


1. Map of Tibet
2. Introduction
3. Why Policymakers are part of the Solution
4. How Policymakers can assist Tibet
5. Useful Resources & Suggested Reading





Map of tibet Tibet was traditionally comprised of three main regions: Amdo (northeastern Tibet), Kham (eastern Tibet) and U-Tsang (central and western Tibet). The Tibet Autonomous Region was established by the Chinese government in 1965 and covers the area of Tibet west of the Yangtse River (Tibetan: Drichu), including part of Kham. The rest of Amdo and Kham have been incorporated into Chinese provinces, and designated as Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and Tibetan Autonomous Counties. As a result, most of Qinghai and parts of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces are acknowledged by the Chinese authorities to be 'Tibet autonomous'. The term 'Tibet' is used to refer to all of these Tibetan areas currently under the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China.

1.

Introduction

There is a solution and a path towards that solution

Policymakers in foreign countries cannot alone move the Chinese government, nor unilaterally bring about a solution to the Tibet issue. However, parliamentarians are a critical part of the wider effort to bring about a solution.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, his envoys and the democratically elected leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration, to whom the Dalai Lama has transferred his political authority in 2011, have all articulated the general conditions required for a lasting solution for Tibet. In brief, these are that the Tibetan people should have:


- 1. A single administrative entity encompassing the Tibetan people, rather than the current structure that divides the Tibetan people across five separate provinces.**
- 2. The authority to regulate major demographic change caused by the mass movement of new settlers to Tibetan areas.**

- 3. Increased responsibility for the internal public order and security of the autonomous area, including an increase in the proportion of Tibetan public security personnel.**
- 4. Increased rights over the management of their environment, including following traditional conservation practices. The Tibetan people should have the authority to formulate and implement developmental plans concurrent to the state plans.**

Therefore, the Tibetan side has presented to the Chinese government, in the “Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People” presented to Chinese officials during the eighth round of dialogue (November 4 and 5, 2008 in Beijing) and in the additional “Note” on this Memorandum formally presented during the ninth round of dialogue (January 30th, Beijing), the framework of a potential future for Tibet and has mapped out in specific terms how this could be achieved within the framework of the Chinese Constitution. In other words, there is a solution to this issue and a path towards that solution. What is lacking is a sincere, committed partner on the part of the Chinese government to engage on these proposals.

2.

Why
Policymakers
are part of the
Solution



It is unlikely that actions of supportive parliamentarians alone can bring about a complete turnaround of a foreign government's position, especially when it is one as deeply entrenched as the issue of Tibet.

That does not, however, mean that parliamentarians are powerless to effect change in China. Quite the opposite: the persistence and creativity of committed parliamentarians from across the globe represents an invaluable component of the wider effort to bring about a solution.

The wider effort What exactly do we mean by a 'wider effort'? The Tibet issue engages a number of actors internationally – the following are some of the kinds of institutions that take up the issue of Tibet in some form or other:

1. The Tibetan institutions in exile, such as the Tibetan Parliament and Government in Exile, and representatives of HH the Dalai Lama
2. Tibetan Communities in exile
3. Tibet Groups (such as the International Campaign for Tibet)
4. Human Rights NGOs like Human Rights Watch, Human Rights in China, the International Federation for Human Rights and Amnesty International
5. Issue-specific NGOs such as those working on helping former political prisoners, ending the death penalty, anti-torture, minority and indigenous rights, environmental groups etc.
6. Foreign policy think-tanks, such as the Brookings Institute and the European Council on Foreign Relations
7. The United Nations Human Rights Council, UN experts, including Special Procedures mandate-holders of the UN Human Rights Council and working groups, committees established by international covenants on human rights which China is party to, such as the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for instance

- 8. Ministries of Foreign Affairs**
- 9. European Institutions (in particular the European External Action Service)**
- 10. Numerous parliamentary committees and individual parliamentarians**

This list is important for a few reasons. Firstly, you are not alone! There are numerous groups conducting research and providing analysis on Tibet, so you always have people to turn to for info, analysis and advice. Secondly, this list represents a list of potential partners in any policy effort – you can cooperate with the Tibetan institutions, invite a local Tibet Group to brief you or subscribe to newsletters and reports from ICT or numerous other relevant NGOs.

This list of actors might also lead you to consider what action a parliamentarian, a group of parliamentarians or even an entire parliament, national government and international institutions can take that the others cannot. What specifically can policymakers bring to the table?

Create awareness, encourage debate Political figures have the ability to use their position and network to bring the issue of Tibet into the public debate, whether by giving interviews, opinion pieces in newspapers or questions on the floor of the House. Parliamentarians who develop a degree of expertise on the Tibet issue lend a great deal of credibility and can very effectively raise the issue to higher levels of government.

Bring direct pressure to bear on China Politicians cannot resolve the Tibet China issue unilaterally, but they can bring pressure to bear on China. This pressure creates a cost for the Chinese government if they continue human rights violations in Tibet or refuse to engage the Dalai Lama on finding a solution. That cost may be a 'soft-power' cost in public perception of China in your country or it may be a financial cost in terms of foreign investment in China when the political climate is so uncertain etc. The Chinese government should recognise that it is judged on its actions in Tibet and that there is a cost in disregarding the concerns of the international community and a benefit in engaging the Tibetan side in discussions and negotiations that lead to a mutually acceptable solution.

Influence, encourage and press those tasked with engaging China As 'insiders', politicians can influence, encourage and even pressure those who have responsibility for their government's or institution's relations with China.

For example, politicians can legitimately ask their foreign ministry whether they have raised Tibet bilaterally with China or at the UN Human Rights Council or via another institution like the European Union. Politicians can also either sit on or influence those who sit on parliamentary committees to discuss Tibet, to meet with Chinese officials and raise Tibet or to allocate budgets for Tibet-related projects.

Engage directly with Chinese officials and visiting leaders

Politicians may find they have opportunities to engage directly with Chinese officials, whether from the local embassy, or visiting leaders at Parliamentary receptions or other events. Exposing these officials to the views of those who are at the epicentre of a democratic society can be very beneficial. You may also be in a position to bring Chinese officials into contact with exiled Tibetans.

Provide a broader context for discussion on Tibet


It is crucial to raise awareness of Tibet as a human rights problem and the exile of the Dalai Lama. However, there are also wider regional issues at stake in the future of Tibet and it is important to help government, the media and the public develop a broader understanding of why Tibet matters, and why helping Tibet can be a matter of national interest for most countries. Some examples could be:

- a. **Chinese Rights** The development of human rights in Tibet and the openness of discussion on Tibet in China is a litmus test for the development of human rights for all 1.3 billion people in China, one fifth of the world's population.
- b. **Setting a Bad Example** How governments handle Tibet and China, for example in bilateral relations and at the UN, can have consequences for the wider struggle to ensure global human rights. When a government fails to acknowledge the scale and nature of China's actions in Tibet, it sends the signal to other authoritarian regimes that neither governments nor bodies like the UN will actively pursue an improvement in the situation.
- c. **Geopolitical Ramifications** Tibet borders sensitive areas in Asia, namely India and Nepal. India continues to experience border issues with China over the exact demarcation of the Tibet-India border. Nepal remains a fragile state and home to approximately 20.000 Tibetan refugees, with more arriving each year and China has increased its influence in Nepal dramatically over the last 10 years. Instability in Tibet and the increased militarisation of Tibet therefore has significance not just inside Tibet but on Tibet's neighbours.
- d. **Environmental Consequences** Tibet is an extremely sensitive environmental region. Unchecked industrialisation, resource exploitation and inward migration can have real consequences locally and regionally, if not globally. According to the studies of

the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), glaciers in the Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau are receding faster than ever. The snow covered mountain ranges and glaciers on the Tibetan plateau are the source of major rivers that flow down the Indian peninsula and south-east Asia. Rivers such as the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, China's twin lifelines, along with the Brahmaputra and Indus flow down from the fresh water reservoirs in Tibet. About 47 percent of the world's population live in the watersheds of the six major rivers that originate in Tibet. Continued melting of the glaciers at the current rate will result in massive flooding followed by severe droughts in the entire low-lying regions of the Tibetan plateau.

3.

How
Policymakers
can assist Tibet



There are specific actions that policymakers can take. What follows is certainly not a comprehensive list and we hope that policymakers can creatively engage in activities that aren't mentioned here. However, as an inspiration, here are a number of top hints for action on Tibet.

Parliamentary Action

- » **Table parliamentary resolutions and motions on Tibetan issues of concern, form or join a Parliamentary Tibet Group and commemorate important Tibetan dates, such as the 10 March National Uprising Day.**
- » **Welcome the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan officials of the Central Tibetan Administration to your Parliament and call for your government to receive the Dalai Lama at the highest level.**
- » **Send written questions to your Foreign Minister, Prime Minister, President or European Union leaders requesting information on their activities related to Tibet. Ask verbal questions or call for a debate about Tibet policy. Call on your government to recognize that, in addition to quiet diplomacy, assertive and visible engagement with the Chinese government can yield positive consequences and provide hope to Tibetans that a peaceful solution is possible.**
- » **Call on your government to invest in the resources to better monitor and respond to the situation in Tibet; for example by creating a Tibet Desk in your country's Beijing embassy. Urge your government to consider allocating funds to vital program(s) that support the non-violent Tibetan.**
- » **Work with other Parliamentary Committees to encourage discussion on Tibet, including Foreign Affairs Committees, Human Rights Committee, parliamentary China Friendship groups and so on.**

- » Visit the home of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala/India or invite representatives of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile to visit your parliament, for mutual skill-sharing experience.
- » Support the attribution of Parliamentary or Governmental awards to key Tibetan figures/actors (i.e. the Sakharov Prize of the European Parliament).

Towards the Chinese Government

- » Call for the sincere engagement of the Chinese government in dialogues with the representatives of the Dalai Lama, using the Memorandum on Tibetan Autonomy as a basis for future discussions.
- » Engage visiting Chinese delegations to your country and Parliament on Tibet, highlighting that this is an important issue for you, your party and your constituents.
- » Request a meeting at your local Chinese Embassy or Consulate to discuss Tibet.
- » Visit different parts of Tibet, including areas outside the Tibet Autonomous Region, but approach an organisation like ICT before you go to help you plan for your visit and prepare for some of the ways in which the Chinese authorities may attempt to diminish your ability to see the real situation during your trip.
- » Build up China knowledge. This will add weight to your comments on Tibet and enable you to more fully engage Chinese officials as well as Chinese civil society.

Multilateralism

- » Develop contacts with policymakers in other parliaments in order to cooperate, share ideas and create a broad front of support and action for Tibet, including by joining the International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet (INPaT).
- » Scrutinize whether your government is raising issues of concern in appropriate international and bilateral forums, including at the UN Human Rights Council, bilateral meetings and Human Rights Dialogues with China.
- » Call on your government to coordinate their efforts on Tibet within the European Union for example by supporting the appointment of a EU Special Coordinator for Tibetan Affairs and with like-minded governments internationally.

Civil Society

- » Support politically and financially efforts to address chronic needs, as articulated by the Tibetan people, for assistance in such areas as education, work force development, environmental protection, and sustainable development.
- » Work with NGOs and local Tibet groups. Invite former political prisoners or Tibet/China experts to brief you on the situation in Tibet.
- » When visiting China, request meetings with Chinese civil society actors.

- » **Create opportunities for Tibetans in your community to engage directly with overseas Chinese, or visiting Chinese officials, in order to foster mutual understanding (for example, host a reception).**

4.

Useful Resources & Suggested Reading

Websites

www.dalailama.com

The website of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, including statements and schedules.

www.tibet.net

The official website of the Central Tibetan Administration, commonly referred to as the Tibetan Government in Exile.

www.tibetnetwork.org/find-a-group

Guides the public to their nearest Tibet Group. Compiled by the International Tibet Network, a global coalition of Tibet-related non-governmental organizations.

<http://inpatnet.org>

The 5th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet (Rome, 18-19th of November 2009) resolved to form an

international network of parliamentarians for Tibet (INPaT) to facilitate coordination among parliamentarians and parliamentary groups in order to effectively advance Tibet issues in a concerted manner.

www.savetibet.org

Website of the International Campaign for Tibet, including news, reports and campaign information. Visit the ICT blog at <http://weblog.savetibet.org>

ICT has also websites in other languages:

German (www.savetibet.de), Dutch

(www.savetibet.nl), French (www.savetibet.fr), Chinese

(<http://www.liaowangxizang.net/>)

www.hrichina.org

Website of Human Rights in China, a New York and Hong Kong based NGO and the leading NGO on Chinese human rights, particularly rule of law issues.

www.hrw.org/en/asia/china

China-section of Human Rights Watch, arguably the world's leading human rights monitoring NGO.

<http://www.fidh.org/-China,227->

China-Section of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), a platform of 164 human rights organizations throughout the world

www.amnesty.org/en/region/china

China-section of Amnesty International.

www.tibetpolicy.eu

Devoted specifically to European policymakers and governments, this website from the International Campaign for Tibet includes reports, independent studies and global political information relevant to Tibet and China.

www.chinadigitaltimes.net

CDT is a collaborative news site covering China's social and political transition and its emerging role in the global community.

<http://highpeakspureearth.com/>

High Peaks Pure Earth provides insightful commentary on Tibet related news and issues and provides translations from writings in Tibetan and Chinese posted on blogs from Tibet and the People's Republic of China.

Reports

'A 'raging storm': The Crackdown on Tibetan writers and artists after Tibet's Spring 2008 Protests' by ICT

There has been a vibrant literary and cultural resurgence in Tibet since Spring 2008 when protests against government policy and in support of the Dalai Lama swept across

the plateau. Writers, using print and the internet, who are often fluent in Chinese as well as Tibetan, in Xining and other areas of Amdo (now part of Qinghai province) have been at the forefront. This ICT release can be found at <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/ict-publications/publications>

'The Communist Party as Living Buddha: The Crisis Facing Tibetan Religion Under Chinese Control' by ICT

Documents a trend of tightening control over religious practice and scholarship in Tibet using information from official documents obtained from Tibet and interviews with reincarnate lamas, monks and nuns from Tibet. This ICT release can be found at <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/ict-publications/publications>

'Tracking the Steel Dragon: How China's economic policies and the railroad are transforming Tibet' by ICT
Details the strategic significance to China of the extension of its national rail network into central Tibet, which Beijing describes as 'the southwestern frontier of the motherland', and the projected expansion of the line within Tibetan areas of the PRC and to Nepal. This ICT release can be found at <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/ict-publications/publications>

'A Great Mountain Burned by Fire: China's Crackdown in Tibet' by ICT

Details new campaigns directed against Tibetan culture and religion since the March 2008 unrest. Almost any expression of Tibetan identity not directly sanctioned by the state can be branded as 'reactionary' or 'splittist' and penalized with a long prison sentence, or worse. This ICT release can be found at <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/ict-publications/publications>

'Like Gold that Fears No Fire: New Writing from Tibet' by ICT

A new collection of writings by Tibetans inside Tibet, including extracts from books that are banned by the Chinese government and work by writers now in prison. This ICT release can be found at <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/ict-publications/publications>

"I Saw It with My Own Eyes": Abuses by Chinese Security Forces in Tibet, 2008-2010 by Human Rights Watch

This 73-page report is based on more than 200 interviews with Tibetan refugees and visitors conducted immediately after they left China, as well as fresh, not previously reported, official Chinese sources. The report details, through eyewitness testimonies, a broad range of abuses committed by security forces both during and after protest incidents, including using disproportionate

force in breaking up protests, proceeding to large-scale arbitrary arrests, brutalizing detainees, and torturing suspects in custody (July 2010) at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/07/22/i-saw-it-my-own-eyes-0>

US Congressional Executive Commission on China - Annual Report 2011

<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt11/AR2011final.pdf>

Books

'The China Fantasy: How our leaders explain away China's repression' by James Mann

The China Fantasy raises an awkward and important question: What if there is a third alternative between the rise of democracy and the collapse of China's political order? What if that alternative is the survival of the one-party state, with all its apparatus of control and repression?

'What Does China Think?' by Mark Leonard

Leonard is the Director of the influential Brussels policy think-tank, the European Center on Foreign Relations. He asks what do we really know about the kind of society China wants to become? What ideas are motivating its citizens? We can name America's neo-cons and the religious right, but cannot name Chinese writers, thinkers,

or journalists--what is the future they dream of for their country, or for the world?

'Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions'
edited by Anne-Marie Blondeau and Katia Buffetrille

'Authenticating Tibet' is a clear and unbiased response to a booklet published by the Chinese government in 1989, which sought to counter the criticism of China's policies in Tibet. International Tibet scholars provide historically accurate answers to 100 Questions and deal even-handedly with both China's "truth" about Tibet. An excellent reference work for the key debates on Tibet.

'The Dragon in the Land of Snows' by Tsering Shakya

Still considered one of the leading and most accessible works on Tibet's modern history. Shakya seeks to objectively understand and present the Chinese viewpoint that Tibet has always been part of the Chinese empire and that Maoism has ushered a backward feudalistic society into the 20th century even as he forcefully refutes it. A 'must read' work.

'Unlocking Tibet' by Tsering Woeser & Wang Lixiong

Tsering Woeser is an influential female Tibetan author writing in Chinese. In December 2007, the Norwegian Authors Union named Woeser the winner of its Freedom of Expression Prize- 2007. Her husband, Wang Lixiong, is a well known essayist and fiction author in his own right.

Wang's essay, 'The Dalai Lama is the Key', is rumoured to have been read by the Politburo and is included in 'Unlocking Tibet'.

'Freedom in Exile' by HH the 14th Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama's autobiography recounts his life, from the time of his recognition in 1939 at the age of 4, to his escape from Tibet in 1959, to his winning of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. The Dalai Lama describes the Chinese invasion of Tibet and details the ensuing human rights tragedy. This book is both a historical document and an insight into the Dalai Lama's thinking on the broader future of Tibet and China.

'China's Communist Party: Atrophy & Adaptation' by David Shambaugh

Shambaugh assesses the strengths and weaknesses, durability, adaptability, and potential longevity of China's Communist Party (CCP). He argues that although the CCP has been in a protracted state of atrophy, it has undertaken a number of adaptive measures aimed at reinventing itself and strengthening its rule. He finds that China's Communist Party is resilient and will continue to retain its grip on power.

Subscriptions

Tibet Brief (<http://www.savetibet.org/tibetbrief>)

From the International Campaign for Tibet, this monthly briefing is aimed at policymakers. Subscribe at info@tibetpolicy.eu

China Rights Forum

A quarterly journal from Human Rights in China, for details go to www.hrichina.org

Jamestown's China Brief

A bi-weekly briefing on Chinese politics, domestic and foreign, from the DC-based Jamestown Foundation. For details, go to www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief

Film

Leaving Fear Behind

Leaving Fear Behind is a film shot by Tibetans from inside Tibet in the period leading up to the Beijing Olympic Games. Filming concluded in early March 2008 on the eve of the eruption of unprecedented mass Tibetan protests across the Tibetan plateau. Shot primarily in the eastern provinces of Tibet, the film provides a glimpse into the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people. The footage was smuggled out of Tibet under extraordinary circumstances,

resulting in the detention of the filmmakers. See www.leavingfearbehind.com

The Sun behind the clouds

In 'The Sun Behind the Clouds', Tibetan filmmaker, Tenzing Sonam, and his partner, Ritu Sarin, take a uniquely Tibetan perspective on the trials and tribulations of the Dalai Lama and his people as they continue their struggle for freedom in the face of determined suppression by one of the world's biggest and most powerful nations. The filmmakers had intimate access to the Dalai Lama and followed him over the course of an eventful year, which included the 2008 protests in Tibet, the international response to it, the Beijing Olympics, and the breakdown in talks between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government. See <http://thesunbehindthecLOUDS.com/>

What Remains of Us

A Canadian documentary shot over eight years without the knowledge of the Chinese authorities. A young Tibetan from Québec, Canada, enters her homeland for the first time – carrying a clandestine video message from the Dalai Lama to Tibetans inside Tibet. The film has received a number of awards and nominations.

Murder in the Snow

In September 2006, a teenage Tibetan nun, Kelsang Namtso, was killed when Chinese border police opened fire

on a group of pilgrims as they fled Tibet over the Nangpa Pass. The shooting was witnessed by many international mountain climbers, some of whom videotaped or photographed the events and also helped rescue survivors and sent the story out to the world. This documentary tells of young Tibetans who risk their lives each year to illegally cross the Himalaya in an attempt to see the Dalai Lama or attend school in India.

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