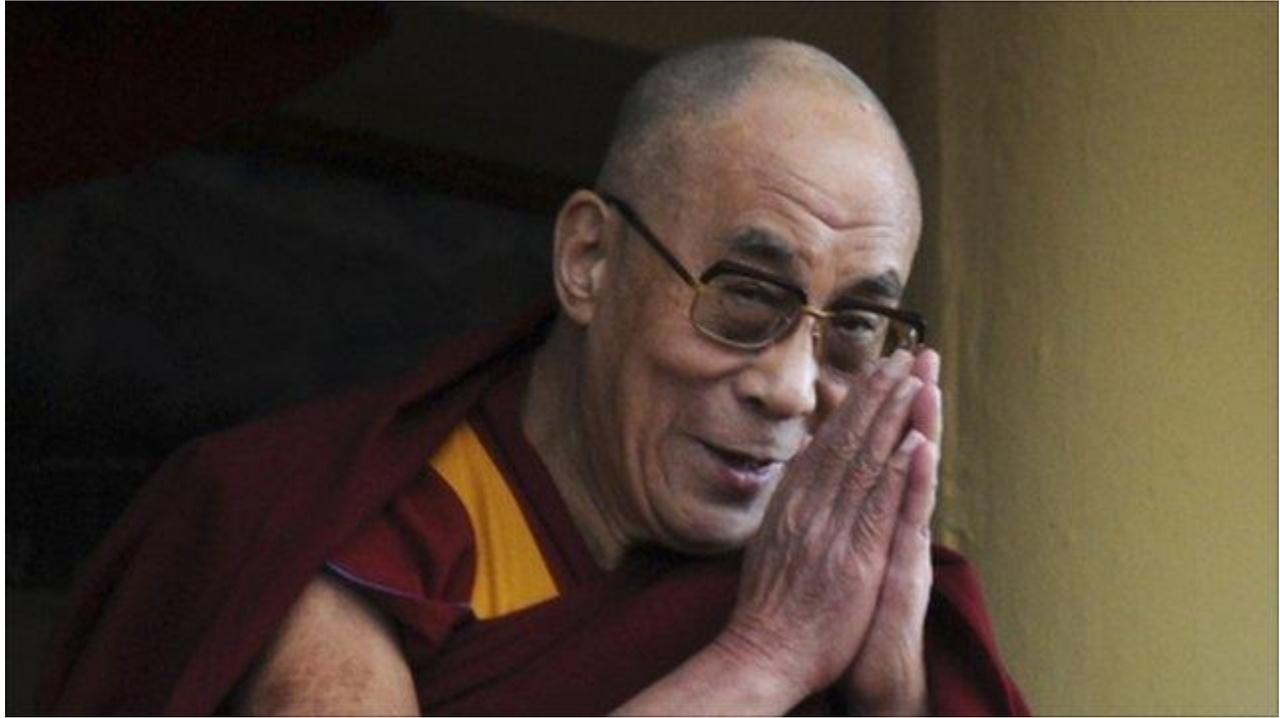


10 March 2011 Last updated at 06:46 ET

Tibet's exiled Dalai Lama to devolve political role



The Dalai Lama makes his announcement

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, has announced a long-awaited plan to devolve his political responsibilities to an elected figure.

The Dalai Lama said he would begin the formal process of stepping down at a meeting of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile next Monday.

He said the move would be to the long-term benefit of Tibetans.

The announcement came in a speech by the Dalai Lama marking the anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising.

"As early as the 1960s, I have repeatedly stressed that Tibetans need a leader, elected freely by the Tibetan people, to whom I can devolve power," he said in Dharamsala, the Indian town that has become his base.

"Now, we have clearly reached the time to put this into effect."

He added that his decision was not made because he wanted to "shirk responsibility" or felt disheartened, emphasising that it was in the best interests of the Tibetan people.

Analysis



Damian Grammaticas BBC News, Beijing

There is already an elected Tibetan government-in-exile with a prime minister, so the powers the Dalai Lama plans to hand over next week are limited, like signing laws and administering oaths.

He will retain his much more significant role as Tibet's spiritual leader.

Behind all this lies a power struggle between Beijing and Tibet's exiles over who will succeed the Dalai Lama when he dies.

China's communist-led government is likely to try to hand pick its own reincarnation.

By devolving political power, the Dalai Lama is trying to ensure Tibetans will have an elected leader they can look to, who is outside China and beyond the Communist Party's control.

When parliament met next week, he would formally propose the constitutional amendments necessary to devolve formal authority to an elected leader, he said.

Correspondents say that whoever replaces the Dalai Lama faces a daunting task, because no other Tibetan comes close to matching his authority as a spiritual and political leader.

They say his move is part of a wider struggle between Dharamsala and Beijing over who succeeds the Dalai Lama.

'Tricks'

The Dalai Lama, who heads Tibet's exiled government, has lived in Dharamsala since fleeing across the Himalayas following the failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule.

He has said he does not want independence for Tibet, only meaningful autonomy.

The Dalai Lama is routinely vilified by the Chinese authorities - who he called on in his speech to show more transparency and allow greater freedom of expression.

The Tibet Divide

- China says Tibet was always part of its territory
- Tibet enjoyed long periods of autonomy before 20th Century
- In 1950, China launched a military assault
- Opposition to Chinese rule led to a bloody uprising in 1959
- Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, fled to India
- Dalai Lama now advocates a "middle way" with Beijing, seeking autonomy but not independence

In Beijing, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman described the Dalai Lama's announcement as trickery.

"He has often talked about retirement in the past few years. I think these are his tricks to deceive the international community," Jiang Yu said.

"The government-in-exile is an illegal political organisation and no country in the world recognises it."

Chinese officials have recently announced travel restrictions to Tibet ahead of the third anniversary of riots there.

In March 2008, Tibet witnessed a wave of violent anti-China protests - the worst unrest there for 20 years.

Beijing blamed the unrest on followers of the Dalai Lama, who it said were seeking to separate Tibet from China.

China responded to the unrest with a massive military crackdown.

Many Tibetans have complained about the growing domination of China's majority Han population in Tibet and accuse the government of trying to dilute their culture.

In the run-up to the anniversary, police in the Indian capital Delhi detained more than 30 Tibetan exiles protesting outside the Chinese embassy on Wednesday.

The protesters wore yellow T-shirts and waved red and blue Tibetan flags, chanting "Free Tibet" and "We want freedom".

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Dalai Lama ready to give up political power

By the CNN Wire Staff

March 10, 2011 7:00 a.m. EST



Dalai Lama to retire

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- NEW: Eleven people are arrested in Nepal for displaying "Free Tibet" banners
- China calls the Dalai Lama a "religious crook"
- He says he will "continue to provide political leadership," but not as an elected leader
- The Dalai Lama fled China in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule

(CNN) -- The Dalai Lama announced Thursday his plan to retire as political head of the Tibetan exile movement, according to his website.

"Tibetans need a leader, elected freely by the Tibetan people, to whom I can devolve power," the exiled spiritual leader said in a statement. "Now, we have clearly reached the time to put this into effect."

The Dalai Lama remains the head of state for now, according to Tempa Tshering, his representative in India, and will remain the group's spiritual leader.

"On March 14th, parliament will meet in Dharamsala (India) and decide whether to approve his request," Tshering said. "He wants to make a change. He has always believed in democracy and he wasn't elected as head of state."

If the changes are made, leadership of the group would be passed onto an elected leader.

"Since I made my intention clear, I have received repeated and earnest requests both from within Tibet and outside, to continue to provide political leadership," the Dalai Lama said in his statement. "My desire to devolve authority has nothing to do with a wish to shirk responsibility. It is to benefit Tibetans in the long run.

"It is not because I feel disheartened. Tibetans have placed such faith and trust in me that as one among them I am committed to playing my part in the just cause of Tibet," he said. "I trust that gradually people will come to understand my intention, will support my decision and accordingly let it take effect."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry panned the announcement, calling the Dalai Lama a "religious crook," who is trying to splinter China.

"He is the mastermind of political activism," said Jiang Yu, ministry spokeswoman. "He has said many times he is leaving but this seems to be one of his tricks to deceive the international community."

In Nepal, eleven people were arrested Thursday for displaying "Free Tibet" banners and shouting anti-China slogans, police said. Some of the arrests took place near the Buddhist monastery of Boudhanath in the capital, Kathmandu, on the anniversary of a failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule.

The Dalai Lama fled China 52 years ago on March 10, 1959, after the failed uprising. The exile group is headquartered in Dharamsala in northern India.

The Dalai Lama told CNN in October that he would like to retire at some point.

"I'm also a human being. ... Retirement is also my right," he said while on a speaking tour of North America.

Without saying exactly when, he said, "Sooner or later, I have to go. I'm over 75, so next 10 years, next 20 years, one day I will go."

CNN's Ben Brumfeld and Sara Sidner contributed to this report

http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/03/10/india.dalai.lama/index.html?eref=rss_topstories&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2F+cnn_topstories+%28RSS%3A+Top+Stories%29&utm_content=My+Yahoo

25 February 2011 Last updated at 01:57 ET

China calls for renewed fight against Dalai Lama

By Michael Bristow BBC News, Beijing



It is nearly three years since riots and unrest rocked Tibetan areas

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A senior Chinese leader says Beijing should launch a fresh struggle against the influence of the Dalai Lama in Tibet.

The comments were made by Jia Qinglin, who sits on the standing committee of the Chinese Communist Party's powerful politburo.

He said China also needed to raise the living standards of Tibetan people.

The call comes nearly three years after riots and unrest in Tibetan areas which China blamed on the Dalai Lama.

'Handle carefully'

Mr Jia made the comments at a two-day meeting to discuss developments in Tibet and in other provinces where Tibetans live.

The attendance of China's public security minister, Meng Jianzhu, suggests Beijing's control in Tibet was a major issue.

"The fight against the Dalai Lama clique must be continued and deepened," the state-run news agency Xinhua quote Mr Jia as saying.

The Tibet Divide

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But he added that initiatives used to ensure stability should be "circumspectly deployed".

He said that issues related to Tibetan Buddhism must be "handled well", perhaps an acknowledgement that a heavy-handed crackdown on religion could prove counterproductive.

The Chinese authorities have long vilified the Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism who fled the region more than 50 years ago.

He now lives in exile in India, but his influence in Tibet is still immense - which is why China continues to attack him.

This is, though, only one part of Beijing's strategy to secure control over Tibet, which it claims has been part of China for centuries.

It is also been spending millions of dollars improving the living standards of people there.

Just this week, it said the number of Tibetans living in absolute poverty had nearly halved in five years.

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