

March 22, 2008

Twelve Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation by Some Chinese Intellectuals

1. 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.

2. 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 the violent suppression, and appeal to the Tibetan people likewise not to engage in violent activities.

3. The Chinese government claims that "there is sufficient evidence to prove this incident was organized, premeditated, and meticulously orchestrated by the Dalai clique." We hope that the government will show proof of this. In order to change the international community's negative view and distrustful attitude, we also suggest that the government invite the United Nation's Commission on Human Rights to carry out an independent investigation of the evidence, the course of the incident, the number of casualties, etc.

4. 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 integrating into the international community, we maintain that it should display a style of governing that conforms to the standards of modern civilization.

5. We note that on the very day when the violence erupted in Lhasa (March 14), the leaders of the Tibet Autonomous Region declared that "there is sufficient evidence to prove this incident was organized, premeditated, and meticulously orchestrated by the Dalai clique." This shows that the authorities in Tibet knew in advance that the riot would occur, yet did nothing effective to prevent the incident from happening or escalating. If there was a dereliction of duty, a serious investigation must be carried out to determine this and deal with it accordingly.

6. If in the end it cannot be proved that this was an organized, premeditated, and meticulously orchestrated event but was instead a "popular revolt" triggered by events, then the authorities should pursue those responsible for inciting the popular revolt and concocting false information to deceive the Central Government and the people; they should also seriously reflect on what can be learned from this event so as to avoid taking the same course in the future.

7. We strongly demand that the authorities not subject every Tibetan to political investigation or revenge. The trials of those who have been arrested must be carried out according to judicial procedures that are open, just, and transparent so as to ensure that all parties are satisfied.

8. We urge the Chinese government to allow credible national and international media to go into Tibetan areas to conduct independent interviews and news reports. In our view, the current news blockade cannot gain credit with the Chinese people or the international community, and is harmful to the credibility of the Chinese government. If the government grasps the true situation, it need not fear challenges. Only by adopting an open attitude can we turn around the international community's distrust of our government.

9. We appeal to the Chinese people and overseas Chinese to be calm and tolerant, and to reflect deeply on what is happening. Adopting a posture of aggressive nationalism will only invite antipathy from the international community and harm China's international image.

10. The disturbances in Tibet in the 1980s were limited to Lhasa, whereas this time they have spread to many Tibetan areas. This deterioration indicates that there are serious mistakes in the work that has been done with regard to Tibet. The relevant government departments must conscientiously reflect upon this matter, examine their failures, and fundamentally change the failed nationality policies.

11. 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 criticize and make suggestions regarding the government's nationality policies.

12. 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 as popular organizations and religious figures should make great efforts toward this goal.

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