

As the Dalai Lama visits Britain, the BBC outlines Beijing's stance on Tibet, based on various official Chinese sources.

Is Tibet part of China?

For more than 700 years, the central government of China has continuously exercised sovereignty over Tibet, and Tibet has never been an independent state. No government of any country in the world has ever recognised Tibet as an independent state.

(People's Daily, April 2008)

What was Tibet like before the Communists established control in 1951?

Even in the first half of the 20th Century, Tibet remained a society of feudal serfdom under a theocracy, one even darker and more backward than medieval Europe. The ecclesiastical and secular serf owners controlled the personal freedom of the serfs and slaves who made up more than 95% of the population of Tibet. By resorting to... extremely savage punishments, including gouging out eyes, cutting off ears, tongues, hands and feet, pulling out tendons, throwing people into rivers or off cliffs, they practiced cruel economic exploitation.

(Xinhua News Agency, March 2008)

What has happened since then?

Since its peaceful liberation in 1951, Tibet has undergone profound social changes, including democratic reform, reform and opening up, and has achieved remarkable social and economic progress.

(China's Foreign Ministry handbook, July 2007)

Who was behind a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959, after which the Dalai Lama fled to India?

In face of the ever-growing demand of the people for democratic reform, some people in the upper ruling strata of Tibet, in order to preserve feudal serfdom and supported by imperialist forces, staged an armed rebellion all along the line on 10 March 1959 in an attempt to separate Tibet from China.

(Xinhua News Agency, March 2008)

Who was responsible for the recent unrest in Tibet?

We now possess sufficient evidence to prove that the Lhasa incident is part of the 'Tibetan people's uprising movement' organised by the Dalai clique. Its purpose is to create crisis in China by staging co-ordinated sabotage activities in Tibet. 'Tibet Independence' separatist forces led by the Dalai Lama takes the 2008 Beijing Olympics as their last straw to realise 'Tibetan independence'.

(China's Ministry of Public Security press release, April 2008)

The Dalai Lama keeps talking about a peaceful way. However, solid facts prove that his much-vaunted 'middle way' policy and 'peaceful demonstrations' are blatant lies fabricated by the Dalai himself and the Dalai clique.

(China's Ministry of Public Security press release, April 2008)

What does the Chinese government think about reports by the Western media about the recent events in Tibet?

It is unfortunate that a few Western media outlets, including some from the United States, are ignorant of the obvious truths and are basing their reports on distorted facts and unfounded claims.

(Zhang Yun, Chinese consul general for Los Angeles, Xinhua, April 2008)

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