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China issues white paper on Tibet, denouncing Dalai Lama's "middle way"

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The Chinese government on Wednesday issued a white paper on southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, lauding its development path and denouncing the "middle way" advocated by the Dalai Lama.

The white paper, "Tibet's Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide", holds that Tibet's current development path is correct.

Tibet's progress on its present path of development is an objective requirement of modern civilization. It accords with the progressive trend of society, the prevailing conditions and current reality in China, and the fundamental interests of all ethnic groups in Tibet, says the white paper, which was released by the Information Office of the State Council.

However, the paper points out that a group remains clustering around the 14th Dalai Lama, who are remnants of the feudal serf owners having long lived in exile. This group is driven by the political goal of achieving Tibetan independence and a sentimental attachment to the old theocratic society.

Having failed to instigate violence in support of their cause, they turned to the "middle way", which negates Tibet's sound development path and attempts to create a "state within a state" on Chinese territory as an interim step toward the ultimate goal of full independence.

Zhang Yun, director and researcher of Institute of History of China Tibetology Research Center, told Xinhua that the middle way is quite deceptive as it uses the rhetoric of peace and non-violence.

"The white paper offers a complete and in-depth explanation of the ulterior motives behind the middle way and why the central government can not accept it," Zhang said.

The middle way advocates a "Greater Tibet" with "a high degree of autonomy" within China. However, this idea of a Greater Tibet -- which includes Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai and other areas inhabited by Tibetans -- has never existed and the autonomy put forward by the Dalai Lama denies the leadership of the central government, and Tibet's present social and political system.

The white paper accuses the Dalai group of being opportunistic in talks with the central government.

"When they thought the situation was not working to their advantage, they would call for contact with the central government; when they thought the situation was in their favor, they would break off contact," it says.

"None of the negotiations were conducted in good faith -- it was always the intention of the Dalai Lama and his supporters to divide China and achieve independence for Tibet."

The central government has followed a clear and consistent policy concerning the Dalai Lama, the white paper stresses.

"Only when he makes a public statement acknowledging that Tibet has been an integral part of China since antiquity, and abandons his stance on independence and his attempts to divide China, can he improve his relationship with the central government in any real sense," it says.

The central government hopes that the Dalai Lama will put aside his illusions in his remaining years and face up to reality, adapt his position, choose the objective and rational path, and do something of benefit to overseas Tibetan compatriots in exile, it says.

"The only sensible alternative is for the Dalai Lama and his supporters to accept that Tibet has been part of China since antiquity, to abandon their goals of dividing China and seeking independence for Tibet, and to begin to act in the interests of Tibet and the country at large," it says.

Reviewing Tibet's history, the white paper notes that the region first began to embrace modern civilization only after the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949.

Having gone through such important phases as peaceful liberation, democratic reform, the establishment of Tibet Autonomous Region, and the introduction of reform policies and opening up, Tibet has not only established a new social system, but also witnessed a great leap forward in its economy and embarked on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

While following this path, people in Tibet have become masters of their country and their society, and critically, masters of their own destiny, the white paper says.

"The current path of Tibet is an inevitable choice," said Zhalo, a research fellow with the Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "Today's Tibet proves that choice to have been right."

The majority of Tibetans have been lifted out of poverty and now enjoy relatively comfortable lives.

In 2013, the gross regional product (GRP) of Tibet was 80.77 billion yuan (13.15 billion U.S. dollars) while the per capita net income of rural Tibetans was 6,578 yuan and the per capita disposable income of urban residents was 20,023 yuan.

Tibet's population rose to 3.12 million in 2013, tripling the figures of the early 1950s. Average life expectancy has doubled to 68.2 years.

VENEER OF PEACE, NON-VIOLENCE

The white paper presents evidence to prove that the Dalai Lama and his supporters continued to employ violence to promote Tibetan independence.

During the armed rebellion in Tibet in the late 1950s, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) not only sent agents to help the 14th Dalai Lama flee Tibet but also trained militants to support his forces and airdropped a large quantity of weaponry.

Since the 1980s, the Dalai Lama and his supporters have been linked to a series of violent incidents in Tibet, including an incident on March 5, 1988, that led to 299 police and civilian

casualties, and another on March 14, 2008, in which 18 people were burnt or hacked to death, and 382 injured.

Since 2011, they have incited Tibetan lamas and lay followers inside China to engage in acts of self-immolation.

"For the Dalai party, 'peace' and 'non-violence' are no more than fig leaves," the white paper says.

THE BEST SOLUTION

Since the Dalai Lama fled abroad in 1959, the central government has exercised great restraint and strived for the best solutions.

"However, he [the Dalai Lama] has repeatedly made choices counter to the wishes of the central government and the people of Tibet," the paper says.

The central government received 13 visits by private representatives of the 14th Dalai Lama between 1979 and 2002, and ten visits from 2002 to January 2010.

In 2011, the Dalai Lama announced his "political retirement", and his private representatives who had liaised with the central government also "resigned".

Since then, the Dalai group has declared that it would only talk with the central government in the name of the "government-in-exile", thereby, destroying any basis for contact and negotiation, the white paper says.