reiterated, but if the Nepalese government feels it must focus on other priorities, Bhutan will respect that decision. PolCouns pressed on A/S Dewey's point that resolution of the refugee impasse could help to advance the King's priority of moving to a constitutional monarchy. Ambassador Tshering did not dispute this point, reaffirming his confidence that a solution to the refugee problem is within reach. Comment: Dewey-Wangchuck Framework the Best Way Forward --------------------------------------------- ----------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/05newdelhi5480%22%20%5Cl%20%22par5) 5. (C) It appears to us that neither Bhutan nor Nepal is actively working to resolve the refugee issue and are engaged in a game of finger-pointing as to who should make the next move. We should focus our efforts on compelling Bhutan and Nepal to meet and implement the Dewey-Wangchuck agreement as a way to jump-start the stalled bilateral process. The repatriation of Category 1's from Khudunabari would be an important confidence building measure and show refugees that return to Bhutan is possible. The upcoming meetings of SAARC and UNGA are both opportunities for the RGOB and RGON to discuss the Dewey-Wangchuck plan at senior levels. As mentioned in Reftel C, from 2005 onwards, USG policy is to utilize all durable solution, not only repatriation, to resolve the refugee issue. Therefore, resumption of the UNHCR profiling surveys, in order to accurately determine the wishes of the refugees, should also be high on our agenda. BLAKE