

1

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June 16, 1928

Committee on Foreign Relations,  
United States Senate,  
Washington, D. C.

Members of the Committee:

In the name of the Director of the Roerich Museum, we send to you the following cable recently despatched to us from the Roerich American Expedition in Asia, headed by Nicholas Roerich, the world-renowned artist and scientist:

"ROERICH AMERICAN EXPEDITION AFTER MANY HARDSHIPS HAS REACHED HIMALAYAS STOP THUS ENDED BIG CENTRAL ASIATIC EXPEDITION STOP MANY ARTISTIC AND SCIENTIFIC RESULTS STOP ALREADY SENT SEVERAL SERIES PAINTINGS TO NEW YORK STOP HOPE LAST SENDING FROM MONGOLIA SAFELY REACHED STOP MANY OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING BUDDHISM STOP EXPEDITION STARTED IN 1924 FROM SIKKIM THROUGH PUNJAB KASHMIR LADAK KARAKORUM KHOTAN KASHGAR KARASHAHR URUMCHI IRTYSH ALTAI MOUNTAINS OYROT REGION MONGOLIA CENTRAL GOBI KANSU TSAIDAM TIBET STOP PEACEFUL AMERICAN FLAG ENCIRCLED CENTRAL ASIA EVERYWHERE MOVEMENT EXPEDITION FROM KHOTAN ASSISTED BY BRITISH CONSUL KASHGAR STOP ON TIBETAN TERRITORY HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY ARMED ROBBERS STOP SUPERIORITY OF OUR FIRE ARMS PREVENTED BLOODSHED STOP IN SPITE OF TIBET PASSPORTS EXPEDITION FORCIBLY STOPPED BY TIBETAN AUTHORITIES ON OCTOBER SIXTH TWO DAYS NORTH OF NAGCHU STOP WITH INHUMAN CRUELTY EXPEDITION HAS BEEN DETAINED FOR FIVE MONTHS ON ALTITUDE OF 5000 FEET IN SUMMER TENTS AMIDST SEVERE COLD ABOUT MINUS FORTY DEGREES CENTIGRADE STOP EXPEDITION SUFFERED FROM WANT OF FUEL AND FODDER STOP DURING STAY IN TIBET FIVE MEN MONGOLS BURIATS AND TIBETANS DIED AND NINETY CARAVAN ANIMALS PERISHED STOP BY ORDER OF AUTHORITIES ALL LETTERS AND WIRES ADDRESSED TO LHASA GOVERNMENT AMERICAN CONSUL CALCUTTA BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN SEIZED STOP FORBIDDEN TO BUY FOOD STUFFS FROM POPULATION STOP MONEY AND MEDICINES CAME TO AN END STOP THE PRESENCE OF THREE WOMEN IN CARAVAN AND MEDICAL CERTIFICATE ABOUT HEART WEAKNESS NOT TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION STOP WITH GREAT DIFFICULTIES ON MARCH FOURTH EXPEDITION STARTED SOUTHWARDS STOP ALL NINE EUROPEAN MEMBERS EXPEDITION SAFE STOP COURAGEOUSLY BORE HARDSHIPS OF EXCEPTIONALLY SEVERE WINTER STOP MANY SCIENTIFIC RESULTS AFTER FOUR YEARS TRAVELS STOP MAY SIXTEENTH -- (Signed) NICHOLAS ROERICH".

The Roerich American Expedition set out on its artistic mission in 1924, sponsored entirely by American art institutions-- Roerich Museum, in co-operation with the Master Institute of United Arts, and Corona Mundi, International Art Center. The institutions knew that through the attainments of its leader, the Roerich American Expedition would enrich the cause of American culture and art. The purposes of the Roerich American Expedition were, first, to obtain a panorama of paintings by Roerich of countries never yet painted by Western artist. It was felt by the sponsors of the Roerich American Expedition that in paintings by so great a master, new conceptions of the East would be brought to the West. The Roerich American Expedition also desired to obtain in Asia scientific and archaeological data and



material, which it deemed would be of vast importance in furthering our knowledge of Eastern culture.

The Leader of the Expedition, Professor Nicholas Roerich, is one of the great contemporary figures of international culture. Over 3000 of his paintings are in the leading Museums and private collections of twenty-five countries, including the Louvre (Pavillon Marsan); Luxembourg; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; National Museum, Rome; National Museum, Stockholm; Athenaeum, Helsingfors, and numerous others; and in America, such Museums as Chicago Art Institute, Kansas City Art Institute, Detroit Museum of Art, and numerous others. The Roerich Museum, founded by leading American art institutions as a tribute to Roerich's art, contains in its permanent collections more than 730 of his paintings. In addition to his fame as one of the greatest international artists, Roerich is outstanding as scientist, archaeologist, educator, and philosopher.

With Professor Roerich on the Expedition are also Mme. Roerich and his son George Roerich, eminent orientalist of Harvard and the Sorbonne.

Since its work began the Roerich American Expedition has sent back to this Country more than 250 paintings by Nicholas Roerich which are now permanently placed in the Roerich Museum, a free public museum in New York. In addition, the Expedition has sent to America numerous art treasures of Asia. Through the research of the members of the Expedition there has been secured vast literature and scientific material which have augmented our knowledge of the unknown regions of Asia. By its work, the Expedition has thus shed new light on the cultures and spirit of the East.

The Roerich American Expedition has also transmitted to Asia the message of America and a true vision of her striving and virile spirit. Called in the East the "Friend of America", Professor Roerich, perhaps more than any other individual, has brought to Asia a new conception of our country and with his great faith in and love for America Roerich has sown new seeds of friendship for us. Through his efforts many of the Eastern peoples are looking for new bonds of unity with America.

Despite this peaceful mission as well as the artistic and scientific goal of the Roerich American Expedition, we learn with deep regret that the Expedition has been forcibly detained by Tibetan officials who have subjected its members to inhuman cruelty.

Knowing your deep concern over all which pertains to the cultural and educational well-being of this country, we beg to inform you that the Directors of the Roerich Museum and its affiliated institutions, Master Institute of United Arts and Corona Mundi, International Art Center, have decided to send a Commission to meet the Roerich American Expedition in India and to learn the causes of the actions of the Tibetan authorities. We wish to ascertain the details and nature of their ruthless acts against the members of the Expedition. Upon receiving from the Commission their report, we shall submit to you its full contents and the results of its inquiry.



Respectfully submitted to you, in the name of the  
Directors of the

ROERICH MUSEUM  
MASTER INSTITUTE OF UNITED ARTS  
CORONA MUNDI, INTERNATIONAL ART CENTER

PRESIDENT