

“Instead of scapegoating the Dalai Lama, Beijing needs urgently to reflect on the failures of its strategy for Tibet”

—ICT



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Military patrols in Lhasa following the protests that began on March 10. The identifying markings of military vehicles believed to belong to the PLA have been covered.

TIBETAN UPRISING A DAMNING VERDICT ON BEIJING'S TIBET POLICY

April, 2008, Tibet. A group of nomads on horseback gallop along a rough track towards a small town; a monk is seen shaking his fist in the air, crying: “We want the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet!” The crowd around him roars its support. The blurred image shifts, and we see the Tibetans tearing down a red Chinese flag, and raising the banned Tibetan snow lion flag.

The bold protest by the nomads and monks of Amchok Bora in eastern Tibet (view at <http://tinyurl.com/6kwyhm>) is one of the defining images of a wave of protests that swept across the Tibetan plateau since hundreds of monks took to the streets in Lhasa on March 10. It is the most significant uprising against Chinese rule in more than half a century, and it has untold political significance for China and Tibet.

Since the unrest began on March 10, one or more instances of protest have been reported in each of at least 52 county-

level locations in Tibetan areas of China, as well as in Chengdu (the capital of Sichuan), Lanzhou (the capital of Gansu), and Beijing, where Tibetan students held a silent vigil for those killed in the crackdown.

ICT has documented 125 separate incidents of dissent across the Tibetan plateau, of which 47 have been carried out by monks, 44 by laypeople, and 28 by both monks and laypeople. The majority of protests have been in Tibetan areas of Sichuan province, particularly in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), where more than 80 nuns have been detained in recent weeks for peaceful dissent. While the majority of protests have been peaceful, at least 14 of the protests are known to have involved a significant degree of violence, mainly directed at property, such as Chinese-owned shops, banks, cars and government

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No progress in dialogue as situation in Tibet remains tense

Special Envoy of the Dalai Lama Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari, Envoy Kelsang Gyaltzen and other members of the Tibetan Task Force on Sino-Tibetan Negotiations visited Beijing from 30 June to 3 July 2008 to conduct the seventh round of formal talks between the Tibetan and Chinese sides.

In Beijing, the Tibetan delegation met with Du Qinglin, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Minister of the Central United Front Work Department, Executive Vice Minister Zhu Weiqun and Vice Minister Sithar.

Lodi Gyari, speaking at a press conference on 5 July, said that the latest round of talks with China were disappointing and difficult, and had failed to lead to any breakthrough. This round of talks were particularly crucial due to the deteriorating situation in Tibet.

ICT's Vice President of Advocacy, Mary Beth Markey, said: “This round of talks clearly has not met the expectations of the international community, which has repeatedly called upon Beijing for results-based dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives. These leaders are now compelled to press Chinese President Hu to wrest the dialogue from

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their clothes, fearful of a knock on the door in the middle of the night. Someone has disappeared from almost every Tibetan household in Lhasa in the weeks since March 14, according to one Tibetan source, while another described the situation as a "second Cultural Revolution".

Many Tibetans are being taken to detention facilities far from their homes, and their families have no idea whether they are alive or dead. Hundreds of Tibetans from Lhasa, including many monks, have been seen being taken out of the city on the new train to Qinghai. Eyewitnesses have reported seeing the Tibetans being herded onto the train in Lhasa by armed troops while others have reported seeing groups arrive in Xining, Qinghai. An eyewitness told ICT: "Every prisoner seemed to be hurt badly and some had blood on their faces. There was an old lady in the group with heavy shackles on her feet, and no shoes. She was being beaten by the police." ICT has learned that the bodies of three children, who had been shot in the back, were taken away from their families in Lhasa as they were carrying out prayers.

China wants to hide the repression in Tibet from the outside world, but images of the nomad horsemen with the snow lion flag, and thousands of other Tibetans, have told an alternative story with devastating effect. Authorities have attempted to seal off virtually the entire plateau, despite promising increasing openness in the buildup to the summer Olympics in Beijing. Although some foreign tourists will now be allowed into Tibet, these tour groups are likely to be limited and highly managed, and there is no indication yet of when individual tourists will be permitted entry.

Tibet is at a turning point. Instead of scapegoating the Dalai Lama, Beijing needs urgently to reflect on the failures of its strategy for Tibet. The Chinese leadership needs to understand the extent to which these grievances emerge from a deep-seated sense of Tibetan dispossession and collective loss. It is in China's long term interest to recognize the dynamics that led to the current instability and its own role within those dynamics.

The international community has an important role to play in ensuring that China moves forward in substantive, meaningful dialogue with the only legitimate representative of the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama, and in ending the repression in Tibet. This is what Tibetans inside Tibet have risked their lives for. ■

For video footage of the protests, visit:

Nomads in Machu: <http://tinyurl.com/6kwyhm>

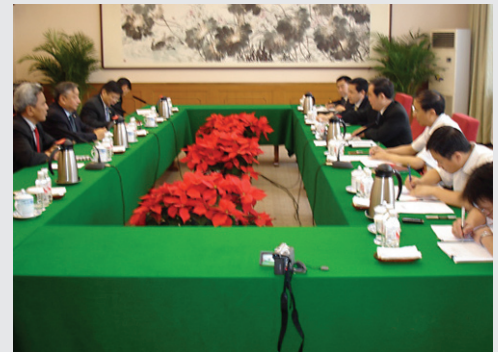
Protests in Eastern Tibet: <http://tinyurl.com/6bqnr5>

Channel 4, UK : <http://tinyurl.com/6jaog9u>

No progress in dialogue....

the grip of hardliners who are holding onto a failed policy in Tibet and blocking an achievable solution."

The Dalai Lama's Special Envoy said that during the meetings in Beijing he countered China's accusations that the Dalai Lama planned to sabotage next month's Olympics and was behind the protests against Chinese rule that swept the Tibetan plateau from March onwards. He called the discussions "one of the most difficult sessions" the two sides have had in the latest round of talks, that have been ongoing since 2002 after a decade of diplomatic stalemate, saying in a statement: "In the course of our discussions we were compelled to candidly convey to our counterparts that in the absence of serious and sincere commitment on their part the continuation of the present dialogue process would serve no purpose."



7th Round of Sino-Tibetan dialogue, Beijing,
3 July 2008

Lodi Gyari, who briefed the Dalai Lama on 5 July in India on the talks, said in Dharamsala, India: "This meeting took place at a crucial time in our relationship. The recent events in Tibet clearly demonstrated the Tibetan people's genuine and deep-rooted discontentment with the People's Republic of China's policies. The urgent need for serious and sincere efforts to address this issue with courage and vision in the interest of stability, unity and harmony of all nationalities of the PRC is obvious. In addition even though His Holiness the Dalai Lama is seeking a solution to the issue of Tibet within the PRC, it is a fact that it has become an issue of great international concern. In this context, we had hoped that the Chinese leadership would reciprocate our efforts by taking tangible steps during this round. On the contrary, due to their excessive concern about legitimacy the Chinese side even failed to agree to our proposal of issuing a joint statement with the aim of committing both parties to the dialogue process." ■

An 8-point plan to put Tibet on the EU's map

ICT Commentary, first published in European Voice, 26 June 2008

The Tibetan crisis has certainly had a negative impact on EU-China relations. However, the efforts undertaken so far by the EU's Council of Ministers and by the European Commission to address the crisis are insufficient. They must identify concrete actions and play a pro-active role that could help Tibetans and Chinese to find a compromise on Tibet's genuine autonomy and future.

The EU has many different instruments and tools at its disposal to develop a much more supportive policy on Tibet. Here is a non-exhaustive list of 8 initiatives that could be for instance taken up by the EU to move the Tibetan file forward:

1. Adopt a common position on the attendance of the Heads of Government and of State, and the EU High Representative at the Olympic Games opening ceremony in Beijing. According to ICT's information, the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) does not even want to discuss this divisive issue
2. Open the doors of the Council to the Dalai Lama. Different options could be envisaged, the most ambitious of which would be to invite the Tibetan leader to a GAERC and give him the opportunity to directly explain his middle-way approach and what kind of autonomy he is seeking for the six million Tibetans. The International Campaign for Tibet also encourages Mr. Solana (and Commission President José Manuel Barroso) to receive the Dalai lama in face-to-face meetings, whatever Chinese counter-lobbying might be
3. Play a facilitator role in the Sino-Tibetan dialogue process. Again, many different actions could be imagined, including sending an EU Emissary to Beijing, monitoring and commenting on the outcomes of the next rounds of talks, etc.
4. Nominate an EU Special Representative for Tibet as exists for other regions and countries facing serious crisis (Sudan, Middle East Peace process, Great Lakes Region, Afghanistan and others)
5. Coordinate the position on Tibet with other key partners of the International Community (Norway, US, Canada, Japan, Australia)
6. Bring the EU's Human Rights dialogue with China out of its box and create many more connections between human rights issues and other areas of cooperation, in particular in the trade sector. The EU could also use public statements to express more transparently its assessment on the results of the talks, which could



European public attitudes towards China's actions in Tibet were clear as the Olympic Torch arrived in London and Paris, but at the political level there remains an unwillingness to challenge China's human rights record head on

increase pressure on the Chinese Government to commit itself in the dialogue in a much more serious way

7. Include a strong reference on Tibet in the on-going talks on the Partnership Agreement under the lead of the Commission's external relations department. On this specific issue, Parliament President Hans-Geert Pöttering said on the 8 November 2007: "I think it is vital that in that framework the question of the future of Tibetan people and also the question of Human Rights should find due place". The EU and China will never become real partners while the Tibet question remains unresolved
8. Keep Tibet high on the agenda after the Olympic Games, once the media and public opinion's attention diminishes

The EU has different and very concrete ways to help the Tibetan people. What is now needed is the adoption of a much more courageous, coherent and ambitious EU foreign policy with regards to the sensitive question of Tibet and human rights issues in China.

The EU has a long-standing and unique experience in crisis prevention and crisis management. Many of its most experienced diplomats, if tasked, could certainly find imaginative and creative ideas to assist the Chinese and Tibetan sides in finding, once and for all, a peaceful and long-term solution for Tibet. ■



Monks from Labrang Monastery, Gansu province, staged a protest in front of a state-organized media tour for foreign and Chinese journalists on 9 April.

Beijing responds to protests with intensified Patriotic Education campaigns

Once the height of the protests in the TAR and other Tibetan areas through the second half of March had passed, the response of the Chinese authorities was to step up patriotic education campaigns throughout Tibet, especially in areas where demonstrations or dissent had occurred.

These campaigns, involving denunciation of the Dalai Lama, have been ongoing, and deeply resented, in many parts of Tibet since at least 1996, and one of the first protests in the wave of demonstrations this year at Ditsa Monastery in Qinghai province on March 10 seems to have begun in response to such a campaign.

The intensification of these campaigns in the aftermath of serious protests was accompanied by punitive searches of monasteries by security forces (including those previously uninvolved in protest), arrests of monks and others for possession of photos of the Dalai Lama and the requirement for individuals to sign statements confessing involvement in the protests. In many cases, heads of monasteries have had to guarantee that no further demonstrations will take place. Laypeople are also being targeted in this new round of patriotic education with demands that they denounce the Dalai Lama and pledge loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The first known case of renewed protest sparked by patriotic education work teams entering monasteries was at Nangshik in Ngaba TAP in Sichuan on March 18, just two days after the major protest at nearby Kirti monastery that led to the shooting of unarmed protestors. Further examples of such protests have been reported in places including Sakya (Chinese: Sajia) county in the TAR on March 19; in Nyarong, (Chinese: Xinlong) county in

Kardze TAP on March 29; in Sog (Chinese: Suo) and Biru counties in the TAR, also on March 29; in Jomda (Chinese: Jiangda) county (in Sibda) in the TAR on March 14; in Yulgen (at Tsang Gon) and Nyakchuka on April 15; in Lhasa (Nechung) on April 19; in Dege (Chinese: Derge) county (in Dzakok) in Kardze on April 28; and in Markham county (at Khenpalung Gon) in Sichuan on May 12.

Several protests were conceived as expressions of sympathy for those killed in the uprising and appeals for clemency. In most cases they were staged by nuns, monks, school children or students.

On an "inspection tour" of six monasteries in Lhasa, reported in the Chinese media on June 5, Zhang Qingli was shown assessing the "patriotic education and political situation at Sera, Drepung, Ramoche, Potala and Jokhang temples" (Xizang TV). Zhang Qingli was quoted as saying "In order to attain our goal of political education in the monasteries, we have built up a suitable political environment in order to clean up influences of the 'Dalai Clique' and crack down on his supporters. The political education program in the monasteries is one of the most important programs of the TAR government and the central government has been paying great attention to this too. Anyone who tries to disturb our campaigns must be punished right away and decisively, in order to establish a proper foundation for the long term peaceful political environment in the monasteries."

A recent report in China's state media directly linked the patriotic education campaign with ensuring "security and stability" during the Olympics, and stated that "patriotic education" in one monastery in Lhundrub

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Chinese soldiers arrive to conduct a search at Tsendrok monastery in Mayma township, Machu County, Gansu.

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(Chinese: Linzhou) county in the TAR included passing onto monks “relevant knowledge” about the Olympics.

The report stated: “In order to create a peaceful and harmonious Lhundrub and to ensure security and stability during the period of the Olympic sacred flame torch relay and the Olympics, Lhundrub county People’s Armed Police has demanded that People’s Armed Police leaders in all townships vigorously carry out patriotic education in monasteries under their jurisdiction, and that monks at monasteries study the ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’, that the state’s laws and regulations as well as the Party’s nationality policies and religion policies and regulations are propagandized to the monks, that the great developments in Tibet’s society and relevant knowledge about the Olympics are propagandized, making use of available and typical examples to educate the broad masses of monks and nuns in order to strengthen their patriotic sentiment and their understanding of the law, and to make them conscientiously uphold the unification of the motherland and oppose ethnic splittism.” (‘Linzhou county rolls out patriotic education in monasteries’, June 18, 2008, www.chinatibetnews.com.)

The campaign has also involved searches at monasteries for items of political significance such as Dalai Lama pictures - took place in other monasteries. ICT has received several reports of religious artefacts being seized and taken away by troops from monasteries. There are indications that these are actions not necessarily sanctioned by higher officials.

A Tibetan source told ICT: “The personal possessions of monks as well as objects like small statues and antique china bowls have been stolen by police during raids on several monasteries. There is evidence that these actions

are by local security forces taking the law into their own hands.” The looting of monasteries during raids also occurred during the crackdown in the late 1980s in Lhasa.



Monks from Drepung Monastery walk towards Lhasa city centre on 10 March, four days before widescale clashes erupted on Friday 14 March.

In a report from Beijing in the first week of July, the London Times’ Jane McCarthy reported that few monks remain in the major Lhasa monasteries of Drepung, Sera and Ganden and that over 1,000 monks have been transferred to prisons and detention centres in and around the city of Golmud in Qinghai province. Young monks originating from outside the TAR have been particularly targeted as part of a policy to rid the monasteries of any monks not registered as formal residents of the TAR and some men say that they are growing their hair so as not be mistaken for a monk and interrogated. ■