A Solution: The Middle Way Approach

Umay Lam in Tibetan, this nonviolent proposal for genuine autonomy within the People's Republic of China is the Dalai Lama's and the Tibetan people's vision for Tibet's future.

What you need to know

Proposed by the Dalai Lama and democratically adopted by the Tibetan exile government after years of deliberation, the Middle Way is the official policy of the Tibetan Government in Exile, known as the Central Tibetan Administration, and the Tibetan people and seeks to resolve the Tibet-China conflict through nonviolence and dialogue. Under the Middle Way Approach, Tibetans would govern their internal affairs, including language, education, religion, culture, economic development, and environmental protection, while Beijing retains responsibility for defense and foreign affairs.

- **FORMULATED BY THE DALAI LAMA**
  The Dalai Lama began developing the Middle Way in 1974, grounding it in the Tibetan Buddhist principles of nonviolence, interdependence, and negotiated conflict resolution.

- **TIBET WOULD REMAIN PART OF CHINA**
  But Tibetans would have meaningful autonomy within the People's Republic of China, drawing on rights already established in China's Constitution and laws on regional ethnic autonomy.

- **TIBETANS WOULD GOVERN INTERNAL AFFAIRS**
  China would oversee defense and foreign affairs, but the Tibetan people would exercise complete authority over their education, language, religion, culture, economy, and other internal issues.

The only way to solve the Tibetan issue is through direct dialogue

The last round of dialogue between Chinese officials and the envoys of the Dalai Lama took place in China in January 2010. Although the Chinese side continued to make baseless allegations against the Dalai Lama, Lodi Gyari, the lead Tibetan negotiator, later said, "We do not see any reason why we cannot find a common ground … if the Chinese leadership has the sincerity and the political will to move forward."

1949 China's People Liberation Army invades Tibet

1974 The Dalai Lama conceives the Middle Way framework to engage the Chinese government in meaningful dialogue

2010 Formal dialogue between representatives of the Dalai Lama and Beijing ends without a negotiated resolution

Tibetans commitment to peaceful engagement

The Middle-Way Approach seeks to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet through a mutually beneficial negotiated solution between the Tibetan and Chinese leadership. The Tibetan people do not accept the present status of Tibet under the People's Republic of China. Although the historical independence of Tibet is a fact, this approach prioritizes the future and looks for a solution within the framework of the People's Republic of China.

It is a policy adopted democratically by the Central Tibetan Administration after a series of discussions beginning in the 1970s.

It is inspired by the Dalai Lama who believes that it is "the most realistic and pragmatic course" as it takes into consideration the concerns and interests of not just the Tibetan people but also of the Chinese nation. Many Chinese scholars and writers have publicly supported the Middle Way approach. A resolution of the Tibet issue within the Middle Way framework will be able to contribute to regional and global peace and stability.

Strasbourg Proposal

Presented by the Dalai Lama before the European Parliament in Strasbourg on June 15, 1988, the Proposal called for earnest negotiations so that Tibet can become a self-governing democratic political entity within the People's Republic of China. While China would be responsible for foreign affairs and defense, the Proposal outlined that Tibet would have the rights to decide on all affairs relating to Tibet and the Tibetan people.t

Five-Point Peace Plan

Announced by the Dalai Lama on September 21, 1987, at the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in Washington, D.C., the Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet called for the transformation of Tibet into a zone of peace; a halt to China's population transfer policy in Tibet; respect for Tibetan people's human rights, democratic ideals, and Tibet's environment; and earnest negotiations between Tibetans and the Chinese government on the future status of Tibet.

Guidance for future Tibet policy

The Dalai Lama affirmed the central role of the Tibetan people in determining Tibet's future when he devolved his political authority to a democratically-elected Tibetan leadership in exile in 2011. He has categorically said that the Tibetan struggle is not for the restoration of the Dalai Lama's traditional political position or the former government of independent Tibet. He has said that the Tibetan struggle is for the cause of the seven million Tibetans inside Tibet and therefore, the Tibetan people should bear the main responsibility in deciding their own future. Through his encouragement, an institutionalized democratic governance structure is in place in exile that will be responsible for establishing and implementing policy for the future.