

Summary of international responses to protests and unrest in Tibet, starting March 2008

(Comments within each section are in chronological order with most recent comments at the end)

EUROPE

SLOVENIA (EU Presidency)

March 29: The European Union has issued a joint statement regarding recent events in Tibet. Avoiding any reference to calls for an EU boycott of the opening of the games, the statement demands an end to violence in Tibet and that people arrested be treated in accordance with international standards.

The French foreign minister was one of those calling for a common EU position on China's deadly crackdown on protesters in Tibet. However, there was division on whether the opening of the games should be boycotted. Instead they agreed to a call for what they called substantive and constructive dialogue.

Their statement also says the EU notes the Dalai Lama's recent public commitment to non-violence and to the autonomy, not independence of Tibet. As security is heightened surrounding Olympic ceremonies, the European ministers also agreed on a call for transparency of information, meaning free access by the press to Tibet.

BELGIUM (European Parliament)

March 27: European Parliament President Hans-Gert Poettering invited the Dalai Lama on Wednesday to address the EU legislature on events in Tibet and questioned whether European leaders should attend the opening of the Beijing Olympic Games.

Opening an emergency debate on events in Tibet, Parliament President Hans-Gert Poettering said to applause: "I put it to this house to join with me in saying that the Dalai Lama is welcome in this house whenever he wants to come."

He urged the Chinese authorities to seek a solution to the unrest through dialogue with the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, respecting China's territorial integrity.

"I genuinely say that all politicians must ask themselves whether they can attend the opening ceremony if China fails to take part in dialogue," Poettering said, adding he expected the Dalai Lama to attend the EU assembly in December.

UNITED KINGDOM

March 28: British Prime Minister Gordon Brown speaking in London said Britain won't boycott the Olympic games.

April 5: In London, the Olympic torch was met with widespread protests and scuffles between demonstrators and police Sunday as thousands turned out to protest Olympic host China's human rights record and its recent clampdown on Tibet. At one point in Sunday's 48 km (31 mile) relay, about 100 demonstrators "attempted to surround the torch and torch bearer," police said in a statement. The torch bearer was moved back onto the bus to "complete that stage on the vehicle."

FRANCE

March 26: In Paris, President Sarkozy said that a boycott of the opening ceremonies was a possibility. He made it clear that skipping the ceremony was one of several possible French responses to the violence in Tibet. "Our Chinese friends must understand the worldwide concern that there is about the question of Tibet, and I will adapt my response to the evolutions in the situation that will come, I hope, as rapidly as possible."

Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner separately suggested that if a full-fledged boycott of the games wasn't appropriate, then perhaps one during Opening Ceremonies was.

March 28: French President Nicolas Sarkozy, speaking in London with British Prime Minister Brown, while refusing to rule out a boycott of the games, said "the Dalai Lama himself" isn't calling for a boycott.

April 7: On Monday, just hours before the torch relay was set to begin in the French capital, Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner reiterated that Sarkozy was "keeping all options open." Kouchner has said France opposes a full boycott of Games.

April 8: Paris' Olympic torch relay descended into chaos Monday, with protesters scaling the Eiffel Tower, grabbing for the flame and forcing security officials to repeatedly snuff out the torch and transport it by bus past demonstrators yelling "Free Tibet!"

The relentless anti-Chinese demonstrations ignited across the capital with unexpected power and ingenuity, foiling 3,000 police officers deployed on motorcycles, in jogging gear and even inline skates.

About 500 protesters congregated at the Trocadero Square, which faces the Eiffel Tower, the relay's start-point. They carried signs reading "Save Tibet," and "Act fast, Tibet is dying." Across town, City Hall was draped with a banner reading, "Paris defends human rights around the world."

Police in the French capital said Monday that the last part of the Olympic torch relay in the city had been cancelled after they were forced to douse the symbolic flame several times and carry it in a bus to avoid anti-China protesters.

The announcement followed a day in which the police were forced to play a game of cat-and-mouse with protesters in an effort to keep them at bay as the relay took place.

Security officials in Paris extinguished the Olympic torch five separate times on Monday, frequently hustling it aboard a bus to protect it from protesters. France's former sports minister, Jean-Francois Lamour, stressed that, though the torch was put out aboard the bus, the Olympic flame itself still burned in the lantern where it is kept overnight and on airplane flights.

POLAND

March 28: Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said he will skip the opening of the Olympic Games in Beijing as his government requested that other European Union members join its protest in support of demonstrators in Tibet.

GREECE

March 25: Yesterday in ancient Olympia, demonstrators disrupted a speech by Liu Qi, president of the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee, during the ceremony to light the flame of the Olympic torch. The protestors unfurled a banner and called for a boycott of the games in Beijing before they were arrested by police. The black banner depicted the Olympic rings as handcuffs.

The Athens chapter of Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based media rights group, said its members had staged the protest. They said that "We cannot let the Chinese government seize the Olympic flame, a symbol of peace, without denouncing the dramatic situation of human rights in the country."

Moments after that incident, a Tibetan woman doused herself in red paint and lay in the road in front of a torch runner, while police arrested other protestors planning a demonstration.

INDIA

March 29: The Dalai Lama accused Beijing of "demographic aggression" by encouraging settlers from China's ethnic Han majority to move to the sparsely Tibetan populated region. He said the number of settlers in Tibet was expected to increase by more than 1 million following the Olympics, but did not say where he obtained such information. "There is evidence the Chinese people in Tibet are increasing month by month," the Tibetan spiritual leader told reporters in New Delhi. Lhasa has 100,000 Tibetans and twice as many outsiders, most from the Han majority, the Dalai Lamas said.

March 30: Speaking in Dharamsala of recent protests by monks and nuns, Samdhong Rinpoche, prime minister of the Tibetan-government-in-exile, said "There is the responsibility of every individual, monks and lay people, to act for the betterment of society. He added that if monks "want to fight, they have to disrobe and join the fighters."

TIBET

March 26: The Tibet Daily reported that Public Security Minister Meng Jianzhu announced that "patriotic education" classes would be expanded at monasteries after criticizing monks for taking part in anti-government protests. He toured three monasteries in Lhasa to drive home China's message.

March 27: A group of Tibetan monks disrupted a tour by the first group of foreign reporters allowed into Lhasa since the riots by yelling "Tibet is not free! Tibet is not free!" during the reporters' visit to the Jokhang Temple. The Chinese allowed in about two dozen foreign reporters.

Liu Xuan of the Tibetan Information Office told the group of reporters that "The situation in Lhasa is returning to normal."

March 29: Fresh protests broke out in the Tibetan capital Lhasa on Saturday as foreign diplomats wrapped up a tightly controlled visit organized by Beijing, a radio broadcaster and Tibetan activists reported.

A protest began Saturday afternoon at Lhasa's Ramoche monastery and grew to involve "many people," said Kate Saunders of the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet. Citing unnamed witnesses in the city, Saunders said the situation calmed down after a few hours. She had no information on injuries or arrests.

People also protested at the Jokhang Temple, a major Buddhist site in Lhasa, the government-

in-exile of the Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, said on its Web site. The India-based government gave no other details. Several hundred people took part in the protests, the U.S.-funded broadcaster Radio Free Asia reported.

The Ramoche and Jokhang monasteries and other sites were sealed off by security forces, Saunders said. Ramoche was the original site of protests that spread earlier this month and led to a crackdown by the Chinese government. The reports of new protests came as a 15-member group of diplomats from the United States, Japan and Europe returned to Beijing after a two-day visit to Lhasa.

March 30: Chinese officials in Lhasa and Beijing issued no immediate response to reports by Radio Free Asia that a melee erupted yesterday in Lhasa when security forces surrounded areas near the Ramoche and Jokhang temples while several hundred Tibetans staged a rally.

CHINA

Chinese officials said that more than 660 protestors had surrendered in Lhasa and Sichuan province since violent confrontations between police and Tibetan protesters.

March 31: President Hu Jintao relit the Olympic torch in Beijing last night a week after the lighting ceremony for the Olympic torch in Greece was marked by protests. After Beijing, the flame starts a month long 20 country, journey of over 85,000 miles.

March 31: EU foreign ministers had issued a statement on Saturday after their meeting in Brdo, Slovenia, saying the body "calls for an end to violence and asks that arrested persons be treated in conformity with international standards."

In response to the EU, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said in a statement posted on the ministry's website. that "The Tibet issue is completely China's internal affair. No foreign countries or international organizations have the right to interfere in it."

Jiang said the EU statement could send a "wrong signal" to the international community and "encourage Tibetan separatists in their violent crimes."

April 3: U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, the highest ranking U.S. official to visit Beijing since the March 14th anti-government riot in Lhasa, said he appealed to Chinese leaders to engage their critics. "I expressed our concerns about the violence and urged a peaceful resolution through dialogue."

Secretary Paulson was in Beijing as unrest was also reported among Muslims in Xinjiang following earlier disturbances there last month.

April 4: Hu Jia, one of the most prominent human rights activists in China, was sentenced to 3 _ years in prison. Critics say Hu's conviction is part of a government crackdown to silence dissidents before the Olympics.

April 5: In response to torch relay protests in London, an unnamed Beijing Olympic spokesman condemned "attempts to sabotage" the relay, according to China's state-run Xinhua news agency.

April 10: For the second time in two months Tibetan monks interrupted media tours led by Chinese authorities. Hong Kong TV footage shows a group of monks raising the snow lion flag of Tibet in a square after monks called for the return of the Dalai Lama as journalists entered the main assembly hall at Labrang Monastery in Xiahe, Gansu.

Champa Phuntsok, the Chinese appointed head of the Tibetan Autonomous Region believes supporters of the Dalai Lama, blamed by Beijing for instigating unrest in Tibet and western China, will use the Olympic torch relay to publicize their cause. "During the torch relay in Tibet and climbing Mount Everest, if anyone should attempt to disrupt to undermine the torch relay, then

they will be dealt with severely according to the law.”

UNITED STATES

March 26: The White House said yesterday that the crackdown in Tibet is not cause for President Bush to cancel his planned attendance at the Beijing Olympics.

March 26: San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom said yesterday that protestors have the right to voice their grievances against China when the Olympic torch makes its only North American stop in his city, but that city officials have a responsibility to ensure a peaceful procession. The mayor said the torch route would be made public before the April 9th relay. Activists have criticized the city for restricting demonstration permits.

March 27: A dozen members of the U.S. Congress signed a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi requesting a hearing on a nonbinding Olympic boycott resolution. The letter said “We should not permit the totalitarian government in China to use the Olympics to cover its own evil as did Adolf Hitler in 1936.”

March 29: Pro-Tibet Rally in Washington on March 31st to Ask Bush Not to Attend Olympics Opening Ceremony.

Organized by the Capital Area Tibetan Association and the International Campaign for Tibet, hundreds of Tibetans and their supporters will gather in front of the White House Monday to protest China's recent actions against the Tibetan people and to implore President Bush to send a strong message to China by not attending the opening ceremony for the 2008 Olympic Games this summer in Beijing. After the 12:30pm rally in Lafayette Park, participants will march up Connecticut Avenue to the Chinese Embassy where they will demand that China dialogue with the Dalai Lama.

March 29: President George Bush and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd spoke yesterday at the White House in Washington urging China's leaders to meet with the Dalai Lama and to use restraint against protesting Tibetans.

Rudd stated that “It is absolutely clear that there are human rights abuses in Tibet.” Bush said he told Chinese President Hu Jintao this week that “it's in his country's interest” that Chinese leaders meet with the Dalai Lama.

March 29: The International Campaign for Tibet invites Tibet supporters to join the Olympics campaign, Race for Tibet, by participating in two events coinciding with the arrival on U.S. soil of China's official 2008 Olympics Torch in San Francisco on April 9th.

April 1: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said yesterday that President Bush should consider boycotting the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. “I think boycotting the Opening Ceremony, which really gives respect to the Chinese government is something that should be kept on the table.” Pelosi also said she does not think the United States should boycott the Games entirely.

April 3: It was reported that U.S. Representative Thaddeus McCotter, R-Mich., has drafted a bill to restrict U.S. government officials and employees from attending the opening parade of the Beijing Olympics, saying on his web site that “President Bush, as the leader of the free world, must uphold America's beacon of liberty to the world's oppressed. This noble cause is harmed through his attendance as a guest of this oppressive communist government.”

April 8: In San Francisco, demonstrators scaled cables near the south tower of the Golden Gate Bridge today and unfurled banners intended to draw attention to Chinese human rights violations in Tibet. The protest by Students for a Free Tibet came the day before the Olympic Torch is to arrive in San Francisco for its only North American stop before this summer's games in Beijing.

The protesters, two men and a woman, unfurled two banners. One banner read, "One World, One Dream, Free Tibet 08," a play on the official slogan of this year's Olympic Games, "One World, One Dream." The other read simply, "Free Tibet." The protesters also hung two Tibetan flags.

April 9: In San Francisco, the Beijing Olympic torch run took less than two hours and left only thousands of frustrated protesters on one end of San Francisco and mostly relieved runners and officials on the other. On Wednesday, Mayor Gavin Newsom and other officials said that once they got a good look mid-morning at the chanting, surging, flag-waving crowds along the torch's advertised route, they felt they had no choice but to change the route. A decision the mayor said was made "exclusively" because officials could not guarantee the safety of people at the event.

"You can say what you will about how imperfect this was, and it was imperfect, and I'm not arguing for this model or example in any other city, but I can tell you this: We're better off than London was, we're better off than Paris was," Newsom said, referring to torch relays earlier this week in those cities that descended into chaos.

ARGENTINA

April 11: In Buenos Aires, Argentina runners relayed the Olympic torch in its first stop after San Francisco past fenced-off protesters on Friday, as hundreds of China supporters in red windbreakers tried to reverse weeks of bad publicity for the host of the Summer Games.

U.S OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

March 27: Steve Roush, the chief liaison between the U.S. Olympic Committee and the Beijing organizers said that "Even at the highest levels, there is dialogue going on that wouldn't be happening if the Olympics were not here...They're changing. They're opening up."

April 10: Referring to the Olympic torch relay in San Francisco, Peter Ueberroth, chairman of the United States Olympic Committee, said the U.S. had struck the right balance between preserving freedom of speech for protesters, providing an exhilarating experience for the torchbearers, and preventing a repeat of the chaotic demonstrations that accompanied the torch in London and Paris. "As close as anybody can do in a free society, so far it's looking very good," Ueberroth said. "Virtually anybody and everybody is being heard."

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

March 27: International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge said the "Olympic Games are a catalyst for change, not a panacea for all ills. "

April 6: The President of the Association of National Olympic Committees. Mario Vazquez Rana, meeting in Beijing with the International Olympic Committee, said that "Any politician who is pushing for a boycott is committing a serious error."

April 7: In Beijing Monday, International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge said he was "very concerned" about unrest in Tibet, his strongest comments to date on the political storm surrounding the Games.

"The International Olympic Committee has expressed its serious concern and calls for a rapid peaceful resolution in Tibet," Rogge said. He added that violent protests, "for whatever reason," are "not compatible with the values of the torch relay or the Olympic Games."

INTERNATIONAL

March 27: International Tibet Scholars Call on China to End Harsh Repressions in Tibet, Should Stop Tactic of Blaming the Dalai Lama

An international group of Tibet scholars have asked President Hu Jintao and China to take steps to end the harsh repression in Tibet saying "that silence is no longer an option for a group whose members have devoted their professional lives to the study of Tibet's culture and history."

In an open letter to President Hu Jintao made public on March 27, 2008, the 75 scholars, who have signed so far, said, "The group furthermore states that the tactic of blaming the unrest on the Dalai Lama masks a refusal, on the part of the Chinese government, to recognize the failures of its own policies."