GOP platform references Tibet, draft Democratic platform does not

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International Campaign for Tibet statement:

As part of the Democratic and Republican party conventions held in the past two weeks, both parties have made announcements about their platforms for this year’s election.

The Republican National Committee’s executive committee decided on June 10, 2020 to adopt the same platform it had for the 2016 election cycle. The 2016 Republican platform made this reference to Tibet: “[C]ultural genocide continues in Tibet and Xinjiang, the promised autonomy of Hong Kong is eroded, the currency is manipulated, our technology is stolen, and intellectual property and copyrights are mocked in an economy based on piracy.”

The Democratic platform for 2016 offered this clear position on Tibet: “We will promote greater respect for human rights, including the rights of Tibetans.”

However, we note with concern that the Democrats’ draft 2020 platform has no references to Tibet. The adopted version of the Democratic platform is not yet public, though, and we hope that it does not overlook the issue of Tibet.

We are, however, perplexed by the decision made by the Democratic National Committee to delete the reference to Tibet that was in its 2016 platform from its draft 2020 platform. By all accounts, the human rights situation in Tibet has in fact deteriorated rather than improved since 2016.

We do not believe that presumptive Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is unsupportive of the Tibetan people. In fact, as a senator, he met the Dalai Lama and was a co-sponsor of several Senate resolutions, like the resolution awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama in 2007 and S.RES.504 in 2008, which calls for a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership for “meaningful religious and cultural autonomy for Tibet within China and urges that these discussions take place with all deliberate speed.”

Also, using language similar to the Tibetan Policy and Support Act, which passed the House of Representatives in January and is waiting for Senate approval, the 2008 resolution “urges that the agreement to permit China to open further diplomatic missions in the United States should be contingent upon the establishment of a United States Government office in Lhasa, Tibet.”

The United States has a strong history and tradition of bipartisan support for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people. The situation in Tibet has worsened in recent years with China imposing lockdown-like conditions for the entire Tibetan population even before the current pandemic.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people have chosen to resolve the Tibetan issue through a nonviolent approach. It is therefore imperative that the Tibetan people get the support of all sections of American political leadership.