

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to All Tibetans

While extending my warm greetings to all the Tibetans in Tibet, I would like to share some of my thoughts.

1. Since March 10 this year, we have witnessed protests and demonstrations in almost all parts of Tibet, even in a few cities in Mainland China by students, which are the outburst of long pent-up physical and mental anguish of the Tibetans and the feeling of deep resentment against the suppression of the rights of Tibetan people, lack of religious freedom and for trying to distort the truth at every occasion, such as saying that Tibetans look towards the Chinese Communist Party as the "Living Buddha", is an ultra leftist statement and smacks of Han chauvinism. I am very much saddened and concerned by the use of arms to suppress the peaceful demonstrations of Tibetan people's aspirations that have resulted in unrest in Tibet, causing many deaths, and much more casualties, detention, and injury. Such suppression and suffering are very unfortunate and tragic which will reduce any compassionate person to tears. I, however, feel helpless in the face of these tragic incidents.

2. I pray for all the Tibetans as well as Chinese who have lost their lives during the current crisis.

3. The recent protests all over Tibet have not only contradicted but also shattered the People Republic of China's propaganda that except for a few "reactionaries", the majority of Tibetans enjoy a prosperous and contented life. These protests have made it very clear that Tibetans in the three provinces of Tibet, U-tsang, Kham and Amdo, harbor the same aspirations and hopes. These protests have also conveyed to the world that the Tibet issue can no longer be neglected. These protests highlight the need to find a way to resolve the issue through "finding truth from facts". The courage and determination of those Tibetans who have, for the greater interests of Tibetan people, demonstrated their deep anguish and hopes by risking everything is very commendable as the world community has acknowledged and supported the spirit of these Tibetans.

4. I deeply appreciate the acts of many Tibetan government employees and Communist Party cadres who have, without losing their Tibetan identity, shown grit and sense of what is right during the present crisis. In future, I would appeal to the Tibetan Party cadres and government employees not to look always for their personal benefit, but to work for safeguarding the larger interests of Tibet by reporting the real sentiments of the Tibetan people to their superiors in the Party and try to give unbiased guidance to the Tibetan people.

5. Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Nobel Laureates, Parliamentarians, and concerned citizens from every part of the world have been sending

clear and strong messages to the Chinese leadership to stop the present ongoing harsh crackdown against the Tibetan people. They have all been encouraging the Chinese government to follow a path where a mutually beneficial solution could be reached. We should create an opportunity for their efforts to bring out positive results. I know you are being provoked at every level but it is important to stick to our non-violent practice.

6. The Chinese authorities have been making false allegations against myself and the Central Tibetan Administration for instigating and orchestrating the recent events in Tibet. These allegations are totally untrue. I have made repeated appeals for an independent and respected international body to conduct a thorough investigation into the matter. I am sure this independent body will uncover the truth. If the People's Republic of China has any basis and proof of evidence to back their allegations, they need to disclose these to the world. Just making allegations is not enough.

7. For the future of Tibet, I have decided to find a solution within the framework of the People's Republic of China. Since 1974, I have sincerely remained steadfast to the mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach. The whole world knows this. The Middle-Way Approach means that all Tibetans must be governed by similar administration that enjoys meaningful National Regional Autonomy and all the provisions in it, self-rule and full decision-making, except for matters concerning foreign relations and national defense. However, I have said it from the beginning that the Tibetans in Tibet have the right to make the final decision for the future of Tibet.

8. The hosting of the Olympic games this year is a matter of great pride to the 1.2 billion Chinese people. I have from the very beginning supported the holding of these Games in Beijing. My position on this remains unchanged. I feel the Tibetans should not cause any hindrance to the Games. It is the legitimate right of every Tibetan to struggle for their freedoms and rights. On the other hand, it will be futile and not helpful to anyone if we do something that will create hatred in the minds of the Chinese people. On the contrary, we need to foster trust and respect in our hearts in order to create a harmonious society, as this cannot be built on the basis of force and intimidation.

9. Our struggle is with a few in the leadership of the People's Republic of China and not with the Chinese people. Therefore we should never cause misunderstanding or do something that will hurt the Chinese people. Even during this difficult situation, many Chinese intellectuals, writers and lawyers in Mainland China and other parts of the world have sympathized and shown us their solidarity by issuing statements, writing articles and offering pledges of support that is overwhelming. I have recently issued an appeal to the Chinese people all over the world on 28th March, which I hope you will hear and read.

10. If the present situation in Tibet continues, I am very much concerned that the Chinese government will unleash more force and increase the suppression of Tibetan people. Because of my moral obligation and responsibility to the Tibetan people, I have repeatedly asked the concerned leadership of the PRC to immediately stop their suppression in all parts of Tibet and withdraw its armed police and troops. If this brings result, I would also advise the Tibetans to stop all the current protests.

11. I want to urge my fellow Tibetans who live in freedom outside Tibet to be extra vigilant as they voice their feelings on the developments in Tibet. We should not engage in any action that could be even remotely interpreted as violent. Even under the most provocative of situations we must not allow our most precious and deeply held values to be compromised. I firmly believe that we will achieve success through our non-violent path. We must be wise to understand where the unprecedented affection and support for our cause stems from.

12. As Tibet is currently virtually closed and no international media is allowed there, I doubt my message will reach the Tibetans in Tibet. But I hope through media and by word of mouth, it will be passed on to the majority of you.

13. Finally, I want to reiterate and appeal once again to Tibetans to practice non-violence and not waver from this path, however serious the situation might be.

The Dalai Lama

Dharamsala
April 6, 2008

(N.B. Translated from the Tibetan original)