



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

China pressured Nobel laureates to disinvite Dalai Lama

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World-renowned scientists and the US State Department have warned the Chinese government after it attempted to intervene to stop the Dalai Lama from speaking at a gathering of Nobel laureates earlier this year.

More than 100 Nobel Prize winners signed a letter on July 28 saying that in late March and early April, the Chinese Embassy in Washington, DC called a senior official of the US National Academy of Sciences—cosponsor of the Nobel Prize Summit in April alongside the Nobel Foundation—and insisted they disinvite both the Dalai Lama and Taiwanese scientist Yuan T. Lee.

On April 25, the embassy emailed the academy, again demanding that the Dalai Lama and Lee not speak at the first-of-its-kind summit, which focused on climate change and sustainable development.

After those demands went unheeded, the summit was hit with a presumed cyberattack during its first virtual session on April 26—followed by another cyberattack that disrupted the entire platform on April 27, the day of the Dalai Lama's virtual remarks.

“This Nobel Prize Summit issue is another example of the Chinese government telling the world, ‘Do as I say, not as I do,’” the International Campaign for Tibet said. *“China loves to claim that any criticism of its oppression in Tibet is ‘foreign interference,’ but that doesn’t stop the Chinese government from interfering in the interaction that governments, organizations and individuals have with the Dalai Lama.*

“The Dalai Lama has always considered the interests of humanity, including Chinese and Tibetans, and if Chinese officials simply meet with him themselves, they can see the man of peace that he really is.”

Dalai Lama summit message

ICT added that China's attempts to stop the Dalai Lama from speaking at the summit were even more absurd given the unifying, peaceful message the Tibetan Buddhist leader delivered.

In his video remarks to the summit, the Dalai Lama said:

“We should pay more attention about ecology and preserve water resources. We really need a concept of oneness of 7 billion human beings. We all live on one planet. Our basic way of life is the same. So according to that reality, no longer emphasis on my nation, my country. Now we should think more of humanity.”

The Dalai Lama added that Buddhism's emphasis on logic complements modern science, and he suggested the best way to achieve happiness is “to think about the well-being of humanity on this planet.”

The Dalai Lama earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 in part for his environmental efforts, as well as his nonviolent advocacy for an end to China's oppression in Tibet, which the Chinese government annexed more than six decades ago.

China has also made clear its desire to annex Taiwan, an independent democratic country in the Pacific Ocean.

Lee, the Taiwanese scientist, earned the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1986.

Scientists, State Department warn China

In their letter, the Nobel laureates say they are “outraged by the Chinese [government’s] attempt to censor and bully the scientific community by attempting to prevent two of our fellow Laureates (or indeed anyone) from speaking at a meeting outside of China.”

While noting that many of them have valued colleagues and friends in China, the laureates warn that China’s behavior only serves to hinder scientific cooperation and “if continued, will affect our willingness to participate in events in China, particularly those fully or partially sponsored or supported by the Chinese government.”

The US State Department also told NBC News that it was aware of the Chinese Embassy’s attempts to interfere in the summit and said, “We condemn this harassment, and have warned the Embassy against this inappropriate conduct.”

The department added: “This, unfortunately, is just another example of the [People’s Republic of China] attempting to suppress free expression and bully people and institutions outside of China whose views and values differ from the Chinese Communist Party’s political agenda.”

Following is the full text of the Nobel Laureates’ letter and the names of the signatories.

Statement by the Nobel Laureates, July 28, 2021

We Nobel Laureates are greatly concerned about a series of incidents that occurred prior to and during the Nobel Prize Summit, Our Planet, Our Future, held from April 26-28, 2021. The Summit brought together international thought leaders of all ages around the world to address some of the greatest challenges that humanity faces. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the Nobel Foundation and the US National Academy of Sciences.

In late March and again in early April, the Chinese Embassy in Washington telephoned a senior National Academy official and insisted that two of the scheduled speakers, the Dalai Lama and Dr. Yuan T. Lee, should be disinvited and not allowed to speak at the Nobel Summit. The embassy was told at both times that no such disinvitation would take place.

On Sunday afternoon, April 25th, immediately before the Nobel Summit, the National Academy received an email from the Chinese Embassy demanding that the Dalai Lama and Dr. Yuan T. Lee not be permitted to speak. Again, the request was denied. During the first virtual session of the meeting on April 26th, the video transmission of the session was disrupted by a presumed cyber-attack.

Again, on April 27th another cyber-attack disrupted the entire platform. Regardless of whether these attacks were linked to the demands from the Chinese embassy, we are outraged by the Chinese governments attempt to censor and bully the scientific community by attempting to prevent two of our fellow Laureates (or indeed anyone) from speaking at a meeting outside of China.

The future of our planet will require collaboration between all nations and all scientists across the globe. Many of us have valued scientific colleagues and long-standing friends in China, with whom we interact productively. Unfortunately, actions such as those described above only serve to hinder such essential cooperation, and if continued, will affect our willingness to participate in events in China, particularly those fully or partially sponsored or supported by the Chinese government.

We strongly believe that the free and open expression of ideas and the freedom of assembly are basic human rights, and international forums such as the Nobel Summit are essential means of finding solutions,

maintaining international trust, and securing a more just and prosperous future. In so doing, these efforts will confer great benefits onto humankind.



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