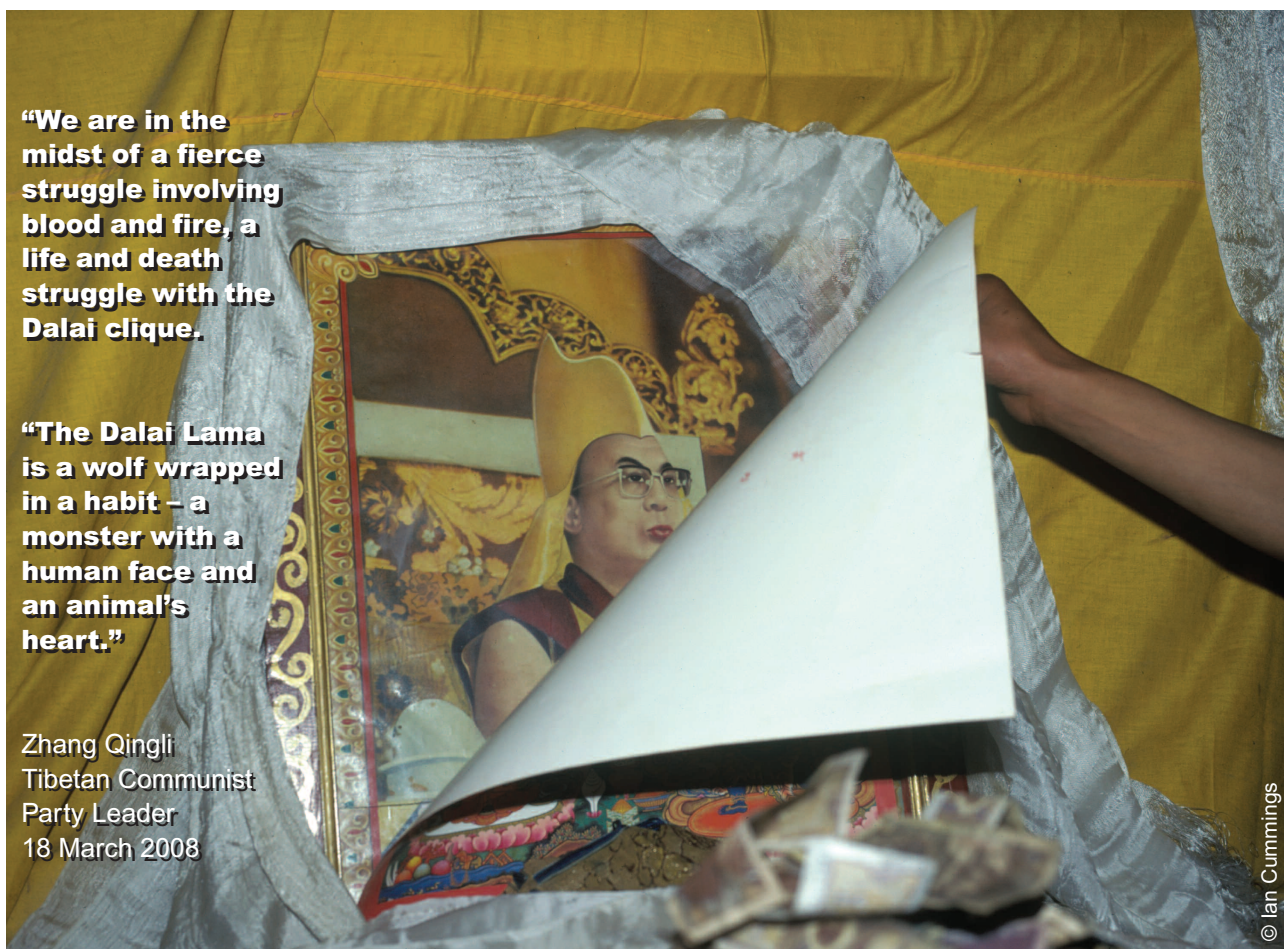


# Revealing the truth:

Why China's anti-Dalai Lama campaign must end



The Tibetan people may have to hide their devotion to the Dalai Lama, but it is never far from the surface.

A Free Tibet Campaign briefing

May 2008

# Summary

For Tibetans, Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama is the symbol of their very identity, the individual they steadfastly view as both their religious and political leader. That Tibetans continue to venerate him nearly 50 years after his exile challenges the legitimacy of Chinese presence in Tibet and is anathema to a Communist regime which demands the undivided loyalty of those it rules. That the Dalai Lama is also respected and venerated throughout the western world enrages the Chinese government.

According to the patriotic education sessions which Tibetan monks, nuns and laypeople are forced to undergo, the Dalai Lama is “the main source of harm to the stability of Tibetan society”. Individuals and groups who meet with the Dalai Lama or voice support for the cause of the Tibetan people are dismissed by the Chinese government as members of the “Dalai clique”. Tibetans are told that “opposing the Dalai clique is our number one responsibility”.

A book could and should be written about the Chinese government’s spectacularly unsuccessful propaganda campaign to turn the Tibetan people and the western world against the Dalai Lama.

The object of this briefing is to provide an overview of the problem, citing examples of the Chinese government’s campaign to vilify the Dalai Lama. In writing this briefing, it is also hoped that world leaders, in the spirit of friendship with China, will prevail upon Beijing to embrace the Dalai Lama as the key to unlocking a solution in Tibet.

Faced with the unrest which began in Lhasa on 10 March 2008 and quickly spread throughout the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and the former Tibetan provinces of Amdo and Kham (absorbed into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Qinghai and Gansu), the Chinese government refused to accept the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people who fear for the survival of their ancient culture.

Instead, Chinese authorities immediately pointed the finger of blame at the Dalai Lama, claiming that he is the cause of all problems in Tibet.

Chinese officials cannot (or will not) see what world leaders have often told them: There will never be any solution to the problems in Tibet until the Chinese government accepts the right of the Tibetan people to love their spiritual leader and ends its relentless campaign to vilify him.

The current unrest began on the 10 March 2008 anniversary of the failed 1959 Tibetan Uprising when monks from Drepung monastery in Lhasa marched to a government building to demand the release of monks who had been detained since the October 2007 celebrations of the awarding of the US Congressional Medal of Honour to the Dalai Lama. Although the march and the demands were peaceful, extreme force was used to break up the rally. When the public became aware that police had assaulted monks, the protest rapidly escalated.

Since the Chinese government brought in troops and threw out journalists and other independent observers, there have been almost daily incidents of defiance throughout the TAR and other Tibetan populated areas. Central to all these protests have been calls for the return of the Dalai Lama. Information from Tibet suggests there have been hundreds of deaths and thousands of arrests. There are reports of arbitrary detention of men, women and children, torture, enforced starvation in monasteries and the suicide of monks and nuns. Patriotic education sessions, which require monks and nuns to denounce the Dalai Lama have been intensified. Schoolchildren are being forced to write anti-Dalai Lama essays.

And yet the protests continue. Knowing that the eyes of the world were on China in the run up to the Beijing Olympics, Tibetans in all regions of historic Tibet have been emboldened to make one, last desperate plea to the world for the help which has been so long denied them.

As one Tibetan told Free Tibet Campaign: *“We are fighting for our very survival. Without the support of the world, we will loose. We are armed with portraits of His Holiness and they are armed with machine guns.”*

World leaders have long recognised the need for the Chinese government to negotiate a solution with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile. Indeed, they were quick to call for talks in the aftermath of the recent crackdown in Tibet.

On 19 March 2008, Gordon Brown announced in the House of Commons that Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao was willing to arrange talks between the Chinese government and envoys of the Dalai Lama. However, the day before this announcement, Premier Wen was quoted as saying: *“Assertions by the Dalai clique that they desire peaceful negotiations are nothing but lies... There is ample fact and we also have plenty of evidence proving this incident was organised, premeditated and incited by the Dalai clique... Hypocritical lies cannot cover ironclad facts.”*

Following international pressure, the Chinese government announced on 25 April 2008 that it would meet informally with envoys of the Dalai Lama on 4 May. The next day an editorial in the Communist Party People’s Daily, attacked ‘the Dalai clique’ for seeking support from Western countries and ignoring ‘the efforts and achievements made by China after shaking off serfdom and poverty in Tibet’. This hardly boded well for the Chinese government’s sincerity in meeting with representatives of the Tibetan government-in-exile. For observers of the previous rounds of so-called negotiations, it came as no surprise that nothing substantive came out of these talks.

Although the Chinese government and the Tibetan government-in-exile met six times between 2002 and 2007, these were never real negotiations with substantive outcomes: they were talks about the preconditions under which the Chinese government might consider negotiations.

These preconditions included demands that the Dalai Lama renounce violence (which he has always done), renounce demands for Tibetan independence (which he has done for nearly 30 years, offering instead negotiations for fuller autonomy for Tibetans), a demand that the Dalai Lama affirm Taiwan as an inseparable part of the Chinese motherland, and, more recently, a demand that the Dalai Lama stops trying to sabotage the Olympic games (despite the Dalai Lama’s unswerving support for the staging of the 2008 games in Beijing).

Western governments are all too aware that the talks to date have been far from substantive and yet many leaders and diplomats continue to hide behind support for these negotiations as an excuse to not press the Chinese government for more action on Tibet.

### **Enough is enough.**

It is time for real negotiations about the future of Tibet to begin - without preconditions - between the Chinese government and the man who holds the key, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama.

In order to ensure that a peaceful, negotiated solution is reached to end the often brutal military occupation of Tibet and allow the unique culture of Tibet to flourish, the Chinese government must:

1. Acknowledge that the Dalai Lama has never endorsed violence and has made it plain that he would resign his position as leader if Tibetans chose the path of violence.
2. Acknowledge that the Dalai Lama has relinquished all previous demands for full Tibetan independence since 1979.
3. Remove all irrelevant preconditions to negotiations, such as the demand that the Dalai Lama state that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China.
4. End its campaign of vilifying the Dalai Lama in Tibet and in China.
5. Begin substantive talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile to be held in a neutral third country and attended by independent observers.

# Runggye Adak: a case in point

The Lithang horse festival is an enormously popular event in the Tibetan calendar which attracts tourists from around the world. In August 2007 it also led to a huge demonstration calling for the return of the Dalai Lama.



Runggye Adak, a nomad from eastern Tibet, mounted the stage at the horse festival, offering a ceremonial scarf to the chief lama of Lithang monastery. He then seized the microphone, calling out to the crowd that they should have freedom of religious belief and that the Dalai Lama should be allowed to return to Tibet. The crowd roared its approval.

Adak was immediately arrested. Fearing for his safety, thousands of Tibetans gathered at the police station demanding the release of Adak and 20 others detained with him.

On 29 October, Adak and three others (his nephew Adak Lopo, a respected senior monk from Lithang monastery; Kunkhyen, a popular Tibetan singer and art teacher; and Jarib Lothok) were tried on charges of splittism at the Ganzi Autonomous Prefecture People's Court. According to Radio Free Asia, Adak told the judge from the dock: *"When I shouted 'Long live the Dalai Lama', I was detained and then formally arrested."* Adak said there was no one in Tibet who did not have faith in, loyalty to or the heartfelt wish to see the return of the Dalai Lama. He countered 'propaganda' by the Chinese authorities that Tibetans have lost faith in the Dalai Lama, stating: *"That is wrong, but we have no freedom to say so."*

All four men were found guilty and on 20 November 2007, Runggye Adak was given an eight-year sentence for "inciting to split the country" and for "severely disrupting public order". His nephew Adak Lopo was sentenced to 10 years for "colluding with foreign separatists forces to split the country and distributing political pamphlets" (i.e. attempting to get information about the case to sources in the west). Kunkhyen, also accused of attempting to disseminate information about the case, was sentenced to nine years in prison. Jarib Lothok received a three year sentence for helping to send photos abroad.

Runggye Adak told the court: *"I wanted His Holiness to return, and I wanted to raise Tibetan concerns and grievances, as there is no outlet for us to do so. That made me sad and made me act."*

Radio Free Asia reported that all four men protested their sentences, calling out: *"We cannot accept this decision. This is not a fair trial."*

The fact that those accused of communicating with foreign media and groups about the case received harsher sentences than Runggye Adak himself sent a clear message to Tibetans: Anyone attempting to get the truth about Tibet out of the country faced a hefty prison sentence.

The case of these four men, found guilty of calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet continues to be raised by British and other world diplomats with their counterparts in Beijing.

**BEFORE:** In the weeks leading up to the horse festival, Chinese officials in Lithang had been circulating and demanding Tibetans sign petitions which opposed the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama.

**AFTER:** In mid-December 2007, a mandatory public meeting was called in Lithang. After listening to the requisite speeches, people were asked to raise their hand if they opposed the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. No one raised a hand. They were then asked to raise their hands if they did not possess a weapon at home. As it is illegal to own a weapon, everyone raised their hands. A photograph was duly taken of the second show of hands and, to the outrage of citizens, published in a newspaper, claiming it was a unanimous vote against the return of the Dalai Lama.

# Patriotic education and other dirty tricks

*“Every nation on earth teaches its people to love their motherland. We are organising patriotic education everywhere, not just in the monasteries. Those who do not love their country are not qualified to be human beings. This is a matter of common sense.”*

Zhang Qingli, Communist Party Secretary, Tibetan Autonomous Region  
August 2006

Of all the unpopular Communist Chinese policies in Tibet, nothing is more contentious than patriotic education. Contrary to the above statement by Zhang Qingli, the primary targets of patriotic education are monks and nuns who must denounce the Dalai Lama during these sessions. Refusing to do so can result in their eviction from their monasteries or nunneries.

Responding to the unrest which began in Tibet in March and spread throughout all Tibetan-populated areas, the Chinese government has stepped up and intensified patriotic education. This move has been met with tragic resistance on at least one occasion.

## Massacre at Tongkor

On 2 April 2008, Chinese authorities arrived at Tongkor monastery in Kardze county, Sichuan Province, home to approximately 370 monks. When the authorities announced they would be conducting a patriotic education session the following day, Lobsang Jamyang, the chant master in charge of the monastery, refused to co-operate, saying he would rather die than ever denounce the Dalai Lama again.

The following day, during a religious ceremony at the monastery, Lobsang Jamyang informed the other monks that the authorities would be coming for patriotic education and of his refusal to co-operate. Another monk, Yeshe Nyima, stood up and said he also refused to denounce the Dalai Lama. The other monks all agreed.

Later that day, according to eyewitness reports given to Tibet Watch, approximately 3000 armed police surrounded the monastery and began to search it. They found photos of the Dalai Lama in the huts of Geshi Sonam Tenzing and Tsultrim Phuntsok and arrested both monks.

Early that evening the remaining monks and about 400 Tibetans marched to a government building, shouting “Long live His Holiness. We don’t have freedom. We want freedom.” They demanded the release of the two monks. Tongkor town authorities promised the monks would be released within two hours. When the agreed time arrived without the release of the monks, the same crowd began to march again towards the government building. Before they reached their destination, they were confronted by hundreds of armed police. In the ensuing clash, the police opened fire on the crowd, killing at least eight people, including two women and a monk.

Despite the complete media blackout imposed by the Chinese government in all Tibetan areas, Free Tibet Campaign was able to release details of this atrocity to the press. The response of the Chinese authorities was to offer a reward of up to 80,000 Yuan for information about anyone attempting to pass information to foreigners via phones or the internet.

The central theme of patriotic education is that individuals must love their country first and foremost. In order to prove that they do, monks and nuns must denounce their spiritual leader. The Dalai Lama, knowing how painful this is, has made it clear that monks and nuns should do what is required of them in order to practise their faith – whatever words they are forced to speak cannot alter what is in their hearts.

Sample questions and the 'correct' answers from a patriotic education test at Tsamkhung monastery (obtained by Tibet Watch) follow.

Q. What are the reasons for opposing the splittists and the Dalai clique?

A. *Tibet is inseparable from the motherland and hence it is the number one duty of the PRC to oppose the splittists and to protect the unity of the motherland. Since the Dalai clique ran away, they have been working to disturb the harmony of the motherland and have committed sins trying to destabilise the nationalities. Opposing the splittists protects the unity of the motherland. Opposing the Dalai clique is our number one responsibility.*

Q. What is the aim of the 14th Dalai Lama declaring Tibetan independence and harming the unity of the motherland?

A. *The aim of the Dalai Lama doing these things is to bring back the old feudal society and to revive now defunct politico-religious powers in his hands.*

Q. What are the four views that CPC have of the Dalai?

A. *First, the 14th Dalai is the main source of harm to the stability of Tibetan society. Second, he is the head of a group that wants to split Tibet from the motherland. Third, his is an unmistakable tool in the hands of foreign imperialists opposing China. Fourth, he is the biggest obstacle in setting rules regarding Buddhist philosophy.*

Another source of great frustration and anger for Tibetans is the relentless campaign by the Chinese authorities to compel or dupe them into denouncing the Dalai Lama and refuting their passionate desire for his return.

It takes many forms: Demands that Tibetans sign Chinese-language anti-Dalai Lama petitions which they do not understand, tricks like the Lithang show of hands (page 4) used to maintain the fiction that Tibetans do not want the Dalai Lama to return, demands that schoolchildren write anti-Dalai Lama essays (they are only allowed to refer to him as "Dalai" - if they say "Dalai Lama", they are punished and forced to begin again).

Where intimidation or collusion do not work, the Chinese authorities are not above straightforward bribes.

For example, in December 2007, every Township Secretary and Accountant from Gansu province was invited to take part in a month-long, all expenses paid tour of China. Prior to their departure they were summoned to a meeting in Lanzhou where, in front of television cameras, they were told to sign a petition on behalf of the citizens they represented, stating their opposition to the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama.



The banner at this Tibetan school assembly reads: Learn and implement the white paper book of 'Minority Ethnic Regional Autonomy of Tibet', deeply expose and condemn Dalai".

One old man from Amchok, Hezui City, who refused to sign, was taken away and beaten. The old man was kept in prison in Lanzhou until the rest of the delegates returned a month later. He was warned not to tell anyone back home what happened to him or face being arrested again. The old man ignored the warning and talked about his experience. He said he'd had the worst beating of his life, but he was ready to face more beatings and imprisonment rather than be silent about the anti-Dalai Lama plot. Apparently the Secretaries and Accountants who signed the anti-Dalai Lama petition were also rewarded with salary increases of between 2000 and 3000 Yuan per month.

# One photo is worth a beating

It has long been illegal in the TAR and Tibetan regions of China to possess an image of the Dalai Lama. The strictness with which this had been enforced varied, with authorities in Sichuan and Qinghai (the former Tibetan provinces of Amdo and Kham) often more lenient about displays of the Dalai Lama's image in monasteries and nunneries. This has changed dramatically following the outbreak of dissent throughout all Tibetan areas. In open defiance of the ban, monks, nuns and laypeople marched in the streets with photos of the Dalai Lama and the also illegal Tibetan flag. In response, the military and police have searched a number of monasteries and nunneries, defacing any large images they find of the Dalai Lama, such as the one from Kirti monastery shown below. (Kirti was the site of another massacre in early April, with eyewitnesses reporting the deaths of up to 30 Tibetans.<sup>1</sup>)



Chinese authorities have also stepped up their campaign to confiscate all photographs of the Dalai Lama. A Tibetan businessman who was visiting Lhasa when the protests began, told Free Tibet Campaign that beginning March 14th, roadblocks were set up every 100 metres with police and military checking everyone for identity cards and photos of the Dalai Lama.

*“Anyone found carrying photos of the Dalai Lama was ordered to tear them up and step on them. Anyone refusing to do this was arrested and beaten. I was in line at one security point when an elderly Tibetan man of around 75 years was caught with a Dalai Lama photo. He was ordered to tear the photo and step on it but he refused. He was immediately beaten and fell to the ground. I saw blood spilling from his head. Two armed police were pointing guns at him whilst another policeman handcuffed him. Then he was led away.”*

This policy, which led directly to the massacre in Tongkor on 3 April 2008 (see page 5), has led to the arrest, beating and detention of many monks, nuns and laypeople. A nun from Golok Prefecture, Tsongon Province [Ch: Qinghai] described to Tibet Watch the shocking but not untypical treatment she received from soldiers in Shigatse in the TAR when they discovered she was wearing a Dalai Lama photo necklace hidden under her clothing:



*“They saw the photo [of the Dalai Lama on a necklace] and when I would not give it to them, the soldiers rushed over and beat me. When my companions cried out that a nun was going to be killed, they were beaten and thrown across the room.*

*“I was punched and kicked and blood was spouting from my mouth. Then I was tied to a pillar and kicked on the chest many times. Red colour flashed before my eyes and a gun was pointed at me, the soldier saying if I did not give them the photo I would be killed. I was scared and handed it over to them. I was kept tied to the pillar for a long time and in the evening when I was untied, I was so stiff I fell over. The soldiers just trampled me under their feet.*

*“The next day I was beaten again. When they beat me they said, ‘We arrested more than 500 people and there was no one as stubborn as you, your behaviour is not good.’ From that time on I could not walk and had excruciating pain. They gave me an injection and sent me to hospital.”*

## Tibetan defiance

*“It is by no means an isolated and accidental event. At face value, it is an internal affair within a monastery, but on a fundamental level, it was provoked by the Dalai clique whose purpose is to arouse conflict between different sects of Tibetan Buddhism, thus sabotaging the unity of Tibet.”*

Norbu Dunzhub, Mayor of Lhasa  
10 May 2008

Before the Chinese government imposed a media blackout in the TAR and all other Tibetan regions in March 2008, the world saw ample evidence of the desperation of Tibetans to preserve the cultural identity. The connection between the Dalai Lama and recent events in Tibet is simple: The Tibetan people want to see the return of their spiritual leader. Nothing the Chinese authorities say or do can change this.

Although the recent and ongoing protests are the most concerted and widespread since the failed 1959 Uprising, Tibetans have never missed an opportunity to show their support for the Dalai Lama and their defiance of Chinese government policy.



For example, when word reached Tibet in January 2006 that the Dalai Lama had condemned as not befitting Buddhist beliefs the practice of wearing garments adorned with the fur of endangered animals, the response was immediate. On 9 February, 10,000 people took part in a mass fur burning ceremony at Kirti monastery in Sichuan province. When word reached Tibetans travelling to Meiwa monastery that Chinese officials had banned another mass burning planned for 12 February, they set fire to the skins they were bringing all along the roadside, before returning home. In Tso, Amdo [Ch: Qinghai], skins were burned for several days (pictured, left). From villages of just eight families to towns everywhere, Tibetans rushed to follow the wishes of the Dalai Lama by burning fur-adorned clothing.

The response of the Chinese authorities was to demand the presenters on Tibetan television wear endangered furs.

In March 2007, defying a Chinese government ban on any religious ceremony connected with the Dalai Lama, hundreds of Tibetans congregated in Lhasa to burn incense and offer long-life prayers to coincide with similar ceremonies they found out were being held in Dharamsala, the exiled Dalai Lama's home.

Whatever measures the Chinese authorities take to prevent information about the Dalai Lama reaching Tibet, news invariably filters in.

In October 2007, the Chinese authorities shut down internet cafes and blocked websites and blogs in an unsuccessful attempt to repress news of the presentation of a US Congressional Medal of Honour to the Dalai Lama. The authorities in Labrang ordered all shops selling fireworks to close on 13 October to prevent sales of celebratory firecrackers. Monks who travelled from Labrang to Linsha to buy firecrackers in defiance of the ban were stopped by Chinese police, who confiscated approximately Chinese Yuan 8,000 (just over £500) worth of firecrackers. Eyewitnesses in Tibet reported huge increases in military personnel near monasteries in the TAR and in Tibetan provinces of China on or immediately before the 17 October ceremony.<sup>2</sup>

Although Chinese authorities attempted to block media coverage into and out of Tibet, news leaked out of a four-day clash between monks from the Drepung monastery in Lhasa and the police, who were determined to prevent monks and lay people celebrating the awarding of the Medal of Honour to the Dalai Lama. Reports indicated that 3000 military personnel surrounded the monastery, preventing the 1000 monks from leaving the building to celebrate with lay people.

The clashes spread far beyond Drepung monastery. There was an earlier conflict between monks and armed Chinese police who broke up a special celebratory prayer service at Labrang monastery in Amdo [Ch: Qinghai].



Armed troops gather at Drepung monastery on 17 October, the day the Dalai Lama received the Congressional medal. Photo obtained by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, India

Also in Amdo, eyewitnesses described police confiscating the satellite dishes that local people in Chentse County had put on their rooftops to help them receive coverage of the award ceremony from Voice of America. Subsequent eyewitness reports said that power transmission was cut in Tawu county in Amdo to prevent TV and radio transmission of the award. Eyewitnesses also reported four truckloads of troops stationed outside Tso monastery in Amdo at the time the award was made.

Despite all efforts by the Chinese authorities to prevent any celebration, monks, nuns and lay people came out in droves to mark the occasion with prayer ceremonies, bonfires and firecrackers.

### **A link has now emerged between the clash at Drepung monastery in October 2007 and the outbreak of unrest throughout Tibet in March 2008.**

The disturbances began on the 10 March anniversary of the failed 1959 Uprising after monks from Drepung marched to a government building to demand the release of monks who had been detained since the October celebrations. Although the march and the demands were peaceful, extreme force was used to break up the rally. When the public became aware that police had assaulted monks, the protest rapidly escalated.

## Paying lip service to talks

On the day he awarded the Dalai Lama the Congressional Medal of Honour, US President George Bush called on the Chinese government to meet the Nobel peace prize winner. President Bush, along with a host of other world leaders, renewed this call in the aftermath of the brutal Chinese crackdown against protests which began in Tibet in March and continue through the writing of this report.

On 18 March, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao was quoted in the state media: *“Assertions by the Dalai clique that they desire peaceful negotiations are nothing but lies... There is ample fact and we also have plenty of evidence proving this incident was organised, premeditated and incited by the Dalai clique... Hypocritical lies cannot cover ironclad facts.”*

On the same day, Zhang Qingli, the Communist party leader in Tibet stated: *“We are in the midst of a fierce struggle involving blood and fire, a life and death struggle with the Dalai clique... The Dalai Lama is a wolf wrapped in a habit, a monster with a human face and an animal's heart.”*

The next day, on 19 March in the UK House of Commons, the leader of the Opposition asked Prime Minister Gordon Brown: “The whole world will have been shocked by the pictures on television last night of the security crackdown and the dead bodies on the streets of Lhasa and other parts of Tibet. Does the Prime Minister agree with me that, yes, our relationship with China is vital, and China is a major power, but we must be absolutely clear in telling the Chinese Government that this is completely unacceptable?”

Given the inflammatory rhetoric from Chinese authorities the previous day, some might have been surprised when the Prime Minister responded: “I spoke to Premier Wen of China this morning, and I made it absolutely clear that there had to be an end to violence in Tibet. I hope that Members on both sides of the House will agree with that. I also called for constraint, and I called for an end to the violence by dialogue between the different parties. The Premier told me that subject to two things that the Dalai Lama has already said – that he does not support the total independence of Tibet and that he renounces violence – he would be prepared to enter into dialogue with the Dalai Lama. I will meet the Dalai Lama when he is in London. I think it is important that we all facilitate discussions, but the most important thing at the moment is to bring about an end to the violence, to see reconciliation, and to see legitimate talks [emphasis added] taking place between those people in China.”

To the uninitiated the Prime Minister’s statement may have sounded like a new initiative based on recent concessions by the Dalai Lama to the Beijing government. In fact, the Dalai Lama relinquished all demands for an independent Tibet nearly 30 years ago – offering instead a truly autonomous Tibet within China – nor has the Dalai Lama ever endorsed violence. That is why he won the 1989 Nobel peace prize. Indeed, the Dalai Lama has gone on record saying he would resign if the Tibetan people chose the path of violence. (Unfortunately the Chinese government and state media refuse consistently to acknowledge either of these facts.)

On 25 April 2008, the Chinese government announced that it would meet with envoys of the Dalai Lama on 4 May. According to Associated Press, the next day “the People’s Daily, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party, printed an editorial attacking ‘the Dalai clique’ for seeking support from Western countries and ignoring ‘the efforts and achievements made by China after shaking off serfdom and poverty in Tibet’.” This hardly boded well for the Chinese government’s sincerity in meeting with representatives of the Tibetan government-in-exile who were offering whatever assistance they could to resolve the crisis in Tibet. It came as no surprise that nothing substantive came out of these talks. And so the crisis continues.

Between 2002 and 2007 there were six rounds of what the Chinese government called negotiations between Chinese officials and representatives of the Tibetan government-in-exile. These were never really negotiations. Nothing substantive was ever achieved. These were talks about having talks. Over and over again Tibetan representatives were told there could be no negotiations until the Dalai Lama renounced violence and calls for an independent Tibet – conditions met decades earlier, but ignored in the Chinese state media which continues to portray the Dalai Lama as a violent enemy of the state, determined to split the motherland. Then there is the constant precondition that the Dalai Lama states that Taiwan always was and would always be an inseparable part of China – and the more recent demand that he stops trying to sabotage the Beijing Olympics (despite the Dalai Lama’s unswerving support for the staging of the 2008 games in Beijing).

Whilst setting up impossible roadblocks to prevent the Tibetan government-in-exile negotiating any meaningful improvement for Tibetans, the Chinese government has been using these talks to distract western governments keen to see Beijing do something about the situation in Tibet. The strategy has had some success.

For example, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office makes the following statement about Tibet: *“Successive British Governments have regarded Tibet as autonomous while recognising the special position of the Chinese there. We regularly urge the Chinese Government to engage in serious negotiations with the Dalai Lama’s representatives, without pre-conditions as we see this as the only lasting way to build a peaceful, sustainable and legitimate solution for Tibet.”*<sup>3</sup>

It is time for world leaders and politicians to take a much stronger position, to publicly acknowledge that the future of Tibet can never be successfully negotiated while the Chinese government continues to place impossible preconditions on substantive dialogue.

It is time for world leaders to demand action, not words from China.

It is time for real negotiations about the future of Tibet to begin – without preconditions – between the Chinese government and the man who holds the key, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama.

## Conclusion

In order to ensure that a peaceful, negotiated solution is reached to end the often brutal military occupation of Tibet and allow the unique culture of Tibet to flourish, world leaders – beginning with Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the first leader to meet the Dalai Lama since the current crisis began – must prevail upon the Chinese government to:

1. Acknowledge that the Dalai Lama has never endorsed violence and has made it plain that he would resign his position as leader if Tibetans chose the path of violence.
2. Acknowledge that the Dalai Lama has relinquished all previous demands for full Tibetan independence since 1979.
3. Remove all irrelevant preconditions to negotiations, such as the demand that the Dalai Lama state that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China or that he stops sabotaging the Olympic games.
4. End its campaign of vilifying the Dalai Lama in Tibet and in China.
5. Begin substantive talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile to be held in a neutral third country and attended by independent observers.

---

Poor picture quality is due to the circumstances under which they were taken, with many being taken on mobile phones.

---

<sup>1</sup>Graphic images of the bodies brought to Kirti monastery can be viewed on the Free Tibet website: [www.freetibet.org/newsmedia/photos-kirti-monastery-discretion-advised](http://www.freetibet.org/newsmedia/photos-kirti-monastery-discretion-advised)

<sup>2</sup>Dramatic footage of heavy-handed policing in Labrang can be viewed at [www.freetibet.org/newsmedia/itv-special-report-shows-dramatic-footage-filmed-undercover-tibet](http://www.freetibet.org/newsmedia/itv-special-report-shows-dramatic-footage-filmed-undercover-tibet)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.fc.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/asia-oceania/china?profile=all>

Revealing the truth: Why China's anti-Dalai Lama campaign must end © Free Tibet Campaign 2008

With thanks to Tibet Watch for assistance with research about the most recent events in Tibet.



Free Tibet Campaign  
28 Charles Square  
London N1 6HT

T: +44 (0)20 7324 4605

E: [mail@freetibet.org](mailto:mail@freetibet.org)

W: [www.freetibet.org](http://www.freetibet.org)