

THE DALAI LAMA

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October 7, 1987

Your Excellency,

I hesitate to write again so soon after having written to you on September 8, 1987 before my departure for the United States. I am aware of the pressure on your time. However, because of the urgency of the matter I am compelled to encroach upon your precious time.

Tibet is culturally the child of India. Tibetans always consider India as a holy and sacred land. Today, in the hour of our great tragedy the Tibetan people pin our entire hope in India. There is a Tibetan saying, "the right place for a child to cry is before its mother". As I have mentioned in my previous letter, I have presented the enclosed five-point proposal after I had spoken at the Human Rights Caucus at Capitol Hill. The response of the members of the U.S. Congress was most favourable. Chairmen of both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee endorsed my initiative and wrote to the Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang. Their move was supported by ranking members of both the committees. I enclose a copy of that letter here. The response and support in West Germany and Britain are also encouraging. I am confident that we will be able to receive favourable response and support from a number of other countries. A large number of the members of the European Parliament are also becoming supportive.

The political support we are receiving from these countries, particularly from the United States, is extremely important. But the most important for the Tibetan people and crucial for the issue of Tibet is the political support from the Government of India. The political support for the cause of the Tibetan

people from other countries, though important, is peripheral to the central role which the Government of India can play.

The recent events in Tibet prove that the Tibetan people do not want to live under Chinese rule. It is in this connection that I have taken the liberty of reiterating the two important points that I have dwelled on in my earlier memoranda.

It is tremendously important for the Government of India to seriously consider the two points. I am convinced that these two points, namely the creation of Tibet into a zone of peace and the immediate cessation of Chinese population transfer into Tibet, are reasonable and practical. The Government of India's support to the two proposals is particularly vital at this stage when the Tibetan people in Tibet have clearly demonstrated their true national aspirations. Another issue I would like to bring to Your Excellency's notice is the border problem. The Government of India seems to consider the issue of Tibet as being separate from the border issue. I would like to point out that as long as Chinese military forces continue to be stationed in Tibet, whatever agreements India and China may reach on paper will be of little value. As I have mentioned in the past, there will be no genuine and lasting peace in the region, as long as the issue of Tibet is left unsolved. I feel the Government of India should approach the matter, though delicate and difficult, with far-sightedness by supporting the proposal for the creation of Tibet into a peace zone, which has the potential of becoming the foundation for the happiness of the diverse peoples inhabiting the Himalayan region.

Your Excellency, let me be candid and frank for our common future interests by pointing out that historically there had never been a Sino-Indian border but only an Indo- Tibetan border which was given international recognition and legitimacy by the Simla, Treaty of 1914. If Tibet is recognised as a part of China then the McMahon Line logically becomes untenable. Further some

people expound the idea that the Tibetan issue can be dealt with after solving the border problem when some mutual understanding will exist between India and China. The fallacy of this idea is that even if a temporary solution is achieved it will be naive to expect genuine, mutual trust in the foreseeable future. In the meantime Chinese will pour in their population into Tibet and the Tibetan issue will then become absolutely insoluble. Be that as it may, to reach settlement on the border without Tibetan participation will not solve the fundamental problems which beset India-China relations. Instead, it will be a source of much disappointment to the Tibetan people who place so much hope in India.

The Government of India's positive and forthright stand on the issue of Tibet will not only enhance the respect which India and its cultural ethos enjoy in the world but this will also accord with the principles of the non-aligned movement of which India is its founding member and foremost champion. Such a stand will also be reflective of the feelings of the majority of the people of India. It is my understanding that a large segment of the Indian public feels that India's recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was a great mistake. This feeling is shared privately by many in the Government as well.

Your Excellency, I would like to express at this stage my sincere desire to see good relations established between India and China. Friendly relations between India and China - two great cultures and two great people - will benefit regional and world peace. It is in this connection that I have put forward the proposal for the creation of Tibet as a zone of peace which will also become the basis for peace in this region and friendly relations, between India and China.

India and China are two most powerful nations in this part of the world. Unlike China, India's standing is deeply rooted in the moral values it upholds. It is my belief that if India takes a firm stand on moral issues it will not only result in

tremendous upsurge of goodwill and respect for India but also act as a counterbalancing factor.

I hope Your Excellency will give serious considerations to the contents of the letter which are for our mutual welfare. With the assurance of my highest regards and esteem.

Yours sincerely,

THE DALAI LAMA

His Excellency Rajiv Gandhi.

Prime Minister of India

New Delhi

(Courtesy late Prof M.L. Sondhi, Institute of Asia-Pacific Security, New Delhi)