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International Commission of Jurists (Canadian Section)
I C J C A N A D A C I J
Commission internationale de juristes (section canadienne)

February 16, 2006

Alison LeClaire Christie
Director, East Asia Division 1
Foreign Affairs Canada
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Dear Ms. Christie,

On behalf of the Canadian Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), I write at the direction of President Ed Ratushny, Q.C., to thank you for your letter of January 6, 2006, and provide clarification on a point raised therein.

We wish specifically to address your assertion that:

“The Dalai Lama himself has made statements indicating his belief that Tibet is part of China and that his goal remains greater autonomy within China, not independence.”

We have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to the Bureau of H.H. The Dalai Lama and we are awaiting formal reply from the International Relations Department. In the mean time, we wish to draw to your attention this preliminary comment, received in response to your letter by Tempa Tsering, a representative of the Bureau of H.H. The Dalai Lama:

“His Holiness the Dalai Lama has never said that Tibet is a part of China he however, acknowledged that today Tibet is under Chinese occupation and that he is not demanding independence for Tibet if the Chinese give genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people in which they could practice their way of life & culture.”

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It is apparent from Tempa Tsering's comments that the Dalai Lama's acceptance of Chinese occupation is conditional on the enjoyment by Tibetans of *genuine autonomy* with respect to their ability to practice their culture and way of life. The ongoing human rights atrocities occurring in Tibet, as outlined in our letter of March 31, 2005, are inimical to such autonomy and ought to be explicitly and specifically identified by the Canadian government as an obstacle to the peaceful resolution of this crisis.

On the matter of Tibetan independence, the Dalai Lama has taken a conciliatory position, asking only for China's commitment to basic autonomy for Tibetans and the cessation of persecution. In light of the fact that such a commitment has not been forthcoming from the People's Republic of China, what is Canada's position on the *bona fides* of China's position?

We emphasize that, in the age of terror, it is incumbent on the Canadian government to vocally endorse a non-violent approach to political conflict in accordance with rule of law principles. At stake is the maintenance of free and orderly society in Tibet and elsewhere.

Sincerely,



David M. Aaron
Correspondent

cc:

Canada Tibet Committee

Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Henri-Paul Normandin, Director
Human Rights Division, Foreign Affairs Canada

Nicholas Howen, Secretary General
International Commission of Jurists, Geneva

Ed Ratushny, Q.C.
President, ICJ Canada