



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Trump administration's first Tibet Negotiations Report to Congress reflects the absence of a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues

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The State Department has submitted a report to Congress detailing the steps taken by the Trump Administration in 2017 to encourage dialogue between envoys of the Dalai Lama and representatives of the Chinese government to resolve the Tibetan issue, in line with the requirements of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002.

The report, a first by the Trump administration, says, “The U.S. Government remains concerned by the lack of meaningful autonomy for Tibetans within China, ongoing violations and abuses of the human rights of Tibetans in China, and efforts by Chinese authorities to eliminate the distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans. The United States believes the Chinese government must address these concerns to create conditions for a sustainable settlement, which is essential to the long-term stability of the region.”

Acknowledging Tibet's importance on a regional level, the report states the U.S. government “believes that a negotiated outcome that results in meaningful autonomy for Tibetans, and ensures they are able to practice freely their religion, culture, and language, provides the best hope for long-term stability in the region.”

Detailing steps taken towards this objective, the report lists meetings that the U.S. Consul General in Chengdu had with officials of the Tibet Autonomous Region during which they “regularly expressed concerns to the Chinese government regarding severe restrictions imposed on Tibetans’ ability to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

The report notes that U.S. officials have maintained close contact with a number of Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders, including meetings with Lobsang Sangay, the President of the Central Tibetan Administration. State Department officials played an important role, meeting with “Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leaders – including the Gyalwang Karmapa, who leads one of the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism -- as well as Representative of the Dalai Lama to North America, CTA officials and parliamentarians, Tibetan human rights activists, and members of the Tibetan-American community.”

The report also states that the office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues “continued to coordinate U.S. efforts to promote substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives.”

However, a conspicuous absence in the report is any references to senior Trump Administration leadership raising the Tibetan issue during their interaction with Chinese leaders. Since the Trump Administration took over in January 2017, there have been two summits between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, in addition to meetings with other Chinese leaders. Similarly, Secretary of State Tillerson, during his tenure, had several meetings with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other officials.

As the report rightly says, the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 requires the President to provide reports to Congress concerning “the steps taken by the President and Secretary of State” on the issue of dialogue between the Dalai Lama’s envoys and the Chinese leadership.

[View the full text of the report \(PDF\)](#) that was submitted to Congress on May 21, 2018.