



## Chinese reprisals against Tibet must be stopped

China's declaration of a "people's war" on protesting Tibetans ("Dalai Lama condemns 'rule of terror'", smh.com.au, March 17) smells suspiciously like its so-called "peaceful liberation" of Tibet in the 1950s, which led to countless Tibetans being imprisoned, tortured and killed.

There is a grave risk that China will launch a violent crackdown on the Buddhist monks and other Tibetans who demonstrated.

And, by shutting off media access to Tibet, it is clear that they intend to do this away from the prying eyes of other countries. Australia, with its reputation as a human rights defender, cannot allow this to happen. Kevin Rudd must publicly demand (in Mandarin if need be) that the Chinese Government demonstrate restraint in handling

protests, respect human rights in Tibet and allow journalists and human rights monitors to ensure that arrested Tibetans are not mistreated.

**Temay Rigzin Turner (ACT)**

Many would prefer China to leave Tibet, but, with the tragedy of East Timor in mind, one must seriously examine the strategic and security implications of a Tibet without Chinese presence before advocating such an event. In particular, consideration must be given to filling the power vacuum that China would leave behind.

Tibet is a vast, thinly populated and poor territory. It does not have a trained local security service to assume control from the Chinese military. In any power vacuum, there is a high risk of a breakdown of law and order as

happened in East Timor. No doubt, in the interim, foreign personnel would be required to maintain security. However, few countries have the resources to police this vast territory, except perhaps the United States. The Americans would like to be able to use parts of Tibet that border central Asia for strategic purposes, as they did in Kyrgyzstan. It would also please many people in the US and elsewhere who are keen to "contain" China. Perhaps this explains why China is so reluctant to let go of Tibet.

**Kin-Mun Kan Cheltenham**

The people of Tibet are hoping the rest of the world will do something to stop their destruction. But as long as the West values its trading relationship with China, nothing will be done. The

response is defined by our previous prime minister: he recognised China's sovereignty over Tibet and said it was not in our national interest to interfere.

If ever there was a country in need of regime change, China is it. However, since China has the financial whip hand over the US, dramatically increased by President Bush's borrowings for the Iraq war, nothing will be done. That war also poses a problem for the West, since it ignored the rule of law and provided an eloquent excuse for China to ignore any protests.

**David Ashton Orange**

When our Government urges restraint on the Chinese does it mean we prefer them to squeeze the trigger with bridled, rather than unbridled, zeal?  
**Barry Lamb Cairns (Qld)**