

THE NATURE, EVOLUTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MIDDLE WAY POLICY

1) Background

The Middle Way policy is a mutually-beneficial policy that is based on the principles of justice, compassion, non-violence, friendship and in the spirit of reconciliation for the well-being of entire humanity. It does not envisage victory for oneself and defeat for others.

In 1959, led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, over 80,000 Tibetans were forced to come into exile. During the initial few years of our exile, we were engaged with the immediate and urgent tasks of catering to the educational needs of young Tibetans, preservation of Tibetan religion and culture as well as rehabilitation of the Tibetan refugees. Therefore, we were not able to formulate a definite policy that concerns the future political status of the Tibetan people. However, from 1967/1968 onwards, His Holiness the Dalai Lama — taking into consideration the prevailing situation in the world in general, and China in particular — held a wide-ranging and series of discussions with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, the Kashag, others who were part of the decision-making body at that point of time and wise and experienced friends of Tibet. As a result, an internal decision was made in 1974 to pursue a policy of securing a meaningful autonomy for Tibet — and not independence — when the opportunity arises for a dialogue with the Chinese government. So, in 1979, when China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping proposed dialogue with us, we could immediately establish contacts as we were then fully prepared to respond to them.

Since then, we have made unceasing and continuous efforts to resolve Tibet's issue by steadfastly holding on to the Middle Way policy. The leaders of the People's Republic of China have, however, not responded positively to these efforts. Moreover, the

situation inside Tibet has been deteriorating over the years. The peaceful protests by the Tibetan people between 1987 and 1989 were brutally suppressed and in the ensuing days the Chinese government not only placed strict restrictions on the Tibetan people in general and monks and nuns in particular, but also launched several harsh and unbearable measures like the ‘Patriotic Education’ campaign. Driven by these, the Tibetans from across the length and breadth of Tibet rose up in a popular and peaceful uprising in 2008, which was again brutally crushed resulting in many Tibetans being killed, tortured, beaten and imprisoned. Such inhuman acts continue to be carried out to this day. Moreover, nine rounds of talks with China since the resumption of direct contact in 2002 after nine-year hiatus has not produced any meaningful outcome.

Due to all these reasons, the Tibetan people in Tibet and Tibetan communities in exile are growing more impatient with and less hopeful of the Middle-Way policy. An increasing number of Tibetans who have doubts in their minds about the Middle-Way policy suggest that it is better to explore alternative means to resolve the issue of Tibet.

The Central Tibetan Administration, however, continues to uphold the Middle-Way policy with full confidence, as this policy has not only received overwhelming majority support during the 2008 Special Meeting, but the Tibetan Parliament in Exile has also adopted a unanimous resolution to this effect on 20 March 2010. Given the reality of the situation inside Tibet and the behaviour of the Chinese authorities, it is understandable why many of our Tibetan brothers and sisters are growing impatient. However, if one were to take a holistic view of our situation, then the Middle-Way policy has produced positive results. A time has, therefore, come to once again introduce the nature, evolution and achievement of the Middle Way policy to the general Tibetan populace.

2) Ideological Foundation of the Middle-Way Policy

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama teaches the importance of universal responsibility across the globe and urges that whatever problems we face should be solved through mutual consent in a friendly atmosphere. He also advises that even if the past century was a century of war and struggle, we should strive to make the present 21st century a new era where conflicts are resolved through dialogue. In his 10 March 1984 statement, His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated, “Irrespective of varying degrees of development and economic disparities, continents, nations, communities, families, in fact, all individuals are dependent on one another for their existence and well-being. Every human being wishes for happiness and does not want suffering. By clearly realising this, we must develop mutual compassion, love and a fundamental sense of justice. In such an atmosphere there is hope that problems between nations and problems within families can be gradually overcome and that people can live in peace and harmony.”

While he provides such an advice to the global community, he believes, at the same time, that the Tibetan struggle for greater freedoms in Tibet should also be conducted in conformity with this advice. If we strive for Tibet’s independence, there is neither a possibility for a dialogue nor of mutual agreement. Therefore, it is necessary for us to adopt a mutually-beneficial approach if the issue at hand should be resolved through dialogue in a spirit of reconciliation.

3) Nature of the Middle-Way Policy

The nature of the Middle-Way policy to realise the cause of Tibet is that it neither seeks the separation of Tibet from China by restoring Tibet’s independence nor accepts the present conditions of Tibet under the People’s Republic of China. In an effort to resolve the issue of Tibet in a manner that benefits both the parties concerned, it treads a middle path between these two extremes. This is what we call the Middle Way policy.

For resolving the issue of Tibet, each and every provision of autonomy as stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and its Law on National Regional Autonomy should be genuinely implemented by the Chinese government and the entire Tibetan people must be brought under a single autonomous administration. Moreover, non-violence should be the only means by which to achieve these objectives. These are the inviolable principles of the Middle-Way policy.

As regards Tibetan history, no one can rewrite the past. Particularly, one cannot accept a version of history that has been distorted or misrepresented for political purposes. However, the distinctive feature of the Middle-Way policy is that history should not be an obstacle in seeking a mutually beneficial common future within the People's Republic of China.

4) Need to Adopt the Middle-Way Policy

- a) Today's world is such that there is no way one can make a policy that is not pragmatic, or consistent with reality.
- b) Gone is the time when countries only pursued their individual rights. In pursuit of their common interest, many countries are now foregoing some of their individual sovereign rights by joining federations like the European Union. Moreover, the reality today is such that a country cannot live in isolation without depending on others.
- c) There are many nations that allow high degree autonomous arrangements based on race, culture and language. These autonomous arrangements are not only well-established but they contribute in strengthening the stability and integrity of the respective nations.
- d) Even with a mere six-million Tibetans, most of the areas in eastern and north-eastern Tibet have gradually been sliced off

from under the Gaden Phodrang government and in 1951 when Tibet lost its independence, the area of Tibet was not more than the area of today's so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). So even if independence is restored based on Tibet's recent history, there is no way we could get more than the TAR area. Because of this, for both the short and long-term benefit of the Tibetan people and in view of the fact that more than 50% of the Tibetans live outside TAR, is it not better to have a meaningful autonomy for all Tibetans rather than independence for one part of it? This needs a serious consideration by all the Tibetan people.

e) Tibet is a land-locked country. Therefore, it has to rely on its powerful neighbours for its economy and modern material development. In fact, Tibet remaining within the People's Republic of China will gain more material benefits.

f) In order to continue the large-scale activities for the cause of Tibet, it is necessary to garner the support of governments and other organisations to carry out our struggle at the global level. It is also indispensable to sustain the Central Tibetan Administration until the eventual resolution of the Tibet issue.

g) A way has to be found out, particularly, to save Tibetan culture, environment and national identity from the urgent situation of being completely destroyed inside Tibet.

5) The Middle-Way Policy was Adopted through a Democratic Process

a) Although the Middle-Way policy was conceived by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he has not directly formulated this policy. The Middle-Way policy was adopted democratically — through unanimous agreement — after holding extensive discussions with the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, the Kashag, all other organisations and individuals representing Tibetan people.

Subsequent to our numerous meetings with the Chinese government, a need was deeply felt to have a complete and clear proposal. Therefore, in 1987 His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced his long-term vision for Tibet called the Five-Point Peace Plan at the US Congress and in 1988, while elaborating on the fifth point of the Five-Point Peace Plan, he announced the Strasbourg Proposal at the European Parliament. Since this was the first proposal explaining the Middle-Way policy, a four-day special political meeting was organised in Dharamsala from 6 to 9 June 1988 before making it public. This conference was presided over by the Kashag and attended by the members of the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, public servants, NGOs, autonomous bodies, newly-arrived Tibetans, special invitees and others representing the exile Tibetans. They held a thorough discussion on the text of the proposal and finally endorsed it unanimously. This was the first time such a policy was adopted through democratic process by not only consulting the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies and the Kashag, but also directly soliciting the views of the delegates representing the Tibetan public.

b) After Sino-Tibetan contacts were broken in 1993, His Holiness the Dalai Lama proposed in his 10 March 1996 and 1997 statements that the Tibetan people should decide on the best possible course of action to resolve the issue of Tibet through referendum. Accordingly, as a preliminary to such a referendum, the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies and the Kashag provided the Tibetan people with four alternatives to debate and vote on. However, more than 64 percent of the Tibetan people inside and outside Tibet expressed the opinion that there was no need to hold a referendum and that they would support the Middle-Way policy, or whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama took from time to time in accordance with the changing political situation in the world. To this effect, the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies adopted a unanimous resolution on 18 September 1997, stating that His Holiness the Dalai Lama should decide on the issue of Tibet, from time to time, in accor-

dance with the changing political situation in China and in the world. It was further resolved that whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama takes will be regarded by all the Tibetan people as no different from a decision arrived through a referendum. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, when informed of this decision made by the majority of people and unanimously by the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, responded through his 10 March 1998 statement that he would continue his Middle-Way policy. This was the second time such a policy was adopted democratically by the majority of people and unanimously by the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies.

c) Even after seven rounds of talks with China since the resumption of direct contacts in 2002, no meaningful outcome could be achieved on the fundamental issue of Tibet. Aside from that, there were widespread peaceful protests all over Tibet in 2008 and there was a sense of urgency within the exile Tibetan community as well. So, in accordance with the article 59 of the Charter of Exile Tibetans, a six-day Special Meeting was held from 17 to 22 November 2008 in Dharamsala. Out of the views solicited from nearly 600 representatives who attended the meeting and the written opinions of their respective communities as well as opinions collected from among the Tibetans in Tibet, more than 80% of them expressed support for the Middle-Way policy. This was the third time for the Tibetan people to adopt such a policy through a democratic process.

d) Similarly on 20 March 2010, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, after having discussed the text of the Motion of Thanks on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Message, adopted a unanimous resolution supporting the Middle Way policy once again. This was fourth and the latest decision through a democratic process.

Thus, for 36 years from 1974 to 2010, His Holiness, time and again, solicited the views of the people and the great majority of them expressed their strong support for the Middle-Way policy at

different points of time. They took these decisions independently by relying on their intelligence. Particularly, many experienced people who have devoted several years to work for the well-being of the Tibetans inside Tibet, as well as those Tibetan scholars and activists from across the three regions of Tibet who are currently working for their well-being, have repeatedly expressed strong support for the Middle Way policy.

6) Gradual Changes in the Specifics of the Middle-Way Policy

During the Sino-Tibetan dialogue process that took place between 1979 to 1988, there was only a broad outline of the autonomous status we are striving for, but no details were explained. The Strasbourg Proposal of 1988, however, asked for a self-governing democratic political entity that comprised of all the three regions of Tibet founded on a separate basic law of its own. In other words, the local Tibetan government should have exclusive power for all other matters, except for defence and external relations. Such a self-government, it is further stated in the proposal, would remain in association with the People's Republic of China.

The Strasbourg Proposal was rejected by the Chinese government, saying that it demanded “independence, semi-independence or independence in disguise”. Besides attempting to distort Tibet's history and the actual situation prevailing there, it said that the proposal did not recognise China's sovereignty over Tibet, or that the latter was an inalienable part of the former. Particularly, the then Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang told the media that the Dalai Lama must stop working for the independence of Tibet if he wanted to return to China. He further said, “However, I don't see any sign that he is prepared to do so”. On 21 September 1988, the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi informed the Kashag, through a three-point communication, that the Strasbourg Proposal cannot be considered the basis for talks, because it has not abandoned the concept of the “independence

of Tibet”. A press statement to this effect was issued on 22 September. Again on 18 November 1988, the Chinese Embassy in Delhi said: “The Central government reiterates that the Strasbourg Proposal cannot be the basis of talks. The precondition for holding talks is for the Dalai Lama to accept and support the unity of the motherland”.

The Chinese government has, thus, responded to us at different times that there is no way for them to hold talks on the Strasbourg Proposal. Consequently, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced through his 10 March statement of 1991 that if the Chinese side failed to respond positively to his proposal in the near future, then he would consider himself free of any obligation to abide by it. The following year, in 1992, His Holiness the Dalai Lama declared the Strasbourg Proposal as having become null and void through his annual 10 March statement and his address at the Yale University, USA.

Since then until 2008, no new proposal or further detailed explanation has been made on the Middle-Way policy. In the period following the revival of contacts in 2002 and the conclusion of the seventh round of talks, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration — taking into consideration the reality of the international situation, the position of the Chinese government and the aspiration of the Tibetan people — articulated their desire, or willingness, to work towards resolving the problem of Tibet according to the constitutional provisions of the People’s Republic of China in a spirit of accommodation. The 10 March statements of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Kashag’s statements issued during this period bear testimony to this. Moreover, in the course of these exchanges, we have stated that His Holiness stands ready to issue a new explanation on the Middle-Way policy at an appropriate time.

During the seventh round of talks in 2008, the Chinese side asked us to clearly define the autonomous status that we are aspiring for.

As such, we provided a detailed explanation in the memorandum that we submitted for the Chinese government's consideration on how the national regional autonomy provisions as enshrined in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China could actually be implemented for all Tibetans. In it we sought that the Chinese government should respect the integrity of the Tibetan nationality and its aspiration. We have also identified and explained the basic needs of Tibetans (eleven subject matters of self-government), application of a single administration for the Tibetan nationality, the nature and structure of the autonomy, and the way forward for the Chinese and Tibetan peoples. There is a great difference between this memorandum and the Strasbourg Proposal. The memorandum was drafted with the main purpose of bringing the entire Tibetan people under a single autonomous administration based on the provisions of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and its Law on National Regional Autonomy.

However, the Chinese side misinterpreted and distorted the contents of the memorandum. As a result, we had to present, during the ninth round of talks on 26 January 2010, a Note on the Memorandum in which we offered clarifications on Chinese distortions. These are two latest documents expounding on the Middle-Way policy.

Our memorandum has been hailed by many governments, parliaments, institutions/organisations and individuals as being very reasonable and legitimate. They are surprised that the Chinese government should find it unacceptable to them. As well as condemning this inappropriate behaviour of the Chinese government, they emphatically urged them to engage in a productive dialogue with us on the agenda of this document.

7) Achievement of the Middle-Way Policy

Implementation of the mutually beneficial Middle-Way policy has many achievements to its credit and some of these are:

a) Successive fact-finding delegations and representatives have visited many Tibetan areas since Sino-Tibetan contacts were established in 1979. These visits not only brought out strong emotions among Tibetans as if their loved ones had come back from the dead, but also boosted the inner strength of the Tibetans inside Tibet.

b) The contacts allowed Tibetans in Tibet and in exile to pay visits to each other and see their relatives. It has also allowed more than 10,000 students, monks and nuns to avail themselves of the opportunities to study in exile.

c) Many high lamas, geshe and scholars from all the religious traditions in exile have been able to visit Tibet and carry out spiritual and cultural activities there.

d) The position of the Central Tibetan Administration has received endorsement and solid support from a large number of educated Tibetans in Tibet. Take the case of a senior Tibetan leader Baba Phuntsok Wangyal. He said, “[Observers think that] the Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle-Way approach’ of ‘seeking only a meaningful autonomy for Tibet rather than independence’, in the present historical context, is an expression of the great responsibility he takes in giving serious thought over the fundamental interests, future and fate of Tibet and the Tibetans as a whole. It also shows that he takes great responsibility in understanding the issues concerning both sides and in carefully studying the changing circumstances. Furthermore, it is a thinking that is based on reality and foresight.”

Another scholar has said, “As well as serving as a mutually-beneficial medicine that can bring about a new situation where Tibetans will be happy while ensuring the well-being of the Chinese, the Middle-Way approach is the only one that can be applied to resolve the issue of Tibet once and for all. Speaking from the perspective of Tibetans inside China, in particular, it transcends

the boundaries of the problems and doubts emanating from an equivalent-to-independence struggle. Theoretically speaking, the Middle-Way approach has brought about a thought liberation by ensuring the participation of the general public [in the political processes] and allowing them to demonstrate their individual and innovative skills. Practically speaking, it has broadened the areas of engagement and enriched its substance.”

e) Chinese scholars, democracy activists, media personalities and writers as well as many other justice-loving people have been able to take part in activities supporting Tibet. For example, in recent years some 900 articles have been written by Chinese scholars in support of the Middle-Way policy. Some of these are Federalism is the Best Way to Resolve the Issue of Tibet, The Dalai Lama is the Key to Resolving the Tibet Issue, The Middle-Way Approach is Panacea for Curing the Disease of Ethnic Animosity, The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach is the Right or Perfect Way of Resolving the Issue of Tibet and Middle-Way Approach is a Golden Advice. Similarly, as a result of improved understanding and co-operation with the general Chinese populace, we have been able to establish Sino-Tibetan friendship associations in many places.

f) His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been able to carry out his spiritual and temporal activities all over the world without any hindrance. Moreover, the Central Tibetan Administration has been able to lead the international community to invest their collective energy towards resolving the issue of Tibet.

g) Ever since the adoption of the Middle-Way policy, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been receiving many international awards and recognitions including the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as meeting with important national leaders. Furthermore, many parliaments have been adopting resolutions and establishing parliamentary support groups for Tibet. In short, we have been receiving open support from the governments and parliaments across the world.

h) The Central Tibetan Administration and its activities aimed

for the realisation of the cause of Tibet have not encountered any legal and political hindrance across the world. In fact, many governments are taking keen interest in the Sino-Tibetan dialogue and in order to bring about a substantive negotiation, more and more of these governments are willing to play a meaningful role in facilitating it.

i) Many governments consider the Middle-Way policy and the dialogue process pursued by the Central Tibetan Administration as a constructive effort to find a mutually-acceptable solution. As such, they are doing their utmost for the resolution of the issue of Tibet. For example, during the US Congressional Gold Medal ceremony in honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, President Bush said, “ ... I will continue to urge the leaders of China to welcome the Dalai Lama to China. They will find this good man to be a man of peace and reconciliation.” Similarly, the statement issued by the spokesperson of the Obama White House stated, “The President commended the Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle Way’ approach, his commitment to non-violence and his pursuit of dialogue with the Chinese government.” Likewise, the President of Taiwan, Mr. Ma Ying-jeou, expressed his support for an autonomous Tibet and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s efforts to engage in dialogue with China. He publicly said, “That is the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet.”

j) We were able to clearly understand Chinese government’s doubts, concerns and position because of our several rounds of talks with them.

k) We were able to demonstrate that our aspirations are based on reality. As a result, we could convince the world that our aspiration is not only just and valid but also appropriate and reasonable, which in turn exposed the Chinese government’s intransigent and inappropriate position to the world.

l) By presenting the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for

the Tibetan People to the Chinese government, we have firmly established the basis of our future negotiations.

8) Appeal to the Exile Tibetan Populace

Since the vast land of Tibet came into existence, it had been a nation with splendid civilisation and culture. That the empire of the Three Religious Kings of Tibet spread to four directions can only be attributed to the Tibetan people's bravery and unity.

Since the ninth century, Tibetan unity suffered and internal conflicts became the order of the day. This led to Tibet's disintegration into many principalities, thus paving the way for its gradual conquest by the Mongol rulers.

After this, having regained independence, Tibet once again began to be ruled successively by the Sakyapas, Phagmodrupas, Rinpungpas and Tsangpas. Since the change in these ruling dynasties took place in a short span of time, the nation could not consolidate its sovereignty. The reason for this was the lack of unity among the general Tibetan populace of the time and failure on the part of the powers that be to adopt a policy of non-discrimination.

The emergence of Gaden Phodrang government brought some stability to the faltering Tibetan nation. However, Tibet was once again embroiled in internal feuding — this time among the Kalons and between the U and Tsang regions. This naturally ushered an era of foreign influence over Tibet and by the 19th century, the image of Tibet's sovereignty became so pale that it has not been able to refurbish it to this day. All this happened, once again, due to the lack of unity among the Tibetan people. A modern Tibetan scholar was speaking the truth when he said: "Conflict in our constitution leads to the loss of energy and strength// Conflict in perception leads to the loss of the virtues of the path// Conflict among the chieftains led to the loss of Tibetan history//

This conflict is the cause of all losses.”

Hence, it is very clear that unity is indispensable for realising the short and long-term interests of the Tibetan people as a whole.

Thanks to His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s meritorious service across the globe, the critical period brought about by the Chinese communists’ repression of the Tibetan uprising and the free democratic system that we have been able to put in place, there is presently no such partisan feelings based on religion, province or region within the exile Tibetan community and the Tibetans enjoy a level of close bonding and unity that was never before seen in the long history of Tibet. Proud as we should be of this, there is still a need to further improve this bond of unity among the Tibetan people. Given the enormity of the Chinese incitements to sow seeds of discord within the Tibetan community, we cannot be negligent of the fact that there is today a far greater threat to our unity than ever before.

Reposing great faith in and remaining committed to democratic values, the Central Tibetan Administration led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama has — during the last over 50 years — created opportunities for the Tibetan people to freely initiate, maintain and propagate their varied ideologies and viewpoints. Plurality of political thought or ideology in a mature democracy is an asset and will never harm the unity of the people. Keeping in view the ulterior motives of the other side, we must be aware of the danger of their creating discord within our community in the name of different ideological backgrounds. Therefore, the Kashag would like to issue these two points of clarification and appeal to all of you:

a) In a democratic society, there is always a fierce debate among the proponents of different ideologies and approaches, each opposing the other through arguments and counter-arguments. The main thing by which to ensure that this does not harm the unity among these different ideological groups is each of these groups

develops a sense of understanding, respect and tolerance for one another. If one does not believe in a reason-based investigation, then one cannot develop this sense of caring for, or accommodating, others. Hence, whatever political ideologies one may follow, one should be able to gain certainty about that particular ideology through reason; one should never follow hearsay and blind-faith, as well as be prejudiced, gullible and be more reliant on “individuals than the doctrine”. In short, it is very essential that without undertaking a proper and thorough investigation on one’s own, one should not blindly follow what other people say.

Let us give an example here. Whatever guidance His Holiness the Dalai Lama provides — be it religious or secular in nature — he would never say that all should accept, or agree with, him. On the contrary, he asks the people to investigate what he preaches by using their intelligence and judiciously applying the Buddhist concept of “Four Reliances”, and never, ever accept them as being his wishes or words. In this respect, he always quotes this verse of the Lord Buddha: “Bikshus and scholars!// Like gold is subjected to the three tests of burning, cutting and rubbing// Investigate my teachings thoroughly// Do not accept due to your respect for me.”

In the same vein, the Middle-Way policy has been put forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a mere suggestion, after he found this to be the best possible future political option for the Tibetan people through his own investigation. He has never said that all should agree with his line of thought. The Central Tibetan Administration has also thus far not issued any statements to this effect, both verbally and in writing. Neither does it intent to issue one in the future. Hence, if any of those organisations and individuals who support the Middle-Way policy try to propagate this policy by saying that it is the expressed wish of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and so all should accept it, then they are simply spreading disinformation. We consider this as absolutely inappropriate and undesirable.

As mentioned earlier, this policy has been laid down through a democratic process by referring it to the general Tibetan populace not just once but several times. Even so, there is no denying the fact that this policy was first conceived and proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Hence, in order to describe the fact that this is a policy being upheld by His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself, it is not at all inappropriate to say he has suggested this policy. In fact, it behoves us to say so. This, however, should not be misconstrued as pressure being exerted upon the public.

Due to the reasons cited above, we would like to emphatically urge those who agree with, support and practise the Middle-Way policy that they should be able to gain certainty about their belief by relying on their independent faculties to carry out an investigation to that effect. Simply having blind faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama will not do. The same rule should also apply when you go about advocating this to others.

b) For those who uphold different stance than the Middle-Way policy, there are no stumbling blocks erected on the way of their freedom to propagate their respective ideologies. Some put the blame of their own failure to do so on the Central Tibetan Administration, saying that it is influencing them. Others allege that those who speak about independence are acting against His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice. These are nothing but baseless talks. We should not only refrain from spreading such disinformation but, more importantly, the general public should be careful not to be swayed by these.

In the process of the Tibetan people deciding upon the Middle Way policy as a means to resolve the issue of Tibet, those holding different stance than this policy were given no less opportunity to present their points of view. In the future also, no restrictions will be placed on their freedom to do so. The people cannot be faulted if the reasons provided do not satisfy them. Thus, when they are accused of blind faith, incapable of independent think-

ing or shirking responsibilities for the only reason of their having complete faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the accusers are not just showing disrespect to these people but also making evident the dereliction of their own responsibilities.

In a democratic society, it is the fundamental freedom of the people to decide on their own whom they want to trust, believe in, or follow. Nobody can trample upon this freedom. Similarly whether you want to depend upon His Holiness the Dalai Lama or not, it is within your freedom to do so. The freedom of those who depend upon His Holiness the Dalai Lama cannot be taken away. All of us should be capable of identifying the bounds of our democratic freedoms and equality.

Unfortunately some people try to create an impression that His Holiness the Dalai Lama tacitly agrees with and support those organisations and individuals who advocate independence. These people go to the extent of misrepresenting His Holiness the Dalai Lama's championing of the cause of compassion as well as his statements to support their claim. This is a grave lie or falsification of his real intentions. There are others who say that the Middle-Way policy was not adopted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Pursuant to the Tibetan parliament's pledging to respect whatever policy decisions he makes as a decision arrived through a referendum, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced that he would continue to abide by the Middle-Way policy. The unanimous resolution adopted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile on 20 March 2010, aside from re-affirming the above resolution, states that it will wholeheartedly support whatever policy decision His Holiness makes. Hence it is very clear this policy has been adopted by the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile. What further evidence does one need to prove so?

Therefore, it would be more beneficial if those upholding ideologies other than the Middle-Way policy could put their aspiration before the public in a legitimate manner after having carefully

recognised the bounds of their democratic freedoms and the duties that these entail — rather than just resorting to such desperate actions as hurling baseless accusations against others and insulting them. Moreover, they should see to it that their avowed ideologies do not remain as a mere wishful thinking or as a protest rally slogan that will serve nothing more than the media to quote as sensational news headlines. Instead, they should come out with a detailed plan of action to accomplish the stated goals of their respective ideological standpoints, as well as to garner support towards that end. Only then will they win the admiration of people with wisdom.

9) Conclusion

The mutually beneficial Middle-Way policy, which first came in the form of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's suggestion, has been repeatedly approved by the Tibetan people inside and outside Tibet through democratic process. Hence, this policy is in keeping with the aspirations of the Tibetan people. Should a time come in the future when the Tibetan aspiration undergoes a change freely due to some reason, then the Central Tibetan Administration will certainly accept it. We never intend to hold on to this policy stubbornly or thrust it upon the general public. Those who favour the Middle-Way policy should — after having based their understanding of the policy on reason and gained certainty about it — agree with this policy and practise it. Those who object to this policy should also tread the path of honesty and reason by refraining from making baseless allegations and playing with people's sentiments. This is what the Kashag expects from the people.

Jai Jagat! Sarwamangalam!

Note: This has been translated from the Tibetan original.

MEMORANDUM ON GENUINE AUTONOMY FOR THE TIBETAN PEOPLE

I INTRODUCTION

Since the renewal of direct contact with the Central Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2002, extensive discussions have been held between the envoys of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and representatives of the Central Government. In these discussions we have put forth clearly the aspirations of Tibetans. The essence of the Middle Way Approach is to secure genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the scope of the Constitution of the PRC. This is of mutual benefit and based on the long-term interest of both the Tibetan and Chinese peoples. We remain firmly committed not to seek separation or independence. We are seeking a solution to the Tibetan problem through genuine autonomy, which is compatible with the principles on autonomy in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The protection and development of the unique Tibetan identity in all its aspects serves the larger interest of humanity in general and those of the Tibetan and Chinese people in particular.

During the seventh round of talks in Beijing on 1 and 2 July 2008, the Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Mr. Du Qinglin, explicitly invited suggestions from His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the stability and development of Tibet. The Executive Vice Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Mr. Zhu Weiqun, further said they would like to hear our views on the degree or form of autonomy we are seeking as well as on all aspects of regional autonomy within the scope of the Constitution of the PRC.

Accordingly, this memorandum puts forth our position on genuine autonomy and how the specific needs of the Tibetan nationality for autonomy and self-government can be met through ap-

plication of the principles on autonomy of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, as we understand them. On this basis, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is confident that the basic needs of the Tibetan nationality can be met through genuine autonomy within the PRC.

The PRC is a multi-national state, and as in many other parts of the world, it seeks to resolve the nationality question through autonomy and the self-government of the minority nationalities. The Constitution of the PRC contains fundamental principles on autonomy and self-government whose objectives are compatible with the needs and aspirations of the Tibetans. Regional national autonomy is aimed at opposing both the oppression and the separation of nationalities by rejecting both Han Chauvinism and local nationalism. It is intended to ensure the protection of the culture and the identity of minority nationalities by powering them to become masters of their own affairs.

To a very considerable extent Tibetan needs can be met within the constitutional principles on autonomy, as we understand them. On several points, the Constitution gives significant discretionary powers to state organs in the decision-making and on the operation of the system of autonomy. These discretionary powers can be exercised to facilitate genuine autonomy for Tibetans in ways that would respond to the uniqueness of the Tibetan situation. In implementing these principles, legislation relevant to autonomy may consequently need to be reviewed or amended to respond to the specific characteristics and needs of the Tibetan nationality. Given good will on both sides, outstanding problems can be resolved within the constitutional principles on autonomy. In this way national unity and stability and harmonious relations between the Tibetan and other nationalities will be established.

II RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE TIBETAN NATIONALITY

Tibetans belong to one minority nationality regardless of the current administrative division. The integrity of the Tibetan nationality must be respected. That is the spirit, the intent and the principle underlying the constitutional concept of national regional autonomy as well as the principle of equality of nationalities.

There is no dispute about the fact that Tibetans share the same language, culture, spiritual tradition, core values and customs, that they belong to the same ethnic group and that they have a strong sense of common identity. Tibetans share a common history and despite periods of political or administrative divisions, Tibetans continuously remained united by their religion, culture, education, language, way of life and by their unique high plateau environment.

The Tibetan nationality lives in one contiguous area on the Tibetan plateau, which they have inhabited for millennia and to which they are therefore indigenous. For purposes of the constitutional principles of national regional autonomy Tibetans in the PRC in fact live as a single nationality all over the Tibetan plateau.

On account of the above reasons, the PRC has recognised the Tibetan nationality as one of the 55 minority nationalities.

III TIBETAN ASPIRATIONS

Tibetans have a rich and distinct history, culture and spiritual tradition all of which form valuable parts of the heritage of humanity. Not only do Tibetans wish to preserve their own heritage, which they cherish, but equally they wish to further develop their culture and spiritual life and knowledge in ways that are particularly suited to the needs and conditions of humanity in the 21st century.

As a part of the multi-national state of the PRC, Tibetans can benefit greatly from the rapid economic and scientific development the country is experiencing. While wanting to actively participate and contribute to this development, we want to ensure that this happens without the people losing their Tibetan identity, culture and core values and without putting the distinct and fragile environment of the Tibetan plateau, to which Tibetans are indigenous, at risk.

The uniqueness of the Tibetan situation has consistently been recognised within the PRC and has been reflected in the terms of the '17 Point Agreement' and in statements and policies of successive leaders of the PRC since then, and should remain the basis for defining the scope and structure of the specific autonomy to be exercised by the Tibetan nationality within the PRC. The Constitution reflects a fundamental principle of flexibility to accommodate special situations, including the special characteristics and needs of minority nationalities.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's commitment to seek a solution for the Tibetan people within the PRC is clear and unambiguous. This position is in full compliance and agreement with paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's statement in which he emphasised that except for independence all other issues could be resolved through dialogue. Whereas, we are committed, therefore, to fully respect the territorial integrity of the PRC, we expect the Central Government to recognise and fully respect the integrity of the Tibetan nationality and its right to exercise genuine autonomy within the PRC. We believe that this is the basis for resolving the differences between us and promoting unity, stability and harmony among nationalities.

For Tibetans to advance as a distinct nationality within the PRC, they need to continue to progress and develop economically, socially and politically in ways that correspond to the development of the PRC and the world as a whole while respecting and nur-

turing the Tibetan characteristics of such development. For this to happen, it is imperative that the right of Tibetans to govern themselves be recognised and implemented throughout the region where they live in compact communities in the PRC, in accordance with the Tibetan nationality's own needs, priorities and characteristics.

The Tibetan people's culture and identity can only be preserved and promoted by the Tibetans themselves and not by any others. Therefore, Tibetans should be capable of self-help, self-development and self-government, and an optimal balance needs to be found between this and the necessary and welcome guidance and assistance for Tibet from the Central Government and other provinces and regions of the PRC.

IV BASIC NEEDS OF TIBETANS

Subject Matters of Self-government

1) Language

Language is the most important attribute of the Tibetan people's identity. Tibetan is the primary means of communication, the language in which their literature, their spiritual texts and historical as well as scientific works are written. The Tibetan language is not only at the same high level as that of Sanskrit in terms of grammar, but is also the only one that has the capability of translating from Sanskrit without an iota of error. Therefore, Tibetan language has not only the richest and best-translated literatures, many scholars even contend that it has also the richest and largest number of literary compositions. The Constitution of the PRC, in Article 4, guarantees the freedom of all nationalities "to use and develop their own spoken and written languages ...".

In order for Tibetans to use and develop their own language, Tibetan must be respected as the main spoken and written language.

Similarly, the principal language of the Tibetan autonomous areas needs to be Tibetan.

This principle is broadly recognised in the Constitution in Article 121, which states, “the organs of self-government of the national autonomous areas employ the spoken and written language or language in common use in the locality.” Article 10 of the Law on Regional National Autonomy (LRNA) provides that these organs “shall guarantee the freedom of the nationalities in these areas to use and develop their own spoken and written languages....”

Consistent with the principle of recognition of Tibetan as the main language in Tibetan areas, the LRNA (Article 36) also allows the autonomous government authorities to decide on “the language used in instruction and enrolment procedures” with regard to education. This implies recognition of the principle that the principal medium of education be Tibetan.

2) Culture

The concept of national regional autonomy is primarily for the purpose of preservation of the culture of minority nationalities. Consequently, the constitution of PRC contains references to cultural preservation in Articles 22, 47 and 119 as also in Article 38 of the LRNA. To Tibetans, Tibetan culture is closely connected to our religion, tradition, language and identity, which are facing threats at various levels. Since Tibetans live within the multinational state of the PRC, this distinct Tibetan cultural heritage needs protection through appropriate constitutional provisions.

3) Religion

Religion is fundamental to Tibetans and Buddhism is closely linked to their identity. We recognise the importance of separation of church and state, but this should not affect the freedom and practice of believers. It is impossible for Tibetans to imagine personal or community freedom without the freedom of belief, conscience and religion. The Constitution recognises the impor-

tance of religion and protects the right to profess it. Article 36 guarantees all citizens the right to the freedom of religious belief. No one can compel another to believe in or not to believe in any religion. Discrimination on the basis of religion is forbidden.

An interpretation of the constitutional principle in light of international standard would also cover the freedom of the manner of belief or worship. The freedom covers the right of monasteries to be organised and run according to Buddhist monastic tradition, to engage in teachings and studies, and to enroll any number of monks and nuns or age group in accordance with these rules. The normal practice to hold public teachings and the empowerment of large gatherings is covered by this freedom and the state should not interfere in religious practices and traditions, such as the relationship between a teacher and his disciple, management of monastic institutions, and the recognition of reincarnations.

4) Education

The desire of Tibetans to develop and administer their own education system in cooperation and in coordination with the central government's ministry of education is supported by the principles contained in the Constitution with regard to education. So is the aspiration to engage in and contribute to the development of science and technology. We note the increasing recognition in international scientific development of the contribution which Buddhist psychology, metaphysics, cosmology and the understanding of the mind is making to modern science.

Whereas, under Article 19 of the Constitution the state takes on the overall responsibility to provide education for its citizens, Article 119 recognises the principle that "[T]he organs of self-government of the national autonomous areas independently administer educational affairs in their respective areas..." This principle is also reflected in Article 36 of the LRNA.

Since the degree of autonomy in decision-making is unclear, the point to be emphasised is that the Tibetan need to exercise genuine autonomy with regard to its own nationality's education and this is supported by the principles of the constitution on autonomy.

As for the aspiration to engage in and contribute to the development of scientific knowledge and technology, the Constitution (Article 119) and the LRNA (Article 39) clearly recognise the right of autonomous areas to develop scientific knowledge and technology.

5) Environment Protection

Tibet is the prime source of Asia's great rivers. It also has the earth's loftiest mountains as well as the world's most extensive and highest plateau, rich in mineral resources, ancient forests, and many deep valleys untouched by human disturbances.

This environmental protection practice was enhanced by the Tibetan people's traditional respect for all forms of life, which prohibits the harming of all sentient beings, whether human or animal. Tibet used to be an unspoiled wilderness sanctuary in a unique natural environment.

Today, Tibet's traditional environment is suffering irreparable damage. The effects of this are especially notable on the grasslands, the croplands, the forests, the water resources and the wildlife.

In view of this, according to Articles 45 and 66 of the LRNA, the Tibetan people should be given the right over the environment and allow them to follow their traditional conservation practices.

6) Utilisation of Natural Resources

With respect to the protection and management of the natural environment and the utilisation of natural resources the Constitution and the LRNA only acknowledge a limited role for the organs of self-government of the autonomous areas (see LRNA Articles 27, 28, 45, 66, and Article 118 of the Constitution, which pledges that the state “shall give due consideration to the interests of [the national autonomous areas]”). The LRNA recognises the importance for the autonomous areas to protect and develop forests and grasslands (Article 27) and to “give priority to the rational exploitation and utilization of the natural resources that the local authorities are entitled to develop”, but only within the limits of state plans and legal stipulations. In fact, the central role of the State in these matters is reflected in the Constitution (Article 9).

The principles of autonomy enunciated in the Constitution cannot, in our view, truly lead to Tibetans becoming masters of their own destiny if they are not sufficiently involved in decision-making on utilisation of natural resources such as mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grasslands, etc.

The ownership of land is the foundation on which the development of natural resources, taxes and revenues of an economy are based. Therefore, it is essential that only the nationality of the autonomous region shall have the legal authority to transfer or lease land, except land owned by the state. In the same manner, the autonomous region must have the independent authority to formulate and implement developmental plans concurrent to the state plans.

7) Economic Development and Trade

Economic Development in Tibet is welcome and much needed. The Tibetan people remain one of the most economically backward regions within the PRC.

The Constitution recognises the principle that the autonomous authorities have an important role to play in the economic development of their areas in view of local characteristics and needs (Article 118 of the Constitution, also reflected in LRNA Article 25). The Constitution also recognises the principle of autonomy in the administration and management of finances (Article 117, and LRNA Article 32). At the same time, the Constitution also recognises the importance of providing State funding and assistance to the autonomous areas to accelerate development (Article 122, LRNA Article 22).

Similarly, Article 31 of the LRNA recognises the competence of autonomous areas, especially those such as Tibet, adjoining foreign countries, to conduct border trade as well as trade with foreign countries. The recognition of these principles is important to the Tibetan nationality given the region's proximity to foreign countries with which the people have cultural, religious, ethnic and economic affinities.

The assistance rendered by the Central Government and the provinces has temporary benefits, but in the long run if the Tibetan people are not self-reliant and become dependent on others it has greater harm. Therefore, an important objective of autonomy is to make the Tibetan people economically self-reliant.

8) Public health

The Constitution enunciates the responsibility of the State to provide health and medical services (Article 21). Article 119 recognises that this is an area of responsibility of the autonomous areas. The LRNA (Article 40) also recognises the right of organs of self-government of the autonomous areas to “make independent decisions on plans for developing local medical and health services and for advancing both modern and the traditional medicine of the nationalities.”

The existing health system fails to adequately cover the needs of

the rural Tibetan population. According to the principles of the above-mentioned laws, the regional autonomous organs need to have the competencies and resources to cover the health need of the entire Tibetan population. They also need the competencies to promote the traditional Tibetan medical and astro system strictly according to traditional practice.

9) Public Security

In matters of public security it is important that the majority of security personnel consists of members of the local nationality who understand and respect local customs and traditions.

What is lacking in Tibetan areas is absence of decision-making authority in the hands of local Tibetan officials.

An important aspect of autonomy and self-government is the responsibility for the internal public order and security of the autonomous areas. The Constitution (Article 120) and LRNA (Article 24) recognise the importance of local involvement and authorise autonomous areas to organise their security within “the military system of the State and practical needs and with the approval of the State Council.”

10) Regulation on population migration

The fundamental objective of national regional autonomy and self-government is the preservation of the identity, culture, language and so forth of the minority nationality and to ensure that it is the master of its own affairs. When applied to a particular territory in which the minority nationality lives in a concentrated community or communities, the very principle and purpose of national regional autonomy is disregarded if large scale migration and settlement of the majority Han nationality and other nationalities is encouraged and allowed. Major demographic changes that result from such migration will have the effect of assimilating rather than integrating the Tibetan nationality into

the Han nationality and gradually extinguishing the distinct culture and identity of the Tibetan nationality. Also, the influx of large numbers of Han and other nationalities into Tibetan areas will fundamentally change the conditions necessary for the exercise of regional autonomy since the constitutional criteria for the exercise of autonomy, namely that the minority nationality “live in compact communities” in a particular territory is changed and undermined by the population movements and transfers. If such migrations and settlements continue uncontrolled, Tibetans will no longer live in a compact community or communities and will consequently no longer be entitled, under the Constitution, to national regional autonomy. This would effectively violate the very principles of the Constitution in its approach to the nationalities issue.

There is precedent in the PRC for restriction on the movement or residence of citizens. There is only a very limited recognition of the right of autonomous areas to work out measures to control “the transient population” in those areas. To us it would be vital that the autonomous organs of self-government have the authority to regulate the residence, settlement and employment or economic activities of persons who wish to move to Tibetan areas from other parts of the PRC in order to ensure respect for and the realisation of the objectives of the principle of autonomy.

It is not our intention to expel the non-Tibetans who have permanently settled in Tibet and have lived there and grown up there for a considerable time. Our concern is the induced massive movement of primarily Han but also some other nationalities into many areas of Tibet, upsetting existing communities, marginalising the Tibetan population there and threatening the fragile natural environment.

11) Cultural, educational & religious exchanges with other countries

Besides the importance of exchanges and cooperation between

the Tibetan nationality and other nationalities, provinces, and regions of the PRC in the subject matters of autonomy, such as culture, art, education, science, public health, sports, religion, environment, economy and so forth, the power of autonomous areas to conduct such exchanges with foreign countries in these areas is also recognised in the LRNA (Article 42).

V APPLICATION OF A SINGLE ADMINISTRATION FOR THE TIBETAN NATIONALITY IN THE PRC

In order for the Tibetan nationality to develop and flourish with its distinct identity, culture and spiritual tradition through the exercise of self-government on the above mentioned basic Tibetan needs, the entire community, comprising all the areas currently designated by the PRC as Tibetan autonomous areas, should be under one single administrative entity. The current administrative divisions, by which Tibetan communities are ruled and administered under different provinces and regions of the PRC, foments fragmentation, promotes unequal development, and weakens the ability of the Tibetan nationality to protect and promote its common cultural, spiritual and ethnic identity. Rather than respecting the integrity of the nationality, this policy promotes its fragmentation and disregards the spirit of autonomy. Whereas the other major minority nationalities such as the Uighurs and Mongols govern themselves almost entirely within their respective single autonomous regions, Tibetans remain as if they were several minority nationalities instead of one.

Bringing all the Tibetans currently living in designated Tibetan autonomous areas within a single autonomous administrative unit is entirely in accordance with the constitutional principle contained in Article 4, also reflected in the LRNA (Article 2), that “regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities.” The LRNA

describes regional national autonomy as the “basic policy adopted by the Communist Party of China for the solution of the national question in China” and explains its meaning and intent in its Preface:

the minority nationalities, under unified state leadership, practice regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities and set up organs of self-government for the exercise of the power of autonomy. Regional national autonomy embodies the state’s full respect for and guarantee of the right of the minority nationalities to administer their internal affairs and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity of all nationalities.

It is clear that the Tibetan nationality within the PRC will be able to exercise its right to govern itself and administer its internal affairs effectively only once it can do so through an organ of self-government that has jurisdiction over the Tibetan nationality as a whole.

The LRNA recognises the principle that boundaries of national autonomous areas may need to be modified. The need for the application of the fundamental principles of the Constitution on regional autonomy through respect of the integrity of the Tibetan nationality is not only totally legitimate, but the administrative changes that may be required to achieve this in no way violate constitutional principles. There are several precedents where this has been actually done.

VI THE NATURE & STRUCTURE OF AUTONOMY

The extent to which the right to self-government and self-administration can be exercised on the preceding subject matters largely determines the genuine character of Tibetan autonomy. The task

at hand is therefore to look into the manner in which autonomy can be regulated and exercised for it to effectively respond to the unique situation and basic needs of the Tibetan nationality.

The exercise of genuine autonomy would include the right of Tibetans to create their own regional government and government institutions and processes that are best suited to their needs and characteristics. It would require that the People's Congress of the autonomous region have the power to legislate on all matters within the competencies of the region (that is the subject matters referred to above) and that other organs of the autonomous government have the power to execute and administer decisions autonomously. Autonomy also entails representation and meaningful participation in national decision-making in the Central Government. Processes for effective consultation and close cooperation or joint decision-making between the central and the regional government on areas of common interest also need to be in place for the autonomy to be effective.

A crucial element of genuine autonomy is the guarantee the Constitution or other laws provide that powers and responsibilities allocated to the autonomous region cannot be unilaterally abrogated or changed. This means that neither the Central Government nor the autonomous region's government should be able, without the consent of the other, to change the basic features of the autonomy.

The parameters and specifics of such genuine autonomy for Tibet that respond to the unique needs and conditions of the Tibetan people and region should be set out in some detail in regulations on the exercise of autonomy, as provided for in Article 116 of the Constitution (enacted in LRNA Article 19) or, if it is found to be more appropriate, in a separate set of laws or regulations adopted for that purpose. The Constitution, including Article 31, provides the flexibility to adopt special laws to respond to unique situations such as the Tibetan one, while respecting the estab-

lished social, economic and political system of the country.

The Constitution in Section VI provides for organs of self-government of national autonomous regions and acknowledges their power to legislate. Thus Article 116 (enacted in Article 19 of the LRNA) refers to their power to enact “separate regulations in light of the political, economic and cultural characteristics of the nationality or nationalities in the areas concerned.” Similarly, the Constitution recognises the power of autonomous administration in a number of areas (Article 117-120) as well as the power of autonomous governments to apply flexibility in implementing the laws and policies of the Government and higher state organs to suit the conditions of the autonomous area concerned (Article 115).

The above-mentioned legal provisions do contain significant limitations to the decision-making authority of the autonomous organs of government. But the Constitution nevertheless recognises the principle that organs of self-government make laws and policy decisions that address local needs and that these may be different from those adopted elsewhere, including by the Central Government.

Although the needs of the Tibetans are broadly consistent with the principles on autonomy contained in the Constitution, as we have shown, their realisation is impeded because of the existence of a number of problems, which makes the implementation of those principles today difficult or ineffective.

Implementation of genuine autonomy, for example, requires clear divisions of powers and responsibilities between the Central Government and the government of the autonomous region with respect to subject matter competency. Currently there is no such clarity and the scope of legislative powers of autonomous regions is both uncertain and severely restricted. Thus, whereas the Constitution intends to recognise the special need for autonomous regions to legislate on many matters that affect them,

the requirements of Article 116 for prior approval at the highest level of the Central Government - by the Standing Committee of National People's Congress (NPC) - inhibit the implementation of this principle of autonomy. In reality, it is only autonomous regional congresses that expressly require such approval, while the congresses of ordinary (not autonomous) provinces of the PRC do not need prior permission and merely report the passage of regulations to the Standing Committee of the NPC "for the record" (Article 100).

The exercise of autonomy is further subject to a considerable number of laws and regulations, according to Article 115 of the Constitution. Certain laws effectively restrict the autonomy of the autonomous region, while others are not always consistent with one another. The result is that the exact scope of the autonomy is unclear and is not fixed, since it is unilaterally changed with the enactment of laws and regulations at higher levels of the state, and even by changes in policy. There is also no adequate process for consultation or for settling differences that arise between the organs of the Central Government and of the regional government with respect to the scope and exercise of autonomy. In practice, the resulting uncertainty limits the initiative of regional authorities and impedes the exercise of genuine autonomy by Tibetans today.

We do not at this stage wish to enter into details regarding these and other impediments to the exercise of genuine autonomy today by Tibetans, but mention them by way of example so that these may be addressed in the appropriate manner in our dialogue in the future. We will continue to study the Constitution and other relevant legal provisions and, when appropriate, will be pleased to provide further analysis of these issues, as we understand them.

VII THE WAY FORWARD

As stated at the beginning of this memorandum, our intention is to explore how the needs of the Tibetan nationality can be met within the framework of PRC since we believe these needs are consistent with the principles of the Constitution on autonomy. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated on a number of occasions, we have no hidden agenda. We have no intention at all of using any agreement on genuine autonomy as stepping stone for separation from the PRC.

The objective of the Tibetan Government in Exile is to represent the interests of the Tibetan people and to speak on their behalf. Therefore, it will no longer be needed and will be dissolved once an agreement is reached between us. In fact, His Holiness has reiterated his decision not to accept any political office in Tibet at any time in the future. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, nevertheless, plans to use all his personal influence to ensure such an agreement would have the legitimacy necessary to obtain the support of the Tibetan people.

Given these strong commitments, we propose that the next step in this process be the agreement to start serious discussions on the points raised in this memorandum. For this purpose we propose that we discuss and agree on a mutually agreeable mechanism or mechanisms and a timetable to do so effectively.

NOTE ON THE MEMORANDUM ON GENUINE AUTONOMY FOR THE TIBETAN PEOPLE

(Translated from the Tibetan original)

Introduction

This Note addresses the principal concerns and objections raised by the Chinese Central Government regarding the substance of the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People (hereinafter ‘the Memorandum’) which was presented to the Government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) on October 31, 2008 at the eighth round of talks in Beijing.

Having carefully studied the responses and reactions of Minister Du Qinglin and Executive Vice-Minister Zhu Weiqun conveyed during the talks, including the written Note, and in statements made by the Chinese Central Government following the talks, it seems that some issues raised in the Memorandum may have been misunderstood, while others appear to have not been understood by the Chinese Central Government.

The Chinese Central Government maintains that the Memorandum contravenes the Constitution of the PRC as well as the ‘three adherences’¹. The Tibetan side believes that the Tibetan people’s needs, as set out in the Memorandum, can be met within the framework and spirit of the Constitution and its principles on autonomy and that these proposals do not contravene or conflict with the ‘three adherences’. We believe that the present Note will help to clarify this.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama started internal discussions, as early as in 1974, to find ways to resolve the future status of Tibet through an autonomy arrangement instead of seeking independence. In 1979 Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping expressed willing-

1 The ‘three adherences’ as stipulated by the Central Government are: (1) the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party; (2) the socialism with Chinese characteristics; and (3) the Regional National Autonomy system.

ness to discuss and resolve all issues except the independence of Tibet. Since then His Holiness the Dalai Lama has taken numerous initiatives to bring about a mutually acceptable negotiated solution to the question of Tibet. In doing so His Holiness the Dalai Lama has steadfastly followed the Middle-Way approach, which means the pursuit of a mutually acceptable and mutually beneficial solution through negotiations, in the spirit of reconciliation and compromise. The Five-Point Peace Plan and the Strasbourg Proposal were presented in this spirit. With the failure to elicit any positive response from the Chinese Central Government to these initiatives, along with the imposition of martial law in March 1989 and the deterioration of the situation in Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama felt compelled to state in 1991 that his Strasbourg Proposal had become ineffectual. His Holiness the Dalai Lama nevertheless maintained his commitment to the Middle-Way approach.

The re-establishment of a dialogue process between the Chinese Central Government and representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2002 provided the opportunity for each side to explain their positions and to gain a better understanding of the concerns, needs and interests of the other side. Moreover, taking into consideration the Chinese Central Government's real concerns, needs and interests, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has given much thought with due consideration to the reality of the situation. This reflects His Holiness the Dalai Lama's flexibility, openness and pragmatism and, above all, sincerity and determination to seek a mutually beneficial solution.

The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People was prepared in response to the suggestion from the Chinese Central Government made at the seventh round of talks in July 2008. However, the Chinese Central Government's reactions and main criticisms of the Memorandum appear to be based not on the merits of that proposal which was officially presented to it, but on earlier proposals that were made public as well as other

statements made at different times and contexts.

The Memorandum and the present Note strongly reemphasise that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not seeking independence or separation but a solution within the framework of the Constitution and its principles on autonomy as reiterated many times in the past.

The Special General Meeting of the Tibetans in Diaspora held in November 2008 in Dharamsala reconfirmed for the time being the mandate for the continuation of the dialogue process with the PRC on the basis of the Middle-Way approach. On their part, members of the international community urged both sides to return to the talks. A number of them expressed the opinion that the Memorandum can form a good basis for discussion.

1. Respecting the sovereignty & territorial integrity of PRC

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly stated that he is not seeking separation of Tibet from the People's Republic of China, and that he is not seeking independence for Tibet. He seeks a sustainable solution within the PRC. This position is stated unambiguously in the Memorandum.

The Memorandum calls for the exercise of genuine autonomy, not for independence, 'semi-independence' or 'independence in disguised form'. The substance of the Memorandum, which explains what is meant by genuine autonomy, makes this unambiguously clear. The form and degree of autonomy proposed in the Memorandum is consistent with the principles on autonomy in the Constitution of the PRC. Autonomous regions in different parts of the world exercise the kind of self-governance that is proposed in the Memorandum, without thereby challenging or threatening the sovereignty and unity of the state of which they are a part. This is true of autonomous regions within unitary

states as well as those with federal characteristics. Observers of the situation, including unbiased political leaders and scholars in the international community, have also acknowledged that the Memorandum is a call for autonomy within the PRC and not for independence or separation from the PRC.

The Chinese government's viewpoint on the history of Tibet is different from that held by Tibetans and His Holiness the Dalai Lama is fully aware that Tibetans cannot agree to it. History is a past event and it cannot be altered. However, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's position is forward-looking, not backward grasping. He does not wish to make this difference on history to be an obstacle in seeking a mutually beneficial common future within the PRC.

The Chinese Central Government's responses to the Memorandum reveal a persistent suspicion on its part that His Holiness' proposals are tactical initiatives to advance the hidden agenda of independence. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is aware of the PRC's concerns and sensitivities with regard to the legitimacy of the present situation in Tibet. For this reason His Holiness the Dalai Lama has conveyed through his Envoys and publicly stated that he stands ready to lend his moral authority to endow an autonomy agreement, once reached, with the legitimacy it will need to gain the support of the people and to be properly implemented.

2. Respecting the Constitution of the PRC

The Memorandum explicitly states that the genuine autonomy sought by His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the Tibetan people is to be accommodated within the framework of the Constitution and its principles on autonomy, not outside of it.

The fundamental principle underlying the concept of national

regional autonomy is to preserve and protect a minority nationality's identity, language, custom, tradition and culture in a multinational state based on equality and cooperation. The Constitution provides for the establishment of organs of self-government where the national minorities live in concentrated communities in order for them to exercise the power of autonomy. In conformity with this principle, the White Paper on Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet (May 2004), states that minority nationalities are "arbiters of their own destiny and masters of their own affairs".

Within the parameters of its underlying principles, a Constitution needs to be responsive to the needs of the times and adapt to new or changed circumstances. The leaders of the PRC have demonstrated the flexibility of the Constitution of the PRC in their interpretation and implementation of it, and have also enacted modifications and amendments in response to changing circumstances. If applied to the Tibetan situation, such flexibility would, as is stated in the Memorandum, indeed permit the accommodation of the Tibetan needs within the framework of the Constitution and its principles on autonomy.

3. Respecting the 'three adherences'

The position of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as presented in the Memorandum, in no way challenges or brings into question the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in the PRC. At the same time, it is reasonable to expect that, in order to promote unity, stability and a harmonious society, the Party would change its attitude of treating Tibetan culture, religion and identity as a threat.

The Memorandum also does not challenge the socialist system of the PRC. Nothing in it suggests a demand for a change to this system or for its exclusion from Tibetan areas. As for His Holiness

the Dalai Lama's views on socialism, it is well known that he has always favoured a socialist economy and ideology that promotes equality and benefits to uplift the poorer sections of society.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's call for genuine autonomy within the PRC recognises the principles on autonomy for minority nationalities contained in the Constitution of the PRC and is in line with the declared intent of those principles. As pointed out in the Memorandum, the current implementation of the provisions on autonomy, however, effectively results in the denial of genuine autonomy to the Tibetan and fails to provide for the exercise of the right of Tibetans to govern themselves and to be "masters of their own affairs." Today, important decisions pertaining to the welfare of Tibetans are not being made by Tibetans. Implementing the proposed genuine autonomy explained in the Memorandum would ensure for the Tibetans the ability to exercise the right to true autonomy and therefore to become masters of their own affairs, in line with the Constitutional principles on autonomy.

Thus, the Memorandum for genuine autonomy does not oppose the 'three adherences'.

4. Respecting the hierarchy and authority of the Chinese Central Government

The proposals contained in the Memorandum in no way imply a denial of the authority of the National People's Congress (NPC) and other organs of the Chinese Central Government. As stated in the Memorandum, the proposal fully respects the hierarchical differences between the Central Government and its organs, including the NPC, and the autonomous government of Tibet.

Any form of genuine autonomy entails a division and allocation of powers and responsibilities, including that of making laws and regulations, between the central and the autonomous local gov-

ernment. Of course, the power to adopt laws and regulations is limited to the areas of competency of the autonomous region. This is true in unitary states as well as in federal systems.

This principle is also recognised in the Constitution. The spirit of the Constitutional provisions on autonomy is to give autonomous regions broader decision-making authority over and above that enjoyed by ordinary provinces. But today, the requirement for prior approval by the Standing Committee of the NPC for all laws and regulations of the autonomous regions (Art. 116 of the Constitution) is exercised in a way that in fact leaves the autonomous regions with much less authority to make decisions that suit local conditions than that of the ordinary (not autonomous) provinces of China.

Whenever there is a division and allocation of decision-making power between different levels of government (between the Central Government and the autonomous government), it is important to have processes in place for consultation and cooperation. This helps to improve mutual understanding and to ensure that contradictions and possible inconsistencies in policies, laws and regulations are minimised. It also reduces the chances of disputes arising regarding the exercise of the powers allocated to these different organs of government. Such processes and mechanisms do not put the Central and autonomous governments on equal footing, nor do they imply the rejection of the leadership of the Central Government.

The important feature of entrenchment of autonomy arrangements in the Constitution or in other appropriate ways also does not imply equality of status between the central and local government nor does it restrict or weaken the authority of the former. The measure is intended to provide (legal) security to both the autonomous and the central authorities that neither can unilaterally change the basic features of the autonomy they have set up, and that a process of consultation must take place at least for

fundamental changes to be enacted.

5. Concerns raised by the Chinese Central Government on specific competencies referred to in the Memorandum

a) Public security

Concern was raised over the inclusion of public security aspects in the package of competencies allocated to the autonomous region in the Memorandum because the government apparently interpreted this to mean defence matters. National defence and public security are two different matters. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is clear on the point that the responsibility for national defence of the PRC is and should remain with the Central Government. This is not a competency to be exercised by the autonomous region. This is indeed the case in most autonomy arrangements. The Memorandum in fact refers specifically to “internal public order and security,” and makes the important point that the majority of the security personnel should be Tibetans, because they understand the local customs and traditions. It also helps to curb local incidents leading to disharmony among the nationalities. The Memorandum in this respect is consistent with the principle enunciated in Article 120 of the Constitution (reflected also in Article 24 of the LRNA), which states:

“The organs of self-government of the national autonomous areas may, in accordance with the military system of the state and practical local needs and with approval of the State Council, organise local public security forces for the maintenance of public order.”

It should also be emphasised in this context that the Memorandum at no point proposes the withdrawal of People’s Liberation Army (PLA) from Tibetan areas.

b) Language

The protection, use, and development of the Tibetan language are one of the crucial issues for the exercise of genuine autonomy

by Tibetans. The emphasis on the need to respect Tibetan as the main or principal language in the Tibetan areas is not controversial, since a similar position is expressed in the Chinese Central Government's White Paper on Regional Ethnic Autonomy in Tibet, where it is stated that regulations adopted by the Tibet regional government prescribe that "equal attention be given to Tibetan and Han-Chinese languages in the Tibetan Autonomous region, with the Tibetan language as the major one..." (emphasis added). Moreover, the very usage of "main language" in the Memorandum clearly implies the use of other languages, too.

The absence of a demand in the Memorandum that Chinese should also be used and taught should not be interpreted as an "exclusion" of this language, which is the principal and common language in the PRC as a whole. It should also be noted in this context that the leadership in exile has taken steps to encourage Tibetans in exile to learn Chinese.

Tibetan proposal which emphasises the study of the Tibetan people's own language should therefore not be interpreted as being a "separatist view".

c) Regulation of population migration

The Memorandum proposes that the local government of the autonomous region should have the competency to regulate the residence, settlement and employment or economic activities of persons who wish to move to Tibetan areas from elsewhere. This is a common feature of autonomy and is certainly not without precedent in the PRC.

A number of countries have instituted systems or adopted laws to protect vulnerable regions or indigenous and minority peoples from excessive immigration from other parts of the country. The Memorandum explicitly states that it is not suggesting the expulsion of non-Tibetans who have lived in Tibetan areas for years. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Kashag also made this clear

in earlier statements, as did the Envoys in their discussions with their Chinese counterparts. In an address to the European Parliament on December 4, 2008, His Holiness the Dalai Lama reiterated that “our intention is not to expel non-Tibetans. Our concern is the induced mass movement of primarily Han, but also some other nationalities, into many Tibetan areas, which in turn marginalises the native Tibetan population and threatens Tibet’s fragile environment.” From this it is clear that His Holiness is not at all suggesting that Tibet be inhabited by only Tibetans, with other nationalities not being able to do so. The issue concerns the appropriate division of powers regarding the regulation of transient, seasonal workers and new settlers so as to protect the vulnerable population indigenous to Tibetan areas.

In responding to the Memorandum the Chinese Central Government rejected the proposition that the autonomous authorities would regulate the entrance and economic activities of persons from other parts of the PRC in part because “in the Constitution and the Law on Regional National Autonomy there are no provisions to restrict transient population.” In fact, the Law on Regional National Autonomy, in its Article 43, explicitly mandates such a regulation:

“In accordance with legal stipulations, the organs of self-government of national autonomous areas shall work out measures for control of the transient population.”

Thus, the Tibetan proposal contained in the Memorandum in this regard is not incompatible with the Constitution.

d) Religion

The point made in the Memorandum, that Tibetans be free to practice their religion according to their own beliefs, is entirely consistent with the principles of religious freedom contained in

the Constitution of the PRC. It is also consistent with the principle of separation of religion and polity adopted in many countries of the world.

Article 36 of the Constitution guarantees that no one can “compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in any religion.” We endorse this principle but observe that today the government authorities do interfere in important ways in the ability of Tibetans to practice their religion.

The spiritual relationship between master and student and the giving of religious teachings, etc. are essential components of the Dharma practice. Restricting these is a violation of religious freedom. Similarly, the interference and direct involvement by the state and its institutions in matters of recognition of reincarnated lamas, as provided in the regulation on the management of reincarnated lamas adopted by the State on July 18, 2007 is a grave violation of the freedom of religious belief enshrined in the Constitution.

The practice of religion is widespread and fundamental to the Tibetan people. Rather than seeing Buddhist practice as a threat, concerned authorities should respect it. Traditionally or historically Buddhism has always been a major unifying and positive factor between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

e) Single administration

The desire of Tibetans to be governed within one autonomous region is fully in keeping with the principles on autonomy of the Constitution. The rationale for the need to respect the integrity of the Tibetan nationality is clearly stated in the Memorandum and does not mean “Greater or Smaller Tibet”. In fact, as pointed out in the Memorandum, the Law on Regional National Autonomy itself allows for this kind of modification of administrative boundaries if proper procedures are followed. Thus the proposal

in no way violates the Constitution.

As the Envoys pointed out in earlier rounds of talks, many Chinese leaders, including Premier Zhou Enlai, Vice Premier Chen Yi and Party Secretary Hu Yaobang, supported the consideration of bringing all Tibetan areas under a single administration. Some of the most senior Tibetan leaders in the PRC, including the 10th Panchen Lama, Ngapo Ngawang Jigme and Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal have also called for this and affirming that doing so would be in accordance with the PRC's Constitution and its laws. In 1956 a special committee, which included senior Communist Party member Sangye Yeshe (Tian Bao), was appointed by the Chinese Central Government to make a detailed plan for the integration of the Tibetan areas into a single autonomous region, but the work was later stopped on account of ultra-leftist elements.

The fundamental reason for the need to integrate the Tibetan areas under one administrative region is to address the deeply-felt desire of Tibetans to exercise their autonomy as a people and to protect and develop their culture and spiritual values in this context. This is also the fundamental premise and purpose of the Constitutional principles on regional national autonomy as reflected in Article 4 of the Constitution. Tibetans are concerned about the integrity of the Tibetan nationality, which the proposal respects and which the continuation of the present system does not. Their common historical heritage, spiritual and cultural identity, language and even their particular affinity to the unique Tibetan plateau environment is what binds Tibetans as one nationality. Within the PRC, Tibetans are recognized as one nationality and not several nationalities. Those Tibetans presently living in Tibet autonomous prefectures and counties incorporated into other provinces also belong to the same Tibetan nationality. Tibetans, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, are primarily concerned about the protection and development of Tibetan culture, spiritual values, national identity and the environment. Tibetans are

not asking for the expansion of Tibetan autonomous areas. They are only demanding that those areas already recognised as Tibetan autonomous areas come under a single administration, as is the case in the other autonomous regions of the PRC. So long as Tibetans do not have the opportunity to govern themselves under a single administration, preservation of Tibetan culture and way of life cannot be done effectively. Today more than half of the Tibetan population is subjected to the priorities and interests first and foremost of different provincial governments in which they have no significant role.

As explained in the Memorandum, the Tibetan people can only genuinely exercise regional national autonomy if they can have their own autonomous government, people's congress and other organs of self-government with jurisdiction over the Tibetan nationality as a whole. This principle is reflected in the Constitution, which recognises the right of minority nationalities to practice regional autonomy "in areas where they live in concentrated communities" and to "set up organs of self-government for the exercise of the power of autonomy," (Article 4). If the "state's full respect for and guarantee of the right of the minority nationalities to administer their internal affairs" solemnly declared in the preamble of the Law on Regional National Autonomy is interpreted not to include the right to choose to form an autonomous region that encompasses the whole people in the contiguous areas where its members live in concentrated communities, the Constitutional principles on autonomy are themselves undermined.

Keeping Tibetans divided and subject to different laws and regulations denies the people the exercise of genuine autonomy and makes it difficult for them to maintain their distinct cultural identity. It is not impossible for the Central Government to make the necessary administrative adjustment when elsewhere in the PRC, notably in the case of Inner Mongolia, Ningxia and Guangxi Autonomous Regions, it has done just that.

f) Political, social and economic system

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly and consistently stated that no one, least of all he, has any intention to restore the old political, social and economic system that existed in Tibet prior to 1959. It would be the intention of a future autonomous Tibet to further improve the social, economic and political situation of Tibetans, not to return to the past. It is disturbing and puzzling that the Chinese government persists, despite all evidence to the contrary, to accuse His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his Administration of the intention to restore the old system.

All countries and societies in the world, including China, have had political systems in the past that would be entirely unacceptable today. The old Tibetan system is no exception. The world has evolved socially and politically and has made enormous strides in terms of the recognition of human rights and standards of living. Tibetans in exile have developed their own modern democratic system as well as education and health systems and institutions. In this way, Tibetans have become citizens of the world at par with those of other countries. It is obvious that Tibetans in the PRC have also advanced under Chinese rule and improved their social, education, health and economic situation. However, the standard of living of the Tibetan people remains the most backward in the PRC and Tibetan human rights are not being respected.

6. Recognising the core issue

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other members of the exiled leadership have no personal demands to make. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's concern is with the rights and welfare of the Tibetan people. Therefore, the fundamental issue that needs to be resolved is the faithful implementation of genuine autonomy that will enable the Tibetan people to govern themselves in accordance with their own genius and needs.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaks on behalf of the Tibetan peo-

ple, with whom he has a deep and historical relationship and one based on full trust. In fact, on no issue are Tibetans as completely in agreement as on their demand for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. It cannot be disputed that His Holiness the Dalai Lama legitimately represents the Tibetan people, and he is certainly viewed as their true representative and spokesperson by them. It is indeed only by means of dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama that the Tibetan issue can be resolved. The recognition of this reality is important.

This emphasises the point, often made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that his engagement for the cause of Tibet is not for the purpose of claiming certain personal rights or political position for him, nor attempting to stake claims for the Tibetan administration in exile. Once an agreement is reached, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile will be dissolved and the Tibetans working in Tibet should carry on the main responsibility of administering Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama made it clear on numerous occasions that he will not hold any political position in Tibet.

7. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's co-operation

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has offered, and remains prepared, to formally issue a statement that would serve to allay the Chinese Central Government's doubts and concerns as to his position and intentions on matters that have been identified above.

The formulation of the statement should be done after ample consultations between representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Central Government, respectively, to ensure that such a statement would satisfy the fundamental needs of the Chinese Central Government as well as those of the Tibetan people.

It is important that both parties address any concern directly with their counterparts, and not use those issues as ways to block the dialogue process as has occurred in the past.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is taking this initiative in the belief that it is possible to find common ground with the People's Republic of China consistent with the principles on autonomy contained in PRC's Constitution and with the interests of the Tibetan people. In that spirit, it is the expectation and hope of His Holiness the Dalai Lama that the representatives of the PRC will use the opportunity presented by the Memorandum and this Note to deepen discussion and make substantive progress in order to develop mutual understanding.

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA'S ADDRESS TO THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

December 2008

Your Excellency, Mr. President, Honorable Members of the Parliament, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great honour to speak before you today and I thank you for your invitation. Wherever I go, my main interest or commitment is in the promotion of human values such as warm heartedness this is what I consider the key factor for a happy life at the individual level, family level and community level. In our modern times, it seems that insufficient attention is paid to these inner values. Promoting them is therefore my number one commitment.

My second interest or commitment is the promotion of inter-religious harmony. We accept the need for pluralism in politics and democracy, yet we often seem more hesitant about the plurality of faiths and religions. Despite their different concepts and philosophies, all major religious traditions bear the same messages of love, compassion, tolerance, contentment and self-discipline. They are also similar in having the potential to help human beings lead happier lives. So these two are my main interests and commitments.

Of course the issue of Tibet is also of particular concern to me and I have a special responsibility to the people of Tibet, who continue to place their hope and trust in me during this most difficult period in the history of Tibet. The welfare of the Tibetan people is my constant motivation and I consider myself to be their free spokesperson in exile.

The last time I had the privilege to address the European Parliament (EP), on October 24, 2001, I stated, “despite some devel-

opment and economic progress, Tibet continues to face fundamental problems of survival. Serious violations of human rights are widespread throughout Tibet and are often the result of policies of racial and cultural discrimination. Yet, they are only the symptoms and consequences of a deeper problem. The Chinese authorities view Tibet's distinct culture and religion as the source of threat of separation. Hence as a result of deliberate policies an entire people with its unique culture and identity are facing the threat of extinction".

Since March this year, Tibetans from all walks of life and across the entire Tibetan plateau demonstrated against the oppressive and discriminatory policies of the Chinese authorities in Tibet. With full awareness of the imminent danger to their lives, Tibetans from all across Tibet known as Cholkha-Sum (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo), young and old, men and women, monastic and lay people, believer and non-believers, including students, came together to spontaneously and courageously express their anguish, dissatisfaction and genuine grievances at the policies of the Chinese government. I have been deeply saddened by the loss of life, both Tibetan and Chinese, and immediately appealed to the Chinese authorities for restraint. Since the Chinese authorities have blamed me for orchestrating the recent events in Tibet, I have made repeated appeals for an independent and respected international body to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter, including inviting them to Dharamsala, India. If the Chinese government has any evidence to support such serious allegations, they must disclose it to the world.

Sadly, the Chinese authorities have resorted to brutal methods to deal with the situation in Tibet, despite appeals by many world leaders, NGOs and personalities of international standing to avoid violence and show restraint. In the process, a large number of Tibetans have been killed, thousands injured and detained. There are many whose fate remains completely unknown. Even as I stand here before you, in many parts of Tibet there is a huge

presence of armed police and military. In many areas Tibetans continue to suffer under a state of de-facto martial law. There is an atmosphere of angst and intimidation. Tibetans in Tibet live in a constant state of fear of being the next to be arrested. With no international observers, journalists or even tourists allowed into many parts of Tibet, I am deeply worried about the fate of the Tibetans. Presently, the Chinese authorities have a completely free hand in Tibet. It is as though Tibetans face a death sentence, a sentence aimed at wiping out the spirit of the Tibetan people.

Many honorable members of the EP are well aware of my consistent efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibet problem through dialogue and negotiations. In this spirit, in 1988 at the European Parliament in Strasbourg I presented a formal proposal for negotiations that does not call for separation and independence of Tibet. Since then, our relations with the Chinese government have taken many twists and turns. After an interruption of nearly 10 years, in 2002 we re-established direct contact with the Chinese leadership. Extensive discussions have been held between my envoys and representatives of the Chinese leadership. In these discussions we have put forth clearly the aspirations of the Tibetan people. The essence of my Middle Way Approach is to secure genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the scope of the Constitution of the PRC.

During the seventh round of talks in Beijing on 1st and 2nd July this year, the Chinese side invited us to present our views on the form of genuine autonomy. Accordingly, on 31st October 2008 we presented to the Chinese leadership the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People. Our memorandum puts forth our position on genuine autonomy and how the basic needs of the Tibetan nationality for autonomy and self-government can be met. We have presented these suggestions with the sole purpose of making a sincere effort to address the real problems in Tibet. We were confident that given goodwill, the issues raised in our memorandum could be implemented.

Unfortunately, the Chinese side has rejected our memorandum in its totality, branding our suggestions as an attempt at “semi-independence” and “independence in disguise” and, for that reason, unacceptable. Moreover, the Chinese side is accusing us of “ethnic cleansing” because our memorandum calls for the recognition of the right of autonomous areas “to regulate the residence, settlement and employment or economic activities of persons who wish to move to Tibetan areas from other parts of the PRC.”

We have made it clear in our memorandum that our intention is not to expel non-Tibetans. Our concern is the induced mass movement of primarily Han, but also some other nationalities, into many Tibetan areas, which in turn marginalizes the native Tibetan population and threatens Tibet’s fragile natural environment. Major demographic changes that result from massive migration will lead to the assimilation rather than integration of the Tibetan nationality into the PRC and gradually lead to the extinction of the distinct culture and identity of the Tibetan people.

The cases of the peoples of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and East Turkestan in the PRC are clear examples of the devastating consequences of a massive population transfer of the dominant Han nationality upon the minority nationalities. Today, the language, script and culture of the Manchu people have become extinct. In Inner Mongolia today, only 20% are native Mongolians out of a total population of 24 millions.

Despite the assertions by some hard-line Chinese officials to the contrary, from the copies of our memorandum made available to you it is clear that we have sincerely addressed the concerns of the Chinese government about the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the PRC. The memorandum is self-explanatory. I would welcome your comments and suggestions.

I take this opportunity to appeal to the European Union and the Parliament to use your good offices, sparing no efforts, to persuade the Chinese leadership to resolve the issue of Tibet through

earnest negotiations for the common good of the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

While I firmly reject the use of violence as a means in our struggle, we certainly have the right to explore all other political options available to us. In the spirit of democracy, I called for a Special Meeting of Tibetans in exile to discuss the state of Tibetan people and the state of the issue of Tibet and the future course of our movement. The meeting took place from November 17-22, 2008 in Dharamsala, India. The failure of the Chinese leadership to respond positively to our initiatives has reaffirmed the suspicion held by many Tibetans that the Chinese government has no interest whatsoever in any kind of mutually acceptable solution. Many Tibetans continue to believe that the Chinese leadership is bent on the forceful and complete assimilation and absorption of Tibet into China. They therefore call for the complete independence of Tibet. Others advocate the right to self-determination and a referendum in Tibet. Despite these different views, the delegates to the Special Meeting unanimously resolved to empower me to decide the best approach, in accordance with the prevailing situation and the changes taking place in Tibet, China and the wider world. I will study the suggestions made by about 600 leaders and delegates from Tibetan communities around the world, including views we are able to gather from a cross section of Tibetans in Tibet.

I am a staunch believer in democracy. Consequently, I have consistently encouraged Tibetans in exile to follow the democratic process. Today, the Tibetan refugee community may be among the few refugee communities that have established all three pillars of democracy: legislature, judiciary and executive. In 2001, we took another great stride in the process of democratization by having the chairman of the Kashag (cabinet) of the Tibetan Administration in exile elected by popular vote.

I have always maintained that ultimately the Tibetan people must be able to decide the future of Tibet. As Pandit Nehru, the first

Prime Minister of India, stated in the Indian Parliament on December 7, 1950: "The last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else."

The issue of Tibet has dimensions and implications that go well beyond the fate of six million Tibetans. Tibet is situated between India and China. For centuries Tibet acted as a peaceful buffer zone separating the two most populated countries on earth. However, in 1962, only a few years after the so-called "peaceful liberation of Tibet" the world witnessed the first ever war between the two Asian giants. This clearly shows the importance of a just and peaceful resolution of the Tibet question in ensuring lasting and genuine trust and friendship between the two most powerful nations of Asia. The Tibetan issue is also related to Tibet's fragile environment, which scientists have concluded, has an impact on much of Asia involving billions of people. The Tibetan plateau is the source of many of Asia's greatest rivers. Tibet's glaciers are the earth's largest ice mass outside the Poles. Some environmentalists today refer to Tibet as the Third Pole. And, if the present warming trend continues the Indus River might dry up within the next 15-20 years. Furthermore, Tibet's cultural heritage is based on Buddhism's principle of compassion and non-violence. Thus, it concerns not just the six million Tibetans, but also the over 13 million people across the Himalayas, Mongolia and in the Republics of Kalmykia and Buryat in Russia, including a growing number of Chinese brothers and sisters who share this culture, which has the potential to contribute to a peaceful and harmonious world.

My maxim has always been to hope for the best and to prepare for the worst. With this in mind, I have counseled the Tibetans in exile to make more rigorous efforts in educating the younger generation of Tibetans, in strengthening our cultural and religious institutions in exile with the aim of preserving our rich cultural heritage, and in expanding and strengthening the democratic institutions and civil society among the Tibetan refugee commu-

nity. One of the main objectives of our exile community is to preserve our cultural heritage where there is the freedom to do so and to be the free voice of our captive people inside Tibet. The tasks and challenges we face are daunting. As a refugee community, our resources are naturally limited. We Tibetans also need to face the reality that our exile may last for a longer time. I would therefore be grateful to the European Union for assistance in our educational and cultural endeavors.

I have no doubt that the principled and consistent engagement of the EP with China will impact the process of change that is already taking place in China. The global trend is towards more openness, freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. Sooner or later, China will have to follow the world trend. In this context, I wish to commend the EP for awarding the prestigious Sakharov Prize to the Chinese human rights defender Hu Jia. It is an important signal as we watch China rapidly moving forward. With its new-found status, China is poised to play an important leading role on the world stage. In order to fulfill this role, I believe it is vital for China to have openness, transparency, rule of law and freedom of information and thought. There is no doubt that the attitudes and policies of members of the international community towards China will impact the course of the change taking place in China as much as domestic events and developments.

In contrast to the continued extremely rigid attitude of the Chinese government towards Tibet, fortunately among the Chinese people – especially among the informed and educated Chinese circles – there is a growing understanding and sympathy for the plight of the Tibetan people. Although my faith in the Chinese leadership with regard to Tibet is becoming thinner and thinner, my faith in the Chinese people remains unshaken. I have therefore been advising the Tibetan people to make concerted efforts to reach out to the Chinese people. Chinese intellectuals openly criticized the harsh crackdown of Tibetan demonstrations by the Chinese government in March this year and called for restraint

and dialogue in addressing the problems in Tibet. Chinese lawyers offered publicly to represent arrested Tibetan demonstrators at trials. Today, there is growing understanding, sympathy, support and solidarity among our Chinese brothers and sisters for the difficult situation of the Tibetans and their legitimate aspirations. This is most encouraging. I take this opportunity to thank the brave Chinese brothers and sisters for their solidarity.

I also thank the European Parliament for the consistent display of concern and support for the just and non-violent Tibetan struggle. Your sympathy, support and solidarity have always been a great source of inspiration and encouragement to the Tibetan people, both in and outside of Tibet. I would like to express special thanks to the members of the Tibet Inter-Group of the EP, who have made the tragedy of the Tibetan people not only a focus of their political work but also a cause of their hearts. The many resolutions of the EP on the issue of Tibet have helped greatly to highlight the plight of the Tibetan people and to raise the awareness of the issue of Tibet amongst the public and in governments here in Europe, and all around the world

The consistency of the European Parliament's support for Tibet has not gone unnoticed in China. I regret where this has caused some tensions in EU-China relations. However, I wish to share with you my sincere hope and belief that the future of Tibet and China will move beyond mistrust to a relationship based on mutual respect, trust and recognition of common interest – irrespective of the current very grim situation inside Tibet and the deadlock in the dialogue process between my envoys and the Chinese leadership. I have no doubt that your continued expressions of concern and support for Tibet will, in the long run, have a positive impact and help create the necessary political environment for a peaceful resolution of the issue of Tibet. Your continued support is, therefore, critical.

I thank you for the honor to share my thoughts with you.

OUTLINE OF KALON TRIPA SAMDHONG RINPOCHE'S TALK ON MIDDLE-WAY APPROACH TO INDIAN DIGNITARIES

New Delhi, 16 June 2008

Tibet: its Early History

Tibet, widely known as a “land surrounded by snow mountains,” is situated on the roof of the world surrounded from all directions by snow mountains such as the Himalayan ranges. Whether the Sanskrit word “Bhota” is derived from Tibetan word “Bhod” or vice versa, both has a similarity of pronunciation. In the Buddha’s teachings Tibet was referred as “land of snow in the north” (Uttara Himpradesh). Vedic Rishis also called it “Trivishtab”. Whatever the case, Tibet is situated on a high plateau with clean air and is a source of major rivers of Asia. Tibet has a vast land with small population and remained economically self-reliant on the basis of need.

Archeological surveys revealed the evidence of human existence in Tibet since the primitive age. However, Tibetan civilisation received added strength in the 6th century and reached its peak in the 8th century. Tibet also emerged as a powerful nation with a strong military in Asia.

Tibetan ethnicity is distinct compared to other people in the region. Tibetan features resemble a mix of Aryan and Mongolian races.

All Tibetans use the same language. Though there are different local dialects, but after the invention of the script and grammar in the 7th century, all Tibetans use one language that is based on four vowels and thirty consonants. It is a rich language with the capacity to convey all Sanskrit terms accurately. Considering the time duration and population, the Tibetan language has richest and highest quality of literary output in the world both in terms

of translation and original composition. A large number of ancient Indian texts are now available only in the Tibetan language. Since the Tibetan script and grammar are invented based on Sanskrit it belongs to the Indian language family.

After the advent of Buddhism in the 7th century, Tibetan culture and civilisation flourished widely and quickly. These originate from the Buddhist culture of India of the time.

Although Tibet emerged as strong and powerful nation until the mid-9th century, it gradually disintegrated and remained without a common ruler or central government for nearly three centuries. However, there was no major obstacle in the advancement of religion and culture. By the start of 13th century Tibet was invaded by Genghis Khan and remained under Mongol control for more than 50 years. Gradually China also came under Mongol rule.

In 1260s Mongol emperor Kublai Khan of the Yuan Dynasty of China offered three Cholkas (provinces) to Drogon Choegyal Phagpa, which restored Tibetan sovereignty to the Tibetans. Since then to 1640, though Sakya, Phagdru, Ringpung and Tsangpa fought each other to rule Tibet, there was no foreign invasion. In 1640s Mongol tribal leader Gushri Khan invaded whole of Tibet and offered it to the Great Fifth Dalai Lama to rule in 1642. Thus was founded the Gaden Phodrang Government of Tibet. Since then it has now been 366 years. Later on the Gaden Phodrang Government could not protect its Eastern borders. As a result China gradually started encroaching and finally divided it into “inner Tibet” and “outer Tibet”.

Since the commencement of Priest-Patron relationship between China and Tibet starting from Choegyal Phagpa, though there were many ups and downs in the relationship but the outer structure of the Priest-Patron relationship remained unchanged. After the founding of the Gaden Phodrang Government, the Manchu Emperor invited the Fifth Dalai Lama to China. This enhanced

the Priest-Patron relationship between the two. At first, it was purely a religious relationship between the Priest, the teacher and the Patron, the student. This relationship was devoid of any political overtones. However, in the passage of time, this relationship was misinterpreted in many different ways in order to achieve political advantage. During the Sixth and Seventh Dalai Lamas, due to internal rivalry within Tibetan leaders, coupled with Mongol interference etc, Tibetans were compelled to seek help from the Manchu Emperors. In particular, during the Gorkha War by the end of 17th century Tibetans were forced to seek military help from the Manchus, which gradually paved the way for many unpleasant incidents such as involvement of political interference in the Priest-Patron relationship.

Recent Developments

In the 19th century, British government tried several times to reach out to Tibet through China under various pretexts. However none of these endeavors were successful. Finally, in 1904 the British army entered Tibet and signed a ceasefire treaty with the Tibetans. Similarly, later Chinese attacks on Tibet were repulsed by the Tibetans on their own. At the Shimla Convention and the Agreement of 1913/14 and during the subsequent events thereafter, the British government engaged directly with Tibet to sign treaty when it served their purpose and they accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet when dealing directly with Tibet did not serve their interests. Due to these self-contradictory positions of British government, the status of Tibet remained unclear on the international level. However, the demarcation of the present Indo-Tibetan border, which is at present followed by the government of India, was made between the British and Tibetans and there was no Chinese participation.

It was the weakness of the Tibetan leadership of not being able to assert Tibetan sovereignty and the failure to be a member of the League of Nations and subsequently the United Nations. Nev-

ertheless, both the Chinese and British had collectively tried to create confusion at international level. In order to dispel these doubts, the great Thirteenth Dalai Lama reiterated the status of Tibetan independence in 1913.

After Chinese Revolution

Soon after the establishment of Communist rule in China in 1949, Chinese army started invading Tibetan territories. The PRC considered the 'liberation' of Tibet and Taiwan of the utmost urgency. Within a year Chinese invasion reached Chamdo. It was termed as "forceful liberation". Later on, Tibet was brought under Chinese rule when the Tibetan delegation, consisting of Ngapoi, the Governor of Chamdo who was held as prisoner of war together with his aides, and the others who were sent from Tibet to China, were forced to sign the 17-Point Agreement on 23 May 1951 under the pretext of negotiations. It was termed as "peaceful liberation". This is quite similar to the occupation of India by the British as explained by Mahatma Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 7.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government has sincerely tried to implement the agreement since under the given national and international situation there was no other options available at that point of time. Moreover, His Holiness the Dalai Lama returned Lhasa with confidence trusting the words of senior Chinese leaders of Party, State and the Army, including Mao, when he met them during his visit to China in 1954/55. However, unrest started unfolding in the Eastern Tibetan regions of Kham and Amdo around 1956. In addition, after the completion of road connection between Beijing-Lhasa facilitating faster mobilisation of army and military equipments, local Chinese officials deliberately violated the agreement by making the situation even more critical. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's appeal to the central leadership, including Mao, were left unanswered. Finally there was a threat to the life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and

Tibetans in Lhasa were compelled to carry out peaceful uprising on 10 March 1959. On the night of 17 March, His Holiness the Dalai Lama disguised as a common man escaped from Norbulinka and eventually sought asylum in India.

On 31 March 1959, after reaching the Indian border, the Government of India received His Holiness the Dalai Lama by offering him asylum. On 17 April 1959 at Tezpur, during his first meeting with the international media, His Holiness the Dalai Lama renounced the 17-Point Agreement based on two reasons. The two reasons were that the agreement was signed under duress and that the Chinese central government themselves had deliberately violated all the clauses of the agreement. Since then His Holiness the Dalai Lama declared to strive for the revival of the Tibetan independence. This policy was followed till 1979.

Nature of Tibetan Struggle

Since 1959, after seeking asylum in India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been striving hard to resolve the Tibetan issue by implementing wide-ranging programmes. However, different people see the nature of Tibetan struggle differently.

a) Not a political ideological conflict

Some people think Tibetan struggle is a struggle between different political ideologies and interprets Tibetan uprisings of the early 1950s and 60s as an uprising against Communism. Some people extend their support to Tibet based on this reason. However, this is not the truth. As long as the Tibetans are happy and contented, ideologies do not matter to them. Moreover, certain aspects of Marxism appeal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

b) Not an ethnic conflict

Some identify our struggle as an ethnic conflict between the Tibetans and Han Chinese. Many even attempt to make it into an ethnic conflict. But the Tibetans and Chinese have lived together

as neighbors since time immemorial by helping each other like brothers. Especially after the commencement of the Priest-Patron relationship in the 13th century, most of the Chinese Buddhists became followers of Tibetan lineage of Buddhism. There were times when the two sides fought wars. But these wars were few and scattered and for short periods. For most of the time the two sides remained amicably and even today there is no hatred between the Tibetans and Chinese.

c) Not a power struggle

Some suspect the Tibetan struggle is one of power struggle. The Chinese side has unleashed a massive propaganda campaign to misinterpret the Tibetan struggle as an attempt to revive the old system of governance. Nothing is farther from truth. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exile administration have never thought of holding power in future Tibet. Not even in our dreams.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has declared time and again that He will not hold any political or institutional position the moment Tibetan issue is resolved for once and all. The officials of the exile administration will also not aspire for political authority in Tibet. They will lead the life of the common people. Therefore, the issue between us is how to rule the people and not who will rule.

d) True nature of Tibetan struggle

Then, what is the true nature of Tibetan issue? It is an issue between truth and false, justice and injustice. In other words, it is an issue of difference in approach to fulfill one's duty. Tibetans are not struggling for their rights but to perform their special duty towards universal responsibility. The precious Buddhist tradition of all the yanas, including vajra-yana, originated from the great land of India is today not available in any other part of the world. Preservation of this tradition, which is of immense value to all living beings, is the true nature of our struggle. If we read carefully the definition of "civilisation" as explained in Hind Swaraj

by Mahatma Gandhi, then one can exactly identify the true nature of the Tibetan struggle.

Community that preserves Buddhist tradition should be a non-violent society and there is a need to create non-violent environment for such society. Therefore the broad vision to transform Tibet into a zone of non-violence was suggested. Need for consistency between means and ends is not only highlighted in Buddhist philosophy, but Mahatma Gandhi also emphasised on this point. To conform our means and ends we strive to adopt only non-violent means. As a result the Tibetan movement at present is free from violence.

There are opposite ways of looking to our struggle from the two sides. The Chinese consider us their enemy and our struggle as struggle for victory and defeat and life and death. But we view the authorities of PRC as our potential friends and our struggle as win-win to both sides. We do not struggle for the victory of oneself and defeat of the opponent.

Undoubtedly, the Tibet problem is a direct result of a larger scheme of modern power struggle among the nations, continents and civilisations. Therefore, it is difficult to keep our movement away from the larger conflict. But we are happy that under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama we are able to protect ourselves until now from becoming tools of the bigger powers.

Etymological Meaning of Middle-Way

The Buddha first used the word “middle-way” in his first sermon. It refers to the middle which avoids two extremes. At first it was used in reference to ethics but later on it was more commonly used in reference to philosophy. Going to extremes is divergence from the truth and there is a need to have middle-way in every field.

In this case when we use the word “middle-way” in reference to

policy, the two extremes are 1) to seek separation from China and 2) to remain within China under present condition. The essence of the Middle-Way Approach is to seek meaningful national regional autonomy status to all Tibetans as provided under the constitution of PRC by avoiding these two extremes.

Why Middle-Way Approach?

Since Tibet is a country which has remained independent for a long period, what are the reasons for upholding the Middle-Way Approach instead of restoring independence?

a) Given the realities of the present global scenario, it is absolutely necessary for us to be pragmatic and realistic in formulating any policy to conform to these realities.

b) Even if Tibet became independent and lived as a neighbour of China, it will face unavoidable encroachment in the fields of politics, economy and social matters.

c) Since Tibet is land-locked and situated on a high plateau, it has to rely on others to meet its needs.

d) On the positive side if we remain with the PRC, this will be helpful for our modern material development.

e) Under the present global scenario when there is a loosening of the nation-state ideology, there is a trend towards greater unions, like the European Union.

f) This will make it less inconvenient for friendly nations like India to extend their support.

g) Since the PRC's constitution sufficiently provides national regional autonomy provisions, this aspiration is legitimate and within the Chinese constitution and it can be achieved.

i) Many areas of Kham and Amdo were gradually separated from

Tibetan sovereignty. In 1951 when Tibet lost its independence, Tibetan territory was already reduced to the size of the present day so-called Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Even if we managed to restore independence, it is unlikely to extent beyond the territory of the present so-called TAR. Since more than fifty percent of Tibetan population lives outside of this area, it is impossible to achieve the unification of all Tibetans. There are many other such reasons.

The reason why His Holiness chose autonomy as the objective of the Tibetan struggle is quite similar to Gandhi's choice of "self-rule; Swaraj" instead of "independence". Gandhi's article "Independence versus Swaraj" published on 12 January 1928 has been the supreme guiding light for us in our path.

Detractors of Middle-Way Approach may think this as surrendering of the Tibetan people's legitimate right. If we look at Chapter 4 of Gandhi's Hind Swaraj titled "What is Swaraj?" then one can clearly see our aspiration. To save time I will not quote here.

Formation of Middle-Way Approach

Around 1968, under changing national and international situation, it was clear to us that restoring Tibetan independence was difficult and the means to resolve the Tibetan issue through autonomy was suggested. Since then series of discussions and consultations were held. Especially after internal consultations with the Kashag, Speaker and Deputy Speaker in mid-1970s, the basis for the Middle-Way Approach was established by formulating a new policy to seek meaningful autonomy instead of independence when an opportunity for negotiation arose.

In China, the turmoil of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution came to an end. Post - Mao China witnessed major political changes. Deng Xiaoping informed His Holiness the Dalai Lama through his elder brother Mr. Gyalo Thondup, who was stationed in Hong Kong, to consider returning home and de-

clared that “except independence” all other issues can be resolved through negotiation. This has paved the way for new era of relationship between the Tibetans and Chinese. Since His Holiness the Dalai Lama has already formulated a policy of Middle-Way Approach it was easy for Him to respond immediately.

However, during the course of contacts substantial negotiations were delayed without any concrete result. Similarly there was a shift in the views of Chinese leaders. Therefore, in order to clarify the background and framework of negotiation, His Holiness the Dalai Lama issued the Five-Point Peace Plan in 1987. In his Strasbourg Proposal of 1988, His Holiness the Dalai Lama outlined the detailed framework for autonomy. But the Chinese termed it as semi-independence or independence in disguise. Since China has rejected these proposals, there was no further discussion on this and gradually the documents became somewhat like ineffective. Contacts between the two sides broke off in 1994.

Thereafter in 1996 and 1997 His Holiness the Dalai Lama proposed that Tibetan people should decide on the best possible way of realizing the cause of Tibet through a referendum. Accordingly, a preliminary opinion poll was conducted in which more than 64% of the Tibetan people expressed that there was no need to hold a referendum, and that they would support the Middle-Way Approach, or whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama takes from time to time, in accordance with the changing political situation in China and the world at large. To this effect, the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies adopted a unanimous resolution on 18 September of 1997 and informed His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Responding to this, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said in his 10 March Statement of 1998:

“..I continue to believe that my ‘Middle-Way Approach’ is the most realistic and pragmatic course to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully. This approach meets the vital needs of the Tibetan people while ensuring the unity and stability of the People’s Re-

public of China. I will, therefore, continue to pursue this course of approach with full commitment and make earnest efforts to reach out to the Chinese leadership..." Based on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's guidance, this policy was, hence, adopted through highest decision-making process of democratic system by taking into account the opinion of the Tibetan people both in exile and inside Tibet and a unanimous resolution passed by the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies.

Renewal of Direct Contacts

Since the renewal of direct contacts in 2002, the Chinese side has expressed deep suspicions and doubts concerning the Five-Point Peace Plan and Strasbourg Proposal. In order to dispel these suspicions it was explained that Five-Point Peace Plan is a future vision for the benefit of entire humanity, including Chinese and Tibetans, irrespective of the resolution to the Tibetan issue. The Preamble and other explanations of the Strasbourg proposal are not a part of the discussion agenda. The framework for autonomy that was outlined in the text is only a proposal and not an ultimate decision. To avoid suspicion from both sides on the proposal for negotiations, envoys have, in a nutshell, explained our aspiration for implementation of the provision of national regional autonomy enshrined in the PRC constitution in its entirety in both letter and spirit. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has also explained it several times. In his address to the 4th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, 18 November 2005, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said,

"Basically, we are not seeking independence and everybody knows that. What we are seeking is genuine, meaningful autonomy within the framework of the constitution of the People's Republic of China."

Similarly on 10 March Statement of 2006, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said,

“I have stated time and again that I do not wish to seek Tibet’s separation from China, but that I will seek its future within the framework of the Chinese constitution. Anyone who has heard this statement would realise, unless his or her view of reality is clouded by suspicion, that my demand for genuine self-rule does not amount to a demand for separation.”

Provisions of Autonomy in the PRC Constitution

Since China is a multi-national state, the reason behind adopting provisions of national regional autonomy in the constitution of the PRC is because it was impossible to achieve equality and unity among nationalities without abandoning both Han chauvinism and local nationalism. It was said, to ensure equality and unity among nationalities the policy of national regional autonomy was formulated based on nationality policy of Marxist-Leninism by criticising exploitation of minority nationals in the past by previous Emperors and the nationalist government, which caused the separation of nationalities.

Preamble of the PRC constitution states,

“The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and to combat local national chauvinism. The State will do its utmost to promote the common prosperity of all the nationalities.”

Similarly article 4 of the Chapter 1 states,

“All nationalities in the People’s Republic of China are equal. The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality,

unity and mutual assistance among all of China's nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited.

The State assists areas inhabited by minority nationalities in accelerating their economic and cultural development according to the characteristic and needs of the various nationalities.

Regional autonomy is practised in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy. All national autonomy areas are integral parts of the People's Republic of China.

All nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written language and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs."

Article 112 to 122 of Section 6 of the constitution explains in detail organs of national regional autonomy.

Article 116 empowers local people's congress of the national regional autonomy areas to enact regulations in accordance with the need of the areas.

Article 117 and 118 explains provisions of autonomy in the field of economy and financial development.

Article 119 provides autonomous provisions in educational, scientific, cultural, public health and physical culture affairs.

Article 120 explains provision of autonomy to organise local public security forces for the maintenance of public order.

Article 121 explains provision to use local language of the area as an official language. Similarly article 134 of Section 7 on Judiciary provides provisions to use local language in judicial proceedings.

Preamble of National Regional Autonomy Law (NRA Law) states,

“Regional national autonomy means that the minority nationalities, under unified state leadership, practise regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities and set up organs of self-government for the exercise of power of autonomy. Regional national autonomy embodies the state’s full respect for and guarantee of the right of the minority nationalities to administer their internal affairs and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity for all its nationalities.”

Article 10 of Chapter 1 on General Principles of NRA Law guarantees the freedom to use and develop one’s own spoken and written language and to preserve one’s own folkways and customs.

Article 11 clearly guarantees freedom of religion.

Similarly article 19 of Chapter 3 provides provision to adopt autonomy regulations.

Article 20 provides rights to not to implement resolution, decision, order or instruction of a state organ at a higher level if it does not suit the conditions of the autonomous areas.

Article 43 provides provision to work out measures for control of the transient population.

Likewise there are sufficient provisions to ensure self-rule and autonomy in terms of culture, economy, usage of natural resources, taxation, trade, health, public security and education.

Moreover article 31 of the constitution provides provision to establish special administrative regions when necessary. This essentially provides that accept foreign relations and national defence, all other affairs are left under the domain of the administration of regional autonomy.

If these provisions of constitution and autonomy law are implemented in true spirit it will ensure the welfare of Tibetan people and the protection of Tibet's unique culture, religion, tradition and language. It will further enable Tibetans to perform their universal responsibility. However, at present, unfortunately it is a universal fact that none of these provisions are implemented in all Tibetan autonomous region, prefectures and counties.

All Tibetans lived together on the Tibetan plateau since time immemorial, sharing the same religion, culture, language, customs, geographical location and livelihood, and if the PRC truly accepts Tibetan nationality as one of the 55 minority nationalities of China as they already claim, one cannot divide them into different parts or designate them into inner or outer region and smaller or greater. It is essential to implement self-rule provided under the provisions of national regional autonomy to all Tibetans.

PRC's Concerns and Differences in Opinion

Since 2002 six rounds of meetings were held. Though we have time and again clearly explained our aspirations of Middle-Way Approach, they still do not understand or prefer not to understand. Though there are many differences in opinion, it comes down to two main points. Firstly difference on history and secondly regarding the unification of Tibetans.

The Chinese side insists that His Holiness the Dalai Lama accept Tibet was part of China from a historical point of view. Tibetan side has explained that is not true. Therefore, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not in a position to accept it. Chinese concern is that if we do not accept Tibet as a part of China from past history, then liberation of 1951 will be considered as invasion and the present Chinese rule of Tibet will be viewed as illegal occupation. His Holiness the Dalai Lama sees that no nation today has remained the same as its past history and this will never make the present status illegitimate. Tibet will naturally become a legitimate part of China the moment Tibetans have voluntarily

decided to remain as a part of the PRC. For such a thing to happen, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly agreed to work on this.

Similarly the Chinese side supports their position by saying that united Tibet has never happened in history and it will be impossible to change the boundaries of the present provinces. To this we explained that since time immemorial the Tibetans lived together in concentrated and compacted groups and not scattered. For larger period of the history, all the Tibetan were ruled by the early Kings as well as during the early period of Sakya reign. Moreover, PRC considers Tibetan nationality as one of the 55 minority nationalities, it is imperative that Tibetans come under one single administration. If Tibetan nationality does not come under one single administration then this will be tantamount to a policy of “Divide and Rule” as practiced by the past imperialist regimes. Especially, this aspiration is not a new aspiration. During the signing of 17-Point Agreement, the Tibetan delegation raised the unification of the Tibetan nationality. The Chinese side responded by saying that the time was not yet ripe but the idea of unification of the Tibetan nationality was appropriate. This was again discussed during the meeting on the establishment of the Preparatory Committee of the TAR and a special committee to make a detailed plan was appointed under the leadership of senior Communist Party cadre, Sangye Yeshe (Tian Bao). However, due to ultra-leftist policy this could not materialise. Similarly there are many incidents where the boundaries of the provinces are altered according to the needs of the time. In the future too boundaries can be altered.

Though Chinese side has unleashed massive propaganda to project that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is demanding a “greater Tibet” and “high degree autonomy”, but in reality Tibetans are one single nationality and it cannot be divided into greater or smaller parts. Our aspiration is to implement the provisions of national regional autonomy as enshrined in the PRC constitution. Apart

from that we have never talked about high degree or low degree autonomy. We see that these differences can be resolved if PRC leadership possesses political will.

KALON TRIPA SAMDHONG RINPOCHE'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON "GREATER TIBET"

New Delhi, 27 August 2009

Introduction

Since 1979, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has adopted the Middle-Way Approach of not seeking separation but for Tibet to remain within the PRC. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly requested for the implementation of National Regional Autonomy provisions to the entire Tibetan nationality in order to preserve and promote Tibet's cultural and spiritual heritage and identity.

Since 1951, during the negotiations for the 17-point agreement, the Tibetan side had asked for one autonomous administration for the entire Tibetan nationality. Since then, this aspiration of Tibetan people has remained consistent.

In 2002, after the restoration of direct contact between Dharamsala and Beijing, eight rounds of formal dialogue and one informal consultation were held between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the concerned PRC officials. In the process, we have further clarified how the entire Tibetan nationality can be brought under one autonomous administration within the provisions of constitution and autonomy law and what are the advantages by doing this.

Unfortunately, the PRC officials twisted our argument by saying His Holiness the Dalai Lama is demanding "Greater Tibet". Although we never use the phrase "Greater Tibet" at any time, this propaganda can create confusion or misunderstanding in the minds of people who do not have full understanding of the issue.

I appreciate the Tibet Study Group for arranging this round table discussion and allowing me to submit the reality in detail.

1. Definition and usage of “Greater Tibet”

The expression “Greater Tibet” has been used by ancient Indian scholars to indicate the geographical distance of the parts of Tibet from India. The regions of Tibet which border India or are near it were called Tibet (Bhota) and the regions of Tibet which are far away from India were known as Greater Tibet (Mahābhota).

In Sanskrit idiom, with reference to geographical area, distant places are usually qualified by the word greater. For example, the jungle which is near a town is called jungle (Araṇya) and the jungle which is far away from the town is known as greater jungle (Mahāraṇya). Indeed this expression doesn't refer to size or quality but it connotes distance.

In the ancient times, the Chinese and Tibetans, occasionally, used to refer each other as Great China and Great Tibet as an honorific word. But these were used referring to the whole of China and whole of Tibet not specifying the parts of the territory. Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821-822 also used the word Great Tibet and Great China. Later on, Chinese changed this honorific word from Great Tibet to High Tibet, which indicates high plateau rather than greatness. During the Ming and Manchu period, they coined different words to indicate different parts of Tibet such as familiar Tibet and unfamiliar Tibet to distinguish between Tibetan areas which border China and those which are far away from China.

However, Tibetans themselves have never used the word “Greater Tibet” to classify any part of Tibet. There are traditional ways of distinguishing regions of the country such as upper, middle and lower or U-tsang, Kham and Amdo or the three Cholkas, etc.

The Republic of China's, pre-1949, official term for distinguishing different parts of Tibet was Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet, similar to that of Mongolia which was identified between Inner and Outer Mongolia. Inner Tibet refers to the regions which were under China by that time and outer Tibet refers to independent

or autonomous Tibet. These terms were used in the documents of the Shimla Convention (1913-14) by the three parties.

Moreover, it is strange that in Tibetan and Chinese language there is only one word for big or great. This is used as an honorific or refers to size. In English there are two different words, "Great" and "Greater". When word "Greater" is prefixed to a country, its meaning may encompass a political boundary referring to language and cultural domain. This creates misunderstanding in the minds of English-speaking people. Thus this is a matter which needs subtle analysis and one should not be carried away by the words.

2. Propaganda over "Greater Tibet"

In recent times (after 1979) the authorities of the PRC coined the new term, "Greater Tibet", to refer to the total areas habited by Tibetan nationality which are at present divided into Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties.

In reality, Tibet is Tibet. There is no greater or smaller Tibet. All Tibetans belong to one minority nationality among the 55 minority nationalities of the PRC.

Beijing tries to mislead the international community by saying that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is demanding "Greater Tibet" which is one fourth of the PRC's territory. This propaganda is done to make people believe that His Holiness the Dalai Lama's aspiration is unreasonable and that he is asking for separation of one fourth of the PRC or that His Holiness is asking for inclusion of certain areas into autonomous region that are not already declared as Tibetan autonomous areas.

In reality, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has never used the word "Greater Tibet" at any time verbally or in written document. If someone surveys the entire correspondences, statements, docu-

ments and any other written dossiers of the Tibetans since 1979, one will not find a single instance of the word “Greater Tibet” being used. This is PRC’s word, which they are trying to project as if it is His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s position.

3. What is His Holiness the Dalai Lama asking for?

What His Holiness the Dalai Lama is asking the PRC’s central government to do is the following:

to have one autonomous administration for all the Tibetan autonomous areas

to genuinely implement the constitutional provisions of national regional autonomy

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has made these requests in accordance with the spirit of the PRC Constitution and its Autonomy Law.

a) Article 4 of the Constitution says:

All nationalities in the People’s Republic of China are equal. The State protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China’s nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationalities are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the nationalities or instigates division is prohibited.

The State assists areas inhabited by minority nationalities in accelerating their economic and cultural development according to the characteristics and needs of the various nationalities.

Regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy.

All national autonomous areas are integral parts of the People's Republic of China.

All nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written language and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs.

b) Preamble of the National Regional Autonomy Law says,

Regional national autonomy means that the minority nationalities, under the unified state leadership, practise regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities and set up organs of self-government for the exercise of power of autonomy. Regional national autonomy embodies the state's full respect for and guarantee of the right of the minority nationalities to administer their internal affairs and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity for all its nationalities.

c) Similarly article 2 of the Autonomy Law says,

Regional autonomy shall be practiced in areas where minority nationalities live in concentrated communities. National autonomous areas shall be classified into autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties.

All national autonomous areas are integral parts of the People's Republic of China.

d) Division of minority nationalities who live in a concentrated community is a direct violation of the Constitution as quoted above. This resembles the policy of "divide-and-rule" adopted by the imperialist regimes in the past. How one can expect the unification of all nationalities as a whole without unifying the minority nationalities themselves?

In fact, a senior party member, Phuntsok Wangyal, rightly said, "...it has been proven that the policy of 'administering Tibet' which calls for 'divide-and-rule policy' is a mistake and histori-

cally this is a bitter lesson. If the thinking of Big Nationality Supremacy is abandoned - especially the bias in the nationalities policy that suggests 'divide-and-rule,' then there would not be any problems in changing and adjusting the administrative division policy.”

e) Preamble of the Constitution solemnly declares,

The People's Republic of China is a unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity and mutual assistance have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard the unity for the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and to combat local national chauvinism. The State will do its utmost to promote the common prosperity of all the nationalities.

In order for you have to a clearer picture I would like to present some maps. These maps are taken from various sources only to show internal administrative divisions of the PRC. Their international boundaries are not necessarily accurate and do not reflect the views of this author.

i)

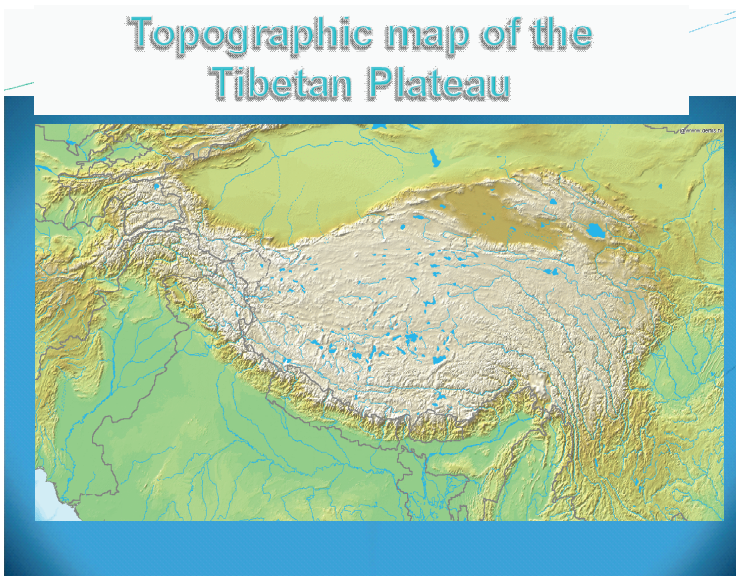
People's Republic of China (PRC):
Administrative Divisions



ii) Autonomous Areas of PRC

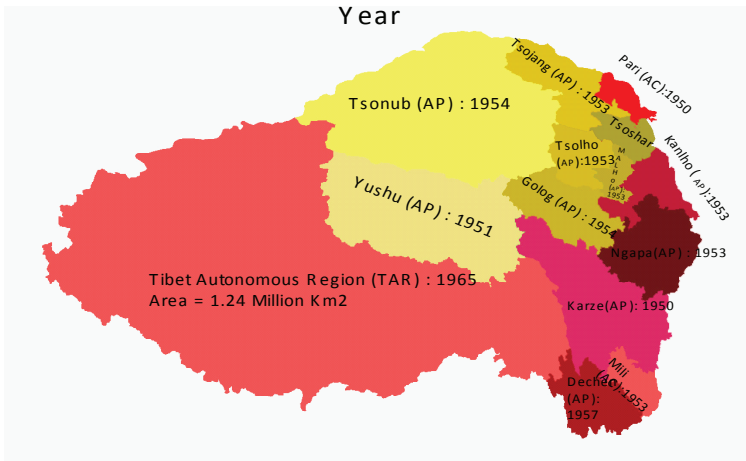


iii)



iv)

Administrative Division of Tibet under PRC & Creation Year



4. PRC's objection and Tibetan position

Now I would like to respond to the PRC's objection from our point of view.

i) The size of area

The PRC authorities say that the Tibetan autonomous areas cannot be put under one administration because the area is so large and it constitutes one fourth of the PRC's territory.

It is true that the Tibetan area constitutes one fourth of the PRC's territory, but it was not created by us. In fact, it came about by natural process and has existed since time immemorial, which no one can change at this point of time. It is not that Tibetan people have moved into these areas in recent times. They were in these areas right from the beginning of human civilization in Tibet. Tibetans are the indigenous inhabitants of these areas throughout history.

ii) Size should not matter

The area of Tibet may appear quite large but we are not seeking separation and are willing to remain as an autonomous region of the PRC. Despite its largeness or smallness, Tibet will remain within the territory of the PRC. There are other large autonomous regions as well such as Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. In case of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, it constitutes about one sixth of the PRC territory and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is about one eighth. Therefore, the size of a territory should not be a hindrance to making one autonomous region for the people of the same nationality.

In fact, 64.3% of the PRC's total territory belongs to 155 autonomous areas for 55 minority nationalities. This is despite the fact that the population of these minority nationalities constitutes

only 8.46% of the total population of the PRC.

The PRC authorities did not hesitate to make 64.3% of its total territory as autonomous areas because these areas remain within the PRC's territory. Article 4 of the Constitution declares that “..All national autonomous areas are integral parts of the People's Republic of China.” The crucial point is that whether the Tibetan autonomous areas remain within one administration or under several administrations does not change either the size of the Tibetan autonomous areas or the total size of the autonomous areas of the PRC.

Not putting the entire Tibetan autonomous areas under one administration does not reduce the size of the Tibetan autonomous areas. Anyway, the Tibetan autonomous areas constitute one fourth of the PRC's total territory.

Therefore, the size of areas has no relevance with the function of one administration or several administrations for the Tibetans.

iii) Not history but nationality

a) The PRC authorities say that Tibetans have never remained under one administration in history. But this is not true. Tibetans were under one administration until the mid 9th century. Later Tibetans were again re-integrated into one administration in 1260 under Drogon Choegyal Phakpa. This was offered to him by emperor Kublai Khan and this offering explicitly refers to the three Cholkas with clear demarcation of its borders. Such unified administration remained until 1730s. Parts of the Tibetan areas were merged into Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan during the rule of Emperor Yongzheng, after Tibetan civil war between U and Tsang which invited Manchu's influence in Tibet.

b) Moreover, we are not making any demand on the basis of history. As we all know, history is never static. Throughout history

every country in the world, including China, has never remained exactly in the same status as it is now. For example, there is no history of Communist Party's rule in China prior to 1949 but this doesn't prevent Communist Party of China to rule the country for the last 60 years.

c) The basis of our demand is the concept of National Regional Autonomy for minority nationalities propounded by Marx, Lenin, Mao and the provisions enshrined in the Constitution of the PRC. The concept of National Regional Autonomy itself is not based on history but it is a concept that came out of a revolutionary principle.

iv) Re-adjustment of boundary is not a hindrance

The PRC authorities argue that it is not possible to re-draw the boundary within the PRC.

a) But we perceive it possible because there is a provision for this in the National Regional Autonomy Law.

Article 14 of the Autonomy Law says:

The establishment of a national autonomous area, the delineation of its boundaries and the elements of its name shall be proposed by the state organ at the next higher level jointly with the state organ in the relevant locality, after full consultation with representatives of the relevant nationalities, before they are submitted for approval according to the procedures prescribed by law.

Once defined, the boundaries of a national autonomous area may not be altered without authorization. When an alteration is found necessary, it shall be proposed by the relevant department of the state organ at the next higher level after full consultation with the state organ of self-government of the national autonomous area before it is submitted to the State Council for approval.

b) Moreover, we are not seeking additional areas to be included

in the Tibetan autonomous areas. It is only to make alterations in the administration. Instead of having several autonomous administrations, one autonomous administration should be established. It neither affects China's borders with other countries nor its domestic boundaries between autonomous areas and non-autonomous areas, nor, above all, the territorial integrity of the Chinese state.

v) Precedence of boundary re-adjustments in the PRC

There is also precedence of re-adjusting the boundaries of autonomous areas and provinces. To cite a few examples:

a) Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was established in 1947, based on the Soviet nationalities policy of the Communist Party of China. Initially, it included just the Hulunbuir region. Over the next decade, after the founding of the PRC, Inner Mongolia was expanded westwards to include five of the six original leagues. Eventually, all areas with sizeable Mongol population were incorporated into the region, giving present-day Inner Mongolia its size and elongated shape.

Thereafter, in 1969, during the Cultural Revolution, most of the areas of Inner Mongolia were incorporated into nearby provinces. However, later in 1979, these were once again reorganized back into the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

b) Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region was founded in 1958 by transforming Guangxi Province into an autonomous region for the Zhuang nationality.

In 1952 a small section of Guangdong's coastline was given to Guangxi, giving it access to the sea. This was reversed in 1955, and again reversed back in 1965.

c) Hainan Province

In 1988, Hainan Island was separated from Guangdong and became a new province.

d) Chongqing Municipality

In 1997, Chongqing was created as a directly administered municipality by excluding it from Sichuan province.

5. Not new but long overdue

For the whole of Tibet to come under one autonomous administration is not an afterthought or a fresh demand.

a) The issue was raised in 1951 during the negotiation of the 17-Point Agreement. The Tibetan delegation submitted a petition regarding this issue signed by Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, head of the Tibetan delegation. At that time Premier Zhou Enlai verbally responded by saying that the idea of unification of the Tibetan nationalities is appropriate but the time is not yet ripe.

b) On 29 September 1951, a three-point suggestion was made by the Kashag, the government of Tibet, to Zhang Jingwu (Central Government's representative in Tibet). The first point was to have a single administrative entity for all the Tibetans.

c) In 1953, Dege Kelsang Wangdue, the deputy Chairman of Chamdo People's Liberation Committee and others demanded that whole Tibetan nationality come under one administrative entity.

d) During the establishment of the Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1956, a meeting was organized in Lhasa. In that meeting, Vice-Premier Chen Yi and other representatives of Chinese government said that it would be very beneficial for the development of the Tibetan area, unity and stability of the country and harmony between the Tibetans and Chinese

peoples if a unified Tibetan Autonomous Region, with Lhasa as its center, was established by merging Tibetan areas in eastern provinces of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan with Central Tibet.

Later, the Central leadership dispatched a senior Communist Party member, Sangye Yeshe (Tian Bao), and appointed a special committee to make a detailed plan on the unification of the areas in the five provinces. However, this work could not make progress on account of ultra-leftist elements in Tibet.

e) Similarly, in 1980, a few Tibetan cadres of Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture submitted a signed petition to the central government of China to establish a single administration for all the Tibetan areas.

f) The 10th Panchen Lama, the then Vice-chairman of National People's Congress, said when inaugurating the Tibet Development Project, "The desire for the establishment of an autonomous region for a unified Tibetan nationality is appropriate and is in accordance with the legal rules. It is also in line with the views of the entire Tibetan population. The issue is only a matter of ripening the conditions and not about postponement or a reactionary issue."

g) Central leadership's acceptance for the unification of Tibetan areas in principle was acknowledged by senior party member Phuntsok Wangyal. He said, "The desire for a unified autonomous region of Tibet was accepted in principle by the Chinese government and its leaders in the 1950s..."

6. Benefits of a single administration for all Tibetan nationality

- To the Central Government

Will help to realize constitutional objectives of establishing equality and unity among all nationalities

Will promote confidence and goodwill towards the Central Government among the minority nationalities in general and Tibetans in particular

Will help to contain local nationalism

Will ensure unity and stability of the PRC

Will ensure peaceful coexistence and harmony between Tibetans and all other nationalities

Will help to realize harmonious society and peaceful rise of China

-To the Tibetan People

Will help to protect and preserve unique Tibetan culture and identity which has a potential to provide valuable service for entire humanity

Will help to protect Tibetan nationality from assimilation and disappearance

Will help to protect Tibet's fragile environment, which largely determines the environment of the entire Asian continent.

Will help to enhance socio-economic development

To the Autonomous Government

Will be easier to administer

Will reduce administrative expenditure

Will help to make integrated developmental plans and the usage of natural resources for the entire community

Will help to make uniform policy of education, health, environment and social custom

Will help to promote harmonious relation with the Central government, provinces and other autonomous areas

Will help in implementing Central government's policies and directives effectively for all Tibetan people

7. Conclusion

The basic aspiration of all the Tibetan people in today's PRC to have a uniform policy that will enable them to preserve and promote their distinct identity is a right granted by the PRC constitution and relevant statutes. Keeping in view of above-mentioned facts, to make one autonomous administration for all Tibetan autonomous areas is appropriately desirable and easily achievable. For this to happen there is neither any need to make amendments to the Constitution nor any change in political system is needed. It only requires a political will of the leadership.

**PAPER PRESENTED BY KALON TRIPA SAMDHONG
RINPOCHE IN THE CONFERENCE ON “REGIONAL
SELF-GOVERNMENT, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND
MULTINATIONAL INTEGRATION: COMPARATIVE
EXPERIENCES FOR TIBET”**

16 - 17 November 2009, Autonomous Province of Trento, Italy

Honourable Chairperson, distinguished scholars and participants
and ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the leadership of Autonomous Province of Trento for its consistent support to the suffering people of Tibet and the cause of Tibet, and particularly for holding this important conference. The deliberation of this conference will certainly benefit and help us to understand the concept of self-rule or autonomy in depth. We are also grateful to you for giving us the opportunity to explain the “Tibetan needs for self-government: The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy”. But unfortunately we do not have any researched paper of academic value to present in this august gathering of scholars. What we are presenting is a kind of a statement of factual position.

The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People gives a comprehensive outline on how to implement the provisions of national regional autonomy for minority nationalities enshrined in the constitution of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) for the entire Tibetan nationality. This Memorandum is self-explanatory. Therefore, we do not consider it necessary to make commentary on the Memorandum itself. However, we will refer to the concept of self-rule or autonomy and the background of the PRC’s constitutional provisions. At the end we will address the concerns expressed by the authorities of the PRC on the Memorandum.

Concept of Self-Rule or Autonomy

Conflict between different nationalities within a state has been a source of tension for humanity throughout history. This problem has led to the rise of the theory of nation-state. In spite of this, there are numerous multinational states in various parts of the world. Even within one nation, different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups cannot live together harmoniously under one centralised system of governance. In order to maintain a harmonious society, particularly in states that have majority and minority ethnic groups, there must be a certain degree of internal freedom for the concerned groups to enable them to sustain their own ethnicity, language, religion and their cultural identities without having to assimilate to the dominant group.

Over the time, leaders and thinkers have developed various approaches to resolve the nationality issue, particularly in states where several minority nationalities are being oppressed by the majority nationalities. In democratic countries the best solution is to give sufficient internal autonomy to such groups so that they can maintain their unique language or religion. This system has proved a great success in various states where different kinds of autonomy are being practised. The autonomous provinces of Italy are among the best examples.

Evolution and concept of National Regional Autonomy in the constitution of People's Republic of China

Karl Marx thought that the relationship between nationalities in multinational states should be one of complete equality. Marx drew a basic distinction between nationalities embedded in class-based societies and those in communist societies. In class-based societies, separatist activities by minority nationalities are considered genuine and legitimate because of oppression by the majority and lack of equality. In absence of equality, separatism is a

valid response to the oppressive policies of the state. Lenin further advanced the Marxist theory of nationality saying that, “We require that there be sovereign equality between nationalities in a country. Only this will solve the issue of separatist feeling and activities”. He promoted the principle of self-determination, including the right of political secession. But he thought that self-determination is not suitable to the nationality question in Russia and instead he adopted federalism as a way to resolve this issue.

Apart from the nationality issue, the basic principle of socialism is to do away with inequality of any kind. He emphasised that minority nationality languages be given importance to bring equality and development for the minorities. Lenin said, “Those who do not agree with and support the equality of nationalities and languages and those who do not fight against nationality oppression and inequality are not Marxists or Socialists”. Stalin asked, “Why should people of a certain nationality use their language? It is because using their own language is the only way for them to develop their culture, politics, and economy.” On the basis of such ideology the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) was established with full provision of the right to secession and language policy, etc.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the beginning inherited the idea of self-determination and right to secession for the minorities. The constitution of the Chinese Soviet Republic adopted in November 1931 declared that:

“The Soviet government in China recognizes the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China, and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. Thus the Mongols, Moslems, Tibetans, Koreans and others inhabiting the territory of China enjoy the complete right to self-determination, that is, they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviet Republic or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer.”

This declaration was entirely opposite to the minorities' policies adopted by the Republic of China (Kuomintang government), which opposes the concept of self-determination, and federalism. Unfortunately the CCP's above-mentioned policies could not survive long. Since 1937 onwards when they became more and more powerful, they abandoned these ideas entirely. Chairman Mao quickly denied the right to self-determination and secession on the following grounds.

Lenin's theory of self-determination was used by Japan to support the independence of Mongolia.

Right to self-determination should be given only in the case of countries ruled by imperialism and colonialism where people are repressed.

Particularly in China it is not feasible because the nationalities are overlapping and interdependent.

The nationalities already used the right to self-determination once and for all by their common revolutionary struggle and voluntary cooperation in PRC.

These are meek excuses. In reality the inconsistency and opportunist approach is inbuilt in the evolution of Communist ideology. In fact, they believe that the nationality question is by nature a question of class and it will wither away with time, in the wake of the end of the class struggle. Thus the ultimate aim is to assimilate the entire minority nationalities into the Han majority and eliminate all national identities, including language, culture and other symbols.

In spite of this way of thinking, the PRC was compelled to maintain the provisions of national regional autonomy due to not only internal social political reasons but also for its international image. Thus, the successive constitutions of the PRC inherited the provisions of national regional autonomy. The leaders thought,

by providing these provisions, they would satisfy the concerns of the minority nationalities for the time being, and consequently, with passage of time, the minority nationalities would be assimilated by indoctrination and repressive measures. Large numbers of minority nationalities have already assimilated. The Manchu nationality is one of them.

If the provisions of the PRC's constitution are sincerely implemented, they would be sufficient for preserving the culture, language and distinct identities of the minority nationalities. The basic problem is insincerity of the authorities. They do not wish to implement the provisions of the constitution and autonomy law. In this context, the Memorandum explains both the need for the implementation and how to implement them in detail and also points out the obstacles and hindrances, which are likely to arise in the process of implementation.

Why Autonomy or Self-Rule?

Often people ask us why we have chosen autonomy instead of restoration of independence. People might think that it is only our predicament and perhaps there isn't any other option. In the age of pragmatism this might be the reality but we have more reasons for opting for autonomy. Many thinkers and scholars observe that the idea of implementing the entirety of the PRC's constitutional provisions - of national regional autonomy - is utopian. They say this may appear more practicable in theory but in reality it is not. Therefore there is no difference between asking for implementation of autonomy provisions and asking for separation from the PRC. Both are equally impossible. This argument might have some basis. But we opt for implementation of autonomy provision for entire Tibetan nationalities, because of the following reasons.

The entire Tibetan freedom movement is not for political gain or power. It is for freedom in which six million Tibetans can effectively perform their universal responsibility. That is be possible if

the provisions of the autonomy are sincerely implemented.

In today's globalised world, nations are becoming increasingly interdependent. Many nations voluntarily join bigger groups by sacrificing some of so-called sovereign rights and powers. They are compelled to do this.

Between the two Asian giants, a small and tiny nation remaining independent may not carry any real meaning.

The material development and resources of Tibet, a landlocked nation, are largely dependent with its neighbors. Therefore, economically it is more beneficial to remain as a part of a bigger nation.

Above all the six million people of Tibet, who share a common culture and language, have the indomitable desire to remain united and such unification may not be possible if we look for restoration of independence. Restoration of independence would be feasible for that portion which was included in the PRC in 1951.

The above are empirical reasons. Apart from that, the connotation of autonomy is more compatible with self-rule and self-rule is more important to us than independence. Self-rule is equivalent to Swaraj in the Indian language. Self-rule does not mean to rule others by self. It means to rule over self by oneself. That is the ultimate objective of our endeavor. Gandhi said, "Swaraj is an all satisfying goal for all time" and he further says that, "I crave not for 'independence', which I do not understand, but I long for freedom from the English yoke."

The Memorandum

Since the adoption of Middle-Way approach in 1979 our concept of autonomy has gone through gradual change. There was the use of the expression of 'autonomy' even during the period of Shimla convention way back in 1913-14. British India tried to impose upon Tibetan and the Republic of China that Tibetans accept

Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and that the Chinese accept Tibet's internal autonomy. Such a concept of autonomy was termed as de-facto independence by many historians and legal experts. An autonomy, which was practised after the conclusion of "17-Point Agreement" between the Central People's Government of China and Local Government of Tibet on measures for the peaceful liberation of Tibet on 23rd May 1951 till March 1959 was of a different kind. Indeed this was for the first time that the concept of one-county, two-systems was practised. Right from the PRC's common programme through successive constitutions until the present constitution, adopted in 1982, the PRC's legal provisions also went through various changes. The present constitution has a wide range of provisions from autonomous municipalities to special administrative regions. Therefore, we did not spell out the details of autonomy until 1988.

In 1988, His Holiness presented the Strasbourg Proposal in which a separate basic law and democratic system, etc. were recommended. Since the re-establishment of our direct dialogue with the PRC in year 2002 and as a response to our successive exchanges of views with their officials, we finally penned down our suggestions for the implementation of provisions of the constitution and the autonomy law. Nothing more, nothing less. This suggestion has been detailed in the Memorandum. The Memorandum has seven sections. The first section is an introduction. Second deals with integrity of the Tibetan nationality. The third section refers to Tibetans aspirations. In the fourth section, the basic need of Tibetans, mainly, self-government is mentioned. This section covers the following 11 subjects:

- 1.Language
- 2.Culture
- 3.Religion
- 4.Education
- 5.Environmental Protection
- 6.Utilisation of Natural Resources
- 7.Economic Development and Trade
- 8.Public Health
- 9.Public Security
- 10.Regulation on Population Migration
- 11.Cultural, Educational and Religious exchanges with other countries

These are stated with reference to the clauses of the constitution and the autonomy law. The legal references are clear and our requests are exactly within the letter and spirit of the referred clauses of the constitution and the autonomy law.

Section five deals with the application of a single administration for the Tibetan nationality within the PRC. Section six is about the nature and structure of the autonomy. And finally section seven deals with how to go forward on this. In our view not a single word in this Memorandum is contrary to the provisions of constitution or in violation of the prevailing system of the PRC.

The PRC's concerns

In their immediate reaction to the Memorandum and later in various press statements, they have raised several concerns. Anyone who examines these concerns will find that these concerns are not related to the points contained in the Memorandum. These concerns are the PRC's perpetual doubts or suspicions. Many are self-imagined problems. We may briefly respond to them as follows.

Our respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the PRC, our respect for the constitution of the PRC and respect for the three adherences and the authority of the Central Government are unambiguously reflected in the Memorandum. There is no hidden agenda.

There appears to be some misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the following section of the Memorandum.

Public Security

The Memorandum specifically refers to internal public order and security under the article 120 of the constitution and article 24 of the Law on National Regional Autonomy (LNRA). Therefore,

this must not be mixed up with national defense force. Right from the beginning His Holiness the Dalai Lama had repeatedly made it clear that external affairs and defense would be the exclusive subject of the central government.

Language

In our Memorandum we emphasised that the Tibetan language should be the main language. Our emphasis is to give equal importance to Mandarin and the Tibetan language. The Tibetan language must not be substituted by Mandarin. This should not be misinterpreted as an exclusion of Mandarin.

Regulation on Population Migration

The Memorandum has never mentioned that non-Tibetans should be debarred from visiting and settling in Tibetan areas. Our contention is that we work out measures for control of transient population under the article 43 of the LNRA. In absence of any regulations the demographic balance would be badly disturbed and thereby the national regional autonomy shall no longer be meaningful.

Religion

What the Memorandum aspires for is the freedom of religion and belief in accordance with the article 36 of the constitution of the PRC. Under no means does the memorandum ask for anarchy or lawlessness in the monasteries and nunneries. Separation of church and state is considered important by many secular states. More so, an atheistic state of communist China should not interfere in the religious life of individual citizens.

Single administration

A single autonomous administration for the entire Tibetan people is neither unconstitutional nor unreasonable. It is in accordance with the basic objective of the national regional autonomy system. We are not asking that areas which are not yet declared as autonomous areas should be included in the Tibetan autonomous region. We are seeking one administration for all the areas, which are already designated as Tibet autonomous region, prefectures, counties or districts. It does not require any re-demarcation of areas. On this matter, anyone who desires to have more information may go through my article on “Greater Tibet” posted on www.tibet.net.

Thank you.

References

1 Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People

<http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=589&articletype=flash&rmenuid=morenews&tab=1#TabbedPanels1>

2 Keynote Address on “Greater Tibet”, August 27, 2009, New Delhi.

<http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=104&articletype=press&tab=2&rmenuid=morepress#TabbedPanels1>

3 Baogang He's presentation in (Tibetan Autonomy and Self-Government: Myth or Reality? TPPRC, 2000)

4 Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages, 1949-2002. Minglang Zhou, 2003.

5 The Collected Works of Lenin, Vol. 20

6 The Collected Works of Stalin, Vol. II

Appendix 1
WRITTEN INTERVIEW WITH KALON TRIPA
SAMDHONG RINPOCHE BY BI YANTAO

Boxun News, Thursday, 25 February 2010

Prof. Bi Yantao: Greetings! I am very happy for having this opportunity to ask on issues which are closely followed by the people inside China.

When looking at the Tibet issue, I pay special attention to the term “Greater Tibet”. I have repeatedly read the text of your statement on ‘Greater Tibet’ (including the English version). You said, “Tibet is Tibet. There is no greater or smaller Tibet”. However, the fact of the matter is, during the dialogue process between the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Beijing, the issue of one autonomous administration for all the Tibetan people has been raised. Obviously, it seeks to unify Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai Provinces into the present day Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Given the size of administration, it is indeed a ‘Greater Tibet’. Therefore, on account of that, the ‘Greater Tibet’ which Beijing asserts is not wrong because the reference was made from the present status of Tibet. You have, on one hand opposed the usage of word ‘Greater’ as in ‘Greater Tibet’, while on the other hand, maintained that ‘size should not matter whether big or small’. Are not these two statements contradictory?

Kalon Tripa: Before answering your questions, we would like to stress two important points which are the root cause of difference in perceptions between Dharamsala and Beijing. The first is lack of trust and confidence in the mindset of Beijing’s leadership as illustrated by the popular Tibetan saying, “Tibetans are ruined by hope, and Chinese are ruined by suspicion.” Beijing views everything with suspicion and always fear that to consider anything which is proposed by Dharamsala will bring consequences of disaster or loss of face. Therefore, they always project every petty issue as a potential threat of separation.

With such mindset, Dharamsala could not convince Beijing, no matter how sincerely the Tibetan side puts its faith in the People's Republic of China's (PRC) leadership, or, no matter how rational and reasonable the request is.

The second is lack of political will in PRC's leadership to find a solution to the Tibet problem. The leadership always suffers from immeasurable fear that if they do anything with Tibet issue, it might bring more problems or may lead to the loss of Tibet. It is for this reason that we are not able to communicate with each other from a right perspective and in a positive manner.

National integrity cannot be maintained without mutual trust. We are afraid that if the present PRC leadership's approach to minorities in general and Tibetans in particular remain unchanged, it might lead to separation or annihilation of the minority nationalities. Either of these ends will not be in the interest of anyone. If both sides are able to view each other with trust and self-confidence, this problem can be resolved quickly and amicably. Both sides will be in a win-win situation.

Another, small but important point is the nature of language. In Chinese and Tibetan languages, there is no difference in expression of "Great" and "Greater". In the English language there are two different words. Thus "Great Tibet" may be understood as honorific word but when we use the word "Greater Tibet" it may create more confusion. This expression might encompass the national boundaries and may include the cultural and language domain. Therefore, in this reference we better use "Great Tibet" in English instead of "Greater Tibet".

Now coming to your question, what I mean by saying - Tibet is Tibet - is that there is no smaller or bigger Tibet in the context of the constitutional provisions of national regional autonomy for the minority. The Tibetans are one minority nationality among the 55 minority nationalities of the PRC. One minority nationality must not be divided into "small, great or greater". Of course,

if all these autonomous areas are administered by one administration, then the area of administration of the autonomous region will definitely be enlarged compared to the present areas which are administered by several autonomous administrations. But it does not mean that the Tibet or Tibetans are becoming bigger or greater. So therefore, there is no contradiction in my statement.

Our basic concern is how the PRC presents this issue to the world. As a matter of fact, Tibetans are asking for one administration for all the Tibetan autonomous areas. But the tone of language in saying that Tibetans are demanding the “Great Tibet or Greater Tibet” sounds as if we are seeking separation or re-demarcation of Tibetan areas. This sentence appears to us as being formulated intentionally to mislead people.

Prof. Bi: The Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has raised the need of ‘One administration’ for the whole of Tibetan areas. However, others find this very intricate and complicating. Perhaps, the Dalai Lama’s side did not feel it necessary to condense the expression “One administration” by some other word which is more comprehensible and rich. Beijing’s assertion of ‘Greater Tibet’ is similar to giving a name to the concept of ‘One administration’. This is true according to economics of language. If in case the Tibetan government in exile (TGiE) has used a definite term from the very beginning, then there is no reason for the PRC to pronounce it differently. Therefore, does the TGiE feel the need and importance to have a specific term? How does it plan to respond to this in future?

Kalon Tripa: The constitution provides that “Regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy”. In accordance with this provision Tibetans live in a concentrated community in a particular geographical area which is not scattered over different parts of the PRC, nor are these areas separated

or divided by non-Tibetan areas.

Therefore, one organ of self-government is sufficient for all the Tibetans and that is the essence of the constitution too. We do not find any other word more suitable than “one administration or self-government” to define our aspiration. We also don’t believe that if we substitute this word by any other expression it will be acceptable to the PRC authority. If anyone can suggest more appropriate expression, we would welcome.

The basic objective for seeking one administration is not for political or economic interests. It is only for preservation and promotion of the unique Tibetan language, culture, spiritual heritage and traditions. One administration can easily execute uniform policy of education and culture, etc.

Prof. Bi: You have said, “Moreover, we are not seeking additional areas to be included in the Tibetan autonomous areas. It is only to make alterations in the administration. Instead of having several autonomous administrations, one autonomous administration should be established. It neither affects China’s borders with other countries nor its domestic boundaries between autonomous areas and non-autonomous areas, nor...” In my view, this explanation has created more confusion. Whether TGIE’s request to unify all Tibetan areas under one administration implies redrawing of the boundaries of the provinces and autonomous region? If not, then how do you propose to implement one administration to all Tibetan areas?

Kalon Tripa: At present, autonomous areas in various provinces are already having well defined boundaries. There is no need to change these boundaries. What is going to be changed is the administration. Those with several self-governments will be substituted by one self-government and that self-government will be directly controlled by the central government instead of by several provincial governments.

One may argue that the administrative areas of those provinces will become smaller if autonomous areas within their province are governed by one self-government. Yes, this may be true but if the provisions of national regional autonomy are implemented in all sincerity then the provinces do not have much role to play in the autonomous areas. Therefore, the incorporation of autonomous areas outside the provinces or remaining within the provinces will not make much difference to the concerned provinces.

Prof. Bi : It is true that there is precedence of boundary re-adjustments in the PRC. If the 'Greater Tibet', which the Dalai Lama's side seeks, is to be constituted, it is going to be the biggest re-drawing of the boundaries between provinces and autonomous regions since the inception of the PRC. This will, therefore, certainly mean redistribution of benefits, and it invariably relates to the issue which does not go well with the sentiment of the people. However, everyone knows that to maintain status quo is less expensive than to change it. Therefore, if the boundaries of the provinces and autonomous region are to be re-adjusted, there must be strong and compelling reasons to do so. I personally think that the central government would not take the political risk of such magnitude and the TGiE alone is not powerful enough to advance the re-drawing of the boundaries. How does the Dalai Lama's side think and speculate on this matter?

Kalon Tripa: As mentioned in response to question no 3, we do not perceive that the change of administration does not necessitate the redrawing of boundaries. As a matter of fact, boundaries between provinces or autonomous regions may not have much importance as all of them will remain as an integral part of the country.

Nevertheless, changing boundaries between autonomous areas to non-autonomous areas may have some importance for the provinces and autonomous regions but we have never asked for inclusion of any non-autonomous areas into the Tibetan autonomous

region.

Our recommendation is to integrate into one administration those Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties which are already defined and recognised as autonomous areas.

Prof. Bi: You mentioned Beijing's approach of "dividing concentrated areas of minority nationals" is unconstitutional. However, the constitution explicitly states that "Regional autonomy is practised in areas where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy". It does not specifically mention about establishing one autonomous organ for each minority nationality. Article 2 of the National Regional Autonomy Law further adopts that national autonomous areas shall be classified into autonomous regions, prefectures and counties. Therefore, the present approach of the central government is in accordance with both the constitution and autonomy law. I think your understanding of the constitution and autonomy law is different from anyone else. How do you intend to settle this difference?

Kalon Tripa: The basic concept of national regional autonomy aims to preserve and promote the unique identities of the minority nationalities. To achieve this objective there is need to maintain administrative unity within same nationality, unless this unity is impossible due to geographical conditions. Apart from that, article 4 of the constitution says, "Any act which undermines the unity of the nationality or instigates division is prohibited".

It is stated in the autonomy law that national autonomous areas shall be classified into autonomous regions, prefectures and counties. But it should be determined by the size and population of a particular minority nationality, in accordance with their areas of habitation, in establishing an autonomous region just as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. There is no reason or need to deliberately divide a par-

ticular nationality by establishing many autonomous prefectures and counties.

Dividing the Tibetan nationality despite the fact that they have lived together for centuries in one contiguous area is considered as a violation of the spirit of the constitution. This is the imperialist policy of “divide and rule”. If a minority nationality cannot integrate within itself, then it will become more difficult to integrate with the PRC. Emotional integrity is the sustainable cause for national integration.

Prof. Bi : If one autonomous administration is being implemented for Tibet, it implies that other minority nationalities can also claim the same. This means total upheaval of China’s minority nationality policy and a major shift in central government’s approach towards regional governments. At present, Han nationals whether residing in provinces, autonomous regions or municipalities directly under the central government, are all governed directly by their respective governments like the Tibetans. Both Han and Tibetan nationals are equal in this regard. If Tibetans were administered separately under one administration and the Hans under several administrations, as usual, doesn’t it mean inequality among nationalities? How do you look at this issue?

Kalon Tripa: Perfect equality among nationalities is the fundamental principle of Marxism and I hope even today this principle is being respected by the PRC. In order to maintain this equality and prevent the majority’s domination or chauvinism, the concept of national regional autonomy is envisaged. Therefore, the opportunity of self-rule for all the minorities is necessary.

The question regarding one administration or several administrations should be determined in accordance with their areas of habitation. Minority nationalities like Mongolians and Tibetans, who inhabit one contiguous region, can be governed by one administration and those minorities who do not inhabit one region may be governed by several administrations. These arrangements

will not be in any way contrary to the principle of equality. On the other hand, it will grant equality to all the nationalities, regardless of their size or population.

Prof. Bi: The “Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People”, submitted to Beijing by the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, raises the issue of public security in the Tibetan areas. In your presentation on ‘Greater Tibet’ in New Delhi, you have mentioned that establishment of one administration for all the Tibetan areas will help to contain local nationalism and ensure unity and stability of the PRC. In my opinion, there are several perspectives or standpoints on this. It is possible that the central government may thoroughly evaluate the effect of establishing an administration of the ‘Greater Tibet’. Under such circumstances, crucial point will be how far the central government is going to trust the administration of the ‘Greater Tibet’. In my opinion, it is very hard to believe, at present, that the central government will agree that one administration will contain local nationalism and enhance unity and stability in China. How do you think to break this entrenched ice?

Kalon Tripa: This question is difficult to answer because it does not relate to facts and principles. But it is related with the mind-set and attitude of the present leadership.

Logically speaking, if they wish to achieve stability through emotional integrity and mutual trust, one administration will definitely enhance the possibility of unity. Even if they believe in using force in order to maintain unity and stability, it will be much easier to use force if there is one centralised administration.

Nevertheless, we do not have any handy methods to break the ice. However, whether we are able to break the ice or not, we shall have to put forward our aspirations and ideas clearly and sincerely without any ambiguity. There is no any other way.

Prof. Bi : I think ‘Greater Tibet’ is the biggest obstacle for people

inside China to understand the issue of Tibet. Apart from that, other concerns of the TGiE such as religious freedom, economic development, promotion of education, protection of the Tibetan culture, etc. are understandable and I believe people inside China will also extend their support. However, it appears that the ‘unification of all Tibetan areas’ is the biggest difference between Beijing and the TGiE at present. If the dialogue process does not move forward, will the TGiE change its position on ‘One administration for all Tibetan areas’ in the future? Will the Dalai Lama’s side change its strategy of the dialogue process?

Kalon Tripa: This question cannot be entertained at this moment because there are no alternative suggestions that are forthcoming.

From our side, we consider the request for one administration for all the Tibetan nationality as reasonable and constitutional, apart from being the legitimate right of the Tibetan people. There will be no problem in implementing it if there is political will in the PRC leadership. As we have mentioned before the objective of our request is for the preservation of Tibetan language, culture and spiritual heritage.

If there is more logical and convincing alternative suggestions coming forth, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is always very open to any idea which is based on truth and reason.

(The Chinese translation of this interview has been published in Beijing Spring, February Edition 2010)

Appendix I

THE MIDDLE -WAY POLICY ENJOYS HUGE SUPPORT AMONG THE CHINESE INTELLECTUALS

After making the Middle-Way policy public and its details clear, many responsible Chinese intellectuals who are concerned about Tibet and China's future were very confident that the Middle-Way policy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is consistent with the reality and of mutual benefit to China and Tibet. Because of this, besides expressing their solidarity with the cause of Tibet, they have supported and continue to support the Middle-Way policy for resolving the issue of Tibet.

Here we quote some articles written by well-known Chinese scholars. They represent the viewpoint of the Chinese intellectuals.

- 1) A well-known economist Su Shaozhi who was formerly the head of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought at the Chinese Academy of Social Science said, "When I was at Oxford University in 1988, the Dalai Lama addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg. In my view Tibet really is special with its own people, religion, culture, and traditions. Therefore, if we are able to protect these special characteristics of the Tibetan society under the framework of one China principle then Deng Xiaoping's One Country Two System policy can be both practicable and progressive." And he further said, "In 1999, along with some friends, I met the Dalai Lama in Washington, DC. At that time, while talking about his Strasbourg address, I conveyed my admiration for his position of seeking autonomy and not independence for Tibet. For the speedy resolution of the issue of Tibet, the responsible media people and all right thinking men

should leave no stone unturned to make Chinese people understand the Dalai Lama's true intention so as to bring his Middle-Way policy to fruition. Doing so is not only for the welfare of the Tibetan people alone but also for the welfare of all the Chinese people.”²

When Su Shaozhi was living in Beijing, he suggested to the then leaders of the United Front Work Department to support the Middle-Way policy of the Dalai Lama.³

- 2) A Chinese scientist Fang Lizhi who was one off the Three Voices of Freedom in China⁴ met His Holiness the Dalai Lama at a conference held on Sino-Tibet issues at the Columbia University in March 1992. At that time, he expressed his respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's thinking with regard to resolving the issue of Tibet and the rights of the Tibetan people.⁵
- 3) Scholar Yan Jiaqi, a close aide of the former CCP Party Secretary Zhao Ziyang, and former official of the Institute of Political Research of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, authored a book titled *Towards a Federated China: An Idea*⁶ in 1992. In a separate chapter dealing with Tibet, the writer expresses his view that Tibet should join the federation of China without being separated from it. He also makes it clear that he has based his view on the Five-Point Peace Plan and the Strasbourg Proposal of the Dalai Lama. Likewise, in 1995, in another article entitled *Federalism and the Future of Tibet*, he further expands his view on Tibet. Very well known and highly

2 Chinese periodical Beijing's Spring, Issue dated November 2003

3 Chinese writer Cao Changqing's article *The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach*

4 Wang Ruowang, Liu Binyang and Fang Lizhi were known as the Three Voices of Freedom among the educated Chinese in the 1980's

5 Central News Agency(CNA), Taiwan, (14/3/1992)

6 Lan Jin Publishing House, Taiwan, November 1992

respected, he is today one of the most ardent supporters of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle- Way policy.

- 4) A senior member of the Communist Party and legal expert living in Beijing Yu Haocheng published an article in October 1997 titled Federalism is the Best Way to Resolve the Issue of Tibet. In that article, he wrote, "The nature of the Dalai Lama's proposal of seeking internal autonomy and not independence is closer to federation. Such a thinking of the Dalai Lama which is neither unitary nor secessionist is the best way to resolve the issue of Tibet."⁷
- 5) Xu Wenli, who had already served 10- years in prison term and released but slapped a 13-year prison term because he continued to persist in democracy activities, expressed his support for the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way policy in his article published on 4 February 1998 entitled China Should Respond Positively to the Dalai Lama's Appeal to Resolve the Issue of Tibet.
- 6) When the Tibetan Participants explained the details of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way policy to the Chinese participants during the Sino-Tibet Conference held at the University of London, UK, in 1997, Si Malu, who is a senior expert on the history of the Chinese Communist Party, suggested that the Dalai Lama should be appointed president of democratic China, for he does not seek Tibet's independence. Later, he mentioned this in his article.
- 7) A well-known Chinese writer Wang Lixiong published a popular article from Beijing in 2000 entitled, The Dalai Lama is the Key to Resolving the Tibet Issue. In this article, he introduced to the educated Chinese that

⁷ Discussion between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese People, compiled by Zhang Weiguo, 21st Century Fund, November 1990

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way approach of seeking a meaningful autonomy and not independence is the best way to resolve the issue of Tibet. Because of this, many educated Chinese in and outside China are able to understand the intention of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and support it.

- 8) A professor of Beijing's People's University, Ding Zilin, wrote an article titled Support the Dalai Lama on 20 March 2008. In that article, she wrote, " I support the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way approach for resolving the issue of Tibet and I request the Chinese Government to immediately undertake meaningful negotiations with him directly or through his envoys without any pre-conditions."⁸
- 9) A well-known writer of the Sichuan Literary Periodical in Chengdu, Ran Yunfei, published an article entitled My Perspective on the Issue of Tibet on 20 March 2008. In that article, he stated that, " I support autonomy and not independence for Tibet. Striving for independence will cause much chaos. Basically, i support a high level of autonomy for Tibet under a unified China."⁹
- 10) On 22 March 2008, 30 leading Chinese intellectuals-including Wang Lixiong, Liu Xiaobo and Zhang Zuhua-released a petition entitled Twelve -point Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation, in which they stated: " We support the Dalai Lama's appeal for peace." Within eight days of the issuance of this document, 303 people had signed up- out of which 214 were people from within China representing various walks of life. They include teachers, lawyers, journalists, writers, artists, etc. Some of these people were later interviewed by the media as to why they signed the petition. Their response was: "

8 www.newscenturynews.com

9 www.newscentury

Since His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not talking about independence, our supporting him does not go against the law. Therefore, we have put our signature to the petition.”

- 11) Zhang Boshu, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Science and constitutional expert, came out with this popular article entitled The Basic Way to Resolve the Tibet Issue on 22 April 2008. Zhang wrote : “ Under the Middle-Way principle that seeks true autonomy in lieu of independence, the Tibetan issue should be resolved by treading the path of negotiations.”¹⁰ His views were highly appraised and supported by many intellectuals within China.
- 12) In his article entitled Advice to the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Bao Tong, a senior party cadre who had earlier served as secretary to the late Chinese Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang, said: “ The Dalai Lama does not seek independence. So, which of his views are not right and which are not good? It is very clear that he desires autonomy that is legally permissible within Chinese sovereignty.”¹¹
- 13) While fighting the case of writer Cheng Daojun in the Chengdu Court in 2008, Zhu Jiuhu, a renowned lawyer based in Beijing, quoted from His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s appeal to the Chinese people. He said, “ His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not trying to separate Tibet from China. He only seeks meaningful autonomy for Tibet. Supporting this (endeavour of the Dalai Lama) is not only lawful but also reasonable.”¹²
- 14) On 16 February 2009, a renowned lawyer based in Beijing

10 www.observechina.net (29/2/2008)

11 A Chinese Language periodical, Dong Xiang, Dated November 2008

12 www.canyu.org (7/11/2008)

, Liu Jianqiang, wrote an article entitled The Seventeenth-point Agreement and the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach, in which he spoke highly of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's viewpoints. He said: " In the current circumstance, the Middle-Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a great way for resolving the issue of Tibet in a peaceful and pragmatic manner."¹³

15) A non-governmental human rights monitoring agency based in Guizhou Province, China, issued a public statement with regard to the issue of Tibet on 5 January 2010. It said: " The broad masses of people from within the country and outside who cherish freedom and democracy, rule of law as well as human rights support and respect these principles of meaningful autonomy, peace and non-violence as contained in the Middle-Way Approach propounded by Dalai Lama. From our side we consider this political standpoint of the Dalai Lama as the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet."

16) On 30 April 2010, while responding to a question from American news channel CNN, Ma Ying-jeou, the president of Taiwan, expressed his support for an autonomous Tibet and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's efforts to engage in dialogue with China. He said: " That is the only way to resolve issue of Tibet."

From amongst the hundreds of Chinese intellectual across the world who support and agree with the true intention of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach, the Chinese mentioned above are some of the intellectuals from within China who are cited here as an example. Moreover, there are many other eminent Chinese such as professor Yang Liu, scholar Chen Yize, renowned democracy activistng, writer Liu Binyan, rights activists and writers Liu Xiaobo, Yujie and Hu Jia, commentator

13 A bi-lingual (Chinese-English) periodical, Humans and Human Rights, web version (3/3/2009)

Huping, democracy movement leader Wang Juntao, and leader of the students's student's Tiananmen Square Shen Tong who have openly expressed their support to the issue of Tibet. All this is due to the greatness of that is contained in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach.

Chinese intellectuals have, particularly, written many articles, analysing and commenting on the Middle-Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Some of these articles are:

a) Writer Zhang Qing's article entitled The Middle-Way Approach is Panacea for Curing the Disease of Ethnic Animosity(20 September 2009)

b) Writer Weng Yanfeng article entitled The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach is the Right or Prefect Way of Resolving the Issue of Tibet(17 February 2010)

c) Writer Tan Mu's article entitled I Appreciate the Middle-Way Approach

d) Scholar Yang Jianli's article entitled I Propose a New Middle-Way (10 March 2009)

e) Writer Cao Changqing's article entitled The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach (19 May 1997)

f) Commentator Lin Baohui's article entitled A Look at the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach(23 October 2004)

g) Democracy activist Lin Dajun's article entitled The Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach and China's Democracy Movement(11 February 2010)

h) Democracy advocate Xu Bangtai's article entitled Middle-Way Approach is a Golden Advice"

On 5 May 2009, about a hundred Chinese intellectuals,

democracy activists, writers and students submitted a signed petition to His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New York, USA in which they stated : “ For resolving the issue of Tibet peacefully, you have consistently held on the path to peace, non-violence and the Middle Way and wished Tibet not to be separated from China. We thank you from the depth of our hearts for this.”

Among those who signed this petition include writer Chen Pokong and Yu Dahai, scholar Su Xiaokang , Dr. Yang Jianli and legal expert Xiang Xiaoji.

Similarly, over 70 representatives of Chinese intelligentsia, who came from different part of the world to participate in the International Sino-Tibet Conference held in Geneva in August 2009, issued what they called the Final Document in which they pledged to honour and respect the Middle-Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In short, since the announcement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach, Chinese intellectuals have been expressing their support to it one after another. Particularly, the number has been increasing in recent years. According to our information, since March 2008 until May this year, a period spanning just over two years, Chinese intellectuals from within and outside China have written about 900 articles in support of the cause of Tibet. And most of these articles were written only in support of their belief that the issue of Tibet should be resolved in accordance with His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Middle-Way Approach. This clearly proves that every year, an increasing number of Chinese in general, and intellectuals in particular, are beginning to understand the great intention of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach and express their solidarity with us Tibetans.

