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## Senate

### Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein

#### *A Resolution Expressing Support for the People of Tibet*

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today with Senators Lieberman, Rubio, Boxer, Durbin, McCain, Webb and Mark Udall to introduce a resolution expressing our deep concern about the current situation in Tibet and our steadfast support for the Tibetan people.

Once again, we have seen how harsh and counterproductive Chinese policies have heightened tensions and led to deadly violence.

According to press reports and the International Campaign for Tibet, since the beginning of the Chinese New Year on Monday, security forces in Sichuan province have opened fire three times on Tibetans who gathered peacefully to protest Chinese policies on Tibet.

At least three Tibetans have been killed and many more wounded.

These attacks come on top of a recent spate of self-immolations mostly by Tibetan monks and nuns.

Since March 2011, at least 16 Tibetans, including four this month alone, have set themselves on fire and at least 12 have died.

I know I join my colleagues in mourning these tragic deaths and the death of Tibetans in this latest round of unrest.

In addition, I call on Chinese security forces to exercise maximum restraint and stop targeting Tibetan protesters.

Violence is not the answer to the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people.

We must raise our voice with this resolution to call on Beijing to respect the right of Tibetans to practice their own religion freely and preserve their distinct cultural and linguistic identity.

This resolution:

- mourns the death of Tibetans who have self-immolated and deplors the repressive policies targeting Tibetans;
- calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to suspend implementation of religious control regulations, reassess religious and security policies implemented since 2008 in Tibet, and resume a dialogue with Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama or his representatives, to resolve underlying grievances;
- calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release all persons that have been arbitrarily detained; to cease the intimidation, harassment and detention of peaceful protestors; and to allow unrestricted access to journalists, foreign diplomats, and international organizations to Tibet;

- commends His Holiness the Dalai Lama for his decision to devolve his political power in favor of a democratic system;

- congratulates Tibetans living in exile for holding, on March 20, 2011, a competitive, multi-candidate election that was free, fair, and met international electoral standards; and

- reaffirms the unwavering friendship between the people of the United States and the people of Tibet.

Mr. President, over the past several years I have been following the situation in Tibet with increasing concern.

I became involved in this issue when I first met His Holiness the Dalai Lama during a trip to India and Nepal in the fall of 1978.

At that time, as Mayor, I invited His Holiness to visit San Francisco and he accepted.

In September 1979, I was delighted to welcome the Dalai Lama to San Francisco to receive his first public recognition in the United States.

He inspired me to act and I have had the privilege to

call him a friend for over 30 years.

Over this time, I have come to the view that Chinese policies on Tibet are intended to suppress the Tibetan culture and people.

These policies include:

- punitive security measures including permanently placing Chinese officials in monasteries;
- surveillance, mass arrests, and detentions; and
- restrictions on freedom to practice religion including requiring monks to denounce the Dalai Lama.

We have seen how these policies have created an atmosphere of despair, hopelessness, and frustration among many Tibetans.

And despite nine rounds of talks between the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China and envoys of His Holiness, a comprehensive solution to the Tibetan issue remains out of reach.

As a friend of China and the Dalai Lama, I am saddened to see the situation in Tibet deteriorate to this point.

The Dalai Lama has been trying to engage the Chinese leadership for over fifty years.

In the 1990s, I carried three letters to President Jiang Zemin from the Dalai Lama requesting a face to face meeting.

In my view, the Dalai Lama's concerns are driven by a strong Tibetan belief and experience that the Chinese Government continues to suppress the Tibetan culture and way of life.

As my colleagues know, the Dalai Lama has made it clear that he does not support independence for Tibet, but rather meaningful cultural and religious autonomy for the Tibetan people within the People's Republic of China.

Most recently, in his March 2011 statement marking the 52nd anniversary of the peaceful Tibetan uprising he stated:

“In our efforts to solve the issue of Tibet, we have consistently pursued the mutually beneficial Middle-Way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the [People's Republic of China]”.

And the newly elected prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, has affirmed this policy in his inaugural address:

“Guided by the wisdom of our forefathers and foremothers, we will continue the Middle-Way policy, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet within the People’s Republic of China.”

Despite these repeated and unequivocal statements, Beijing continues to insist that His Holiness seeks independence for Tibet.

I am stunned that this message has fallen on deaf ears.

Let there be no doubt: the clear goal of His Holiness and the Tibetan people is autonomy within China.

And this autonomy can only come about through meaningful dialogue and negotiation, not actions that would undermine Tibetan culture.

As such, I urge the administration to work with our friends and allies in the international community and call on the Chinese Government to begin a substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama on national

reconciliation, respect for the Tibetan culture, and meaningful autonomy for Tibet.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for the Tibetan people and support this resolution.

I ask Unanimous Consent that a copy of the resolution be printed in the Congressional Record.