



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

French President Macron's statement on the Dalai Lama and Tibet

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George Washington University - On April 25, 2018 French President Emmanuel Macron, on his first official visit to the United States, held a town hall question and answer session with George Washington University students in the U.S. capital. One student raised a question on a possible meeting between the President and the Dalai Lama, leading to the following exchange:

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Question: Hello President Macron. Thank you for being here, we welcome you. My name is Walter James, I am a Senior in the Elliott School of International Affairs. In 2016, the Dalai Lama made an official visit to France, but President Holland did not meet with him, nor any member of the French government. Given Beijing's repression of Tibet and its persecution of the current Dalai Lama, who's exiled in India, and given France and EU's positive relations with the PRC, would you meet with the Dalai Lama if he were to return to France?

Answer: As for the second question on Dalai Lama. I met Dalai Lama during my campaign, in Paris (...). It was a great meeting. He is a great leader, he is very inspiring, and I do respect him a lot. Now, I am President of the French Republic. If I meet him, it will create indeed a crisis with China. For me, I have two questions in front of such a situation: do I help the situation for Dalai Lama himself, and is it good for my country? If tomorrow I meet Dalai Lama in Paris, am I useful in order to fix the situation between Dalai Lama and the Chinese Republic? If I don't have any mandate from the Chinese Republic, if I don't discuss with them before, if I don't build the condition to have a useful meeting, honestly, it's useless. Is it good for my people, if I have a sort of countermeasures coming from China? For sure no. So my answer will be: if France could be useful in order to fix the situation between the Dalai Lama and his people, and China, I will do my best. I think this people deserves it, and I think it would be good for China itself. And China is one of our great ally, and China is a great country I do respect. So my answer would be much more let's work with China and let's try to be, if we are the right facilitator. I perceive some early signals, that the Chinese President wants to move. I hope so. I hope so for China, I hope so for the Dalai Lama, I hope so for Buddhist people. But like that, without any pre-condition, just to provide the signal, I think it's useless and counterproductive to have a meeting with the Dalai Lama in France tomorrow. *(Transcript by ICT)*

In September 2016, a poll conducted by the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP) found that 86% of the French public felt that the former French President François Hollande “has to officially receive the Dalai Lama in the name of Human Rights.” The results of the poll are available here.