



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Tibet's continued isolation belies Chinese claims in new white paper on Tibet's development

<http://www.savetibet.org/tibets-continued-isolation-belies-chinese-claims-in-new-white-paper-on-tibets-development/>

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China's new white paper on Tibet, "Democratic Reform in Tibet – Sixty Years On," is an acknowledgement that Chinese government policies have failed to win the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people.

Released on March 27, 2019 and timed to appear one day before China's 'Serf Emancipation Day,' the white paper clearly is an attempt to justify China's continued control over Tibet and to seek legitimacy.

It is telling that the white paper with China's claim about everything being fine in Tibet was released in Beijing even as Tibet remained closed to foreigners. If the situation of the Tibetan people is as good as the white paper claims, China should have nothing to fear in providing access to Tibet to independent observers, journalists and diplomats. If Beijing sincerely believes the people of Tibet have benefited greatly under its rule, it should allow them freedom of movement and expression so that they can travel and make their case themselves.

If there is one thing China has proven over 60 years of ham-fisted rule in Tibet, it is that its propaganda should never be trusted.

The fact is that even after 60 years and claims about being liberated, the Tibetan people continue to suffer systematic discrimination and abuse and have no right to live with freedom and dignity. After 60 years, Tibet remains a major liability for China in diplomatic affairs, as evidenced by the recent passage of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act, which bans entry to the US for the Chinese officials responsible for keeping Americans out of Tibet.

The white paper does not acknowledge the reasons for the continued grievances the Tibetan people have, as evidenced in a stark way by the more than 150 Tibetan self-immolations of the past decade. Rather, by dwelling at length on the misdeeds of the government of independent Tibet, which the report refers to as "old Tibet," China tries to lay the blame for Tibet's present on what might have happened 60 years earlier.

The fact is that to the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama symbolizes their identity, religion and culture. The Chinese government knows that the only way for it to have genuine stability in Tibet and respect in the international arena is for it to engage directly with the representatives of the Dalai Lama in negotiations on Tibet's future. But due to the lack of political courage to do this, they can only try to spin the narrative by coming out with documents like this white paper, which have no connection to the reality in Tibet today.