



US Passed Resolve Tibet Act

For Prelims: [China-Tibet Issue](#), [India-China Relations](#), [India-US Relations](#), [Buddhism](#), Dalai Lama.

For Mains: Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests.

[Source: BS](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the US Congress passed the **Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act**, also known as the **Resolve Tibet Act**.

- This legislation aims to **promote a peaceful resolution to the [Tibet-China dispute](#)** according to **international law** and the [United Nations \(UN\) Charter](#) through **peaceful dialogue** without preconditions.

What is the Resolve Tibet Act 2024?

- **About:**
 - It is a legislation passed by the **United States Congress** in June 2024.
 - It is the third notable act by the US government regarding Tibet, following the **Tibetan Policy Act (2002)** and the **Tibetan Policy & Support Act (2020)**.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - It aims to **strengthen the US's position on Tibet** and **pressure China** into **resuming negotiations with the [Dalai Lama](#)**.
 - The Act aims to **enhance US support for Tibet** and **empower US State Department officials to actively counter disinformation** about Tibet from the Chinese government.
 - The Act will also **push for negotiations "without preconditions"** between the **Chinese government** and the **Dalai Lama or his representatives** or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community.
 - It underlines the **Tibetan people's right to self-determination and human rights**, noting China's duty as a signatory of international human rights covenants.
 - It **recognizes and addresses** the distinct **historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity** of the Tibetan people.
 - It also aims to **empower the international community** to stand up for justice and peace in Tibet.
- **Difference with Earlier Acts:**
 - Unlike the 2002 act, which recognized China's claim over Tibet, the **Resolve Tibet Act directly challenges this claim**.
 - The 2002 act encouraged dialogue with the Dalai Lama, but only in his capacity as a spiritual leader, not as a political representative. In contrast, this Act urges **China to engage in dialogue with [the Dalai Lama](#) or his democratically elected representatives, without preconditions**.
 - The **Tibetan Policy & Support Act of 2020** also pushed for **constructive dialogue**, but

the Resolve Tibet Act goes further by stating that **these talks should aim to "resolve differences" between the parties.**



How is India's Relation with Tibet?

- **The Younghusband Mission (1903-1904):** The British military expedition to Tibet, led by Colonel Younghusband, aimed to establish a **British presence in the region and counter growing Russian influence.**
 - This led to a conflict with Tibetan forces, culminating in the British victory and the signing of the **Lhasa Convention of 1904.**
- **Anglo-Russian Convention (1907):** This agreement aimed to settle outstanding colonial disputes between Colonial Britain and Russia.
 - According to this agreement, **two great powers would not negotiate with Tibet, except through the mediation of the Chinese government.**
- **India's Relationship with Tibet:** Despite the Sino-Russian treaty, India maintained close ties with Tibet through the **influence of Buddhism.**
 - The spread of Buddhism from India to Tibet and the presence of **influential Buddhist monasteries fostered strong cultural** and religious connections between the two regions.
- **The Indo-Tibetan Border:** The Sino-Indian **border dispute, particularly in the Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh regions,** has been a major point of contention between India and China.
 - The status of Tibet and its historical relationship with India have been central to this ongoing dispute, with both countries claiming sovereignty over the disputed territories.
- **India's Stand on Tibet:** Since 2003, **India** has recognised **Tibet Autonomous Region as part of the People's Republic of China** following the signing of the **Declaration on Principles for Relations and Comprehensive Cooperation** between India and China.
 - **In 1959, India granted asylum to the Dalai Lama after a failed uprising.**

What is the Background of the China-Tibet Dispute?

- **Tibet's Independence Claims:**
 - Tibet is an **autonomous region** on the Tibetan Plateau, with a distinct culture, language, and religious tradition centred around **Tibetan Buddhism.**
 - In **1913**, the **13th Dalai Lama** announced **Tibet's de facto independence** after the fall of the **Qing dynasty**, claiming Tibet was never a part of China.

- However, successive Chinese governments, including the [People's Republic of China \(PRC\)](#) established in **1949**, have **consistently claimed** sovereignty over Tibet.
- **Chinese Invasion and the Seventeen Point Agreement:**
 - From **1912 to 1949**, Tibet was **not under the control** of any Chinese government, with the Dalai Lama's government ruling the region.
 - In 1951, the **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** of China **invaded Tibet**, and Tibetan leaders were forced to sign the [Seventeen Point Agreement](#) which nominally guaranteed **Tibetan autonomy** but allowed the establishment of **Chinese civil and military headquarters** in Lhasa (capital of Tibet).
 - The Tibetan people, including the Dalai Lama, have **rejected the validity of this agreement**, considering it a forced occupation and an act of "**cultural genocide**."
- **1959 Tibetan Uprising and Aftermath:**
 - Increasing tensions between Tibet and China led to a **major uprising in 1959**, during which the **Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans fled to India**, seeking asylum.
 - The Tibetan exiles formed a **government-in-exile**, the **Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)**, based in Dharamshala, India.
 - Since the 1959 uprising, **China has tightened its control over Tibet**, severely restricting freedoms of speech, religion, and press, and engaging in human rights abuses such as forced abortions, sterilisations, and the demographic shift through the **influx of ethnic Han Chinese**.
 - While China has invested in **infrastructure development in Tibet**, these efforts are widely seen as part of a larger strategy to consolidate its control over the region.

Dalai Lama

- **Tradition:** The Dalai Lama belongs to the **Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism**, the largest and most influential tradition in Tibet.
- **History:** There have been only **14 Dalai Lamas** in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. The first and second Dalai Lamas received the title posthumously. The current Dalai Lama is **Tenzin Gyatso**, the 14th in the line.
- **Spiritual Significance:** Dalai Lamas are believed to be **manifestations of Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezig)**, the **Bodhisattva of Compassion and Tibet's patron saint**.
 - Bodhisattvas are **enlightened beings** who aspire to achieve Buddhahood to benefit all sentient beings and vow to be reborn to help humanity.
- **The process to Choose the Dalai Lama:**
 - **Reincarnation Search:** The process of selecting a Dalai Lama involves identifying the **reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama**, who serves as the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism. The **search typically begins after the passing of the incumbent Dalai Lama**.
 - High Lamas of the Gelugpa tradition and the Tibetan government are responsible for finding the next Dalai Lama. If multiple candidates are identified, a **public ceremony involving the drawing of lots is held to determine the true successor**.
- **Recognition and Training:** The selected child, usually very young, is recognised as the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and undergoes rigorous spiritual and educational training.
- **Role:** The Dalai Lama's role includes both **spiritual and political leadership** in Tibetan Buddhism. The selection process is crucial to Tibetan cultural and religious traditions.
- **Duration:** The **search can take several years**; for example, it took 4 years to find the current (14th) Dalai Lama.
- **Geographical Scope:** The search is generally limited to Tibet. However, the current Dalai Lama has **suggested that he might not be reborn or, if he is, it would not be in a country under Chinese rule**.

What is the Global Stand on China-Tibet Issue?

- **China's Stance:** China claims Tibet has been **part of its territory since the 13th century** and its policies aim to develop the region. It argues Tibet is an autonomous region with significant

rights and accuses the Dalai Lama of seeking independence.

- China has expressed concerns over the future selection of the Dalai Lama. It fears that the Dalai Lama's successor might be chosen to **challenge its authority in Tibet**.

▪ **Support for Tibetan Autonomy/ Independence:** Some Western countries, like the **US and Canada**, have expressed **support for Tibetan autonomy and human rights**.

- The **Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)**, the **Tibetan government-in-exile** led by the Dalai Lama, is **not recognized** by the international community, including India.

▪ **Non-Interference and Neutrality:** Many countries, especially those with ties to China, **maintain a neutral stance and prioritise diplomatic** and economic cooperation with China.

- Neighbouring countries like **Nepal and Bhutan take a cautious approach** to avoid tensions with China.

▪ **Human Rights Concerns:** International organisations including the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) have expressed concerns about human rights abuses in Tibet, including restrictions on religious freedom and cultural suppression.

Drishti Mains Question:

What are the factors responsible for the ongoing dispute between China and Tibet? Analyze the impact of this dispute on India's strategic interests and suggest a way forward for India's Tibet policy.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q1. With reference to Indian history, who among the following is a future Buddha, yet to come to save the world? (2018)

- (a) Avalokiteshvara
- (b) Lokeshvara
- (c) Maitreya
- (d) Padmapani

Ans: (c)

Q2. The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at (2017)

- (a) Ajanta
- (b) Badami
- (c) Bagh
- (d) Ellora

Ans: (a)

Mains:

Q. Border management is a complex task due to difficult terrain and hostile relations with some countries. Elucidate the challenges and strategies for effective border management. (2016)