

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF TIBET FOR INDIA

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Strategic Importance of Tibet for India**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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DEDICATED

TO

MY

PARENTS

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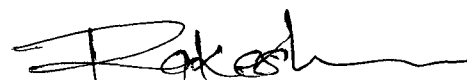
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Preface

In the 21st century, Tibet is considering as the fundamental base of national security for world's two prominent developing countries, namely India and China. As the fundamental base, recently Tibet has a different stand and distinctiveness between India and China. But, earlier, in the history Tibet was acting as a buffer zone between India and China. Anyway, to aim for a Tibet which will serve the role of a "buffer zone" as it did before the liberation in 1951 seems far-fetched. No doubt, Tibet is today an integral part of China and to argue or even talk about its complete autonomous status appears to be an impossible and uncanny proposition. Still, today world's renowned spiritual leader like the Dalai Lama is negotiating on the grounds of an autonomous Tibet with regards to the "Domestic Matters" as religion, culture and society. Though, the Defence and the Foreign Relations will remain in the hands of the Chinese central government.

Considering the aforesaid circumstance, it's fruitful to say that Tibet after acquisition of autonomy will be able to play vigorous role as a buffer state appears unrealistic. Then in one hand, in the perspective of nuclear issue, China has already planted their two nuclear sites in Tibet at Amdo and Kham region which distance is roughly 2000 Kms away from the New Delhi. In the other hand, if India would place their nuclear weapons at the north-eastern border of India it would be face to face problem for both countries.

Tibet and Tibetan ethnic areas are endowed with the greatest river system in the world. Its rivers supply fresh water to 85% of Asia's population and approximately 50% of the world's population. Three of the world's major rivers, namely;Yarlung Tsangpo or Brahmaputra, Yangtze and Mekong have their headwater in Tibet. Even, the South Asian Sub-Continent is nourished by perennial flow of four major rivers originating from different directions of the Kailash range in western Tibet. For instance; India's major rivers originate from the Trans-Himalayan region. Among some of the Tibetan rivers also like Brahmaputra which influence the livelihood of the Indian north-eastern region strategically show more importance for India's security north-eastern belt.

China's Tibet policy impacts on Indian security interests in mainly two ways. One, it exposed the border problem between India and China which led to the 1962 Sino Indian War. And the Chinese invasion of Tibet ended the buffer zone between the two countries. Second, China's Western Development Strategy, a product of China's nationalism project, has deeper ramifications for India. A closer analysis of China's Western Development Strategy indicates that more than removing economic backwardness from the region, gaining strategic capability is the primary objective. The entire development strategy in Tibet is impelled by the crucial strategic location of Tibet, as well as it being a focal point of Sino-Indian rivalry. With the completion of the Qinghai Tibet railway line, China will be able to overcome this obstacle in increasing its military deployment near the India-Tibet border region. This indeed will have serious security implications for India. There are also plans to extend the Qinghai-Tibet railway line to Kathmandu. This will indeed have geopolitical ramifications for India.

For the normalisation of the relations between two states Prime Minister Vajpayee visited to China in 2003 and officially accepted Tibet as a part of China and in return Chinese have accepted that Sikkim is a part of the Indian Territory. Though China has asserted their stance on Arunachal Pradesh and has claimed that it is the part of the Chinese territory. The economic tie between the two countries is on a constant boost.

Though the Dalai Lama and his followers have taken asylum in India after the Lhasa revolt of 1959, and has become rift between India China relations, still both the countries China and India have disagreement on this issue. But, in the other hand, Tibetan people itself have become an internal security threat for the Indian security. Tibetan have involved in indulged illegal activity like drugs trafficking, poaching, using Indian voter ID card, ration card and schedule tribe certificates etc. Even, there are so many Tibetan refugees who have engaged themselves in various jobs under the Indian government offices on the basis of above mention testimonials.

By and large, this Dissertation entitled, "*Strategic Importance of Tibet for India*", is thus, an attempt to examine that how the Tibet issue influence the Indo-China relations in one surface, and in the other surface, how the Tibetan strategic location and Tibetan people have influenced the India's internal and external security.

Consequently, the proposed study entitled, “*Strategic Importance of Tibet for India*”, has been organised into five chapters including the conclusion. The first chapter focuses on the historical background of the Indo-Tibetan relations, and their up-down relations up to the India’s independent. Along with that background and diplomatic relations, it also covers the issues of India’s post Panchsheel agreement changing policy towards Tibet and the stand of Tibet as the bone of contention between the Indo-China relationships.

The second chapter entitled as, “*Geopolitical Background of Tibet*” has discussed the role of British Empire in Tibet and how it has influenced Tibetan government in per their interest. The role of Soviet Union and US during the cold war period into Tibet also has been emphasized. These two super power states during the Cold War period were using Tibet as a pawn in the sake of their interest. Soviet Union was supporting to China on Tibet issue and on other hand United States was giving training to the Tibetan rebellion in US through their CIA agency. India was following the policy of British India for Tibet till her independent. But after 1954 Panchsheel agreement they changed their policy towards Tibet and recognised Tibet as a part of china. After the Lhasa revolt 1959 India China relations went into rift. India now supported on Tibet issue in 1965 UN resolution passed by the council to condemn the human rights violation in Tibet by the Chinese authority.

The third chapter is related to, “*Indo-Tibetan Relations during the British India Period*”, examines the policy of Warren Hastings and Lord Curzon during their rule of regime. It has been explained about the Younghusband expedition to the Lhasa in 1904, which was the first indo-Tibetan direct contact between them, and Tibet recognised a separate entity from China. Shimla agreement of 1914 and after 1947 the British India’s assurance to the Tibetan that the independent India will follow their policy towards Tibetan has been explained into this chapter.

The fourth chapter is concerned with “*Strategic Importance of Tibet: Indian Perspective*”. In this chapter attempt has been made to analyze the Tibetan strategic importance for Indian security with the Indian point of view. The discussion over the Nehru’s policy towards Tibet has been emphasized. Nehru invited Tibet in 1947 for Asian conference in New Delhi as an independent nation. But he changed his policy after the 1954 Panchsheel agreement. And relations of India China again misbalanced

after the Lhasa revolt. India-China not only has Tibet and border issue but water issue has also strategic importance between India and China because of the Tibet. As it's well known that the source of origin of the major Indian rivers is from Tibetan plateau. This determines the economy and life of the Indian north eastern states. Thus, this chapter emphasize the disagreement on border problem of India China related to Tibet.

Lastly, the last and fifth chapter includes a brief outline of the findings of the study.

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Chapter-1

Introduction

India, Tibet and China have an ancient past. In the course of their history, each nation has developed its own characteristics, though the recent decades may certainly be considered among the most tense and complex. In its long and chequered annals, Tibet's links with India and China date back almost to the dawn of her recorded history. They rested largely on close Buddhist ties: Tibetan Lamaism (Vajrayana Buddhism) is an offshoot of the Mahayana school of Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, a Bodhisattva¹. Moreover, the Tibetan script was based on Devanagari, the language itself leaning heavily on Sanskrit. For the average Tibetan, India is a sacred land, a land of pilgrimage. The present Dalai Lama has called Tibet 'a child of the Indian civilisation'².

The great Himalayan range has always been a cultural continuum and has drawn special attention of India. It has been porous not only to trade but also for religious, political and cultural exchanges. More than 2500 years ago, Prince Siddhartha, who later became Buddha born in a small state called Kapilavastu in the Himalayan foothills. The birth of Gautama Buddha altered the face of Asia and the World. The Buddha and his teachings have largely determined the relations between Tibet and India for practically 1400 years. Historically, Tibet has always given prima to the Buddhism in the development of her culture. And, therefore, in the Tibetan population mind, India has always been considered as the 'Land of the Gods'³.

In 127 B.C., the inhabitants of Yarlung Valley elevated Nyatri Tsenpo as the first king of Tibet. Nyatri was originally from India; he was the son of a royal family related to the Buddha's family. Before reaching Tibet, he had been wandering

¹ Mehra, Parshotam (1990), "The Elusive Triangle: Tibet in India-China Relations--A Brief Conspectus", *China Report*, 26(2), p.145.

² Ibid., p.147.

³ Arpi, Claude (2004), "Cultural Relations between India and Tibet: An overview of the light from India", *Dialogue*, 6(2), p.42.

between India and Tibet and finally came down in Yarlung Valley where he met some herdsmen grazing their yaks. The Tibetan believed that he had come from heaven. His enthronement marks the beginning of the Yarlung Dynasty of Tibet. The Tibetan royal calendar still dates from the year⁴.

Notwithstanding above developments, Buddhism was introduced in Tibet in the fifth century A.D. during the reign of Thori Nyatsen, the 28th King of the Yarlung Dynasty⁵ and became a state affair during the reign of Songtsen Gampo (617-650), the 33rd Tsenpo of the Yarlung Tribe. After marrying a Nepalese and a Chinese princess, the King converted himself to Buddhism. These marriages played a vital role in the spread of Buddhism in Tibet and also it influenced the politics of Tibet. During his reign Tibet became the strongest military power in Central Asia. Though the Chinese emperor and the Nepalese king were none too keen to present their daughter to the Tibetan king who was considered uneducated and a barbarian, they had no choice but to accept the friendly offer of their powerful neighbour.

Historically, King Songtsen Gampo built the Tibetan empire which extended to the Chinese capital Chang'an (modern Xian) in the East, to the Pamirs and Samarkand in the west and the Himalayas in the south. It was the greatest empire in Asia. During this time the capital was moved from Yarlung to Lhasa and a fort where the Potala Palace stands today. The adoption of Buddhism as the religion of the court is an important watershed in the cultural relations between the two nations. India's long-standing relationship with Tibet has developed historically as a friendship based on culture, religion, trade and politics.

There was an apparent change of stance under the British rule but, as the Younghusband expedition of 1904 clearly demonstrated, British India was not interested in making Tibet into an imperial protectorate. The only assurance it sought

⁴ Arpi Claude (2004), "Cultural Relations between India and Tibet: An overview of the light from India", *Dialogue*, 6(2), pp.42-43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.42.

was that neither Russia nor China make Tibet into a base for mounting hostile operations across the Himalaya⁶.

The beginnings of Tibet's links with China go back to the mid-seventh century when a powerful Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo married a Han princess of the ruling Tang dynasty. Chinese influence came in its wake: in manner of dress and modes of living. Centuries later especially in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the Mongols, whose vast empire embraced China as well as Tibet, established close links with Tibet's Lamas after accepting their faith. The pattern was that of the traditional guru-chela relationship (Tib: Chos-Yon); the lay prince buttressing the authority of the high priest who in turn extended him spiritual support⁷. Under the Manchus (1644-1912) the relationship evolved further. But, in essence, the Dalai Lamas treated it as a purely personal, almost familial one: with the Manchu emperor, not with the Han people. This was to become a major bone of contention in the wake of the October (1911) Revolution, the birth of Sun Yat-Sen's republic and later, Mao's People's Republic of China and Shimla accord made more aggressive to the Chinese towards Tibet. British Empire was keen to resolve Tibetan problem for the sake of its political and economic interest.

The establishment of the British Empire in India in 1757 and economic penetration of China by the western powers from 1839 fundamentally altered the traditional balance of power on the Asian continent. British policy towards Tibet was characterized by two conflicting imperatives which, throughout their rule in India, they sought to reconcile. From early on, the British rulers realized the importance of Tibet as a buffer between India and any other external power on the north, be it France, Russia or China. The British raj's policy towards Tibet was shaped by the great game which was the need to prevent Russia from posing a threat to India. However, to support or even encourage a completely independent Tibet was to damage a much larger commercial interest in China. Thus, they sought to limit Chinese power in Tibet and encourage Tibetan autonomy. In short, the British government recognised what they called Chinese "suzerainty" but not sovereignty in

⁶ Mehra, Parshotam (1990), "The Elusive Triangle: Tibet in India-China Relations--A Brief Conspectus", *China Report*, 26(2), p.145.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.145.

Lhasa⁸. The British rulers were unsuccessful in establishing contact with Lhasa until 1904.

There were various options before the British Empire in India with regard to Tibet. Though they could have colonized Tibet with much difficulty and at high cost, they ruled out this option as early as 1775, because it was then a not viable economic proposition. They could have easily extended their protectorate as the Tibetan authorities including the thirteen Dalai Lama and his ministers repeatedly requested this. But the British ruled-out this option too because it would be a costly affairs. They could have granted an Independent status to Tibet as they tentatively tried to 1912 until 1947. This option was not officially sanctioned, because it would damage their much larger commercial interest in China. Under the circumstances, the only viable option they consider seriously was that China had suzerainty over Tibet but on understanding that Tibet was autonomous. Such a conditional policy safe guard's British economy interest in China as well as national security of the Indian Empire⁹.

The primary consideration in British policy towards Tibet was how to ensure the security of the 2000 miles long Himalayan frontier that India shares with Tibet. This could be ensured if Tibet remained autonomous in the British sense and as long as China remained weak as a nominal suzerain authority in Tibet¹⁰. This formula worked up to 1949 because China remained weak and divided until 1949. Their understanding that Tibet under the suzerainty to the weak Chinese would not be a source of danger to the safety of British India was good.

Through this agreement in 1914, the Shimla Agreement was signed by British India, China and Tibet. British India's goal was to settle the boundary dispute between British India and China on one hand and on another hand between Tibet and China. The agreement divided Tibet into inner and outer Tibet. China was given sovereignty over inner Tibet but only suzerain control over outer Tibet. And the

⁸ Singh, Gunjan (2008), "Can Tibet play the Role of a Buffer State Again?", *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*, 8(1), p.25. ISSN: 1522-211X |URL: http://www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/8_1singh.pdf.

⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁰ Kumar, Anand (1995), *Tibet: A Sourcebook*, (ed.), New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, p.38.

boundary between India and Tibet was demarcated, with the raj retaining trading and extra territorial rights in outer Tibet.

India after independence, i.e. from 1946 to 1951, followed the policy of British: treating Tibet as an autonomous buffer state between India and China recognizing Chinese suzerainty but not sovereignty over Tibet, and protecting Tibet's autonomy by recognizing its treat making powers, especially in relation to India. In 1943 Tibet established own foreign ministry with the universal recognition of Tibetan passport. Even in 1947, Nehru invited Tibet to attend the first inter-Asian conference in New Delhi¹¹.

Jawaharlal Nehru in 1950 tried his best, mainly through diplomacy, to prevent a Chinese military occupation of Tibet, and strongly advocated a peaceful resolution of Sino-Tibetan tension. Nehru was rushing through a series of defence treaties with Bhutan (8th of August, 1949), Nepal (31st July, 1950) and Sikkim (15th of December, 1950). These countries constituted Nehru's definition of security zone in which India would tolerate no foreign interference. These treaties demonstrated India's strategic response to the Communist takeover of Tibet.

In the post 1949 period, India urged China to let Tibet continued as an autonomous region in line with its historical status, religious, cultural, and political identity. However, the entry of 20000 PLA troops in 1950-51 into Tibet ended its independent status and eventually brought to the fore the India-China border issue. And later in 1959 China stating that the Sino-Indian border never delimited and that China has never recognized the McMahon line¹².

Between 1947-1954 India's positions on Tibet was as an independent nation. But in 1954 India gave up this position in an agreement with China over trade and intercourse between India and Tibet. In subsequent decade New Delhi has repeatedly reiterated that Tibet is a part of China in spite of claim over Indian Territory, the border war it imposed on India in 1962. The 1962 war was a severe blow to the

¹¹ Pant, Pushpesh & Jain, Sripal (2006), *Theory and Practice of International Relations*, (Hindi), Meerut: Minakshi Prakashan, p.533.

¹² Das, Gautam (2009), *China-Tibet-India: 1962 War and the Strategic Military Future*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, p.138.

country's prestige in the world, particularly in Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. And also among the tribal population on Indian side of border like Ladakh. It shattered at least temporarily, the credibility of India's ability to protect these areas from the might of China. Understandably, Nepal and to a lesser extent Bhutan and Sikkim began to feel that it might be better to seek to reach some understanding with the dragon on their door step and towards that end to reduce their dependence on India¹³.

China also setting up nuclear missiles in the Tibet which is roughly 2000 kms from New Delhi. China's first attempt of nuclear research was made in 1958 at Amdo on the Tibetan plateau and armed in 1971 when Beijing perceived a serious threat from the Soviet Union and India. By the early 1970s China had brought south Asia and the former Soviet Union within their effective nuclear range and reach¹⁴. The fact that the Maoist strategist had chosen Amdo and Kham (near the Sino-Tibetan border) for their nuclear sites might have other implications and motives, besides geographical suitability and nuclear safety. By this mighty nuclear act, they might have cemented and concretized their claims over inner Tibet.

In March 1969 a group of Indian parliament members led by one of India's respected leaders, Jayaprakash Narayan, urged their government to make a fresh appraisal of its policy towards Tibet. They cited Tibet's strategic importance in these terms: "Independent Tibet is vital not only to the national interest of India but also to that of the Soviet Republics of Central Asia, of Mongolia, of Pakistan, of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and of Burma¹⁵".

The Triangle: India- Tibet- China

Though the Tibet has strategic importance for India but historically and culturally these two (now it is part of China) had very rich relations through ages of history. For centuries, India and Tibet have shared a common spiritual search. Though Buddhism first reached China from India in the first century AD, it was the Sui dynasty in China (A.D. 581-618); many Buddhist monks from India travelled to China and made it

¹³ Sawhny, R.(1968), "China's Control of Tibet and Its Implications for India's Defence", *International Studies*, 10(4), p.493.

¹⁴ Norbu, Dawa (1979), "Strategic Development in Tibet: Implications for Its Neighbors", *Asian Survey*, 19(3), p.146.

¹⁵ Norbu, Dawa(2001), *China's Tibet Policy*, London: Curzon Press Richmond, p.229.

their permanent home¹⁶. Indian Buddhist monk went to China by of two routes, one overland and the other by sea. More common was the land route though today's Afghanistan, which was then a flourishing centre of Indian Buddhism, as the famous 6th century Bamian Buddha statues¹⁷ destroyed by the Taliban¹⁸ in the march 2001 testify, through the similarly Indian Buddhist oasis towns of today's Sinkiang, and thence into mainland Han China. Some Buddhist monks too travelled to India to study and to collect Buddhist documents for translation. The most well known of these was Hiuen Tsiang's visit to India, from AD 629.

The Tibetans consider India as 'Gya-gar Phags-pay-Yul' (Enlightened-Land), an expression of spiritual inheritance with India since the 7th century through the transmission of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama has described the Indo-Tibetan relationship as between the Guru-Chela¹⁹. At the higher level of political thinking, a section of Tibetan believes in 'keeping India happy' approach.

A new era began when the British took control over the peninsula. The crown's officials saw the land of snows as an opportunity to open new markets and create a convenient buffer zone between their Indian colony and the Russian empire. China was too weak to react meaningfully, but continued to pretend to be the suzerain of Tibet²⁰.

The ball started rolling in another direction in July 1904 when a young British colonel, Francis Younghusband entered the holy city of Lhasa. At the end of his stay in the Tibetan capital, Younghusband forced upon the Tibetans their first agreement

¹⁶ Das, Gautam (2009), *China-Tibet-India: 1962 War and the Strategic Military Future*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, pp. 33-34.

¹⁷ Bamian, or Bamiyan, in the Hazarajat region of Central Afghanistan, 230 km North-West of Kabul. These were the two tallest standing Buddha carvings in the world, and the site is still a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The statues, in the Indo-Greek style, were of *Vairocana Buddha* and *Sakyamuni Buddha*, 55m (180 ft) high, constructed in AD 507; and 37m (121 ft) high, constructed in AD 554, respectively.

¹⁸ Taliban is an Islamist militia group that ruled large parts of Afghanistan from September 1996 onwards. Although in control of Afghanistan's capital (Kabul) and most of the country for five years, the Taliban's Islamic emirate of Afghanistan gained diplomatic recognition from only three states: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and The United Arab Emirates. Most Taliban leaders were influenced by Deobandi fundamentalism.

¹⁹ Stobdan, P. (2007), "India's Tibet Policy", *World Focus*, 28(11-12), (Nov-Dec), p.421.

²⁰ Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, called the claim 'A Constitutional Fiction'.

with the mighty British Empire. In signing this treaty with the Crown representative, Tibet was acknowledged by the London as a separate nation. However political deals were never simple; Tibet's western neighbour China was extremely unhappy to not be a party to the accord.

In the meantime, the thirteenth Dalai Lama formally declared Tibet's independence in 1912. A year later, a treaty of friendship was signed between Tibet and Mongolia. On all accounts, Tibet was a de facto independent nation. Wanting to show fairness, in 1913 London called for a tripartite conference in Shimla to settle the issue: the three main protagonists (British India, Tibet and China) sat together at a negotiation table for several months. The result was not fully satisfactory as the Chinese only initialized the main document and did not ratify it.

However, contrary to the view prevailing in India today, the Chinese were not invited to discuss the question of the border between India and Tibet and their acceptance of the McMahon line was never sought; nor did they enquire about the final demarcation²¹. The British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries agreed to the Indo-Tibet frontier in March 1914. In a letter dated 24 March 1914, Henri McMahon wrote: "The final settlement of this India-Tibet frontier will help to prevent causes of future dispute and thus cannot fail to be of great advantage to both governments²²". The next day, the Tibetan plenipotentiary Lonchen Shatra officially accepted: "as it was feared that there might be friction in future unless the boundary between India and Tibet is clearly defined."²³

Thus the McMahon line was born in the form of a thick red line on a map showing the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the eastern sector. The British and the Tibetan delegates signed and sealed the map.

As the Chinese were playing delaying tactics and ratifying the main convention, the British finally made statement: "We have no alternative but to inform the Chinese government that, unless the convention is signed before the end of this

²¹ Arpi, Claude (2008), "The Tibet Factor in the Indo-Chinese Relations", *World Focus*, 29(4), p.153.

²² Shakabpa, Tsepon, W.D. (1976), *Tibet: A Political History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp.256-257.

²³ Op. cit.21.

month, his majesty's government will hold themselves free to sign separately with Tibet." As the Chinese did not sign, the following words were included: "The powers granted to Chinese under the Convention shall not be recognized by Great Britain and Tibet until and unless the government of China ratifies the Convention."²⁴

In October 1950, an event changed the destiny of the Himalayan region as well as the relations between India and China: Mao's troops marched into Tibet. When Lhasa appealed to the United Nations against China's invasion of Tibet, India which had always acknowledged Tibet's autonomy began to vacillate. During the last days of October, Lhasa sent feelers to Delhi to see if India would be ready to sponsor the Tibetan appeal in the UN. The Tibetan government was quite confident that Nehru's government, which had always taken the side of oppressed people against imperialist and colonialist powers, would support Tibet. India's reply was that it would certainly support an appeal from Tibet, would not sponsor it.

Delhi had other preoccupations: Nehru cabled B.N. Rau²⁵: "Chinese military operations against Tibet...do not affect our general policy or even our policy regarding admission of New China in United Nations."²⁶ The admission of Communist China in the UN seemed more important for Nehru than the invasion of Tibet. For the Tibetans, it was a terrible let down.

An appeal by the government of Tibet was finally cabled to the UN on November 7. The well-drafted appeal stated that the problem was not of Tibet's own making and that "the Tibetans were racially, culturally and geographically far apart from the Chinese."²⁷ An interesting feature of the appeal was the comparison with the situation in Korea which had also been invaded a few months earlier.

Officially, India was still on Tibet's side on November 14; the Hindu wrote: "according to inform quarters here, India is expected to extend her general support to Tibet's case before the Security Council. The UK and the US, according to diplomatic

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Sir Benegal N. Rau, was the Indian Representative to the United Nations.

²⁶ Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (SWJN), Series II, Vol.15, No.2, (November, 1950), p.339.

²⁷ Lama, Dalai (1983), *My Land and My People*, New York: Potala Corp., p.249.

quarters here, are also expected to support the Tibetan appeal.”²⁸ On the November 15, it was the tiny state of El Salvador which requested the UN Secretary General to list the Tibetan appeal on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The great powers, in particular the United Kingdom and India, were in a dilemma. After the independence of India in 1947 the things had been changed. India’s position began to vacillate. India had Kashmir issue also in her mind. The Nehru’s position started changing:

We cannot consistently with previous declarations, support Tibetan claim to independence, though we can and should favour recognition of Tibetan autonomy. We should support on broad ground that problem of Sino-Tibetan relations should be solved peacefully and not by resort to arms.²⁹

Nehru added a small sentence which still reverberates today:

Chinese government has repeatedly expressed themselves in favour of Tibetan autonomy, but of course we do not know what their idea of autonomy is.³⁰

The Communist nations had started lobbying for the inclusion of Beijing as a member of the UN and the Security Council. This was a new factor for India’s government. From New York, Vijayalakshmi Pandit³¹ declared: “the Indian government disquiet about the Communist military invasion of Tibet which might make it more difficult for the Peking government to qualify as a ‘peace loving’ nation within the meaning of the charter.”³² The Indian diplomats worried about only one thing: The entry of Peking into the UN.

The American government inform New Delhi that they were ready to help the Tibetans by whatever means possible, but in view of the geographical and historical factor, the main burden of the problem remained on India and India’s collaboration was more than necessary in any attempt to help the Tibetan government.

²⁸ The Hindu (1950), Madras, 14 November, 1950.

²⁹ Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (SWJN), Series II, vol.15, No.2, (November, 1950) p.347.

³⁰ Arpi, Claude (2008), “The Tibet Factor in the Indo-Chinese Relations”, *World Focus*, 29(4), p.154.

³¹ Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indian ambassador to the UN.

³² The Hindu (1950), Madras, 21 November, 1950.

At the last moment, Nehru backed out of the understanding that India had given to Tibet to support the appeal. He said:

We cannot save Tibet, as we should have liked to do so, and our very attempts to save it might bring greater trouble to it. It would be unfair to Tibet for us to bring this trouble upon her without having the capacity to help her effectively.³³

Tibet Invasion Implication

In May 1951, Dalai Lama's representatives signed 'under duress' a 17-point agreement with Communist China. The incorporation of the Tibetan nation into Beijing's fold was not immediately acknowledged by Delhi which continued for a couple of years to maintain a full-fledged mission in the Tibetan capital and have diplomatic relations with Lhasa. The signature of the Panchsheel Agreement between India and China marked the tail-end of the events set in motion by Younghusband's entry into Tibet. While the British expedition officialised Tibet as a separate entity, the agreement put an end to its existence as a distinct nation. The land of snows became Tibet's region of China. The circle was closed with incalculable consequences for India and the entire Himalayan region.

The preamble of the agreement contains the five principles which formed the main pillar of India's foreign policy for the next five years. It heralded the beginning of the Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai policy and the non-aligned position of India.

However, this agreement opened the door to the military control of the roof of the world by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In April 1951, the Tibetan government sent a five-member delegation to Beijing for the negotiations with Chinese authority. Under immense Chinese pressure the Tibetan-delegation signed the "Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" on 23 May 1951, without being able to inform the Tibetan government.³⁴

The seventeen clauses of the agreement among other things, authorised the entry into Tibet of Chinese forces and empowered the Chinese government to handle

³³ Arpi, Claude (2008), "The Tibet Factor in the Indo-Chinese Relations", *World Focus*, 29(4), p.155.

³⁴ Kumar, Anand (1995), *Tibet: A Sourcebook*, (ed.), New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, p.54.

Tibet's external affairs. On the other hand, it guaranteed that China would not alter the existing political system in Tibet and not interfere with the established status, function and powers of the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama. The Tibetan people were to have regional autonomy, and their religious beliefs and customs were to be respected. The full text of what came to be known as the "Seventeen-Point Agreement" was broadcast by radio Beijing on 27 May 1951.

On 9 September 1951, around 3,000 Chinese troops marched into Lhasa, soon followed by some 20,000 more, from eastern Tibet and from eastern Turkistan (Xinjiang) in the north. The PLA occupied the principal cities of Ruthok and Gartok, and then Gyantse and Shigatse. With the occupation of all the major cities of Tibet, including Lhasa and large concentration of troops throughout eastern and western Tibet, the military control of Tibet was virtually completed.

From this position, China refused to re-open negotiations and the Dalai Lama had effectively lost the ability to either accept or reject any Tibet-China agreement. However, on the first occasion he had of expressing himself freely again, which came only on 20 June 1959, after his flight to India, the Dalai Lama formally repudiated the "Seventeen-Point Agreement", as having been "thrust upon Tibetan government and people by the threat of arms".³⁵

In 1989, the scholar Melvyn Goldstein pointed out:

The Chinese Communist party's ideology emphasized reunification of China, one of the prime targets of which was the liberation of Tibet and its reintegration with the 'motherland'. The Chinese communists believed that Tibet's desire to be separate from China was caused by Western imperialist interference in Chinese affairs... the Chinese saw British policy as an attempt either to eliminate or to reduce to token status all Chinese influence in Tibet and saw the elimination of British 'imperialism'(influence) as critical.³⁶

In Beijing, however, officials perceived other vital interests linked to Tibet. The Chinese also perceived British involvement in Tibet and the ties between the Tibetans and British India as the source of a new threat.³⁷ Despite the Indian

³⁵ Ibid., p.54.

³⁶ Goldstein, Melvyn C. (1989), *History of Modern Tibet*, Berkeley: University of California, p. 623.

³⁷ Hoffmann, Steven A. (2006), "Rethinking the Linkage between Tibet and the China-India Border Conflict a Realist Approach", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8(3), p.176.

government's seeming refusal to act on the terms of the 1914 convention which envisaged British India as an intermediary between China and Tibet. Another Chinese interest lay in Tibet's economic promise. 'Tibet possessed everything China lacked: vast, under populated tracts of land' and 'mineral, forest and animal reserves virtually unexploited.'³⁸

Tibet has huge natural resources in mineral, metals and in other fields. The region covers an area of around 1.2 million km square, which accounts for 12.8% of the total of China. China's narrow policy towards Tibet annoyed Tibetan people in the form of Lhasa revolt in 1959. In the consequences, giving shelter to Dalai Lama in India, relations between India and China had become elusive and serious and the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 had lost their meaning.

Beginnings of discord

Tibetan history itself explains about her natural connectivity with India not only in the field of religion and culture but also in politics. Tibet geographical location makes it more strategically important for India. By having two giant neighbourhood states China and India; Tibetan matter has become a bone of contention between these two states. India and China relations has never been normalised after the post independence arena due to the Tibetan cause. China and India both have disagreement in the field of border and water issues. The border issue has been started since the Shimla Accord in 1914 when the British representative McMahon drawn the line between China, Tibet and British India knows as the McMahon line which was not accepted by China.

Mutual distrust and hostility have characterised relations between India and China since the 1950s. the 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai' (India China brotherhood), which prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India believed in implicitly, broke down in the early 1950s after the people's liberation army(PLA) of China invaded an annexed Tibet. With the completion of the occupation of Tibet, the PLA was at the doorsteps of India's northern frontiers. The Chinese leadership refused to recognise the

³⁸ Avedon, John (1984), *In Exile from the Land of Snows: The Dalai Lama and Tibet since the Chinese Conquest*, New York: Knopf, p. 41.

boundary that had been demarcated between British India and Tibet by the erstwhile British colonial and Tibetan officials, and war broke out in 1962 as the situation worsened.³⁹

The India China rivalry originated with the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1951. With the occupation, a buffer that insulated direct contact between the two countries disappeared and the Indo-Tibetan border became the Indo-Chinese border. Tibet remains the bone of contention between the two sides for several decades. The Chinese have encountered frequent disturbances and protests both inside and outside Tibet by pro-independence activists, and Chinese leaders have always been concerned about resurgent nationalist movements based on ethnicity and religion within China's outlying provinces. Tibet had attracted widespread international attention and the Chinese have frequently been subject to attacks on their human rights record in Tibet by International community, specially the west.

For a long time now, India has deliberately avoided condemning China's human rights record and its occupation of Tibet. The prime motivation for this has been the desire to improve its relations with China. In addition, India is sensitive about the issue of human rights because its own record in Kashmir has been less than perfect.

The consistent stand of successive Indian governments is that Tibet is an autonomous region of China. The constitution of the People's Republic of China states that the head of government of each autonomous entity in China (like Tibet) must belong to the majority ethnic group that is settled in that autonomous entity. The constitution also guarantees a range of rights including: independence of finance, independence of economic planning, independence of arts, science and culture, organisation of local police, and use of local language in these entities. The head of government of each autonomous region is known as a 'chairman', unlike in the provinces, where they are known as 'governor'.⁴⁰ The Chinese claimed that Tibet

³⁹ Majumdar, Arjit (2006), "India-China Border Dispute: Centrality of Tibet", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(41),(October 14-20), p.4324.

⁴⁰ Majumdar, Arjit (2006), "India-China Border Dispute: Centrality of Tibet", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(41),(October 14-20), p.4325.

enjoys substantial freedom due to the above mentioned rights guaranteed in the constitution.

However, critics have argued that the autonomous entities offer little or no autonomy, as officials (even if they belong to the ethnic minority) are appointed from above rather than elected democratically by the people. Pro-independence advocates of Tibet view the autonomous regions as a façade because of the repression and assimilation that takes place there. The real power within the autonomous entity lies with the local communist party committee secretary rather than the head of the government in Tibet. Also, it is argued that the ranks of government are being filled with Han Chinese instead of Tibetans, since only the head of government needs to be from the designated ethnic group.⁴¹

Tibet is at the heart of the India-China rivalry for dominance in Asia. When Tibet was occupied, it changed the asymmetry between the two sides. India recognises that the loss of Tibet as a buffer zone crippled the security of its northern frontier forcing it to maintain hundred and thousands of soldiers along the Himalayan frontier.

India's Tibet policy after the Lhasa Revolt

History and politics of Tibet, over the decades has become obscure, elusive and mystical, something incompatible to contemporary politics. In the case of India, before the Lhasa revolt, Nehru invited Tibet to attend the first inter-Asian conference in New Delhi in the year of 1947. Nehru in 1950 tried his best, mainly through diplomacy, to prevent a Chinese military occupation of Tibet, and strongly advocated a peaceful resolution of Sino-Tibetan tension. Between 1947-1954 India's position on Tibet was as an independent nation. But in 1954 after the Panchsheel Agreement between India and China, India gave up this position for the sake of good bilateral relations with them. But after the Lhasa revolt, 1962 war was a severe blow to the country's prestige in the world. India started playing Tibetan card in relation with China which is the only a trump card for India where it can stand before the Chinese. China says that historically Tibet is an integral part of China. According to

⁴¹ Ibid.

the Chinese scholar and leaders, the Manchu emperor who ruled over Tibet was a Chinese, therefore Tibet become part of China.

A major propaganda war has been waged over the nature of Tibet-China relationship. China's present claims are based on the 17 Point Agreement signed after 1950 with the Dalai Lama, which recognized Chinese Sovereignty over Tibet (contested by the DL assigned under duress). The agreement, however, remains unchallenged by major nations of the world, which recognise Tibet as China's sovereign territory. The UN resolutions of 1959, 1961, 1965 and 1991 UN 43 Sub-commission on human rights, therefore, have had no significant effect.⁴² No significant resolutions were either passed or enforced by international action in the past.

China, meanwhile, has consolidated its hold over Tibet through large-scale development campaigns. Efforts have been to modernise Tibet and improve the socio-economic levels of 6 million Tibetans. This has been demonstrated by large-scale investments, subsidies, development of industry, agriculture, education and training. Large farming and irrigation projects are being developed. Education policy since 1980 has hastened Tibetan integration into Chinese mainstream and to mollify world opinion, China in 1987 recognised Tibetan as the official language, with even Chinese cadres being encouraged to learn it.⁴³ However, university and technical level education is still imparted in Chinese.

Prior to 1950 the lack of communications frustrated repeated Chinese attempts, both imperial and republican, to gain effective control over Tibet. The Manchu regime tried, at the turn of this century, to build roads in Kham (eastern Tibet) but with little success. The Communists realized that without modern communications, and in particular motorable roads, the enormous physical barriers would make any attempt at the liberation of Tibet meaningless. This, almost immediately after the conquest of Tibet in 1951, the Chinese began constructing highways that would link Tibet with China for the first time in their history⁴⁴.

⁴² Ibid., p.4326.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Norbu, Dawa (2001), *China's Tibet Policy*, London: Curzon Press Richmond, p.231.

However it was not until the Sino-Tibetan agreement of 1951 and the Sino-Indian treaty on Tibet of 1954 that the Chinese were able to launch their massive road construction programme using a Tibetan labour force. By 1965 two highways effectively linked Lhasa with interior China. And by 1975 China had completed 91 highways totalling 15,800 km with 300 permanent bridges in outer Tibet alone, effectively connecting 97 percent of the region's countries by road.⁴⁵

China's achievements in Tibet were highlighted in a white paper on Tibet titled "Regional Ethnic autonomy in Tibet" issued by China's state council in May 2004. Meanwhile, in exile, the DL and his people, since 1959, have set up their own parallel state institutions and structures of governance based on democratic principles. This, they claim, is a necessary step to prepare for governing a future free Tibet. Broadly the exile government in Dharamsala runs a parallel network of institutions to monitor and govern about 3 lacks Tibetan refugees (TRs) in India. These institutions are supposed to be run on democratic values, though the Dalai Lama holds supreme power to decide all policy matters. The Dalai Lama set up conducts its own foreign policy and diplomatic activities and has set up 'offices' in many world capitals.⁴⁶

The Dalai Lama regularly travels and meets world leaders to canvass support for his cause. Tibet lobby is fairly strong and active in the US Congress and European Parliaments. They exert considerably influence on the foreign policies of the Western countries vis-a-vis China, especially on the sanctions restricting Western arms sale to China. The DL set up also has contacts with the Islamic world, as well as maintains close associations with many ethnic, democratic and political movements in the world.

China had made several political moves on the Tibet issue particularly in the post-Mao era. Beijing initially suggested the Dalai Lama to return and live in Beijing on the condition that he accepts Tibet as an integral part of China. The DL's first talk with Beijing started in 1979 and he came close to accepting Chinese demands in 1988, when he declared to drop the demand for complete independence and settle for

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.231.

⁴⁶ Stobdan, P. (2007), "India's Tibet Policy", *World Focus*, 28(11-12), p.417.

internal autonomy along the 'One Country, Two Systems' approach. However, the hope got dampened following frequent riots in Lhasa from 1987-1989.

Beijing rebuffed the DL's September 1987 Five-Point Peace Plan and June 1988 Strasbourg Proposal that called for transforming Tibet into a zone of peace and protecting its environment.⁴⁷ China repeatedly criticised the DL as a separatist and traitor and his high profile international visits were dubbed as a ploy to internationalise the issue and split the motherland. A new series of talks between DL's envoys and Chinese authorities started since September 2002. The talks, including the sixth round held in 2007, have produced no concrete results.

India's position since 1954 has been consistent in explicitly recognising 'Tibet as an autonomous region of China' and that India's implicit endeavour was to wait for a time when the DL himself feels that it is time for him to return to Lhasa. India's stand on Tibet was based on the point as Nehru described "Neither the UK nor the USA, nor indeed any other power is particularly interested in Tibet or on its future. What they are interested in is, embarrassing China."⁴⁸ The government of India has reiterated in 2003 by accepting 'the Tibet autonomous region is part of the territory of PRC.' The change in India's position has been widely debated.

In the past, India's moral stand of providing political/ spiritual sanctuary to the Dalai Lama and his people was considered by the world outside as masterstroke diplomacy, as much as a well thought out strategic investment to counter China. Dalai Lama, over the years, has managed to gain sympathy among parliamentarians, activists and public at large. The Dalai Lama and his people through material and spiritual support have privately obliged a wide section of India politicians to galvanized Indian public support for them. In the recent case, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi went to Dharamsala to seek blessing of Tibetan spiritual leader. This has created a state of ambiguity even in the minds of well-informed Indian circles.

India's ability to sustain an ambiguous Tibet policy has particularly weakened after the end of the cold war. A marked change in India's position on Tibet was

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.418.

visible since late 1980s, with consequent dilution of Tibet factor from India's strategic framework. Correspondingly, Indian public opinion too has gradually shifted in China's favour. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), which handles the Tibet issue, maintains a close communication with the Dalai Lama set up appears to be playing no direct role in the current Dalai-China negotiation process.⁴⁹

The Arunachal Pradesh Issue

China's territorial claim on Arunachal Pradesh and the unresolved border dispute in the eastern sector are major irritants in India-China relations. Since November 2006, China has once again hardened its position on Arunachal Pradesh. China's aggressive posture in the eastern sector along the McMahon Line or the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has substantially increased in recent years. In May 2007, China denied a visa to Ganesh Koyu, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from Arunachal Pradesh, who was to be a part of an IAS officers study team visit to Beijing and Shanghai. China pointed out that Koyu is a Chinese citizen since he belongs to Arunachal Pradesh and hence could visit China without a visa.⁵⁰ This was a deliberate act of provocation and assertion by China. In June 2009, China tried to block India's request for a US \$ 2.9 billion loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the request included US \$ 60 million for a flood management, water supply, and sanitation project in Arunachal Pradesh.⁵¹ This was the first time that China sought to broadcast its claim on Arunachal Pradesh in a multilateral forum.

China's territorial claim is perhaps based on its Tibet policy and the lost territories argument. China's territorial claim on Arunachal Pradesh has great symbolic resonance for its legitimacy over Tibet. The Tawang monastery in Arunachal Pradesh was the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama in the 17th century and is the second largest Tibetan monastery after Lhasa. It could well be that the 14th Dalai Lama chooses his successor from the Tawang monastery. China also believes that India makes it possible for the Dalai Lama to travel abroad, and his speeches

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.421.

⁵⁰ "China denies visa to IAS officer from Arunachal", *The Financial Express*, May 26, 2007 at <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/China-denies-visa-to-IAS-officer-from-Arunachal/200132/>.

⁵¹ Samanta, Pranab Dhal (2009), "China Strikes Back on Arunachal", *The Indian Express*, 18 September, 2009.

around the world have kept the Tibetan issue alive and led to questioning Chinese legitimacy over Tibet. China perhaps fears that India might itself become a base for the subversive activities of the Dalai Lama's supporters. Consequently China believes that its aggressive posture on Arunachal Pradesh will deter India from overplaying its Tibet card, which includes 100,000 Tibetan refugees living in India, against China.

Since 2005, Chinese think tanks have been articulating the cultural and historical dimensions along the border areas, as also stipulated in article V of the roadmap. In 2005 India and China signed an agreement for a quicker solution to the niggling boundary issue along a 10-point political roadmap. Tawang's importance as the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama, therefore, significant for the Tibetan sentiment is being aired repeatedly. Article V is certainly quite intricate and it could complicate Indian position further even in western sector.⁵²

Linking of Lhasa with Chinese railway has fundamentally altered the security dynamics along the Sino-Indian frontiers. The sensitivity of the Tibet issue effecting on India's security and the rapid changes in the Tibetan refugees activities, India should consider in some following measures: Indian government needs to tighten measures against Tibetan illegal entry, as Nathula opens for cross-border trade, India must monitor and restrict TRs migrating for settling down in Sikkim. India should keep their strong presence in the north-eastern boundary area, therefore they can look in all matters whether it boundary dispute or immigration issues.

India recognises that the loss of Tibet as a buffer zone crippled the security of its northern frontiers forcing it to maintain hundreds and thousands of soldiers along the Himalayan frontier. Therefore, Tibet will always remain vital to India's security interests and a moderating factor in India's relation with China.

Thus, by and large, this dissertation has tried to answer those research questions in accordance with the aforesaid context along with the justification of the following objectives and hypothesis:

⁵² Ibid.

Objective of the Study

- To review the historical evolution of Tibet-India relations.
- To examine the India's policy towards Tibet during the period of Nehru and how it influenced India-China relations.
- To examine the importance of Tibet as a buffer State between India and China.
- To examine China's environmental deconstruction and plantation of nuclear sites in Tibet for the concern of Indian security.
- To find out cultural threat from Tibet and how much it has influenced our Himalayan belt culture.

Annexure

- What was the cultural and historical linkage between Tibet and India?
- Why Tibet buffer state status is no more?
- Will Tibet get back their buffer state status again?
- Are Tibetan Refugees in India pose a threat to Indian internal security?
- Is the Tibetan exile government in India affecting the Indo-China relations?

Hypothesis of the Study

- Tibet issue is posing constant threat to regions stability and security.
- Tibet issue is also threat to Indian Himalayan belt identity and stability that make trouble to Indian security.
- Frequent claim of an Independent Tibet upon Indian soil by the Tibetan refugees/ supporters has become bone of contention between Sino-Indian Relations.



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Chapter-2

Geopolitical Background of Tibet

Tibet, with an area of about 600,000 sq. miles, occupies a strategic position. To the north is Mongolia and former Soviet States, to the east is China, to the South, India and Burma, and to the West, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The political character of each of these countries reflects the importance of Tibet's geographical location. Historically the representation of Tibet is one of a Shangri-la. When the Russians began their imperial expansion in the late 1800s, the British realized the threat posed by Russia. To overcome this emerging Russian threat via Mongolia, the British, in 1904 sent a military expedition to Tibet marching directly into Lhasa.

After 1949, when Chinese forces had marched into Tibet the development posed a serious and direct threat to Tibet's immediate neighbours. The then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, however, did not take this threat seriously and instead believed that Tibet could engage in a dialogue with China. India believed that the old concept of a buffer state was imperial and colonial. In 1954, India signed a trade agreement with China on Tibet but without the participation of Tibetan representatives. China insisted that it would endorse the agreement for only eight years while India pressed for 15 years. In 1962, China attacked India leading to a bloody war, the first in the two country's history. India's experience with China confirms the belief that China says one thing in dialogue and another thing in action.

The military build-up in Tibet is a major threat to India as China is using Tibet as a channel for its arms trade to Pakistan and Afghanistan. China's occupation of Tibet was a part of an ideological Marxist ambition to world revolution.

These are few indicators showing the geopolitical importance of Tibet and why it is necessary to transform Tibet into a buffer zone, a zone managed by Tibetans. There is a political significance of Tibet. While China has ideological aspirations to spread Communism through Asia, its ambition to be an imperial power got the better

of China. The invasion of Tibet is related to the export of the revolution to Tibet and India. Tibet is the springboard to attack India (as in 1962,) and at present, more than 119,000 sq. km. of Indian Territory is held by China.

There are some parts of India which China does not recognize as Indian Territory. There was an incident. At the insistence of the McArthur Institute, China invited the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh to Kunming, Yunnan Province, to participate in a discussion on biodiversity at the Kunming Institute of Biodiversity.¹ The Chief Minister went to New Delhi to get his Chinese visa. The next day the Chinese Embassy responded saying there were unsettled political issues concerning Arunachal Pradesh, but that the Chief Minister was welcome to visit China without a Chinese visa. This is effect makes him a Chinese citizen. Like Tibet, Arunachal Pradesh is very rich in minerals.

China has similar intent in Burma. China needs Tibet to control Burma. The Chinese are building military bases in Burma as well as naval bases on islands (Burmese territory) which are just 40 km from Indian islands of Andaman and Nicobar in the Indian Ocean.

There has been a transfer of Chinese population into Mongolia (Inner) and Eastern Turkestan on a massive scale. In 1942, the Uighurs made up over 70 percent of the population of Eastern Turkestan, but today they have been reduced to just over 50 percent with the other half being Chinese immigrants. In Inner Mongolia, there has been such a massive population transfer that the Chinese are in a majority there. So there is a design on the part of the Chinese to get leverage through population transfer, military action, and access to minerals, oil and markets.

British Invasion and the Emergence of Tibet in the Modern Geopolitical Imaginary

The 1903–04 British missions were meant to rectify the vagueness and ambiguity that marked the political status of Tibet and to establish once and for all international relations between British India and Tibet. It was not so much about a mercenary

¹ T.C. Tethong (1997), "Geopolitical Importance of Tibet", Accessed 21 April 2011, URL:<http://www.tpprc.org /3rd-wpct/washington-dc.html>.

appetite to open markets or a political plan to dominate and control but a politico-economic-cultural-epistemological desire to allay anxieties arising out of the geopolitical ambiguity of Tibet. But the actual impact of the mission was far more complicated and ambiguous than that envisioned by those directly involved.² The invasion did allow a significant filling in of the blank space of Tibet in the British imperial imaginary. Tibet was brought into modernity through the violence of invasion and diplomacy. Tibetans were forced to encounter the naked brute force of modern imperialism mostly dressed to impress.³ Whether they liked it or not, Tibet was represented as a buffer state and therefore became strategically important, not only for British India, but in the eyes of the Chinese state, which insisted on its incorporation into Chinese territory rather than serve as a buffer.

By 1900, all attempts by the British to establish some sort of communication with the Tibetan authority, both directly and through the Chinese, had failed. But by 1900, this had changed. Tibet as a blank space acquired new meaning—it was unknown, vague, and opens to all sort of possibilities, and therefore it constituted a danger. This transformation in the significance of the unknown aspect of Tibet was a result of new ideas of the frontier and buffer state, Russian expansion in Central Asia, and Curzon's perceptions of Russian intrigue in Tibet.⁴

The British decided to take the matter into their own hands, as previous attempts to deal with the Tibetans through China (until seen as having 'suzerainty' in Tibet) had clearly failed. Imperial action (a blending of negotiation and force) was required to firmly show Tibetans their place in the larger scheme of things—that is, as secondary to British imperial interest.

Initially, Curzon tried a policy of direct approach, sending letters to the Dalai Lama, but the letters were returned unopened. To rub salt into the wound, the British heard that the Dalai Lama had little hesitation in dispatching missions to Russia

² Anand Dibyesh (2009), "Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68(1), p.235.

³ When signing the treaty in Potala Palace, Younghusband ordered everyone to dress in full regalia in order to impress the Tibetans.

⁴ Alex, McKay (1997), *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre, 1904–1947*, Richmond: Curzon Press.

through the Buriyat monk Dorje. This was the time of the ‘Great Game’, an intense rivalry between British and Russians in Asia, and some ‘players’ of this game, such as Curzon, pushed for a more active, confrontational policy.⁵

Curzon’s dispatch was followed by strong advocacy of an armed mission. It was then that the Tibet missions were formed and sent (there were two missions, one after another when attempts to negotiate at the border region failed). This resulted in what was benignly called an “expedition,” but it was, in practice, a military invasion of Tibet.⁶ The culmination was a treaty signed in Lhasa in 1904 seeking to establish British India’s relation with Tibet on a concrete basis. This became a watershed event, especially because of its impact on China’s attitude toward Tibet.

The home government was warning British India as early as 1904. The invasion radically altered the Chinese perception of Tibet- the traditional loose political control characteristic of Qing imperial rule was no longer acceptable in nationalizing China.⁷ The Qing court, regional governors, Nationalists, communists- all major actors in the rapidly changing China in the first part of the twentieth century- now conceptualized Tibet’s position as strategic bulwark against hostile incursions from the south of the Himalayas. British invasion led to newfound concern among the governors of Sichuan regarding Tibet’s vulnerability:

Tibet is a buttress on our national frontiers— the hand, as it was, which protects the face— and its prosperity or otherwise is of the most vital importance to China.⁸

This framing of Tibet as strategic and as a weak link within the Chinese state is the main legacy of the Younghusband mission with serious ramifications. The new Chinese forward policy was even welcomed by some sections of the British Indian establishment.

⁵ Mehra, Parshotam (1979), *North Eastern Frontiers: A Documentary Study of the Internecine Rivalry between Indian Tibet and China*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁶ Anand Dibyesh (2009), “Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet’s Geopolitical Identity”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68(1), p.236.

⁷ Lamb, Alastair (1986), *British India and Tibet, 1766–1910*, (ed.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.244.

⁸ Tuttle, Gray (2005), *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, New York: Columbia University Press, p.44.

The placing of Tibet in the geopolitical imaginary with the 1903–04 invasion was closely linked with the dominant regimes of representation of Tibet. As the accounts of many participants of the Younghusband mission reveal Tibet as a place combined the strategic and the mysterious. What is clear is that the Younghusband mission brought out into the open ‘the question of what exactly was Tibet, who had the final say in its affairs and what were its precise geographical limits’.⁹

De facto Independent Tibet, De jure (UN) Contested Chinese Supremacy

The internal crisis within the Chinese state, with the collapse of the Qing Empire, formation of the republic, and then the civil war within China, offered Tibet the opportunity to expel the Chinese army and to operate as a de facto independent state from 1913 to 1951. And yet, the Tibet that existed from 1913 to 1951 was not recognized as an independent state by any other state. British India, which at the turn of the century was seeking to define Tibet in clear geopolitical terms, now adopted a simple pragmatic opportunistic policy: Deal with Tibet as if it were independent but repeat the mantra of Chinese suzerainty so as not to offend China and other Western imperial powers suspicious of British aims in Tibet. All parties within China claimed sovereignty over Tibet.¹⁰

The British portrayed themselves as a neutral arbitrator. This was exemplified during the tripartite Shimla Talks in 1914, which resulted in the signing of a firm convention between Great Britain and Tibet, in which the two parties, agreed to the McMahon line as the border between India and Tibet. The disagreement between Tibet and China over the boundary of ‘Outer Tibet’ (which was under the direct political control of the Lhasa government, as opposed to ‘Inner Tibet’, which was under Chinese control) led to the withdrawal of China from the talks. The Shimla Convention provided for Chinese suzerainty and Tibetan autonomy. Tibetans argued that because the Chinese had refused to sign, they would have to forego even nominal

⁹ Lamb, Alastair (1986), *British India and Tibet, 1766–1910*, (ed.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.257.

¹⁰ Anand Dibyesh (2009), “Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet’s Geopolitical Identity”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68(1), p.240.

suzerainty. But there was no serious attempt to make this claim at any international level.

China saw the convention as an unequal treaty imposed by British imperialists using Tibetans as their pawn. The British went on to stick to the suzerainty/autonomy formula while dealing with Tibet as an independent state but without committing to recognizing it as such.

During the Shimla talks, the British aim was made clear— the only interest in Tibet was the security of British India and the frontier states. The lack of serious commitment to Tibetan autonomy, unless it threatened vital political interests, was evident throughout the 1913–1951 period of Tibetan de facto independence.¹¹ That ambiguity was not only accepted as inevitable but was part of a conscious policy become clear once again in a 1930 communication from the home government to the viceroy of India:

We do not wish to give Tibet idea either that we are opposed to ultimate settlement with China or that we are anxious to encourage her to throw off Chinese suzerainty.¹²

By the middle of 1930s, it was clear that the attempts to transform the Lamaist state into a modern quasi-nation-state had failed. Goldstein blames for this failure on the conservative monastic dominance of the state, but he underemphasizes the role of Britain.¹³ The semantic change introduced by the British to describe Sino-Tibetan relations was crucial in its Europeanization, a process that ended up fixing Tibet's geopolitical identity in a manner not conducive to any claim for independent internationally recognized statehood.¹⁴

Whatever modernizing efforts were encouraged by the local British Indian officials in transforming the Lamaist state into a modern state, there was always a

¹¹ Ibid., p.241.

¹² Indian Office Record (1917), "Tibet: Proposed Revision of 1914 Convention, 1922–30." British Library, Political and Secret Separate (Subject) Files, L/P&S/10/718, p.4 as cited in Anand Dibyesh (2009), "Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68(1).

¹³ Goldstein, Melvyn, (1989), *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p.55.

¹⁴ Norbu, Dawa (1990), "The Europeanization of Sino-Tibetan Relations, 1775–1907: The Genesis of Chinese Suzerainty and Tibetan Autonomy", *Tibet Journal*, 15(4), pp.28–74.

conscious frowning upon of attempts to represent Tibet's separate identity at the international level. A secret letter from the British Indian government dated September 19, 1945, affirmed the policy that had been consistently followed over the last three decades— British must not intervene in Tibet's internal affairs because any modernization would challenge the monastic order and throw them into the hands of the Chinese as a 'slow process of evolution is suited to Tibetan mentality and to our interests'.¹⁵ Political isolation of Tibet was convenient for Britain.

Britain did not want to be accused of dismembering China by encouraging Tibetan independence. The spectre of a reactive annexationist policy by China was deployed to quash occasional efforts to give a more concrete geopolitical identity to Tibet that did not conform to the strategic hypocrisy. Even as a regime perceived as hostile to the West (Communist PRC) threatened Tibet in 1950, the British ambassador to the United Nations advised the Foreign Office: "What we want to do is to create a situation which does not oblige us in practice to do anything about the Communist invasion of Tibet," and therefore the best position is to argue that the legal status of Tibet was extremely obscure.¹⁶

As British imperial interest wedded itself to the formulaic strategic hypocrisy of Chinese suzerainty/Tibetan autonomy, the representations of Tibet did not remain merely esoteric or cultural. Ambiguity about Tibetans remained, but the Tibetan lamas were not despised the way they were at the start of the century, and Tibetan Buddhism was no longer seen as parasitic. This transformation of Tibet in the Western imagination was not related to changes within Tibet but to changes within the imperial West. As ideas of Western imperialism saw a slow but steady decline in the first half of the twentieth century and the confidence of British Empire was shaken thanks to the world wars and ant colonial nationalist movements, Tibet came to be invested with images, desires, and fantasies more easily than most other parts of the world. The ambiguity and hence the relative 'placelessness' of Tibet in modern

¹⁵ Indian Office Record, "Status of Tibet: Publicity by China and HMG, May 1943–June 1946." British Library, Political (External) Files and Collections, L/P&S/12/4196, p.48 as cited in Anand Dibyesh (2009), "Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68(1).

¹⁶ Shakya, Tsering (1999), *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*, London: Pimlico, p.55.

geopolitics acted as an easy recipient for Western representations of the absolute other that offered a different vision of the world but did not challenge West politically though anti-colonial nationalism.¹⁷ The ambiguity of Tibet allowed for a depoliticized imagining that was no longer easy with decolonizing India or revolutionary China. Tibet could serve more easily as a 'service society' and a 'surrogate state' by virtue of having not been clearly written into the space-time of grid of modern geopolitics.¹⁸

The last caution underlines the argument that the British did not want independence for Tibet. Olaf Caroe, an official later associated with pro-Tibet sentiments, informed the officers on October 13, 1943, that even though,

A sustained policy of 'glamourizing' Tibet would not get department agreement, there is advantage in maintaining the mystery of this no-man-land as long as we can. It helps to sustain the buffer.¹⁹

The Coupling of Sovereignty and Statehood

Tibetans only started making serious attempts to gain international recognition as a state in 1948–50, but they were either ignored or undermined by the British, who no longer ruled India. Newly decolonized India, as the successor state to British India, asserted its sphere of influence over culturally Tibetan areas in northeast and northern India by treating the Shimla Agreement and McMahon line as legitimate. In 1954, India accepted the position that Tibet is an integral part of China.

Tibet as a multicoded yet ambiguous space was now an avoidable irritant as India sought to make its own mark as a postcolonial state and have friendly relations with China.²⁰ Similarly, Tibet was a liability for the British, who no longer needed even the strategic hypocrisy. However, not only did the British ignore Tibetan efforts to acquire international personality in 1948–49, they actively discouraged any other state from encouraging them. Almost pre-staging the replacement of suzerainty with

¹⁷ Anand, Dibyesh (2007), *Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁸ Lopez, Donald S. Jr. (1998), *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.201-203.

¹⁹ Op. cit.14, p.166.

²⁰ Anand Dibyesh (2009), "Strategic Hypocrisy: The British Imperial Scripting of Tibet's Geopolitical Identity", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68(1), p.245.

the discourse of sovereignty, the British government clarified its policy on the status of Tibet immediately after the end of World War II thus:

Before the fall of the Manchu Empire in 1912, Tibet was under Chinese sovereignty. In that year she broke away and although she has maintained her independence ever since (subject to her recognition of Chinese suzerainty) the Chinese have in recent years shown an increasing tendency to claim sovereignty over the country.²¹

What this suggests is that China had sovereignty over Tibet until 1912, and then suzerainty from 1913 on, and it was asserting its sovereignty again. This interpretation of pre-1912 Sino-Tibetan historical relations would have surprised most of the British imperial officials, who saw Chinese dominance in vague nominal non-sovereign terms.

In a secret meeting of Cabinet Far Eastern Civil Planning Unit dated November 5, 1945, the report of a Coalition War Cabinet Conclusion dated July 7, 1943 mentions that it was agreed that:

(a) They should avoid committing H.M.G. (His Majesty's Government) to recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet unconditionally and independently of Chinese acceptance of Tibetan autonomy (b) that, if necessary, a warning should be added that, if the Chinese attempted to upset Tibetan autonomy, H.M.G. would have to consider withdrawal of their recognition of Chinese suzerainty.²²

The latter document (1945) followed the wording closely with one subtle yet significant change:

The British representatives should—(a) avoid committing His Majesty's Government to recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet unconditionally and independently of Chinese acceptance of Tibetan autonomy and (b) if necessary add a warning that if the Chinese attempted to upset Tibetan autonomy His Majesty's Government would have to consider withdrawal of their recognition of Chinese suzerainty.²³

The semantic change from suzerainty to sovereignty made by the British in their internal official documents occurred well before any serious Chinese attempt to reassert political and military control over Tibet.

²¹ Indian Official Record, 1945–46, "Status of Tibet: HMG's Policy, Oct 1945–Feb 1946." British Library, Political (External) Files and Collections, L/P&S/12/4195A, p.3, as cited in Op. Cit.19.

²² Indian Official Record, 1943–46. "Status of Tibet: Publicity by China and HMG, May 1943–June 1946", British Library, Political (External) Files and Collections, L/P&S/12/4196, p.62, as cited in Op. Cit.19.

²³ Ibid. p.57, as cited in Op. Cit.19.

As the Chinese regained control over Tibet and the Lamaist state was absorbed into the PRC, the formula of strategic hypocrisy, Chinese suzerainty/Tibetan autonomy, was no longer in the running. A confidential foreign office memorandum of 1948 makes clear that because the main rationale for this formula was the security of the Indian empire, after India's independence, it was redundant and therefore "it may seem no longer necessary for His Majesty's Government actively to support Tibetan autonomy".²⁴ Britain silently and conveniently dropped the formula that it had been adhering to for the last half century and that it had been instrumental in inscribing through various international treaties. The European imperial scripting of Tibet was complete with China claiming sovereignty in 1951.

What is remarkable about Tibet is the fact that while British imperial policy encouraged Tibetan statehood, it also bolstered Chinese claims to sovereignty. This decoupling of statehood and sovereignty was made possible by the peculiar and ambiguous status of Tibet fostered by conscious British imperial policy. The British clearly recognized the distinct statehood of Tibet throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and especially after 1913, not only in practice, but in rhetoric, too. This unnatural decoupling could not work in the decolonizing world, where the principle of sovereign statehood became the only way of being political and international.²⁵

Independence of India and Tibetan question

On August 15, 1947, India and Pakistan were created as two separate Nations by the British Government through the enactment of the Indian Independence Act of 1947, at the House of Commons, London. The territories of India were defined as those: "...under the sovereignty of His Majesty which, immediately before the appointed day, was included in British India except the territories which, under subsection (2) of this section are to be the territories of Pakistan."²⁶

²⁴ Op. Cit.19, p.246.

²⁵ Ibid. p.247.

²⁶ Menon, V.P. (1957), *The Transfer of Power in India*, Delhi: Orient Longmans, p.516.

This meant that India and Pakistan inherited the frontiers which the British had acquired by treaty, agreement and occupation. But, it is true that the British left the sub-continent without implementing the 1914 Shimla Agreement, and activating the McMahon Line, causing much concern to the destiny of the Tibetans. Not only the British failed to activate the McMahon Line, but also they failed to convince the Tibetans about the 1914 convention that India-Tibet frontier was delimited and finalized. They could not prevent the Tibetans from collecting revenues from the Tawang area south of the McMahon Line within India. But, in order to allay the fears of the Tibetans on the eve of their departure from India, the British government assured them that: 'Great Britain would continue to take a friendly interest in the welfare and autonomy of the Tibetans and expressed the hope that contact might be maintained by visits to Tibet from British representative in India.'²⁷

In 1948 summer the Chinese Head of the State Chiang Kai-shek proposed to Delhi that the 1908 Tibetan Trade Regulations should be revised. Delhi felt that the proposal was in effect a trap to obtain India's acceptance that the Shimla Agreement was not a valid document, so India replied that she only recognised the validity of that agreement which superseded the 1908 Trade Regulations.²⁸ On January 4, 1949, Chiang Kai-shek surrendered to the Communists and on October 1 that year Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the Chinese People's Republic. And on January 1, 1959, the 'Liberation of Tibet' was officially announced as one of the unfinished task of the People's Liberation Army.

On Chinese announcement on Tibet's liberation, Premier Jawaharlal Nehru said:

The Indian Government fully recognised the validity of Chinese claims but wished simply to advice against precipitate action. He believed that china would listen when asked not to take a strictly legalistic view on India's recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.²⁹

²⁷ Richardson, H. E. (1962), *Tibet and its history*, London: Oxford University Press, p.173.

²⁸ Green, L. C. (1960), "Legal Aspects of the Sino-Indian Border Dispute", *The China Quarterly*, No.3, July-Sep, pp.42-58.

²⁹ Adhikari, Sudepto & Sharma, R.K. (2009), "Geopolitics of Tibetan Crisis", *Asian Profile*, 37(6), p.550.

Nehru's this statement, as a matter of fact, was a deviation from what the Government of Independence India had replied to Chiang Kai-shek's proposal in which the latter had sought to scrap the 1914 Shimla Agreement and asked for revival of the 1908 Trade Regulations.

Indian ambassador to Peking K.M. Panikkar on Sino-Indian relationship, particularly with regard to Tibet, said:

I knew, like everyone else, that with a Communist China cordial and intimate relations were out of question, but I was fairly optimistic about working out an area of co-operation by eliminating causes of misunderstanding, rivalry, etc. the only area where our interests overlapped was in Tibet, and knowing the importance that every Chinese Government, including the Kuomintang, had attached to exclusive Chinese authority over the area I had, even before I started for Peking, come to the conclusion that the British Policy(which we were supposed to have inherited) of looking upon Tibet as an area in which we had special political interest could not be maintained. The Prime Minister had also in general agreed with this view.³⁰

The statement of Panikkar, however, reveals how the Government of India, under his influence, had diluted the 'approach' to Tibet, which it was supposed to carry on as being inherited. On August 27, 1950, the Chinese troops moved into Tibet and by the end of October a full scale military campaign had begun. India sent a protest note condemning the military action. The Government of China replied that:

Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory. The problem of Tibet is entirely the domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China.³¹

When the Tibetan issue was in the United Nations at that time, hardly any debate and discussions were taken place in full spirit at the Security Council. The exiled Chiang Kai-shek led Nationalist Government at Taipei, Taiwan, which was a permanent member of the UN Security Council at that time, but was driven out of the mainland of China by the Communists, had strongly opposed any discussion on Tibet at the United Nations. The important thing was that both the Communist Government in China and the exiled Kuomintang Government in Taiwan had similar views with regard to Tibet that it was an integral part of China. By not supporting Tibetans in the wake of the Chinese aggression, India had abandoned her geopolitical responsibilities in the Himalayan region.

³⁰ Panikkar, K.M. (1955), *In Two Chinas: Memories of a Diplomat*, London: G. Allen & Unwin, p.102.

³¹ India News Bulletin, Chinese Govt. to Govt. of India, October 30, 1950, as cited in Adhikari, Sudepto & Sharma, R.K. (2009), "Geopolitics of Tibetan Crisis", *Asian Profile*, 37(6), p.552.

Figure-2.1



Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion

(Source: Internet, www.mapsworld.com)

Tibet's forced occupation and subsequent integration to China was further strengthened by the Sino-Tibetan Agreement on measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet signed on May 1, 1951, that finally sealed China's complete control. In spite of the Chinese complete occupation of Tibet, the Dalai Lama went underground until he fled Tibet in 1959, but he continued to inspire the Tibetans to fight the Chinese. India provided him shelter when he entered India.³²

India made no comment on the signing of the agreement. There were some question raised on the geopolitical responsibilities that India held in the eastern Himalayan region after the British withdrawal, but the final end came when the Sino-Indian agreement was signed in Peking on April 29, 1954 at the initiative of Premier Nehru. It was known as "Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibetan Region and India". The agreement was signed within the framework of the Panch-Shila—the Nehruvian paradigm of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The

³² Thomas, Laird (2006), *The Status of Tibet: Conversation of with Dalai Lama*, New York: Grove Press.

signing of the 1954 agreement finally sealed the Tibetan destiny forever, making the frontier issues more vulnerable.³³

The Premier Chou En-Lai made it clear that:

....the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited. Historically no treaty no agreement on the Sino-Indian boundary has ever been concluded between the Chinese Central Government and the Indian Government...³⁴

Declaring the 1914 Shimla Agreement illegal, China laid claim over the entire North East Frontier Agency (NEFA).

After the independence India had once assured Tibet that she would continue with British Tibetan policy. However, she could not protect Tibet from Chinese invasion and its subsequent incorporation into Chinese territorial system as an integral region in 1950, forgetting her strategic and security concerns. But in the 1954 of the Panchsheel Agreement, India recognized Tibet as an integral part of China, which conclude the meaning that the 1914 Shimla Agreement and the McMahon Line was illegal, thus it ended the all speculation of either an autonomous Tibet or an independent Tibet. India wanted that Tibet should be treated as an autonomous region, but due to their large commercial interests and geostrategic importance of China, India quit her Tibetan Policy for the goodness of Sino-Indian relationship.

Soviet Policy and the Absorption of Tibet

The People's Republic of China announced its plans to liberate Tibet in 1949. The actual liberation of Tibet, which formally began on January 1, 1950, was proceeded by months of propaganda, including allegations of purported Anglo-American designs on Tibet.³⁵ China rejected any Tibetan claim to independence, and no Western power was in a position to assist the Tibetans. India, newly independent, was in no diplomatic or military position to aid Tibet, as Nehru sought peace with the Chinese.

³³ Patterson, G.N. (1962), "Recent Chinese Policies in Tibet and towards Himalayan Border States", *The China Quarterly*, No.12, Oct-Dec, pp. 87-102.

³⁴ Op. Cit.28, p.554.

³⁵ Asenko, YuriN (1977), *Jawaharlal Nehru and India's Foreign Policy*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, p.97.

The Chinese had no trouble in defeating the small Tibetan army in 1950, and appeals for assistance by the Tibetans proved to be ineffective. When The Tibetan appeal was put into the United Nations for the discussions, the Soviet delegate, Yakov Malik, forcefully argued that Tibet was an integral part of China and said any suggestion of an investigation of Tibet would be a violation of the United Nations Charter and an insult to the Chinese people. The Soviet media in 1950 and 1951 hailed the liberation of Tibet, arguing that Tibet had been under the control of 'foreign imperialists', who were not defined. Moscow also condemned the traditional leadership of Tibet, who were the 'feudal lords and high priesthood.' The Soviet Union explicitly said that the Chinese were the sovereign rulers of Tibet, stating that Tibet is a lawful and inalienable part of China.³⁶

The USSR did not play a significant role in the Chinese absorption of Tibet. There was no international legal challenge to the Chinese claims, and the Tibetans, in May 1951, had no choice but to agree to the 'Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet.' A major land reform program was launched in December 1955; most of the land had traditionally been in the hands of the lamas, the Tibetan monks. A system of cooperatives was introduced by the Chinese, further reducing the power base of the lamas. Temple lands were taken away without compensation.

Throughout the 1950s, resistance against Chinese rule in Tibet grew. Finally, in March 1959 the Tibetans revolted amidst fears the Dalai Lama was about to be kidnapped and carried off to Peking. This brief revolt became an international event and a resolution was passed in the United Nations General Assembly in September 1959 calling for the respect of the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people.

The role of the Soviet Union in this crisis also proved to be minor, as no major power or international body was in any position to punish the PRC. Since Peking did not belong to the United Nations, it could not be punished by it. At best the UN, the United States, Great Britain and other major powers could only express disapproval of Chinese policy. The Soviet policy was rather predictable, as Soviet statements generally reflected the Chinese policies. The Soviet Union made statement that the revolt had the support of only a handful of people, and the revolt was not carried by

³⁶ Wersto, Thomas J. (1983), "Tibet in Sino-Soviet Relations", *Asian Affairs*, 10(3), pp.72-73.

the peasants but by the some rebellion group of the state. China was directly blaming to India for the uprising revolt in Tibet, but Soviet Union was refrained herself from making any such kind of statement on the involvement of India in the Tibetan uprising.

During the revolt, then, there was evidence of a public rift beginning between China and the Soviet Union, though Moscow downplayed the differences over Tibet, voicing some support for Chinese claims to Tibet and also suggesting that imperialist forces were behind the revolt, and not Chinese Mao-administration. Sino-Soviet relations were also becoming strained over India; while Peking remained suspicious of India's intentions, in the 1950s Indo-Soviet relations improved.³⁷

Tibet in the 1960s and 1970s

Soviet policy towards the subcontinent changed substantially in the 1960s. While Sino-Indian relations soured over the border war in 1962 and Chinese allegations of Indian support for the continued insurgency in Tibet, the Soviets moved to gradually improve relations with India and at the same time did not criticize New Delhi's policy of allowing the Tibetan refugees to settle in northern India. In the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, Moscow took a comparatively even-handed approach; Moscow did not explicitly blame India for the war, and it expressed 'regret' that the two nations could not work together peacefully.

The Soviet stance on Tibet gradually changed, and this was a result of deteriorating relations with Peking. Nevertheless, Soviet criticism was to emerge very gradually. In the early 1960s Moscow chose to remain silent on Chinese minority policy, but latter Soviet theoreticians increasingly viewed Mao's minority policy in a negative dimension. Communist noted that before 1949 Tibet was populated by non-Han peoples and that now (in the 1960s), this was no longer true.³⁸ Moreover, by the mid-1960s, Moscow charged the Chinese with violating Marxist-Leninist principles of minority rights. This indicated the growing ideological warfare.

³⁷ Naik, J.A.(1970), *Soviet Policy Towards India, From Stalin to Brezhnev*, Delhi: Vikas publications.

³⁸ Kommunist, May, 1969, as cited in Wersto, Thomas J. (1983), "Tibet in Sino-Soviet Relations", *Asian Affairs*, 10(3), p.74.

In the 1970s, Soviet criticism of Chinese minority policy in general continued. Added to this was a change in the balance of power in South Asia which facilitated Moscow. There was a gradual change in Chinese policy towards India. Peking had apparently demanded changes in New Delhi's policy toward the Tibetan exiles in India; such as the expulsion of the Dalai Lama from Indian soil, as well as the forced exile of other exile leaders. However, India never agreed to these demands. Moreover, India continued to regard the border dispute as the more pressing issue.³⁹ Therefore, in the early 1970s the Chinese were trying to blunt the growing role of the Soviet Union in South Asia, including the close Indo-Soviet ties, by quietly seeking a rapprochement with India over the Tibetan question. However, the Chinese demands for a settlement were too severe for New Delhi to accept, especially with no major Chinese concessions in return, namely, accepting the Indian terms for a border settlement.

From the end of the Cultural Revolution to the death of Mao in 1976, Sino-Soviet relations were strained, and in this period the Soviets paid much closer attention to the Chinese policy in Tibet. The Soviets had by now completely reversed their view on Tibet: in the 1970s they charged that China annexed Tibet, whereas in the 1950s the Kremlin openly backed Chinese claims to Tibet and the subsequent absorption. The USSR did not proclaim the Tibetan exiles to be a 'national liberation' movement. Moscow did not call for an independent Tibet in the United Nations.

In the early and mid-1970s there was greater Soviet support for the Tibetan cause, including the hint that Tibet should be independent, there was no formal Soviet assistance military or diplomatic to the exiles. The death of Mao in 1976 offered new opportunities for Moscow. His death offered the USSR three options. First, if it was able to improve relations with the post-Mao leadership, it would be able to quietly drop any tacit support for the Tibetans. The second option Moscow had was to continue its basic policy. That is, to somewhat suggest that the Tibetans have the right to self-determination and even perhaps independence. This policy is flexible and can be a bargaining stance rather than a formal Soviet policy on the legal position of

³⁹ Maxwell, Neville (1981), "The Deadlocked Deadlock: Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16(38), Sep.19, pp.1545-48.

Tibet. This option is really a veiled threat, and it gives the Soviets the opportunity to both back down and eventually supports either the Chinese or the Tibetan position.

Moscow has continuously tried to improve ties with Peking.⁴⁰ Following Mao's death, the Soviets for more than a year toned down their criticism of Chinese internal policies. By 1978, however, Sino-Soviet relations returned to a cool level. Sino-Soviet differences widened further in 1979 as a result of China's brief invasion of Vietnam, and the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. Sino-Soviet relations are hampered by the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, border disagreements, and Chinese demands that the Soviets lessen aid to Vietnam.

These strains were reflected in a resurgence of Soviet support for the Tibetans in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1979, for the first time, the Soviets described Chinese activity in Tibet in the 1950s as aggression. The Soviet media again began to depict Chinese rule in Tibet as colonial and as an example of 'Han chauvinism'.⁴¹ There was also the statement by L. V. Shcher-bankov, an official of the Foreign Relations Department of the USSR Council for Religious Affairs on Tibet; he said the Soviet Union is "ready to help any nation struggling for independence and justice."⁴² For their part, the Tibetan exiles openly welcomed the Soviet statements. The Dalai Lama publicly appreciated the Soviet offer of assistance.⁴³ The Dalai Lama's September 1982 visit to Moscow, the USSR offered military aid to the exiles, with the implication that the Chinese are illegally in their homeland. Peking responded harshly to this move, claiming that the USSR has old tsarist intentions toward Tibet, and that Moscow has plans to dismember the PRC.

The continued Soviet support for the Tibetan issue served two purposes. First, it was used to depict the People's Republic of China as 'oppressive' that China was not a model to be followed, since it had violated the Leninist principles on minority rights. Second, by threatening to support the Tibetan exile cause for 'national

⁴⁰ "Sino-Soviet Dispute: Beyond the Pamirs", *Soviet Analyst*, (December 2, 1981), pp. 1-4, as cited in op. cit.35, p.77.

⁴¹ Norbu, Dawa(1979), "Strategic Development in Tibet: Implications for its Neighbors", *Asian Survey*, 19(3), pp. 245-259.

⁴² *The Statesman* (1980), 4 May 1980.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5 April 1980.

liberation', the Soviets served notice that if they wish, they could punish Peking. The Tibetan factor did not depend on the course of Sino-Soviet relations alone. India was a crucial factor in any Soviet strategy because most of the exiles live there; if the USSR wished to exploit the Tibetan issue to a further degree, it must have excellent relations with New Delhi, while simultaneously discouraging any improvement in Sino-Indian relations. Moreover, if the USSR decides to implement the option to actively support a Tibetan national liberation movement it would need the cooperation of India, because India would be the best base of support for the exiles.

The Soviet Union has completely reversed its Tibetan policy. In the 1950s Moscow openly backed the Chinese claim to sovereignty over Tibet and the subsequent forced absorption. By the mid-1970s the USSR condemned Chinese policy in Tibet, gradually seeing the Chinese role there as a colonial power. This change in policy was directly tied to the course of Sino-Soviet relations. While the USSR hesitantly backed self-determination and possible independence for the Tibetans, the Soviets did not recognize the Tibetan case as a 'legitimate' national liberation struggle. They did not accord Tibet official recognition, and some benefits, such as economic and military aid, and some form of diplomatic recognition.⁴⁴ Tibet remained geopolitical pivotal between Soviet Union and China.

U.S. Tibet Policy, 1911-1987

Tibetans are ethnically and culturally quite different from the Han people who comprise ninety percent of the Chinese population. During the 1911 Chinese Revolution, Tibetans expelled the small Chinese army garrison then stationed in Tibet, and in June 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama proclaimed Tibet's independence.

The U.S. was largely not interested in Tibetan affairs until the Second World War. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, both the War and State Departments believed the U.S. Air Force should establish a base of operations in China to support Chinese resistance against Japan. This policy was being formulated just as the Nationalist government had made an appeal to the U.S. for aid to reopen China's land supply route, which had been blocked by the Japanese. In response,

⁴⁴ Wersto, Thomas J. (1983), "Tibet in Sino-Soviet Relations", *Asian Affairs*, 10(3), p.82.

Washington negotiated an agreement with Tibet to establish a supply route through that country and into China. In 1942, two members of the Office of Strategic Services were sent on a mission via India and Tibet to meet with Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell in China. These two men gave the 14th Dalai Lama a letter of introduction and gifts from President Franklin Roosevelt during this first official U.S. contact with Tibet.⁴⁵

The Chinese Nationalist government claimed suzerainty over Tibet. As China's ally, the U.S. accepted this position, although it stipulated in a 1942 telegram sent to the British Foreign Office that "Tibet must be recognized to have autonomy under Chinese suzerainty."⁴⁶ In November, 1949 People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces began infiltrating eastern Tibet. Negotiations between Lhasa and Beijing began in 1950, punctuated by sporadic fighting that summer. The talks proved fruitless. The question of Tibet was proposed for U.N. debate in late November 1950, but it was postponed after India persuaded the U.K. and the U.S. that debate on the matter would not produce any useful results.

After the Chinese army entered Tibet, the U.S. State Department affirmed in a letter to the British Embassy dated December 30, 1950, that Washington "believes that the Tibetan people have the same inherent right as any other to have the determining voice in its political destiny, and the U.S. considered recognizing an independent Tibet should developments warrant."⁴⁷

After the Communist triumph in mainland China in 1949, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, and the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, the U.S. government began to show more interest in helping Tibet as a way to fight Communist expansion in Asia. With the 1959 crackdown, the U.S. government's vacillations over implementing its Tibet policy ended with its clearly stated refusal to accept China's occupation of Tibet and its references to Tibetan autonomy within Chinese suzerainty.

⁴⁵ Department of State, Foreign Relations of the U.S. [FRUS] (1942): China (1956), Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 144, 602-3, as cited in Xu, Guangqiu (1997), "The United States and the Tibet Issue", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), pp.1062-63.

⁴⁶ FRUS (1943): China, p. 84, op. cit.44.

⁴⁷ FRUS (1950): China, vol. 6 (1976), p. 613, As Cited in Xu, Guangqiu (1997), "The United States and the Tibet Issue", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), pp.1063-64.

Between 1956 and 1961, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) made sporadic airdrops of materiel to guerrillas in Tibet, and also provided training to Tibetans both at U.S. military bases in Asia and at 'Camp Hale in Colorado'⁴⁸.

Furthermore, China had become aware of the aid the U.S. was providing Tibetan refugees in South Asia, and after reports had appeared in Colorado newspapers of the training of the Tibetans in that state, its government made claims that the Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule was simply the result of American manipulation. However, in the U.S. the reports of the Colorado activities were dismissed as 'Communist propaganda.'⁴⁹

U.S. administrations strongly condemned Chinese human rights practices and supported all three U.N. General Assembly resolutions (of 1959, 1961, and 1965) that urged China to withdraw from Tibet. Occasionally, U.S. policy statements went beyond calls for self-determination and human rights by referring explicitly to Tibetan sovereignty. Indeed, during the debate on the 1961 U.N. resolution, the U.S. delegate referred to the Chinese as 'foreign oppressors' in Tibet, and further cited the 1959 and 1961 International Commission of Jurists reports that concluded that Tibet had been independent prior to the 1950 invasion.⁵⁰ The basic principle that lay behind the U.S. position from 1949 to 1972 was its desire to contain Communist expansion in Asia, and Tibet occupied a place in the U.S. strategy aimed at isolating and overthrowing the Chinese Communist government.

In 1984, believing that tourism would promote economic development in Tibet; Beijing decided to spend \$215 million on tourist facilities. As China opened Tibet's doors to greater contact with the outside world, however, other aspects of China's human rights record there were subjected to greater foreign scrutiny. Some American politicians were very angered by such marks on the Chinese record there, such as the 1950 occupation, the suppression of the 1959 uprising, and China's refusal to allow the free practice of religion in Tibet, especially during the Cultural Revolution. The situation did improve a great deal after Deng Xiaoping's rise to

⁴⁸ Camp Hale was established in 1942 in west-central Colorado (the part of western United States) to provide winter and mountain warfare training during World War II.

⁴⁹ Wise, David (1973), *The Politics of Lying*, New York: Random House, p. 174.

⁵⁰ Xu, Guangqiu (1997), "The United States and the Tibet Issue", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), p.1065.

power. Deng adopted a more liberal policy toward Tibet, allowing the reopening of many temples and the repair and renovation of others. On July 24, 1985, 91 members of Congress signed a letter sent to the Chinese government that expressed support for direct talks between Beijing and the Dalai Lama.⁵¹

From 1972 to 1987 the American executive branch's Tibet policy was inconsistent, but generally it did accept the premise that Tibet was a part of China or, at the very least, that China had the right to rule Tibet as a protectorate or suzerain. Although the U.S. encouraged Tibetans to resist the communist advance for ideological reasons, Washington was careful not to provoke Beijing by supporting the Tibetan nationalist demands. Such support might have jeopardized U.S. geopolitical and economic interests in maintaining a friendly relationship with China. The Tibet issue was not to become a problem for the bilateral relationship, and Tibet was not a consideration in America's China policy.

Tibet in U.S. China Policy 1987 onwards

The U.S. stand on Tibet has undergone radical changes during the period bracketed by the Reagan and Clinton administrations. As has been the case with the Taiwan issue, the Tibet issue has become a matter of contention between the U.S. and China, and it presents Washington with a dilemma. Tibet became an item of concern in U.S. China policy after 1987.

In September, 1987 the Dalai Lama visited the U.S. for ten days at the invitation of the U.S. Congress. In his address to the House Committee of Foreign Affairs, the Dalai Lama made a landmark statement advocating dialogue and moderation. It contained a five-point peace plan, including the transformation of Tibet into 'a zone of peace' and the understanding that 'Buddhist Tibet would draw on its peaceable traditions to resume its role as a buffer state between the great regional powers'.⁵² Under this plan, Tibet would recognize Chinese sovereignty in exchange for a withdrawal of Chinese military forces and a much higher degree of political and

⁵¹ Ibid., p.1066.

⁵² New York Times (1987), 7 October 1987, as cited in Xu, Guangqiu (1997), "The United States and the Tibet Issue", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), p.1068.

cultural autonomy. The Dalai Lama's Washington visit and Congress's support for the Tibetan nationalist cause fuelled the Tibetan's will to rebel against Beijing.

Congress and the White House differed in their opinions on the Tibet issue. Congress was more concerned about the human rights problem in Tibet and was unhappy with the Reagan administration's policy on the Tibet issue as a whole. To put more pressure on the administration, Congress in 1988 passed a resolution supporting the Dalai Lama's five-point proposal.

Geopolitical changes in the post-World War II era, starting with China's 1950 invasion of Tibet, have served to move the Tibet issue gradually forward to the prominent place it occupies in the U.S. foreign policy debate. Congress has gone so far as to accuse the Chinese government of violating the Tibetan's human rights, and has criticized the population transfer of Han Chinese into Tibet that Beijing has advanced since 1987.

During the 2008 Beijing Olympic game, the sudden eruption of anti-Chinese violence in Tibet, got attention of the whole world on the human rights issue. Some countries who threatened to China that if the human rights violation in Tibet not stopped they would not participate in the 2008 Olympic game. USA, Britain, France and other some states made statements over the concern of the Tibetan uprising and human rights violation.

On the Dalai Lama visit in 2009, US government made it clear that they have not changed their policy towards Tibet. The US President has decided that he will meet with the Dalai Lama at a mutually agreeable time and it would be after the Obama's trip to China. The State Department spokesman Ian Kelly of US said that we've decided to meet with the Dalai Lama because of our respect for his position, the fact that he is a revered spiritual leader. Noting that the US position regarding China is clear, he said the Obama administration wants to engage China. As he stated that:

We think China is an important global player. We also don't try and downplay some of the concerns that we have about China and some of our disagreements with China in the areas of human rights, religious freedom, and freedom of expression. The

President's decision to meet the Dalai Lama and the path that of US relationship with China are two separate issues.⁵³

Thus, geopolitically, Tibet issues always have been being a trump card for the external states. For instance; as earlier discussed the issue of the Cold War period when the Soviet Union and the U.S. had used Tibet issue as a means to influence the world order in their own interest. Last, but not the least, it meant to say that, geopolitically Tibet always has an importance in international relations among those developed and developing countries.

⁵³ Indian express (2009), New Delhi, 6 October 2009.

3rd Chapter:

Indo -Tibetan Relations during the British India Period

Started in 1600 as a company with shareholders to peacefully and profitably develop trade with the Asian continent, the East India Company was no longer a trading concern by the beginning of the nineteenth century, but rather the military arm of the British Empire and the authorised ruler of the vast Indian subcontinent and various other possessions.¹ Younghusband described the manner in which British officers of the Company worked for nearly three centuries to expand their empire:

...We who have dealt with Asiatics can appreciate so well (the following tactic) taking the opportunity, striking while the iron is hot, not letting the chance go by, knowing our mind, knowing what we want, and acting decisively when the exact occasion arises.²

It was Warren Hastings who first saw the importance for British trade of securing some sort of friendship with Tibet. After gaining control of India, Britain became anxious to extend its sphere of influence to Tibet. Therefore, the British sought an opportunity to set their feet in Tibet. The first diplomatic contact between British and Tibet was established in 1774 when Warren Hastings was the Governor General of India.

The Company had opened trading posts in Madras and Calcutta and later started penetrating China, taking tea, silk, porcelains or cottons back to England on the return voyage. An ever-expanding Empire, Regarding Tibet and the Himalayan states, Hastings bided his time until the right opportunity came to advance his pawn. It came in 1772, when the Bhutanese attacked Cooch Behar³ and took its King prisoner. Hastings retaliated against the Bhutanese, defeating them. At that point, the opportunity to enter into contact with Tibet emerged. One hundred and thirty years later, Younghusband thus described Hastings' actions:

It was a forward policy, and combined in a noteworthy manner alertness and deliberation, rapidity and persistency, assertiveness and receptivity. He sought to

¹ Arpi, Claude (2008), *Tibet: The Lost Frontier*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, p.54.

² Younghusband, Francis (1910), *India and Tibet*, London: John Murray, p.11.

³ Cooch Behar is a district in the modern state of West Bengal.

secure his borders by at once striking when danger threatened, but also by taking infinite pains over long periods of time to promote ordinary neighbourly intercourse with those on the other side. Both qualities are necessary.⁴

The opportunity to enter into contact with Tibet came in the form of a letter from the Panchen Lama who was the guru of the ruler of Bhutan. Though recognizing the wrong action of the Bhutanese king, the Panchen Lama pleaded with Hastings for clemency – it was the first letter from a Tibetan Lama to a British officer.⁵

Hastings laid the letter of the Panchen Lama before the Board of the Company in Calcutta and informed them that he proposed a general treaty of amity and commerce between Bengal and Tibet. For the purpose, George Bogle, a twenty-eight year old officer was chosen by the Viceroy to be the first British Agent at the Court of the Panchen Lama. He left the same year for Shigatse to negotiate with the Lama.⁶

Bogle's discussions with the Tashi Lama, revolved around a possible alliance between Tibet and British India, so that the influence of the latter might be used to restrain the Gurkhas of Nepal from attacking Tibet. The Tashi Lama was quite open to the arguments of Bogle, but he had to refer the matter to the Regent and the Kashag in Lhasa who opposed the idea as it would have upset the fragile balance with the Chinese authorities. The Regent diplomatically wrote that he needed to get a clearance from Peking which, for obvious reasons, never came.⁷

The Nepalese were not keen to see an alliance between Tibet and India with their kingdom suddenly sandwiched between two powerful neighbours. The Gurkha King took the matter to the Tashi Lama, assuring him that Tibetans had nothing to fear from the Nepalese. The Nepalese king concluded his letter requesting the Tibetan Lama “to have no connection with the Firingies (English) and not to allow them into the country, but to follow the ancient custom (to keep the foreigners out).”⁸ Bogle had

⁴ Arpi, Claude (2008), *Tibet: The Lost Frontier*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, p.55.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ At that time the Panchen Lama was known as the Tashi Lama or Lama of the Tashilhunpo. He was usually referred by the Tibetans as the Panchen Rinpoche.

⁷ Younghusband, Francis (1910), *India and Tibet*, London: John Murray, p.19.

⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

many friendly discussions with the Panchen Lama but he finally had to leave the Land of Snows.

The influence of the Manchus' representatives in Lhasa forced Tibet to remain a closed country; this situation was to continue until the beginning of the twentieth century. The British clearly identified three main obstacles to their Tibetan forward policy and an eventual alliance with Lhasa.

The first problem was the antagonism of the Himalayan countries such as Bhutan and Nepal towards the Crown. They felt culturally closer to Tibet than to the British. The second problem was the presence of the Manchu Emperors (through their Ambans) in Lhasa. That was the extreme weakness of the Tibetan system and their military dependence on their Chinese patron. The third obstacle Bogle identified was the growing influence and presence of Russia in the area.⁹ One hundred and thirty years later, the same argument (or pretext?) led Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, to send Colonel Younghusband to Tibet, to establish by military means the 'forward policy' envisioned by Hastings.

It was only in 1810, that Lord Minto, the Viceroy, sent a new Mission to Tibet led by Thomas Manning, a reputed scholar. Manning stayed in Lhasa for many months but was finally recalled by the Viceroy. Manning was to be the last Englishman to enter Lhasa before the troops of Younghusband in 1904. For over 100 years after Hastings left the Governor General's office in 1784, Britain did not make any serious further attempt to gain a foothold in Tibet. By and large, during this period Britain adopted a 'Leave-Tibet-Alone' policy; it retreated from Tibet but was waiting for a chance to come back. The chance came in 1876 when the British succeeded in inserting a separate article in a treaty called 'Anglo-Chinese Chefoo Convention'. The British forced the Chinese to accept it.¹⁰

British India and the Himalayan Kingdoms

Great Britain started tackling the problems enunciated by Bogle one by one. They dealt first with Nepal. In 1814, a British expedition with 34,000 soldiers annexed

⁹ Arpi, Claude (2008), *Tibet: The Lost Frontier*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, p.57.

¹⁰ Richardson, H. E. (1962), *Tibet and its history*, London: Oxford University Press, pp.75-76.

Nepal. Ten years later the British made the next move and marched into Assam. The Company's territory now had a border with Bhutan and ultimately in 1865, the British attacked Bhutan, which became a protectorate.

Next on the Viceroy's map was the Kingdom of Sikkim. The annexation of Sikkim or at least control over it by the British was of prime strategic importance: the Chumbi valley commanded the entrance into Tibet. For centuries the major trade route between India and central Tibet passed through Natu-la, Yatung in Chumbi Valley and then onto Gyantze in Tibet. From a military point of view also, the control of Gangtok and Natu-la was most important.¹¹

There was a general understanding that nothing would stop the opening of a trade route between India and Tibet, once the suzerainty of Sikkim was grabbed from Lhasa by the British crown. The acquisition of Darjeeling was also a crucial stroke in their strategy and many English officers could already see the potential of Darjeeling as a turning point for trade and diplomatic manoeuvres in the Himalayan region. Similar views were held about Kalimpong.¹² In Tibet, there was an increasing uneasiness over the British Forward Policy.

The Sikkimese had to accept their fate in good spirit and there were already many in the kingdom who were ready to collaborate with the Crown. In Tibet, it was different. The government had never dealt with a Western power and the Tibetans knew very little about modern warfare and the latest technologies used by the British army. They knew even less about diplomacy.¹³

In 1886, there was some rumour aired that the Viceroy, Randolph Churchill was planning to send a commercial mission to Shigatse without the permission of Lhasa. This created a lot of resentment in Tibet and Lhasa decided to send some 200 soldiers to the Sikkimese border to block the way of the proposed mission. Around the same time yet another irritant emerged: the Tibetans heard in 1876 that the British had signed an Agreement with the Chinese in Chefoo. Though the Government in Lhasa had not been consulted or even informed, one of the clauses concerned Tibet. The

¹¹ Arpi, Claude (2008), *Tibet: The Lost Frontier*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, p.57.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p.58.

British scheme was to pass the Treaty through the back door: as they had not been able to reach Tibet from the South, they would do it through the West. They secured the permission of the Chinese to send a mission to Tibet through the mainland.¹⁴

Tempers ran so high in Lhasa that the Tsog-du (National Assembly), at an emergency meeting, decided to take an oath never to allow the British to enter Tibetan territory. The National Assembly's seal was put on the oath. It also declared that the Chinese Emperor had no power to give passports permitting foreigners to enter Tibetan territory. In the meantime, the Kashag was informed that the British were planning to build a guest-house on the border between Sikkim and Tibet, near the border pass of Jelap-la. Lhasa resolved to send two representatives to find out where the border was and to set up a check-post to guard it. The border had never been properly demarcated.¹⁵

Finally, in 1887, a fortified post was built by the Tibetans in Lungthur which according to them, was inside their territory. But the British did not agree with the demarcations and demanded their immediate removal. An ultimatum was sent to the Tibetan commanders to vacate their fortifications before March 15, 1888. At the same time the British sent a formal protest which was forwarded to the Manchus and the Dalai Lama by the Chogyal of Sikkim. Though the Manchus were not in a position to intervene, told the British that "no marked separation existed formerly between Tibet and Sikkim" and that the Tibetans regarded the kingdom of Sikkim as an extension of their own country.¹⁶

This time the British were not in a mood to discuss or even negotiate the exact position of the border. With the pressure mounting, the British positioned more than 2,000 troops of the Sikkim Field Force. Tibet disliked British dominance of Sikkim. Thus the Tibetans sent troops to aid Sikkim in its struggle against the British in 1888 the British forces not only defeated the Joint Sikkim Tibetan Forces and captured the

¹⁴ Ibid.,p.58.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.59-60.

king of Sikkim, but also advanced twelve miles (12) across the Tibetan border into the Chumbi Valley.¹⁷

The Chinese, fearing that the British forces would remain in Tibet, requested the British government to negotiate with it on the Sikkim-Tibetan Border problem in order to avoid further border clashes between Britain and Tibet.¹⁸ The British government responded favourably, and a treaty was concluded by the Chinese and British representatives in March 1890. This treaty was known as the “Convention between Great Britain and China, Relating to Sikkim and Tibet.” It laid down the Sikkim Tibetan boundary. But the Tibetans declined to accept this new drawn line as they had not been consulted in drawing it.¹⁹

The British knew perfectly well that Sikkim was a protectorate of Tibet, but they were also aware that Tibet was in too weak a position to defend its rights in Sikkim. The Tibetans were deeply disturbed by the Convention on Sikkim and Tibet signed by the Chinese and the British; they regarded it as a breach of the Patron-Priest relationship.

One point was very clear that time for the Tibetans—they had lost their protector. A new factor, which played a role in this complex game, was the visit of Prince Henri d’Orleans to Tibet in 1888; he declared that France was ready to have diplomatic relations with Tibet. He even promised the Tibetan Government:

We, the French can save Tibet from the British threat. France and Russia have concluded an alliance and, we are now the strongest power in the world.²⁰

The Anglo-Chinese Treaty of 1893

In 1891, the British and the Chinese government sent their representatives to Darjeeling to negotiate. The result of the negotiations was the conclusion of a treaty titled “Regulations regarding trade, communication and pasturage, to be appended to

¹⁷ Bell, Charles (1924), *Tibet: Past and Present*, London: Oxford University Press, p.60.

¹⁸ Hung, Ti-Chen (1936), *General History and Geography of Tibet*, Nanking, p.60.

¹⁹ Li, Tieh-Tseng (1956), *The Historical Status of Tibet*, New York: King’s Crown Press, p.81.

²⁰ Kuleshov, Nikolai S. (1996), *Russia’s Tibet File*, Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, p. 3.

the convention between Great Britain and China of 17 March, 1890, relative to Sikkim and Tibet.” The important parts of these regulations were as follows:

- Yatung of Tibet shall be opened to all British subjects for Trade.
- British subjects’ trading or residing at Yatong shall receive protection from China for their person and property.
- Trade disputes arising between the British and Chinese or Tibetan subjects in Tibet shall be dealt with the political officer for Sikkim and the Chinese frontier officials.
- After one year from the date of the opening of Yatung, Those Tibetans who continued

To graze their cattle in Sikkim will be subject to such regulations as the British government sees fit to issue.²¹

But again, the Tibetans refused to recognize these regulations as binding documents, and again, the Chinese government was unable to make them comply with its provisions.²²

Younghusband Expedition to Tibet

In view of the fact that Tibetans refused to respect the Anglo-Chinese treaty of 1876, 1890 and 1893 regarding Tibet and that the Chinese Government could not impose its will upon the dissenting Tibetans, Lord Curzon, and the Governor General of British India believed that it was necessary to make direct contact with Lhasa. In 1903, Curzon requested London to permit him to send a mission with an armed escort to Lhasa to talk with the Dalai Lama about the trade problems between the British and the Tibetans.²³ However, London did not approve Curzon’s plan lest these should provoke Russia’s intervention. But finally they approved permission to send a mission.

An expedition led by Col. Younghusband reached Lhasa on 2 August 1904. The Dalai Lama fled to Urga, Mongolia but his regent aided by several others held talks

²¹ Richardson, H.E. (1962), op. cit.10, pp.251-253.

²² Hung, Ti-Chen (1936), op. cit.18, p.176.

²³ Bell, Charles (1924), op.cit.17, p.65.

with the British. By the September 1904 the British and the Tibetan produced a treaty known on the “Convention between Great Britain and Tibet.” The major provisions of the convention were as follows:

- The Tibetan Government shall recognize the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet as defined in the Anglo-Chinese Treaty of 1890.
- The Tibetan Government shall open Gyantze and Gortok to British subjects for Trade.
- The Tibetan government shall pay an indemnity of 500,000 pounds (75 lacks of rupees) to the British Government.
- The Tibetan government shall raze all forts and remove all armaments between the British frontiers and the towns of Gyantze and Lhasa.
- Without the provision consent of the British government the Tibetan government shall not cede, sell, lease or mortgage any portion of the Tibetan territory to any foreign power, admit representatives of any foreign power to Tibet.²⁴

This was the first time that a treaty was concluded directly between British and Tibet. By this treaty, the British government internationally made Tibet a semi-colony of Britain and will fully made Tibet a separate entity from China.

The Anglo-Chinese Treaty of 1906

When the Younghusband forced the Tibetan leaders to conclude the Lhasa Convention of 1904, he was aware that Tibet was part of China and could not act independently. Thus, after the Lhasa Convention was signed by him and the Tibetan leaders, he requested the Chinese Amban at Lhasa to put his signature on the convention in an attempt to make it binding upon the Chinese Government also. The Amban asked Chinese (Peking of the decision). Peking believed that the Lhasa Convention severely violated Chinese rights in Tibet, and that if the Chinese government approved the

²⁴ Richardson, H.E. (1962), op. cit.21, pp.253-256.

convention it would mean that it recognized the Tibetan's power to make treaties with foreign nations. Therefore the Amban was asked not to sign the convention.²⁵

To settle this problem China decided to meet British in Peking or Calcutta, British decided to meet at Calcutta. The Chinese representative declared that the Chinese would never accept the Anglo-Tibetan convention of 1904 as a valid treaty; he proposed that a new treaty be worked out by the Chinese and British governments to take the place of the Lhasa convention. He stressed that Tibet was a part of China and not a separate entity. The British refused to recognize Chinese sovereignty in Tibet insisting that it was autonomous and that China had only suzerainty in Tibet.²⁶

They based this argument on the fact that the Chinese were unable to make Tibet respect either the treaty of 1890 or of 1893. Thus the British representative demanded that the Chinese representative accept the Lhasa convention as it stood. The Chinese representative refused as he was determined to see Chinese sovereignty maintained in Tibet. Although the Calcutta talks were over, the Anglo-Chinese negotiations did not die. At about this time, the British government changed and the new regime sought only a limited involvement in Tibetan affairs. It requested the Chinese government to reopen the Anglo-Chinese negotiations. The Chinese government responded favourably and the negotiations began of Peking.²⁷

On 10 Jan, 1906 the Chinese representative called on the British with a new Anglo-Chinese draft treaty which was not very different from the old that British at Calcutta. Again this draft treaty asked the British government to agree that Britain should neither encroach on Tibetan territory nor interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet and that China was not a foreign power with respect to Tibet.²⁸

The new British government did not raise any serious objection to this China's proposed treaty and it becomes the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906. The major provisions of the convention were as follows:

²⁵ Lamb, Alastair (1966), *The McMahon Line: A Study in Relations between India China and Tibet, 1904-1914*, Vol.1, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, p.32.

²⁶ Ibid., p.37.

²⁷ Ibid., pp.38-39.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.48-49.

- The Lhasa Convention of 1904 between Britain and Tibet is confirmed and attached to the present convention as an annex.
- British agree not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet.
- The concessions provided in Art 9 (d) of the Lhasa Convention are denied to any state other than China.²⁹

In this convention Chinese authority over Tibet was unmistakably recognized by Britain. Indeed, this was a great triumph for the Chinese.

The Anglo-Chinese Treaty of 1908

After the conclusion of the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906, the British government asked the Chinese government to discuss the question of the amendment of the regulation of 1893. The Chinese government accepted the request lest the British should again conduct direct negotiations with the Tibetans. The British government asked the Chinese government to send some Tibetans to the conference table to represent Tibet. On being asked by the Chinese government the Tibetan government sent two representatives by April, 1908 a treaty was agreed upon that was officially titled 'Agreement between Great Britain, China and Tibet amending trade regulation in Tibet' of December 5, 1893.³⁰ The major points of the agreement were as follows:

- The boundaries of the Gyantze mart shall be defined, and the administration of the trade marts shall with the Tibetan officers in direction of Chinese officers.
- China shall furnish police protection to the persons and property of the British subjects of the marts.³¹

This was the last treaty concluded between Great Britain and China and the first signed by the Tibetan representative along with the representative of British and China. By this treaty, British subjects enjoyed not only all types of conveniences in

²⁹ Richardson, H. E. (1962), *Tibet and its history*, London: Oxford University Press, pp.256-260.

³⁰ Liu, Kuan-I (1951), *A Brief History of the Imperialist's Aggression against Tibet*, Peking: World Knowledge Association, p.15.

³¹ Richardson, H. E. (1962), *op. cit.*29, p.262.

the trade with the Tibetans, but also police protection and full extra-territorial privileges, now legally Tibet remained a part of China. But in substance, Tibet was made a semi-colony of Britain, and China was made an instrument of British interests in Tibet.

In October, 1911 a revolution took place in China, and February, 1912, the Manchu Dynasty was overthrown. After hearing this news, the Dalai Lama set out for Tibet and upon his return immediately declared Tibet independent. The Dalai Lama urged all the Tibetans to rise up against all the Chinese in Tibet.³²

Under such circumstances, president of China Yuan Shikai ordered soldiers into Tibet to put down the revolt.³³ The British government was unwilling to see Tibet come under firm Chinese control and so delivered a stern memorandum concerning Tibet to the Chinese government. It threatened that if the Chinese government would not make a new treaty with Great Britain on Tibetan Affairs, the British would negotiate directly with the Tibetans. At this time China was too weak to resist British pressure, therefore president Yuan gave orders to halt military actions in Tibet and agreed to negotiate with British. In the meantime from 1912 onward Tibetan government conducted its own foreign affairs, maintained its own army and its own internal administration. Until the Chinese invasion (of 1950), all officials and other functionaries in the country were appointed by Lhasa independently.³⁴

The British held that the recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet would keep the Russians at a distance. Besides, the British did not want to antagonise China as they had a lot of trade interests with it. And an acceptance of full scale Chinese sovereignty over Tibet would have brought the Chinese soldiers on the Indian frontiers. Thus British interests could best be served if a weak and neutralised Tibet enjoying autonomy existed between China and (British) India. Suchita Ghosh writes that:

³² Alexandrowicz, C.H. (1954), "The Legal Position of Tibet", *American Journal of International Law*, 48(2), p.270.

³³ Chand, Attar (1982), *Tibet: Past and Present*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, p.10.

³⁴ Hung, Ti-Chen (1936), *General History and Geography of Tibet*, Nanking, p.211.

The British policy of maintaining Tibet as a buffer by recognition of Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty was the least expensive and most practical policy for her.³⁵

The Shimla Conference

In view of the constant Chinese infiltration into Tibet, British India was considering how to maintain a balance of power there. Any sharp increase of Chinese penetration in Tibet was obviously a threat to British India's security; while the elimination of Chinese influence from Tibet would obviously have caused a deterioration of Anglo-Chinese relations, provoked the danger of Russian infiltration, and increased unnecessarily the responsibility of British India in relation to Tibet. Thus the balance was determined by a policy of keeping Chinese influence in check without eliminating it entirely.³⁶ It found visible expression in the provisions of the Shimla Conference in 1914, where representatives of British India, China and Tibet initialled a Convention of which the chief provisions were the following:

1. Tibet was to be divided into two parts: outer Tibet, adjoining India and including Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo; and inner Tibet, including the provinces near China and part of Eastern Tibet.
2. The principle of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was recognized, but China was to observe strictly her limited position as a suzerain. Suzerainty implies that internal sovereignty is vested in the vassal state; in other words China could not, according to the Convention, infringe upon the internal jurisdiction of the Dalai Lama's government. On the other hand, suzerainty means no external sovereignty in the vassal state. Thus the Convention implied the right of China to conduct Tibet's foreign affairs, with the exception of British India's direct rights in Tibet, essential to the mutual balance in the Indian-Chinese-Tibetan triangle.
3. Great Britain declared that it had no other aspirations in Tibet, and in particular none for territorial expansion or aggrandisement.

³⁵ Ghosh, Suchita (1977), *Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations 1899-1914*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, p.199.

³⁶ Alexandrowicz, C.H. (1953), "India and the Tibetan Tragedy", *Foreign Affairs*, 31(3), pp.497-98.

4. The division of Tibet into outer Tibet and inner Tibet implied the predominant interest of British India in the former and of China in the latter. India always enjoyed the natural security afforded by the Himalayas. The passes leading from the Tibetan plateau into Sikkim and India are important trade routes. Non-interference of China in outer Tibet best secured freedom of movement on these routes. Thousands of Tibetan traders used to arrive in India yearly over these passes to sell wool, hides and medicinal herbs in exchange for other goods. Thus the firm establishment of the Dalai Lama's jurisdiction in this part of Tibet served the twofold purpose of promoting Indo-Tibetan trade and security of the north-eastern frontier of India. British India was allowed to have her trade agents in outer Tibet and later also established a Mission in Lhasa.
5. In inner Tibet the Chinese were to keep certain internal rights, including responsibility for the maintenance of order.
6. Finally, the Chinese were to maintain a representative, called Amban, in Lhasa.³⁷

The British pointed out that it would be useless to discuss other things unless the boundary between Chinese and Tibet could be defined. On 11 March, 1914, McMahon submitted to the conference a draft convention which included the following major points.

- Both the British and Chinese government recognize that Tibet is a state under the suzerainty, but not the sovereignty, of China and that outer Tibet is an autonomous body.
- Both the British and Chinese government engage to respect the territorial integrity of outer Tibet and to abstain from interference in the administration of the Country.
- The Chinese government engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province, and the British government engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it.

³⁷ Alexandrowicz, C.H. (1953), Ibid.

- The Border of Tibet and the boundary between outer Tibet and inner Tibet shall be shown on the attached map.³⁸

The terms of the draft convention and the division of Tibet into inner Tibet and outer Tibet upset the Chinese and Chinese representative withheld the signature. In addition to the declaration the British and the Tibetan signed new trade regulation providing that the rights enjoyed and the powers exercised by the Chinese in the Anglo-Tibetan Trade relations now rested entirely with the Tibetan.³⁹

One of the tasks of the Shimla Conference was also to define the north eastern frontier of India, particularly between Tibet and Bhutan, the vassal of British India where Chinese penetration remained a continuous threat.⁴⁰ Two days after the Convention was initialled, the Chinese Government refused to sign it. The British then informed China that they considered the Convention as in force between themselves and Tibet.

A few weeks later the First World War broke out and Tibetan affairs were duly shelved. But the principles of the Shimla Conference remained a reliable guide to British Indian policy in Tibet, based as it was on genuine friendship and on a mutually respected balance of power by which no more would be given to or withdrawn from either China or Tibet than was inherent in the balance itself. Tibet was to serve as a buffer state without giving up its autonomy in its own internal affairs.⁴¹

It was also obvious that British India's action was dictated not only by British Commonwealth interests but by the natural requirements of any future Indian policy, whether connected with British rule or not. Problems of security and trade aside, there was also an increased need after the First World War for vigilance against the Bolshevist penetration which Chinese soldiers tended to import into Tibet.

³⁸ The Indian Society of International Law (1962), *The Sino-Indian Boundary: Texts of Treaties, Agreements and Certain exchange of Notes Relating to the Sino-Indian Boundary*, New Delhi, pp.36-38.

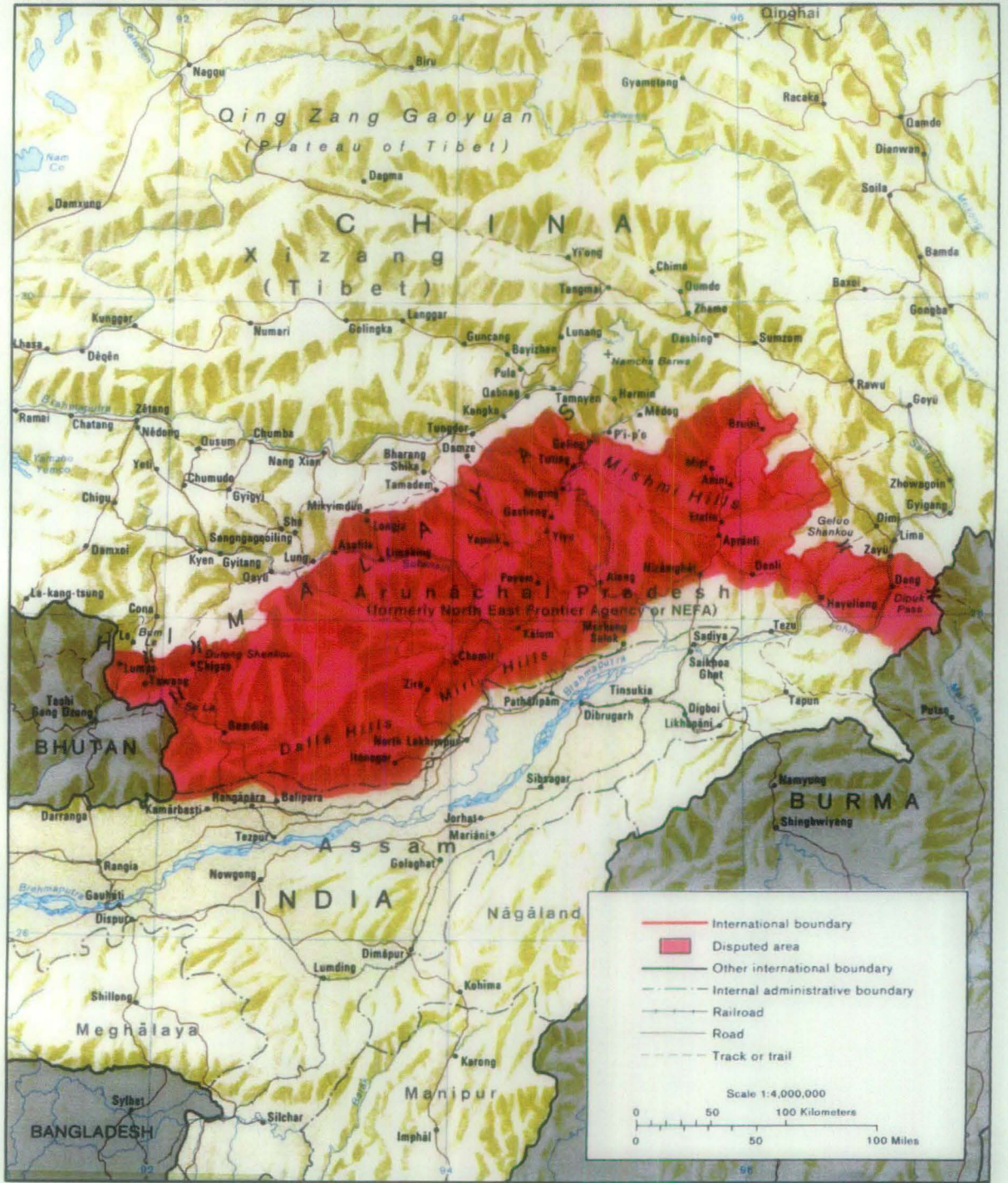
³⁹ Richardson, H. E. (1962), *Tibet and its history*, London: Oxford University Press, p.114.

⁴⁰ Alexandrowicz, C.H. (1953), op. cit.36.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Figure-3.1

China-India Border: Eastern Sector



B00912 (A06001) 9-88

The McMahon Treaty of 1914

(Source: Internet, www.mapsworld.com)

Communism was always less popular in Tibet than in India and Nepal, the reason being that the Dalai Lama's government was, primarily spiritual, abhorring physical force as a means of leading people to happiness and salvation.⁴²

A convention signed on 27 April 1914 gave Tibet full autonomy. When the Chinese government later refused to ratify the convention, for reasons which had nothing to do with the Indo-Tibetan boundary or the question of complete Tibetan autonomy, the British and the Tibetan representatives proceeded to the conclusion of a bilateral agreement between them (4 July 1914), and recorded a formal declaration to the following effect:

We, the plenipotentiaries of great Britain and Tibet, hereby record the following declaration to the effect that we acknowledge the annexed convention as initiated to be binding on the governments of Great Britain and Tibet, and we agree that so long as the government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid convention, she will be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom.⁴³

The recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet by the Tibetan and British government, as provided for in the convention, was thus, among other things, withdrawn. Tibet was released from its obligation to recognize Chinese suzerainty, and Britain committed itself to the position that it would not recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet unless the government of China fulfilled its side of the bargain by signing the convention. This solemn declaration continued to be the basis of Anglo-Tibetan relations till Britain withdrew from India in August 1947.⁴⁴ As late as 5 August 1943, Anthony Eden (later, the Earl of Avon), then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the British government, writing to T.V. Soong, Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs, reiterated that British recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was contingent on Chinese recognition of Tibetan autonomy.⁴⁵

In July 1947, a month before India became independent, formal statements were made by the Government of Great Britain and the government of India, to the government of Tibet that after the transfer of power, British obligations and rights

⁴² Ibid., p.498.

⁴³ Records of Shimla Conference, National Archives of India, as cited in Chakravarti, P.C. (1968), "India and the Tibetan Question", *International Studies*, 10(4), p.449.

⁴⁴ Chakravarti, P.C. (1968), Ibid., p.450.

⁴⁵ Chakravarti, P.C. (1962), *India's China Policy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.23.

under the existing treaties would devolve upon the successor government of India, and they hoped that the government of Tibet would continue with the independent government of India the same relations as had formerly existed with the British government. The government of Tibet took some time to consider the question but finally announced its acceptance of the Indian proposal.⁴⁶ This meant that the government of India inherited not only the McMahon Line as the north-eastern boundary of India and a number of other rights and privileges in Tibet, but also the British obligation not to recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet unless China recognized Tibetan autonomy in the strict terms of the Shimla Convention.

From 1946 to 1951, the Tibet policy of Nehru and his associates reflected that of the British: treating Tibet as an autonomous buffer state between India and China. Even in 1947, Nehru invited Tibet to attend the first inter-Asian conference in New Delhi. But in 1954 India gave up this position in an agreement with China over trade and intercourse between India and Tibet.

⁴⁶ Chakravarti, P.C. (1968), *op. cit.* 43, p.450.

4th Chapter:

Strategic Importance of Tibet: Indian perspective

The threat that a strong China would pose to its neighbours and the world in general was clearly appreciated by Napoleon I of France when he said: “Let the Chinese dragon sleep, for when it wakes, it will shake the earth.”¹ After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, India-Tibet border suddenly had to be renamed as India-China border. Soon after chairman Mao’s ‘Peoples Republic of China’(PRC) came into being in 1949, the new Communist government announced its intentions of liberating Tibet, Sinkiang (viz. East Turkistan), Hainan and Taiwan in order to give shape to Chairman Mao’s dream of a larger China. Before his Communist revolution succeeded in China, Mao had his designs on Tibet ready. He is on record announcing, “Tibet is China’s palm and Ladakh, Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) are its fingers.”²

A study in contrast what followed is a history of clear focus and smart action on the Chinese part in occupied Tibet and persistent suicidal indifference and foggy vision on the part of India. Today China is far more entrenched inside occupied Tibet than India is in its own territory along 4000 km long border between India and Tibet. Today China’s defence machinery enjoys support of a massive network of logistic facilities like roads, military establishments, even nuclear facilities and communications network in occupied Tibet. For example, China’s Army along the Indian Himalayas is served by a set of end to end all-weather roads along this border. These roads are well integrated with the main network of Chinese highways in Tibet.³ In sharp contrast, with the exception of Nathu-La in Sikkim, not a single Indian army post along this 4000 km long border is supported by a pucca road. It was only after a barrage of Chinese claims and threats on Arunachal Pradesh that Indian government has suddenly woken up and has decided to connect some border points with roads.

¹ Sawhny, R. (1968), “China’s Control of Tibet and Its Implications for India’s Defence”, *International Studies*, 10(4), p.486.

² Kranti, Vijay (2009), “Chinese Occupation of Tibet and its Impact on Indian Security”, *Dialogue*, 10(4), p.55.

³ Ibid. p.56.

Demography: as a colonial tool on the demographic front too, China has been consistently busy in changing the Tibetan character of occupied Tibet through massive population transfer. The first step in this direction was taken when the Amdo and Kham provinces of Tibet were chopped off from Tibet in 1960s and their parts were distributed among the surrounding Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai. The remaining Tibet, comprising mainly of the third province of U-Tsang and some other left over parts of the two eastern provinces, which was baptized as ‘Tibet Autonomous Region of China’ (TAR).

Today a major point of contention between between Beijing and Dalai Lama that is holding up progress in their talks on future status of Tibet is about the definition of ‘Tibet’. While Beijing insists on presenting only ‘TAR’ as a real Tibet, Dalai Lama’s concept of Tibet is ‘Cholka Sum’ viz. ‘Three Provinces’ comprising of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo.

A comparative study of population figures of Tibet vis-a-vis other occupied regions in the western China would show how Beijing government has already inundated the Amdo and Kham regions of Tibet with Han population during past five decades.⁴

Tibet (truncated) i.e. TAR	2,616,329
Sichuan	82,348,296
Yunnan	42,360,089
Qinghai	4,822,963
Gansu	25,124,282
Tibet (original)	6,000,000

According to the Tibetan government in exile headed by Dalai Lama, the population of Tibet (Cholka-Sum) was 6 million before China invaded and occupied

⁴ Ibid. pp.56-57.

Tibet. Although the transfer of Han population from mainland China to Tibetan areas has gained a big momentum after 2002. No wonder the Tibetans in Kham and Amdo have been already reduced to an insignificant minority—like the Manchurians in Manchuria and the Mongols in Inner Mongolia.

Fast emergences of new Chinese settlements in recent years in regions across Arunachal and India-Tibet-Nepal tri-junction have already changed the demographic character of these strategic border areas from Tibetan to Chinese. No wonder the Chinese leaders have been terming this strategy as the ‘last solution’ to Tibetan problem. This process of ‘Han-nizing’ of Tibet has gain tremendous momentum since the Chinese railway arrived in Lhasa in 2006. A dear project of Chinese leader Hu Jin Tao, Han population transfer to Tibet is termed as the new Great Wall of Defence towards south Asia. Besides starting a process of irreversible demographic change in Tibet, China’s success in extending its railway network right up to Lhasa has also multiplied Beijing’s strategic capabilities in Tibet many folds. Latest developments in Beijing and Kathmandu indicate that the Chinese railway network may be soon extended right up to Nepal.

Subsequent events in past five decades have proved beyond doubt that no other development in Asia during 20th century had more impact on the geopolitical character of South Asia than the fall of Tibet into China’s hands. Perhaps the best possible description of this development was expressed in the telegraphic message which the Indian consulate general in Lhasa had sent to New Delhi following PLA’s attack on Tibet that is, “Chinese have entered Tibet. Himalayans have ceased to exist”.⁵ Before Chinese occupation of Tibet it has been a common belief in India that Himalayas were the protectors of India. But events after the fall of Tibet have shown that it was actually a free Tibet, which stood as a security buffer between China and India.

Diplomatic aggression instead a military offensive the Chinese leadership adopted a more practical policy of developing relations with countries along Tibetan borders to contain India’s influence. A reliable network of highways has been developed in Nepal which is capable of taking the Chinese army with all ease to the

⁵ Ibid. p.57.

Indian states of Uttarakhand, Bihar and West Bengal in the event of a direct clash with India. On 3rd December 2008 Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi announced financial and technical aid for a 16 km road linking Syaprubensi in Nepal to Rasuwamadi on the border with Tibet.⁶ Today a China and Bangladesh are bound by a defence treaty that ensures direct support from each other in the event of an attack from a 'third party'. Links between anti-India forces in Bangladesh and Nepal too present serious threat to Indian security. Emergence of a relatively pro-India government in Bangladesh recently has come as a big relief to India.

For the Myanmar China has emerged as the best and most reliable ally of the military dictators. China has cleverly used this advantage to liver its position in Asia, especially against India. In the Southern Myanmar where it has allowed Chinese navy to establish its naval post in Coco islands of Myanmar that is just 40 km away from Indian naval bases at Andaman and Nicobar islands.⁷

One of the most serious fall outs of Chinese occupation of Tibet against India has come in the shape of a direct geo-link and military and political alliance between China and Pakistan. Pakistan has emerged as China's most favoured ally, rather a proxy, in its attempts to contain India. China's obvious and significant role in the nuclear arming of Pakistan; handing over of some strategic chunks of Akshai-Chin in Jammu and Kashmir territory by Pakistan to China; Pakistan's permission to China to build Karakoram road through Pakistani territory; and development of Gwadar naval base for Pakistan in the Arabian Sea by China have underline the serious dimensions of Beijing-Islamabad strategic axis against India. Establishment of Gwadar naval base for China and presence of Chinese navy there has, practically, wiped of Indian navy's traditional superiority in the Arabian Sea.⁸

Tibetan occupation by China is the real issue which has created many serious repercussions for other countries in South Asia. In the case of India the impact has been worse. Arrival of China's army right up to the Indian borders for the first time in history has proved to be a highly expensive development for the Indian economy.

⁶ Ibid., p.58.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.,p.59.

This signal development across the Himalayas has forced a total change in the Indian priorities in spending the national income. The Indo-Tibetan border, which used to be one of the most peaceful borders prior to Chinese occupation of Tibet, is now one of the most vulnerable borders in today's world.

Chinese Occupation of Tibet and Nehru's Reaction

No sooner had two almost equally nationalistic regimes come to power in Delhi (1947) and Beijing (1949) than Tibet began to impinge on their relations. Stripped of diplomatic dressings, the critical question in 1950 was who should or could occupy the strategic buffer region between the two? Nehru acceded to the indirect but persistent Chinese demands in 1954, hoping that each state would respect the Himalayas as the operational perimeter of the other's political interest and defense.⁹

From 1946 to 1951, the Tibet policy of Nehru and his associates reflected that of the British: treating Tibet as an autonomous buffer state between India and China; recognizing Chinese suzerainty but not sovereignty over Tibet, and protecting Tibet's autonomy by recognizing its treaty-making powers, especially in relation to India. Thus, in March 1947 a Tibetan delegation was invited to the Asian Relations Conference in Delhi, despite protests from the Kuomintang delegates. In September 1947, the Indian government assured Lhasa that all previous treaty commitments, that is, Anglo-Tibetan treaties and conventions, would be respected as before, and an Indian army officer was sent two years later to Lhasa as adviser to the Tibetan government.¹⁰ When the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) marched into Tibet in 1950, Indians including Nehru vociferously protested the invasion. Such actions indicated India's preference for continuing British policy toward Tibet.¹¹

Both Nehru and Indira Gandhi publicly scoffed at concepts like buffer zone and balance of power as outmoded imperialist jargon. However, more recent research

⁹ Norbu, Dawa (1997), "Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), p.1079.

¹⁰ Tibet and Peace in South Asia (1991), New Delhi: National Committee for Tibet and Peace in South Asia, pp. 46-47, as cited in Norbu, Dawa (1997), "Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", *Asian Survey*, 37(11).

¹¹ Nehru, Jawaharlal (1993), *Selected Works*, vol. 15, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 429, 433, as cited in op. cit.7.

suggests that, given the chance and in the absence of PLA forces in Tibet, the post-colonial government in Delhi would have treated Tibet as an autonomous buffer state.¹² Such a complex policy was not only dictated by geopolitics; it was the most economical way of ensuring security along the 3,200 km Himalayan boundary. Colonial officials knew this, as did Nehru, but the latter erred on the side of over-smartness.

Once the PLA was in full command of Tibet-which Beijing sought to legitimate through a treaty with the Dalai Lama's government in May 1951-Nehru completely changed his policy tactics toward the PRC. There was virtually nothing, he and Panikkar concluded, that India could do militarily to dislodge the PLA from Tibet. Therefore, rather than fruitlessly antagonize Beijing by maintaining the old British policy; New Delhi should befriend New China by all means and at almost any cost. This friendship policy was expected to reduce or neutralize the security threat from the PLA stationed in Tibet, as well as enhance Asian solidarity. The Panchsheel Agreement (1954), which sacrificed Tibet's historical status at the altar of Sino-Indian friendship (Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai), should be seen in this perspective.

Nehru did not give up Tibet easily. In 1950 he tried his best, mainly through diplomacy, to prevent the Chinese military occupation of Tibet, and strongly advocated a peaceful resolution of Sino-Tibetan tensions.¹³ Though he ultimately sacrificed Tibet for the sake of Sino-Indian friendship, Nehru was clearly determined to protect India's vital security interests in the Himalayan region. As the Chinese Communists neared their revolutionary victory, Nehru was rushing through a series of defense treaties with Bhutan (August 8, 1949), Nepal (July 31, 1950), and Sikkim (December 5, 1950). These countries constituted Nehru's definition of a security zone in which India would tolerate no foreign interference.¹⁴ The treaties represented India's strategic response to the Communist takeover of Tibet. Throughout the 1950s, Nehru demonstrated his serious commitment to this doctrine. In February 1951, he

¹² Norbu, Dawa (1988), "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet on the Himalayan region," *Strategic Analysis*, 12(4), p. 373.

¹³ Nehru, Jawaharlal (1993), *Selected Works*, vol. 15, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 434-36, as cited in op. cit. 7.

¹⁴ Heimsath, Charles H. & Mansingh, Surjit (1971), *A Diplomatic History of Modern India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, p. 202.

established the North and North-Eastern Defence Committee, visited NEFA (1952), Sikkim and Bhutan (1958), and Nepal (1954 and 1959). In public statements in August and December 1959, Nehru offered open support in defense of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim in case of Chinese invasion.¹⁵

As far as Nehru was concerned, all the outstanding problems between India and China, particularly the border question and demarcation of respective spheres of special interest-that is, China's Tibet and India's Himalayas- were resolved by 1954. This was accomplished more through a moral agreement with Zhou Enlai rather than what the Panchsheel Agreement explicitly stipulated. Zhou was probably aware that Delhi had made the biggest concession to China in modern Asian history, not only by giving up India's extraterritorial rights in Tibet but, more importantly, by putting India's seal of legitimacy on the Chinese occupation of Tibet at a time when most nations were condemning it.

That Nehru expected a quid pro quo on the border issue for his recognition of Tibet as a region of China appears clear. All political maps of India prior to 1954 marked the northern border extending from Kashmir to Nepal as undefined and the north-eastern frontier as undemarcated. Also, a few weeks after the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement on July 30, 1954, Nehru issued a memorandum to the External Affairs, Defence, and Home ministries. In it, Nehru described the agreement as "a new starting point of our relations with China and Tibet," and affirmed that:

Flowing from our policy and as a consequence of our Agreement with China, the northern frontier should be considered a firm and definite one, which is not open to discussion with anybody. A system of checkposts should be spread along this entire frontier. More specifically, we should have checkposts in such places as might be considered as disputed areas.¹⁶

It was a gentleman's deal struck between Nehru's India and Zhou's China in which India in fact conceded and recognized China's claims over Tibet. In return, Communist China was expected to recognize India's claims over the Indo-Tibetan border as well as India's special relations with the Himalayan states. However, while

¹⁵ Appadorai, A. (1985), *Select Documents on India's Foreign Policy and Relations 1947-1972*, (ed.), Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 547.

¹⁶ Mankekar, D. R. (1968), *The Guilty Men of 1962*, Bombay: Tulsi Shah Enterprises, p. 138.

the concessions China sought were stated explicitly in the agreement, those India sought were not.

Neither India's vital security interest in the Himalayas nor its stand on the border problem was recognized in writing or respected in practice by the PRC. Nor was the autonomy of Tibet, in the sense Nehru understood it, respected by China. When the PRC violated this oral agreement in the late 1950s, the Indian elite felt betrayed by its Chinese friends. Strategically, India surrendered Tibet-its outer ring of defense-without gaining anything substantial in return from China, which penetrated India's inner ring of defense starting with Nepal in 1955.

Implications of China's Tibet Policy for India

China's Tibet policy impacts on Indian security interests in mainly two ways. One, it exposed the border problem between India and China which led to the 1962 Sino-Indian war. The Chinese invasion of Tibet ended the buffer zone between the two countries. Till date, Sino-Indian relations remained dotted with several rounds of protracted talks on the border issue without achieving any major breakthrough. At the same time it increased China's reach into South Asia. In fact, Tibet has an 870 mile border with Nepal and China has been consolidating its relationships with the Nepal government. China reached an agreement with king Gyanendra in August 2002 to cease any anti-China activities (unspecified) in Nepal. Also, China asked Nepal to close down the Tibetan refugee welfare office in January 2005. China's growing influence in Nepal is thus at the expense of India and other key western players, which has grave geo-political ramifications. The role of Nepal in linking Afghanistan's membership to China's quest for observer status in the SAARC cannot be missed.¹⁷

Second, China's western development strategy, a product of China's nationalism project, has deeper ramifications for India. A closer analysis of China's western development strategy indicates that more than removing economic backwardness from the region, gaining strategic capability is the primary objective.

¹⁷ Nath, Rajeshwer (2007), "Worship Building- Cost and Time Overruns", *Indian Defence Review*, 24(4), p.84, (Online: web) Access 13 June 2011, URL: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/vol.22.4>.

China's go west policy is aimed at consolidating its power over Tibet through persistent hanization policy. Infrastructure development and Han migration forms the linchpin of the hanization process. The grand strategy of China's nationalism project is predicted largely on the construction of the Qinghai-Tibet railway project. Through his railway project China aims at achieving strategic capability vis-a-vis India. The entire development strategy in Tibet is impelled by the crucial strategic location of Tibet, as well as it being a focal point of Sino-Indian rivalry. There are plans to extend the Qinghai-Tibet railway line to Kathmandu. This will indeed have geopolitical ramifications for India.¹⁸

Another serious consequence of Chinese development strategy in Tibet could be in terms of environmental hazards. India's major rivers originate from the trans-Himalayan region. China's western development programme is reared to cause major deforestation and ecological imbalance. This, in the long run, may have discernible effect on the climatic patterns of the region, including India. The recent threat of a lake burst in Tibet portending a catastrophic flood in Himachal Pradesh and cloud burst in Ladakh has exposed India's vulnerability to environmental warfare. Some scientists point out that the denial of permission for Indians to visit the site, conflicting information from China about the lake parameters, and Chinese warning to India a month after the supposed 'landslide'. Heighten suspicion that the impending lake burst is being treated as an experiment in environmental warfare. China's strategic infrastructure in Tibet will enhance its military capability and enable Chinese coercive diplomacy with respect to the border dispute with India. China also has a listening post in occupied Akshai-Chin.¹⁹

Tibet factor between Sino-Indian Relations

The PRC's policies toward independent India have been characterized as a judicious combination of deep strategy and surface diplomacy. China's deep strategy, observable from the pattern of her actions, is to gain a strategic edge over India in inner Asia by courting Indian acquiescence in the Chinese occupation of Tibet. At the same time, China seeks to use its informal strategic alliance with Pakistan to deny

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.85.

India's regional supremacy in South Asia. If India becomes strong enough to establish regional supremacy in South Asia, China reasons, it might think next of trans-Himalayan ventures. And surface diplomacy, which is characterized by frequent visits of all kinds to New Delhi (such as those during 1954-58),²⁰ has been pursued whenever the PRC feels vulnerable in Tibet. This course was taken because the Chinese Communists firmly believed that India would play a crucial role in any probable external intervention in Tibet.

The Chinese leaders attached enormous importance to India and Nehru during the critical period of their takeover of and consolidation in Tibet. The PRC's position in Tibet was very weak both because of the almost worldwide condemnation of the Communist takeover and because China's military infrastructure was underdeveloped at that time. As Mao Zedong observed in 1952, there was no social basis or popular support for the Communist liberation in Tibet.²¹ Externally, though India was not in a military position to intervene by itself, the Maoist strategists calculated that if Nehru were to act in concert with American forces, they would constitute a probable threat to the takeover and occupation.²² Therefore, the essential functions of Nehruvian India in the Communist scheme of things were not only to prevent external intervention in Tibet but also to seek India's legitimation of the Communist takeover. The latter had direct implications for the Sino-Indian boundary dispute of which Chinese leaders, but not Nehru, were fully aware.

The PRC could establish its full legal claims over Tibet only after Nehru recognized Tibet as part of China in 1954. Once this occurred, China then began to claim officially territory along the Indo-Tibetan border, using the provisions of the 1954 treaty as its rationale. In fact, China's claims are primarily based on Tibetan- not Chinese- documents, which would be valid only if India recognized Tibet as part of China. Zhou Enlai himself acknowledged this in a letter dated November 5, 1962, sent to Asian and African leaders concerning the boundary dispute, in which he cited only

²⁰ Jain, R. K. (1981), *China-South Asia Relations, 1947-1980*, (ed.), New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, pp. 577-78.

²¹ Zedong, Mao (1977), *Selected Works*, vol. 5, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, p. 64, as cited in op. cit. 7.

²² Chinese press (1949), *Kwangming Daily*, 3 September 1949.

Tibetan evidence to support PRC claims. In this letter he concedes that the names of rivers, passes, and other places in the eastern sector (NEFA/Arunachal Pradesh) are in the Tibetan language. Also, the inhabitants of the middle sector 'are nearly all Tibetans' and Tibetan archival documents indicate that the 'local government' had consistently exercised its jurisdiction over the Tibet-Sikkim border area. Zhou bases China's claims over the Aksai Chin by declaring that it once was part of Tibet's Zinjiang and Ngari District.²³ This is confirmed by Jagat S. Mehta, who was one of the chief Indian representatives at the 1960 Indian and Chinese officials meeting on the boundary question. He recalls that most of the 245 items of evidence presented by the Chinese side were official Tibetan documents.²⁴

With such a weak position on the border question as well as within Tibet, the Chinese pursued cautious policies both in Tibet and toward India during the early 1950s. Mao and Zhou sought to synchronize their external and internal policies regarding Tibet. Internally, they sought to consolidate China's military power in inner Asia as expeditiously as possible. This was accomplished by 1957, when four highways began to connect Tibet with China proper and Xinjiang and after most members of Tibet's traditional ruling class had been co-opted into the transitional Communist setup in Lhasa, which was deceptively liberal and generous.²⁵

The Communists focused on India because it was the power most intimately connected with Tibet through ancient culture, recent history, and geostrategic terms. On December 30, 1949, the Indian government recognized the PRC; two days later Beijing announced the liberation of Tibet. On April 30, 1954, China and India signed the much publicized Panchsheel Agreement; only a few weeks after that, Chinese patrols began a series of intrusions into areas claimed by Beijing to be integral territory. The following year, China began to compete with India for a sphere of influence in Nepal. And when in 1960 officials presented India's formal claims on the

²³ Premier Chou En-lai's Letter to the Leaders of Asian and African Countries on the Sino- Indian Boundary Question (1962), Beijing: Foreign Language Press, pp. 3-4, as cited in op. cit.7, p.1083.

²⁴ Mehta, Jagat S. (1995), *South Asia Seminar on Non-violence in the Modern World System*, (October 2), New Delhi: India International Centre.

²⁵ Norbu, Dawa (1974), *Red Star over Tibet*, London: Collins, pp. 110-11.

Indo-Tibetan borders as being based on treaty, custom and usage, their Chinese counterparts reportedly invoked the Nehruvian ideology of anti-imperialism.²⁶

The essence of China's argument, made on different occasions and in different words by both Zhou Enlai and the Chinese media, raised a series of rhetorical questions designed to appeal to the Nehruvian sense of anti-imperialism, and fix the Indian position within the ideological make-believe world in which both India and China, as anti-imperialist, post-colonial nations, were supposed to cooperate. The questions implicit in the Chinese argument included the following: Do you agree that both India and China were subjected to acts of aggression by British imperialism? Did not Western imperialist powers impose unequal treaties on Asian countries? Was not the McMahon Line a product of an unequal treaty imposed by the British policy of aggression against China's Tibet region?²⁷ Can such an unequal treaty, perpetuated by imperialists, be the basis for the settlement of the border question between two anti-imperialist powers in post-colonial Asia?²⁸

The Chinese Communists had been silently but carefully listening to the Nehruvian rhetoric of anti-imperialism and Asian solidarity for almost a decade. In 1960, the Chinese threw the rhetoric back at the Indian leaders and tripped up the Indians in an ideological position of Nehru's making. Each time New Delhi made a favourable gesture toward the PRC, Beijing made it clear that what India undertook with regard to China also applied to Tibet. The strategy and tactics of early Communist China's policy toward Nehruvian India were not based on the teachings of Marx or Lenin but rather on the 'legalist' or 'realist' teachings of Xun Zi (298-38 B.C.). His three cardinal teachings seem to have profoundly influenced Communist foreign policy, particularly toward an India with which the Maoist realists perceived a conflict of interest right from the beginning. Xun Zi believed that human nature is evil unless controlled; he emphasized a logical method based on realism as a basis of

²⁶ Maxwell, Neville (1970), *India's China War*, Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, p. 12.

²⁷ Ibid. p.123.

²⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches (1964), *September 1957-April 1963*, Vol. 4, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, p. 212, as cited in op. cit.7, p.1084.

human affairs, and insisted that relations must be properly defined before conventions could be established.²⁹

The whole episode demonstrates the absolute necessity of legitimacy and justification for one's actions, even to those who believe in the maxim, 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.' In the final analysis, it is power that determines the outcome in interstate conflicts. But at the same time most states, like most human beings, like to believe and make it appear that the deployment of force is not a case of might alone but that it is legitimate and justified in the eyes of the world. That is why Beijing took such pains to trap Nehru on grounds of his own making before taking concrete action.

Tibet and the Sino-Indian Conflict on Border Issue

Although the history of direct foreign relations shows the content of Indian and Chinese positions toward the Tibet issue and broader territorial disputes, these positions were themselves responses to domestic developments in Tibet and India that neither Zhou nor Nehru could control. The growing Tibetan resistance movement against the Chinese occupation, begun in 1952-53 in Kham and culminating in the 1959 Lhasa revolt, attracted increasing Indian public support. The opposition party's bitter criticism of Nehru's China policy shook the very foundation of Indian foreign policy. The PRC interpreted the free public expression of democratic rights in a democratic society as Indian involvement in the Tibetan unrest and interference in internal affairs. In response, China began to concretize her border claims and compete with India in Himalayan regions that Nehru had assumed as part of the 1954 gentleman's agreement to be the exclusive spheres of Indian interest and influence.

It is not easy to establish clear-cut correlations among the Tibetan revolts, Indian public demonstrations in support of Tibetan pro-independence movement, and the Sino-Indian border incidents. However, it appears that Tibetan unrest and perceived Indian involvement in it tended to further encourage the PRC to increase the border incidents. This in turn infuriated the Indian government, which hardened its

²⁹ Norbu, Dawa (1997), "Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), p.1084.

position on the boundary dispute and intensified its support for the Tibetan cause. Thus, the Khampa revolts in 1956 and 1957 might have compelled the Chinese to try to close their border with India by establishing Chinese checkposts along ill-defined territories such as the Aksai Chin and Shipka La Pass, which in turn produced more border incidents.³⁰

Until 1962, China's concrete steps to establish its border claims were directed exclusively toward the western sector. This offers some clues to the then-prevailing Chinese strategic perceptions. Perhaps more than India, the Chinese feared the United State's use of Pakistan as a base for operations against Tibet and Xinjiang in the late 1950s. Pakistan was a SEATO member, and President Ayub Khan called in May and June 1959 for a joint Indo-Pakistan defense against the Chinese Communist threat.³¹ This explains the rapid completion of the Aksai Chin Road in October 1957. It is also why most of the 1959 border incidents, such as Pangong Lake (July 28, 1959), Longju (August 26, 1959), and Kongka Pass (October 20, 1959), took place in the western sector, where the Chinese perceived the greatest danger of external intervention from India and Pakistan, backed by the U.S. Such perceptions of a threat led China to establish military and police posts along the western sector, both to meet external challenges as well as prevent the Tibetan revolt (1956-59) from infecting Xinjiang.

Whatever veracity there may be in the Chinese allegations of Indian (official or public) involvement in the 1959 Tibetan revolt that event and the Dalai Lama's subsequent arrival in India certainly placed a strain on Sino-Indian relations from which, some argue, they never recovered.³² This helps to explain why (a) border incidents increased and became more violent than they had been before the revolt; and (b) in just six months (September 1959 and March 1960), 30 notes, eight letters, and six memoranda were exchanged between New Delhi and Beijing. The temperature of Sino-Indian relations was rising.

³⁰ They include 24,000 sq. km in Ladakh, about 320 sq. km in the middle sector, and some 51,200 sq. km in the eastern sector.

³¹ Kavic, L. J. (1967), *India's Quest for Security: Defence Policies 1947-1965*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 68-69.

³² Gopal, Sarvepalli (1979), *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol. 2, Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 89.

An analysis of the implications of the Tibetan revolt to both parties (India and China) in the context of the Panchsheel Agreement makes this proposition clear. To the PRC, the revolt and alleged Indian involvement, as well as the Indian public's warm reception to the Dalai Lama, violated a cardinal principle of the 1954 agreement: non-interference in one another's internal affairs. Equally, the revolt revealed to India that despite Zhou Enlai's assurances, China did not respect Tibetan autonomy. Much more important, China's refusal to respect Indian border claims violated the Panchsheel principle of respect for each other's territorial integrity.

The territorial dispute therefore became one of the most contentious issues to face China and India, and the issue is closely connected with Tibet. The evidence for China's claims on the disputed borders becomes valid only after India's recognition of Tibet as a Chinese region in 1954. And evidence for China's claims on the border, especially the McMahon Line, is based on the treaties that British India signed with the 13th Dalai Lama's government in 1913-14. In this sense, Tibet has been and remains the pivot around which post-colonial Sino-Indian relations have revolved and still do invisibly.

India more than China pretended that Tibet was not a factor in Sino-Indian relations. PRC has consistently opposed the 1913-14 Shimla convention. Yet, it was China, not India that hinted during the period March 1959 to September 1962 that the invisible problem impinging on almost every issue in their bilateral relations was the Tibetan Question. On December 3, 1961, the PRC reminded India that the 1954 agreement was due to expire in six months, and proposed negotiations to replace it. The Chinese hoped that "a new agreement on Tibet would ease relations with India and open the way to settling other questions."³³

By 1962 India and China had reached a deadlock, more on emotional rather than territorial grounds. India's refusal to negotiate Himalayan boundaries and detach itself completely from Tibet was tantamount to a Hindu declaration that the sacred Himalayas were un-negotiable. For its part, the Chinese refusal to recognize any pre-1949 border treaty or convention that Tibet signed with British India amounted to a

³³ White Paper II (1960), New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, November 1960, pp. 8-16, as cited in op. cit.27, p.1088.

firm declaration that Tibet, and any proposition that challenges even implicitly China's claim to Tibet, was un-negotiable. These conflicting views clashed first psychologically and then physically in 1962.

The Himalayas are very much bound up with ancient Hindu mythology and the living faith.³⁴ Hindus view the Himalayas as the abode of their gods, where true renunciation (tapas) and liberation (moksha) can be achieved. Many Hindus consider Tibet as part of their 'religious geography.' Even a secularized intellectual like Nehru was not free from his subconscious emotional attachment to the Himalayas. He recognized their security function as an impregnable barrier to the north but also repeatedly expressed his view that the mountains are a part of Hindu culture. Nehru summed up the emotional aspects of the Sino-Indian dispute:

So it is not a question of a mile or two or ten or even a hundred miles. It is something more precious than a hundred or thousand miles and it is that which brings up people's passions to a high level, and it is that which, to some extent, is happening in India today.³⁵

In contrast, neither Tibet nor the Himalayas is considered by Confucians as sacred; their sacred territories, as reflected in their ancestor worship, have always been the Han areas of China itself.³⁶ Therefore, the Chinese takeover of Tibet and consequent claims on the Indo-Tibetan borders may be considered primarily of strategic considerations, secondarily of ideological motives. That is why the Chinese side showed less emotion.

China India Clash over Chinese claims to Tibetan Water

Water shortages in much of Asia are beginning to threaten rapid economic modernization, prompting the building of upstream projects on international rivers. Water has emerged as a key issue that could determine whether Asia is headed toward mutually beneficial cooperation or deleterious interstate competition. No country could influence that direction more than China, which controls the Tibetan plateau—the source of most major rivers of Asia.

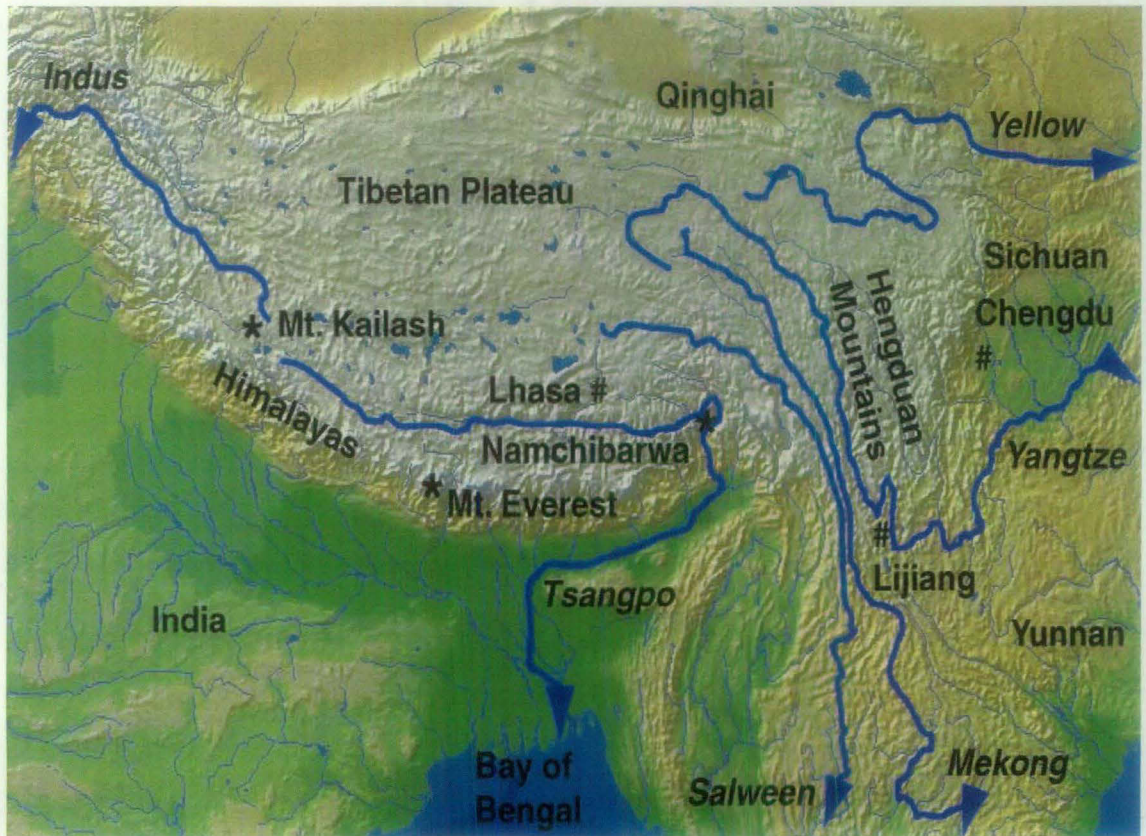
³⁴ Fisher, James F. (1978), *Himalayan Anthropology*, ed., The Hague: Morton Publishers, pp. 77-80.

³⁵ Maxwell, Neville (1970), *India's China War*, Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, p.121.

³⁶ Norbu, Dawa (1992), *Culture and the Politics of Third World Nationalism*, New York: Routledge, pp.145-52.

Tibet's vast glaciers and high altitude have endowed it with the world's greatest river systems. Its river waters are a lifeline to the world's two most populous states- China and India- as well as to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, Cambodia, Pakistan, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. These countries make up 47% of the global population.

Figure-4.1



Map of Tibet, Western China and South Asia rivers.

(Source: Internet, www.mapsworld.com)

Yet Asia is a water deficient continent. Asia has less fresh water- 3920 cubic meters per person- than any continent besides Antarctica. The Himalayan snow melt that feeds Asia's great rivers could be damagingly accelerated by global warming.

Intrastate water-sharing disputes have become rife in several Asian countries from India and Pakistan to Southeast Asia and China; it is the potential interstate conflict over river-water resources. This concern arises from Chinese attempts to dam or redirect the southward flow of river water from the Tibetan plateau, where major rivers originate, including the Indus, the Mekong, Yangtze, Yellow, Salween,

Brahmaputra, Karnali and the Sutlej. Among Asia's mighty rivers only the Ganges starts from the Indian side of the Himalayas.

As water woes have been aggravated in its north due to environmentally unsustainable intensive farming, China has increasingly turned its attention to the bounteous water reserves that the Tibetan plateau holds. It has dammed rivers, not just to produce hydropower but also to channel waters for irrigation and other purposes, and is currently toying with massive inter-basin and inter-river Water transfer projects. Several Chinese projects in west-central Tibet bearing on river water flows into India, but Beijing is loath to share information.³⁷

Following flash floods in India's northern Himachal Pradesh state, however, China agreed in 2005 to supply New Delhi data on any abnormal rise or fall in the upstream level of the Sutlej River, on which it has built a barrage. Discussions were on to persuade it to share flood control data during the monsoon season on two Brahmaputra tributaries, Lohit and Yarlong Tsangpo, as it has done since 2002 on the Brahmaputra River, which it has dammed at several places upstream.³⁸

The 10 major watersheds formed by the Himalayas and Tibetan highlands spread out river waters far and wide in Asia. Control over the 2.5 million square km Tibetan plateau gives China tremendous leverage, besides access to vast natural resources. Having extensively contaminated its own major rivers through unbridled industrialization, China now threatens the ecological viability of river systems tied to South and Southeast Asia in its bid to meet its thirst for water and energy.

Tibet comprises approximately one fourth of China's land mass today, since 1950 giving China a contiguous frontier with India, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal. Tibet traditionally encompassed the regions of the central plateau, Kham and Amdo. After annexing Tibet, China separated Amdo (the present Dalai Lama's birthplace) as the new Qinghai province, made the central plateau and eastern Kham the Tibet Autonomous Region, and merged the remaining parts of Tibet into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu. The traditional Tibet is not just a distinct

³⁷ Chellaney Brahma (2007), *Japan Times newspaper*, 26 June 2007.

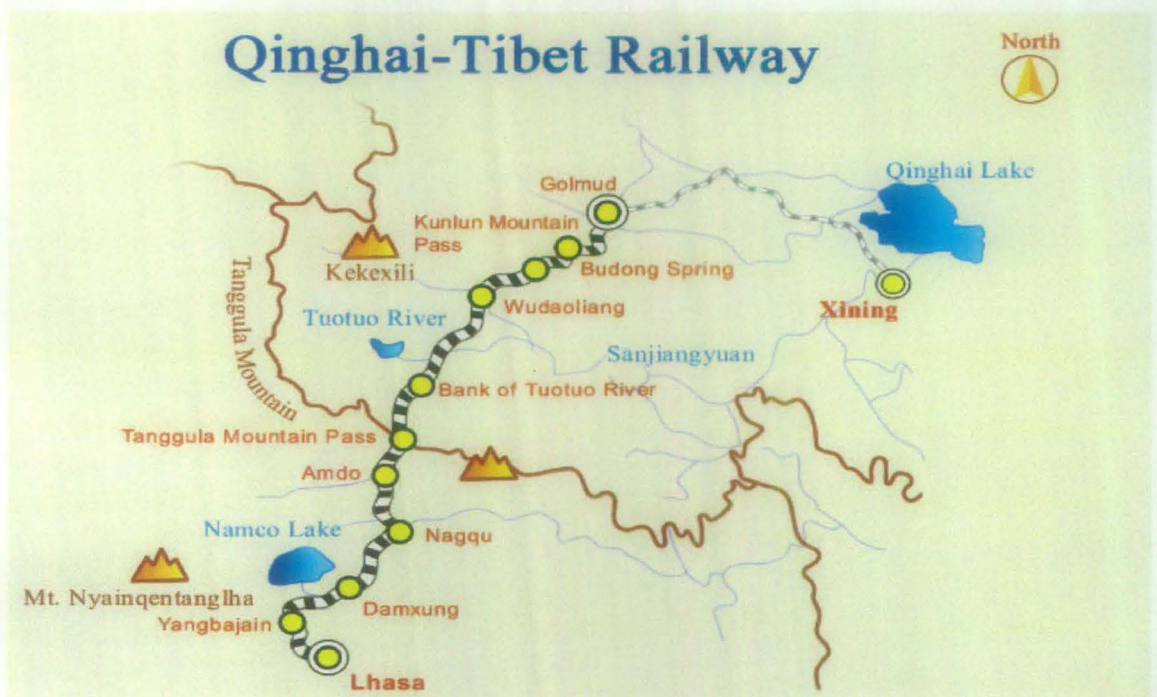
³⁸ Ibid.

cultural entity but also a natural plateau, the future of whose water reserves is tied to ecological conservation.

Large hydro projects and reckless exploitation of mineral resources already threaten Tibet's fragile ecosystems, with ore tailings beginning to contaminate water sources. Unmindful of the environmental impact of such activities in pristine areas, China's 108km paved road to Mount Everest, located along the Tibet Nepal frontier, was a part of China's plan to reinforce its claims on Tibet by taking the Olympic torch to the peak of the world's tallest mountain before the 2008 Beijing Games.³⁹

As in the past, no country is going to be more affected by Chinese plans and projects in Tibet than India. The new \$6.2 billion Gormo-Lhasa railway, for example, has significantly augmented China's rapid military deployment capability against India just when Beijing is becoming increasingly assertive in its claims on Indian territories.

Figure-4.2



(Source: Internet, www.mapsworld.com)

³⁹ Ibid.

China seems intent on aggressively pursuing projects and employing water as a weapon. The Chinese ambition to channel the Brahmaputra waters to the parched Yellow River has been whetted by what Beijing touts as its engineering feat in building the giant \$25 billion Three Gorges Dam project, which has officially displaced a staggering 1.2 million citizens.

The Brahmaputra (Yarlong Tsangpo to Tibetans) originates near Mount Kailash and, before entering India, flows eastward in Tibet for 2,200 km at an average height of 4,000 meters, making it the world's highest major river. When two other tributaries merge with it, the Brahmaputra becomes as wide as 10 km in India before flowing into Bangladesh.⁴⁰

The first phase of China's South North Project calls for building 300 km of tunnels and channels to draw waters from the Jinsha, Yalong and Dadu rivers, on the eastern rim of the Tibetan plateau. Only in the second phase would the Brahmaputra waters be directed northward. In fact, Beijing has identified the bend where the Brahmaputra forms the world's longest and deepest canyon just before entering India as holding the largest untapped reserves for meeting its water and energy needs.

While some doubts do persist in Beijing over the economic feasibility of channelling Tibetan waters northward, the mammoth diversion of the Brahmaputra could begin as water shortages become more acute in the Chinese mainland and the current \$1.2 trillion foreign-exchange hoard brims over. The mega-rerouting would constitute the declaration of a water war on lower-riparian India and Bangladesh.

Tibet as a Strategic Dilemma

In the past, both imperial historians and post-colonial area specialists have failed to observe the interconnected web of politics of Sino-Indian relations within which the Tibet Question is interwoven. Tibet has shaped the informal and invisible dynamics of Sino-Indian relations and politics from 1950 to the present.

Tibet is the legal foundation on which both India's and China's border claims rest: the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement deals more with Tibet than either China and

⁴⁰ Ibid.

India, while India's alleged involvement in the 1959 Tibetan revolt and the Dalai Lama's asylum status in India played no insignificant role in the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict. New Delhi has been using the Tibetan card in its policies toward the PRC since the early 1970s, while the Chinese side raised the Tibetan Question both during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China and Li Peng's to India. Such examples suggest that Tibet continues to be a major bone of contention between the two countries.

Tibet looms large in Sino-Indian relations and politics, even after 45 years of Chinese occupation, because of its intimate connection with the strategic interests of both parties. It is a manifestation of continuing Sino-Indian strategic rivalry in inner Asia and the Himalayas. Mao's strategists considered Tibet as China's back door, and some of India's elite still consider it as a buffer between India and China.⁴¹ The crux of the Sino-Indian strategic rivalry is this: If the Chinese power elite consider Tibet to be strategically important to China, the Indian counterparts think it is equally vital to Indian national security. Tibet thus presents itself even today as a strategic dilemma for both parties. If India dominates Tibet (as the British raj had done until 1947), the Chinese feel insecure and threatened. Conversely, if China occupies Tibet (as it has since 1950), India feels that its whole northern security system, stretching over 3,200 km, is open to external danger. Such a strategic zero-sum game over Tibet may be resolved through neutralization of the contested territory, as Britain and Russia did in their treaty of 1907, which ensured peace for 43 years.

⁴¹ Norbu, Dawa (1997), "Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality", *Asian Survey*, 37(11), p.1094.

5th Chapter:

Conclusion

Tibet is a critical issue in the complexity of Sino-Indian relations. The criticality of this issue arises not only from the geo-strategic location of Tibet between China and India but also from the historical context of evolving Sino-Tibetan relations, and the humanitarian and cultural dimensions of this relationship.

Starting with point of the British policy towards Tibet, British rulers realized the importance of Tibet as a buffer between India and any other external power on the north, be it France, Russia or China. However, to support or even encourage a completely independent Tibet could be damaged a much larger commercial interest in China for the British power. Thus, they sought to limit Chinese power in Tibet and encourage Tibetan autonomy. The primary consideration in British policy towards Tibet was how to ensure the security of the 2000 mile long Himalayan frontier that India shares with Tibet. This could be ensured if Tibet remained autonomous in the British sense and as long as China remained weak as a nominal suzerain authority in Tibet. This formula worked up to 1949 because China remained weak and divided until 1949.

China always claimed that Tibet is an integral part of China. To resolve this problem through the negotiation and by understanding, the Shimla conference was held by the British government. All the three representatives from the government of China, Tibet and British India were called for this conference. But China rejected the Shimla agreement and McMahon proposal. Tibet became a bone of contention between India and China.

India became deeply involved in the Tibet issue in 1959 but its responses to the revolts in 1988 and 2008 were mild and carefully guarded. India's response to the developments in Tibet can only be understood in the overall perspective of India's Tibet policy which has evolved gradually since 1947. India has had strong historical and cultural relations with Tibet spanning centuries. According to a devout Indian scholar on Indo-Tibetan relationship,

The culture of Tibet is a glowing example of how the stream of Indian consciousness crossed the Himalayan frontiers and followed into far-off lands, transforming them body, mind and soul, into an eternity of love, peace and compassion through a community of ideas and institutions.¹

On the eve of its independence, India looked at Tibet as an independent country. And Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru invited Tibet as an independent participant in the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947. The Chinese delegation protested against the flying of the Tibetan flag at the conference venue, and in the Prime Minister's first gesture of accommodation of the Chinese on Tibet, the Tibetan flag was removed. However, he continued to refer to Tibet as an independent country, equating it to Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and Myanmar (then Burma).² On gaining independence, the Indian government wrote letters to all those governments with which it has had treaty relations. A similar letter was sent to Tibet as well, stating:

The Government of India would be glad to have as assurance that it is the intention of the Tibetan government to continue relations on the existing basis until new arrangements are reached that either party may wish to take up. This is the procedure adopted by all other countries with which India has inherited Treaty relations from His Majesty's Government.³

Jawaharlal Nehru ignored the strategic implication of Chinese control over Tibet for India which was presented by his colleagues in the Indian government. One such person, Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, who in his letter of 7 November 1950 to Prime Minister Nehru cautioned him that "the Chinese 'onslaught on Tibet' was little short of perfidy, and that the disappearance of Tibet has resulted in the expansion of China almost up to our (Indian) gates." Another Indian leader, B. R. Ambedkar, said, "By letting China take control over Lhasa, the Prime Minister has, in a way, helped the Chinese to bring their armies on the Indian borders."⁴ Prime Minister Nehru's other political associates such as Jay Prakash Narayan also disagreed with him for his soft approach towards China on Tibet. India seemed to have decided in favour of the British formula of accepting 'Tibetan autonomy under

¹ Mehrotra, L. L. (2000), *India's Tibet Policy: An Appraisal and Options*, New Delhi: Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, p. 11.

² Muni, S.D. (2009), "The Tibetan 'Uprising' 2008: India's response", *Institute of south Asian studies*, No.59, p.2.

³ Mehrotra, L. L. (2000), op. cit.1.

⁴ Ibid., p.39.

Chinese suzerainty.’ This formed the basis of the Panchsheel Agreement between China and India in April 1954. As a part of this agreement, India withdrew its ‘military escorts stationed at Yatung and Gyantse in the Tibet region of China. Other Indian facilities in Tibet such as the post, telegraph and public telephone services were also handed over to China. Indian trade agencies and facilities for the pilgrimage continued to operate in Tibet but they came under strict Chinese control.⁵

India was in a difficult situation in its relation with Pakistan at that time and the Kashmir question were becoming complicated and serious. Any confrontation with China would have forced India to depend on the West in the then defining Cold War and, consequently, make compromises with Pakistan on Kashmir. These considerations continued to also impinge on India’s Tibet policy in 1959 when the Chinese violated all their assurances to India and Tibet on the latter’s autonomy and cultural freedom. Tibet had been heating up with the Khampas revolt against China since 1956. This revolt was clandestinely backed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States.

By 1958, there were growing Tibetan activists joining the Khampas revolt. However, India assured China that the Tibetan emigrants’ anti-China activities would not be tolerated on the Indian territory.⁶ As violence increased in Tibet, Prime Minister Nehru disallowed the entry of Tibetan refugees into India. However, on humanitarian grounds, India offered medical assistance to the sick and the wounded on the border. India, however, treated the Dalai Lama differently and agreed to give him asylum when he crossed the India borders on 31 March 1959. India China relations deteriorated after the giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and his followers which led to the 1962 war between them.

With the deterioration of the Sino-Indian Relations after the War, the Indian government radically revised its stance on Tibet. It supported the Tibetan cause in the 1960s both openly and clandestinely, in 1963 the Special Frontier Code named 22,

⁵ Muni, S.D. (2009), “The Tibetan ‘Uprising’ 2008: India’s response”, *Institute of south Asian studies*, No.59, p.3.

⁶ Gopal, Sarvepalli (1984), *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol. III: 1956-1964, Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 81.

was established to train able-bodied young Tibetan refugees⁷, in 1965 the Indian delegate openly supported the UN resolution on Tibet for the first time since 1950, and in the same year Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was expected to recognize the Tibetan government in exile, but he died suddenly and the Indian Politics took another twist of its own. The Pro-Tibetan stance continued until the Bangladesh War Liberation in 1970-71. This turn of events compelled New Delhi to forestall any possibility of Chinese intervention either along the Himalayan border or in the Bangladesh war itself by sending reassuring messages to China. India had no more handy instrument to sacrifice before Beijing than the Tibetan Card.

Tibet was becoming strategic suitability for nuclear experimenting and testing to the Chinese. China's first attempt at nuclear research was made in 1958 at Amdo (Haibei) on the Tibetan Plateau and armed in 1971 when Beijing perceived a serious threat from the Soviet Union and India. By the early 1970s China had brought South Asia and the former Soviet Union within their effective nuclear range and reach. The fact that the Maoist strategists had chosen Amdo and Kham (near the Sino-Tibetan border) for their nuclear sites might have other implications and motives, besides geographical suitability and nuclear safety. By this mighty nuclear act, they might have cemented and concretized their claims over inner Tibet.

The 'nuclearization' of Tibet and South Asia is sure to increase tensions along the Sino-Indian border. What makes the nuclear arms race in Asia so dangerous is the sheer proximity of the Chinese and the Indian nuclear sites. When nuclear weapons were placed in the former Soviet Union and the USA, geographically long distance from each other, it had a different implication, as compared to when they were placed in Cuba. At present the Chinese nuclear sites in Tibet are roughly 2000 kms from New Delhi. And if India decides to deploy its nuclear weapons along the Himalayan Border, there appears a serious face to face situation. This will allow no peace of mind to either the Chinese or the Indian or the Tibetans.

When the question rises about the Tibetan refugees in India it seems uncomfortable for those Indian citizens who are living in the area of Tibetans majority

⁷ Singh, Gunjan (2008), "Can Tibet Play the Role of a Buffer State Again?", *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*, 8(1), p.27.

population. The assessment that the presence of the Dalai Lama and his people in India would be a provisional arrangement remains unfounded. After over five decades, the activities of Tibetan refugees have become intertwined with India's domestic as well as external concerns. Their prolonged stay and the spiritual influence of the Dalai Lama has made the Tibetan refugees well entrenched in the Indian system. The track record of Tibetan refugees suggests that they have not only taken full advantage of India's lenient approach but have also been indulging in various unlawful activities, which, if not controlled, are fraught with dangerous consequences for India's security.

Roughly around 120,000 Tibetan refugees entered India along with the Dalai Lama in 1959. Additionally, 3,500 Tibetans on average have been entering India annually since then.⁸ They are theoretically subject to rules and regulations applicable to foreign nationals, i.e.: the registration of foreigners act, 1939; foreigners act, 1946; passport (entry into India) act, 1920; etc. Tibetan refugees enter India illegally through Nepal with the connivance of the Tibetan refugee centre (TRC) and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Kathmandu. Nepal has always acknowledged its right against illegal entry, but the UNHCR called for regulations to allow entering India via Nepal has risen significantly. Despite the introduction of Special Entry Permits (SEPs), Tibetans tend to contravene the guidelines introduced by India.

Tibetan refugees are known in India for their indulgence in scandalous illegal activities. In the guise of religious activities they are involved in trans-border smuggling, money laundering, and the smuggling of wildlife products, rare artefacts, antiques, etc. in 2005, Meneka Gandhi's remark "throw all Tibetans out of India, each one of them is a poacher"⁹ highlighted the menace of the Tibetan refugees involvement.

Yet another aspect is the colossal commercial interests and enterprises built up by the Tibetan refugees, much of it without government clearance. Many of them

⁸ Kharat, Rajesh S. (2003), *Tibetan Refugees in India*, Delhi: Kaveri Books.

⁹ Gandhi, Meneka (2005), "Indian Tiger Skins Flooding Tibet Black-Market", *Indian Express*, New Delhi, 7 September 2005.

have produced tribal certificates, gained government contract works, as well as employment in government services. Tibetans have built vast infrastructures all over India. Tibetan refugees enjoy a dominating presence in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir by acquiring tribal land through benami (fraud) transaction. There is an element of outside support that Tibetan refugees receive from the vast sources of international links, mostly from the US and the Western support groups.¹⁰

Apparently, most of these transactions take place violating the foreign exchange regulations. Such funding also carries the potential of misuse as they are sought for the purpose of developing Himalayan environment, people and culture. To pursue their goal, Tibetans have intensified their activities since the 1980s in the Indian Himalayan belt, which are a compact geo-cultural region and a safe haven. Privately, Tibetans claim a list of territories extending from Bhutan to Ladakh as their area of influence. There is also the factor of the Tibetan resistance movement having religious rather than political overtones. This leads to the theory of Tibetan refugees achieving the objective without necessarily getting independence while creating a tibetland in India.

Several studies have revealed eruptions of ethnic tensions in the Indian Himalayas between the local inhabitants and the Tibetan refugees. The Tibetan refugees' instability is more in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka. In Himachal Pradesh it often became a law and order problem. Mcleodganj area of this state is totally dominated by the Tibetans. There is always some cases occurred of clashes between Tibetans and the local residents of the Himachal Pradesh.

The Tibet issue and Tibetan refugees in India could become highly explosive in the medium and long term and has the potential to become a major source of long-term contention between India and China. The activities of Tibetan refugees in India generally remain imperceptible. They are mostly unguided and risk dangerous consequences for India's security. India needs to create a Tibet cell to coordinate

¹⁰ Stobdan, P. (2009), "Tibet and the Security of the Himalayan Belt", in K. Warikoo (ed.) *Himalayan Frontiers of India: Historical, Geo-Political and Strategic Perspectives*, New York: Routledge Contemporary South Asia, p.112.

policy matters with a long-term perspective. The US and others have appointed a coordinator on Tibetan affairs, not as a mark of support to the Tibetans, but to deal with the complexities of the issue, which at times are beyond their comprehension with fallout difficult to predict. The Tibet cell should be tasked to monitor holistic developments pertaining to Tibet and Tibetans in India and to provide inputs on what needs to be done from time to time.

Given the nuclear capability of both the India and China it is irrelevance in the present context to raise the issue of creating Tibet again as a buffer state between them. The nuclearization of the world has made the idea of a buffer zone obsolete and inapplicable.

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