



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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REMARKS BY
MAX M. KAMPELMAN
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTING
THE FREEDOM HOUSE AWARD
TO THE 14th DALAI LAMA

United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

April 17, 1991

Members of the United States Senate, Members of the United States House of Representatives, distinguished guests and friends. In behalf of Freedom House and as its Chairman, I welcome you this afternoon to join us in honoring His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who will be receiving our Freedom Award. We are proud to join with the Congressional Caucus on Human Rights to pay tribute to this outstanding man of religion and public conscience for his forty years of devotion to restoring democracy, human rights and dignity to his people and to his country, Tibet. We are proud to identify ourselves with his patient and yet persistent efforts to demonstrate that the aspiration for democracy and human freedom is a universal one.

This year marks Freedom House's 50th year. Nearly 50 years ago, a noteworthy group of American leaders -- Democrats, Republicans and Independents -- led by Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, came together to assert that the human values of freedom and democracy must be at the foundation of our government's policies, domestic and international. During the ensuing fifty years, we have taken on many challenges, some

popular and others less so. We have fought for civil and human rights in our own country and elsewhere in the world. We have opposed the totalitarians of the right and of the left and we have never hesitated to do so. Whether in the Soviet Union or the Union of South Africa, whether in Chile, China or Cuba, we have spoken out for freedom and human dignity.

Freedom House has acted with the strong conviction that America has a moral imperative to defend liberty and uphold the fundamental ethical values that form the foundation of our democratic society. During the past 50 years, our commitment to genuine political pluralism, religious liberty, ethnic tolerance, and basic human rights have been at the cornerstone of our activities around the world.

We do so again this afternoon in welcoming the Dalai Lama of Tibet in this edifice of democracy, the Capitol of the United States of America.

Our guest, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in a line that began in 1351, has described himself as "a simple monk". He is aware of his moral and political responsibilities as the leader of his people who today live under Chinese domination, the victims of an armed invasion by foreign troops that took place 40 years ago.

That aggression and the repression used to perpetuate it is one that too many are prepared to accept as a reality of international affairs. There is no legal or moral justification for acquiescing in that dastardly act of violence. For 1,300 years the Tibetans have worked to preserve their own unique form of government. They have insisted on their separateness and their right to follow the teachings of their culture and religion, which emphasize selflessness, compassion, meditation, study, and discipline. They continue to seek a status and a way of life which will permit them to live their own lives free of foreign intrusion and domination.

The Dalai Lama is today in exile from his country and his people. His leadership has been a moral one and its power has been awesome. The recognition he has received in being awarded the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to non-violence in resisting the evils experienced by his people is an illustration of that strength. His voice and message have brought that cruelty to the attention of the civilized world. The Dalai Lama has become a symbol of the power of moral force in international affairs.

Tibet is today a tragic land. Many of its people, including tens of thousands of its children, have been forcibly removed to China in an effort to homogenize them and bury their heritage. Millions of Chinese have been forcibly removed from their homes and brought to Tibet in order to dilute and further

destroy Tibetan culture, religion and influence. Indiscriminate torture and public executions have been tools of that repression. Buddhist monks became a primary target for persecution as thousands of monasteries have been defaced, ransacked and destroyed. Vital food and grains were confiscated from Tibet and sent to China, resulting in famine, killing tens of thousands. We cannot permit a deafening silence to acquiesce in that extermination process which continues even today.

That is why we gather today to express our support for the aspirations of the six million Tibetan people for freedom and dignity. That is why we honor the Dalai Lama in his effort to safeguard Tibetan culture and to champion the principles of democracy, peace and the unity of mankind.

The world is rapidly moving toward greater democracy and human dignity. It is an inevitable by-product of the communications revolution which is making available to all peoples the impressive potential benefits to mankind from the scientific and technological changes that are altering the way we live.

Over the years, Freedom House has supported and worked with noble human spirits such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrei Sakharov, Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel. Once lonely voices, their messages have now become messages of humanity as we move

forward toward their realization. We identify ourselves with the aspirations of the Dalai Lama in that same spirit. We believe in the rightness of his cause. We work to help him and his people focus the attention of the world on the moral legitimacy of their cause. We do so again this afternoon. We will not abide those who seek to silence them. Nor will we abide those who seek to isolate and ignore them. The cause of the Dalai Lama is the cause of our evolving civilization.

The principles of tolerance, pluralism and democracy are today rapidly advancing across the world stage. Tibet remains hidden behind a curtain of terror and repression. We, here, must help remove that curtain. The United States represents respect for human rights and the dignity of the human being. That is what the Dalai Lama is striving to achieve for his people. That is what his efforts represent. We belong together. We, here, are together.

It is now my honor to present His Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, with the Freedom Award of Freedom House in honor of his outstanding contributions to the cause of human liberty and human dignity.

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