

Address by Special Guest, Mr Lhakpa Tshoko, Representative of Central Tibetan Administration and His Holiness the Dalai Lama for Australia and New Zealand

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I am glad to be with you all as the Special Guest to attend today's seminar on "Victims of the Communist regime of China: Retrospect and Prospect".

We all share a common purpose to meet here today for the next two days. We are meeting at a time when the brutality of the Chinese communist regime has increased manifold. We have all suffered and continue to suffer, directly or indirectly, under the authoritarian regime of Communist China.

As the Representative of Central Tibetan Administration, I would like to share the efforts His Holiness has made to alleviate the sufferings of the Tibetan people under the Chinese Communist regime and His Holiness' Principal Commitments to promote a compassionate world by advocating human values and inter-religious harmony.

After the military invasion and illegal occupation of Tibet in 1949 by the Chinese communists, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at the age of 16, had to assume the temporal and religious leadership of Tibet. During his visit to Beijing in 1954-55, His Holiness met with Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders. His Holiness sought to strive for a harmonious concord between the Tibetans and Chinese. However, the brutal repression of the Tibetan people continued to increase. In 1959 eventually, at the age of 24, His Holiness was compelled to go into exile in India.

After going into exile in India, His Holiness has made every effort to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet through the mutually beneficial Middle Way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people under a single administration within the constitutional framework of the PRC. His Holiness has made numerous overtures by issuing a Five-Point Peace Plan at the US Human Rights' Caucus in 1987 and the Strasbourg Proposal at the European Parliament in 1988 for a resolution of the Tibetan issue. Most recently, through his Envoys, he presented a Memorandum for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People, and a Note to the Memorandum in 2008 and 2010 respectively, to the PRC leadership during the formal dialogue process that resumed in 2002. His Holiness has been always advocating non-violence in pursuing the Tibetan freedom struggle and the Middle Way Approach is based on this principle of violence. Tibetans always followed His Holiness' advice in pursuit of their freedom struggle.

His Holiness was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 in recognition of his long advocacy of peaceful solutions based upon mutual respect and tolerance as a solution to international conflicts, global environmental problems, and human rights issues.

In 2011, His Holiness devolved his political responsibilities to the elected leadership of Tibetans in exile, to engage more with His three principal commitments.

1. to promote happiness by advocating the cultivation of warm-heartedness and human values such as compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment, and self-discipline. His Holiness has been encouraging educational institutions to prepare curriculums by including secular ethics to cultivate good human values from a young age.

2. to promote and encourage religious harmony among the world religious traditions. His Holiness the Dalai Lama believes that despite philosophical differences between them, all major world religions have the same potential to create good human beings and preach kindness and compassion.

3. to preserve the Tibetan language and culture, while also speaking up for the protection of Tibet's natural environment.

In addition, His Holiness has committed to reviving the rich ancient Indian knowledge - which he commonly refers as Nalanda Tradition - of the workings of the mind and emotions, as well as the techniques of mental training, such as meditation which are of great relevance to today's world.

Of course, His Holiness' tireless efforts, coupled with those of supporters throughout the globe and the sacrifices forced on the Tibetan people, especially those suffering under the China's authoritarian regime, did not bring any resolution of the Tibetan issue. However, the issue of Tibet and its legitimate struggle has received support and sympathy not only from governments, political leaders, parliamentarians, organisations, individuals, and the general public across the globe but also from many Chinese scholars, intellectuals, and ordinary people from both inside and outside China.

From the 1950s to this day, governments, parliaments, and organisations have voiced and passed numerous resolutions and bills in support of Tibet and the Tibetan people's genuine quest for freedom.

Without dwelling over the previous resolutions or bills, I will briefly outline the Tibetan Policy and Support Act (TPSA) 2020. The TPSA represents a major upgrade to US policy on Tibet, by building on the landmark Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, as well as being a direct challenge to China's continuing repression of the Tibetan people.

To highlight some of the major provisions of the TPSA:

The TPSA makes it official US policy that the selection of Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including a future Dalai Lama, should follow the instructions of the current Dalai Lama and the desires of the Tibetan Buddhist community with no interference from the Chinese government. If the Chinese authorities carry out their plans to appoint their own Dalai Lama in the future, the Chinese officials will be sanctioned in the form of freezing their assets and denying entry to the US. The State Department will also have to work at the international level to build support for Tibetan Buddhists' freedom to choose their own leaders without Chinese government interference.

The TPSA addresses water security and climate change in Tibet, which is warming nearly three times faster than the global average and provides water to more than 1 billion people across Asia. Under the TPSA, the US recognizes the strategic importance of the Tibetan plateau and the threat that climate change poses to it.

The US Secretary of State will have to pursue collaboration with China and international institutions to monitor Tibet's environment and support the Tibetan people's efforts to preserve it, and encourage a regional framework on water security.

Under the TPSA, the US will strengthen diplomatic efforts through the office of the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues in the State Department to push for a negotiated solution between the Chinese government and the representatives of the Dalai Lama.

It mentions that until China allows a US consulate in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, the US will not allow China to open a new consulate in the US. It formalizes funding for Tibetans inside and outside Tibet until at least 2025. It also commends His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people for adopting a democratic system of governance in exile. It acknowledges the Central Tibetan Administration as the legitimate representative reflecting the aspiration of the Tibetan people and the Sikyong as the President of the Central Tibetan Administration.

We thank the United States for its bold leadership and look forward to other countries adopting their own versions of the Tibetan Policy and Support Act. At the same time, it is encouraging that just last week a new bipartisan bill prohibiting goods made by Uyghur forced labor from entering the United States will also mandate a US government enforcement strategy for dealing with Tibetan forced labor.

The updated House bill includes new references to Tibet. The bill notes the "similarity of

the Tibet Autonomous Region system to that in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region." This enforcement strategy will have to include a list of products made wholly or partly by the involuntary labor of Tibetans or members of the other persecuted groups, as well as a list of businesses that have sold such products in the United States.

In conclusion, I would like to urge the Australian government to enact legislation comparable to the US Global Magnitsky Act and encourage other governments to impose similar sanctions. It is high time that the International community come together for justice and truth to register their protest clearly and vigorously against high-handed Chinese atrocities committed against the Tibetans and other oppressed people under the CCP rule.

I want to thank the Committee of the Australian and New Zealand Alliance of the Victims of Communist Regime of China for organising this Seminar and wish you all a very successful and meaningful Seminar.

Thank You!