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UMAYLAM Middle Way
Approach
Peaceful conflict resolution for the 21st century

The Middle Way Approach: UMAYLAM

Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People

Briefing Note and
Chronology

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Middle Way Policy: Seeking Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People

Introduction

The Middle Way Approach for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People (Umaylam in Tibetan) is a policy conceived by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and adopted as the official policy of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The Middle-way policy aims to seek genuine autonomy through dialogue so as to protect the unique culture and identity of Tibetan people. It is also grounded in the Buddhist principle of avoiding extremes and instead finding a middle ground. This policy is a win-win proposition and a pragmatic solution that safeguards the vital interests of both the parties. For Tibetans, it offers the protection and preservation of their identity and dignity; for China, it maintains the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

After taking into consideration the prevailing political situation of the world in general, and China in particular, His Holiness the Dalai Lama held a series of discussions with the members of the Kashag (Cabinet) and the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies¹ (now known as the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile). Following these discussions, an internal decision was taken in 1974 to

pursue a middle-way policy to secure a meaningful autonomy for Tibet and to engage the PRC government through dialogue. In an opinion poll held in 1997 among the Tibetans in exile, 64 percent of the respondents expressed support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision of the Middle Way Approach. Reflecting this outcome, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile adopted a unanimous resolution to support the approach on 18 September 1997. In the following decades, CTA has repeatedly reaffirmed the Tibetan people's adherence to the middle-way policy that seeks genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people and engagement with the Chinese leadership for the benefit of both Chinese and Tibetan people.

The policy's first accomplishment was the establishment of direct contact between Dharamshala and Beijing. Deng Xiaoping said in 1979, "apart from independence, all issues can be discussed." Four fact-finding Tibetan delegations from exile visited Tibet from 1979-1985. Two high-level exploratory delegations from Dharamshala met with senior Chinese leadership in Beijing in 1982 and 1984, and official contact between Dharamshala and Beijing was maintained till August 1993. Meanwhile, since 1987, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has presented the Middle Way Approach in a range of forums around the world – including the U.S. Congress² and the European Parliament.³

Sino-Tibet Dialogue resumed in 2002, and nine rounds of talks were held until 2010. During the 7th round of talks in 2008 – the year in which unprecedented and widespread protests broke out across Tibet – the PRC government asked the Tibetan leadership to put in writing the nature of the autonomy it sought. Thus, the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People⁴ was presented during the 8th round of talks in 2008.

The PRC government expressed a number of concerns and objections to the Memorandum. To address the concerns and objections raised by the PRC government on the Memorandum, the Tibetan leadership presented the Note on Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People⁵ during the 9th and last round of talks in January 2010.

These two documents – The Memorandum and the Note – elaborate on how genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people as proposed by Tibetans would operate within the framework of the Constitution of the PRC. These also takes into consideration the sovereignty, territorial integrity, the three adherences⁶ and authority of the PRC government. The Note further addresses the specific concerns raised by the PRC government with respect to the form of single administration; political, social, and economic systems,

public security, regulation of population migration, language, and religion. There has been no dialogue with the PRC government since 2010.

Tibetan Aspiration

In 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) forcibly invaded Tibet. Since then, Tibet has endured the darkest period in its history. More than 1.2 million Tibetan people have perished and over 6,000 monasteries were reduced to ruins due to the occupation. The PRC government has since imposed systematic repressive policies resulting in political oppression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalization and environmental degradation in Tibet. This has threatened the very existence of distinct Tibetan national identity, including its language, culture, religion, environment, and livelihood. The gross violation of fundamental human rights in Tibet continues to this day.

All Tibetans, within and outside Tibet earnestly aspire for freedom and ultimately yearns for the peaceful resolution of the longstanding Sino-Tibet conflict. Over the last six decades, Tibetan people from all three traditional regions of Tibet—U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo—have continuously engaged in peaceful resistance against PRC's coercive policies that undermine Tibetan identity and their fundamental rights. These expressions of discontent

were invariably suppressed by the use of disproportionate force. The reprisal against the Tibetan people by the PRC government has resulted in deaths of Tibetans, arbitrary detention, and torture in prisons.

China has since implemented sophisticated surveillance methods that has turned Tibet into a giant open prison. Even after decades of PRC's rule over Tibet, since 2009, there are 157 known cases of Tibetans who have self-immolated against China's repressive policies in Tibet. They have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and the restoration of freedom for the Tibetan people.

CTA remains resolute in its commitment to seek a mutually-beneficial and a lasting solution to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and representatives of the PRC leadership based on the Middle Way Policy. It calls on the PRC government to grant genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the framework of the Constitution of the PRC. This approach accommodates key concerns of both the Tibetan people and that of the PRC government.



Tibetan monks protesting in Rebkong, Amdo, Tibet - March 2008.

Position of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

In 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama devolved his political authority to the democratically-elected Tibetan political leader Kalon Tripa⁷ (now known as the Sikyong) of the Central Tibetan Administration. As stated in the Memorandum, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has made it clear on numerous occasions that he will not hold any political position in Tibet. As a symbol of Tibetan unity and identity, His Holiness is a beacon of hope for the Tibetan people. The Tibetan people place their hope in his spiritual leadership as the person most trusted in bringing about a peaceful resolution to the situation inside Tibet. To this day, His Holiness the Dalai Lama remains steadfast and committed in his endorsement of the Middle-way policy as

a realistic and pragmatic solution to peacefully resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict through dialogue.



Kalon Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and outgoing Kalon Tripa, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche at the oath-taking ceremony in Dharamshala on 8 August 2011.



Outgoing Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay and the new Sikyong Penpa Tsering at the swearing-in ceremony, 27 May 2021.

What are Tibetan People Seeking through the Middle Way Policy?

The Middle Way Policy seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetan people who share common language, religion and customs without challenging the sovereignty and integrity of the PRC. Uniting them under a single administrative unit would be a more efficient and effective form of governance than the existing structure where Tibetans are divided into the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Qinghai and three Chinese provinces with Chinese majority, i.e. Sichuan, Gansu, and Yunnan.

The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People calls for 11 basic needs for self-governance for the Tibetan people. This encompasses the following:

Language, Culture, Religion, Education, Environmental protection, Utilisation of natural resources, Economic development and trade, Public health, Public security, Regulation on population migration, Cultural, educational and religious exchanges with other countries.

These demands are within the framework of both the Law on National Regional Autonomy and the Constitution of the PRC.

The PRC authorities claimed that it is the Tibetan leadership's intention to expel "all Chinese" from Tibetan areas. In fact, the Memorandum clearly articulates that this is not the case: "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." The Memorandum calls for the Tibetan areas to have a Tibetan majority for the preservation and promotion of the unique Tibetan identity.

Evolution of the Middle Way Policy

Conceived initially by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Middle Way Approach was gradually adopted as the official policy of the Central Tibetan Administration to find solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict. This adoption of the official policy came about through a democratic process. Between 1988 and 2010, a series of meetings and opinion poll were held where views of the Tibetans inside and in exile were solicited.

In 1987, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced his long-term vision for Tibet called the Five-Point Peace Plan at the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus. In 1988, while elaborating on the fifth point of the Five-Point Peace Plan, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced the Strasbourg

Proposal at the European Parliament. Since this was the first proposal explaining the Middle Way Approach, a four-day special political meeting of the Tibetan leadership was organized in advance in Dharamshala before making it public. They held a thorough discussion on the text of the proposal and finally endorsed it unanimously.

During an opinion poll conducted in 1995-1997, 64% of the total opinions received expressed that there was no need to hold a referendum and that they would support the Middle Way Policy or whatever decision His Holiness the Dalai Lama took from time to time in accordance with the changing political situation in the world. Reflecting on the outcome of the opinion poll, the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies adopted a unanimous resolution in favor of the Middle Way Policy on 18 September 1997.

Similarly, more than 80% of opinions collected during the six-day first special general meeting held in November 2008 also reiterated the support for the Middle Way Policy. Finally, in March 2010, a parliamentary resolution in support of the policy was unanimously adopted again. Thus, the Middle Way Policy received the support of an overwhelming majority of Tibetans.



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama announced Five-Point Peace Plan at the United States Congress, Washington D.C. on 21 September 1987.



First Special General Meeting of Tibetan in Dharamshala on 17-22 November in 2008.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced Strasbourg Proposal for Tibet at European Parliament at Strasbourg, France on 15 June 1988.

International Support on Middle Way Policy

The Tibetan leadership believes that the Middle Way Policy is the most viable solution to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict. It is also the approach that has enjoyed the strongest international support. Many governments internationally have officially stated their support for dialogue between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the PRC leadership, including the US, EU, Britain, France, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. Over the years, many international resolutions, motions, and statements in support for dialogue have been passed in many parliaments across the world. Most recently, on 14 December 2022, Canada's Parliament

unanimously passed a motion endorsing Tibet's Middle Way Policy and their support for the resumption of dialogue.

The Middle Way Policy has received much support from the Chinese community. Some of the most respected Chinese intellectuals and artists have endorsed the policy. These include the late Liu Xiaobo, the Nobel Peace Laureate who was one of the co-authors of an open letter in 2008 that expressed support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's peace initiatives. Since then, more than 1,000 articles and opinion pieces have been written by Chinese scholars and writers supporting dialogue to resolve the issue of Tibet. A report by the Beijing-based legal organisation (the Gongmeng Law Research Centre of the Open Constitution Initiative),⁸ describes the grievances of the Tibetan people and called for policy review. In 2012, 82 Chinese NGOs based in 15 countries sent a petition to the United Nations, the EU, and various parliaments and governments, exhorting them to "urge the PRC government to start negotiations as soon as possible." Other Chinese intellectuals who support the Middle Way Policy include Wang Lixiong a well-known writer; Zhang Boshu of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a constitutional expert; Ran Yunfei of Sichuan Literary Periodical; Yu Haocheng, a senior member of the Communist Party and legal expert based in Beijing; Su Shaozhi, a former

economist at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Yan Jiaqi, a close aide of the Zhao Ziyang, former premier of the People's Republic of China.

Global leaders who have called for dialogue based on the Middle Way Policy include former US Presidents (Barack Obama; George W. Bush; William J. Clinton); former High Commissioner for UN Human Rights Navi Pillay; former High Representative for EU on Foreign Affairs/ Security Policy and Vice-President of European Commission Lady Catherine Ashton; former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown; former French President Nicolas Sarkozy; former German Chancellor Angela Merkel; former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper; former Australian Prime Ministers Tony Abbot and Kevin Rudd; former Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou and former Prime Minister of Japan, the late Shinzo Abe.

After President Barack Obama's meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 16 July, 2011 and again on 21 February, 2014 the White House applauded "the Dalai Lama's commitment to non-violence and dialogue with China and his pursuit of the Middle Way Policy," and encouraged "direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences", saying "that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans."



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with former United States President Barack Obama.

The Middle Way Policy has been supported by many Nobel laureates. In 2008, 26 Nobel laureates including the late Alexei Abrikosov, Peter Agre, late Baruj Benacerraf, late Gunter Blobel, late Arvid Carlsson, John Coetzee, late Paul J. Crutzen, late Clive W.J. Granger, late Paul Greengard, Avram Hershko, Roald Hoffman, late John Hume, Brian D. Josephson, Eric R. Kandel, Roger Kornberg, Finn E. Kydland, Erwin Neher, John C. Polanyi, Richard J. Roberts, Phillip A. Sharp, late Jens C. Skou, Wole Soyinka, late Elie Wiesel, Torsten N. Wiesel, late Betty Williams, and H. David Politzer called upon the PRC government to resume talks with the Dalai Lama's representatives as soon as possible in order to achieve a

peaceful and mutually beneficial solution to the Sino-Tibet conflict.

In an open letter to Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2012, twelve Noble laureates including the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Jody Williams of the US, José Ramos Horta of East Timor, and the late Betty Williams of the UK wrote, “The people of Tibet wish to be heard. They have long sought meaningful autonomy and chosen negotiation and friendly help as their means of attaining it. The PRC government should hear their voices, understand their grievances and find a non-violent solution. That solution is offered by our friend and brother His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who has never sought separatism and has always chosen a peaceful path. We strongly urge the PRC government to seize the opportunity it provides for a meaningful dialogue. Once formed, this channel should remain open, active, and productive. It should address issues that are at the heart of the current tension, respecting the dignity of the Tibetan people and the integrity of China.”

Prominent leaders inside Tibet who have supported the Middle Way Policy include the late Panchen Lama, who openly expressed support for the policy. The late Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, a former minister of the Tibetan government in Tibet, urged the PRC government

to implement regional autonomy in Tibet as promised in its 17-Point Agreement.⁹

The late Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, a senior Tibetan official of the Chinese Communist Party, stated that, “the Dalai Lama’s Middle Way Policy of seeking only meaningful autonomy for Tibet rather than independence, in the present historical context, is an expression of the great responsibility he takes in giving serious thoughts 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.”

Tibetan leaders such as Dorjee Tseten, a senior Tibetan Communist leader and former director of the Tibetology Research Centre in Beijing; Sangye Yeshe, a veteran Tibetan Communist leader; Tashi Tsering, a professor of English at Tibet University in Lhasa; and Yangling Dorjee, a senior Tibetan Communist leader; support the unification of all the Tibetan people under a single administration.

The Way Forward

The Central Tibetan Administration hopes to find a mutually-agreeable solution to Tibet's future status through dialogue based on the Middle Way Policy. It is the only viable solution to resolve the Sino-Tibet Conflict. In an effort to resolve the Sino-Tibet conflict in a manner that benefits both the parties concerned, we are ready to engage in discussion to seek a lasting solution based on equality, friendship, and mutual benefit. Until the Sino-Tibet conflict is resolved, the CTA will make every effort to bring global attention to the ongoing PRC government's repression and extermination of Tibetan identity. CTA will continue to seek international support to defend the Tibetan cause and to encourage the PRC government to resume peaceful dialogue on negotiations to resolve the long-standing Sino-Tibet conflict.

The Middle Way Policy: A Chronology

This timeline does not attempt to be exhaustive but rather gives key points in the evolution of the history of the Middle Way Policy.

1949 The People's Liberation Army of the People's Republic of China (PRC) invades and starts to assume control over Tibet.

1951-1959 In 1951, the PRC government coerced the Tibetan representatives to sign the "17-Point Agreement on Measures for Peaceful Liberation of Tibet". The PRC government violates the provisions of the agreement and fails to abide by it.

1959 With resistance taking place in various parts of Tibet in the late 1950s, the National Uprising also breaks out in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa, in March 1959. PRC forces crushed the uprising, leading to the deaths of 87,000 Tibetans between March 1959 to September 1960. Escaping the PRC's repression in Tibet, approximately 80,000 Tibetans followed His Holiness the Dalai Lama across the Himalayas and into exile in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

1959-1974 Due to the humanitarian support of the Government of India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama makes a base in exile in northern India. On 18 April 1959,

His Holiness the Dalai Lama repudiates the “17-Point Agreement” on reaching Tezpur in Assam and first settled in Mussoorie and then later in Dharamshala, where the Central Tibetan Administration is established. With the support and guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the CTA, Tibetans in exile concentrated on establishing themselves in communities around the world. During this period, the UN General Assembly adopted three resolutions on the issue of Tibet, in 1959, 1961 and 1965.

1974 Taking into consideration the gravity of the situation inside Tibet and the need to alleviate the suffering of Tibetans, His Holiness the Dalai Lama envisions a win-win proposition to solve the issue of Tibet that would also address China’s fundamental concern about maintaining sovereignty and territorial integrity. His Holiness held a series of discussions with the Kashag (Cabinet), leaders of the Commission of Tibetan People’s Deputies (CTPD), and trusted friends of Tibet. An internal decision is taken to pursue a policy of autonomy— the “Middle Way” – rather than separation from the PRC. This policy came to be known as the Middle Way Approach (*Umaylam* in Tibetan).

1979 China’s paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, stated that “apart from independence, all issues can be discussed” and offered talks with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Since the Middle Way Approach has already been developed, a

positive response is sent to Deng Xiaoping, beginning a long period of contact and discussions between Dharamshala and Beijing.



Members of the first fact-finding delegations with 10th Panchen Rinpoche (centre) and Baba Phuntsok Wangyal (far right). From left: Lobsang Dhargyal, Phuntsok Tashi Takla; Juchen Thupten Namgyal and Lobsang Samten, 1979. Not seen in the photograph: Tashi Topgyal.

1979-1985 China accepted four fact-finding delegations to Tibet, in August 1979, May 1980, June 1980, and June 1985. The delegations are enthusiastically received by local Tibetans. They visit various parts of Tibet, including Lhasa, Shigatse, Lhokha, Kongpo Nyingtri, Sakya, Lhuntse, Tsona, Tsethang, Gyangtse, Choekhorgyal, Sang-Ngag Choeling and Yartok Nakartse in U-Tsang; Labrang,

Siling, Golog, Malho, Ngaba, and Zoege in Amdo; Nagchu, Kyegudo, Dartsedo, Chamdo, Derge, Karze, Nyarong, Gyalthang and Markham in Kham. In 1982 and 1984, PRC leaders met the exploratory delegations from Dharamshala for talks in Beijing. Following the 1985 fact-finding delegation, PRC refused to receive further missions.



Members of second fact-finding delegations during their visit to the Jokhang Temple, Lhasa 1980. From left Phuntsok Wangyal, Lobsang Jinpa, Tenzin N.Tethong, Tsering Dorji and Pema Gyalpo Gyari.



Members of the third fact-finding delegation celebrating the birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in Taktser, Amdo 1980.



Members of the fourth fact-finding delegations from right Thubten Samphel , Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha, Chabcha Kalden and Drawu Pon Rinchen Tsering with Chinese officials in Lanzhou 1985.

1987 His Holiness the Dalai Lama addresses the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus and presents a Five-Point Peace Plan for Tibet, proposing the PRC government to start earnest negotiations based on the Middle Way Policy.

1987-1989 In 1987, a large-scale peaceful street protest which broke out in Lhasa was brutally suppressed by PRC forces. A new wave of repression and arrests ensues. Following continued peaceful protests, PRC declares Martial Law in Lhasa in March 1989.

1988 His Holiness the Dalai Lama presents the Strasbourg Proposal in the European Parliament, which elaborates on the fifth point of the Five-Point Peace Plan. In September, Beijing announced its willingness to negotiate with Tibetans and says that His Holiness the Dalai Lama can choose the date and venue for negotiations. Welcoming Beijing's willingness, Dharamshala announces a six-member Tibetan negotiating team. Before the talks can begin, the PRC government reverts to its former hard-line position and says that the Strasbourg Proposal cannot be the basis of talks.

1989 His Holiness the Dalai Lama is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his advocacy for a peaceful solution to the issue of Tibet based upon an approach of tolerance and mutual respect.

1992 His Holiness the Dalai Lama declares the Strasbourg Proposal invalid due to lack of positive response from the PRC government.

1993 With Beijing failing to reciprocate numerous diplomatic initiatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 14 years of formal contact with the PRC government comes to an end.

1994 Beijing holds the third “Tibet Work Forum” during which it adopts a hard-line policy on Tibet. This marks a significant shift from the more open approach of earlier forums. Given Beijing’s change in stance, His Holiness the Dalai Lama proposes that a referendum of the Tibetan community is held for future dealings with PRC and to reorientate the course of the Tibetan freedom struggle.

1997 Based on the preliminary opinion survey and reflecting the Tibetan people’s profound trust in His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies (ATPD) adopted a unanimous resolution in September 1997 stating that His Holiness the Dalai Lama should in the future be the sole person to take decisions to resolve Sino-Tibet conflict. The ATPD further resolves that whatever decisions His Holiness the Dalai Lama takes will be regarded by all the Tibetan people as being equivalent to a decision reached through a referendum.

1998 During the 39th anniversary of the Tibetan people's National Uprising Day on 10 March, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in his public statement, responds to the events of the previous year and thank the people of Tibet for the trust and hope placed in him. His Holiness the Dalai Lama reiterated his commitment to the Middle Way Policy.

2001 His Holiness the Dalai Lama addresses the plenary session of the European Parliament, urging the resumption of dialogue.



Visit of his Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The Dalai Lama addresses the House at a formal sitting (© European Communities – 2001).

2002 Dialogue with China resumes with the first of what will become nine “rounds of talks” based on the Middle Way Policy. The 1st round of talks between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the PRC government takes place in September 2002 in Beijing. This is followed by the 2nd round in May-June 2003 in Beijing. In the same year, the United States Congress passes The Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 to urge that substantive dialogue between the PRC Government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives lead to a negotiated settlement on questions related to Tibet. The 3rd round of the talk was held in September 2004 in Beijing; the 4th round in June - July 2005 in Bern, Switzerland; the 5th round in February 2006 in Guilin City, China; the 6th round in June-July 2007 in Shanghai and Nanjing; an informal meeting in May 2008 in Shenzhen; the 7th round in June-July 2008 in Beijing; the 8th round in October-November 2008 in Beijing and the 9th round of talks in January-February 2010 in Hunan Province and Beijing.

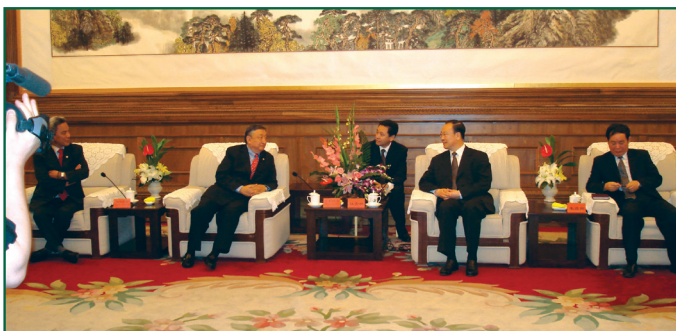


2nd round of talk between envoys of the Dalai Lama and the PRC leadership was held in Beijing from May 25 to June 8 in 2003.



4th round of talk was held in Bern, Switzerland from June 30 to July 1 in 2005.

2008 During the first half of 2008, unprecedented and widespread protests erupted across Tibet. At the 7th round of talks with the PRC government in July 2008, PRC negotiators ask the Tibetan leadership to put in writing the nature of the autonomy it seeks. The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People is presented during the 8th round of talks in October-November 2008. The Memorandum elaborates on how genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people would operate within the framework of the PRC Constitution and Law on National Regional Autonomy. It also defines areas such as the “application of a single administration for the Tibetan nationality in the People’s Republic of China”, the “nature and structure of autonomy” and the “11 Basic Needs of Tibetans”. However, the PRC leadership rejects the proposal, falsely claiming that the Memorandum includes references to a “Greater Tibet”, “Higher Degree of Autonomy,” “covert independence” and “independence in disguise”.



7th Round of Talk held in Beijing, 2008.

2009 Tibetans begin setting themselves on fire to protest against the PRC government's continued occupation of Tibet and political repression, religious persecution, cultural assimilation and economic marginalisation of its people, and environmental destruction. While attempting to take their lives, self-immolators consistently call for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for the Tibetan people. Since 2009, 157 recorded self-immolations have taken place inside Tibet as of date.

2010 To address the PRC government's concerns about and objections to the Memorandum, the Tibetan leadership presents a Note on the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People during the 9th round of talks. The Memorandum and the Note describe how genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people would operate within the framework of the PRC Constitution. The Note further addresses specific concerns raised by the PRC government with respect to the form of single administration; political, social, and economic systems; public security; regulation of population migration; language; and religion. The PRC government once again refuses to accept the proposal.



9th Round of Talk held in Beijing from January 26 to 31, 2010.

2011 His Holiness the Dalai Lama announces to devolve his entire political authority to the democratically-elected Tibetan political leader Kalon Tripa of the Central Tibetan Administration. The Tibetan leadership, headed by Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, reiterates its firm commitment to the Middle Way Policy and clearly states that dialogue between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the PRC leadership is the only way forward.

2020 The Tibet Policy and Support Act 2020 is passed by the US Congress which upgrades the US support for Tibet addressing major issues including the succession of His

Holiness the Dalai Lama and China's continuing repression of Tibetan people among others. This bill also solidifies the US recognition of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Middle Way Policy.

2021 The 16th Kashag under the leadership of Sikyong Penpa Tsering, reiterates its firm commitment to the Middle Way Policy as the key foundation to resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict. Sikyong also hopes to resume dialogue with the PRC counterpart which has remained stalled since 2010. The Task Force on Sino-Tibet Negotiation is restructured into a new Permanent Strategy Committee which is now composed of advisors and relevant senior CTA officials led by Sikyong Penpa Tsering.



Members of CTA's Permanent Strategy Committee headed by Sikyong Penpa Tsering. 25 November 2022.

Endnotes

- 1 From 1960-1979, Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies (CTPD), 1979-2006, Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) and 2006 onwards Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, (TPiE)
- 2 His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced his long-term vision Five-Point Peace Plan at the US Congress in 1987.
- 3 In 1988 while elaborating on the fifth point of the Five-Point Peace Plan His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced the Strasbourg Proposal at the European Parliament. This was the first proposal explaining the Middle Way Approach.
- 4 The Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People was presented during the 8th round of talks in October-November 2008. The Memorandum elaborates on how genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people would operate within the framework of the PRC Constitution and Law on National Regional Autonomy. It defines areas such as the "application of a single administration for the Tibetan nationality in the People's Republic of China", the "nature and structure of autonomy" and the "11 Basic Needs of Tibetans".
- 5 To address the PRC government's concerns about and objections to the Memorandum, the Tibetan leadership presents a Note on the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People during the 9th round of talks. The Memorandum and the Note describe how a genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people would operate within the framework of the People's Republic of China: its Constitution, territorial integrity and sovereignty, the three adherences, and the hierarchy and authority of the PRC Government. The Note further addresses specific concerns raised by the PRC government with respect to the form of single

administration; political, social and economic systems; public security; regulation of population migration; language; and religion. The PRC government once again refuses to accept the proposal.

- 6 The ‘three adherences’ as stipulated by the PRC government are: (1) the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party; (2) socialism with Chinese characteristics; and (3) the Regional National Autonomy system.
- 7 The 15th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile amended the title of KalonTripa to Sikyong (Tibetan Political Leader) in 2012.
- 8 Gongmeng Law Research Centre of the Open Constitution Initiative was officially shut down by the PRC authority in 2009.
- 9 The Tibetan government was coerced to sign the agreement in 1951 under the threat of military invasion. In 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama repudiated the agreement following China’s failure to abide by its commitment.



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