

Tibet Brief

A monthly report of the International Campaign for Tibet



APRIL 2010



Following the meeting between President Obama and His Holiness the Dalai Lama on February 18, 2009, the White House said that the President “commended the Dalai Lama’s “Middle Way” approach, his commitment to nonviolence and his pursuit of dialogue with the Chinese government.” His Holiness was received the Secretary Hillary Clinton at the State Department on February 19th.

“Despite the great hardships Tibetans have faced for many decades, they have been able to keep up their courage and determination, preserve their compassionate culture and maintain their unique identity.”

– The 14th Dalai Lama, 10 March, 2010

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The Hill: China’s ‘disappointing’ stubbornness on Tibet

By The 14th Dalai Lama. Excerpted exclusively for The Hill from the Dalai Lama’s statement on the 51st anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, given in Dharamsala, India, on March 10, 2010.

Today (March 10) marks the 51st anniversary of the Tibetan people’s peaceful uprising in 1959 against Communist China’s repression in Tibet, as well as the second anniversary of the peaceful protests that erupted across Tibet in March 2008. On this occasion, I pay homage to those heroic Tibetan men and women who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet, and pray for an early end to the sufferings of those still oppressed in Tibet.

Despite the great hardships Tibetans have faced for many decades, they have been able to keep up their courage and determination,

preserve their compassionate culture and maintain their unique identity. It is inspiring that today a new generation of Tibetans continues to keep Tibet’s just cause alive.

Wherever Tibetans in exile have settled, we have been able to preserve and promote our distinct cultural and spiritual traditions, while generating awareness of the Tibetan cause.

Today, the Chinese authorities are conducting various political campaigns, including a campaign of patriotic re-education, in many monasteries in Tibet. They are putting the monks and nuns in prison-like conditions, depriving them the opportunity to study and practice in peace. These conditions make the monasteries function more like museums and are intended to deliberately annihilate Buddhism.

Whether the Chinese government acknowledges it or not, there is a serious problem in Tibet. As the world knows, this is evidenced by the fact that there is a huge military presence and restrictions on travel in Tibet. It is good for neither party. We have to take every opportunity to solve it. For more than 30 years, I have tried my best to enter into talks with the People’s Republic of China to resolve the issue of Tibet through the Middle-Way Approach that is of benefit to us both.

Although I have clearly articulated Tibetan aspirations, which are in accordance with the constitution of the People’s Republic of China and the law on national regional autonomy, we have not obtained any concrete result. Their lack of a positive response is disappointing. Although

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The Hill...

the present authorities may cling to their hard-line stand, judging by the political changes taking place on the international stage as well as changes in the perspective of the Chinese people, there will be a time when truth will prevail.

It is a matter of pride and satisfaction that our mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach and the justice of the Tibetan struggle have gained growing understanding and support year by year from many political and spiritual leaders, including the president of the United States of America, reputed non-governmental organizations, the international community, and in particular from Chinese intellectuals. It is evident that the Tibetan issue is not a dispute between the Chinese and Tibetan peoples, but has come about because of the ultra-leftist policies of the Chinese Communist authorities.

Let me reiterate that once the issue of Tibet is resolved, I will not take any political position nor will members of the Tibetan administration in exile hold any positions in the government in Tibet. I have repeatedly made this clear in the past. To understand the situation of the Tibetans in exile and their aspirations, I invite Tibetan officials serving in various Tibetan autonomous areas to visit Tibetan communities living in the free world, either officially or in a private capacity, to observe the situation for themselves.

During my visits abroad, wherever I go, when I meet Chinese in general, particularly the intellectuals and students, they offer their genuine sympathy and support. Since the Sino-Tibetan problem ultimately has to be resolved by the two peoples themselves, I try to reach out to the Chinese people whenever I can to create a mutual understanding between us. Therefore, it is important for Tibetans everywhere to build closer relations with the Chinese people and try to make them aware of the truth of the Tibetan cause and the present situation in Tibet.

It is also essential that the 1.3 billion Chinese people have free access to information about their own country and elsewhere, as well as freedom of expression and the rule of law. If there were greater transparency inside China, there would be greater trust, which would be the proper basis for promoting harmony, stability and progress. This is why everyone concerned must exert their efforts in this direction.

Finally, I offer prayers for the happiness and well-being of all sentient beings. ■

Full Text: Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the 51st Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day: <http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=123&articletype=press&tab=2&rmenuid=morepress#TabbedPanels1>

22 March, 2010



Chinese soldiers marching in front of the Potala Palace, Lhasa

Tibetans mark Uprising anniversaries despite crackdown: Lhasa like a “war-zone”

Despite intensive security and a stepped-up military presence, Tibetans marked two significant anniversaries on March 10 and 14, and called attention to restrictions, with protests involving hundreds of people in Amdo, eastern Tibet. Two of the protests, in Macchu (Chinese: Maqu) county town and Tsoe City (Ch: Hezuo), both in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture) in Gansu Province, involved teenage students, and their schools are now under military lockdown. In Lhasa, the atmosphere was tense around March 10-14, with one Tibetan in the city describing it as “like a war-zone.”

On the second anniversary of the protests and riots in Lhasa on March 14, 2008, at 11-12 noon, around 20-30 students from the Machu Tibetan Middle School began a peaceful protest after the authorities

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March 16, 2009

United Nations: Polish NGO Wants Evidence on Panchen Lama

At the 13th session of the UN Human Rights Council, Ms. Tsering Jampa delivered a statement on behalf of Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights raising the case of the enforced disappearance of the Eleventh Panchen Lama. The statement said: At this session the Council raised the important subject of people living under enforced disappearances with report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) showing 28 unresolved cases with China, including the case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the Eleventh Panchen Lama of Tibet who disappeared in 1995 at the age of six years. Since 1997, China failed to provide document as requested by the WGEID to support China's claim that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family wished not to be disturbed by outsiders. The Working Group told China that it "would appreciate being provided by the Government of China with documents supporting its statement that he and his parents had appealed to the Government for protection and at present are "leading normal lives and enjoying perfect health." Similarly, China has ignored the call by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that independent expert be allowed to visit the Panchen Lama to confirm his well-being. As the 21st birthday of this spiritual leader of the Tibetan people approaches, we urge the Chinese authorities to provide full evidence to support its claims, including the recent one which said that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is living in Tibet.

The statement also cautioned the Council on China's cooperation with its Special Procedure mandate-holders, especially after the Chinese delegation announced that Beijing will this year receive Mr. Mr. Olivier de Schutter (Belgium), the Special Rapporteur on the right to Food. Raising the growing concern the forced evictions of Tibetan nomads from their ancestral lands, Helsinki Foundation urged China "to immediately impose a moratorium on all resettlements until independent experts carry out a review of policies that require or produce displacement and resettlement of Tibetan herders and other rural population in Tibetan areas, the confiscation of their property, or imposed slaughter of their livestock. ■

¹ In late January 2010, the US Pentagon notified Congress of a proposed arms sale to Taiwan, worth \$6bn. The notification to Congress is required by law and does not mean the sale has been concluded. Congress has 30 days to comment on the proposed sale.

National and European Parliamentary Initiatives on Tibet

Two significant parliamentary Tibet Intergroups have been re-established in the German Bundestag with Mr. Haibach as chairman and at the European Parliament with Mr. Thomas Mann as the chairman. The Tibet Intergroup of the European Parliament with a membership of more 100 deputies has already met on two occasions. Its members participated to the debate on Tibet at the plenary session in Brussels on 24 March of the European Parliament, including by Mr. Peter Stastny who announced the establishment on 9 March 2010 of a new Tibet Intergroup in the Slovakian Parliament.

During the debate, Deputies from all political groups regretted the absence of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and of the EU Spanish Presidency who left the hemicycle just before the start of the discussion. The deputies were Laima Liucija Andrikiene (EPP), Heidi Hautala (Greens), Filip Kaczmarek (EPP), Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Edward Mcmillan-Scott (NI), Tunne Kelam (EPP), Charles Tannock (ECR), Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR), Jarosław Wałęsa (EPP) and others.

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Tibetans mark Uprising...

intensified security measures and refused to allow students to leave the school grounds in the buildup to March 10, the 1959 Uprising anniversary. According to at least three exile sources in contact with Tibetans in the area, the students were soon joined by more than 100 local Tibetans (some sources say several hundred), as they protested along the main street of Machu (Ch: Maqu) County in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan TAP) in Gansu Province. The demonstration included calls for a "Free Tibet," "Long life for His Holiness the Dalai Lama," and "Chinese get out of Tibet," according to the same sources, who also reported that protestors called for resolution of the Tibet situation through dialogue. (Since 2002, envoys of the Dalai Lama and Chinese officials have met for sporadic dialog, most recently in January 2010.)

According to several Tibetan sources, Tibetan students from two middle schools in Tsoe - the Kanlho Tibetan Middle School (Ch: Gannan zangzu zhongxue) and Tsoe City Tibetan Middle School (Ch: Hezuo Shi zangzu zhongxue) - demonstrated peacefully in the streets on March 16. All of the students had been prevented from leaving their schools, which are boarding schools, since March 10 due to intensified security linked to the anniversary of both the Uprising in 1959 and the beginning of the current wave of protests on March 10, 2008.

On March 10, some of the more than 400 monks at Ditsa monastery in Amdo scattered leaflets in the monastery compound and pasted posters expressing loyalty to the Dalai Lama and calling for a "Free Tibet." According to Tibetans in exile and in contact with Tibetans in the area, at least 30 security personnel came to the monastery and were joined by at least 100 more later that day. They detained 18-year old Jamyang from Tsigortang (Ch: Xinghai) county in Tsolho (Ch: Hainan TAP) in Qinghai Province; 19-year old Yeshe, also from Tsigortang, and a reincarnate lama in his thirties, Tulku Woesser, who has since been released after three days of interrogation. ■

Read the full report:
<http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/tibetans-mark-uprising-anniversaries-despite-crackdown-lhasa-war-zone>

National and European Parliamentary Initiatives...

Despite these empty seats, an interesting debate was focused on the human rights situation in Tibet which highlighted the relevance of appointing an EU Special Representative for Tibet and the need for a meeting between the Dalai Lama and EU Foreign Affairs Representative. Different members of the Parliament also urged the European Commission to support civil society projects in favor of Tibetans in Tibet and Tibetan refugee settlements in India, Nepal and Bhutan.

In reaction, European Commissioner Maroš Šefcovic said: "We have always supported peaceful reconciliation through dialogue between the Chinese authorities and the representatives of the Dalai Lama. This dialogue has to be constructive and substantive, addressing all core issues such as the preservation of Tibet's unique culture, religion and traditions and the need to achieve a system of meaningful autonomy for Tibet within the Chinese Constitution. The dialogue should also address the participation of all Tibetans in decision-making. For the EU, Tibet is a human rights issue. We have consistently passed this message on to our Chinese counterparts and listened carefully to their views, and we make every effort to understand their position in a spirit of mutual respect. But human rights are universal, and the situation in Tibet is a legitimate concern for the international community (...). In the Sino-Tibetan dialogue, the Tibetan side has recently submitted an updated memorandum on genuine autonomy for the future of Tibet. We welcome that the Tibetan side has reiterated its firm commitment not to seek separation or independence".(transcripts of the debate can be seen at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=CRE&reference=20100324&secondRef=ITEM-014&format=XML&language=FR>).

At the end of 2009, the 5th World Parliamentary Convention on Tibet attended by 133 Parliamentarians and associates from 30 Parliaments around the world issued the Rome Declaration on Tibet. One commitment of all participants was "to identify members of an international parliamentarians network for Tibet" and to establish a Secretariat to coordinate the future activities of the Convention. To implement this initiative, the Tibetan Parliament in Exile has officially tasked the International Campaign for Tibet to become the secretariat of this network whose role is to "facilitate greater coordination between parliamentary groups, share best practices, and be sufficiently supported in the international advancement of a near-term action plan". ■

The full Declaration is available here: <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/tibet-news/rome-declaration-tibet>

Visit of the European Economic and Social Committee to Dharamsala

Following last October's mission to Tibet (Lhasa), an official delegation of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was on a complementary fact finding mission to Dharamsala (8-11 March), the headquarters of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (aka Central Tibetan Administration) in India.



March, 2010, members of the European Economic and Social Committee with the officials of the Tibetan Government in Exile, in Dharamsala. The Tibetan Prime Minister, Samdhong Rinpoche, 4 from left standing row. ICT's EU Policy Director, Vincent Metten, far left, standing row.

Members of the delegation observed the opening session of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile on 8 March, met representatives of the Central Tibetan Administration (picture), members of the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce and Tibetan NGOs. The EESC delegation had a one and half hours audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama on 9 March.

The delegation was accompanied by Vincent Metten, EU Policy Director of the International Campaign for Tibet, also visited the Tibetan reception centre to meet the newly arrived refugees, the Tibetan Children's Village School and the Transit school.

At the Press Conference at the end of the visit, Anne-Marie Sigmund, head of the delegation, outlined the purpose of the visit stated: "We are here on a fact-finding mission. We want to go back with a lot of knowledge and possibilities to create networks in order to put in place some concrete activities." She explained that one of the purposes of the visit was to collect information on the living conditions and challenges faces by Tibetan refugees before making the final mission report.

Another member of the delegation, Henri Malosse, President of the Employer's Group, stressed the importance of developing a stronger EU-Tibet business relationship through the EESC. "We will engage to strengthen the local civil society, to see how we can build up contacts and partnerships with European and other partners to engage in concrete projects with the [Tibetan] Chamber of Commerce, with the business sector and with small scale industry." Adding that his organisation "will not just go back with a nice picture with the Dalai Lama (...) We have concrete proposals and projects."

Delegation members also observed that "they were highly impressed by the model of civil society and democracy in the exile Tibetan community". Ms. Madi Sharma, member of EU-India Follow-up Committee said: "We want to put more women in the decision making process within the community because the women are the ones to develop the next generation, and the women are the one's who have as His Holiness the Dalai Lama told me, the compassion. We need to promote more compassion in the world." Sharma spoke highly of her visit to the Tibetan Children's Village, and stated her intentions to start an entrepreneurship program, along with microcredit initiatives to encourage students into enterprise. ■