

# Important statement by Dalai Lama 'speaking truth to power'

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The Dalai Lama has made an important statement about his role and Tibet's future in which he admits that his faith in the present Chinese government is 'thinning'. He also advances a historic precedent for a Dalai Lama by stating that Tibet's future is "for the Tibetan people to decide, not for me as an individual". In the speech, made yesterday in Dharamsala, India, the Dalai Lama's home in exile, the Dalai Lama confronted the Chinese government by stressing that "We cannot continue as though we do not know that this [the protests and suppression across Tibet since March] is happening".

The Dalai Lama's statement, which has been misquoted in some of the international media as saying that he has 'given up' on pressing the Chinese on Tibet's future, was made prior to the expected eighth round of dialogue between his envoys and Chinese officials. The Dalai Lama said: "I have not lost faith in the people of China, but my faith in the present Chinese government is thinning and it is becoming very difficult."

The Dalai Lama indicates in his comments that he is prepared for the 'Middle Way' approach - that accepts Chinese sovereignty over Tibet but seeks a 'genuine autonomy' for the Tibetan people - to be questioned if the Tibetan people do not feel it can achieve results. He said: "Until now, we have followed a path towards finding a mutually beneficial solution which has received much support from the rest of the world including India, as well as increasingly more Chinese intellectuals. But this path has had no effect on our main objective, which is to improve the lives of Tibetans inside Tibet.... Now, at this time, there is no reason to stay the same course just because we are on it [now]. The future of Tibet is for the Tibetan people to decide - not for me as an individual. Secondly, I truly believe in active democracy - I am not like the Communist Chinese who say one thing, like democracy, and act in another way."

Last month the Dalai Lama called for a special meeting to be convened by the Tibetan government-in-exile, along with the Tibetan community, that will review the current strategy of engagement with the Chinese government. Speaking about the meeting, the Dalai Lama said, "We need to understand, analyze and together think of long term solutions based on the real and current situations." The meeting will be held in Dharamsala, India, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, from November 17 - 22.

The full text of the Dalai Lama's address on Tibet's future, made in Tibetan at the 48th anniversary celebration of the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala, is included below. Mary Beth Markey, Vice President for Advocacy at the International Campaign for Tibet, said: "His Holiness the Dalai Lama's comments, made in the tradition of speaking truth to power, are an unvarnished statement on the reality of Tibet as opposed to Beijing's representations to the world. As such they directly confront the Chinese government's intransigence on the question of Tibet."

The Middle-Way-Approach is described by the Tibetan government-in-exile as follows: "The Tibetan people do not accept the present status of Tibet under the People's Republic of China. At the same time, they do not seek independence for Tibet, which is a historical fact. Treading a middle path in between these two lies the policy and means to achieve a genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet within the framework of the People's Republic of China."

<http://www.tibet.net/en/index.php?id=115&rmenuid=11>

**ICT translation of the Dalai Lama's statement on Tibet's future, October 26, 2008, Dharamsala, India**

"Until now, we have been following a certain path - and in March, Tibetans all over Tibet very courageously and clearly demonstrated their deeply-rooted resentment and animosity. This was not just ordinary Tibetans but included Party members, officials, students... even students who were at the University for Nationalities in Beijing. Without differentiation, it was men and women, lay and robed, everyone showed their resentment.

I placed great hope in the Chinese government at this time. Having been exposed to the reality of the situation in Tibet, I hoped that with this understanding they would be willing to consider finding a solution. But instead, they labeled all Tibetan demonstrators as 'political rebels' and clamped down hard on them. Now, we cannot continue as though we do not know that this is happening.

So, until now, we have followed a path towards finding a mutually beneficial solution which has received much support from the rest of the world including India, as well as an increasing number of Chinese intellectuals. But this path has had no effect on our main objective, which is to improve the lives of Tibetans inside Tibet.

So, right from the beginning, even in my Strasbourg proposal at the EU parliament, I said the final decision will be made by the people of Tibet. In the 1990s - in 1993 - we lost contact with the Chinese government and we had a general meeting at which we decided to continue on the same path.

Now, at this time, there is no reason to stay the same course just because we are on it [now]. The future of Tibet is for the Tibetan people to decide - not for me as an individual. Secondly, I truly believe in active democracy - I am not like the Communist Chinese who say one thing, like democracy, and act another way.

We have a truly unique culture of kindness and compassion that can benefit the whole world. Tibet's struggle for truth is not just for the benefit of the Tibetans alone but it will benefit the whole world and it has the potential to improve the lives of the Chinese people as well. The destruction of Tibet's religion and culture will be a huge loss to everyone. Therefore, our struggle is a struggle to benefit the people of both sides. So, we need to discuss all this and find ways in which we can take our struggle forward.

The Chinese government has blamed me for instigating the March protests inside Tibet. Right away I invited them to come and go through my office, paperwork and even listen to tapes of conversations I've had with new arrivals from Tibet. But no one came to look through anything. So, it seems as though I am a hindrance to finding a solution for Tibet. The Tibet issue is an issue of the Tibetan people and the Tibetan people need to decide. So, under these circumstances, on September 14, I said that this responsibility is becoming too difficult and there is no use in continuing it. If I were dealing with someone who was speaking honestly, then I would have no problem, as I can speak and understand reason. But we are not dealing with honesty here.

So, I've been clearly saying, even to foreign journalists and others, that I have not lost faith in the people of China but my faith in the present Chinese government is thinning and it's becoming very difficult.

So now, we are having this general meeting as announced by the Kashag [Tibetan cabinet] and the Tibetan Parliament. It is likely that we will not reach any decisions immediately but we need to understand, analyze and together think of long-term solutions based on the real, current situation. So this is the aim of this meeting."

This report can be found online at <http://savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1376>