

# The Hypocrisy and Danger of Anti-China Demonstrations

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We hear that Tibetans suffer “demographic aggression” and “cultural genocide”. But we do not hear those terms applied to Spanish and French policies toward the Basque minority. We do not hear those terms applied to the US annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1898. And Diego Garcia? In 1973, not so long ago, the UK forcibly deported the entire native Chagossian population from the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. People were allowed one suitcase of clothing. Nothing else. Family pets were gassed, then cremated. Complete ethnic cleansing. Complete cultural destruction. Why? In order to build a big US air base. It has been used to bomb Afghanistan and Iraq, and soon maybe to bomb Iran and Pakistan. Diego Garcia, with nobody there but Brits and Americans, is also a perfect place for rendition, torture and other illegal actions.

When the Olympics come to London in 2012, the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu will certainly lead the demonstrators protesting the “demographic aggression” and “cultural genocide” in Diego Garcia. The UN Secretary General, the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany, the new US President and the entire US Congress will certainly boycott the opening ceremonies.

The height of hypocrisy is this moral posturing about 100 dead in race riots in Lhasa, while the USA, UK and more than 40 nations in the Coalition of the Willing wage a war of aggression against Iraq. This is not “demographic aggression” but raw shock-and-awe aggression. A war crime. A war on civilians, including the intentional destruction of the water and sewage systems, and the electrical grid. More than one million Iraqis are now dead; five million made into refugees. The Western invaders may not be doing “cultural genocide” but they are doing cultural destruction on an immense scale, in the very cradle of Western Civilization. Why is the news filled with demonstrators about Tibet but not about Iraq?

And as everyone knows but few dare say, “demographic aggression” and “cultural genocide” can be applied most accurately to Israel’s settlement policies and systematic destruction of Palestinian communities. On this, the Dalai Lama seems silent. Demonstrators don’t wave flags for bulldozed homes, destroyed orchards, or dead Palestinian children.

## The Chinese Context

The Chinese government is responsible for the well-being and security of one-fourth of humanity. Race riots and rebellion cannot be tolerated, not even when done by Buddhist monks.

Chinese Civilization was already old when the Egyptians began building pyramids. But the last 200 years have not gone well, what with two Opium Wars forcing China to import drugs,

and Europeans seizing coastal ports as a step to complete colonial control, then the Boxer Rebellion, the collapse of the Manchu Dynasty, civil war, a brutal invasion and occupation by Japan, more civil war, then Communist consolidation and transformation of society, then Mao's Cultural Revolution. Such events caused tens of millions of people to die. Thus, China's recent history has good reasons why social order is a higher priority than individual rights. Race riots and rebellion cannot be tolerated.

Considering this context, China's treatment of its minorities has been exemplary compared to what the Western world has done to its minorities. After thousands of years of Chinese dominance, there still are more than 50 minorities in China. After a few hundred years of European dominance in North and South America, the original minority cultures have been exterminated, damaged, or diminished.

Chinese currency carries five languages: Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, Uigur, and Zhuang. In comparison, Canadian currency carries English and French, but no Cree or Inuktitut. If the USA were as considerate of ethnic minorities as is China, then the greenback would be written in English, Spanish, Cherokee and Hawaiian.

In China, ethnic minorities begin their primary schooling in their own language, in a school administered by one of their own community. Chinese language instruction is not introduced until age 10 or later. This is in sharp contrast to a history of coerced linguistic assimilation in most Western nations. The Australian government recently apologized to the Aboriginal minority for taking children from their families, forcing them to speak English, beating them if they spoke their mother tongue. China has no need to make such apology to Tibetans or to other minorities.

China's one-child-policy seems oppressive to Westerners, but it has not applied to minorities, only to the Han Chinese. Tibetans can have as many children as they choose. If Han people have more than one child, they are punished.

There is a similar preference given to minorities when it comes to admission to universities. For example, Tibetan students enter China's elite Peking University with lower exam scores than Han Chinese students.

China is not a perfect nation, but on matters of minority rights, it has been better than most Western nations. And China achieved this in the historical context of restoring itself and recovering from 200 years of continual crisis and foreign invasion.

## **Historical Claims**

National boundaries are not natural. They all arise from history, and all history is disputable. Arguments and evidence can always be found to challenge a boundary. China has long claimed Tibet as part of its territory, though that has been hard to enforce during the past 200 years. The Dalai Lama does not dispute China's claim to Tibet. The recent race riots in Tibet and the anti-Olympics demonstrations will not cause China to shrink itself and abandon part of its territory. Rioters and demonstrators know that.

Foreign governments promoting Tibet separatism and demonstrators demanding Tibet independence should look closer to home. Canadians can campaign for Québec libre. Americans can support separatists in Puerto Rico, Vermont, Texas, California, Hawaii, Guam, and Alaska. Brits can work for a free Wales, and Scotland for the Scots. French can help free

Tahitians, New Caledonians, Corsicans, and the Basques. Spaniards can also back the Basques, or the Catalonians. Italians can help Sicilian separatists or the Northern League. Danes can free the Faeroe Islands. Poles can back Cashubians. Japanese can help Okinawan separatists, and Filipinos can help the Moros. Thai can promote Patanni independence; Indonesians can promote Acehnese independence. New Zealanders can leave the islands to the Maori; Australians can vacate Papua. Sri Lankans can help Tamil separatists; Indians can help Sikh separatists.

Nearly every nation has a separatist movement of some kind. There is no need to go to Tibet, to the top of the world, to promote ethnic separatism. China is not promoting separatism in other nations and does not appreciate other nations promoting separatism in China. The people most oppressed, most needing a nation of their own, are the Palestinians. There is a worthy project to promote and to demonstrate about.

### **Danger of Demonstrations**

These demonstrations do not serve Tibetans, but rather use Tibetans for ulterior motives. Many Tibetans, therefore, oppose these demonstrations. Many Chinese remember their history and see the riots in Lhasa and subsequent demonstrations as another attempt by foreign powers to dismember and weaken China. There is grave danger that Chinese might come to fear Tibetans as traitors, resulting in wide spread anti-Tibetan feelings in China.

Fear that an ethnic minority serves foreign forces caused Canada, during World War 1, to imprison its Ukranian minority in concentration camps. For similar reasons, the Ottomans deported their Armenian minority and killed more than a million in death marches. The German Nazis saw the Jewish minority as traitors who caused defeat in World War 1; hence deportations in the 1930s and death camps in the 1940s. During World War 2, both Canada and the USA feared that their Japanese immigrant minorities were traitorous and deported them to concentration camps. Indonesians fearing their Chinese minority, deported 100,000 in 1959 and killed thousands more in 1965. Israel similarly fears its Arab minority, resulting in deportations and oppression.

Hopefully, the Chinese government and the Chinese people will see Tibetans as victims of foreign powers rather than agents of foreign powers. However, if China reacts like other nations have in history and starts systematic severe repression of Tibetans, then today's demonstrators should remember their role in causing that to happen.

### **Conclusion**

The demonstrators now disparaging China serve only to distract themselves and others from seeing and correcting the current failings of their own governments. If the demonstrators will take a moment to listen, they will hear the silence of their own hypocrisy.

The consequences of these demonstrations are 1) China will stiffen its resolve to find foreign influences inciting Tibetans to riot, and 2) the governments of the USA, UK, France and other Western nations will have less domestic criticism for a few weeks. That is all. These demonstrations can come to no good end.

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