

## TAR CHIEF ATTACKS DALAI LAMA AND 'INTERNATIONAL HOSTILE FORCES'

Zhang Qingli, Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), has launched a harsh attack on the Dalai Lama and what he called 'hostile international forces'. The comments came during a speech to approximately 600 Party members in Lhasa on 18 May.

Zhang also claimed a "transitional victory" over the influence of the Dalai Lama and assured the gathered Party members that he would tighten security and maintain stability ahead of the 17th Party Congress, expected in November this year, and the Beijing Olympics in August 2008. The nature of the 'victory' is unclear given the continued loyalty to the Dalai Lama among virtually all Tibetans and harsh regulatory measures on religion imposed in the TAR to counter the enduring influence of the Dalai Lama



Zhang meets soldiers of Lhasa branch of the Tibet Armed Police Brigade, December 2006 [Xinhua]

"We must have a more vigorous will to fight, a more tenacious style and do a more solid job of uniting and leading the region's various ethnic groups and throwing ourselves into the struggle against splittism," the Tibet Daily quoted Zhang as saying.

"From beginning to end ... we must deepen patriotic education at temples, comprehensively expose and denounce the Dalai Lama clique's political reactionary nature and religious hypocrisy."

Taking the Party's usual line on the Tibetan religious leader, Zhang accused the Dalai Lama of attempting to establish "an alliance aimed at splitting the motherland" and drew parallels between the international focus on Tibet and the

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### PROFILE: ZHANG QINGLI

**Position:** Appointed as acting secretary of the Party Committee of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in November 2005. Formally took over the role in May 2006. The Party Secretary is the primary political figure in the TAR, but does not hold absolute power. There has never been a Tibetan Party Secretary of the TAR.

**Biography:** Born in 1951 in Dongping, Shandong province. Zhang joined the Communist Party of China in February 1973 and studied at the Beijing Agricultural University and later worked in agricultural broadcasting and agricultural economic management.

Prior to his appointment as the head of the Communist Party in the TAR, Zhang served as Commander of the Xinjiang Construction and Production Corps (also known as the Bingtuan), which oversaw the mass migration of Han Chinese into ethnic-Uyghur areas of Xinjiang. Zhang was well known for his hard-line views on Uyghur 'separatism'.

Under Zhang's tenure in the TAR, patriotic education campaigns in religious institutions have been intensified and he has advocated a "fight to the death struggle" against the Dalai Lama. Zhang is considered a confidante and ally of President Hu Jintao, who was also Party Secretary of the TAR in the late-80s and oversaw a period of harsh martial law. ■

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*"Those who do not love their country are not qualified to be human beings. This is a matter of common sense."*

—Zhang Qingli

INTERNATIONAL  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR TIBET

#### ICT Europe

Vijzelstraat 77

1017HG Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265

Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266

eupolicy@savetibet.org

#### ICT Brussels

11, rue de la linière

1060 Brussels

Belgium

Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10

Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32

ict-eu@savetibet.org

## TAR CHIEF...

'colour' revolutions that toppled regimes in post-Soviet states:

"The fundamental objective of international hostile forces ... is to change Tibet's [political] colour...The [mandate of] heaven in Tibet will never change. The Dalai Lama clique's pipe dream [of independence] will never prevail ... the country's rivers and mountains will remain red," he said. The Dalai Lama is not seeking independence, but a genuine autonomy under Chinese sovereignty.

"The Dalai clique has stepped up efforts to infiltrate (China's) domestic territory and has schemed to move the center of its separatist activities into domestic territory," Xinhua reported.

Zhang was given a platform in the foreign media for his rhetoric against the Dalai Lama with an interview to the German magazine, Der Spiegel [16 August, 2006], in which he accused the Dalai Lama of 'destabilising' Tibet and stated that "Those who do not love their country are not qualified to be human beings. This is a matter of common sense." The Chinese authorities require Tibetans to "love their country", in other words, to respect the Party before their religion.

It is acknowledged even within by some officials in China that the rhetoric of Zhang Qingli and other hard-line figures is not necessarily in the interests of the Party, although it does reflect Beijing's priority to control Tibet, even though the authorities are nowhere near a victory over Tibetan hearts and minds.

## DALAI LAMA VISIT CANCELLED AS BELGIUM BOWS TO CHINESE PRESSURE

On the eve of the EU-China human rights dialogue on May 15-16 in Berlin, the Dalai Lama cancelled a long-planned visit to Brussels to meet with European Parliamentarians and attend a conference of NGOs supporting Tibet. The Belgian government suggested to the Dalai Lama not visit Brussels in response to pressure from Beijing, which opposes foreign trips by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The attitude of the Belgian Foreign Ministry was linked



*Dalai Lama on a previous visit to the European Parliament in Brussels [ICT]*

to the upcoming visit of a Belgian trade delegation to China, led by the Crown Prince Philippe.

The cancellation of the Tibetan leader's Brussels trip follows the postponement under similarly controversial circumstances of an earlier visit meant to take place in June 2005. The date had coincided with a state visit by the Belgian King Albert II to China.

The cancellation highlighted the aggressive nature of China's anti-Dalai Lama diplomacy and the need for EU governments to adopt a coherent position on the Dalai Lama and the Tibet issue to limit the impact of China's coercive tactics on individual member states. Coming in the same week as the EU's human rights dialogue with China, the Belgian government's stance sent mixed signals to Beijing about the EU's position on key Tibetan issues that were scheduled to be raised during the dialogue.

Beijing describes the Dalai Lama as a 'splittist' and consistently objects to his visits to foreign countries on the grounds that he is 'internationalising' the Tibetan cause. On a recent trip to Australia, the Dalai Lama's meeting with Prime Minister John Howard came in the face of Chinese condemnation and threats to trade ties. After meeting the Dalai Lama, Howard told press: "It doesn't alter our foreign policy; it doesn't alter our relationship with China. We have made it clear that we will decide who we see and I am sure the Chinese will understand that."

The level of Chinese pressure on governments receiving the Dalai Lama indicates how seriously it takes the enduring influence of the Dalai Lama, as well as its continued intolerance of the support of foreign governments for human rights and the Tibet issue. ■



**ICT Europe**  
Vijzelstraat 77  
1017HG Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265  
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266  
eupolicy@savetibet.org

**ICT Brussels**  
11, rue de la linière  
1060 Brussels  
Belgium  
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10  
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32  
ict-eu@savetibet.org

## ICT DELIVERS TIBETAN RECOMMENDATIONS TO PORTUGUESE EU PRESIDENCY

ICT has delivered a set of key recommendations on Tibet to the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in anticipation of Portugal's Presidency of the EU, which begins on 1 July. The recommendations focus on long-term priorities that ICT believes should guide the Portuguese Presidency's work on Tibet in the coming six months.

The recommendations call on the Portuguese Presidency to:

1. Actively support progress within the Sino-Tibetan dialogue towards a genuine autonomy for Tibet, including by appointing an EU Special Representative for Tibet if no tangible results on substantive issues are reached in the short/medium term;
2. Work towards the inclusion of a strong reference to the Human Rights situation in Tibet and to the Sino-Tibetan dialogue in the negotiation process and in the final version of EU-China Framework Agreement;
3. Support the request of the Dalai Lama for a visit to China on a pilgrimage before the Olympic Games in 2008;
4. Seek an to end bureaucratic controls that stifle religious expression and practice in Tibet and urge Chinese authorities to release the 11th Panchen Lama from custody;

During a meeting with Portuguese officials, ICT called on the Portuguese Presidency to raise these key issues in their various contacts with the other 26 EU Member States, with the European Commission and, when appropriate, with the Chinese authorities. ■

## DEMOLITION OF GIANT BUDDHA STATUE CONFIRMED

Chinese authorities have issued a rare statement acknowledging the 'removal' of a giant gold and copper plated statue of Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) donated by Chinese Buddhists to Samye monastery in Tibet and demolished by Chinese People's Armed Police in mid-May. There has been a trend towards the tightening of control over religion in Tibet, and the demolition is an example of the aggressive enforcement of wide-ranging new regulatory measures introduced in



*The statue of Guru Rinpoche under construction, pictured in February [ICT].*

the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in January 2007.

Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari, Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, said: "This divisive and sacrilegious act by an atheist state has caused deep anguish among Tibetans in the region. It is particularly sad that the authorities destroyed the statue of a Buddhist leader who is revered by both Tibetans and Chinese. The Buddha Dharma has the potential to bring more Tibetan and Chinese people together, and so the demolition of the Guru Rinpoche statue at Samye is nothing less than an act of splittism."

Guru Rinpoche ('precious master') is accredited with establishing Buddhism in Tibet in the 8th century and holds a particular spiritual and historical significance to Tibetans, who believe that worshipping him can remove obstacles to the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as preservation of Tibet's unique Buddhist culture.

Article 13 of new religious measures adopted by the TAR from January 2007 state that "Organisations and individuals not belonging to religious organizations or places of religious activity may not erect or construct large-scale outdoor religious statues or mani lhakhang [prayer wheel temple]."

Local Tibetan devotees were frightened to disclose information about the incident, but one local resident told the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy: "Tibetans in Lhoka, particularly in Dranang county, did not dare to challenge the officials openly but deep inside their heart, people fear and worry that the demolition of Guru Rinpoche's statue and transportation of its rubble bear a resemblance to the dark era of the Cultural Revolution." ■

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**ICT Europe**  
Vijzelstraat 77  
1017HG Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265  
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266  
eupolicy@savetibet.org

**ICT Brussels**  
11, rue de la linière  
1060 Brussels  
Belgium  
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10  
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32  
ict-eu@savetibet.org