

## **CTA's Response to Chinese Government Allegations: Part Two**

### **Chinese Nationalism, Ethnic Tension and Olympic Games**

#### **Beijing's and Tibetan Approaches to Ethnic Tension**

Of deep concern to the Tibetan people is the Chinese authorities' attempt to turn on the anger of the Chinese people on the Tibetans. China is playing a dangerously irresponsible game by using the Tibet protests to fuel ethnic tension. The struggle of the Tibetan people is against the wrong policies of Beijing. This struggle is not against China both as a nation and culture nor against the Chinese people. The Tibetan people's struggle is against the policies aimed at Tibet's total assimilation within the Chinese majority. The protests that rocked Tibet recently and continue to rock are to convince the authorities to withdraw these policies and implement ones that give greater freedoms for the Tibetan people.

On 28 March, His Holiness the Dalai Lama issued an appeal to the Chinese people. In this appeal, His Holiness said, "The recent unrest has clearly demonstrated the gravity of the situation in Tibet and the urgent need to seek a peaceful and mutually beneficial solution through dialogue. Even at this juncture I have expressed my willingness to the Chinese authorities to work together to bring about peace and stability...Chinese brothers and sisters - wherever you may be - with deep concern I appeal to you to help dispel the misunderstanding between our two communities. Moreover, I appeal to you to help find a peaceful, lasting solution to the problem of Tibet through dialogue in the spirit of understanding and accommodation."

#### **Biased Chinese Media Reporting Creates Ethnic Tension**

However, Beijing is using the full might of its propaganda machinery to convince the Chinese people that these protests are anti-Chinese. In a society where the citizens receive news and information from government-controlled media, this is stoking the fire of Chinese nationalism. Beijing has played with this fire before. In 1999 after the Belgrade Chinese embassy bombing, China whipped up anti-American sentiments. China refused to accept President Clinton's initial phone to President Jiang Zemin to apologise. The Chinese Communist Party declared immediately after the bombing through the People's Daily and other media that the bombing had been intentional, not accidental, and supplied buses to transport demonstrators to the U.S. embassy and consulates across China. Anti-Japanese sentiments were whipped up in 2004 and 2005 during the Asian Football Cup matches in China and over the Japanese textbook controversy. The precision with which these protests have flared and just as suddenly died down led many observers to conclude Beijing's hand in organizing them. Both nearly backfired when the protestors shrilly started to criticise the authorities for being weak before the Americans and the Japanese. Fareed Zakaria, editor of Newsweek International, writes "In the past they have stoked anti-Japanese and anti-American outbursts, only to panic that things were getting out of control and then reverse course."

This biased reporting on the unrest in Tibet and its negative effect on the Chinese public worries Chinese intellectuals. On 22 March, a group of Chinese scholars, writers and human rights activists wrote a twelve-point letter. In the first point they say, "At present the one-sided propaganda of the official Chinese media is having the effect of stirring up inter-ethnic animosity and aggravating an already tense situation. This is extremely detrimental to the long-term goal of safeguarding national unity. We call for such propaganda to be stopped."

The second point says, "We support the Dalai Lama's appeal for peace, and hope that the ethnic conflict

can be dealt with according to the principles of goodwill, peace and non-violence. We condemn any violent act against innocent people, strongly urge the Chinese government to stop violent repression and appeal to the Tibetan people likewise to not to engage in violent activities."

In the case of Tibet, the Chinese authorities are stoking ethnic tension in five areas. Agent provocateurs have infiltrated the ranks of Tibetan protestors and indulged in violence to create deep rifts between Tibetans and Chinese. The authorities' relentless demonization of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is hurting Tibetan sentiments. China's brutal crackdown on the Tibetans is sowing the seeds of complete distrust in the authorities. The Chinese government's inflammatory use of the media and biased reporting is creating more misunderstanding amongst the Chinese people. The Chinese government's active encouragement of overseas Chinese students' association to counter pro-Tibet protests with protests of their own is contributing to mutual suspicion.

The responsibility of any government is to provide good governance, including ensuring communal harmony. In fact, President Hu Jintao's stated goal is to create a harmonious society in China. Crackdown and shrill denunciation do not contribute to harmony. China's hardline action to resolve the issue of Tibet has created the biggest rift between Tibetans and Chinese. The crackdown, the enforcement of the "patriotic re-education" and the media focus on the unrest in Tibet are undermining President Hu Jintao's establishment of a harmonious society.

In their fourth point, the group of Chinese scholars say, "In our opinion, such Cultural Revolution-like language as 'the Dalai Lama is a jackal in Buddhist monk's robes and an evil spirit with a human face and the heart of a beast' used by the Chinese Communist Party leadership in the Tibet Autonomous Region is of no help in easing the situation, nor is it beneficial to the Chinese government's image. As the Chinese government is committed to integration into the international community, we maintain that it should display a style of governing that conforms to the standards of modern civilization."

Zhang Boshu of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences wrote a piece on Tibet called *The Way to Resolve the Tibet Issue*. Its English translation is posted on 9 May on [www.chinadigitaltimes.net](http://www.chinadigitaltimes.net). In his article, Zhang Bozhu writes, 'Hu Yaobang especially stressed: "Looking down on Tibetan history, language and art is totally wrong... Loving the minority people is not a matter of empty words. Their social customs and habits must be respected. Respect their language, respect their history, respect their culture. If you don't do that you are only speaking empty words." Finally, Tibetan cadres should manage Tibet. Within two years, Tibetans should make up two-thirds or more of the cadres in Tibet. "We have been here for thirty years. We have completed our historical mission." "Today there are 300,000 ethnic Han, including military, in Tibet. How can that ever do?" The above can be summarized in six characters "cut taxes, open up, and withdraw personnel". These were the "emergency measures" energetically promoted by Hu Yaobang to resolve the Tibet issue.'

### **Why this hardline Policy in the Face of Its Clear Rejection by Tibetans**

Despite these appeals from some of the most respected citizens of China, why are the authorities intensifying and reinvigorating the very policies that have provoked this desperate reaction from the Tibetan people?

There are three possible reasons. One is to provoke the Tibetans into violence to justify the Chinese government's own violent retaliation. The other is that the current propaganda blitz is to divert the attention of the Chinese people from their own pressing problems. The third is to use the protests in Tibet and the huge international sympathy generated for the Tibetan people to stoke Chinese nationalism to bolster the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party.

Ever since the 1959 uprising, the Tibetan people's struggle has been peaceful. China cannot justify the use of force against a peaceful struggle to its own people or to the international community. The

demonization of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, denouncing some exile Tibetan organizations as "terrorists" outfits and equating them with Al-Qaeda and the armed struggle in Chechnya and infiltrating the ranks of the Tibetan people and trying to provoke them into violence are all attempts to justify a violent response.

The Chinese authorities know that their hardline policies have generated this desperate reaction from the Tibetans. Even then why are they still pushing ever harder with all these elements of the harsh policies? Regardless of the Tibetan people's clear distaste, the "patriotic re-education" campaign is being pushed harder on the Tibetans. Forcing Tibetans to publicly denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama, stomping on his photos, forcing monasteries to fly the Chinese national flag and the official vilification campaign against His Holiness the Dalai Lama have forced many lay Tibetans and monks to refuse to participate in the campaign.

Premier Wen Jiabao during his recent visit to Laos urged His Holiness the Dalai Lama to use his influence in Tibet to calm the situation. Why is this moderate approach and clear official admission of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's influence on his people not reflected in the policy implementation in Tibet? And if the Chinese authorities really wish for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to calm things down in Tibet, why is he not provided the forum and channel to reach out to his people in Tibet?

Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, the founder of the Tibetan Communist Party and a senior figure in the Chinese leadership, has this answer. His answer is contained in a book called *Baba Phuntsok Wangyal: Witness to Tibet's History* compiled by Tenzin Losel, Jane Perkins, Bhuchung D. Sonam and Tenzin Tsundue, published by Paljor Publications, Pvt. Ltd in 2007. The book contains a biography of Baba Phuntsok Wangyal and the three letters he had sent to President Hu Jintao in 2004, 2005 and 2006. In these letters, Baba Phuntsok Wangyal says that there is a well-entrenched vested interest in the Chinese leadership, who have built their careers on the struggle against separatism. Their careers will be blown away when the issue of Tibet is resolved through dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Baba Phuntsok Wangyal quotes a popular saying in Tibet. It goes like this. "These people live on anti-separatism, are promoted due to anti-separatism and they hit the jackpot by anti-separatism."

In his 2004, letter to President Hu Jintao, Baba Phuntsok Wangyal writes, "To summarise the saying above: 'The longer the Dalai Lama keeps on staying abroad, and the bigger his influence, the more long-lasting the period of high ranks and great wealth for those anti-separatist groups; on the contrary, when the Dalai Lama restores relations with the Central Government, these people will be terrified, tense and lose their jobs.' The statement above is not at all far-fetched. With regard to the question of whether or not relations between the Central Government and the Dalai Lama can be restored, this is not only related to shifts of political partiality, resistance and even open objections within the nation, but also to the relations of such and such people and groups and the advantages and disadvantages to them in terms of economic interest."

Baba Phuntsok Wangyal's analysis is echoed by Jing Huang, currently a visiting fellow at the University of Singapore's East Asian Institute. He told Simon Elegant of Time that there is "a huge bulwark of entrenched officials (in the United Front Work Department, the Public Security Bureau, Foreign Affairs, the Religious Affairs department, the Communist Party in Tibet, the Minority Affairs department being the main culprits) who have spent decades shouting about "splittism" and not only can imagine any other approach but would feel it was a threat to their iron rice bowls or livelihoods, which of course it would be. Thus, Huang says, you have essentially the entire Chinese establishment that administers Tibet opposed to a compromise solution that would inevitably not only have to acknowledge that the policies that they have pursued in Tibet for the last 20 years are a failure but would likely cost them their jobs."

Willy Lam, writing for Jamestown Foundation, says, "As police in various cities were issuing warnings

to protestors outside Carrefour supermarkets last Saturday and Sunday, the Hu Jintao Administration has intensified efforts to suppress and contain the 'splittists' in Tibet and Xinjiang - and using nationalist sentiments to help achieve its goal. As the nation is being swept by a tidal wave of 'patriotism' if not xenophobia, liberal intellectuals who had earlier implored Beijing to consider conciliatory policies toward the two autonomous regions no longer dare raise their voice for fear of being labeled traitors." Willy Lam, whose piece called Beijing Intensifies 'People's War' against 'Splittism' as Nationalism Rears Its Head' and which was posted on Jamestown Foundation's website on 29 April, quotes an editor of a Beijing-based magazine who wishes to remain anonymous as saying, "The CCP has used the handy weapon called nationalism to silence those who question the authorities' handling of Tibet."

All this leads us to believe that China's Tibet policy has been hijacked by the hardliners in the leadership who want a Final Solution to the Tibetan Question by using all the might available to them to crush the Tibetan people. The hardliners, more than the national interests of China and the Chinese people, are pursuing their hardline policy to protect their careers and their private interests.

The present crisis in Tibet has become useful to the Chinese authorities to distract the Chinese people from their very pressing problems. The growing social unrest in China is stoked by rampant corruption, growing inequality between the rich and poor and rising prices. At the same time, there is growing aspiration for freedom and democracy in China. China's Tibet distraction is being used to its full advantage by the authorities to make the Chinese public forget, even momentarily, the daily burden under which grind and its longing for freedom.

After the first tidal wave of anti-foreign and anti-Tibetan people passed away on the Internet, a more sober assessment of the situation in Tibet is re-surfacing among Chinese bloggers and Internet-users. There are many Chinese who are fed up with the government blasting away about Tibet every day. They say Tibet is everywhere, on TV, radio and in newspapers. The public cannot escape and get respite from the government's onslaught on Tibet even for a minute. Many Chinese wonder what the reason behind this is.

China's Tibet distraction has also become useful for the Chinese Communist Party to stoke Chinese nationalism and thus bolster the party's legitimacy. The need to do this flows from the paradox that is China today. Communism has been swept away from China and yet the Chinese Communist Party survives and flourishes. In his piece, Why China's Burning Mad, posted on 24 April 2008, Simon Elegant of Time writes, "Having effectively abandoned the Marxist-Leninists ideology that was once the bedrock, China's Communist Party now draws its mandate to govern from two sources - economic growth and nationalist pride." In his book, China's New Nationalism, Peter Hays Gries writes, "In 1994 Xiao Gongqing, an outspoken neo-conservative intellectual advocated the use of nationalism derived from Confucianism to fill the ideological void opened by the collapse of communism." Jayshree Bajoria of the Council on Foreign Relations, writes, "After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the opening of the Chinese economy by Deng Xiaoping, and the pro-democracy protests of 1989, nationalism was once again revived by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), say experts."

Gries writes, "Lacking the procedural legitimacy accorded to democratically elected governments and facing the collapse of communist ideology, the CCP is increasingly dependent on its nationalist credentials to rule." In an editorial in April 2008, the International Herald Tribune notes that "stripped of Maoism as its guiding light, the CCP has fallen back on nationalism as societal glue."

Jayshree Bajoria of the Council on Foreign Relations quotes Kenneth G. Lieberthal of the University of Michigan as saying, nationalistic protests are a combination of genuine popular outrage and government manipulation to let protest grow, which often helps the Chinese government's bargaining position as that incident is negotiated with the offending party.

In order to shore up public support for its right to rule, the CCP is portraying the Tibet protests as anti-China. The CCP also portrays the international support and sympathy and the extensive media coverage of the events in Tibet as an international anti-China force. The government's obsessive and distorted coverage of the Olympic torch relay and the accompanying protests have provoked anti-foreign sentiments in China, including the boycott of French products. Writes Wu Zhong, China editor of [www.atimes.com](http://www.atimes.com) on 23 April, "Amid increasingly growing nationalism, the few Chinese - such as CCTV anchor Bai Yansong and China Youth Daily's photo editor He Yanguang - who were brave enough to criticize the boycott as 'irrational' and harmful to Chinese interests, have been bombarded with accusations by angry bloggers." Mr. B. Raman, a former additional secretary in the cabinet secretariat of the government of India, writing in [www.saag.org](http://www.saag.org) on 20 April, says, "It is learnt that the protests inside China as well as abroad are being sponsored and directed by the Ministry of Public Security, which is China's internal intelligence and security agency."

In Tibet, there is a talk of waging a "people's war" against the Tibetan protestors. No individual Chinese have stepped forward to lead this war, but the authorities are coming upon the detained protestors with violence and ferocity unheard since the days of the Cultural Revolution. Protesters are shot dead and those who are arrested are beaten and tortured. Monasteries where protests have taken place are sealed off and deprived of food and drinking water. Bodies of those shot dead are taken away so as to prevent local Tibetans from knowing the cause of death. Tibet has been turned into a war zone.

### **Chinese Support for Dialogue and Inter-ethnic Harmony**

Grace Wang, a student at Duke University in the United States, wrote an op-ed piece in April in the Los Angeles Times and reprinted in the Indian Express on 21 April. She was the one who tried to mediate between protesting Chinese students and Tibet protestors and was vilified by the Chinese side. She writes, "Trying to mediate between Chinese and pro-Tibetan campus protestors, I was caught in the middle and vilified and threatened by the Chinese. After the protest, the intimidation went online and I began receiving threatening phone calls. Then it got worse - my parents in China were also threatened and forced to go into hiding."

"Back in my dorm room, I logged into the Duke Chinese Students and Scholars Association (DCSSA) Website to see what people were saying. Qian Fangzhou, an officer of DCSSA, was gloating, 'We really showed them our colours!'"

"I posted a letter in response, explaining that I don't support Tibetan independence, as some accused me of, but that I do support Tibetan freedom as well as Chinese freedom. The next morning, a storm was raging online. Photographs of me had been posted on the Internet with the words "Traitor!" printed across my forehead. Then I saw something really alarming both my parent's citizen ID numbers had been posted. This information could only have come from the Chinese police."

"I saw detailed directions to my parent's home in China, accompanied by calls for people to go there and teach "this shameless dog" a lesson. It was then that I realized how serious this had become. My phone rang with callers making threats against my life. I talked to my mom and she said she and my dad were going into hiding because they were getting death threats, too."

In their twelve-point letter, the group of Chinese scholars write, "In order to prevent similar incidents from happening in future, the government must abide by the freedom of religious belief and the freedom of speech explicitly enshrined in the Chinese Constitution, thereby allowing the Tibetan people fully to express their grievances and hopes, and permitting citizens of all nationalities freely to criticise and make suggestions regarding the government's nationality policies."

The twelfth and last point in their letter is this. "We hold that we must eliminate animosity and bring about national reconciliation, not continue to increase divisions between nationalities. A country that

wishes to avoid the partition of its territory must first avoid divisions among its nationalities. Therefore, we appeal to the leaders of our country to hold direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama. We hope that the Chinese and Tibetan people will do away with the misunderstandings between them, develop their interactions with each other, and achieve unity. Government departments as much popular organizations and religious figures should make great efforts towards this goal."

### **Sabotaging or Helping the Beijing Olympic Games**

One major and consistent accusation the Beijing authorities hurl at His Holiness the Dalai Lama is that he is sabotaging the Beijing Summer Olympics. They cite the outbursts of the Tibetan people's anger in the streets of towns and villages throughout Tibet and the protests that have dogged the torch relay as evidence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's involvement in this.

Far from sabotaging the Beijing Olympics, His Holiness the Dalai Lama even before China was awarded the 2008 Olympics Games supported the right of Beijing to host the Games. His Holiness the Dalai Lama during his visit to Salt Lake City in the United States in May 2001 that he supported China's bid for the Games in 2008 if it promoted human rights in the country. His Holiness said he also wanted to know what the feelings of the Chinese people were on the Games. He also wanted to know what the feelings of the human rights groups were. His Holiness said, "I would like to know their opinion. If they feel this event taking place in China would help to change, then I would support it," according to the CNN report of 11 May 2001.

We believe that His Holiness the Dalai Lama's endorsement of Beijing helped China win the bid when the IOC chose the host city in Moscow on 13 July 2001. CNN report of 15 May 2001 says, "The Beijing bid received a major boost last week when the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan Buddhist leader, said China 'deserves to be the Olympic host.'"

When the 2008 Summer Olympic Games were awarded to China His Holiness the Dalai Lama publicly welcome this development and said he had supported Beijing's bid all the time. His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that the same time that it is the right of individuals and organizations to use the Games to peacefully highlight the gross human rights violations going on in China in the hope that these violations would be eliminated.

In his 10 March 2008 statement, His Holiness explains his position on the Olympic Games in China in detail. His Holiness said, "This year, the Chinese people are proudly and eagerly awaiting the opening of the Olympic Games. I have, from the very beginning, supported the idea that China should be granted the opportunity to host the Olympic Games. Since such international sporting events, and especially the Olympics, uphold the principles of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, equality and friendship, China should prove herself a good host by providing these freedoms. Therefore, besides sending their athletes, the international community should remind the Chinese government of these issues. I have come to know that many parliaments, individuals and non-governmental organisations around the globe are undertaking a number of activities in view of the opportunity that exists for China to make a positive change. I admire their sincerity. I would like to state emphatically that it will be very important to observe the period following the conclusion of the Games. The Olympic Games no doubt will greatly impact the minds of the Chinese people. The world should, therefore, explore ways of investing their collective energies in producing a continuous positive change inside China even after the Olympics have come to an end."

In the aftermath of the largest protests in Tibet and the brutal crackdown on the protestors, followed by strident calls for the boycott of the Beijing Olympic Games, His Holiness commented that a boycott was too radical and said that there should not be any boycott.

Another accusation hurled by the Chinese authorities is that the Central Tibetan Administration plotted

to sabotage the Beijing Olympic Games at the 5th International Tibet Support Group Conference held in May 2007 in Brussels.

It is a fact that all the TSG conferences were organised by the Central Tibetan Administration since the first conference in 1990. Particularly from the second conference in Bonn in 1996, the Central Tibetan Administration did it in collaboration with the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation. In all these conferences both the CTA and the FNF acted as facilitators. The agenda for the conferences were set by the TSGs and the ownership of the successive action plans and resolutions is with the TSG movement. In fact, at the Prague TSG conference concerns were raised about the appropriateness of the CTA organising the TSG conferences. This concern was put to the vote. The majority of the participants wanted the CTA to continue to organise subsequent TSG conferences.

Apart from facilitating these conferences, the role of the CTA is to explain the CTA's policies and seek the participants' support for the Middle-Way Approach, which seeks to ensure meaningful autonomy for all Tibetans under a single Tibetan administration. This was done by Kalon Tripa, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, both at the Prague and Brussels conferences. The Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mr. Lodi Gyari, updated the participants on the progress of the talks between the Chinese and the Tibetan sides.

The Chinese media also said that Paula Dobriansky, the special co-ordinator for Tibetan affairs in the State Department, attended the 5th International Tibet Support Group Conference. She did not attend the conference. This is a clear case of the Chinese media spreading disinformation.

The proceedings of all these conferences were transparent. The opening and closing ceremonies of these conferences were open to the international media, which included reporters from Xinhua. At the time the Xinhua reporters did not file any report that says the "splittists were plotting to sabotage the Beijing Olympic Games."