

Chinese cops 'deployed inside Nepal' after Tibet unrest

Agence France Presse Lipang, March 16, 2008

China has deployed security personnel inside Nepal to keep an eye for protests by pro-Tibetan groups, Nepali officials have said.

Plain-clothes Chinese officers could be seen yesterday on the Nepali side of the border with Tibet, and even blocked an AFP correspondent and photographer from working on Nepali soil near the main border crossing with Chinese-controlled Tibet. "Because of the situation in Lhasa, there are a lot more plain-clothes Chinese armed police on the Nepal side," explained a senior Nepali military official who asked not to be named. "In India, there are Tibetan exiles starting marches to Tibet, and the Chinese are scared the same thing could happen here," the military official said from the border crossing near Lipang village, 70 km northwest of Kathmandu.

Another Nepali border official confirmed the presence of Chinese security officials inside Nepal. "Before, there were very few Chinese security on our side, but since the protests in Lhasa, there has been at least six Chinese security officials on the Nepali side of the border post all the time. Sometimes, there are as many as 12," said the Nepali border official.

An AFP photographer was challenged by 10 Chinese security officials in civilian clothing and uniforms more than 200 metres inside Nepali territory, and ordered to erase his images of the area.

"They've put up more barriers on the road and there are a lot more army and police around," said Keshab Timilsina, a Nepali truck driver who plies the road between Nepal and China. Nepali tour operators said they had been told not to bring in foreign tour groups.

Home Ministry's denial:

KATHMANDU: A senior home ministry official, currently out of Kathmandu, dismissed the report about Chinese security personnel entering Nepal's territory. "We don't have any knowledge about Chinese policemen entering Nepal's territory in connection with the current developments in Tibet," the official said on the condition of anonymity. — HNS