

## **CTA's Response to Chinese Government Allegations**

**13 October 2008**

Ever since peaceful protests erupted in Tibet, starting from 10 March, the Chinese government used the full force of its state media to fling a series of allegations against the "Dalai Clique". These allegations range from His Holiness the Dalai Lama masterminding the recent Tibet protest to His Holiness the Dalai Lama making attempts to restore feudalism in Tibet.

This is the fifth and last in a series of response by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to these accusations.

The Chinese translation of this response will be available later at [www.xizang-zhiye.org](http://www.xizang-zhiye.org) The Tibetan translation is available on the Tibetan edition of this website [www.tibet.net/tb/](http://www.tibet.net/tb/)

### **Part Five: Monasteries, Weapons and Terrorism**

As the Tibetan protests — popularly known as the March incident — unfolded on the Roof of the World, the Chinese government relied on brute force to silence the Tibetan voices, leading to a large number of peaceful Tibetan demonstrators being arbitrarily arrested, beaten, tortured, killed and disappeared. In order to justify their heinous actions, various functionaries of the Chinese establishment have been spewing various and sundry lies to pass the buck of the unrest in Tibet to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his exile Administration. China has, employing the full force of its state media and the Public Security Department, ratcheted up its external propaganda efforts to sell its lies to — or rather misinform — the international community that "large quantities of weapons (guns, knives, spears, etc.) have been hidden in the monasteries of Tibet, and these bear evidence of the violent nature of the Tibetan people."

In a press meeting held on 1 April, the spokesperson of China's Public Security Department, Wu Heping, said: "We have found a considerable number of weapons, including guns, in some of the monasteries in Lhasa."

Again, the 10 April issue of Sichuan Daily carried a long story — which appears to be nothing more than a trumped-up one — about the authorities having conducted a raid on the Kirti monastery [located in Ngaba (Ch. Aba) Tibetan Autonomous County in Sichuan Province] and, as a result of it, their having confiscated 30 guns and 33 swords from that monastery. The piece also alleges that these weapons testify to the Tibetan people's indulgence in violence.

In reality, all these constitute nothing but a mad behaviour on the part of the Chinese military to blame the Tibetan people for something they are not responsible at all. In a frenzy of madness, they have committed what can be

described as an aggravated burglary by making their intrusive entry into the Tibetan monasteries and taking away swords, spears, or other symbolic implements closely associated with the pantheon of wrathful deities — tutelary or protective — belonging to the Tibetan spiritual world. In order to link the Tibetans to violence, they have also forcibly taken away explosives bought by Tibetan labourers with due permission from the relevant authorities for construction purposes.

Monastic institutions — as everybody knows — are not just the centres of learning for the ecclesiastical community; these are also the main repositories of the ancient artefacts and cultural relics of Tibet. Moreover these monasteries are, for the Tibetan people, the ultimate places for seeking spiritual refuge. A monastery has assembly halls, temples, libraries, printing houses, chapels housing protective deities and fierce spirits, etc., all of which have their own unique identities and functions. For example, Protector Shrine is the place where a devotee makes his or her offerings to the protective deities. Here, one will come across numerous wrathful images of Dharma-protecting and guardian deities. Each of these deities carries symbolic implements such as swords and spears, which is unique to — and identifiable with — that particular deity. These implements are attributed to the concerned deities by historical tradition; it is not something that came into being after the communist Chinese set foot in Tibet.

If the Chinese government is audacious enough to claim — based on these symbolic implements of the protective deities they have confiscated from the monasteries — that the Tibetan clergy is violence-oriented, then what do they have to say about the Buddhist temples or monasteries in China, where the sculpted images of the Four Worldly Kings, or the Jikas Gods, holding symbolic implements like swords, bow and arrow, long spears, etc., are hung on the doors?

Similarly, in most of the Chinese monasteries, images of Guangong (a historical warrior figure) are erected as local deities or guardians. These images also carry symbolic implements such as long swords and spears. Do these, then, not indicate that Hashangs — or the Chinese priests — are making preparations for violence?

Looking back into Tibetan history, there were numerous incidents where Tibetan hunters and butchers had pledged to give up their profession of killing, or slaughtering, animals by wilfully offering their weapons such as guns and knives to the monasteries. Likewise, there were many cases where the two feuding communities, families, or even individuals, had decided to end their animosity by offering their weapons to the mediating monasteries. The monasteries, in turn, accept these weapons gladly so that these do not fall in the hands of wrong persons and store — or sometimes display — them in the chapels housing protective deities and fierce spirits as a way of encouraging other people to tread the same path of non-violence. This tradition among the Tibetan people is indeed

laudable. However, the Beijing government presents these very weapons looted from the monastic stores as evidence before the international community to prove that the Tibetan monks are harbouring an evil desire to revolt against China. This behaviour of the Chinese government is — far from being a civilised one — akin to the behaviour of a brigand.

In sum, the Chinese government — while looking down upon, or showing scant respect to, Tibet's unique culture, customs and traditions, etc. — goes about doing anything that it feels like doing by conducting raids on the Tibetan monasteries and taking away the treasured possessions, including the statues of deities adorned with expensive jewelry, of these monasteries. Still, Beijing blames the Tibetan clergy for violence, which, in fact, was a peaceful expression of their discontentment. Devoid of truth and reason, this whole drama of having found large quantities of weapons in Tibetan monasteries — as if these monasteries are preparing for a war against the Chinese regime — is nothing but an exaggerated account of the current unrest in Tibet.

### **TYC and Al Qaida**

The state media launched a barrage of propaganda that tried to link some parts of the "Dalai clique" with Al-Qaida and the East Turkestan Independence Movement. For example, in the first week of May, a Tibetologist who goes by the name of Liu Hongji wrote a piece in Xinhua, the official news agency, in which he stated, "The TYC has become a terrorist organization as concepts of violence have taken root within it...The group's shadow was evident when the police confiscated a large number of guns and ammunition in some monasteries in China's Tibetan-inhabited regions after the March 14 riot," the scholar said.

We cannot speak on behalf of the Tibetan Youth Congress. The TYC is more than capable of speaking for itself. We are making these comments in so far as China includes the TYC in its broad and all-encompassing term, "the Dalai clique." To call a democratically-elected organisation a "terrorist" with links with Al-Qaida is based on the assumption that those who hear this claim are total fools or is an attempt to harden the Chinese leadership's attitude to the Tibetans. Whatever the real reason for making such absurd claims, the truth is that the TYC is based in India, an open and plural society where free flow of information is cherished. This allows the concerned authorities of India to make an informed judgment of organizations that flout, or does not flout, the laws of the host country. Till now, the Government of India in its considered judgment has not declared the TYC as a terrorist outfit and within the exile Tibetan community the youth body is recognised as a respected organization.

### **Begging More Questions than Answers**

A section of the Chinese leadership's shrill denunciation of the TYC as a terrorist organization stands in sharp contrast to the leadership's dismissive attitude to the

same organization in the early 1980's. In those days, the TYC was dismissed as a "fly flapping its wings against the king of the mountains."

Why has a humble fly metamorphized into a "terrorists" organization in the eyes of the Chinese leaders?

The answer lies with the hardliners in the leadership. They want China, the whole leadership and the Chinese people, to recognize the "Dalai clique" as a "terrorist" organization so that they could deal with it accordingly.

But before the wiser section of the leadership and the Chinese people as a whole are convinced by both the arguments and the evidence produced by the hardliners, they need answers to some questions.

The first question is, if the arms found in the monasteries are truly smuggled by TYC into Tibet under the very noses of the Public Security Ministry, the PLA, the PAP and China's well-placed informers, why weren't transaction prevented in the first place? China has put in place the tightest restrictions on the movement of people, ideas and goods anywhere else in the world. Why did the shipment of such large catchment happen in the first place? Isn't this a major dereliction of duty on the part of China's security forces?

Let us for the sake of argument assume that the TYC was smart enough to ship these arms under the noses of the ever vigilant Chinese security forces into Tibet, why were these let to be allowed into the monasteries without the security forces noticing? The monasteries in Tibet are placed under intrusive surveillance and why were the presence of these weapons in the monasteries not known to the authorities? And why bring out these weapons only when protests took place in Tibet. Isn't it the duty of the security forces to catch "criminals" and expose their "crime" as and when they happen? Why wait this long?

Where were these weapons made? Usually, the brand of the weapons would give clear indication of the source of the weapons. Why has not the spokesperson for the Public Security Ministry informed the international media where the weapons came from?

### **PLA Soldiers in Monks' Robes**

The Chinese government accuses His Holiness the Dalai Lama of being "a wolf in monk's robes." Ever since the 1959 Tibetan Uprising, the PLA soldiers have been in the habit of doing exactly this: posing as Tibetan monks in order to sow dissension, create distractions and to serve as agents provocateur to incite unsuspecting Tibetan masses into actions that justify quick, military response.

For example, in a book (published in 1992 by the DIIR) about the suffering of the Tibetans in Chinese prisons, a former treasurer of Namgyal Monastery, Venerable

Gyaltsen writes that during the 1959 Uprising in Lhasa, Chinese soldiers dressed as Tibetans climbed the Chokpori, next to the Potala Palace and burned incense and strung prayer flags so as to give the impression to the Tibetan public that the Tibetan side had won in the fighting in Lhasa. This was also done to draw out the Tibetan fighters from their hideouts to make it easier for the PLA soldiers to shoot at them.

On 5 March 1988, Tibetans staged a massive protest demonstration on the streets of Lhasa. At the time, the Chinese government ordered a large number of Chinese officials and soldiers to disguise as Tibetan monks and lay Tibetans and deployed them throughout the city. This is based on an account given by Venerable Bhagdro, a former political prisoner.

During the 1989 demonstrations in Lhasa, the Chinese government came up with the strategy of waging a four-pronged war on Tibetan protestors. As part of this strategy, about 300 Chinese agents and spies were planted within the Tibetan clergy and general public. On the morning of 5 March, they were made to go to the Barkhor and other troubled areas of Lhasa to help the regional and city public security bureaus in deliberately creating disturbances. Their plans included the following: 1) to set aflame the great prayer flag –Gaden Darnyon and Shar Kyareng Darchen – erected at the north-east of the Jokhang Temple, 2) to encourage the local Tibetan residents to destroy and loot the Lhasa Municipality's Grain Store and the Tibet-Gansu Joint Emporia. This information comes from a book written by Tang Daxian. The book is called *The Bayonet Pointed Directly at Lhasa* and has been translated into Tibetan and published by the DIIR in 1992.