

## India, Tibet, and the US: Scoring a Diplomatic Six

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*The US Delegation meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama at this residence in Dharamshala. (Central Tibetan Administration)*

Recent developments have witnessed India, Tibet, and the United States issuing a robust diplomatic messaging and with the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup it's convergence constituted a significant diplomatic manoeuvre, distinctly impacting Beijing and hitting it for a six in cricketing terms. The 19th of June marked a pivotal juncture, with notable occurrences transpiring that shall now be etched within the annals of history.

### **The inauguration of the Nalanda University:**

The first notable event was the official inauguration of Nalanda University in Bihar by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accompanied by Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Nalanda University, an ancient seat of Indian knowledge and wisdom, holds a prominent place in India's cultural heritage. It historically connected India with neighbouring



*Prime Minister Narendra Modi with delegates including foreign diplomats during the inauguration of the Nalanda University. (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GoI)*



regions via land and sea, while Tibetan Buddhism traces its origins to this venerable institution.

During the ceremony, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong was present, and both Nitish Kumar and Chancellor Prof. Arvind Panagariya openly acknowledged Tibet's historical and contemporary ties with Nalanda University. Prior to its official opening, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the ancient site, revered by Buddhist, including many Tibetans. I personally recall visiting the site with relatives some years ago, engaging in prayer, including recitations of the Heart Sutra (ཞེས་སྐྱོང་པོ་).

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community have long championed the Nalanda Tradition, celebrating the revival of this esteemed historical institution in its modern incarnation. Similar to its ancient counterpart, the current university enjoys support from 18 nations participating in the East Asian Summit, underscoring India's pivotal role in such international forums.



*Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Archaeological site of Nalanda, Bihar. (Narendra Modi)*

### **The US Delegation visits Dharamshala and subsequently visits New Delhi:**

The second significant event involved the widely discussed and reported high-level US delegation meeting with leaders of the Tibetan Government in Exile, officially known as the Central Tibetan Administration, and the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala. The bipartisan delegation arrived in Dharamshala on the 18th of June and proceeded to visit Gangchen Kyishong, the current seat of the



*The US Delegation at the Tibetan Parliament in Exile with Dignitaries from the Tibetan Government in Exile. (Tibetan Parliament in Exile)*



Tibetan Government in Exile. They also toured the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, where each member of the US delegation expressed their views to Tibetan leaders. Subsequently, they visited the Tibet Museum and concluded the day with a dinner at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), where they celebrated the birthday of Representative Jim McGovern's wife.

The US delegation comprised of: Rep Michael McCaul (R), Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D), Rep Jim McGovern (D), Rep Gregory W Meeks (D), Rep Nicole Malliotakis (R), Rep Ami Bera (D), and Rep Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R).

On the following day, the 19th, significant developments unfolded when the US delegation not only met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama but also received an audience with the Tibetan state oracle, Nechung. The Tibetan Government in Exile formally honoured the US delegation with a public felicitation at Thekchen Chöling Tsuglagkhang, popularly known as the Dalai Lama Temple. Each delegate shared their perspectives on Tibet and their purpose for visiting, with the Tibetan greeting of Tashi Deleg (བཞིན་པོ་ལོ་གསལ།) resonating strongly (a thing that I observed was how many of the US delegates acknowledged their spouses which we can learn from in my opinion). Representative Michael McCaul, also Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (GoP), led the delegation, emphasizing their intent to convey a resolute message to China through the recent passage of the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' or 'Resolve Tibet Act' in short as many call it. Rep. McCaul affirmed that US President Joe Biden would imminently sign this into law, making it a significant US governmental measure on Tibet. Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi underscored all this by stating, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama will live long, and his legacy will endure forever. But you, President of China, will pass, and history will not credit you for anything."



**Public felicitation event for the US Delegate, public can be seen holding Tibetan, US and Indian national flag. Sikyong Penpa Tsering la affirmed India's support to Tibet to the US Delegation. (Central Tibetan Administration and Voice of Tibet)**

A notable aspect of the Resolve Tibet Act is its definition of Tibet, which explicitly encompasses not only the Tibetan Autonomous Region but also areas designated as Tibetan Autonomous by the Government of the People's Republic of China as of 2018. This includes 13 Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties, aligning closely with Tibetan claims encompassing all three traditional provinces: Amdo (birthplace of the 14th Dalai Lama), Kham (birthplace of the 17th Karmapa Ogyen Thinley Dorjee), and U-Tsang (with its capital Lhasa).

Following the events in Dharamshala, the US delegation departed and reconvened with their colleagues in New Delhi, where they met with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar. These interactions were instrumental in preparing for their subsequent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the 20th of June. The discussions likely encompassed their experiences in Dharamshala, including their meeting with the Dalai Lama, as well as the significance of the Prime Minister's visit to Nalanda University. These discussions would naturally have led to

conversations about Tibet and the Tibetan people.



*The US Delegation with the minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankhar on the evening of 19th June. (Dr.S. Jaishankar)*



*The US Delegation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval. (NDTV Profit)*

The question that many raise and inquire about is what Beijing was up to during all these landmarks. There were three occurrences that occurred and drew the attention of many, including myself:

1. Chinese President Xi Jinping's unprecedented visit to Amdo on the 18th and 19th of June, coincided with the days when the US delegation was in Dharamshala. An interesting point to note is his visit to the Hongjue Temple (ཨོང་ཁ་བཙེ་ཆེན་དར་རྒྱལ་གླིང།), which is closely associated with the Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, headed by the Dalai Lama. This visit was followed by visits to Colonial Boarding Schools. For further details, refer to Rinzin Namgyal's writing on this.
2. At a Press Conference on 18th June, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian stated that the US delegation should not have any contact with the Dalai Lama and should not sign into law the "The Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" (the former is dismissed by US delegation at they must the Dalai Lama and the latter likely to be signed as bill by US president Joe Biden soon). And on 20th June, stated that the Tibetan Government in Exile (acknowledging its existence) is entirely a separatist political group.
3. Similarly, on 18th June, the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India responded to an article in The Tribune by Ajay Banerjee via X, following the party line directives on how the Reincarnation system (which ironically predates the current People's Republic of China by several centuries) is protected by legal instruments from Beijing, most notably Order No. 5. This order, passed in 2007, lays out clear policies asserting Beijing's authority and claims over these



Buddhist practices of reincarnation.

With the stage set and assertions that "Tibet is back on the Global Agenda," momentum is building for decisive action. While some may hesitate, now is the opportune moment to act decisively and achieve tangible results as the iron is hot. The current developments present a crucial window of opportunity through which longstanding issues can be addressed, with India having the ability to garner substantive progress on the international stage, which would be a major step towards its goal of a Viksit Bharat.



*Long time Tibet supporter and advocate Speaker Emerita Nancy Peolosi greeting His Holiness in the traditional Tibetan way, where they touch their foreheads. (Central Tibetan Administration)*



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