The Tibet-China Conflict

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3B

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1. **Thesis Statement:**

‘How is China’s use of Communism and the “Mandate Of Heaven” theory used to control Tibet?’

1. **Intro:**
2. History of Tibet
3. History of the Tibet China conflict
4. How does Communism control Tibet
5. How does Confucianism/Mandate of Heaven theory control Tibet?
6. What Can Be Done?
7. How would an Autonomous Tibet benefit?

**Intro:**

 My research question discusses how Communism is used to control Tibet and Tibetan society. This problem has been a topic of discussion or debate for many years and will continue to be for years to come. This topic is most popular among human rights activists and scholars. When people’s rights and liberties are changed, altered, or taken away completely, it’s time to step in.

**Literature Review:**

1. “A Clash of Buddhism and Communism in Tibet”

This article discusses the history of Communism in China. In 1966, Mao Zedong was tired of religion and started the Cultural Revolution. Many temples, many of them Buddhist Temples, were either destroyed or partially destroyed. His revolution consisted of destroying 4 old habits: Old Culture, Old Thinking, Old Ideas, and Old Habits. One major city where these ideas were destroyed, Ganden, in Tibet, was completely destroyed and Zedong’s photos were hung within the walls of the monastery. Zedong wanted to create an entirely new culture. These reformations are closely related to the Protestant Reformations that occurred years before the reformation in China did. Having the majority of China under his control, Zedong moved his focus to Tibet, which has a totally different society than the rest of China. Zedong ordered that Tibetans learn Chinese or remain illiterate. He also ordered that monasteries be transformed from monasteries to barracks. This conflict continues to this day.

1. “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China”

This article examines the regulation of religion in China in the context of changing social expectations and how people live their lives. The post-Mao government has permitted limited freedom of religious belief, subject to legal and regulatory restrictions on religious behavior. However, this distinction between belief and behavior contains challenges for the regime's efforts to maintain political control while preserving an image of tolerance focused on building legitimacy.

1. “Tibet-China Conflict Sparks Controversy.”

The recent political tension, riots and arrests in Tibet are the realities of the Chinese problem that has existed since 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officially took power in mainland China. Despite its controversial ruling over the past 70 years the CCP has remained resilient for many decades of booming economic growth and diplomatic relations with different regimes across the world. Throughout all this, a constant issue for the Chinese people and its government has been the reunification of its territories and people. The CCP has used its reunification efforts to consolidate its power and maintain legitimacy within the mainland and abroad.

The China of old and the China today wants to reunify, especially with Tibet and Taiwan. The people of Tibet and China are connected through their culture, people and tradition. Also, reunification is way for the China to redeem itself from a "century of humiliation" during the Opium War of 1849 when Great Britain invaded and brutally defeated the Chinese, bringing Western culture and principles. In this sense, the reunification of its territories for China is simply an act to balance power.

If reunification is what China really wants and if Tibetans are Chinese, then both sides must realize that in killing and hurting each other, no one wins. At the same time, Tibet must contemplate the realities of Chinese power, and whether China succeeds in reunification, it must learn how to build relations with China. Though the protests and violence in Tibet draw questions of U.S. intervention through diplomacy, the issue is something that only concerns Tibet and China and can be resolved politically.

1. “Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics.”

The status of Tibet is at the core of the dispute, as it has been for all parties drawn into it over the past century. China maintains that Tibet is an inalienable part of China. Tibetans maintain that Tibet has historically been an independent country. In reality, the conflict over Tibet's status has been a conflict over history. When Chinese writers and political figures assert that Tibet is a part of China, they do so not on the basis of Chinese rule being good rule (although they do not hesitate to make that assertion, either), but on the basis of history. As one of China's more well-known spokesmen once put it, "'Is Tibet, after all, a part of China?' History says it is."

1. “The Riots in Tibet.”

Back in 2008, riots broke out in Tibet. These riots were based totally in the fact that China controls Tibet with an iron fist. Faced with bloodshed and even more rioting, the Chinese government blamed the Dalai Lama and his supporters for using these riots to put pressure on the Communist government in Beijing. Eventually, the riots erupted into bloodshed, mostly youth in their 20s. The explanation offered by the national and local Communist Party is hollow, although the spark for the riots and bloodshed was the monks' and the Dalai Lama's campaign, the cause of the riots was something totally different. Tibet has seen an influx of Chinese businesses; the wealth accumulated all over China by the newly rich has opened opportunities for investments large and small. Those who fail to benefit are the Tibetan unemployed and migrant workers from the villages.

1. “An Appeal to All Chinese Spiritual Brothers and Sisters.”

Peace talks have been attempted but because of the Communist government’s view of the Dalai Lama, they have not been successful. In April of 2008, the Dalai Lama sent decree to Chinese followers of the Buddha. “The Chinese and the Tibetan people share common spiritual heritage in Mahayana Buddhism.” (Dalai Lama) The Dalai Lama is referring to China’s roots in Buddhism. China and Tibet used to be one nation united under many religions but many of those religions are strongly related to Buddhism. The people of both Tibet and China can once again become friends through peace and compassion not through riots and violence

1. “China Denies Problem in Tibet.”

China is "denying there is a problem" between its government and Tibet, the Dalai Lama says. In his first interview since his recent controversial meeting with President Obama, the spiritual leader of Tibet told CNN's "Larry King Live" that China claims Tibetans are "very happy ... much, much, much better than previous Tibet." However, the Dalai Lama noted that the Tibetan Government has received information that indicates “suppression and or restrictions occurring both culturally and religiously to the people of Tibet.

**Research Design:**

I plan to focus on the relationship between Communism and Tibetan society. How have the two become so intertwined in the past few decades? What can be done to persuade the CCP to change their mind about how Tibet, if not the whole country, should be looked after? And maybe one of the more important questions, “why hasn’t the US and other countries intervened?” In order to answer these questions, I plan to do interviews with local monks, possibly correspond with the Dalai Lama and of course good old fashioned research. The limitations that I face are of course, corresponding with important officials and if any interventions will occur in the near future.

**Action:**

 For my action, I plan to have a sort of “information day” that raises awareness about the conflict between Tibet and China. I would like to do things like make t-shirts, have a monk come talk with students about this conflict and anything else that raises awareness about the Tibet-China conflict. This project relates to my research in a huge way. If enough awareness is raised, that influence may reach the government and some sort of intervention or agreement can be reached between China and the United States. If this agreement were to be reached and Tibet received autonomy, violence in the area would definitely decrease.

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