**08NEWDELHI1019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reference ID** | **Created** | **Released** | **Classification** | **Origin** |
| 08NEWDELHI1019 | 2008-04-08 12:18 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy New Delhi |

VZCZCXRO6251 OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW DE RUEHNE #1019/01 0991218 ZNY CCCCC ZZH O 081218Z APR 08 FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1272 INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6858 RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2640 RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5603 RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 6272 RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7671 RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001019 SIPDIS SIPDIS DEPT FOR SCA/INS, DRL E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2018 TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL PINR KDEM IN BT INR SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHY: BHUTAN'S FIRST DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PRIME MINISTER JIGMI THINLEY REF: A. NEW DELHI 971 [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#parB) B. NEW DELHI 202 [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#parC) C. 07 NEW DELHI 5299 Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for reasons 1.4 (B,D) After a Landslide Victory, A Leader is Tapped ---------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par1) 1. (SBU) On April 5, Druk Phuensum Tsogpa (DPT) President Jigmi Thinley was unanimously endorsed by his party to serve as Bhutan's first Prime Minister of its new democratically elected government. On March 24, the DPT crushed the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) during National Assembly elections, leaving it with only two out of 47 seats (ref A). Prime Minister Jigmi Y. Thinley: An Experienced Bureaucrat ---------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par2) 2. (SBU) During Jigmi Thinley's long career, he served the people of Bhutan in various capacities. Before democracy broke out, Thinley held the position of Minister for Home and Cultural Affairs from 2003-2007. Per the rules of the Election Commission, he resigned this post prior to joining politics and becoming the President of the DPT. Serving as Prime Minister is not new for Thinley, who occupied this post for a year between 2003-2004 and also in 1998-1999. He has also served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs (1998-2003), Secretary for the Ministry of Home Affairs (1993-1994, SIPDIS Governor of Eastern Bhutan (1990-1993), Joint Secretary for the Ministry of Communications (1989-1990), Director and Head of the Department of Education (1986-1987), and Secretary for the Royal Civil Service Commission. Thinley has represented Bhutan overseas while posted as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva (1994-1998), at which time he was also the accredited Ambassador to Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the European Union. In New York, Thinley served as the Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the United Nations (1988-1989). Beyond Government, But Still Representing the People of Bhutan ---------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par3) 3. (SBU) In addition to his many postings in government, Thinley has served as a Member of the National Assembly of Bhutan (1998-2007); a Member of the Planning Commission; the President of the Center for Bhutan Studies; and the Chairperson for Druk Air Corporation (Bhutan's national airline). In the early 1980s, as the Assistant Secretary and later as the Secretary of the Bhutan-India Friendship Association, Thinley has been a key figure in deepening Bhutan's relationship with its giant neighbor. He is currently serving as an International Counselor for the Asia Society and is a Member of the Smithsonian Leadership Committee in order to "promote Bhutan's standing as a unique culture around the world." Personal Background ---------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par4) 4. (SBU) Born on September 9, 1952 in the eastern district of Bumthang, Thinley left home at the age of 11. According to his official biography, at an early age, he received a government scholarship to study at Dr. Graham's Homes in Kalimpong, India, where he excelled both academically and in extra curricular activities. Thinley continued his studies in India at the prestigious St. Stephen's College in Delhi where he received his Bachelors degree in 1974. Throughout his school years, Thinley was involved in theater and school politics, and was elected President of the Youth Club. At school in India his peers included current Bhutan Chief Justice Sonam Tobgye, Bhutan Chief Election Commissioner Khandu Wangchuck and his opponent, President of the PDP NEW DELHI 00001019 002 OF 002 Sangye Ngedup. After college, Thinley was admitted to Pennsylvania State University, where he obtained a Masters in Public Administration in 1976. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par5) 5. (SBU) Thinley has traveled extensively and spoken at various international fora, including at the UN General Assembly and at SAARC meetings and summits. He also published articles and papers on a number of topics including: "Gross National Happiness" (2006); "Globalization as seen by Developing Countries" (2002); "Gross National Happiness and Human Development" (1999); "Decentralization for Effective Dzongkhag Administration and Development" (1979); and "Design for a Better System of Education in Bhutan" (1976). [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par6) 6. (SBU) Thinley's father was also a public servant for the second and third Kings of Bhutan. Thinley is married to Rinsy Dem with whom he has three children, two daughters and a son. In addition to Dzongkha (the traditional Bhutanese language), Thinley speaks Hindi and English fluently. His hobbies include gardening and golf. BIO NOTE -------- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/08newdelhi1019#par7) 7. (C) In November 2007, Assistant Secretary for Population Refugees and Migration Ellen Sauerbrey and Poloff met then-President of the DPT Jigmi Thinley (ref C). Thinley's English was impeccable. He expressed frustration over the lack of participation of women candidates in the election and sought advice from Sauerbrey on how to increase their participation. In contrast to his opponent and brother-in-law, PDP President Sangye Ngedup, a brash politician by Bhutanese standards, Thinley exuded the qualities of a statesman. DEIKUN