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**EVENTS LEADING
TO THE SINO-INDIAN
CONFLICT OF 1962**

SUNIL KHATRI

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EVENTS LEADING TO THE SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT OF 1962

SUNIL KHATRI



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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PREFACE

It was in March 2015 that the author set out to search for evidence for the Dalai Lama's older brother, Gyalo Thondup's assertion made in his autobiography, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet* (2015) in which he has written that the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 was one of the outcomes of the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) covert operation in Tibet, which commenced in 1956. The fact that very little has been written about that operation made the task of searching for evidence somewhat challenging. Apart from Thondup's account, two other accounts¹ written by persons directly associated with the covert operation in which that operation is covered in some detail are available. For some reason, this operation has not received the sort of attention that it deserved. One reason for this could be that very little material pertaining to the operation has been declassified, despite intentions to the contrary. Accordingly, not much is known about it. Alongside, the initial phase of the Cold War in which the operation was set is a difficult period for researchers, especially those seeking a balanced perspective.

The CIA's covert operation in Tibet occurred during a period in which the Cold War appeared to be waxing. Beginning with disturbances in Poland and Hungary in 1956, it reached a crescendo in 1962 with the Cuban missile crisis. It was during this period that, after having had bitter quarrels with its ally the Soviet Union, the PRC was seen to be moving over to the American-led Western bloc, having already burnt its boats with India and, consequently, non-alignment. In the alignments that emerged after the end of World War II, the Western bloc could somehow not find a suitable role for India which was in keeping with its aspirations. As a result, in spite of strong historical ties, Western concerns and interests often appeared to be clashing with those of India and vice versa. Naturally, these clashes led to an estranged relationship between the two, resulting in India's proximity with the Soviet Union, whose policies and actions, in comparison, appeared

more friendly and benign. This study attempts to examine this estranged relationship, and how it limited the degrees of freedom available to India in formulating its policies, especially in respect of Tibet and the PRC. It appears that this estranged relationship was carried over to the covert operation in Tibet.

The CIA, either on account of Thondup's assertion or otherwise, most probably the former, through an ex-functionary, Bruce Reidel's book, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War* (2015), has made a quiet admission to the effect that the 'covert operation played a role in Mao's decision to invade India'. However, in an attempt to water down this admission, the Sino-Indian conflict has been portrayed as an 'unanticipated consequence' of that operation. Reidel is shy in providing citations for his qualified admission. He even chooses to make an indirect reference to some of the CIA's declassified documents on the Sino-Indian conflict (referred to in this monograph) through citation of Anuj Dhar's book, *CIA's Eye on South Asia* (2009), which purports to summarise these declassified documents.

Reverting to Thondup's assertion, it has become possible to extend and connect the dots. What emerges is that his assertion appears to be true and correct. Although, there is no direct evidence to establish his assertion, there is sufficient circumstantial evidence available to nail the Americans for providing at least a catalytic agent in the form of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet to sow seeds of discord between India and the PRC that would cause a rupture in Sino-Indian relations, culminating in the 33-day armed conflict of 1962. The case against the Americans also draws strength from the intent of the covert operation which is clearly spelt out in their National Security directives of 1954-1955, referred to in Chapter I of this monograph. As it has been described by the Dalai Lama, the covert operation was a 'cold war tactic' to weaken International Communism.

While this monograph attempts to establish Thondup's assertion, it also looks at the three different interpretations that have emerged so far, for lack of a better description, by the three schools that attempt to offer an explanation for the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict. These schools emerged at a time when very little was known about the aims and purpose of the covert operation. Moreover, the Cold War

was then still in full swing. Unlike the Great Game, the Cold War was not fought according to rules prescribed by gentlemen, and for gentlemen. This war was fought according to Doolittle's rules in which the means employed became irrelevant. Naturally, scholarship on the subject during the period was affected by what may be described as 'the imperatives of the Cold War'. From the clear dogmatic self-serving historical perspectives provided by Mao et al. to explain the events leading to the Sino-Indian conflict which, surprisingly, the Chinese still appear to be clinging to, there appeared, at the Indian end, what some have described as outbursts of Chinese betrayal to account for the events.

What emerges in this monograph is that the CIA is the originator of the Forward Policy school, which was to be taken to new heights by a one-time journalist Neville Maxwell in his popular account on the subject, *India's China War* (1970). Maxwell was to remain a one-book wonder. What also emerges is that a few Indian military personnel who believed they had an axe to grind, or felt that they owed an explanation (to their country?), have chosen to take refuge under the shade provided by the protagonists of this school. This monograph attempts to show why the explanations provided by all three schools are baseless, and fail scrutiny in the light of the facts that have now emerged in respect of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet.

Notwithstanding what has been stated in this Preface, the findings arrived at in this monograph could be treated as being in the nature of a preliminary expression of opinion. By extending and joining the dots what at least definitely emerges is a skeletal structure of an explanation. For this skeletal structure to take final form, some muscle et al. needs to be added. Hopefully, the CIA and other organs of the US government should soon lift the covers off the covert operation in Tibet. Indian researchers need to focus much more deeply on the initial period of the Cold War, and how it impacted the country and its responses. Otherwise, what will be available (to Indians and others as well) is how the West would like it to be viewed. In other words, the study contained in this monograph may need to be taken further.

The author would welcome comments on the monograph at sunel.khatri@gmail.com.

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Although the list of works may sound restrictive, it appears to be so. The two works are: Roger E. McCarthy, *Tears of the Lotus*, Jefferson NC: McFarland and Co., 1997; and John Kenneth Knaus, *Orphans of the Cold War*, New York: Public Affairs, 1999. Although (Prof.) Harry Rositzke handled the political and media management components of the covert operation during the crucial years as the CIA's New Delhi station head, he has chosen not to open up about it in his book, *The CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage and Covert Action*, New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1977. Neither has the Dalai Lama's oldest brother, the late Thubten Jigme Norbu, also closely associated with the covert operation, been forthcoming in his book, *Tibet is My Country*, London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1960. Then, there are accounts of the Tibetan resistance fighters, which are highly restrictive both in their scope and coverage. One such well known account is by Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, *Four Rivers, Six Ranges*, Dharamsala: Information and Publicity Office of the Dalai Lama, 1973.

INTRODUCTION

No decisive work has been published so far that has been able to establish beyond reasonable doubt the events that led to a complete rupture in Sino-Indian relations, which culminated in a 33-day border conflict between 20 October and 21 November 1962. Attempts made in this regard during the past 50 years or so have not been in a position to address the issue in its entirety. There seem to be five main reasons for this. First, the real and true intent of the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) covert operation in Tibet, along with the impact the operation had on Sino-Indian relations, has never really been explored. Second, a holistic view that fully captures the impact of certain major international developments of the period on Sino-Indian relations has not yet been taken. These developments include the US-British 'broadening the scope of the Kashmir issue' in the UN Security Council (1948 onwards), the US arming of Pakistan and the region (1954 onwards), the Sino-Soviet rift and the wooing of the PRC by the West (1956 onwards) and the Cuban missile crisis (1962). Third, some vital official records have been declassified—with redactions and without—in India and the USA only recently—that is, during the past decade and a half or so. Consequently, these records could not have been available to the authors of previous works on the subject. Fourth, authentic Chinese contemporary official records have always been hard to come by. Although, in recent years, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has made a beginning in placing a few records of the period in the public domain, these are scanty when compared to what India and the USA (both democracies) have revealed so far.¹ It is not known to what extent the PRC would be willing to further declassify official records of the period in the future. Fifth, the Cold War too appears to have taken a heavy toll on objectivity as is seen from some works, which seem to have compelled their authors to adopt one stand or another, in keeping with the compulsions of a trying and difficult period. In a few extreme cases, some authors appear to have shown no diffidence at all in imparting a brazen and overt spin to their works to suit their predetermined aims and purposes.

This monograph attempts to take into account available pertinent records/material for making a comprehensive and objective assessment of the matter. More specifically, it attempts to make use of available material to examine the purpose and outcomes of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet from 1956 onwards. The narrative presented in the monograph does not limit its sweep to the covert operation alone. It also attempts to place and view that operation in the context of international developments of the period, and their impact on events that fanned armed resistance in Tibet against the PRC's rule which led to adverse ramifications, especially on Sino-Indian relations and non-alignment.

In addition, the monograph attempts to challenge the existing thinking on the subject, especially the current explanations being offered for the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict. The three different schools that have emerged over the past five decades have their protagonists and critics, depending on which side of the fence they are. The narratives these schools provide have often been criticized for incomplete and selective use of available facts and material, and thus do not qualify as being either complete or spin-free. Accordingly, none of these schools have been in a position to provide a plausible narrative of events that is acceptable to the majority. This monograph attempts to provide a plausible explanation for the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict, which is expected to be acceptable to the majority and, at least, to scholars and policy makers in India, the PRC, and the USA. Importantly, major actors have been made to do the speaking in the narrative, as far as possible in extenso, wherever their statements are available, in order to minimize the risk of misrepresentation. It is hoped that these will lend greater credibility to the contents of this monograph—subject, of course, to limitations imposed by space.

It is both desirable and necessary for a number of reasons to identify the facts and circumstances which establish the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. First, such a study would contribute to presenting an objective account of a very crucial six-year period (1956–62) in the histories of, at least, India and the PRC (and Tibet)—the countries that were directly involved in the conflict. This period had a visible and lasting impact not only on the political trajectory of these countries but also, in a wider context, on Cold War politics and the

resulting realignments that emerged, all of which were to have far reaching consequences for the international community. Second, for any ‘comprehensive, fair and reasonable settlement’ to emerge on the boundary question, it is imperative that an objective assessment of the events that led to the conflict is available, as it could possibly have a bearing on the eventual resolution of the boundary question. Third, it would help put Cold War politics of the period in the region in perspective, and show how they impacted the affected countries. Fourth, the Americans (and others as well) need to know about the inconceivable and brutal acts of commission and omission their country has inflicted on other unsuspecting people just because, in their assessment, these acts would contribute a bit more to their ‘prestige, prosperity and security’. Fifth and finally, there are several important (implicit) lessons in this monograph for the Indian establishment regarding governance, which they ought not to ignore.²

This monograph started off with the intention that it would take the form of a preliminary expression of opinion. Its writing became possible mainly on account of sizeable chunks of information (pertaining to the period covered by the CIA’s covert operation in Tibet), which had hitherto remained classified, being placed in the public domain. Some authors connected with the covert operation or with the CIA have included bits and pieces here and there in their writings which, along with the declassified information, have come in useful. Alongside, with the publication of the confessional autobiographical account of the controversial Gyalo Thondup (one of the Dalai Lama’s older brothers), some of the fog surrounding events of that period seems to have lifted. Thondup may like to open up a bit more on his association with the Americans, the CIA’s covert operation in Tibet, and on his links with Indian intelligence during that period. Further, there is very little clarity on the role of the mainstream Indian press, some political parties, parliamentarians, and civil servants in stoking Sino-Indian differences and whether this was just an effect of a democratic process at play, or it was in any way connected with the CIA’s covert operation. While gaps in information do still remain, it has become possible to extend the dots and connect them in a fairly satisfactory manner. This is so despite the CIA reneging on promises made by three consecutive directors—Robert Gates, R. James Woolsey, and John Deutch—to declassify records pertaining to the covert

operation in Tibet.³ Even then, there are some grey areas still remaining which this monograph has attempted to identify but could not address for want of credible sources and related reasons. It is hoped that future scholarship will provide answers to at least some of these areas, if not to all.

What has, however, become clear is that CIA's covert operation in Tibet was designed to bring about a discord by misleading the PRC into believing that the Indians too were involved in that operation. The PRC interpreted this as an attempt to undermine its rule in Tibet, through the creation of a 'buffer-zone.' It came to believe all this despite repeated assurances given by the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai to the contrary. This naturally caused a rupture in Sino-Indian relations, one major casualty of which was non-alignment. As a result, bi-polarity was restored in world affairs, which the Americans believed was to their advantage in fighting the Cold War against the Soviet Union. It has also become clear that it was the American assurance of neutrality (end June 1962) in the event of a Sino-Indian conflict that made the PRC feel secure, and paved the way for it to start making preparations for an attack on India. Alongside, it was the Soviet Union's offer of mid-October 1962 (made during the height of the Cuban missile crisis) of restitution of the Sino-Soviet alliance as well as dropping of the pro-India tilt that eventually removed the last obstacle in the way of the PRC's attack on India. The success of the CIA's operation can be measured by the fact that Sino-Indian relations have continued to remain strained during the past 60 years or so.

This monograph is divided into 1+11+1 chapters, with each chapter being more or less complete in itself. These chapters are, however, interrelated and thus form one composite whole, covering the six-year period between 1956 and 1962. Some events that occurred somewhat earlier than 1956 or even after 1962, which have a direct bearing on the events of the period under examination, have also been included. The word 'events' in the title covers both underlying causes as well as contributory factors. The selection of the word 'events' was partly influenced by a saying in Chinese which Chou had shared with Nehru: 'a good horse can be seen only from the distance that it covers and the heart of a person is seen only by events.'⁴

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the earlier Wade-Giles system of transcription has been adopted in preference to the later Pinyin for writing the names of contemporary Chinese personalities of the period covered in this monograph. However, allusions to Chinese authors of a later period are in Pinyin, in keeping with the PRC's officially advised practice. For place names, the Chinese Postal Map system of Romanisation has been used.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ R.S. Kalha, *India-China Boundary Issues: Quest for Settlement*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press for the Indian Council of World Affairs, 2014, p. x.
- ² There still appears to be much wisdom in what Nehru had once ironically observed, 'People in England and America are very courteous to us and friendly but, in the final analysis, they treat India as a country to be humoured but not as an equal.' Nehru to Vijayalakshmi Pandit on 2 December 1955, as quoted in Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Vol. 2 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), consulted reprint edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 252. For instance, despite expectations to the contrary in some quarters, India did not find a mention as a 'global strategic and defence partner' in the National Defence Authorisation Bill 2017, passed by the US Senate on 15 June 2016. See report filed by Chidanand Rajghatta in the *Times of India*, New Delhi, 17 June 2016.
- ³ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, p. 518. The promise has been made repeatedly to declassify records in respect of nine major CIA covert operations, including the one in Tibet. While records in respect of the operation in Iran in 1953 have been leaked, those pertaining to the other eight remain under official seal.
- ⁴ Nehru-Chou Talks VII in New Delhi on 25 April 1960, in Madhavan K. Palit (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2015, p. 160.

NON-ALIGNMENT: AN INDIAN RESPONSE TO THE COLD WAR

REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S NON-EXERTION OF AUTHORITY OVER TIBET (1912-1949)

To all intents and purposes, Tibet was deemed to have become independent when the Manchu Resident and the remnants of his military escort left its soil in January 1913—that is, after the overthrow/abdication of the Manchu. From this period onwards, between 1912 and 1949, there was only assertion but never exertion of the Republic of China's (ROC's) authority.¹ The People's Republic of China's (PRC's) claim to Tibet rested on inherited ROC's maps of China, which showed Tibet as a part of it. However, Jawaharlal Nehru realized that, 'whatever jurists might say about the legal status of Tibet, the issue was one of power politics.'² In October 1950, after a period of over 38 years of Tibetan independence—de facto or otherwise—the PRC marched into Tibet for its 'peaceful liberation' on the back of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Soon, thereafter, in May 1951, the Tibetans were made to sign away their independence through the Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (17 Point Agreement).³ Consequently, Tibet found itself incorporated in the PRC, having earlier been assigned one small gold (yellow) star on its red flag.

DISCONTINUATION OF BRITISH INDIA'S POLICIES TOWARDS TIBET AFTER 1947

While the PRC was altering Tibet's status through the force of arms, newly independent India did not find itself having sufficient elbowroom to continue with British India's policy of supporting an autonomous Tibet within the context of nominal Chinese suzerainty, or even a de facto independent Tibet.⁴ First, at Independence in 1947, the country witnessed a bifurcation of the British Indian Army of 0.5 million⁵ men being divided between India and the two Pakistans. Second, the

Kashmir issue,⁶ in which India found itself embroiled with Pakistan within just a couple of months after attaining independence, was to leave it with very little room for manoeuvrability. As the bulk of the Indian Army of around 0.28 million was engaged against Pakistan, it left the over 2,000-mile-long Sino-Indian frontier to be manned by posts set up either by the Indian Intelligence Bureau⁷ or the paramilitary organization, the Assam Rifles. As border defence, they were to be mere pins on the map.⁸ Further, from 1954 onwards, the Indian Army was subjected to a downsizing that resulted in a reduction of 50,000 men, ostensibly for diversion of funds (so saved) for economic development, with plans to effect a further reduction of 50,000 men.⁹ Third, in contrast, the PRC had an army estimated at 2.3 million¹⁰ men that had the singular distinction of being trained and equipped concurrently by the Americans (with hardware produced up to 1945–46)¹¹ as well as by the Soviets (up to the mid-1960).¹²

PANCHSHEEL: THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF CO-EXISTENCE

It has been suggested that perhaps in reaction¹³ to the proposed American-Pakistani military pacts,¹⁴ India found itself being cornered, and was impelled to enter into a somewhat asymmetrical agreement with the PRC in April 1954 on ‘Trade and Intercourse between India and the Tibet Region of China,’ also known as the Panchsheel Agreement. As a result of this Agreement, India renounced its British India inherited extraterritorial rights in Tibet, and recognized the ‘Tibet region of China’ as a part of the PRC. This was in negation of the principle of reciprocity, since it did not include the PRC’s corresponding recognition of India’s sovereignty over Kashmir, or even without obtaining an understanding on the India-Tibet boundary.¹⁵ Apparently, in Nehru’s calculations, obtaining the PRC’s goodwill was equally important for strengthening non-alignment,¹⁶ as the region at that time was being threatened with the emergence of new American-led western military blocs. As is known, in September 1953, the Americans initiated discussions with Pakistan—its ‘strong loyal point’—to provide military assistance under the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement, ostensibly within the context of the defence of the Middle East. After learning of the American intention to provide Pakistan with military assistance, Nehru wrote to the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mahomed Ali (November 1953) the following.

If such an (US-Pak military) alliance takes place, Pakistan enters definitely into the region of cold war. That means to us that the cold war has come to the very frontiers of India...This is a matter of serious consequence to us, who have been trying to build an area of peace where there would be no war...All our problems will have to be seen in a new light.¹⁷

The US-Pak Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement was signed in May 1954. This was followed by the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

SEATO: A US RESPONSE TO INDIA'S ROLE IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

Nehru believed that because India had played a prominent role from the side lines of the Geneva Conference (April-May 1954) in arriving at an agreement on Laos and Cambodia which appeared to offer a less confrontational approach than what had been advocated by the USA—America's angry response to the Indian peace initiative was to come in the form of SEATO. Nehru believed that SEATO had been created more to trouble India than for the encirclement of the PRC. In this regard, during the Nehru-Mao talks in Peking on 19 October 1954, Nehru confided in Mao Tse-tung, Chairman, Communist Party of China, that 'SEATO was (an) American reaction against the Geneva Conference. The Americans did not like the settlement arrived at in Geneva and wanted to show that their views still counted and that their strength and influence in Asia had not become less.'¹⁸

In September 1954, Pakistan was made a member of SEATO even though it did not belong to the South East Asian region. Selwyn Lloyd (British Foreign Secretary during the Nehru-Lloyd talks in New Delhi in early March 1956) was candid enough in admitting that, 'they (UK) were practically driven into it (SEATO) by the USA and a chain of circumstances, and they went there with the object of toning it down...'¹⁹ A few days later, during the Nehru-Dulles talks in New Delhi, the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles conceded that 'Pakistan really should have no place in SEATO, geographically or otherwise.'²⁰ Unlike NATO, SEATO maintained no military forces of its own, had only a

few formal functions, and no unified command and control for deploying the military forces of member states.²¹ SEATO, which included only two Southeast Asian member states and Pakistan, comes across as a subterfuge for arming some countries at the expense of others.

CENTO: A US RESPONSE TO BAIL OUT BRITAIN

The Baghdad Pact, later renamed CENTO and which followed SEATO in 1955, was a similar cover for providing advanced weapon systems to countries like Pakistan. The Historian, US Department of State, has conceded that ‘CENTO never actually provided its members with a means for guaranteeing collective defence...CENTO never created a permanent military command structure (like NATO’s) but United States provided assistance to its allies in the region...it had become clear...that the organization was a better conduit for (arms supplies) than it was a military alliance.’²² Finding himself placed in a tight spot on CENTO during the aforesaid Nehru-Dulles talks, Dulles was compelled to admit that

‘...he (Dulles) did not like the idea of the Baghdad Pact at all and, in fact, had advised the UK Government against any such moves. He (Dulles) drew a very dark picture of the difficulties facing the UK Government. The UK depended for its very life on the oil resources, foreign exchange, and many other matters of the Near East. If they were deprived of this, their whole structure would collapse and they would become a second rate or third rate power. The Prime Minister of the UK was, therefore, begging the USA to come to their help and support the Baghdad Pact fully and, thus, possibly retrieve this position somewhat...in the final analysis they (US) could not allow the UK to go to pieces...’²³

During the Nehru-Dulles talks later that year in Washington, Dulles reaffirmed what he had already said about CENTO nine months earlier in New Delhi: ‘that it was the British Government that had pushed this (CENTO) in spite of their (US) advice.’²⁴ In a remark reflecting sheer insensitivity, Dulles oddly mentioned to Nehru ‘that he had no idea that there was so much fear in India about the arming of Pakistan.’²⁵

CONSEQUENCES OF THE US ARMING OF PAKISTAN

The effect of arming of Pakistan, along with ‘broadening the scope’ of the Kashmir dispute in the Security Council was that it would neutralize India’s pre-eminent military position in the Subcontinent. By helping Pakistan attain theatre parity²⁶ and more through supply of sophisticated weapons, Nehru believed that, ‘[t]he United States imagine that by this (arming Pakistan) policy, they have completely outflanked India’s so-called neutralism, and will thus bring India to her knees.’²⁷ Nehru added ‘...these pacts did militarily little good and politically came in the way of creating peaceful atmosphere in the world.’²⁸

Another immediate consequence of arming Pakistan was to end any hope of a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue.²⁹ In this connection, during his visit to the PRC in October 1954, Nehru informed Chou,

I have been always willing to talk things over with Pakistan Premier and the last time we met, we came to a preliminary agreement but then Pakistan accepted American military aid and things became different.³⁰

A year and a half later—at the time of the Nehru-Dulles talks at New Delhi during March 1956—Nehru expressed his anguish on the impact of the US arming Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

...we were continuing these attempts when the question of military aid to Pakistan came in. That (US military assistance) changed the situation completely and encouraged Pakistan to become more and more aggressive and intransigent.³¹

The very next day, Nehru shared similar feelings regarding US military assistance to Pakistan with the visiting French Foreign Minister, Paul Francis Pineau.

...US military assistance was dangerous and made difficult the solution of outstanding problems...had it not been for promises of such military aid, which encouraged the belligerent attitude of Pakistan, the Kashmir issue would have been solved long ago.³²

Nehru even expressed his feelings in the matter to Josip Broz Tito, President of Yugoslavia, when he wrote:

'Ever since the American military aid has come there (Pakistan) in large quantities, the attitude of Pakistan has become more and more aggressive...'³³

The entire matter took a blatantly ugly turn during the SEATO Council meeting in Karachi (8 March 1956) when, among other matters, the foreign ministers of member countries chose to discuss Kashmir, thereby clearly signalling that SEATO's influence extended beyond the region for which it had been established.³⁴ Nehru's feelings on the issue can be summed up in a message which he had drafted the very next day (after the Conference) for the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden.

The decisions of the SEATO's Conference at Karachi, and more particularly, their reference to Kashmir, indicate an attitude to India which verges on hostility and which is likely to lead to the gravest consequences. They have confirmed all our apprehensions about SEATO and like military alliances, which, far from bringing security, are disruptive factors, leading to conflict. In particular, India is now threatened on both sides (west and east) by these alliances (CENTO and SEATO) which, though said to be defensive in character, have an obvious aggressive implication to India... It has become even more clear to us that these military alliances in South East Asia and the Middle East are harmful to the cause of peace, and are particularly dangerous to India.³⁵

Nehru was drawn to and was, in a manner of speaking, compelled by circumstances to become an exponent of non-alignment in foreign affairs, believing that India's interest would be served best if it were not to side with either power bloc which the world then seemed divided in. Panchsheel, or the Five Principles for Peaceful Coexistence³⁶ among Nations (as enumerated in the preamble to the Sino-Indian Agreement 1954 referred to above) were envisaged as the pillars on which non-alignment was to be built. However, from the very beginning, the Americans came to regard non-alignment as immoral, and an affront to their administration.³⁷ Consequently, Nehru appeared unyielding to them.

DOOLITTLE'S RULES AND CIA'S COVERT OPERATIONS

With the commencement of the Cold War, the Americans began to sharpen their covert operations capability.³⁸ Between 1949 and 1952 alone, the CIA grew some twenty-fold³⁹ in manpower and budgetary support. The National Security Council (NSC) directives 5412, 5412/1 & 5412/2⁴⁰ of 1954–1955 on Covert Operations were to identify the CIA as the chief instrument on behalf of the USA to wage the Cold War against the Soviet Union and its allies. The aim was to create and exploit troublesome problems for International Communism, impair relations between the USSR and Communist China, and between them and their satellites.⁴¹

Alongside, the Doolittle Committee urged America to 'reconsider' its commitment to 'fair play,' and accept that,

There are no rules in such a game. Hitherto acceptable norms of human conduct do not apply... long-standing American concepts of 'fair play' must be reconsidered. We... must learn to subvert, sabotage and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated and more effective methods than those used against us.⁴²

THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE AND THE 'KASHMIR PRINCESS' INCIDENT

In April 1955, the CIA was to get a chance to use its no-holds-barred covert operation capability against India and the PRC when twenty-five Afro-Asian countries, most of them newly independent, were invited to meet in Bandung, Indonesia, for the first Afro-Asian Conference. An Air India airplane—an L-749A Constellation named the 'Kashmir Princess'—was chartered to bring Chou En-lai to Indonesia. However, Chou changed his plans at the last minute.⁴³ The 'Kashmir Princess' crashed en route due to an explosion on board caused by a time bomb. The day after the crash, the PRC's Foreign Ministry issued a statement describing the bombing as 'a murder by the Special Service Organizations of the United States and KMT.'⁴⁴ Later, an Indonesian Board of Inquiry announced that a time bomb with an American made MK-7 detonator⁴⁵ had been responsible for the crash. In his inimitable style, Nehru described the incident to Lady

Mountbatten in a lighter vein when he wrote that Chou was a ‘star performer’ who, ‘after his death defying entrance... stole the show.’⁴⁶

USA AND THE PROSPECT OF THE EMERGENCE OF A NON-ALIGNED-SOVIET AXIS

Nehru was to witness his reputation soaring high. His biographer S. Gopal has noted, ‘Never had India’s—and Nehru’s—reputation stood higher in the world.’⁴⁷ By the beginning of 1956, post-Bandung, Nehru had approached the ‘zenith of his world influence’,⁴⁸ and was to be considered a colossus astride the world stage.⁴⁹ Churchill referred to him as the ‘Light of Asia’.⁵⁰ Alongside, India was emerging as a global player. The Americans were beginning to get concerned that India had moved away from them, and was more inclined to entertain views that were not necessarily in alignment with theirs.⁵¹ They were convinced that Nehru was dangerously naïve, and had entered into a Faustian bargain with the Soviet ‘Mephistopheles’.⁵² Accordingly, they believed that non-alignment was more favourable to the Soviet Union.⁵³ The prospect of a communist-non-aligned axis gaining momentum, and progressing to marginalize the West and America’s post-war achievements cast a chill over them.⁵⁴ They were to strike back hard.

Dulles was to initiate the Game in New Delhi during a meeting with Nehru in March 1956. Towards the end of the meeting, he had Nehru sitting on the back of the sofa with his (Nehru’s) feet on the seat.⁵⁵ What exactly transpired between the two during this encounter that would send Nehru to his higher perch is not exactly known.⁵⁶ This, and subsequent talks with the US President, Dwight Eisenhower in Washington (later that year) appear to have disarmed Nehru. He was led to believe that the Americans had eventually accepted non-alignment as a legitimate third pole in global affairs. Nehru was even to believe that, through their National Security Council (NSC) directive 5701⁵⁷ of January 1957, the Americans had recognized both India and the PRC as the two leading political contenders in Asia. Taking the American word at its face value was Nehru’s big folly, as a consequence of which he perhaps began to lower his guard. However, the American establishment’s view can be summed up in Vice President Nixon’s contradictory words spoken a few months earlier: the ‘US had no

sympathy for the kind of neutralism which draws no moral distinction between the Communist world and the free world.²⁵⁸

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ In its Report to its Secretary General, the Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet of the International Commission of Jurists had concluded 'that Tibet was at the very least a de facto independent State when the Agreement on Peaceful Measures in Tibet was signed in 1951, and the repudiation of this agreement by the Tibetan Government in 1959 was found to be fully justified.' See A Report to the International Commission of Jurists by its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1960, p. 5.
- ² John Kenneth Knaus, *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival*, New York: Public Affairs, 1999, p. 175. Known for his cerebral prowess, Knaus took over from Roger McCarthy in 1961 as head of the Tibetan Task Force, which was housed in the Far East Division of the Directorate of Plans in the CIA, when armed resistance within Tibet had virtually died down. This could be reflective of the change in CIA's priorities from armed resistance in Tibet to political action in India and concerned countries (see Chapter V of this monograph).
- ³ Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Tibet: The Calm before the Storm, 1951–1955*, Vol. 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, pp. 542, 562. The PRC's aim was to establish a legal framework through the 17-Point Agreement for incorporating Tibet in the PRC. They brought out a pre-prepared agreement of their own, and made the Tibetans to sign it. Accordingly, through this agreement, the Tibetans were made to accept the PRC's sovereignty over Tibet. The agreement mentioned, among other things, that the position and authority of the Dalai Lama would remain the same; there would be no interference in the citizen's right to practice their religion; there would be no interference in Tibetan culture; and so on. In brief, the PRC guaranteed the Tibetans that their 'way of life' would not be tampered/interfered with. In spite of the agreement, PLA troops started pouring into Tibet in large numbers.
- ⁴ Kalha, pp. 21 & 252 (26/n). In 1943, Britain explained the legal status of Tibet to the US as follows: The Government of (British) India has always held that Tibet is a separate country in full enjoyment of local autonomy, entitled to exchange diplomatic representatives with other powers. The relationship between China and Tibet is not a matter which can be unilaterally decided by China, but one on which Tibet is entitled to negotiate, and on which she can, if necessary, count on the diplomatic support of the British Government...

Some 65 years later, the British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, in what has been made to appear as a suo moto Written Ministerial Statement issued

in October 2008 recognizing Tibet as a part of China, makes a reference to the term suzerainty being an 'outdated concept'. Miliband should have known that the relationship between Britain and the 565-odd Princely States in British India has been described in the Indian Independence Act, 1947, as suzerainty. It will be appreciated that concepts per se do not become outdated although their application could with a change in the geo-political situation of the time. Written Ministerial Statement at <http://freetibet.org/news-media/pr/britain-rewrites-history-recognising-tibet-part-china-first-time>, accessed 13 June 2014.

The previous statement on the legal status of Tibet was conveyed by the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden to the ROC's Foreign Minister (in 1943) to the effect that 'HMG (His Majesty's Government) are prepared to recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, but only on the understanding that Tibet is regarded as autonomous.' As per the Eden statement, since the ROC could not fulfil its part of the understanding, it therefore never exercised suzerainty over Tibet. See Kalha, pp. 21 & 252 (27/n).

⁵ B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru: The Chinese Betrayal*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1971, pp. 537, 568. The pre-independence British-Indian Army of 0.5 million men was eventually divided along religious lines between India and Pakistan. India's share of this army was determined at 0.28 million men, the remainder going to Pakistan, except for 8 out of the 20 Gurkha regiments which Britain kept for itself. As soon as the British officers, whose services had been temporarily retained after Independence, had returned home, the armies of Pakistan and India were to face each other on the border and the line of control (LOC) in Kashmir. On the other side, no Indian or Tibetan soldier had been required to man the Indo-Tibetan frontier, except at half a dozen or so frontier check posts. This position continued even during the period when Tibet was considered a protectorate of the Manchu. After the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet by the PRC, it was filled with PLA soldiers. Even so, this frontier remained practically unmanned from the Indian side throughout the 1950s, except for some scattered civilian and para-military border posts.

⁶ India found itself outmanoeuvred by the United States and Britain on the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council from January 1948 onwards. To the Indians, the stand taken by these powers appeared to be in negation of the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 (of the British Parliament). Very briefly, as per this Act, the principle of division of territory governed directly by the British in its Indian empire, known as British India, was religion. However, the principle of religion, as the basis for division was not extended to territories governed indirectly, namely, the 565-odd Princely States. In terms of the provisions of the said Act, the absolute power to join or not to join either Union, namely, India or Pakistan, was vested in each ruler of a Princely State, who was at liberty to exercise this discretionary power to sign an 'Instrument of Accession' in favour of either Union. Regrettably, in a move that appeared to be in contravention of the said Act

and favourable to Pakistan, the principle of religion was sought to be indirectly applied to the Princely State of Kashmir by America and its allies in the Security Council.

To appreciate the underlying intent behind the British and American stand, it has been suggested, Britain had recognised the geo-political importance of the to-be-born Pakistan since it had already determined that its strategic interests in the subcontinent would lie not with Hindu-dominated India but with Muslim Pakistan, which could emerge as a potential ally. See C. Dasgupta, *War and Diplomacy in Kashmir*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 17. In early 1949, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff were to reaffirm the British assessment in a white paper wherein they noted that ‘...this area (Pakistan) might be required as a base for air operations against central USSR and as a staging area for forces engaged in the defence or recapture of Middle East oil areas.’ See Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 24, 1949, attached as Appendix C to the report titled ‘Appraisal of U.S. National Interests in South Asia,’ 19 April 1949, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Vol. VI, pp. 29–30, as quoted in Lezlee Brown Halper and Stefan Halper, *Tibet: An Unfinished Story*, London: C. Hurst and Co., 2014, consulted Indian reprint edition, Gurgaon: Hachette India, 2014, p. 55. The Americans and the British had feared that Pakistan’s very survival could be challenged if India were to gain control of areas, corresponding roughly to present-day territory of Kashmir occupied by the former (Pakistan), which would otherwise have led to co-terminity between Indian and Afghan territories, giving these two countries, if they so chose, an opportunity to join hands against Pakistan to create trouble in its tribal belt. See Dasgupta, pp. 57–58.

The American role in the Kashmir issue was mainly instrumental in making Nehru coming to regard them (Americans) as a ‘vulgar, pushy lot, lacking in fine feeling and American materialistic culture dominated by the dollar is a serious threat to the development of a higher type of world civilization’. See Ambassador Loy Henderson’s ‘Letter to Dean Acheson,’ June 18, 1949, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Subject File: Miscellaneous, India, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 56. On another occasion, Nehru, was to confide in the then Indian Home Minister, C. Rajagopalachari: ‘I must say that the Americans, for all their achievements, impress me less and less, so far as their human quality is concerned’, Nehru’s letter dated 3 July 1950, to C. Rajagopalachari, as quoted in S. Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 101.

- ⁷ The Intelligence Bureau had gradually over time, by 1960, created 67 check posts along the Indo-Tibetan frontier manned by a staff of 1,334 men. See Mullik, p. 136.
- ⁸ Knaus, p. 256.
- ⁹ Record of Nehru’s conversation with Christian P. F. Pineau, French Foreign Minister in New Delhi on 11 March 1956, in H. Y. Sharada Prasad and A. K. Damodaran (eds.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32,

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2003, p. 394. See also, Note on Nehru's talks with the US Secretary of State, John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Ibid.* pp. 379-380. Elsewhere, it is stated that Nehru went through with the decision to demobilise 10,000 army men each year for 5 years, beginning 1954 onwards, the initial year incidentally coinciding with the year of the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement with the PRC. See S. Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 188. The figure for the annual rate of demobilisation of 10,000 men in the Indian Army has been corroborated in another account, wherein it has been asserted that the eventual aim was to downsize the army to a third of the strength inherited from the British at Independence. The matter appears to have been settled for a reduction by one-third. Alongside, a serious debate waged to make army personnel supplement the labour force for public works. It appears that that the force reduction decision had been taken unilaterally, without taking the army into confidence. This is suggestive of the fact that the said decision might have been taken more on internal security rather than external security or economy considerations. See Satish K. Issar, *General S.M. Srinagesh*, New Delhi: Vision Books, 2009, pp. 207-211. While Nehru chose to explain the downsizing of the Indian Army to the competing use of scarce financial resources, the question of the underlying lingering fear of the possibility of a coup d'état that could have also played a part in the decision (to downsize) is a matter that requires further scrutiny. While S.S. Khera, India's Cabinet Secretary at the time of the Sino-Indian conflict, has discussed the issue of a coup at some length in his book and ruled it out on account of the diversity encountered among Indians (which is also reflected in the composition of its army), the possibility of some military officers entertaining the idea cannot be ruled out. See S. S. Khera, *India's Defence Problem*, New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1968, pp. 80-89. The known dysfunctional relationship between the Indian Defence Minister, Krishna Menon (1957-1962) and the then Chief of Army Staff, General K.S. Thimayya that resulted in the rise of 'crony' generals, the perceived loss of morale in the armed services, and the fear of a coup in the Indian establishment (in that period), are matters that also require further examination. See Khera, pp. 69-75, and Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 132.

¹⁰ Mullik, p. 577.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 572. Surprisingly, Mao's Communists too received American arms, ostensibly to fight the Japanese. See Mullik, p. 450. Even, surrendered Japanese military hardware and ammunition were given to the ROC. See Mullik, p. 141. With these and other arms, the PRC was to challenge first the Americans in Korea and later attack India.

¹² Mullik, p. 187-188. By mid-1960, Soviet economic and military assistance to the PRC to all intents and purposes was virtually withdrawn.

¹³ Halper and Halper, p. 150.

¹⁴ See Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952-54, 'The Near and Middle East,' Vol. IX, Part I, Document No. 137, Memorandum of

Discussions at the 147th Meeting of the National Security Council, 1 June 1953, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d137>, accessed 3 September 2016; See also FRUS, 1952-54, 'The Near and Middle East,' Vol. IX, Part I, Document No. 144, Memorandum of Discussions at the 153rd Meeting of the National Security Council, 9 July 1953, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d144>, accessed 03/09/16; and FRUS, 1952-54, 'The Near and Middle East,' Vol. IX, Part I, Document No. 145, Statement of Policy by the National Security Council, 14 July 1953, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v09p1/d145>, accessed 3 September 2016.

Nehru strongly believed that the American move 'to give military aid to one party (Pakistan) to a conflict and when armies stand on either side of the cease-fire line is obviously a breach of neutrality'. See, Nehru's telegram to the Indian Mission at the United Nations, 6 March 1954, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 189 (119/n).

- ¹⁵ It was only after having obtained India's acceptance to the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement that Chou En Lai maintained that the boundary question was then 'not ripe' for a settlement. See T. N. Kaul, *A Diplomat's Diary: China, India and the USA*, New Delhi: Macmillan, 2000, p. 64, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 153. Later, Nehru was himself to regret that he had not taken up the boundary question with Chou before concluding the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement. See Kalha, p. 76.
- ¹⁶ Coming from a background of a freedom struggle that was built around the 'gentler' Gandhian principles of truth and non-violence, Nehru was yet to get his first lessons in statecraft, real politick, and strategic affairs. He was to witness at first hand the brazen and blatant pursuit of 'national interest' by the great powers. Clearly, his expectations from the Security Council on the Kashmir issue were different. Consequently, in his All India Radio broadcast on September 7, 1949, Nehru suggested that, 'as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars,' in S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 1, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1984, pp. 404–405, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 59. Subsequently, while addressing both the Senate and House members on his maiden visit to the USA in October 1949, Nehru said that he would not 'seek any material advantage in exchange for any part of our hard-won freedom.' See Nehru's address to the US House of Representatives and the US Senate, Washington, DC, 13 October 1949, in S. Gopal, (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 13, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1992, p. 303, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 61. Two days later, Nehru added: 'I have not come to the USA to ask for or expect any gift from America... India will stand on her own feet.' See Nehru's Address to the Indian residents of New York, New India House, New York, 15 October 1949, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 13, pp. 310–311, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 61.

- ¹⁷ Nehru's letter dated 10 November 1953 to Pakistan Prime Minister, Mahomed Ali, as quoted in S. Gopal, Vol. 2, pp. 184-185 (93/n).
- ¹⁸ Summary of Nehru's talks with Chairman Mao Tse-tung in Peking on 19 October 1954, in Ravinder Kumar and H. Y. Sharda Prasad (eds.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 27, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2000, consulted reprint edition 2010, p. 9.
- ¹⁹ Note on Nehru's talks with Selwyn Lloyd-II in New Delhi on 4 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 372.
- ²⁰ Note on Nehru's talks with US Secretary of State, John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 379.
- ²¹ US Department of State, Office of the Historian, Milestones 1953–1960, South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954, at <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>, accessed 10 July 2015.
- ²² US Department of State, Office of the Historian, Milestones 1953–1960, The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The article on the subject stood withdrawn 'pending review,' as on the date of first accession, at <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/cento>, accessed 10 July 2015. Current version, at <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/cento>, accessed 5 August 2016.
- ²³ Note on Nehru's talks with John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 376.
- ²⁴ Nehru-Dulles Talks in Washington DC between 11-14 December 1956, in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2005, p. 482.
- ²⁵ Note on Nehru's talks with John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 383.
- ²⁶ Nehru's letter dated 12 November 1953 to K.M. Pannikar, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 185. Nehru informed Christian Pineau that John F. Dulles had told him during their talks that the Pakistan Army 'would soon be the same size as the Indian Army'. Nehru pointed out that there would be one major difference between the two armies: while the Pakistan Army was being equipped by the US with the 'latest guns, aircraft, etc.'—thereby making it 'highly mechanized and mobile'—the Indian Army continued to have 'old and outmoded equipment.' See the record of Nehru's conversation with Christian Pineau, French Foreign Minister in New Delhi on 11 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 394. To A. I. Mikoyan, First Vice-Chairman, Council of Ministers of the USSR, Nehru reaffirmed what he had earlier said, 'On partition (1947), the Defence Services were divided between India and Pakistan in the proportion of 3:1. Because of (US) military aid, Pakistan was now getting stronger and this proportion

had been completely upset...Mr. Dulles...agreed...that (US) aid given to Pakistan would make the Pakistan forces nearly equal to India's in size. In addition, the Pakistan forces would have better and more modern weapons, which would give them a further advantage.' See also, Note on conversation with A.I. Mikoyan in New Delhi on 26 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 400.

- ²⁷ Nehru's letter dated 12 November 1953 to K.M. Panikkar, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 185.
- ²⁸ (Nehru's) Talks with Chou En-lai at Bhakra-Nangal between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957, and on the train from Nangal to Delhi, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, p. 584.
- ²⁹ Minutes of Nehru-Chou talks in Peking on 20 October 1954, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 27, p. 13. The PRC version reads thus: 'When Pakistan asked for American military aid, we were in the middle of negotiations (on the Kashmir issue); we had even reached a preliminary agreement. After Pakistan obtained military aid...our talks were broken off. The reason for breaking them off was America's military aid and not any internal rationale.' See Chinese Foreign Ministry File No. 204-00007-15 (1), Memcon: Chou-Nehru Second Talk, October 1954, as quoted in Kalha, p. 62.
- ³⁰ Minutes of Nehru-Chou talks in Peking on 20 October 1954, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 27, p. 13.
- ³¹ Note on Nehru's talks with John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 379.
- ³² Record of Nehru's conversation with French Foreign Minister Christian P. F. Pineau in New Delhi on 11 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 394.
- ³³ Nehru's letter dated 3 April 1956 to Yugoslav President Josip B. Tito, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 367.
- ³⁴ Note on Nehru's talks with John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 379.
- ³⁵ Nehru's draft message dated 9 March 1956 to the British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, pp. 337-338.
- ³⁶ Kissinger has asserted that Panchsheel's 'articulation was classically Westphalian and congruent with historical European analyses of the balance of power ... these (five principles) where in effect a high-minded recapitulation of the Westphalian model for a multipolar order of sovereign states. See Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*, New York: Penguin Press, 2014, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Allen Lane, 2014, p. 205.

- ³⁷ Halper and Halper, pp. 58–59.
- ³⁸ Eisenhower institutionalized America’s capacity for covert operations secretly and unilaterally, without public or Congressional debate. Through NSC directive 5412, the CIA would operate as a presidential agency. The formulation and execution of covert operations were done only on the President’s directives. See Halper and Halper, pp. 167, 316–317 (10/n, 11/n & 16/n). ‘Decisions reached by the (5412) Committee were forwarded to the President for final approval.’ See Conboy and Morrison, *The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet*, Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2002, p. 279 (17/n). In fact, Nixon was to go a step further in giving a direct order (over the head of Henry Kissinger and the national security team) to Richard Helms, (the Director of the CIA) , ‘to intensify operations to prevent President-elect Allende from assuming office in Chile.’ These instructions were given with the explicit stipulation that Helms was not to inform anyone of the order, including the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defence, the US ambassador in Chile, and anyone in the CIA who was not directly involved in the operation. See also, Richard Helms and William Hood, *A Look over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency*, New York: Random House, 2003, consulted reprint edition, New York: Ballantine Books, 2004, pp. 414-415.
- ³⁹ Dennis Merrill (ed.) *The Documentary History of the Truman Presidency, The Central Intelligence Agency, Its Founding and the Dispute over its Mission, 1945–1954*, Vol. 23, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1998, p. xxi, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 126.
- ⁴⁰ William M. Leary (ed.) *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1984, pp. 63–64, and Editorial brief, FRUS 1964-1968, Vol. XII, pp. xxxi-v, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 168–169.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 63-64, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 168.
- ⁴² The Doolittle Report, Special Study Group, ‘Report on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency,’ 30 September 1954, declassified with redactions on 2002/05/07 at <https://www.cia.gov/library/reading room / docs/CIA-RDP86B00269R000100040001-5.pdf>, accessed 16 September 2016.
- ⁴³ H. W. Brands, *The Spectre of Neutralism: The United States and the Emergence of the Third World*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 113, as quoted in Halper and Halper p. 163.
- ⁴⁴ At https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashmir_Princess, accessed 29 November 2015.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* During this period, Nehru too is stated to have been a target for assassination by the CIA. See William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II*, London: Zed Books, 2003, p. 463. It was only through Executive Order 11905 of February 1976 that political assassinations were declared illegal. The relevant Section 5— ‘Restrictions on

Intelligence Activities, subparagraph “g”—of this Order reads: ‘No employee of the United States shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, political assassination.’ However, ways and means were found to circumvent this Order by outsourcing such tasks to private agencies, dependent on the CIA for their existence. See Helms, pp. 170-171.

- ⁴⁶ Brands, p.113, as quoted in Halper and Halper p. 163.
- ⁴⁷ Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 192.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 166–195.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 166-195. See also Halper and Halper, p. 162.
- ⁵⁰ Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 236.
- ⁵¹ Halper and Halper p. 162.
- ⁵² Ibid., p. 164.
- ⁵³ ‘Means to Combat India’s Policy of Neutralism’, paper prepared in the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, 30 August 1951, FRUS, Vol. VI, Part 2, p. 2172, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 128, and 300-301 (44/n). The non-aligned bloc tended to vote in the UN with the Soviet bloc rather than with the West. See also, Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World*, New York: Basic Books, 2005, p. 314.
- ⁵⁴ Halper and Halper p. 203.
- ⁵⁵ ‘Telegram from the Secretary of State to the Department of State: Letter to the President,’ 11 March, 1956, FRUS, Vol. VIII, p. 309, as quoted in Halper and Halper p. 203.
- ⁵⁶ In the Note on talks with Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, which Nehru had himself summarized, there is no indication therein of an exchange between the two that could have led Nehru to behave in the awkward manner in which he is reported to have acted, referred to in this Chapter of the monograph. Further, no clues in the matter are to be found in the two Notes dated 10 March 1956 and 11 March 1956 respectively, also covering the Nehru-Dulles talks, sent by Nehru to the secretary-general, Ministry of External Affairs. See *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, pp. 375-381, 384-385 & 386. In Dulles’ assessment, Nehru was ‘an utterly impractical statesman...’ See Memorandum of Discussions at the 147th Meeting of NSC, 1 June 1953.
- ⁵⁷ ‘NSC 5701, Statement of Policy on US Policy Toward South Asia,’ 10 January 1957, FRUS, Vol. VIII, pp. 29-30, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 14-15.
- ⁵⁸ Nehru’s letter to G.L. Mehta, 19 August 1956, in H.Y. Sharada Prasad and A.K. Damodaran (eds.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 34, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2006, p. 317 (3/n), as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 204.

THE MACHINATIONS OF THE DALAI LAMA'S BROTHERS

THE DALAI LAMA'S BROTHERS AS ASSETS OF THE CIA

Gyalo Thondup (b. 1928), the Dalai Lama's older brother who left Lhasa for Nanking in 1946 to pursue higher studies was to come to the notice¹ of American intelligence in Hong Kong, when he along with his newly acquired Chinese wife fled the communist invasion of China in 1949. Between September 1951 and February 1952, Thondup and his wife visited the USA where his older brother, Thubten Norbu (b. 1922) had already been residing since July 1951. Norbu was living there at the expense of the San Francisco based Committee for a Free Asia (CFA)—a CIA front²—to establish higher-level contacts with State Department and CIA officials. The officials whom Thondup and his wife met asked him to convey an oral message to the Dalai Lama (b. 1935) that the USA 'was still very interested in Tibet', and was hopeful that he (Dalai Lama) would seek refuge in India.³ These officials, it appears, had held discussions with Thondup to explore the feasibility of armed resistance in Tibet.⁴ It has been suggested that Thondup's 'sense of mission had crystallized during the six months he had spent in the USA'.⁵ Thus, immediately upon his return from the USA in early 1952, Thondup made a trip to Tibet to convey the oral message of the Americans to the Dalai Lama and apparently to also make an on-the-spot study for an American assisted armed resistance in Tibet to expel the Chinese.⁶ During his stay at Lhasa, Thondup was to get discouraged by the cool reception he received, for he was taken to be an American spy, and consequently became a source of embarrassment for his younger brother, the Dalai Lama.⁷ After his return to India in mid-1952, Thondup was given permission to stay in India, provided he would 'scrupulously avoid involvement in politics'.⁸

NEHRU'S ADVICE ON TIBETAN ÉMIGRÉS

Soon thereafter, the Indian government stepped in and strongly objected to any further US contact with Thondup. It 'threatened to move him to another part of India if he continued contacts with foreign representatives.'⁹ Thereafter, in early 1953, the Indian Political Officer in Gangtok, Sikkim (concurrently accredited to Bhutan and Tibet), visited Thondup in Darjeeling to warn him in person not to carry out political activities on Indian soil. This official also informed Thondup that the Indian government had come to know of his letter to the Americans seeking assistance for armed resistance in Tibet.¹⁰ The ban on Thondup's political activities was to be a brief one, as B. N. Mullik, Director Intelligence Bureau, paid him a visit soon thereafter, and negotiated the lifting of the ban provided he kept the Bureau fully informed of his activities.¹¹ Mullik asserts he had been advised that he could use the émigrés so long as their activities were not detrimental to Sino-Indian relations. In this regard, Nehru is believed to have told him the following:

...keep in touch with the Dalai Lama's brother and all the other Tibetan refugees and help them in every way possible. Such contacts would also indirectly help us to prevent any machinations by them from Indian soil against the Chinese.¹²

Mullik further asserts that Nehru's view on Tibetans carrying out political activities on Indian soil was as below.

...it would be unwise for the Tibetans to carry on any armed resistance which the Chinese would be able to put down swiftly, effectively and ruthlessly...if these refugees helped their brethren inside Tibet, the Government of India would not take any notice and, unless they compromised themselves too openly...the best form of resistance would be through nonviolence and struggle for the protection of Tibetan culture and regional autonomy and not by taking of arms which would give the Chinese an excuse to use their military might to suppress the poor Tibetans.¹³

JENKHENTSISUM AND ITS ACTIVITIES

Thondup reappears on the scene in 1954 in Kalimpong, a few miles west of Darjeeling, close to the border town of Yatung in Chumbi

Valley in Tibet. Here, along with Tsepon Shakabpa (a former high-ranking Tibetan official) and Khenjung Lobsang Gyentsen (a monk), Thondup formed the Jenkhentsisum (JKTS).¹⁴ It is now known that their intention was to organize ‘opposition to the Chinese from Indian soil’.¹⁵ To begin with, the three men initiated relief activities in Tibet, and set up the Tibet Flood Relief Committee apart from the Association for the Welfare of Tibet for carrying out political activities for Tibetan independence. The Relief Committee sought US funds for the Gyantse floods of July 1954; but these were denied.¹⁶ JKTS was seeking money, wireless equipment, and explosives training from the (Indian) Intelligence Bureau.¹⁷ However, all that JKTS received was a monthly amount of around US\$ 400 (Rs. 1,762), four wireless sets for practice purposes, two sets for use, and no training whatsoever in explosives.¹⁸ In February 1954, the Political Officer Sikkim advised JKTS that ‘Regarding independence, you should do this through your own efforts. If there is outside help, then it will not work... aside for peaceful assistance, it is difficult to help militarily.’¹⁹ In April 1956, he said, ‘You officials (JKTS) have to continue to do things as you are doing now through peaceful means.’²⁰ A month later, in May 1956 the Political Officer was to add,

You have requested (that you be allowed to seek) help from China’s enemies like the United States. If you do this, then the Chinese will be angry; and instead of helping, it will cause harm and will make the situation in Tibet worse.²¹

However, the Americans had been talking to Norbu on a regular basis between 1951 and 1952, and from 1955²² onwards. Thondup/JKTS had been communicating through him (Norbu) as well for support for armed resistance in Tibet.²³ As further events were to unfold, JKTS was to lose much of its relevance after the summer of 1956, and was to become redundant soon thereafter.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Halper and Halper, p. 187.
- ² Conboy and Morrison, 2002, pp. 14–15.
- ³ Telegram from AmCon Gen, Calcutta, to the State Department, 6 September 1952, Dispatch No. 215, 793B.11/9-1852, NARA. This contains record of meeting between Gary Soulen, American Vice Consul (in Calcutta), and

Gyalo Thondup after the latter's return from Tibet in late June 1952. The two had met in a surreptitious manner in Darjeeling (September 1952), when they discussed a plan, most probably based on an on the spot study made by Thondup during his stay at Lhasa (March-June 1952) for armed resistance in Tibet to expel the Chinese, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 189–190, and 325 (29/n). The record of the meeting was made available to the authors in September 2008 under an FOIA request.

- ⁴ Evan Wilson, the American Consul General in Calcutta, was to pursue Thondup a month later (October 1952) in Darjeeling, again in a surreptitious manner, after Soulen's failed attempt in obtaining a written plan from Thondup for armed resistance in Tibet (referred to in Note No. 3/n above). Wilson was successful in obtaining a plan for armed resistance in Tibet from Thondup for onward transmission to the addressee, William O. Anderson of the US State Department's Office of Chinese Affairs. Interestingly, the plan was written in Chinese. See Memorandum of Conversations (with Gyalo Thondup) from Amconsul Calcutta to the State Department, 8 January 1954 (?), Despatch No. 373, NARA. Declassified to the authors, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 190 and 325 (39/n).
- ⁵ Knaus, p. 112.
- ⁶ Gyalo Thondup and Anne F. Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet*, New York: Public Affairs, 2015, consulted Indian reprint edition, Gurgaon: Random House India, 2015, pp. 308–309. In the Afterword chapter of the book under reference, Thurston puts the spotlight on the supposed discrepancy between the versions of the account given separately by Thondup and Lhamo Tsering (a trusted Thondup aide), regarding the purpose behind Thondup's visit to Lhasa immediately after his return from the USA in early 1952. While Tsering is clear that Thondup 'was prepared to carry out a resistance movement against Chinese rule that would achieve complete independence for the Tibetan people,' Thondup chose to remain a bit hesitant on the issue. Since Thondup has tried to convey an impression to the co-author, Anne Thurston, that he came in contact with the CIA only through his older brother, Norbu in 1954 (see Thondup and Thurston, p. 167), it is, therefore, possible that he was attempting to buttress that impression by trying to disassociate himself from anything to do with armed resistance in Tibet prior to 1954. However, as referred to in Note Nos. 3/n & 4/n above, this appears to be factually incorrect. It is becoming somewhat increasingly clear that Thondup visited Lhasa immediately after his return from the USA at the instance of his American handlers to explore the possibility of armed resistance to expel the Chinese in order that he could report his findings to them, which was done through his letter written in Chinese, referred to in Note No. 4/n above.
- ⁷ As Thondup was recovering from typhoid after his return from Tibet, Mrs. Thondup called on Evan Wilson, American Consul General, Calcutta, on 8 July 1952 to report that her husband was believed by the Tibetans to be an American spy. See Halper and Halper, pp. 188 and 323 (11/n).

- ⁸ Mentioned in the monthly report of the Indian Consul at Lhasa, as quoted in Conboy and Morrison, pp. 31 and 265 (8/n). However, over 40 years later, Thondup has chosen to contest the Consul's version, and denied having made any promise to him that he would refrain from political activity while staying in India. See Knaus, p. 334 (31/n).
- ⁹ Memorandum of Conversation from Amconsul Calcutta (Gary Soulen) to the State Department, 11 January 1954, Despatch 373, 793B.00/1-1154, Enclosure 1, NARA. In his report, Soulen noted that the 'Government of India raised serious objections to the transmittal of any message to Gyalo (Thondup) and the project was shelved.' This was declassified to the authors, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 190.
- ¹⁰ Memorandum of Conversation from Amconsul Calcutta (Gary Soulen) to the State Department, 8 January 1954, Dispatch 373, NARA, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 190–191
- ¹¹ Thondup and Thurston, p. 148.
- ¹² Mullik, pp. 180–181. See also Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Tibet: The Storm Clouds Descend, 1955–1957*, Vol. 3, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Dev Publishers and Distributers, 2014, p. 155.
- ¹³ Mullik, pp. 182–183.
- ¹⁴ Jenkhentsisum is a combination of the words *jben*, meaning older brother (i.e., Thondup); *kben* refers to Gyaltzen's title of *kbenchung*; *tsi* refers to Shakabpa's official title of *tsipon*; and *sum* denotes the number three. See Thondup and Thurston, p. 150. Shakabpa had been advised in writing by Lobsang Samden, the Dalai Lama's third oldest brother and a high ranking Tibetan official, to stay on in India and work with Thondup, his older brother, to find ways and means to oppose the PRC's occupation in Tibet. It could be highly likely that Samden might have written the letter at Thondup's instance. See Goldstein, Vol. 2, pp. 377–378.
- ¹⁵ Goldstein Vol. 2, p. 471.
- ¹⁶ Goldstein, Vol. 3, pp. 164–165.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. p. 195.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 192, 198, and 203.
- ¹⁹ Ibid. p. 187.
- ²⁰ Ibid. p. 192.
- ²¹ Ibid. p. 194.
- ²² Norbu had left the USA for Tokyo to attend the 1952 Conference of the Buddhist World Fellowship where he learnt that his CFA sponsorship and travel documents had expired. After a three-year forced stay in Japan as a stateless citizen, Norbu was recalled to the USA in 1955 (to assist in planning for the covert operation?). See Conboy and Morrison, pp. 19 and 30.
- ²³ Goldstein, Vol. 3, p. 406.

THE AMERICAN GREAT GAME TO WEAKEN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM

THE SINO-SOVIET RIFT (1956) AND THE CIA'S RESPONSE

The beginning of the Sino-Soviet rift was witnessed during the XX Congress of the Soviet Communist Party held in Moscow in February 1956, in which Khrushchev denounced Stalin and advocated the co-existence of communist and capitalist systems.¹ The CIA smelt blood when it came to learn of Khrushchev's speech, and got down to work immediately after obtaining a copy of that speech in April 1956, from the Israeli secret service, the Mossad.² It initiated a series of covert operations 'to sow discord among the world's communist parties' and promote 'spontaneous manifestations of discontent,' in communist countries, with a view to weaken International Communism.³ In June 1956, Polish workers began their strike; by end October 1956, the Hungarian revolt had erupted.

Alongside, and most coincidentally, some important developments were taking place in Tibet. In March 1955, the Military and Administrative Committees in Tibet were replaced by the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART), ostensibly to usher in 'regional autonomy' in Tibet. Although, the Dalai Lama was made the figurehead chairman of PCART, he would witness a gradual erosion of his authority.⁴ The PRC used the instrumentality of PCART to bring Han settlers into Tibet⁵ and, in what appeared to be in contravention of the spirit of the 17 Point Agreement, sweeping 'democratic reforms' were initiated in the eastern Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo, which led to local resistance and sporadic violence. By the end of the year, spontaneous uprisings were becoming common throughout these provinces. The first incident of open rebellion occurred in the spring of 1956. It is not known to what extent were the brothers Thondup and Norbu involved with the resistance at this stage. However, during the course of 1955, Thondup had met emissaries from the Khampa

fighters to give shape to a resistance effort that would be dependent on money and weapons from abroad.⁶ The Americans were, at the very least, quick in taking advantage to ride on these trends. When fighting was escalating in the monastery town of Litang in the summer of 1956,⁷ the CIA was given the go-ahead signal for a covert operation in Tibet, after Eisenhower had accorded his approval.⁸

THE COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

It appears that the covert operation in Tibet was just one component of a bigger operation that had been put in place by the Americans through their National Security Council's directives on covert operations. All of these were aimed at waging the Cold War against the Soviet bloc, known as International Communism. The covert operation in Tibet was approved when the covert operation in Poland had already been implemented, and the one in Hungary was still in the planning phase. It can be inferred from the aim of these directives and the timing of the approval of the covert operation in Tibet, that this operation too was connected more with the overall aim of weakening International Communism rather than to create a low intensity irritant for the PRC—which is what it turned out to be.

THE COMPONENTS OF CIA'S COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

The covert operation had three main components. The first, ST CIRCUS, was a cover cryptonym pertaining to assistance for armed resistance in Tibet under a Tibet Task Force located in the CIA headquarters. The second, ST BARNUM, was the cover name for the airlift operations connected with the first component—armed resistance. Third, and, perhaps, a very crucial but the least understood component was ST BAILEY, the cover codename for political action in India and concerned countries, the United Nations, human right organizations, media, and the propaganda front. ST BAILEY was—and still remains—highly classified.⁹ The CIA was to use Thondup as asset-in-chief, with Norbu as his deputy. Eisenhower chose not to inform Nehru of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet when the two met in Washington in December 1956.¹⁰ Apparently, the Americans had decided to keep Nehru in the dark about the CIA's covert operation in Tibet right from the very start.

THE NEHRU, CHOU EN-LAI AND DALAI LAMA MEETINGS: DECEMBER 1956–JANUARY 1957

Nehru received Chou En-lai on three separate back-to-back visits to New Delhi between December 1956 and January 1957. A record of the Nehru-Chou talks is available.¹¹ From this record, it appears that Chou had some inkling of the American plan for the covert operation in Tibet. On the other hand, Nehru is not seen to betray any prior knowledge, either of the CIA's covert operation, or of the involvement of the Dalai Lama's brothers in it, or of the use of Kalimpong (in India) for the operation. During these talks, Chou informed Nehru of the 'subversive activities encouraged by "US agents" taking place in Kalimpong.' Chou added that the 'Dalai Lama's brother (Norbu),¹² recently returned from the USA, told the Dalai Lama that the United States would support (an) independence movement in Tibet.'¹³ In turn, Nehru reassured Chou that 'the Government of India's policy has been not to allow anti-Chinese propaganda to be carried out there (Kalimpong).'¹⁴ In an apparent attempt at testing the waters, Chou asked Nehru as to what next might happen in Kalimpong. While agreeing with Chou that Kalimpong was abounding with spies, Nehru's response was quite straightforward. He stated that, 'he had not noticed the events in Kalimpong in the past, so he could not predict what would happen there (next).'¹⁵ However, Chou, decided to press the issue further by saying what could be construed as a veiled threat.

Espionage activities are carried out in the open in Kalimpong and we feel that the Government of India should intervene because these activities will interfere with religious contacts and exchange.¹⁶

Nehru clarified that 'If any fact about espionage comes to our notice, of course we will take steps. But if it is only a vague suspicion and (there is) no proof, then it is difficult to take action.'¹⁷ To this, Chou replied, 'If we get hold of any evidence of US espionage activities in Kalimpong, we will inform the Indian Government in order that you might be able to take action.'¹⁸

During his meeting with the Dalai Lama—who was in India at that time in connection with the celebrations for the 2500th birth anniversary

of the Buddha (Buddha Jayanti)—Nehru (at Chou's instance) was firm in not acceding to his (the Dalai Lama's) request for asylum,¹⁹ sought most probably on the advice of his two brothers.²⁰ In this regard, Nehru counselled the Dalai Lama 'to go back to Tibet and work peacefully to try to carry out the 17 Point Programme.'²¹

On the Dalai Lama's assertion that PRC was not honouring its side of the 17 Point Agreement, Nehru promised to speak to Chou in the matter.²² As promised, Nehru discussed the issue with Chou who, while conceding that local officers might have committed excesses, stated that he would take up the matter regarding the slowing down of the 'democratic reform' process in Tibet with Mao. Immediately thereafter, Nehru suggested to Mullik that he convey the same to Thondup.²³ Chou, who also met the Dalai Lama in New Delhi, assured him of the prospect of the postponement of 'democratic reforms' in Tibet.²⁴

NEHRU CAUTIONS THE DALAI LAMA ABOUT THONDUP

During his second meeting with the Dalai Lama, Nehru even cautioned him about his brother Thondup, whom he regarded as 'unreliable', 'not to be trusted', and not to be believed.²⁵ In a note dated 1 January 1957 to N. R. Pillai, Secretary General, Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Nehru wrote,

I told the Dalai Lama that his brother at Kalimpong (Thondup) often spoke very foolishly and it seemed to me that he was rather unbalanced...that as he (Dalai Lama) had already agreed by a Treaty (17 Point Agreement) to Tibet being a part of China but autonomous, it was not easy for him to break this agreement. Indeed, any attempt to do so would result in a major conflict and much misery to Tibet. In an armed conflict, Tibet could not possibly defeat China... Our (Indian) position all along had been that sovereignty rested with China but Tibet should be autonomous... I think it is desirable... for someone on our behalf to make it clear privately to the brothers of the Dalai Lama that we do not approve of any agitation or trouble in any part of India in regard to Tibet. We sympathise with the people of Tibet and are prepared to help them in any legitimate way. But we cannot tolerate any mischief in Indian territory.²⁶

Much later, in an interview given in 2004, the Dalai Lama admitted that ‘by nature he (Thondup) was more spontaneous than calculating and controlled.’²⁷ The CIA would exploit this inherent flaw in Thondup’s personality.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Mullik, pp. 186–187.
- ² Weiner, p. 123.
- ³ Ibid. pp. 124–127. During March 1956, Nehru received the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and the Soviet Union and the US Secretary of State, all of whom sought his (Nehru’s) reactions to the recent changes in Soviet policy announced during the XX Congress in the previous month. To John F Dulles, Nehru described the new policy as follows: it was ‘a change (that) had come over there (Soviet Union) and conditions were becoming gradually normal...To some extent, I thought that this (Soviet leaders N.A. Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev’s visits to India and China) also was a factor in influencing a change in Communist policy.’ It appears that in attempting to take credit for the change in Soviet policy, Nehru missed its real significance in as much that the Americans saw it as an opportunity to distance the Soviet Union from its allies, including the PRC. See Note on Nehru’s talks with John F. Dulles in New Delhi between 9-10 March 1956, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 378. See also Ibid. pp. 334, 365-366, 388-389, and 403.
- ⁴ B. R. Deepak, *India and China 1904-2004: A Century of Peace and Conflict*, New Delhi: Manak Publications, 2005, p. 169.
- ⁵ Ibid., p. 169
- ⁶ Halper and Halper, p. 192, and Knaus, pp. 135–136.
- ⁷ Knaus, p. 139.
- ⁸ As already referred to in Note No. 36/n of Chapter I, decisions on covert operations taken by the 5412 Committee required the approval of the President.
- ⁹ John B. Roberts II and Elizabeth Roberts, *Freeing Tibet: 50 Years of Struggle, Resilience, and Hope*, New York: AMACOM, 2009, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2011, p. 82.
- ¹⁰ Halper and Halper, p. 206.
- ¹¹ Nehru-Chou Talks—I, Bhakra Nangal, on the train to Delhi, and in New Delhi between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, pp. 583–638.
- ¹² Goldstein, Vol. 3, p. 407. On his visit (from the USA) to India, Norbu was accompanied by his CIA handler, John Reagan, the first head of the Tibet

Task Force at CIA headquarters. This position made Reagan the first nodal officer for the covert operation in Tibet. See Conboy and Morrison, p. 35. Reagan is credited with drawing up the preliminary plan for the covert action. See Conboy and Morrison, p. 37.

¹³ Nehru-Chou Talks—I, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, p. 596.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 598.

¹⁵ Goldstein, Vol. 3, p. 419.

¹⁶ Nehru-Chou Talks—I, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, p. 602.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 602.

¹⁸ Nehru-Chou Talks—II in New Delhi on 1 January 1957, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, p. 605. Also, the PRC's Foreign Office did present a Note dated 10 July 1958 to the Indian side. This issue has been discussed in Chapter VI of this monograph.

¹⁹ Nehru-Chou Talks—IV in New Delhi in the form of a note dated 1 January 1957 from Nehru to N. R. Pillai, Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, p. 619. It appears that Chou had pressurised Nehru to decline the Dalai Lama's request for asylum. See also Nehru-Chou Talks I in New Delhi on 20 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 22.

²⁰ It appears that the Dalai Lama had no intention of staying on in India. His two brothers were insisting on his seeking asylum in India most probably at the instance of their CIA handlers. At that juncture, the CIA's assistance for armed resistance in Tibet had been conditional, and was tied to the Dalai Lama leaving Tibet (and seeking asylum in India). In the Dalai Lama's own words.

I was met by my brothers and the first words they said, before even hello, how are you, nice to see you, were “You must not go back”...Before leaving for India, I don't think that there was any discussion about staying in India.

See Mary Craig, *Kundun: A Biography of the Family of the Dalai Lama*, Washington DC: Counterpoint, 1997, p. 201, as quoted in Goldstein, Vol. 3, p. 343. Thondup maintains that towards the last quarter of 1956 he had been given an assurance by the Political Officer, Sikkim that the Dalai Lama would be given asylum once he reached India. See Thondup and Thurston, p. 160. At the time when approval for the covert operation had been accorded in the summer of 1956, the CIA was in favour of the Dalai Lama fleeing Lhasa. See Conboy and Morrison, p. 36. It has now emerged that Thondup had been making requests for asylum on behalf of the Dalai Lama without his brother's prior knowledge or consent. Further, on Nehru's instructions, Mullik had informed Thondup of Chou's assurance that he would take up

the issue of slowing down the ‘democratic reform’ process in Tibet with Mao. See Mullik, p. 160. The reason why Thondup decided to stick to the CIA, after knowing fully well that the PRC would be willing to grant some measure of ‘autonomy’ to Tibet, can perhaps be explained by the fact that the CIA handlers were most probably promising independence, definitely a more desirable goal than autonomy. Evidently, it was at the instance of his CIA handlers (and not at his brother’s behest or even in his brother’s interest) that Thondup chose to go along with the CIA.

- ²¹ H. H. the Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People: Memoirs*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1962, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Srishti Publishers and Distributors, 1997, p. 148.
- ²² Ibid. p. 148.
- ²³ Mullik, p. 160.
- ²⁴ Goldstein, Vol. 3, p. 420.
- ²⁵ Thondup and Thurston, pp. 164–165.
- ²⁶ Nehru-Chou Talks—IV, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, pp. 618-619. Shortly after the return of the Dalai Lama to Lhasa in March 1957, the PRC was to publically brand Thondup as a traitor and accuse him of joining the Americans to cause trouble in Tibet. Thondup was also stripped of his citizenship. See Thondup and Thurston, p. 172.
- ²⁷ Goldstein, Vol. 2, pp. 376–377.

CIA's COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

TIBETAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED

While the Dalai Lama was in India, an initial group of six Khampas (Tibetans from Eastern Tibet renowned for their martial abilities) was chosen for training at a CIA station in Saipan in the Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific.¹ After completion of training, two of them were flown out of a US base in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in October 1957, and dropped south of Lhasa,² an incident which should mark the commencement of CIA's covert operation in Tibet on the ground, as per records made available. By December 1956, Gompo Tashi Andrutsang—a scion of a wealthy business family of Lithang, who had become the self-styled leader of armed resistance—had already made plans, at the behest of the CIA or otherwise, to unite the different Khampa clans and lead the resistance under the banner of the Volunteer Army to Defend Buddhism. In June 1958, this army was rechristened the Chushi Gangdruk.³ Chushi Gangdruk too was shortly renamed as the National Volunteer Defence Army (NVDA),⁴ a name and image that was meant to appeal to all Tibetans. The NVDA is said to have an estimated 5,000 volunteers.⁵ However, Thondup places their number at 30,000 men⁶ in Lithang alone. By 1958, their number was estimated between 35,000–40,000 men.⁷ It was Andrutsang and his organizations that the CIA came to know and support.⁸ By end November 1958, the CIA had airdropped 18,000 pounds of weapons, ammunition, and communication gear over Tibet for the use of the resistance fighters.⁹ From 1957 to 1963, more than 250¹⁰ Tibetans received training from the CIA, first in Saipan and later at Camp Hale, Colorado. Against this, the PLA had over 150,000 soldiers by the end of 1957 in eastern Tibet alone.¹¹ The resistance fighters were badly outnumbered and outgunned, and the battle was to become one-sided.

TIBETAN RESISTANCE BREAKDOWN BEFORE APRIL 1960

According to a captured PRC's document, more than 87,000 persons had been killed between March 1959 and October 1960 in Lhasa alone.¹² Thondup claims to have this particular document in his possession.¹³ From other captured documents, Mao's plans to send a large number of Han (Chinese) settlers came to be known. What has also come to light is Mao's order to the PLA to 'eliminate all Tibetan resistance and their families, using whatever means necessary.'¹⁴ International assessments covering events up to 1959 have established a prima facie case of genocide against the PRC which, they recommended, merited a full investigation by the United Nations.¹⁵ By March 1959, the resistance effort had peaked, with conditions becoming highly unfavourable for the Dalai Lama to continue living in Tibet. Accordingly, he had to flee Lhasa and seek refuge in India. It has been suggested that the likelihood of the uprising being coordinated and instigated by the CIA for creating those conditions cannot be ruled out.¹⁶ For the first time ever (23 March 1959), the Tibetan flag was lowered and replaced by the PRC's flag on the Potala Palace in Lhasa.¹⁷ During the Nehru-Chou talks held in New Delhi during April 1960, (refer Chapter VI of this monograph), Chou informed 'that the Tibetan rebellion has been put down.'¹⁸

CIA GIVES INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF OUTDATED ARMS AND EQUIPMENT TO THE TIBETAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS IN TIBET

As per Thondup's account, the military assistance the CIA provided to the resistance fighters in Tibet was both inadequate and out-dated.

... the guns supplied by the CIA were nothing but a tiny drop compared to China's endless ocean of arms...For the twenty-five thousand resistance fighters on the ground in Lhokha, the CIA supplied about seven hundred guns. For the five thousand fighters active in Amdo, the CIA dropped maybe five hundred or six hundred rifles...Most of the rifles were old and out-dated...None of the CIA supplied equipment was made in the United States...Militarily, the Tibetan resistance fighters never stood a chance.¹⁹

The CIA had even chosen the out-dated Lee Enfield rifle of pre-World War I vintage, which was to be later replaced by the M-1 rifle.²⁰

In addition, the CIA provided only a few radios, which were not sufficient for the scattered resistance fighters to remain in contact with each other.²¹

CIA IMPARTS UNSUITABLE TRAINING TO THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS IN TIBET

Theoretically, a guerrilla group should be able to set the pace of battle and dictate their targets. However, the NVDA found itself almost always on the run, and ended up fighting the PLA in a conventional manner. In his briefing to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April 1959, CIA Director Allen Dulles (brother of John Foster Dulles) candidly admitted that there was no possibility of the Tibetans resisting the PRC. He said, “They haven’t the ammunition, they haven’t the organization. . . . But this is terribly difficult country. I mean there is no cover. There isn’t the cover that there is for guerrilla operations.”²²

Surprisingly, the CIA continued to train resistance fighters in guerrilla warfare even after knowing fully well in advance that the barren high altitude plateau-like terrain in Tibet lacked dense vegetation cover and accordingly was not suitable for guerrilla operations.²³ One-time CIA’s chief of the Far East Division, Desmond FitzGerald—who had otherwise earned a reputation for being cavalier with the lives of local agents on some of his Asian operations—questioned whether the Americans were doing the Tibetans a favour by providing armed assistance. FitzGerald was visibly moved when he had to remind his colleagues “that the CIA was dropping human beings and “not confetti” out of planes over Tibet.”²⁴ In an interview given in 2004 (nearly 48 years after the commencement of the covert operation in Tibet), Thomas Parrot (the Director CIA’s nominee as Secretary of the 5412 Committee/Special Group responsible for covert operations) said that Dulles knew before appearing at the said Senate Committee that not only was there an extreme shortage of food but there was little ammunition to fight the PLA, and that the resistance fighters had been “pretty well knocked to pieces.”²⁵ However, Dulles withheld information from the Senate Committee that the CIA was involved in the covert operation in Tibet. Actually, the covert operation was to turn out to be not that secret after all because the PRC was coming to know of the arms drops.²⁶

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Knaus, p. 140.
- ² Ibid. p. 147, and Halper and Halper, p. 200.
- ³ Literally, the Four Rivers, Six Ranges—a reference to the Mekong, Salween, Yangtze, and Yalung and the mountain ranges that run across Kham. See Conboy and Morrison, p. 71.
- ⁴ Conboy and Morrison, p. 72.
- ⁵ Knaus, p. 150.
- ⁶ Thondup and Thurston, p. 176.
- ⁷ Ibid. p. 179.
- ⁸ Knaus, p. 143.
- ⁹ Ibid. p. 79.
- ¹⁰ Thondup and Thurston, p. 201.
- ¹¹ Conboy and Morrison, p. 71.
- ¹² Thondup and Thurston, p. 187. According to an estimate provided by the Dalai Lama, the PRC's footprint in putting down the resistance in Tibet resulted in the death of more than a million people. See Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors: The Story of the CIA-Backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion, and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet*, New York, Jeremy P. Tarcher, 2004, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005, the Dalai Lama's foreword, p. xi.
- ¹³ Thondup and Thurston, p. 208.
- ¹⁴ Roger E. McCarthy, *Tears of the Lotus*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 1997, consulted soft cover edition, 2006, p. 231.
- ¹⁵ The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, Geneva: ICJ, 1959, p.71. In its report presented the following year, the Legal Inquiry Committee of the Commission established 'that acts of genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group...' See ICJ, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, Geneva: ICJ, 1960, p. 3. It has, however, been asserted that the CIA had 'assets' in organizations like the ICJ. The CIA handlers are said to have taken small delegations of Tibetans, sympathetic to the Agency, to meet with members of ICJ's Legal Inquiry Committee to report war crimes and the genocidal actions of the PRC in Tibet. The two afore referred books are stated to have been the outcome of ST BAILEY. See Roberts II and Roberts, pp. 81–82, and 87–88. Likewise, the CIA is said to have paid for the printing and distribution of other such books and pamphlets (for instance, *The Dalai Lama and India*, Bombay: Hind Book House, 1959). See Roberts II and Roberts, p. 69. The authors have apparently based their assertions on what

they had purportedly been informed by ‘a friend and confidant’, Howard T. Bane, a one-time CIA operative of the Near East Division assigned to work on the covert operation in Tibet under a cover assignment in the American Embassy in New Delhi between 1959 and 1962. As the authors’ assertion regarding the afore-referred allegation is based on anecdotal evidence, its veracity definitely requires re-verification/corroboration. See Roberts and Roberts, pp. xi, 65, 102–103, and 267.

¹⁶ Roberts II and Roberts, p. 62. From the spring of 1951, the Truman administration had begun making efforts to ensure that the Dalai Lama somehow moves out of Tibet. See Halper and Halper, p. 118. Thinking that the Tibetans might be a naïve lot, the American Ambassador in New Delhi, Loy Henderson, began writing a series of unsigned letters on plain Indian made paper in March 1951 to the teenaged Dalai Lama (who at that time was residing in Yatung), to advise him, among other things, to seek asylum outside so that he could serve the Tibetan people better. See Halper & Halper, p. 119. While Henderson was playing games with the Tibetans, Mrs Henderson, regrettably, was busy lighting fires in Kashmir. See Sandeep Bamzai, *Bonfire of Kashmiriyat: Deconstructing the Accession*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co, 2006, p. 211. Chester Bowles, Henderson’s successor, used Norbu for conveying messages to the Dalai Lama to leave Lhasa. See Knaus, p. 117. Such misguided advice was given in a non-official manner (or orally) so that the Americans would retain the option of denying the contents, if the same at any point were found to be inconvenient. See Halper and Halper, pp. 112–114. However, the Dalai Lama believed that he could serve Tibet better by being at home rather than away. See Knaus, p. 100. It has been suggested that the Americans were so desperate for Indian involvement that they were even willing to consider a plan to kidnap the Dalai Lama from Yatung into India with the help of Heinrich Harrer (a one-time Austrian World War II prisoner of war in India who had fled to Tibet and had ended up becoming a tutor to the Lama) and George Patterson (a former missionary in the Kham region). See Conboy and Morrison, p. 16. Harrer and Patterson, who were later to acquire some fame through the authorship of books relating to Tibet, were on the CIA’s payroll during this period. See Halper and Halper, p. 294 (12/n). From the very beginning the Americans had been making vain attempts to obtain Indian involvement in Tibetan affairs. Suggestions to this effect were to be made from time to time after getting India bogged down with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue, and through the subsequent arming of the latter (Pakistan).

¹⁷ Halper and Halper, p. 213.

¹⁸ Nehru-Chou Talks—VII in New Delhi on 25 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 171. Thondup confirms that armed resistance inside Tibet was slowing down by the mid-1960. See Thondup and Thurston, p. 204. In 1967, Thondup was told that CIA’s support might be coming to an end. See Conboy and Morrison, p. 229.

However in 1969, William Grimsley, CIA's station head in New Delhi, broke the news to Thondup that in their discussions with the PRC, the Americans had agreed to terminate all contact and assistance to resistance groups in Tibet. See Conboy and Morrison, p. 232. In March 1971, prior to the departure of Henry Kissinger on his first secret official visit to the PRC, the Americans concluded that the Tibetan operation 'was an unsuccessful irritant to the PRC.' See Editorial Note, 274: 'Questions Pertaining to Tibet,' FRUS 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, p. 1140, as quoted in Halper and Halper, 229.

¹⁹ Thondup and Thurston, p. 21.

²⁰ Knaus, pp. 320–321.

²¹ Thondup and Thurston, p. 203.

²² Halper and Halper, p. 214.

²³ Thondup and Thurston, p. 202. It has been admitted that the 'operations in Tibet were planned on the mistaken assumption that the resistance forces could—and would—operate in their homeland as guerrillas.' See Knaus, pp. 321–322.

²⁴ Knaus, p. 157.

²⁵ Halper and Halper, p. 214.

²⁶ Knaus, p. 314. Mrs. Thondup was for some time the Principal of a PRC run school in Calcutta. See Halper and Halper, p. 188. Her father, Chu Shi-keui, who had been a KMT general, had crossed over to the PRC. Chu had been tasked to arrange meetings between the PRC and Tibetan officials at a neutral site, such as Hong Kong. See Conboy and Morrison p. 30. The Thondups usually liked to work in concert and, surprisingly, the Americans allowed them to continue to do so, knowing fully well that Mrs. Thondup's credentials were truly suspect. The PRC's ability to get vital information in real time is indicative of the fact that there might have been a mole within the Tibetan camp who might have been betraying them, and providing information to the PRC. There is much speculation that this could have been the reason why the PRC, in some instances, was getting to know beforehand about the moves of the resistance fighters, as had been suspected all along. One could ask: Was this a part of a deliberate American plan to keep the PRC informed? The PRC even came to know of the arrival of Norbu in India from the USA (along with his CIA handler, John Reagan) in late 1956. Please see Chapter III of this monograph. In addition, it also came to know that he (Norbu) had informed his brothers of the promise of American assistance for armed resistance in Tibet (refer Chapter III of this monograph). However, no definitive conclusion can be arrived at this juncture on the issue of information leakage to the PRC on the basis of material available. The matter requires further scrutiny.

PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES OF CIA'S COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

THE PURPOSE OF CIA'S COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

A question that naturally arises is: what then was the aim and purpose of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet? Thomas Parrot remained reluctant to answer direct questions about the American decision to provide training and military equipment to the Tibetan resistance fighters. Although, he was in a position to provide the minutest details and the exact dates on other issues, his reply to the aforesaid question was, 'I'm a bit hazy on that.'¹ Several other former CIA personnel associated with the covert operation interviewed on the events of the time also became more or less silent when asked what exactly was promised to the Tibetans.² The official original stated purpose for the covert operation has not been declassified to date, although the same as enunciated in January 1964 is available.

The purpose of the program at this stage is to keep the political concept of an autonomous Tibet alive within Tibet and among foreign nations, principally India.³

When examined in the light of facts available, this official stated purpose does not appear to carry conviction. First, from the very beginning, the Americans themselves had remained non-committal in respect of the legal status of Tibet despite the outward bitterness that was to ensue between them and the PRC. In keeping with the Cold War aim of detaching the PRC from the Soviets (and getting it into the Western bloc), the Americans chose not to recognize Tibetan independence even though the PRC had not been accorded official recognition, and was considered to be in the enemy bloc. American actions during this period are suggestive of the fact that while they were dogged in pursuit of their aforesaid aim, they simultaneously believed its attainment could be made somewhat easier if the PRC was given sufficient cause to feel a sense of gratitude to them. This, the Americans were to achieve by

remaining non-committal in respect of the legal status of Tibet during debates on the issue in the United Nations and elsewhere. Eventually, it was the CIA's covert operation that contributed to the PRC strengthening its grip over Tibet.⁴ Second, by 1959, the Americans had downgraded the Tibetan issue in the United Nations from one of autonomy to human rights alone,⁵ as the issue of autonomy was never a part of the UN Resolution 1353 (IV) of October 1959, which the Americans helped to sponsor.⁶ Third, at least since 1966, American policy has explicitly recognized Tibet as a part of the PRC.⁷ Fourth, the Indian and PRC's positions on the issue of autonomy of Tibet, although by and large identical, were known. It will be recalled that Nehru had brought up the issues of autonomy and 'democratic reforms' in Tibet during discussions with Chou, as referred to in Chapter III of this monograph. It is possible that these discussions could have helped Mao in making up his mind to announce the 'Great Contraction' in February 1957, whereby further 'democratic reforms' in Tibet were to be suspended.⁸ Fifth, the Americans must have been cognizant of the fact that the question of India standing up in a decisive manner in support of the Tibetans immediately after the humiliating defeat it had suffered at the hands of the PRC in October-November 1962 could not have arisen. What further pressure was sought to be exerted on India through the covert operation is not clear. Evidently, the covert operation's stated purpose does not carry conviction, and requires a greater degree of transparency in its articulation.

In an interview given in January 1995, Sam Halpern (one time a Far East Division operative in the CIA), stated that 'the primary objective (of the covert operation) had little to do with aiding the Tibetans.'⁹ In separate interviews given in November 1995, the Dalai Lama and Thondup said 'that they felt the United States had used Tibet as a pawn in the Cold War and they still resented it.'¹⁰ The Dalai Lama also added 'that the US government had involved itself in Tibet's affairs not to help it but only as a Cold War tactic...'¹¹ Thondup felt let down because the US government did not 'deliver on the promise to support independence for Tibet, and he is adamant in insisting that its representatives made that promise.'¹² In an attempt to clarify the position, John Kenneth Knaus (one-time Head of the CIA's Tibet Task Force) added,

The Americans who negotiated with Thondup in 1956 probably did make promises to back Tibetan independence—promises

that were never honoured... The negotiators were...not legal experts schooled in the differences among independence, autonomy, and self-determination.¹³

However, Knaus has added that Thondup 'is still adamant that the word used in negotiations with the Americans was 'independence,' not 'autonomy,' or 'self-determination'.¹⁴ In 1967, the Russians too were to caution Thondup on the CIA's assistance, and tell him in no uncertain terms that he 'was naïve to think that the Americans had any real intention of helping the Tibetan cause.'¹⁵ By that time, Thondup might have realized that himself. In his twilight years now, Thondup has written, 'that he felt he was holding back, that there were truths he was not telling.'¹⁶ His brother, the Dalai Lama, advised him, 'You must open up.'¹⁷ Consequently, Thondup has this to say,

In all my life, I have only one regret: my involvement with the CIA... My role with the CIA still weighs heavily on my conscience... I have remained silent about this for decades... Our cooperation with the CIA was wrong.. This reality causes me terrible pain...I feel guilty. This is my great regret.¹⁸

OUTCOMES OF THE CIA'S COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

Sino-Indian Conflict of 1962 et al.

It is clear that tension between India and PRC began to mount immediately after the covert operation in Tibet was initiated. The first signs of this tension could be witnessed during the Nehru-Chou talks in New Delhi in December 1956/January 1957 (see Chapter III of this monograph). The covert operation was designed to misled the PRC into believing that the Indians too were involved in that operation,¹⁹ which it chose to interpret as an attempt to undermine its rule in Tibet,²⁰ despite repeated assurances given by Nehru to Chou to the contrary (refer Chapter III and Chapter VI of this monograph). Consequently, the covert operation was to bring the fault lines between the two countries to the surface. Despite best efforts, managing these fault lines became too huge a task because of the overwhelming adverse momentum that had been generated by the covert operation. A major casualty of this operation was a break in Sino-Indian relations that led to a 33 day conflict between the two countries during October-

November 1962. As relations between the two deteriorated, it was but natural that they would adversely impact non-alignment, in which the role of Nehru as its helmsman has been acknowledged. Six heads of government/state—all belonging to non-aligned countries— assembled in Colombo immediately after cessation of the conflict to offer peace initiatives in order to bring about a rapprochement between the two conflicting countries. These peace proposals were turned down by the PRC (refer Chapter VIII of this monograph).

There are two possible explanations for the Americans targeting Sino-Indian relations, both of which in a way appear to be inter-related. First, the Americans had always considered non-alignment as a source of constant irritation and worry. From 1955 onwards, with its pro-Soviet tilt becoming more evident, it began to be perceived as a threat, and therefore an enemy earmarked for destruction. With the assistance of the KMT, a covert attempt had been made to sabotage the Bandung Conference (refer Chapter I of this monograph). The Americans realized that strained Sino-Indian relations would result in the weakening of a pro-Soviet non-alignment, which would help restore bipolarity in world affairs. The Americans believed that this would be to their advantage in fighting the Cold War against the Soviet Union. As was expected, the PRC chose not to participate in the conference of non-aligned countries in Belgrade (September 1961) and also denounced Nehru's role in that conference.²¹ The Belgrade conference was to be Nehru's last triumph in world affairs.²² During the Sino-Indian conflict 'the Government of India found [it]self perilously close to non-alignment deteriorating into isolation.'²³ Sometime later, Nehru had admitted that for arriving at any accommodation with the PRC, India would have to renounce, among other things, non-alignment, implying thereby that, by then, the PRC had distanced itself even further from that bloc.²⁴ Through their covert operation, the Americans succeeded in distancing the PRC from non-alignment, thus fulfilling their aim of weakening that bloc. The aim of keeping PRC away from non-alignment could have been the reason why John F. Kennedy chose to continue with the covert operation after he became President in January 1961— despite expectations to the contrary, especially when it was known by then that armed resistance in Tibet had virtually died down, even before April 1960.

Second, the more or less simultaneous and rapid deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations and Sino-Indian relations created conditions that not only facilitated PRC's detachment from the Soviet sphere of influence but also pre-empted any possibility of it sharing leadership with India within the non-aligned bloc. Thus, the American led Western bloc emerged as the only choice left for the PRC to consider joining. This eventually led to the PRC becoming an American ally against the Soviets.

It is quite likely that the focus of the covert operation may have shifted from ST CIRCUS (armed resistance component) to ST BAILEY (political action and propaganda component) after the armed resistance in Tibet had been put down. This seems to have necessitated a change in responsibility for the covert operation in the CIA headquarters, with the main responsibility for conducting it being taken away from the Far East Division (responsible for Tibet) of the Directorate of Plans (responsible for all covert operations within the CIA) and assigned to the Near East Division (responsible for India) of that Directorate in order to reflect the change in the Agency's emphasis and priorities pertaining to the covert operation.²⁵

It has, however, been asserted that, as a part of ST BAILEY, the publication of speeches, arguments, and statements made by Indian politicians adopting a hard line in support of the Tibetans or against the PRC, was subsidized by the CIA. Several Indian journalists are said to have been on the payrolls of the CIA.²⁶ In addition, it is quite likely that there were many unsuspecting victims of ST BAILEY who might have been sensitized to toe the CIA line without they themselves realizing that they were being used by the Agency. In this regard, during a debate in the Lok Sabha on 29 April 1960 (on a motion moved on the Joint Communiqué issued in New Delhi on 25 April 1960 on the conclusion of the Nehru-Chou talks), a member stated,

...there are powerful forces in our country which do not want (Sino-Indian boundary) settlement, and amendments before the House show how certain vested interests in our country do not desire that there should be a continuation of the (Nehru-Chou) talks...It is quite clear that they do not desire a settlement...They are strongly backed by...sections of the press. They spare no effort to prevent any kind of talk between the two Prime

Ministers taking place...They will again spare no effort to keep up this tension and intensify it, to oppose every constructive step forward.²⁷

Nehru's brief reply to the members of the House who were censuring him on the talks was witty and eloquent and yet somewhat loaded.

I do say in any spirit of criticism—almost everyone read out from long sheets. That is a new thing...this new practice which is going on in this connection, the manuscript eloquence? ... the manuscript eloquence, even though it is manuscript, is wholly unrestrained. I thought one may lose one's temper. But why lose one's temper in a manuscript?²⁸

At this juncture, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty that the acts of the mainstream Indian press, some political parties, parliamentarians, and even civil servants which appeared to be stoking Sino-Indian differences were just part of a democratic process, or whether they were inspired and influenced by ST BAILEY.

Alongside, as a part of ST BAILEY, the Americans were to maintain 'strategic silence' (for understandable reasons)—that is, US official spokesmen were required to refrain from criticizing the PRC or its actions too strongly.²⁹ However, the eventual outcome of the covert operation was that the Sino-Indian boundary question remained unresolved, and Sino-Indian differences continued to widen and deepen. Evidently, while the underlying aim of St BAILEY was to stiffen the backs of Indian negotiators (including Nehru), that of ST CIRCUS was to stiffen the backs of the PRC, including Mao and Chou, in order that the resolution of the boundary question remains elusive. There is no doubt that further work is required on the ST BAILEY component of the covert operation before any definite conclusion can be arrived at regarding its impact on the Indian establishment in respect of the posture adopted by it towards the PRC

The covert operation also created conditions that were conducive for America being replaced by India as the PRC's chief adversary.³⁰ A major American aim during the Cold War was to detach the PRC from the Soviet Union and, by inference, bring it into the American

fold.³¹ With the PRC walking out of the Russian camp and its enmity firmly focused on India, the inimical feelings toward the Americans, it can be said, were to be somewhat dissipated and even deflected on to the Indians. The operation facilitated American moves to gradually draw PRC into its fold. The Americans all along believed that, in a triangular relationship, they, along with the PRC, would be in a better position to exert greater leverage over the Soviets, which in turn would ultimately lead to a more favourable distribution of power.³²

It was not that the Americans who alone found merit in wooing the PRC. The latter too desired a restitution of their old relationship, and accordingly responded whole heartedly. In this regard, the PRC was just as enthusiastic about the Sino-US rapprochement; for Chou is reported to have said that the proposed Nixon-Mao meeting (1972) ‘would shake the world.’³³ Clearly, the Americans had much to gain by creating trouble between India and the PRC. In one way, the Sino-Indian conflict could be viewed as the collateral damage of the CIA’s covert operation in Tibet whose prime aim was to weaken International Communism.

Thondup has shared his understanding regarding the purpose of the covert operation. This corroborates the above.

Initially, I genuinely believed that the Americans wanted to help us fight for our independence. Eventually, I realized that was not true. It was misguided and wishful thinking on my part. The CIA’s goal was never independence for Tibet. In fact, I do not think the Americans ever really wanted to help. They just wanted to stir up trouble, using the Tibetans to create misunderstanding and discord between China and India. Eventually they were successful in that. The 1962 Sino-Indian border war was one tragic result.³⁴

The covert operation also ensured that with India having been humiliatingly vanquished, the PRC would emerge as the sole dominant power in Asia. With Tibet adding the necessary territorial critical mass to it, the PRC was to head towards emerging as a power capable of challenging the Soviets on their frontier, in keeping with the American aim. As subsequent events were to unfold, the PRC would be fattened for that role.

The End of Tibetan Autonomy

The covert operation created conditions that led to the ruthless and vengeful amalgamation of Tibet with the PRC at a time when the PRC was promising ‘autonomy’ to Tibet. In this regard, it will be recalled, the PRC had indicated that she would keep ‘democratic reforms’ in abeyance. Thondup has the following to say in the matter.

Our (Tibetan) cooperation with the CIA provoked the Chinese, providing them the excuse they needed for launching massive reprisals against both the resistance fighters and the Tibetan people...If we had not collaborated with the CIA, if we had not taken the little bit of assistance the CIA was willing to give, the Chinese would not have had an excuse to kill so many Tibetans. Our collaboration led to the deaths of many, many innocent people. It was not only our people the Chinese killed. They tried to kill our culture, too. What I did by working with the CIA contributed to the complete destruction of the Tibetan culture.³⁵

Nehru and other Indian officials had all along maintained that Tibetan armed resistance would be a folly as the PRC could easily put it down (refer Chapter II and Chapter III of this monograph). It is highly unlikely this simple causal relationship had not occurred to the Americans themselves, and that they would not have factored it into their appraisal. Accordingly, through their covert operation in Tibet, the Americans have willingly and knowingly played a catalytic role in making the Tibetans lose an opportunity of working peacefully towards an ‘autonomous’ Tibet. As alleged, they were to use Tibet and India as pawns in the furtherance of their grand aim to weaken International Communism. As subsequent events unfolded, the prospect of an autonomous Tibet appears to have simply vanished from the global agenda, except for some lip service paid from time to time by America and some of its allies.³⁶

The Emergence of the Sino-Pakistan Axis

After the Sino-India conflict of 1962, the realignment in the region resulted in Pakistan replacing India as the PRC’s close friend (and ally?). This was so despite Pakistan’s complicity in the CIA’s covert operation for it had permitted the use of an air facility on its territory for that

operation. The Pakistanis had permitted CIA aircraft ferrying Tibetan resistance fighters, and the use of an airfield in Kurmitola (on the outskirts of Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan, subsequently renamed Bangladesh) to fly them across to Saipan, the CIA training base in the Western Pacific. Thondup himself drove the first group of six resistance fighters from Siliguri to a place on the Pakistani border from where they made their way to Kurmitola with the help of a CIA operative and some Pakistani soldiers.³⁷ (refer Chapter IV of this monograph). A loyal US military ally, Pakistan would not have dared to act if she believed that its warming up to the PRC would be disliked by the Americans. Clearly, the PRC-Pakistan axis could not have been feasible without American approval—and even connivance. The Americans would use this axis for several purposes, including the facilitation of Kissinger's secret official visit to the PRC in 1971.

In May 1959, the Chinese approached the Pakistanis for the first time for taking a new look at their relations.³⁸ While the official-level Sino-Indian talks on the boundary question were in progress during the second half of 1960, the PRC offered a settlement to Pakistan on the boundary between Sinkiang and that portion of Kashmir which is under Pakistani control.³⁹ By mid-1962, the PRC and Pakistan had arrived at a basic understanding regarding the alignment of their common border.⁴⁰ The boundary agreement was formalized in March 1963, a few months after eruption of the Sino-Indian conflict. Since expediency was to be the prime driver of this agreement, Pakistan—either through ignorance of history or political motive—ceded around 13,000 sq. miles of territory⁴¹ to the PRC, over which the historical and legal claim of both parties appears at best to be tenuous.

The Shaksgam Valley, which forms the apex of the great divide between the drainage of Central and South Asia was also ceded to the PRC in a fit of generosity, notwithstanding that there is no evidence available to show that either the Manchu or the ROC had ever set foot in this valley. In this valley, the sources of the Yarkand flow northwards while the tributaries of the Indus flow southwards.⁴² Shaksgam in Ladakhi means 'The Box of Pebbles' or 'The Dry Pebbles'.⁴³ The saving grace of the agreement of March 1963 is that Pakistan's position in Article Six of the Agreement has been described as that of an occupier, and therefore it lacks finality in both fact and law.⁴⁴

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Halper and Halper, p.170.
- ² Ibid. p. 317 (28/n). The former CIA operatives interviewed by the authors are Bill Turner, Chevy Chase, Maryland, March 2005; and Ken Millian, Washington DC, April 2005.
- ³ US Department of State, Office of the Historian, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. XXX, China Document 337, Memorandum for the Special Group, January 1964, at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68vol30/d337>, accessed 25 May 2015.
- ⁴ Knaus, p. 41. There is a background to the American and British not committing themselves in respect of the legal status of Tibet after PRC's 'peaceful liberation of Tibet.' Immediately after the fall of the Manchu, while the Russians were willing to recognize and support Mongolia's independence—declared in December 1911—the British remained hesitant and unwilling to recognise and support Tibetan independence announced the following year, in October 1912. In British calculations, a more cost-effective way was to recognize Tibetan autonomy within the context of ROC's nominal suzerainty, thereby transferring a part of the cost of maintaining Tibet's territorial integrity to it. Due to a breakdown of talks at the Simla Conference of 1913–1914, ROC's suzerainty over Tibet could not be recognised by Britain. Consequently, Tibet enjoyed independence for over 38 years until it was absorbed into the PRC in 1951. See Wendy Palace, *The British Empire and Tibet, 1900–1922*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2005, pp. 89–91.

At the other end, the Americans, in a bid to offset their competitive disadvantage in trade and commerce vis-à-vis other Great Powers operating in the Manchu territories at that time, came out with the 'Open Door' policy in a series of notes (in 1899–1900), proposing equal opportunity in trade and commerce for all those Powers, while simultaneously propagating respect for Manchu China's administrative and territorial integrity. See US Department of State, Office of the Historian, Milestones: 1899-1913, Secretary of State John Hay and the Open Door Policy in China, 1899-1900, at <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/hay-and-china>, accessed 30 May 2015. Later, at the Washington Naval Conference, 1921–1922, the internationalization of the US Open Door Policy in China was effected through the Nine-Power Treaty. See US Department of State, Office of the Historian, Milestones: 1921-1936, The Washington Naval Conference, 1921-1922, at <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/naval-conference>, accessed 30 May 2015.

The American statement recognising Tibet as a part of the PRC first came in 1978, and was reiterated in 1987. See Kalha pp. 30-31.

- ⁵ Carole McGranahan, *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*, Durham: Duke University, 2010, p. 37.
- ⁶ Halper and Halper, pp. 220–221.
- ⁷ Knaus, p. 320.
- ⁸ Goldstein, Vol. 3, pp. 445–466. Mao announced this during his speech, ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People,’ 27 February 1957. See also Deepak, pp. 174–175.
- ⁹ Knaus, p. 139.
- ¹⁰ Ibid. p. 40.
- ¹¹ Ibid. p. 312.
- ¹² Ibid. p. 314.
- ¹³ Ibid. p. 319.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 140.
- ¹⁵ Thondup and Thurston, p. 229.
- ¹⁶ Ibid. p. 311.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. p. 311.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 296–297.
- ¹⁹ See John Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the 20th Century*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 61.
- ²⁰ See John W. Garver, ‘China’s Decision for War with India in 1962’, Georgia Institute of Technology, unpublished paper, 2005, p. 6, as quoted in Bruce Reidel, *JFK’s Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War*, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2015, consulted Indian reprint edition, Noida: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2016, p. 97.
- ²¹ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 207.
- ²² Ibid. p. 186.
- ²³ Ibid. p. 223. Seeking American military aid (and intervention?) at the height of the Sino-Indian conflict did lead to the question whether non-alignment was dead, and that if it survived, it would require a fresh definition. Nehru was candid in admitting that the issue of military assistance had introduced an element of confusion in (the policy of) non-alignment. However, he chose to make a distinction between military assistance in times of war and voluntarily joining military blocs in times of peace. See Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 229.
- ²⁴ Nehru’s interview with H. Bradsher of the Associated Press on 9 September 1963, *The Hindu*, 26 September 1963, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 237.
- ²⁵ Conboy and Morrison, p. 167.
- ²⁶ Roberts II and Roberts, p. 69.

- ²⁷ H. N. Mukherjee, Member of Parliament (Communist Party of India), in a debate on the Nehru-Chou Talks, 29 April 1960, in the Lok Sabha, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 245-246.
- ²⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru, debate on Nehru-Chou Talks in the Lok Sabha, 29 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 276.
- ²⁹ Roberts II and Roberts, p. 82.
- ³⁰ During 1960, the PRC had considered the USA as enemy number one, with India being accorded the second place. The advice given by Mao on the issue was, '...our struggle against India should be subordinated to the struggle against (US) imperialism. Our struggle against India should not go beyond this limit.' See CIA/RSS DD/I Staff Study, 'The Sino-Indian Border Dispute: Section 1: 1950-59', Reference Title POLO XVI, 2 March 1963, p.79; declassified with redactions in May 2007, at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/14/polo-07.pdf, accessed 30 December 2015. Clearly, the limit set by Mao was to be breached by the PRC after receipt of the American assurance of June 1962, referred to in Chapter VII of this monograph.
- ³¹ In order to pinpoint the underlying cause behind what has been referred to as the 'pathology of the decade' (the 1950s in the United States), it needs to be appreciated, and even acknowledged, that the Americans had been driven to a fairly high state of frenzy in lamenting the 'loss' of China—friend and ally and the object of their most vigorous Protestant missionary enterprise. This feeling of 'loss' had most probably been triggered by the unexpected and humiliating debacle of McArthur's US Eighth Army at the hands of the Chinese Communist Forces in Korea. In this defeat, the Americans could see the potential of the PRC as an effective force, which could be used to balance the Soviets in that part of its Asiatic territories, which were co-terminus with those of the PRC. It was in this era—made infamous by the witch-hunts of the US Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and the House Un-American Activities Committee—that the Americans were to initiate a series of initiatives to detach the PRC from the Soviets. Both these countries (Sino-Soviet) were historical and, therefore, natural adversaries on the Eurasian continent since the mid-seventeenth century. See Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the 'Loss' of China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, pp. ix-xii; and Reidel, pp. 12-16, and 19-20. See also, Kurt Campell and Brian Andrews, *Explaining the US 'Pivot' to Asia, The Asia Group*, Chatham House publications, London: August 2013.
- ³² Halper and Halper, p. 229.
- ³³ Kissinger to President, 'My Talks with Chou En-lai,' 14 July 1971, memo, Box 1033, NSC Files, Miscellaneous Memoranda Relating to HAK Trip to the PRC, July 1971, p. 13, at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/ch-40.pdf>.
- ³⁴ Thondup and Thurston, p. 296.

- ³⁵ Thondup and Thurston, pp. 296–297.
- ³⁶ Halper and Halper, p. 248. The Americans enacted the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 (TPA), as a part of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act of FY 2003. It is not clear how the TPA has helped the Tibetans in gaining autonomy or even preserving ‘their way of life’.
- ³⁷ Conboy and Morrison, pp. 43–45.
- ³⁸ Mullik, p. 229.
- ³⁹ It has been suggested that, in 1956, the PRC had acknowledged ‘the people of Kashmir had already accepted their will,’ thereby conveying the impression that they had recognized Indian sovereignty over Kashmir. In 1961, when the Indians protested against moves to directly enter into boundary negotiations with Pakistan on that portion of Kashmir which is under its control, the PRC gave a different interpretation to that acknowledgement. See Mullik, p. 280.
- ⁴⁰ Mullik, p. 280. A Pakistani foreign office spokesman is said to have informed an American official in Karachi (4 February 1962) that his (Pakistani) government’s policy towards the PRC was guided by the adage, ‘the enemy of my enemy is my friend.’ See the CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 2.
- ⁴¹ J.R.V. Prescott, *Map of Mainland Asia by Treaty*, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1975, p. 234.
- ⁴² Kenneth Mason, *Exploration of the Shaksgam Valley and Aghil Ranges*, Dehradun: Survey of India, 1928, consulted reprint edition, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1996, p. iii. Mason discovered that the Shaksgam Valley was the apex of the great water parting between the rivers flowing north into the Tarim Basin and those flowing south into the Indian Ocean.
- ⁴³ Ibid. p. 172.
- ⁴⁴ Prescott, p. 237.

THE IMPACT OF CIA'S COVERT OPERATION ON SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS AND THE REGION (1957–63)

THE PRC AND INDIA 1957 ONWARDS

As the covert operation in Tibet began to take shape on the ground from 1957 onwards, Sino-Indian relations started to take a downward slide.¹ The first change in the PRC's attitude became evident as the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama were not given permission to receive the Indian Political Officer, Sikkim, when he paid a visit to Tibet in September 1957 for, as Mao believed, 'Western imperialists were influencing Nehru and he might side with them.'² Though Nehru had received an invitation from the Dalai Lama through Chou En-lai in January 1958 to visit Lhasa, he could not go there because the PRC seemed to have changed its mind.³ In July 1958, the PRC accused India of failing to take action against Thondup and five others for 'subversive and disruptive activities against China's Tibet region, carried out by the US and the Chiang Kai-Shek clique in collusion with fugitive reactionaries from Tibet [Thondup et al. named] using India's Kalimpong as a base'.⁴

The Indian response of 2 August 1958 was as follows.

The Government of India have no evidence that the US Government and the Kuomintang regime are using Kalimpong as a base for disruptive activities against China's Tibet region. The Government of India will never permit any portion of its territory to be used as a base of activities against any foreign Government, not to speak of the friendly Government of the People's Republic of China.

The Government of the People's Republic of China have mentioned six persons by name [Thondup et al.]...who are carrying on anti-Chinese activities on Indian territory. Some of these

persons have already been warned that if their activities, political or other, are such as to have adverse effect on the relations between India and China, the Government of India will take the severest action against them. The Government of India have no definite evidence that these persons have been indulging in unfriendly activities. Even so, the Government of India proposes to warn them again.⁵

Around this time, when Nehru came to learn of Thondup's appeal for Tibetan independence, his (Thondup's) denouncement of PRC's reprisals in putting down the resistance in Tibet, and his seeking international intervention, he (Nehru) immediately ordered that all Tibetans in the Kalimpong-Darjeeling area should be warned that if any further such public statements were issued, they would be summarily expelled from India. This apart, Nehru issued 25 personal written warnings to various leading émigrés living in the said area. Rather than face the humiliating prospect of expulsion, many émigrés are stated to have left for Tibet on their own accord.⁶

After the Dalai Lama was granted asylum in India on 31 March 1959, the Chinese attacks became more frequent and virulent. The New China News Agency asserted that Kalimpong had been used as a commanding base for the armed rebellion in Tibet, which Nehru strongly refuted.⁷ On 23 April 1959, the *People's Daily* warned that '[t] here can be no greater tragedy for a statesman (Nehru) than miscalculation of a situation! If the Indian expansionists are seeking to pressure China, they have picked the wrong customer.'⁸

In an article first published by the *People's Daily* (and subsequently republished in the *Peking Review*) in early May 1959, Nehru was, for the first time, accused personally of interfering in the PRC's internal affairs; it questioned Nehru's good faith towards the PRC in granting asylum to the Dalai Lama. It was also asserted that the campaign for Tibet's freedom had been built up in India.⁹ A few days later, the PRC's Ambassador—apparently writing with Mao's approval—made the following statement to the Indian foreign secretary.

China will not be so foolish as to antagonize the United States in the east and again to antagonize India in the west . . . Our Indian friends! What is in your mind? Will you be agreeing to our thinking

regarding the view that China can only concentrate its main attention eastward of China, but not south-westward of China ... It seems to us that you too cannot have two fronts ... Will you please think it over?¹⁰

Almost around the same time, in an address to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in September 1959, the PRC Foreign Minister Chen Yi accused the Indian Government of using 'two-faced tactics ... It is, indeed, extraordinary to adopt such tactics towards a friendly country.'¹¹

Nehru's response in the Lok Sabha debate (26 September 1959) was: '...it is the pride and arrogance of might that is showing in their (PRC's) language, in their behaviour to us and in so many things they have done.'¹² Presumably speaking on behalf of the PRC's leadership, Chen gave a hard hitting and a discourteous response (for which he would come to be known): 'Nehru is nothing but an agent of American imperialism? ... Nehru must be destroyed...'¹³

Even after the CIA sponsored armed resistance in Tibet had been put down over two years earlier (before April 1960) by the PLA, Chou once again chose to put the Indians on the defensive when he accused India of complicity in the CIA's covert operation in early August 1962.

India had given shelter to that 'renegade' Dalai Lama and more than a hundred thousand anti-Chinese rebels in India and had given facilities to the Tibetan rebels and Kuomintang thugs and other foreign mercenaries to attack and destabilize Tibet and the lawful presence of the Chinese. China had evidence that American CIA was financing, arming and guiding these heinous anti-Chinese activities. Nehru was either not aware or pretended not to know about such activities against China.¹⁴

When asked as to why had the evidence available with the PRC not been shared with India, and why had he (Chou) not written or spoken to Nehru about it, Chou's response to the Indian charge d' affairs P.K. Banerjee was evasive: he said that 'Nehru had lost control over his Government, and the people of India had lost faith in their Government.'¹⁵ Had it not been known now that the PRC was at that juncture basking in the American assurance of neutrality (received by it

less than six weeks earlier), it would have been difficult to comprehend why Chou was enacting a charade with the Indians: Chou, it appears, was attempting to provide a camouflage to the PRC's true intent, since serious preparations for an attack on India had already begun.

THE PRC AND THE SINO-INDIAN BOUNDARY QUESTION

Initially, in his approach to the boundary question, Chou was not seen to be exhibiting the sort of intransigence or rigidity that he was to display later on when the PRC chose to believe in Indian complicity in the CIA's covert operation in Tibet. Responding, most probably, to Nehru's concerns regarding the appearance of a map (in the *Brief History of Modern China*, 1954) which included large chunks of Indian territory as part of the PRC otherwise depicted in Indian maps as belonging to India — Chou was quick to allay Nehru's concerns. During Nehru's visit to Peking in October later that year (1954) Chou told Nehru that, '[i]t is a historical question and we have been mostly printing old maps ... At least we do not have any deliberate intentions of changing the boundaries as KMT had. The whole thing is ridiculous.'¹⁶

During the Nehru-Chou talks held in New Delhi between December 1956 and January 1957 (refer Chapter III of this monograph), Chou revealed his intention regarding the McMahon Line to Nehru.

... we studied this (eastern sector boundary) question although this (McMahon) Line was never recognized by us, still apparently there was a secret pact between Britain and Tibet and it was announced at the time of the Simla Conference. And now that is an accomplished fact, we should accept it. But we have not consulted Tibet so far. In the last (Panchsheel) agreement which we signed about Tibet, the Tibetans wanted us to reject this Line; but we told them the question should be temporarily put aside ... But now we think that we should try to persuade and convince Tibetans to accept it. This question also is connected with the Sino-Burmese border ... So, although the question is still undecided and it is unfair to us, still we feel that there is no better way than to recognize this Line.¹⁷

Clearly, by December 1956-January 1957, Chou had shown willingness to drop the KMT's territorial claims in the western sector accruing out

of its cartographical aggression, and therefore restricting the PRC's territorial claims in that sector to those supported by Manchu maps alone. Alongside, Chou was inclined to recognize the McMahon Line. However, as the CIA's covert operation in Tibet started gaining traction on the ground, the PRC's position on the boundary question started to rapidly change. The first major strike took place in July 1958. Together with accusing India indirectly of failing to take action against Thondup et al. accused of being involved in subversive and disruptive activities in Tibet and for using Kalimpong as a base for their activities, as already referred to earlier in this Chapter of the monograph—a map appeared in the *China Pictorial Atlas* (an official PRC publication) showing over 50,000 sq. miles of territory (depicted on Indian maps as belonging to India) as a part of the PRC.¹⁸ This included territory south of the McMahon Line. In response to the Indian protest, in its memorandum of November 1958, the PRC's Foreign Office stated the following.

Premier Chou En-lai explained then (October 1954) to H. E. Prime Minister Nehru that the reason why the boundary in Chinese maps is drawn according to old maps is that the Chinese Government has not yet undertaken a survey of China's boundary, nor consulted with the countries concerned, and it will not make changes in the boundary on its own.¹⁹

Puzzled by the PRC's response in which issues regarding surveys and consultations (with concerned neighbouring countries) were sought to be made a precondition for effecting appropriate changes in the ROC's maps, Nehru chose to write to Chou in December 1958.

I could understand four years ago (1954) that the Chinese Government, being busy with major matters of national reconstruction, could not find time to revise old maps. But you will appreciate that nine years after the Chinese People's Republic came into power, the continued use of these incorrect maps is embarrassing to us as to others ... I do not know what kind of surveys can affect these well-known and fixed boundaries.²⁰

In his response (January 1959), Chou maintained that 'the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited ... [and] that border disputes do exist between China and India.'

In other words, by now pretensions were gone that the PRC's maps were merely reproductions of old ROC's maps awaiting revision. On the McMahon Line, Chou, however, continued to remain conciliatory: 'The Chinese Government . . . finds it necessary to take a more or less realistic attitude towards the McMahon Line and . . . cannot but act with prudence and needs time to deal with the matter.'²¹

However, after the uprising in Lhasa (March 1959) and the grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama in India, in a subsequent letter (September 1959), which arrived after a gap of eight months, Chou toughened his stand on the boundary question. He now chose to question the validity of the entire Sino-Indian border, including the McMahon Line. Consequently, there was a reversal of the PRC's existing position on the ROC's maps, and these maps were now confirmed to be correct and valid. The position of the PRC in respect of the McMahon Line also underwent reversal: Chou stated that 'the Chinese Government absolutely does not recognize the co-called McMahon Line.' However, he did add the caveat that 'Chinese troops have never crossed that Line.'²²

In the second-half of 1960, the PRC's officials presented a new map to the Indian side in New Delhi in which the claim line (in the western sector) had been pushed even further westwards and southwards—that is, very much beyond the claim line depicted on the PRC's map of 1956. In this new map of 1960, an additional 3,000 sq. miles of territory was claimed²³ over and above 12,000 square miles already claimed in that sector through the 1956 claim line. It was only a few months earlier (letter of December 1959) when Chou had confirmed to Nehru the 1956 claim line to be correct. In that letter he had written: '[a]s a matter of fact, the Chinese map published in 1956, to which Your Excellency (Nehru) referred, correctly shows the traditional boundary between the two countries in this (western) sector.'²⁴

THE SINO-SOVIET RIFT (1957-1960) AND THE PRC'S ATTEMPTS AT ISOLATING INDIA

The PRC once again vociferously challenged the Soviet position regarding coexistence of the two systems at the World Conference of the Communist Parties held in Moscow in November 1957.²⁵ Sometime later, the Soviets retaliated in their official newspaper *Tass* (September

1959) by establishing Soviet neutrality on the Sino-Indian boundary question in print.²⁶ A few days later, Khrushchev publicly rebuked the PRC by alleging that it wanted to ‘test by force the stability of the capitalistic system.’²⁷ Khrushchev went on to describe the boundary question as a ‘sad and stupid story.’²⁸ He believed that Mao was responsible for the trouble with India ‘because of some sick fantasy’, and wished to drag the Soviet Union into it.²⁹ To shore up Indian morale, Khrushchev himself visited India in February 1960.³⁰ More or less simultaneously, the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) denied charges of Indian provocation, and accused the PRC of ‘narrow nationalism’ in relation to the boundary question and who desired to hamper Soviet foreign policy moves towards the USA.³¹ The Soviet understanding of the Sino-Indian rift was that it was not limited to the boundary question alone but was a part of the PRC’s ambition to expand, to weaken India, and to embarrass them (Soviets) in their efforts to promote peaceful-coexistence and reach a *détente* with the Americans.³² This aspect requires further study.

Coinciding with the period of escalating Sino-Soviet rift, the PRC initiated boundary negotiations with Pakistan, Burma,³³ and Nepal, with whom it was willing to settle the boundary question in a manner similar to what it had all along been indicating to the Indians, prior to the commencement of the CIA’s covert operation in Tibet. It has been suggested that the boundary agreements with these countries appeared to be in alignment with Chou’s maxim: ‘you make friends in order to isolate your enemies.’³⁴

THE NEHRU AND CHOU EN-LAI MEETING: 20-25 APRIL 1960

In view of Chou’s frequent and rapidly changing position on the boundary question, along with his going back on assurances (given in 1954 and 1956) in respect of not claiming territory emanating out of the ROC’s cartographical additions to Manchu maps, and that he was inclined to accept the McMahon Line as a *fait accompli*, Nehru declared in the Rajya Sabha (12 February 1960) that there was no room left for negotiations with the PRC.³⁵ A week earlier, Nehru had written to Chou the following.

You were good enough to suggest that we should meet to discuss these matters ... But I found that the respective viewpoints ... were so wide apart and opposed to each other that there was little ground left for useful talks ... emphasis has been laid on our entire boundary never having been delimited ... On that basis there can be no negotiations ... Nevertheless I think that we should make every effort to explore avenues which might lead to a peaceful settlement.³⁶

When it became known that Nehru and Chou were meeting to discuss the boundary question, Nasser of Egypt urged Nehru to resist the PRC's territorial demands, and Sukarno of Indonesia wrote to Nehru to say that 'Any weakening on your part will have a strongly adverse effect on Asian resistance to Communism.'³⁷ This was the background in which Nehru and Chou began seven rounds of one-to-one talks in New Delhi during April 1960 to explore avenues for a peaceful settlement of the boundary question.

In the opening meeting (20 April 1960), Nehru availed the opportunity of bringing to Chou's attention that

... these developments in regard to our frontier area have been of recent origin ... this border has been peaceful ... for a long time ... these difficulties have been created because of something happening on the other side ... What distressed us most was that if the Chinese Government did not agree with us, they should have told us so. But for nine years, nothing was said, despite our stating our views to them in clear terms... But then, in the last year or two, the frontier question loomed up. When the Chinese maps came to our notice, we brought it to the notice of the Chinese Government many times. The answer we received was that these maps were old and had to be revised, and that the Chinese Government did not attach very great importance to them. Although these maps were old and the Chinese Government themselves had said that they were incorrect and required to be revised, it seemed odd to us that they should continue to be produced ... it was in September last (1959) that, for the first time, it was stated on behalf of the Chinese Government that the area covered by these maps was Chinese territory, and claims

were laid to it. Even after many years of our drawing attention to these maps, nothing was said and, in fact, we were led to believe that the (Chinese) maps were incorrect ... We just could not understand it, and this produced a feeling of great shock, as happens when firm beliefs are upset suddenly.³⁸

Nehru went on to add:

...the frontier was a peaceful one, and there was no trouble and we did nothing on our part to create any trouble. There were not even military personnel. We have only policemen ... the boundary is delimited, not only by history and tradition but also by records of surveys and other uses on the basic fact of the watershed ... the distressing features of recent events has been the shock it has given to our basic policy of friendship and cooperation between our two countries, which has been the corner-stone of our policy ... Those countries or people who opposed this policy naturally wanted to take advantage of our conflict for their benefit.³⁹

Chou readily admitted that the 'internal developments in Tibet' and the 'border question arising out of Tibet' were inter-related.⁴⁰ In an effort to clarify the Indian position on the armed resistance in Tibet, Nehru was to remind Chou that

...when the developments of last year (1959) took place, we in India were disturbed and pained by the accounts which we heard... (and) a feeling that the old cultural relations with Tibet are put an end to... We had no desire to interfere in anything. We, of course, received the refugees and we also received the Dalai Lama... But, we made it clear to them that they must not function in a political way and, broadly speaking, they accepted our advice. But, occasionally they did something which we did not approve and we told them so.

Three and a half years ago, the Dalai Lama, when he came to India, was advised by some of followers not to go back to Tibet, and you then wanted me to induce him to go back and I advised him strongly to go back to Tibet, and he did so ... Our interest in Tibet has nothing to do with politics or territory but is tied up

culturally for ages in the past. Moreover, reports came here of suppression of cultural and religious institutions in Tibet which produced reactions in India. But it had nothing to do with our wish or capacity to interfere in any way in Tibet. In fact, we felt that it will be harmful in every way.

The Chinese Government has said that we incited rebellion in Tibet. All I can say is that there is no basis for that statement ... But to say that the rebellion in Tibet was brought about by people in India is entirely wrong and without foundation.⁴¹

However, Chou insisted that 'the activities of the Dalai Lama and his followers (in India) have far exceeded the limits of political asylum.'⁴² Nehru tried to explain that

... we d[o] not approve; but we cannot stop it legally. We expressed our disapproval in Parliament and outside...but in all these things it is difficult to draw a strict line, because our normal laws here allow a great deal of freedom ...⁴³

Apparently, Chou was not satisfied with Nehru's reply as, in the seventh and final meeting, he (Chou) not only reiterated the assertions made earlier but also went on to elaborate them as well when he said,

...ever since Dalai Lama came to India till today, he has carried on political activities in India and outside far exceeding the scope of freedom set for him by the Indian authorities. Kalimpong still continues to be the centre for conducting anti-China activities by them in India...at the same time they are encouraged...⁴⁴

When Chou met G.B. Pant, the Indian Home Minister, the very next day (21 April 1960), he (Chou) confirmed that 'there were some adverse effects in the course of suppression of the rebel elements but the situation is effectively under control.'⁴⁵

Pant expressed his anguish to Chou,

...there were some reports that in some parts of China it was alleged that India had instigated the revolt in Tibet. There could always be such baseless feelings in some sections of the people; but when such unfounded assertions are shared in responsible

quarters it is a matter of some concern ... it is true India [has] granted asylum to the Dalai Lama and to the Tibetans, but India [has] never thought that her bona fides would be questioned or the treatment meted to the Dalai Lama and the refugees misunderstood ... this d[oes] not amount to instigation of the revolt.

India ha[s] not in any way meddled in the Tibetan affairs except to restrain the Indian people who ha[ve] been stirred at the events which ha[ve] taken place...As regards Kalimpong, there [i]s already a great deal of correspondence to show that Government of India ha[s] taken appropriate action and that there [i]s no truth in the allegation that it [i]s being allowed to be used as a centre for anti-Chinese or rebel activities.⁴⁶

Chou was more forthcoming with R.K. Nehru (a career diplomat and former Indian Ambassador to the PRC, considered close to Nehru). In a meeting between the two later that evening (on 21 April 1960), Chou said that

...in the past year unfortunate events, some differences and misunderstandings ha[ve] occurred between India and China...all that has happened is not what we expected. But it is the logical outcome of the revolt in Tibet and the coming of the Dalai Lama into India ... The revolt in Tibet [i]s very serious and a sad affair, and Dalai Lama's carrying out his revolt gave a serious jolt to our people ... But the Dalai Lama is today carrying out anti-Chinese activities and encouraging the movement for an Independent Tibet. This is beyond the definition of political asylum ... Although we are distressed at the attitude of the Indian Government towards the Dalai Lama, we did not mention this for a long time ... It is beyond our comprehension as to how a country like India can support the tyrannical serf-holders of Tibet.⁴⁷

To a direct question from Ambassador Nehru whether the revolt in Tibet had 'any direct bearing on the border question,' Chou's response was in the affirmative: it was simply, 'Yes.'⁴⁸

When Chou reiterated his misgivings about Kalimpong to the Indian Finance Minister, Morarji Desai, in a meeting between the two held on 22 April 1960, he said,

...two of his (Dalai Lama's) brothers who came from Taiwan and USA met him and encouraged him to rebel and revolt against us. At the same time, undesirable activities were taking place in Kalimpong. As a consequence of all this, rebellions took place in various places in Tibet, including Lhasa ... It is only after the Tibetan revolt that this (boundary) dispute arose ... We say that Kalimpong is a centre of rebellion and we have basis for this and we have mentioned this in our notes. These rebellious activities in Kalimpong started before the revolution in Tibet and continue now, and even these days the two brothers of the Dalai Lama are operating from there.⁴⁹

Morarji-Chou talks tended to get somewhat heated at times. Morarji's candid response to Chou's assertions was the following.

I cannot accept what you have said about the part that India has played in the Tibetan revolt. You are unfair to us when you say that Kalimpong is the centre of the revolt. I do not accept this. Our systems are different and we cannot quarrel about this matter ... we do not seek to liberate other people as you do. I cannot be gagged in my country ... Our sympathies for Tibet are old, very old, and as old as those of China ... The system and ways of Tibetans may be backward but you forcibly imposed your system on their way of life. All that we said was that violence and force should not be used. Nowhere did we say that we are going back from 1950 ('liberation' of Tibet) and 1954 (Panchsheel) Agreement.

The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, is not carrying on any war preparations against you and if he does, he will be stopped ... We have never had any territorial designs on any country and yet we are blamed in China for being imperialists ... Even now, roads are being built (in disputed territory occupied by PRC), and this shows that your occupation of the area is recent ... in spite of what has been said about us in the Chinese Parliament

and in spite of what has been done in Tibet, we have again gone and sponsored your case in the United Nations. We have done this not because we want to oblige you, but because we think this is the right thing to do ... China has not treated us with gratitude and friendship and has occupied our territory, and the Panchsheel is a one sided affair ... We in India do not want to conspire against China; but we cannot prevent people from expressing their opinions ... You are being unjust to us when you say this. I ask you, is the Dalai Lama recruiting any army or is he threatening to walk into Tibet?⁵⁰

Apart from putting the Indians on the back foot by repeatedly making assertions of India's complicity in the armed resistance in Tibet, Chou also took an inflexible stand on the boundary question by going back on his earlier assurances of 1954 and 1956, when he confirmed explicitly what he had implied in his letter of September 1959.

The present (1956) maps published by the Chinese Government are merely repetitions of earlier official maps of China, and this is proof enough that these are not new claims.⁵¹

It seems that Chou was attempting to mentally prepare Nehru for a territorial swap package deal that would entail the PRC letting go of her territorial claims in the eastern sector (held by India) in return for territory in the western sector (held by the PRC), with minor adjustments in both sectors. Foreign Secretary S. Dutt summed up Chou's intent in a circular telegram (27 April 1960) addressed to all Indian Heads of Mission abroad.

It is quite obvious that the Chinese aim is to make us accept their claim in Ladakh as a price for their recognition of our position in NEFA. Throughout the discussions they have invariably connected Ladakh with NEFA and stressed that the same principles of settling the boundary must govern both these areas. It was obvious that if we accepted the line claimed by China in Ladakh they would accept the McMahon Line. There might be need for minor frontier rectifications...⁵²

As observed, the question of the use of Kalimpong by Thondup and some persons associated with the armed resistance as well as the Dalai

Lama's activities (post asylum) in India dominated the Nehru-Chou talks, despite the fact that by then armed resistance had been put down by the PRC. The latter even chose to go back on its assurances on the boundary question. In addition, the PRC was seen to be responding very aggressively, and was occupying disputed territory by force of arms at an alarming rate. Naturally, these developments vitiated the atmosphere prior to the talks resulting in there being no trust left between the two (Nehru and Chou). In this background, 'the (Nehru-Chou) talks did not result in resolving the differences that had arisen.'⁵³ As Nehru was extremely distressed at the PRC's use of aggressive methods, he was firm in excluding any reference to Panchsheel in the Joint Communiqué issued at the conclusion of the talks.

This was so despite Chou's insistence on their inclusion: '... it is a matter of great regret that the Five Principles are not mentioned.'⁵⁴ Nehru's response on the issue was that 'a reference to them (Panchsheel) in the present context would be immediately criticized. The people will say that these principles have been broken, and still we are talking about them.'⁵⁵ Even, a year earlier (May 1959), during a debate in the Rajya Sabha, Nehru had observed that '... terms like Panchsheel had lost their shine and were hurled about without meaning.'⁵⁶

Nehru and Chou had, however, agreed 'that further examination (of the boundary question) should take place by officials of the two sides of the factual material in possession of both governments'. Accordingly, it was also 'agreed that officials of the two governments should meet and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts and other material relevant to the boundary question... This report should prove helpful towards further consideration of these problems by the two governments'.⁵⁷ While there appeared to be an informal understanding that Nehru and Chou would meet again after the officials of the two sides had presented their report on the boundary question, the two somehow were never to meet again. Evidently, the CIA's covert operation in Tibet had produced the desired result.

THE PRC'S ACTION ON THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER

In October 1957, the Sinkiang-Western Tibet road was formally opened, cutting across the plateau of Aksai Chin in disputed territory.⁵⁸

In the summer of 1958, the PRC took an Indian Army lieutenant and his men as prisoners at Haji Langar in disputed territory.⁵⁹ This was to be the first time that the PRC had resorted to aggression of this nature. The PRC even began preventing Ladhakhi (Indian) graziers from entering the traditional pastures.⁶⁰ Sometime after the Dalai Lama's escape to India, the PRC helped herself during the summer of 1959 to the plateau of Lingzitang (south of Aksai Chin), and parts of the Chang Chenmo Valley, even further south.⁶¹ On 21 October 1959, an Intelligence Bureau police patrol of 20 men was ambushed near Kongka La in disputed territory, well beyond the Sinkiang-Western Tibet road passing through Aksai Chin. This resulted in the killing of eight Indian policemen.⁶² This was the first time that blood was spilled by the PRC in disputed territory. By end 1960, the PRC had forcibly occupied a part of the Depsang Plains, and a total of around 7,000 sq. miles of disputed territory in this sector.⁶³ During 1961, the PRC forcibly occupied the pastures between the passes of Lanak La and Dumjor La.⁶⁴

Mountain passes that had served as the traditional boundary between Tibet, India and Eastern Turkestan for centuries were to be forcibly occupied between 1959 and 1962. The traditional boundary was unilaterally redefined on the ground, with the sole aim of controlling the passes so as to deny India access to them. This was done despite the fact that the approach to these passes from the east and north (the Tibetan and Sinkiang sides) is much easier than from the west and south (the Indian side). It was not that the PRC was satisfied with holding the passes; it even wanted the glacis and large tracts beyond them that were meant to point like daggers at Ladakh (India)—Ladakh incidentally in Ladakhi, which the PRC conveniently forgot, stands for a land of mountain passes. The PRC had realized that, as per the dictates of classical military thinking, it is not sufficient for defence purposes to hold the inner side of the mountain unless the external debouches of the passes are controlled; otherwise a fortress (mountain) with no glacis could end up as a military mouse-trap.

Even the territory covering the entire route between both countries was claimed by the PRC. The PRC was now seeking a border of its liking, which would give it a definite strategic advantage not only in terms of defence but also for staging purposes—in the manner that

the imperial power of yesteryears would have sought against an enemy. Consequently, India's access to Tibet and Sinkiang in this sector—which had remained open for over two millennia and more for the exchange of goods and ideas—was suddenly choked.

The PRC had started displaying a far greater degree of belligerence in the western sector after the commencement of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet. Until 1957, the PRC had only occupied the northern part of the plateau of Aksai Chin for the purpose of constructing the Sinkiang-Western Tibet highway. After that period, the process was to get accelerated, especially after the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in March 1959 when the PRC went on a rampage. Even the CIA was compelled to make a quiet admission, when they chose to say,

...it was primarily as a result of the Tibetan revolt of March 1959 that the Chinese moved stealthily to establish even more posts at scattered points in Ladakh, particularly in the more inaccessible valleys. The 21 October 1959 (Kongka La) clash was a clear indication that the Chinese had moved forward on the western sector, as the clash occurred near Hot Spring, southwest of their previous Kongka Pass positions. These thinly scattered posts may have been set up even beyond the "line" of actual control claimed by Chou En-lai in 1956 and confirmed by him in November and December 1959 ... the Chinese continued to inch forward in the western sector. They pushed their map claim westward, beyond their 1956 claims, taking in more Indian territory than ever before since 1949.⁶⁵

It is estimated that the PRC forcibly occupied around 12,000 sq. miles of territory in the western sector by the time the Sino-Indian conflict erupted, of which around 6,000 sq. miles had been forcibly occupied between November 1959 and 20 October 1962.⁶⁶ Apart from these forcibly occupied territories, the PRC had taken over another 13,000 sq. miles of territory in the Kashmir area under Pakistani control in the western sector.⁶⁷

After having got what it wanted in the western sector, the PRC shifted its attention to the McMahon Line in the eastern sector. Captain A. H. McMahon, the British-Indian Foreign Secretary, had drawn a line on the map that was appended to the Notes exchanged with the Tibetan

plenipotentiary in March 1914 in Delhi. This line depicted the British-Indian Tibetan boundary in that region, the underlying intent of which was that it should be in alignment with the crest-ridge of the Himalaya (based on the watershed principle).⁶⁸

Taking into account the thickness of this Line, the scale on which the map was to be drawn became significant. To complicate matters, the crest-ridge in this sector is broken in a number of places by river gorges and bisecting ranges. And, because there were gaps in geographical knowledge regarding these, the thick line provided ample room for disputing the boundary on the ground—especially if the spirit behind the crest-ridge watershed principle were to be disregarded. Apart from disputing the validity of the Line, the PRC was to dispute the crest-ridge watershed principle as well.⁶⁹ In this sector, the PRC was to claim not only the passes but the southern slopes of the Himalayas as well.

Nehru had to remind Chou that

...our northern border is also associated with high Himalayan ranges...if this normal principle, which is generally adopted by nations in such circumstances, is given up, the whole country would be at the mercy of the power which controls the mountains (passes) and no Government can possibly accept it.⁷⁰

The first armed clash took place at Longju in the eastern sector on 25 August 1959 —after the uprising in Lhasa of March 1959 and the grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama in India. In this connection, the PRC's 'border guards' had challenged an Indian picket which was not only south of Migyitun (the last village in Tibetan territory on the Indo-Tibetan frontier) but also south of the McMahon Line and, in the process, captured four Indians. The very next day, they opened fire at the Longju post (in Indian territory), compelling the Indians to vacate it.⁷¹ Both these places south of Migyitun according to the PRC were north of the McMahon Line.⁷² In response, the Indians urged the PRC to adopt a peaceful approach for the resolution of the boundary question.

If the Chinese Government have any dispute about any point on the international frontier, it should be possible to resolve the

dispute by negotiations between two friendly governments rather than by the unilateral application of force by one side against the other. The Government of India strongly urge the Chinese Government to adopt this peaceful approach⁷³

THE SINO-SOVIET SPLIT (1960-1961)

During the 3rd Congress of the Rumanian Worker's Party in Bucharest in June 1960, Khrushchev told the PRC delegation in unequivocal terms that since only Indians had been killed in the border clashes, it clearly showed that the PRC had attacked India.⁷⁴ Khrushchev continued to charge the PRC leaders of being warlike and adventurist.⁷⁵ Khrushchev went a step further in stating that the PRC's way of handling the Sino-Indian boundary question was a 'tactical error', and a clear sign of 'Chinese nationalism.'⁷⁶ At the Warsaw Pact Congress in February 1960, there were hard exchanges between Khrushchev and Peng Chen, the head of the PRC's secret police and a politburo member of the Communist Party of China.⁷⁷ Around this time, the withdrawal of Soviet technicians was beginning to take place from the PRC. Mao was to declare that '[w]e spent the whole of 1960 fighting Khrushchev.'⁷⁸ This was the precursor to a complete break in their relationship. The process of the PRC exiting the Soviet bloc and entering the American led Western camp appears to have taken concrete shape the very next year, in 1961.⁷⁹ However, the final blow was struck at the 22nd Congress of CPSU in October 1961, from which Chou was to make a dramatic walk out. Immediately thereafter, the PRC in its usual fashion was to make territorial claims on Russian territory, and both countries moved troops to their respective frontiers.⁸⁰

ENDNOTES:

¹ It has been suggested that sometime between June and November 1957, the PRC's foreign policy underwent a radical transformation from one which was cautious and consolidating to that which became increasingly aggressive. Today, it is possible to connect this change with the commencement of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet on the ground. See D. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 66, as quoted in, Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Vol. 3*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 78.

² Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 39.

- ³ Mullik, pp. 212–213.
- ⁴ Note given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 10 July 1958, in MEA, White Paper No. 1, pp. 60-62. The Indians were to take immediate action. The Foreign Secretary addressed the Chief Secretary, Bengal (since Kalimpong happened to be under the jurisdiction of that state) for taking necessary action in the matter. The very next day Nehru followed it up by a letter to the Chief Minister, Bengal. See Gopal, Vol. 3, pp. 81 and 81 (38/n).
- ⁵ Note sent by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Embassy of China, 2 August 1958, in MEA, White Paper No. 1, pp. 63-65.
- ⁶ George N. Patterson, *Requiem for Tibet*, London: Aurum, 1990, as quoted in Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors: The Story of the CIA Backed Tibetan Freedom Fighters, the Chinese Invasion, and the Ultimate Fall of Tibet*, New York: Penguin Press, 2004, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2005, p. 243.
- ⁷ Mullik, pp. 222–223.
- ⁸ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 1, p. 18.
- ⁹ Mullik, p. 228.
- ¹⁰ Statement made by the Chinese Ambassador to the Indian Foreign Secretary, 16 May 1959, in MEA, White Paper No. 1, p. 76.
- ¹¹ Mullik, p. 239. Chen Yi's remarks are contained in Chou En-lai's report to the standing committee of the National People's Congress which was published in the *Peking Review*, 15 September 1959. See Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 97
- ¹² Lok Sabha Debates, Second Series, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 8 and 108–129, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 98.
- ¹³ *Khrushchev Remembers: the Last Testament*, Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1974, pp. 306-311, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 99 (133/n).
- ¹⁴ P. K. Banerjee, *My Peking Memories of the Chinese Invasion of India*, New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1990, p. 54.
- ¹⁵ Banerjee, p. 54.
- ¹⁶ Nehru-Chou Talks in Peking on 20 October 1954, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 27, p. 19. Chou's statement is important in as much as he dropped the KMT's territorial claims accruing out of their cartographical aggression and, therefore, by implication restricted the PRC's territorial claims emanating out of Manchu maps alone.
- ¹⁷ Nehru-Chou Talks—I in New Delhi between 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 36, p. 600.

- ¹⁸ Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China in India, 21 August 1959, in MEA, White Paper No.1, p. 46. See also, Mullik, pp. 234–235.
- ¹⁹ Memorandum given by the Foreign Office of China to the Counsellor of India, 3 November 1958, in MEA, White Paper No.1, p. 47.
- ²⁰ Letter from Nehru to Chou En-lai, 14 December 1958, in MEA, White Paper No.1, p. 51.
- ²¹ Letter from Chou En-lai to Nehru, 23 January 1959, in MEA, White Paper No.1, pp. 52–54.
- ²² Letter from Chou En-lai to Nehru, 8 September 1959, in MEA, White Paper No. II, ‘Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged Between the Governments of India and China, September–November 1959,’ New Delhi: Government of India, 1959, pp. 27–33.
- ²³ Mullik, pp. 309–310. Gopal differs with Mullik in estimating the extent of additional territory sought by the PRC through its claim line of 1960 at a lower figure of 2000 square miles. See Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 206.
- ²⁴ Letter from Chou En-lai to Nehru dated 17 December 1959, in MEA, White Paper (No. III), ‘Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged Between the Governments of India and China, November 1959–March 1960,’ New Delhi: Government of India, 1959, p. 53. Up to the second-half of 1960, the PRC’s territorial claim line had been limited to the frontier depicted on its 1956 map.
- ²⁵ Mullik, pp. 186–187. Mullik suggests that Nehru might possibly have influenced the Soviet position on the issue of the coexistence of the capitalistic and socialist systems. See also Note No. 3/n of Chapter III. It would be interesting to explore this matter further.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 187. Soviet neutrality on the border question was interpreted by the PRC to indicate that they would not side with it in a conflict with India, which opportunity the Americans could avail of by attacking her from the east.
- ²⁷ CIA/RSS DD/I Staff Study, ‘The Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3: 1961–62’, Reference Title POLO XVI, May 5, 1964, p. 6; declassified with redactions in May 2007, at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/14/polo-09.pdf, accessed 21 December 2015.
- ²⁸ CIA Staff Study on The Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2, p. 21.
- ²⁹ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 99.
- ³⁰ Mullik, p. 187.
- ³¹ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 7.
- ³² Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 133.

- ³³ In October 1960, the PRC concluded a boundary treaty (subsequently a boundary Protocol in October 1961) with Burma based on the same McMahon Line watershed principle in a spirit of friendship and mutual accommodation, emanating out of the Five Principles (Panchsheel) of Peaceful Coexistence. See Prescott, pp. 347—374.
- ³⁴ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 134.
- ³⁵ Rajya Sabha Debates, 12 February 1960, Vol. 28, pp. 602-626, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 133 (30/n).
- ³⁶ Letter from Nehru to Chou En-lai, 5 February 1960, in MEA, White Paper No. III, pp. 83-84.
- ³⁷ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2, p. 45. Even the Indian President, Rajendra Prasad, made an emotional plea to Nehru only seven days before the two Prime Ministers were scheduled to meet: he wrote ‘that future generations would have no cause to blame those who took part in the freedom struggle for any “capitulation” now.’
- ³⁸ Nehru-Chou Talks—I in New Delhi on 20 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 18–20.
- ³⁹ Ibid. pp. 20–21.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 21.
- ⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 22-23.
- ⁴² Ibid. p. 23.
- ⁴³ Ibid. p. 23.
- ⁴⁴ Nehru-Chou Talks—VII in New Delhi on 25 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 169.
- ⁴⁵ G.B. Pant-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 21 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 47.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 38-39 and 48-49.
- ⁴⁷ R.K. Nehru-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 22 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 62–64.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 64.
- ⁴⁹ Morarji Desai-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 22 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 95 and 98.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 96-99.
- ⁵¹ G.B. Pant-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 21 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 44.
- ⁵² S. Dutt, Foreign Secretary’s Circular telegram to Heads of Missions, 27 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 237-238.

⁵³ The Joint Communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Nehru-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 25 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 184-185. In the one but penultimate meeting, Chou put forward the draft terms of reference for the proposed officials' group on the Sino-Indian boundary question in the form of five-points. The first of these points was to state that 'our boundaries are not delimited and, therefore, there is a dispute about them.' See Nehru-Chou Talks—V in New Delhi on 23 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 121. In the next (sixth) meeting, Chou somehow gained the impression that the five points were acceptable to Nehru. See Nehru-Chou Talks—VI in New Delhi on 24 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 146.

A relatively junior Indian Foreign Service officer Jagat Mehta (Deputy Secretary, China desk in the Ministry of External Affairs), raised an alarm in regard to the inclusion of the term 'dispute' in the five-points as being contrary to the stand taken by Nehru in Parliament. The Indian Foreign Secretary, S. Dutt, though not fully convinced of Mehta's line of reasoning, let Mehta do the talking to Nehru. At one stage Nehru went on to display annoyance when he said, 'It is obviously a dispute; otherwise why am I talking to Chou En-lai and wasting his time and mine?' Mehta showed a fair amount of perseverance when he chose to pursue Nehru to repeat his advice in front of some of his (Nehru's) Cabinet colleagues and, in the process, annoyed Nehru. Mehta earned a mild reprimand from the Foreign Secretary for his indiscretion. See Jagat Mehta, *Negotiating for India: Resolving Problems through Diplomacy*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2005, pp. 80–83. In the seventh and final meeting with Chou, Nehru informed him that he could not agree to the inclusion of the five-points in the Joint Communiqué which was to be issued later that day. See Nehru-Chou Talks—VII in New Delhi on 25 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 158. Chou returned disappointed, and gave vent to his feelings in Kathmandu, en route to Peking, when he accused Nehru of being 'not so friendly towards China.' See Chou En-lai's press conference in Kathmandu on 27 April 1960, reported in the *People's Daily*, 28 April 1960, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 137.

⁵⁴ Nehru-Chou Talks—VII in New Delhi on 25 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 169.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 162.

⁵⁶ Rajya Sabha Debates, 4 May 1959, Vol. XXV, pp. 1671-1684, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 91.

⁵⁷ Joint communique dated 25 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 184.

⁵⁸ Mullik, pp. 197-198.

⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 202-203.

- ⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 237.
- ⁶¹ Ibid. p.241-243.
- ⁶² Ibid. pp. 309-310.
- ⁶³ Ibid. p. 627.
- ⁶⁴ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 305.
- ⁶⁵ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2, pp. 61–62.
- ⁶⁶ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 305.
- ⁶⁷ Prescott, p. 234. Mullik gives a lower figure of 2,000 sq. miles of territory ceded by Pakistan to the PRC in 1963. See Mullik, p. 280. The difference between the two sets of figures of territory ceded by Pakistan, as given by Prescott and Mullik, is 11,000 sq. miles and would need to be reconciled.
- ⁶⁸ CIA Memorandum OCI No. 4069/62, 'Historical Sketch of the Sino-Indian Dispute,' 18 December 1962, p. 2. Declassified September 1999, at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC-0000255696.pdf, accessed 25 January 2016.
- ⁶⁹ Anon., *The Boundary Question between China and Tibet: A Valuable Record of the Tripartite Conference between China, Britain and Tibet held in India, 1913-1914* (Peking: publisher's name omitted, 1940), pp. 108-109, at <http://www.pahar.in/>, accessed 14 April 2016. The Himalayan crest-ridge watershed principle was discussed between A. Rose of Britain's China Consular Service in his capacity as Assistant to A.H. McMahon, British India's Foreign Secretary and its representative to the Tripartite Conference between British India, China and Tibet (held in India during 1913-1914) and Ivan Chen, Republic of China's representative to that Conference in Simla on 15 April 1914. It was conceded that '(crest-ridge) watersheds should be used as frontier limits wherever possible, as they were permanent and intelligible to the mind of the local tribesmen, whilst they avoided the necessity for elaborate frontier commissions.' While agreeing to delimitation on the watershed principle, Chen wanted the same principle to be extended as well to the proposed frontier between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet.
- ⁷⁰ Nehru-Chou Talks—III in New Delhi on 21 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 55
- ⁷¹ Note given to the Foreign Office of China by the Indian Ambassador, 28 August 1959, in MEA, White Paper No. 1, pp. 44-45.
- ⁷² When Captain F.M. Bailey travelled to Migyitun, a village to the south of the sacred district of Tsari in the valley of the Tsangpo (September 1913), he found about 20 scattered houses there. Bailey noticed that the residents of Migyitun were somewhat different from the Tibetans to the north. Unlike the Tibetans, these people were not seen to be wearing boots; they also smoked a different sort of pipe which was similar to the one used by the non-Tibetan animist Mishmi and Abor (the latter renamed now as Adi and Galo) tribesmen to the south. Moreover, and importantly, unlike the

residents of Tsari who were prohibited from both hunting and ploughing, those of Migyitun freely indulged in these two activities. The residents of Migyitun informed Bailey that the frontier of Tibet lay just below their village, although it was undefined. The tribesmen, whose nearest village was six marches away, came up the river in winter to trade, but were not allowed above Migyitun. The residents of Migyitun paid an annual tax of 144 goats to the tribesmen, who also received gifts from the Tibetan government every twelfth year for providing safe passage to pilgrims on their way to the holy lake. In addition, the residents of Migyitun paid taxes to the Dzongpons (Tibetan district officers) of Kyimdong and the Guru Namgye districts in Takpo province. Bailey considered Migyitun to be on the edge of No Man's Land between the Tibetans and the non-Tibetan tribesmen. It became slowly clear to Bailey that, geographically, he had reached the natural frontier between Tibet and India. Accordingly, Migyitun was assigned to Tibet, and the area south of that village—as also informed by the village headman—was placed in India. Longju was in the area shown to belong to India. Bailey had assisted McMahon with the delimitation exercise pertaining to the McMahon Line. In making his recommendation regarding the natural geographic divide, Bailey did recognize the fact that there could be some ethnic spill over (meaning thereby a few pockets of non-Tibetan animist tribesmen would be there north of this divide while a few Tibetans would be there south of it) and a sovereign spill over (likewise for taxes).

Captain H.T. Moreshead, Bailey's teammate, had helped map the area forming the geographic frontier between Tibet and Assam during the second-half of 1913. See F.M. Bailey, *Report on an Exploration on the North-East Frontier 1913*, Simla: Government Monotype Press, 1914, consulted reprint edition, New Delhi: Isha Books, 2013, pp. 8–10, 15–16, 19, 26, 33 and 69. See also F.M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet*, London: The Travel Book Club, 1957, pp. 156, 202–203.

Interestingly, Pakistani officials called on Bailey, then living in retirement in Norfolk, to consult him on the McMahon Line. As Pakistan is geographically far removed from that Line, the visit might have been at the behest of the PRC. See Arthur Swinson, *Beyond Frontiers: The Biography of Colonel F.M. Bailey, Explorer and Secret Agent*, London: Hutchinson and Co., 1971, p. 231. In the last pilgrimage that took place in 1956, the PRC availed the opportunity to station spies in the form of medical teams, ostensibly to attend to sick pilgrims. The information collected of the terrain etc. by these medical teams came in useful when the PRC was to launch an armed assault on Longju in August 1959. In 1962, the PRC captured this area. It is said the PLA was maintaining an advance post at Migyitun. See Toni Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, consulted reprint edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 169-170.

⁷³ Note given to the Foreign Office of China by the Indian Ambassador, 28 August 1959, in MEA, White Paper No.1, p. 44.

- ⁷⁴ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 141. At the same Congress, Khrushchev publically denounced Mao as 'an ultra-leftist, an ultra-dogmatist and a left revisionist.' See Sir Percy Cradock, *Know Your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World*, London: John Murray, 2002, p. 167, as quoted in Andrew and Mitrokhin, p. 273 and 551 (17/n).
- ⁷⁵ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 5.
- ⁷⁶ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2, p. 80.
- ⁷⁷ Although, the Soviet press ignored Peng's speech, it appeared in full in the PRC's newspapers. See John Byron and Robert Pack, *The Claws of the Dragon: Kang Sheng—The Evil Genius behind Mao and His Legacy of Terror in People's (Republic of) China*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 250-253, as quoted in Andrew and Mitrokhin, pp. 272-273 and 551 (16/n). However, Mullik believes the hard exchanges between Khrushchev and Peng Chen took place in Bucharest in June 1960. See Mullik, pp. 187-188.
- ⁷⁸ John Gittings, *The World and China 1922-72*, New York: Harper Row, 1974, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 141.
- ⁷⁹ Mullik, p. 188. It can be inferred that the withdrawal of Soviet technicians from the PRC started taking place from July 1960 onwards. See Andrew and Mitrokhin, p. 273. In 1961, Britain agreed to sell the long-range variant of the Vickers-Armstrong four-engine turbo-prop Viscount transport aircraft, capable of flying non-stop to Lhasa, thereby directly contributing to the PRC's military capability in Tibet, while the CIA's covert operation there was still in progress. See Kalha, p. 24. America's closest ally would not have agreed to sell dual-purpose transport aircraft at this crucial juncture unless there was a unanimous agreement between the two (allies) on the said sale. This sale also confirms that the CIA's covert operation in Tibet was intended for purposes other than assisting the Tibetans. Ironically, in the same year, India had agreed to the purchase of AN-12 transport aircraft for its Air Force from the Soviets. Again, in 1961 itself, Pakistan (another American ally), had voted in favour of the PRC's admission to the United Nations, a step Pakistan would never have initiated on its own volition, unless it had received prior American approval for it. There is also the possibility of this step having been taken at America's behest. For these and other reasons referred to in this monograph, the year 1961 could be considered as the inflexion-point when the PRC walked out of the Soviet camp to be formally accepted in the Western camp. See CIA Staff Study, Section 2: 1959-61, p. 74.
- ⁸⁰ Gittings, 1974, p. 255, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 141 and 188. By 1968, about one-third of Soviet military power was deployed along the 4000-mile frontier with the PRC. Eventually, in March 1969, the Sino-Soviet forces clashed on the island of Damansky in the Ussuri River, resulting in the death of 23 persons. See S.C.M. Paine, *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 354, and Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, pp. 35-36, as quoted in Andrew and Mitrokhin, p. 279, and 552 (39/n), and 552 (41/n).

THE SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT: 20 OCTOBER 1962—21 NOVEMBER 1962

AMERICAN ASSURANCE OF NEUTRALITY IN THE EVENT OF A SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT (OF JUNE 1962)

The Americans initiated a calibrated and layered response to the PRC by commencing the US-PRC Ambassadorial (John Cabot-Wang Ping-nan) talks in Warsaw in 1955.¹ On 23 June 1962 in Warsaw, the PRC's interlocutor Wang Ping-nan was reassured by his US counterpart John Cabot that he was 'authorized to state that the US Government had no intention of supporting any GRC (Formosa) attack on the Mainland (PRC) under existing circumstances', and that the GRC (Formosa) was 'committed not to attack without [American] consent'.²

This American assurance to the PRC could not have been given in the context of the fear of a Soviet attack as at that juncture there was no imminent threat (to the PRC) from the Soviets. Right from the commencement of the Ambassadorial level talks (that had begun seven years earlier in 1955), the Americans had been periodically reassuring the PRC that the existing position on the ground would not be changed by force of arms. So, in addition, there was no American threat to the PRC warranting the afore stated assurance. However, the Americans were well aware that Sino-Indian relations were passing through a very critical phase. They knew that any assurance of this kind would have serious repercussions on Sino-Indian relations. The American assurance was given in an act mirroring the three little words 'Et tu brute'—that is, Formosa (read as Americans) would remain neutral in the event of a Sino-Indian conflict. Not expecting such an assurance, Wang Ping-nan seems to have been somewhat puzzled, for he then asked Cabot to repeat his statement. Cabot wrote,

Wang requested me to repeat my last statement . . . I then referred to our repeated proposals for agreement renouncing use of force

... I summarized by saying we had no intention of committing or supporting aggression against his side anywhere.³

Not fully convinced of what he had just heard, Wang chose to pose the same question once again, and the assurance he received for the third time from Cabot was,

...we had no intentions of supporting an attack on Mainland under existing circumstances. If GRC (Formosa) forces invaded Mainland it would be contrary to their commitments to us and I (Cabot) said I did not believe they would do it ... Reverting to an earlier remark by Wang that our (Sino-US ambassadorial level) talks could not continue if an attack were made, I (Cabot) said such attack if made by GRC (Formosa) would be without support of US ... I (Cabot) pointed out that I was sure we (US) would disassociate ourselves in word and deed from any attack and would seek to restore peace.⁴

To ensure that the PRC would receive the aforesaid assurance, the Americans took the unprecedented step of asking the British to convey the same (assurance) to the PRC through their mission in Peking.⁵ Even though Wang had not sought a similar assurance from a higher US authority, Kennedy on his own accord chose to repeat the assurance to the press four days later.⁶ It appears quite clear now that the Americans in choosing to give the said assurance, when they were fully cognizant of its consequences, were apparently complementing the aims of their covert operation in Tibet. The PRC's Foreign Minister Chen Yi commented thrice in Geneva on the American assurance as being 'not bad'.⁷ Once again, the Indians found themselves caught unawares of this assurance and the impact it would have on them in the coming months.

From the look of things, the Indian establishment either missed taking cognizance of the American assurance of neutrality given to the PRC in the event of a Sino-Indian conflict or they did not fully comprehend its true intent and purpose. In this connection, M.J. Desai, the Indian Foreign Secretary, is reported to have shared his assessment of the PRC's intentions towards India with the US Ambassador J.K. Galbraith only seven days prior to its (PRC's) attack, when he is reported to have stated that there would be no extensive PRC reaction (to the Indian

decision to defend the McMahon Line) because of the fear of the US, ‘It is you (America) they really fear’ clearly displaying his ignorance of the PRC’s intentions, which, as already referred to, had been triggered by the American assurance of end June 1962.⁸ Understandably, Galbraith chose not to share his assessment of the PRC’s intention to attack India with Desai—for five days prior to the PRC’s attack he (Galbraith) prepared the State Department for the drill to be followed in the event of the impending attack. In his telegram, Galbraith suggests, ‘we will be restrained in our expression in the matter (regarding the PRC’s attack on India)...’ He added, ‘we should be careful to avoid any suggestion that Chinese trouble may force a reconsideration of India’s foreign policy (of non-alignment).’ He further writes that ‘We will not offer assistance. It is the business of Indians to ask. We will listen sympathetically to their requests.’⁹ The contents of this telegram in a way sum up the American game-plan vis-à-vis India.

With the American assurance in its pocket, the PRC felt safe and was no longer rattled by the prospect of a two-front conflict with India. In this regard, the PRC had all along been extremely apprehensive of an attack across the sea from the east (from Formosa or even US led). In the meeting with S. Radhakrishnan, the Indian Vice President, in April 1960, Chen Yi had observed, ‘There was no need for China to hurt India and create two fronts—one against the western powers and another against India.’¹⁰ On another occasion, in his talks with Swaran Singh, a Minister in Nehru’s cabinet during the same period, Chen Yi stated, ‘...that if we cross the Himalayas, the United States would attack us from the east and we cannot defend ourselves.’¹¹ It is this apprehension which was to be dispelled by the American assurance of end June 1962, paving the way for the PRC’s preparations for an attack on India.¹²

AN EMBOLDENED PRC BECOMES STRIDENT

An emboldened PRC made its first move in the valley of river Galwan, a tributary of the Indus, in the Indian part of the watershed in the western sector in July 1962.¹³ To add to it, the PRC issued a stern warning to the Indians through the *People’s Daily* of 9 July 1962, which read, ‘It seems that the Indian Government has taken China’s restraint as weakness ... The Indian authorities had better think three times about this matter.’¹⁴

From then onwards, the PRC felt further emboldened to move beyond the claim line of 1956, and occupy territory up to its revised claim line of 1960.¹⁵ More importantly, after receiving the American assurance of end June 1962, the PRC was not seen to be exhibiting the same level of keenness for a settlement as it had displayed earlier. Banerjee was instructed to personally convey a message to Chou that the Indians were prepared to send a ministerial-level delegation to Peking to discuss, without preconditions, all bilateral problems and disputes. Instead, Chen Yi received him and informed

...that it (the Indian proposal) was not acceptable unless the Government of India unequivocally and publically withdrew all fictitious and false claims on Chinese territory. The present proposal was loaded with ammunition for Indian propaganda against the Chinese. It was a trap and therefore not acceptable.¹⁶

Never before had the PRC laid down such impossible pre-conditions for talks. Soon thereafter, on 26 July 1962, the Indians said,

The Government of India are prepared, as soon as the current tensions have eased and the appropriate climate is created, to enter into further discussions on the India-China boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials as contemplated during the meeting of Prime-Minister Chou-En-lai with the Prime Minister of India in (April) 1960.¹⁷

The PRC's response received on 4 August 1962 was.

The Chinese Government approves of the suggestion put forth by the Indian Government in its note for further discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries. There need not and should not be any pre-conditions for such discussions.¹⁸

The Indians replied on 22 August 1962 to the PRC's note (of August 4, 1962) that

there need not and should not be any pre-conditions for such discussions; and yet the Chinese Foreign Minister ... proclaimed ... that 'to wish that Chinese troops would withdraw from their (occupied) territory is impossible ... No force in the world could

oblige us to do something of the kind (withdrawal from territory occupied by force).’ The Chinese note itself states that the Chinese Government cannot give consideration to the (Indian) suggestion ... regarding mutual withdrawals in this region (western sector) ‘neither in the past nor in the future.’ These are pre-conditions ... It is obvious that it is the Chinese who are laying down impossible pre-conditions and asking for acceptance of the Chinese claim regarding the boundary in this region (western sector) before further discussions start.¹⁹

The American assurance, it can be inferred, had a triple effect. First, it cleared the way for the PRC to start preparing for the military option to supposedly settle accounts whenever an appropriate opportunity would arise. Second, the PRC felt emboldened to occupy more territory beyond its claim line of 1956. Third, it led to the PRC’s inflexibility in the negotiation process, which could have even blocked the possibility of any last minute resolution of the boundary question.

INDIA DEFENDS THE McMAHON LINE

At the western extremity of the Indian part of the Himalayan crest-ridge in the Assam Himalayas (eastern sector) is the tri-junction where India, Bhutan and Tibet meet. The Thag La (Pass) is on this watershed. However, the manner in which the McMahon Line had been delineated (depicted cartographically) on the map by McMahon in 1914, it is open to interpretation whether this Line could also appear south of the Thag La. On 8 September 1962, the PRC troops took positions on the north bank of the Namka Chu (River) on the southern Himalayan slope, south of Thag La. It must be said of the Indians that they had lost their will to resist the PRC’s nibbling of territory in the western sector, and that the Indian border posts could only move back and watch while the PRC helped itself to large tracts of territory. In regard to the defense of the eastern sector, Nehru believed that it would be a localized affair and, on 11 October 1962, he is quoted as having said the following:

I do not want the troops to commit suicide, and I do not want to put them to unnecessary risks ... If it is considered that this position (Namka Chu) can be held, it should be held and there is no reason why we should retreat and yield further territory to the Chinese.²⁰

Thus, after being bullied and thoroughly humiliated in the western sector, the Indians decided that they would neither launch an offensive nor withdraw from their position on the south bank of the Namka Chu, south of the Himalayan crest-ridge watershed in the eastern sector.²¹ For the purpose, the 7 Infantry Brigade of the Indian Army was assigned the task. To accommodate a crony general,²² the IV Corps was hurriedly cobbled out of the 4 Infantry Division, with bits and pieces added from here and there.

SOVIET ASSURANCE TO THE PRC DURING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS (OCTOBER 1962)

With the Cuban missile crisis intensifying between 16-28 October 1962, the PRC got the opportunity it had been looking for. In a bid to garner the PRC's support against the Americans in the event of a US-Soviet conflict, the Soviets were willing to drop their pro-India tilt on the Sino-Indian boundary question. Khrushchev appears to have had a personal meeting with the PRC's Ambassador, Liu Hsiao in Moscow sometime between 13-16 October 1962, and made him a quid pro quo offer.²³ It has been suggested that the PRC's attack on India on 20 October 1962 came at this time 'because of the opportunity provided (to) them by the Cuban missile crisis.'²⁴ Apart from the Cuban missile crisis and the Soviet quid pro quo, the ground had already been prepared by the Americans for the PRC. Confirmation of American neutrality came to the PRC in the form of the warm response that Pakistan—an American military ally and 'strong loyal point'²⁵—was willing to give to its overtures. Accordingly, the decks had been cleared for the PRC and time was ripe for an attack on India.

THE PRC'S ATTACK ON INDIA, 20 OCTOBER 1962

While the process of moving Indian troops to the Line was still in progress, the PRC's attack began at daybreak on 20 October 1962. A division level²⁵ battle could have been fought in the eastern sector but the Indians appear to have been caught unawares. Some local commanders were caught in two minds as they were expecting to be withdrawn, and so had not even prepared a defense.²⁶ Very briefly, more or less the entire 4 Infantry Division was annihilated,²⁷ in addition to having people from across the world witness a very humiliating Indian defeat. Although, the Indians fought a brigade level war in the

western sector,²⁸ which too they were to lose, it must be said that they put up stiff resistance here, and the loss has to be attributed to other than the human factor. During the 33-day conflict, another over 2,000 sq. miles of territory was captured by the PRC in the western sector. Some of this territory was even beyond the PRC's revised claim line of 1960.²⁹ When the PRC believed that it had attained its objectives with 33 days of fighting, it declared a ceasefire and offered a limited withdrawal from occupied territories. However, the PRC did not honour this in full. In its ceasefire proposal, the PRC maintained that it would be withdrawing to the 'line of actual control' as on 7 November 1959 in the western sector and north of the McMahon Line in the eastern sector. This offer would have involved PRC's withdrawal from about 6,000 sq. miles of forcibly occupied territory in the western sector (from the date indicated by it to the date of the conflict) apart from the over 2,000 sq. miles, also in the western sector, forcibly occupied during the period of the conflict. However, the Colombo peace proposals required the PRC to withdraw to the position on the ground as existing on 8 September 1962, which would have involved its withdrawal from only 2,700 sq. miles of territory as compared to the much higher figure arising out of its cease fire declaration. Somehow, even the lower figure of the peace proposals was not acceptable to the PRC. Most probably, the PRC shunned these peace proposals as it could afford to ignore the non-aligned bloc because of the indulgent attitude of the American led West towards it at this juncture.³⁰

CONSEQUENCES OF LIMITED US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO INDIA

Since the Soviets still appeared to be in a firm bear hug with the PRC at the time of the Sino-Indian conflict, Nehru turned to the Americans for help.³¹ The Americans responded on 20 November 1962, after their naval blockade of Cuba was lifted. Help did come from the Americans in the form of military assistance worth US \$ 60 million. This military assistance was in response to an Indian request for US \$ 500 million worth of weapons, spread over five years.³² The Indians had not considered their request unreasonable since Pakistan—a country a fraction of India's size—had already received military assistance worth US \$ 800 million.³³ It seems quite likely that American military assistance was kept to the bare minimum in order to not only not displease

Pakistan but also the PRC. Thus, it can be said that it was provided only for a cosmetic effect. The Indian request for fighter aircraft, air defense equipment, and transport aircraft were all turned down.³⁴ Thus, the US chose to dump India, a fellow democracy, in its darkest hour, after having had the unique distinction of engineering that hour. Additionally, in American strategic thinking, Pakistan was all along assigned the role of balancing India most probably to give the PRC greater strategic space to counter Soviet adventurism on the Eurasian continent.

However, the Soviets very soon realized that they were better off with their Indian friends than with ally, the PRC. Khrushchev spoke of the PRC's 'madness' in attacking India.³⁵ Whatever military hardware the Americans were either unable or unwilling³⁶ to provide to India, the Soviets were more than helpful in giving it and that too in Indian currency. These events could be taken as the basis and the beginning of a long Indo-Soviet military partnership.

THE PRC'S REJECTION OF THE COLOMBO PEACE PROPOSALS

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Sirimavo Bandaranaike and the leaders of five other non-aligned countries—Burma (subsequently renamed Myanmar), Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia and the then United Arab Republic (Egypt)—met in Colombo in December 1962 to discuss peace initiatives with a view to bringing India and the PRC to the negotiating table. As a prerequisite to the talks between the two countries, the Colombo powers called upon the PRC to give up territory forcibly occupied by it after 8 September 1962.³⁷ This required Chinese withdrawal from 2,700 sq. miles of forcibly occupied territory in the western sector.³⁸ In addition, they suggested that, without prejudice to the final alignment or the claims of the two sides, the PRC should withdraw 20 kms (12.5 miles) in the western sector while the Indian forces should not move forward. In the resulting demilitarized zone, civilian posts could be established on both sides.³⁹ In the eastern sector, India could move up to the McMahon Line, except in the Thag La and Longju areas.⁴⁰

THE PRC'S REJECTION OF INDIA'S OFFER OF ARBITRATION

While accepting the Colombo proposals, Nehru (letter of 1 January 1963) suggested to Chou that in the event of failure of the talks, the matter could be referred to the International Court of Justice.

I have suggested to our (Indian) Parliament that, if necessary, we would be prepared to refer these (boundary) questions for decision on the merits to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, which is an impartial tribunal.⁴¹

Chou's reply which was received after a gap of two months on 3 March 1963 circumvented the issue of making a reference of the boundary question to the International Court of Justice.⁴² On 3 April 1963, India repeated its offer of making a reference regarding the Sino-Indian boundary question to an international authority, including the International Court at The Hague:

Both India and China can agree to make a reference, on the differences regarding the boundary, to the International Court of Justice at The Hague and agree to abide by the Court's decision. If this method of peaceful settlement is, for any reason, not acceptable to the government of China, both parties can agree to some sort of international arbitration by a person or a group of persons, nominated in the manner agreed to by both Governments, who can go into the question objectively and impartially and give their award, the award being binding on both Governments.⁴³

Like the PRC's current stance in respect of the South China Sea, it rejected international arbitration even at that juncture. The PRC's response of 20 April 1963 was: 'If in future India continues to make such unreasonable haggling, the Chinese Government will not reply anymore'.⁴⁴ In other words, being in full knowledge of the fact that she was being wooed by the Western powers and had their good will, the PRC chose not only to reject the Colombo peace proposals but also the offer of arbitration. It is quite likely that, had it been otherwise, it might have agreed to the Colombo peace proposals and the offer of arbitration.

THE PRC FREEZES THE CEASE-FIRE LINE

Under the circumstances, the PRC saw merit in freezing the cease-fire line, whereby it could have all the territory it wanted. Chou wrote in a highly mocking and contemptuous manner to Nehru the following:

Now, thanks to the initiative and efforts of the Chinese side (attack on India), there exist a de facto cease-fire line and a de facto disengagement along the border. Even if the officials' meeting between the two sides is not held for the time being, the already eased border situation will not become tense again...⁴⁵

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ US Department of State, Office of the Historian, Milestones: 1953-1960, US-China Ambassadorial Talks, 1955-1970, at <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/china-talks>, accessed 25 May 2015.
- ² Ambassador John Cabot's Telegram from Warsaw to the Department of State, 23 June 1962, in Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1961-63, Vol. XXII, Northeast Asia, Document 131, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v22/d131>, accessed 19 August 2016. The previous evening—that is on 22 June 1962—Averell Harriman, US Assistant Secretary of State, in a meeting with the Soviet Ambassador, A.F. Dobrynin, informed him that Cabot in Warsaw would be telling the PRC's interlocutor Wang in respect of the assurance that the GRC will not attack the PRC. See 'Memorandum of Conversation between Harriman and Dobrynin in Washington on 22 June 1962,' in FRUS, 1961-1963, VOL. XXII, Northeast Asia, Document 127, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v22/d127>, accessed 19 August 2016. Wang later acknowledged in his book that the American assurance had played a 'very big role' in the PRC's decision to commence preparations for an attack on India. See Wang Bingnan, *Zhong-Mei Huitan Jiunian Huigu/Recollections of Nine Years of Sino-US Talks* Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe, 1985, pp. 85-90, as quoted in Kalha, pp. 144 and 264 (94/n).
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the UK, 22 June 1962, in FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XXII, Northeast Asia, Document 128, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v22/d128>, accessed 19 September 2016. Kalha has perhaps unwittingly attempted to dilute the significance of the American assurance of end June 1962 to the PRC by stating that otherwise there could have been the possibility of a Sino-Soviet rapprochement, which the Americans wanted to avoid. Kalha's

line of reasoning does not appear to be in alignment with the facts. First, by the second-half of 1960, it had become evident to most observers that the Sino-Soviet split had become more or less irreversible—by then all Soviet technical experts stationed in the PRC had already been recalled by Moscow. Second, by 1961, the PRC was making a purchase of dual-purpose long-range transport aircraft from Britain, thereby marking its entry into the western camp. Third, there was no imminent threat of a Soviet invasion to the PRC at that juncture which warranted an assurance of the sort given. Fourth, the question of the PRC mulling over the issue of returning to the Soviet camp in mid-1962, when the American assurance was given, just did not arise. On the contrary, the Sino-Indian relationship was passing through a critical phase, and the assurance given to the PRC could have had only one outcome (which must have been known to the Americans): that it would ignite the Sino-Indian boundary question. See Kalha, p. 144.

- ⁶ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 32. Alongside, Kennedy's press conference, the American embassy in Taipei was advised to communicate the following to the President, GRC: '...the (US) President wishes to convey to Chiang Kai-shek his strong feeling that it is of utmost importance that both the United States and the GRC avoid giving the appearance of contemplating any aggressive action against the mainland at this time. Unless we both agree that conditions justify it, we are not prepared to take action and therefore we must not appear to be aggressive.' See Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China, 28 June 1962, in FRUS, 1961-1963, Vol. XXII, Northeast Asia, Document 138, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v22/d138>, accessed 19 August 2016.
- ⁷ Ibid. p. 32.
- ⁸ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 51.
- ⁹ Telegram from the Embassy of India to the Department of State, 15 October 1962, in FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XIX, South Asia, Document 175, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v19/d175>, accessed 11 October 2016. As per Galbraith's plan, Nehru wrote two desperate letters dated 19 November 1962 to Kennedy seeking military assistance. See Gopal, Vol. 3, pp. 228-229. Since 2010, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum has been making available the two Nehru letters in full. See Reidel, p. 135.
- ¹⁰ See *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 34-35.
- ¹¹ Ibid. p. 134.
- ¹² CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 30-32.
- ¹³ Ibid. pp. iii, and 32-33. See also, Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi to the Embassy of China in India, 10 July 1962, in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), White Paper No. VI, Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged between the Governments of India and China,

November 1961-July 1962, New Delhi: Government of India, 1962, p. 81. The corroborative evidence of the inflexion point being reached when the PRC decided to move away from pressure on the ground to extensive military action against India is given as July 1962. See H. C. Hinton, *Communist China in World Politics*, London, 1966, p. 297, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 213.

¹⁴ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 33. In July 1962 in Geneva, Chen Yi is reported to have been 'threatening,' and V.K. Krishna Menon, the Defence Minister in Nehru's cabinet and prime Nehru aide on foreign affairs, was 'somewhat shaken'. See also CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 39. This sort of strident posturing would have been inconceivable in the period prior to the said American assurance.

¹⁵ Notes given by the Ministry of External Affairs New Delhi to the Embassy of China in India, 28 June 1962, 12 July 1962, 14 July 1962, and 24 July 1962, respectively, in MEA, White Paper No. VI. pp. 71-72, 83-84, 88-90, and 93-94. See also CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 36.

¹⁶ Banerjee, pp. 51-52.

¹⁷ Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi to the Embassy of China in India, 26 July 1962, in MEA, White Paper No. VII, pp. 3-4. See also CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 41.

¹⁸ Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 4 August 1962, in MEA, White Paper No. VII, pp. 17-18.

¹⁹ Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 22 August 1962, in MEA, White Paper No. VII, pp. 36-37.

²⁰ Mullik, pp. 363-364.

²¹ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 220.

²² Mullik, p. 356. Lt. General B. M. Kaul assumed charge of the newly announced IV Corps on 4 October 1962, just 16 days prior to the PRC's attack. The strain of the command appears to have been a bit too much for him. As a result, he had to be evacuated on medical grounds from Tezpur to Delhi on 18 October 1962, just two days prior to the PRC's attack. See Mullik, p. 372. Until 25 October 1962, when he was temporarily replaced by Maj. General Harbaksh Singh, Kaul had been permitted to direct the operations in the eastern sector during the first five days of the conflict from his bed in New Delhi. See Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 233, and Mullik, pp. 372 and 381. After Kaul felt that he was fit to resume duty, he was re-sent to command the IV Corps on 29 October 1962. However, during this period of convalescing, when Thapar gently broached the subject with Kaul of returning to his previous assignment in the Army HQ, Kaul had his way and declined the offer. See B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story*, New Delhi: Allied Publisher, 1967, pp. 397-398. Consequently, both, the Defense Minister, V. K. Krishna Menon, and the Chief of Army Staff, General P. N. Thapar, were unwilling to give the command of the IV Corps to another suitable person and, in the process, demonstrated that

they were willing to subordinate national interest to individual interest. See Mullik, pp. 379–380.

- ²³ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, pp. 66–68. Since at least, 1959, the Indians had been depending on the Soviets for putting brakes on the PRC for any hostile misadventure it might have been contemplating. According to a Soviet diplomat who defected to the West in 1959, an informal ‘gentleman’s agreement’ had been arrived at between the Soviet Union and the PRC, whereby India and countries lying to its (India’s) west were recognized as falling within the Soviet sphere of influence and those to its east within the PRC’s sphere of influence. See A. Kaznacheev, cited in R.H. Donaldson, *Soviet Policy towards India: Ideology and Strategy*, Boston: Harvard University Press, 1974, p. 152, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 80.
- ²⁴ S. A. Dange, *New Age* (supplement), 21 April 1963. It is not clear from Dange’s statement whether he was privy to or not to the Soviet quid pro quo. See *Ibid.* p. 69.
- ²⁵ Mullik, p. 573.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 373–374. The Commander of the 7 Infantry Brigade, Brigadier J. P. Dalvi, was under the belief that he had been given an impossible task. His pessimism was to spread to all officers and ranks. Consequently, as the Brigade had not prepared a defense plan, it could not put up any worthwhile resistance. Most of its officers and men were either killed or captured. Dalvi too was taken prisoner of war. Sometime later, Dalvi wrote a book attempting to justify his action. See *Himalayan Blunder*, Bombay: Thacker, 1969, consulted reprint edition, Dehra Dun: Natraj Publishers, 1997. In his book, Dalvi conveniently overlooks the fact that the decision to hold Namka Chu and the Tsangley sector was a military one and had been taken by General Thapar, Lt. General L. P. Sen, GoC-in-C Western Command, and Lt. General Kaul in Tezpur on 17 October 1962. However, before the meeting, among the three named officers, Kaul had been maintaining that holding Namka Chu was not tenable. It appears that Kaul had been pressurized into accepting the views of the two senior generals during the said meeting. See Mullik, pp. 369–370. That day itself, Kaul suffered a breakdown, and had to be evacuated the very next day from Tezpur to New Delhi, as referred to in Note No. 19/n above.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 419. The Commander of the 4 Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Niranjana Prasad, appears to have been also affected by the all-round pessimism. See Mullik, pp. 378–379. Prasad was relieved of his command during the conflict period itself on the charge of ‘betraying lack of leadership during action’. See Kaul, p. 399. During the Indo-Pak war of 1965, Prasad was to exhibit the same diffidence on the Lahore front as well, when he was once again stripped of his command. See Mullik, p. 388. Maj. Gen. A.S. Pathania, Prasad’s replacement proved no better. He chose to move his headquarters with Kaul’s assent to Dirang Dzong, the lowest point on the road between Se La and Bomdila. It proved to be a fatal decision—and in negation of the whole

concept of 'fortress defence' that had been planned around the Se La. This tactic would have been a replay of General William Slim's tactic, employed in saving Imphal and Chittagong in the battle against the Japanese during World War II. See Lt. Gen. Harbaksh Singh, 'NEFA1962: How a Foolproof Defence Plan Collapsed', *Indian Express*, 25 April 1979, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 224.

- ²⁸ Ibid. p. 378. See also, Khera, p. 172.
- ²⁹ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 305.
- ³⁰ Gopal, Vol. 3, pp. 234–235.
- ³¹ Ibid. p. 228–229.
- ³² Ibid. p. 252.
- ³³ Ibid. p. 252.
- ³⁴ Mullik, p. 573.
- ³⁵ Gopal, Vol. 3, pp. 252–253. Nehru's note dated 11 January 1963 on S. A. Dange's account of his visit to the Soviet Union and the record of Khrushchev's talks with Indira Gandhi on 27 July 1963.
- ³⁶ It has been suggested that the Americans were willing to give aircraft free of cost; but the offer was not acceptable in principle. See Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 217. It is possible that the Soviet offer was preferred because it allowed the licensed production of MIG-21s in India, whereas the Americans, especially in that period, believed in not parting even with shop-floor level defence technologies to non-allies.
- ³⁷ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 225.
- ³⁸ Ibid. p. 235.
- ³⁹ Ibid. p. 235.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 235–236.
- ⁴¹ Letter from Nehru to Chou, 1 January 1963, in MEA, White Paper No. VIII, p. 51.
- ⁴² Letter from Chou to Nehru, 3 March 1963, in MEA, White Paper No. IX, pp. 3–4.
- ⁴³ Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 3 April 1963, in MEA, White Paper No. IX, Notes, 'Memoranda and Letters Exchanged Between the Governments of India and China, January 1963–July 1963,' New Delhi: Government of India, 1963, p. 35.
- ⁴⁴ Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 20 April 1963, in MEA, White Paper No. IX, p. 39.
- ⁴⁵ Letter from Chou to Nehru, 3 March 1963, in MEA, White Paper No. IX, pp. 3–4. Having already forcibly occupied around 14,500 sq. miles of disputed territory in the western sector, the PRC believed its interest lay in freezing the ceasefire line. See Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 236.

Chapter VIII

THREE EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE EVENTS LEADING TO THE SINO-INDIAN CONFLICT

During the past 50 years and more, numerous books, papers, and articles have been written on the reasons for the Sino-Indian conflict. The spin imparted to these by each writer has been dependent on which side of the divide he fell into. Since the relentless wooing of the PRC by the West began sometime after cracks had started developing in Sino-Soviet relationship, the possibility of some western writers being dictated by the imperatives of the Cold War to adopt a line generally in alignment with the PRC's interpretation of events cannot be denied. That they have sometimes even gone beyond that line cannot also be ruled out. This is being mentioned merely because, as the CIA has said, the Indian claim

...has had the making of a better case, but (India) has failed either to promote it effectively or to defend it on the ground. China, with a more dubious legal case, has promoted its 'reasonableness' position skilfully and demonstrated its power to enforce it.¹

No doubt, it is for such reasons that the Chinese have earned the reputation for being past masters at playing a weak hand to maximum advantage.²

THE 'FORWARD POLICY' SCHOOL

The great advances made by the PLA in the guise of border guards south of the McMahon Line during the Sino-Indian conflict proved that the PRC's attack was much more than what she has always claimed it to be - a mere counter-attack. In this regard, the PRC's Foreign Minister, Chen Yi in an interview in February 1963 was compelled to admit that the PRC 'had 'prepared'—but had prepared only a defence.'³ In the same interview, Chen was seen to be boasting that he could demonstrate Indian aggressiveness by just 'leafing through the Indian

newspapers of May and June 1962.⁷ Perhaps, he could do so by merely clipping and collating Indian press reports, and twisting them around into the context of presumed Indian aggressiveness on the border.⁴ It is a bit perplexing that the PRC should have made suggestions of an Indian attack when it had all along held the view that the Indians, ‘neither by temperament nor capability’ could ever be a threat.⁵ From a document seized from the PLA by the Tibetan resistance fighters, it has become evident that, in the PRC’s own assessment, the Indians did ‘not have the strength to openly declare war on us (PRC) and attack us militarily on a large scale.’⁶

However, it was known that the bulk of the Indian Army was committed on the border with Pakistan and the line of control in Kashmir, and that the over 2,000-mile-long Sino-Indian frontier was essentially being patrolled by a handful of men of the Intelligence Bureau and the Assam Rifles who, as already suggested, were to be no more than mere pins on the map as border defence. Even with an ill-equipped infantry division (not trained in mountain warfare) thrown in at the last minute, the capability for military action—whether offensive or defensive—was simply just not there. The possibility of India adopting a strident posture on the frontier could not have arisen. For the sake of argument, even if the contrary were true, the PRC could not have been in a position to pick and choose thousands of square miles of territory in the western sector between 1957 and 1962 and declare it with impunity as its own.

No doubt there was to be some sabre rattling at that time by a few Indians in Parliament, the press, and by others, including some army personnel. This was duly reported in a free press, as would have been the case in any democracy. Such utterances without corresponding military action on the ground cannot in any manner be construed as a military threat. Instead, it was a classic case of diplomacy without a shield which, because of sudden and unexpected international developments, detrimental to Indian interests and favourable to the PRCs’ was to backfire. As a matter of fact, because of the severe military imbalance, India was naturally at a great disadvantage as it had to yield to the PRC on many issues—for instance, the recognition of the PRC’s sovereignty over Tibet without receiving in return a corresponding recognition by the PRC of India’s sovereignty over

Kashmir.⁷ It was within a matter of days of the Soviet *quid pro quo* that the PRC's attack began (20 October 1962). In the light of these facts, to suggest that the Indians provoked the PRC by their so-called 'forward policy' does not stand scrutiny. On the contrary, what emerges is that the PRC's attack was deliberate and pre-meditated which was made possible by certain international developments favourable to it; and preparations for it had begun in right earnest from end June 1962 onwards. In attempting to lift the fog of war, the PRC's President Liu Shao Chi explained that one main purpose behind the PRC's attack was to demolish India's 'arrogance' and 'illusions of grandeur'. He added that the PRC 'had taught India a lesson and, if necessary, they would teach her a lesson again and again.'⁸

It is the CIA which has to be considered as the originator of the 'forward (military) policy' school.⁹ This is clear from its three-part staff-study on the Sino-India Border Dispute covering the period 1950-1962, completed between March 1963 and May 1964, and declassified with redactions in May 2007, referred to earlier in Chapter I (refer Note No. 35/n), Chapter V (refer Note No. 30/n) and Chapter VI (refer Note No. 27/n) of this monograph. This study, among other things, has attempted a cover up by sanitizing the CIA's covert operation in Tibet. Through a cherry picking of facts, the use of unsubstantiated information, the distortion of facts as well as contradictory statements and even clichés, the CIA tries to build up a case justifying the PRC's interpretation of events that would serve a triple purpose. One, it would facilitate a quiet burial of the CIA's aims and intentions in the covert operation. Two, it would help in diluting somewhat the American commitment made in respect of the recognition of the McMahon Line. Three, it would mislead scholars into believing an erroneous interpretation of events, thereby making their task that much more difficult for arriving at the truth.

For the attainment of its (CIA's) ends, the blame has been put squarely on India by projecting a contrived scenario at a purely tactical level, wherein Indians are shown to be provoking the PRC by their 'forward policy' on frontier patrolling in disputed areas—even as the PRC was busy forcibly occupying that territory at will and declaring it with impunity as its own. Plausibility is sought to be given to this storyline by picking up bits and pieces of purported Indian official records from here and

there, to cobble together a narrative in which India is shown to emerge as the culprit. The staff study goes on to say, ‘The border dispute was in this way (‘forward policy’) transformed by the Indians from a primarily political quarrel to a serious military confrontation.’¹⁰ Moreover, the staff study is also full of contradictions: it admits that ‘...the Chinese continued to inch forward in the western sector. They pushed their map claim westward, beyond their 1956 claims, taking in more Indian territory than ever before since 1949.’¹¹

In addition, the CIA admits that ‘the Chinese case on Ladakh derives its force from the matter of actual control,’ thereby conceding that what the PRC could not achieve across the negotiating table, the PLA could get for it on the ground.¹² Similar contradictions appear elsewhere in the paper as well. For the purpose of fulfilling its aims, the CIA deliberately adopts the position of the proverbial blind man who, having once caught the tail of an elephant, goes on to describe the ‘creature’, he believes he is holding.

Six years later, a one-time journalist, Neville Maxwell, wrote a popular account of India’s so-called ‘forward policy’ in which he even surpassed the CIA in playing with available Indian material.¹³ To some extent, Maxwell is only partially to blame as he might not have been privy to all facts and circumstances at the time of writing his book (some 47 years ago), which are currently available in the public domain. Apart from these facts and circumstances, there have been many subsequent accounts written by persons connected with the covert operation in Tibet which were not available to him. Maxwell’s book is reported to have ‘influenced’ Henry Kissinger, which would (naturally) endear him to his Chinese hosts during his maiden official secret visit to the PRC in 1971. Kissinger is reported to have told Chou that ‘reading this book showed me I could do business with you people.’¹⁴

It needs to be said that the Americans had officially recognized the McMahon Line as the traditional international border between India and Tibet in the eastern sector during the period of the Sino-Indian conflict itself.¹⁵ It appears that either Kissinger was not aware of the American official position regarding the McMahon Line or he deliberately chose to deflect attention away from it by making positive references to Maxwell’s book. Kissinger’s bias or ignorance or both vis-à-vis India does not appear to have mellowed down over time. In

his recent book, he has erroneously asserted that 'It (British India) also edged India's borders with China north towards Tibet—an issue that arose again in China's war with India in 1962.'¹⁶

In sum, the PRC occupied by force around 12,000 square miles of disputed territory in the western sector, and took the Longju area in the eastern sector before the commencement of the Sino-Indian conflict. During this period, the PRC had not only changed its claim line but was also not in a position to provide India with a precise delineation of the boundary, as claimed by it. To the contrary, Indian patrols were showing the flag in a peaceful manner in what was considered as Indian territory; and yet, the CIA—and later Maxwell—chose to interpret the showing of the Indian flag as 'forward policy.' In this context, Krishna Menon's retort, although simple, was a no-nonsense one: 'no country can follow a forward policy in its own territory.'¹⁷ The eminent soldier Lord Michael Carver was to describe it as 'militarily nonsensical.'¹⁸ That India could never have considered resorting to a 'forward policy'—with all its provocative ramifications—is also borne out from the fact that there had been a continuous reduction in its defence expenditure (as a percentage of its total budget) during the three year period, 1959-1962.¹⁹ Additionally (refer Chapter I of this monograph), Nehru was busy downsizing the Indian Army. Clearly, Nehru was not thinking in terms of provoking an attack on the PRC and nor was he expecting one from it, since he was seen flying off to Colombo just eight days prior to the attack. What on the contrary emerges is that the belligerent manner in which the PRC occupied large tracts of territory in the western sector, especially after commencement of CIA's covert action in Tibet, requires to be labelled as PRC's 'forward policy'.

Clearly, the explanation for the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 lies not in the narrative of the 'forward policy' school, but elsewhere.

THE 'INDIAN BETRAYAL' SCHOOL

From 1957 onwards, Mao and other PRC's leaders found it convenient to target India for the trouble they were facing in stabilizing their rule in Tibet. In this regard, at a Politburo meeting in March 1959, Chou asserted that armed resistance in Tibet was 'connected with the Indian Government ... this was the reason why the commanding centre of

the rebellion has been established in Kalimpong in Indian Territory.²⁰ In May 1959, Mao, Chou and Chen Yi met with senior diplomats of the Soviet bloc to explain the PRC's appreciation of India's alleged involvement with the CIA's covert operation in Tibet. In this meeting, Chou speculated that Nehru's 'unspoken purpose' was to 'establish a buffer zone (in Tibet) under India's sphere of influence with Tibet as its protectorate ... it is also the centre of controversy between China and India.'²¹ In October 1959, in Peking, Mao and Liu Shao chi informed Ajoy Ghosh, a prominent leader of the Communist Party of India, that reliable PRC sources had reported that the Indians were aiding Tibetan resistance fighters.²² Teng Hsiao-ping did not mince words when he asserted that there was 'no doubt that the Indian Government was behind the rebellion...and, when the time comes, we certainly will settle accounts with them.'²³

Several years later, Chou encountered a sympathetic ear in the person of Neville Maxwell in Peking to whom he gave an interview which was published in the *Sunday Times* on 19 December 1971. This was immediately after Kissinger's secret official visit, when he is reported to have said that 'Nehru ha[s] been intriguing with the Dalai Lama since 1956, with big power backing and encouraging them to rebellion.'²⁴ All along, the PRC has chosen to interpret CIA's covert operation as an Indian attempt to undermine its rule in Tibet. The official PLA history of the Sino-Indian conflict adopts a similar line as they too view it as an Indian attempt to turn Tibet into a 'buffer zone.'²⁵ Consequently, even today, Chinese authors are more or less unanimous in their opinion

that the root cause of the 1962 war was an Indian attempt to undermine Chinese rule and seize Tibet. Their narrative views the control of Tibet as one of Nehru's ambitions and is very much in close alignment with PLA's official history of the conflict.²⁶

From the very beginning, the PRC found it convenient to blame India for the armed resistance in Tibet rather than to take the blame upon itself for the manner in which it handled the 'peaceful liberation'. The responsibility for creating this misperception has to be placed on Mao's shoulders. Mao had dominated the PRC's decision-making, and is said to have taken personal charge of the 'struggle with India.' Rather than to blame it on the heavy footprint of the PLA as well as the policies and actions of the Communist Party of China cadres in Tibet, Mao

chose to blame a militarily weak target-India-for the armed resistance in Tibet.²⁷ In this connection, Mao ordered the PRC's propaganda machinery to identify 'Indian expansionists' who wanted to separate Tibet from the PRC.²⁸ In a free exchange of views in the matter (Peking, October 1959), Khrushchev was quite candid in talking to both Mao and Chou when he put the blame squarely on his (PRC) hosts for the happenings in Tibet.

...the events in Tibet are your fault. You ruled Tibet, you should have had your intelligence (agencies) there and should have known about the plans and intentions of the Dalai Lama ... we believe that the events in Tibet are the fault of the Communist Party of China, not India's fault.

Comrade Chou En-lai, you have been Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC for many years and know better than me how one can resolve disputed issues without [spilling blood].²⁹

The PRC's interpretation of Indian intentions regarding Tibet is not borne out by facts. First, although India's claim to Kashmir appears to stand on much firmer ground in comparison to that of the PRC's over Tibet, the Indians (as a part of Panchsheel) recognized the PRC's sovereignty over Tibet. As a reciprocal gesture, the PRC chose not to recognize India's sovereignty over Kashmir, despite Pakistan belonging to an 'adversary's' military bloc. Moreover, evidence points to the PRC's surreptitious wooing of Pakistan having begun from the time of the Bandung Conference (1955) itself.³⁰

Second, India had extended the courtesy of permitting essential supplies like food, medicines, clothing and footwear, construction material and equipment meant for the PRC's officials and the PLA to pass through Indian territory, or to be even purchased locally. The PRC was dependent on India for food and other essential supplies for the maintenance of its troops in Tibet right up to 1959. Without adequate intelligence and proper planning, the PLA's Eighteenth Army Corps descended on Lhasa, a town with a population of around 30,000, during the second-half of 1951. To make matters worse, the grain stored in Tibetan granaries during the beginning of the twentieth century turned out to be rotten, and therefore inedible.³¹ The food situation became extremely precarious, with the rations of soldiers being cut to

one-half.³² The food crisis led to sudden food shortage and high inflation. This became a public relations disaster for the PRC besides also angering several residents of the town and other areas.³³ Getting food in large quantities from the PRC's western provinces of Szechwan and Kokonor using traditional mule trails was not considered feasible on account of the long distances involved³⁴ (wherein a fair share of the grain carried would be required for feeding the pack animals during the long and arduous journey).

It was the Indians who came to the rescue of the PLA in Tibet. Permission to trans-ship Chinese rice to Tibet through India was granted.³⁵ The PRC fully understood the strategic importance of this Indian gesture. It significantly lessened its dependence on Tibetan grain, which went a long way in stabilizing its position in Tibet at a very crucial and critical juncture. In addition, the PRC purchased edible oil, cloth, shoes, medicines etc. in India for its use in Tibet. Besides, construction equipment and material required by the PLA for road making and other building activities was purchased in India and sent to Tibet. The PRC was only in a position to bring in its own food supplies on completion of the road network project in Tibet.³⁶ In other words, assistance of this nature goes contrary to the PRC's assertion—apart from negating it in full.

Third, India would have preferred having a frontier with Tibet that was not militarized—in keeping with past practice and tradition, which had existed for centuries. To this end, the Indians, right up to late 1959, despite the presence of a large number of PLA troops in Tibet, did not deploy military personnel on that frontier. Indeed, the Indian Army was pre-occupied with the Indo-Pakistan border and the line of control in Kashmir, leaving the over 2,000-mile-long Indo-Tibetan frontier to be manned by a few intelligence personnel and men belonging to a para-military organization.

Fourth, for argument sake, even if the PRC's interpretation of Indian motives were assumed to be true, no doubt India (like the PRC) would have militarized itself—and perhaps even seriously considered joining one of the military blocs. This did not happen. On the contrary, after the Panchsheel Agreement, India not only started downsizing its army but also began to reduce its defence budget from 1959 onwards. This

goes completely against the PRC's erroneous assertions about Indian complicity.

Fifth, for argument's sake, even if the PRC's version were to be accepted as somewhat correct, it needs to be appreciated that the PRC was willing to embrace Pakistan during the height of the covert operation, after knowing fully well of Pakistan's complicity in that operation. The PRC could, perhaps, find an answer in the fact that India was not willing to abandon its democratic norms to meet PRC's concerns regarding Thondup et al.³⁷ However, as is known, and as per Chou's own admission, armed resistance in Tibet had been put down even before April 1960, and Kalimpong had been cleared of Thondup et al. by then that is two and a half years prior to the PRC's attack (refer Chapter IX of this monograph).

Sixth, contrary to the PRC's understanding and belief, Nehru never considered India being a step ahead of the PRC. In fact, Nehru's believed that India had the potential of becoming the fourth largest economy in the world, after the USA, Soviet Union, and the PRC—in that order.³⁸ Chinese writers need to bear in mind that Bandung (1955) was actually a stage set by Nehru for Chou. Had Nehru not willingly abdicated, Chou would not have been the central figure at the Conference, from where he could launch the PRC in the Afro-Asian region.³⁹ India was also seen to be facilitating an improvement in PRC's relations with the US. In this regard, in a message to Nehru, Chou acknowledged that 'India has been most helpful and we appreciate her good offices for improving relations between China and USA. I would like Prime Minister Nehru to know the real state of Chinese views when he meets Lloyd and Dulles.'⁴⁰

It also needs to be noted that Nehru had rejected the Soviet offer to propose India as the sixth permanent member of the Security Council, and instead insisted that priority be given to the PRC's admission to the United Nations.⁴¹ It should also not be forgotten that Nehru was once considered 'a combination of a Cambridge man, an Oriental sage and a twentieth-century politician,'⁴² and had never been accused of duplicity. The fact is that it was the PRC's own insecurity about Tibet that led it to 'teach India a lesson.' Others like to believe that Mao was annoyed with India's 'uncooperative approach toward solving the boundary

question' and, in order 'to stabilize the border and bring India to the negotiating table,' the PRC chose to 'counter-attack' India.⁴³ Still others suggest that the PRC wanted to humiliate India to show the rest of the world that it was 'one head taller than India imagined herself to be.'⁴⁴

For some inexplicable reason, the PRC chose to draw an adverse inference against India on the basis of the latter's inability to take penal action against the six men (in the manner it might have expected), when it should have known that intelligence inputs do not automatically get converted into evidence in a democratic set-up in which penal action has to stand judicial scrutiny, based on the procedure established by law (now mirroring the due process of the USA). Chou had admitted during his visit to New Delhi in April 1960, that 'Last year (1959), we might have hurt each other, and there might have been some misunderstanding between us. But let bye-gones be bye-gones.'⁴⁵ However, even then the PRC chose to continue with its unilateral aggressive actions on the ground in occupying more disputed territory which culminated in the 33 day armed conflict, especially after armed resistance in Tibet had been put down and India had acted against Thondup et al. It appears all the more intriguing that the PRC attempted a justification for its unilateral, illegal, belligerent and abrasive actions against India through a concocted storyline wherein India is supposedly siding with the Americans in the covert operation in Tibet, whereas all evidence points to the contrary.

Clearly, the explanation for the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 lies not in the storyline of the Indian betrayal school, but elsewhere.

THE 'CHINESE BETRAYAL' SCHOOL

The third interpretation, or the 'Chinese Betrayal' school, believes that '...the Chinese diplomatic effort was a five-year (1957–1962) masterpiece of guile, executed—and probably planned in a large part—by Chou En-lai'.⁴⁶ It is also believed that 'Chou played on Nehru's Asian, anti-imperialist mental attitude, his proclivity to temporize, and his sincere desire for an amicable Sino-Indian relationship.'⁴⁷

It has even been suggested that the PRC through India sought 'to gain additional recognition and wider global acceptance, particularly among

the non-aligned nations. India's acceptance of China, it was believed, would make China and its policies appear more benign—and acceptable.⁴⁸ 'Chou's strategy was to avoid making explicit, in conversations and communications with Nehru, any Chinese border claims...'⁴⁹

In the CIA's own words:

It was the basic Chinese policy ... not to claim territory in writing or orally, but only on the basis of maps ... Chou En-lai, in talks with Nehru in 1954 and 1956, treated the Chinese maps not as representing Peiping's 'claim' but, on the contrary, as old maps handed down from the previous regime which had 'not yet' been corrected.⁵⁰

It has also been suggested by the CIA that 'Chou sought to create the impression with Nehru that China would accept the McMahon Line...'⁵¹ It has further been said that the PRC had been dependent on India for food and other essential supplies for the maintenance of its troops in Tibet up to 1959. Since the completion of the road network enabled the PRC to consolidate its hold over Tibet, it has been also said that it (PRC) was to gradually reveal its claws.⁵²

For the change in the PRC's attitude towards India, Nehru has put forward the following explanation.

... we were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation. We have been shocked out of it, all of us, whether it is the government or the people; some might have felt it less and some more ... They (PRC) posed as meek lambs set upon by tigers—devouring Indian territory.⁵³

Having been catapulted to a preeminent position by the West, Mao could afford to sit back and say 'It's no fun being a running dog. Nehru is in bad shape, imperialism and revisionism have robbed him blind'.⁵⁴ And, in turn, Nehru was to lament, 'How I worked between India and China, fought for China's legitimate interests in the world—and aggression was my reward'.⁵⁵ A few months later, Nehru was to die a broken man. And, a little earlier, India too was to lose its stride.

This 'Chinese Betrayal' school has not been able to satisfactorily explain the bonhomie that was seen to exist between India and the PRC for a full three years (1954-1956). From all accounts, the Sino-Indian relationship during this period appeared, on the face of it, somewhat genuine. This appears evident from the fairly high degree of congruity that was witnessed in various bilateral as well as international issues. Both sides were seen to be approaching issues in a friendly and mutually accommodating manner. It can be argued that if Nehru recognized the PRC's sovereignty over Tibet, and allowed unfettered passage through India for food and other requirements of the PLA and communist cadres in Tibet, then in return, Chou was willing to limit the PRC's territorial claims to those supported by the Manchu maps (by dropping territorial additions made on ROC and PRC maps). In addition, PRC was inclined to accord recognition to the McMahon Line (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). While India was seen to be delivering on intent, the PRC's intent was more in the nature of assurances to be fulfilled at some later date. The PRC was unable to fulfil these assurances because when Chou En-lai came to New Delhi in April 1960 for talks with Nehru (refer Chapter VI of this monograph), he went back on them.

Further, Chou did not appear to be exuding the same level of charm and grace in his manner of speech by which he had distinguished himself on earlier occasions. For instance, during the talks with Nehru, he was once seen to be retorting sharply when he said, 'I have come here to seek a solution and not repeat arguments.'⁵⁶ There were also some uncomfortable moments when Chou had called on Vice President S. Radhakrishnan. At being asked in a pleasant sort of way by Radhakrishnan that according to the newspapers he (Chou) had looked grave after his talks with Nehru, Chou's unexpected and somewhat angry response was.

...they in China did not believe in this kind of freedom; for example if he smiled then the Indian papers said that it was a false smile and if he did not smile then they said that he was grave.⁵⁷

The Morarji-Chou talks ended up in heated exchanges from both sides as has already been referred to (refer Chapter VI of this monograph).

Why Chou went back on his assurances on the boundary question given to Nehru on two separate occasions in 1954 and 1956 (refer Chapter VI of this monograph) is explained by this School as the betrayal by the PRC of the trust that had been reposed in it by India. In this connection, it has been suggested that the PRC's policy towards India had actually undergone only a superficial change—and that too for a very short period. During this period, India had willingly become a spokesperson for the PRC in the international arena. Moreover, the joint advocacy of Panchsheel by the two led many Afro-Asian countries to believe in the genuineness of the PRC's desire for peaceful co-existence, which it (PRC) would take full advantage of.⁵⁸ It has been asserted that, through friendship with India, the PRC sought to secure India's neutrality in Sino-US relations, so as to create peaceful conditions for its growth and change.⁵⁹ However, it is another matter that during this period the Americans were never really to take any action which could be construed as being detrimental to the PRC's strategic concerns or interests (refer Chapter V of this monograph). Indians seem to have been unaware of Chou's inner thinking about them, which he had articulated as follows.

China should differentiate between long term and temporary friends. As regards temporary friends, they are friends for a certain time ... they belong to the capitalist world but oppose the war and show neutrality which is possible.⁶⁰

The narrative offered by this school for the PRC's shift in its attitude towards India is explained by the fact that, after having thoroughly made use of India, the PRC chose to betray it (India) for attaining its 'rightful place in the world.'

SUMMING UP

The first two schools discussed above (the 'Forward Policy' school and 'Indian Betrayal' school)—each of which provides a different and yet unrelated explanation for the events that led to the Sino-Indian conflict—have not been in a position to convincingly provide a comprehensive picture of what actually may have happened during the period preceding the conflict. First, their narratives appear to be based on incomplete and selective use of available material. Second,

these narratives appear to have been conceived in isolation, without consideration of other relevant factors such as the impact of major international developments on the events during 1956-1962. This could be the reason why the narratives put forward by these two schools have not found universal acceptance among scholars and policy makers across the world.

Since the above two interpretations have not stood scrutiny, the field narrows down to the 'Chinese Betrayal' school as well as the arguments put forward in support of the purpose of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet being to sow seeds of discord between India and the PRC. It is significant to note that the narratives provided by the Chinese Betrayal school and the CIA's covert operation in Tibet appear to a large extent to be somewhat similar. In the case of the Chinese Betrayal school, whereas the trigger for the change in the PRC's attitude and actions towards India that led to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 is Chinese betrayal, the driver in the other case is the CIA's covert operation in Tibet that led the PRC into believing in India's complicity in that operation (refer Chapter V of this monograph). Evidence in the latter case appears somewhat weightier.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ CIA Memorandum on the Sino-Indian Dispute, p. 5.
- ² C. P. Skrine and Pamela Nightingale, *Macartney at Kashgar: New Light on British, Chinese, and Russian Activities in Sinkiang, 1890-1918*, London: Methuen and Co., 1973, p. 38.
- ³ The PRC's Foreign Minister Chen Yi's interview with a Swedish correspondent in Peking on 17 February 1963, as quoted in the CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. 55.
- ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 55.
- ⁵ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 1, p. 1.
- ⁶ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2, p. 77.
- ⁷ Mullik, p. 176.
- ⁸ Felix Bandaranaike's conversations with the PRC's leaders, as conveyed to the author (Gopal) on 28 August 1981, in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 230.
- ⁹ CIA Staff Study on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, p. iii. The CIA uses the term 'forward military policy' which was subsequently trimmed to 'forward policy'.

- ¹⁰ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 3, pp. iii, and 28.
- ¹¹ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 2, p. 62.
- ¹² Ibid. p. 70.
- ¹³ Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1970, pp. 189-288.
- ¹⁴ Bruce Reidel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War* Washington: The Brookings Institution Press, 2015, consulted Indian reprint edition, Noida: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2016, p. 95.
- ¹⁵ 'Memorandum from the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kaysen) to President Kennedy', 26 October 1962, in FRUS, 1961-63, Vol. XIX, South Asia, Document 181, at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v19/d181>, accessed 22 September 2016. Pursuant to Kennedy's approval of the proposal contained in this memo (to accord US recognition to the McMahon Line in the eastern sector), Ambassador Galbraith was authorised through State Department telegram 1663, 26 October 1962 to make a public statement in New Delhi to that effect.
- ¹⁶ See Kissinger, p. 199. Kissinger had played a major role during the Indo-Pak conflict in December 1971, when the Americans were to go so far as to warn the Soviets to keep away from the scene of conflict even if the PRC were to intercede in that conflict on behalf of Pakistan. See Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States, 1941-1991*, Washington: National Defence University, 1993, p. 323n, as quoted in Conboy and Morrison, p. 293 (28/n). Henry Kissinger had started off in Democrat Kennedy's National Security Council team under McGeorge Bundy. His tenure was indeed a brief one, and had to be terminated after he committed a diplomatic gaffe in India in early 1962. Kissinger had to wait for seven years before making a re-entry into the White House as Republican Nixon's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. It cannot, however, be inferred from this single incident alone that Kissinger's attitude and actions towards India were influenced by it although, at the same time, it cannot be ruled out that it may have had some effect in influencing Kissinger's decision-making in matters relating to India. See Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, *Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 184.
- ¹⁷ Gopal, Vol.3, p. 138.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. p. 138.
- ¹⁹ Ibid. p. 139.
- ²⁰ Liu Wusheng, Du Hongqi (ed.), *Chronicle of Chou En-lai's Military Activities*, Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2000, Vol. 2, p. 497, as quoted in Kalha, p. 97.

- ²¹ Zhou Enlai, *Wengjiao wenxian/Zhou Enlai's Diplomatic Papers*, Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1990, pp. 286-287, as quoted in Kalha, p. 101. See also John Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 61-62.
- ²² CIA Staff Study, Section 1: 1950-59, p. 32.
- ²³ Wu Lengxi, *Remembering Chairman Mao*, Beijing: Xinhua, 1995, as quoted in Kalha, p. 97.
- ²⁴ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 99.
- ²⁵ John W. Garver, 'China's Decision for War with India in 1962,' Georgia Institute of Technology, unpublished paper, 2005, p. 6, as quoted in Reidel, p. 97.
- ²⁶ See Garver, 'China's Decision for War with India in 1962,' p. 6, as quoted in Reidel, p. 97.
- ²⁷ Reidel, pp. 98-100.
- ²⁸ Lengxi Wu, *Shi Nian Lun Zhan (1956-1966): Zhong Su Guanxi Huiyilu/Ten Years of Controversy (1956-1966): Memoir about Sino-Soviet Relations*, Beijing: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 1999, as quoted in Tien-sze Fang, *Asymmetrical Threat Perceptions in India-China Relations*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 55.
- ²⁹ See CWIHP, 'Conversation of Khrushchev with Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai on 2 October 1959 at Peking', Document No. 3, Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, f.52, op.1, d.499, II. 1-33, available in the Volkogonov Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, trans. Vladislav Zubok, as quoted in Kalha, pp. 102-104.
- ³⁰ Chou had availed the opportunity in Bandung in 1955 to cultivate Pakistan's Mahomed Ali, to whom he is reported to have said 'that there was no conceivable clash of interest which could imperil the friendly relations between the two countries...' See L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *The State of Pakistan*, London: Faber and Faber, 1962, pp. 120-121, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 243.
- ³¹ Goldstein, Vol. 2, p. 250.
- ³² Ibid. p. 251.
- ³³ Ibid. p. 254.
- ³⁴ Ibid. pp. 248 and 257-258.
- ³⁵ Ibid. pp. 256 and 258-262.
- ³⁶ Mullik, pp. 154-155 and 162. The PRC's Commissioner and Administrator of Civil and Military Affairs in Tibet, Chang Ching-wu, chose to proceed to Lhasa through India during end June/beginning July 1951, as that route was then considered a more convenient one for those travelling from Peking to Lhasa. See Mullik, p. 71, Goldstein, Vol. 2, pp. 146-147, and Kalha, p. 40. Meanwhile, the Americans were watching the situation very closely from

Calcutta. See Goldstein, Vol. 2, pp. 248-264. It will be recalled that the Americans at that time had been pursuing Thondup for a written plan of armed resistance in Tibet (see Chapter II of this monograph). If the Americans were sincere in wanting to help the Tibetans, they would definitely have known that this was the moment to seize.

³⁷ C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna, *India and China: The Way Ahead after "Mao's India War,"* New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2000, as quoted in Fang, p. 59.

³⁸ Nehru's speech in Parliament on 30 September 1954, in Ravinder Kumar and H.Y. Sharada Prasad (eds.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 26, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2002, pp. 332-344, referred to by Nehru at a press conference in Calcutta on 15 October 1954, en route to Peking, as quoted in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 27, p. 3.

³⁹ Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 241.

⁴⁰ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 32, p. 377(4/n).

⁴¹ Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 248.

⁴² Published in New York Times, 8 June 1955, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 2, p. 248 (1/n). 29.

⁴³ Yinfeng Lei, *Zai Zuigao Tong shuaiShenbian Dang Camou: Lei Yinfeng Jiangjun Hhuiyilu* (Being the Staff Officer to the Highest Command: Memoir of General Lei Yinfeng), Nanchang: Baihuazhou Wenyi, 1997, as quoted in Fang, p. 90.

⁴⁴ Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 230.

⁴⁵ Nehru-Chou Talks II in New Delhi on 20 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 26.

⁴⁶ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 1, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 2.

⁴⁸ Halper & Halper, p. 237.

⁴⁹ CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute, Section 1, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. ii.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 3.

⁵² Mullik, p. 212.

⁵³ Nehru's speech to the conference of Information Ministers of the States, 25 October 1962, *National Herald*, 26 October 1962, as quoted in Gopal Vol. 3., pp. 222-223.

⁵⁴ S. Schram (ed.), *Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed*, London: Penguin, 1964, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 236.

- ⁵⁵ M. Kumaramangam, 'Some Memories of Nehru,' *Mainstream* (Delhi), 21 November 1964, as quoted in Gopal, Vol. 3, p. 237.
- ⁵⁶ Nehru-Chou Talks-II in New Delhi on 20 April 20 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 29.
- ⁵⁷ S. Radhakrishnan-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 21 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 35.
- ⁵⁸ Deepak, p. 182
- ⁵⁹ Chinese Academy of Foreign Affairs and CCP's Central Documentation Research Centre, *Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan*/Zhou Enlai on Diplomacy, Beijing, 1990, as quoted in Deepak, p. 182.
- ⁶⁰ Gongsu Yang, *zhongguo fandui waiguo qinlue ganshe Xizang difang douzhenzhui*/History of China's Struggle and Resistance to the Foreign Invasion and Interference in Tibet, Beijing: China's Tibetology Publications, 1992, as quoted in Deepak, p. 182.

KALIMPONG IN CIA'S COVERT OPERATION IN TIBET

REMOVAL OF THONDUP FROM KALIMPONG AFTER APRIL 1960

It has become clear that the first decisive steps to check Thondup and his associates in Kalimpong were taken immediately after Chou En-lai's visit to New Delhi in April 1960. It was then that pressure appears to have been mounted on Mullik, which resulted in restrictions being imposed on Thondup. From then onwards, Thondup was forbidden 'from crossing the Teesta River. [He] was banned from both Kalimpong and Sikkim for a decade'.¹ Even Nehru wrote to the Dalai Lama in August 1960, cautioning him against making any fresh appeal (seeking international intervention against the PRC's forcible take over of Tibet) to the United Nations, which he considered would be unhelpful, and possibly harmful.²

TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY

B.N. Mullik wrote a 650-page book on Sino-Indian relations in which he devotes 19 pages³ to Tibetan armed resistance. There is no mention therein either of the CIA's covert operation in Tibet or the use of Kalimpong by Thondup and others in fanning armed resistance. All that Mullik is willing to disclose is '... the extent of this discontentment and trouble prevalent in Tibet over such a long period was not fully realized in India.'⁴ Mullik added that, 'the magnitude and the strength of the Khampa resistance had not been fully comprehended by us.'⁵ American declassified records of the period suggest that 'Mullik, in fact, already knew that the planes had been flown by CIA pilots, following confidential discussions with agency (CIA) officials.'⁶ Mullik even met CIA's Richard Helms in 1960 on the sidelines of an Interpol conference in Hawaii when 'he (Mullik) endorsed the Agency's (CIA's) efforts and wanted US overflights to continue.'⁷ At the time, Helms was the CIA's deputy director of plans (operations). James Critchfield,

one time head of the CIA's Near East Division, has revealed that he had gone to New York in 1961 for a discreet meeting with Mullik, who had come there in connection with an Interpol conference. It was in this meeting that Mullik was to restate his approval of the Tibet operation. Critchfield adds, 'We (CIA) had decided to put our money on him (Mullik) and invested a lot in a major briefing.'⁸ All this goes to show that Mullik was definitely in the know of things—at least the sanitized CIA version which might possibly have excluded references to Kalimpong, Thondup, and others in India.

However, there are some acts of commission and omission of Mullik in the discharge of his duties which have come to light, and need mention. First, in the first half of 1959, the request of the Intelligence Bureau (which Mullik headed) for opening additional border posts was turned down⁹ by G.B. Pant, the Indian Home Minister and Mullik's direct superior. However, later that year, Mullik went on to exceed his brief by taking unilateral action by approaching a colleague, Wazir Mehra (Inspector-General of Police in the state of Jammu and Kashmir) for the loan of one company of the Central Reserve Police for deployment in the Ladakh area.¹⁰ It has been suggested that Mullik's action in using armed police for patrolling purposes may have precipitated the Kongka La incident (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). The Intelligence Bureau was accused of causing provocations in frontier areas¹¹ and, as a result, armed police patrolling from then onwards was brought under the jurisdiction of the Indian Army.¹²

Second, Mullik was to use armed police patrols after his return from England where he was to spend five months (between mid-February 1959 and beginning July 1959) without the purpose of his visit being available.¹³ It was during this period that the armed resistance peaked in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama decided to flee Lhasa and seek asylum in India. It is surprising that the head of Indian intelligence should have chosen to absent himself for such a long duration from his country at a juncture when the situation in Tibet appeared to be on the boil.

Third, Mullik was to associate himself directly with the inquiry relating to the ill-fated 'Kashmir Princess' airplane in Hong Kong, from where it had taken off in April 1955 (refer Chapter I of this monograph). Chou had leveled serious allegations against Mullik for collusion with the British authorities in conducting the investigation in Hong Kong

and in attempting to suppress evidence relating to the ‘Kashmir Princess’ incident; he even suggested that Mullik was on the payroll of the British and the Americans.¹⁴ Mullik has asserted that Chou later withdrew his charge; however, he provides no details as to how and when the same was done.¹⁵

Fourth, there appears to be little doubt that it would have been on the basis of inputs provided by Mullik that the Indian response of 2 August 1958 to the PRC’s note of 10 July 1958 would have been framed (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). It is somewhat perplexing to note that Mullik (and his men) had been unable to check the use of Kalimpong by Thondup et al. for around three years right up to April 1960, since he would have been fully aware of what Nehru had all along been maintaining: that any kind of armed resistance in Tibet instead of helping would have an entirely opposite effect. In this connection, Nehru had even identified Thondup in particular, whom he had suspected of nurturing ambitions for an independent Tibet, which he had described as ‘foolish’. Nehru had even asked Mullik to keep an eye on Thondup and other émigrés with a view to unravelling intrigues in respect of armed resistance in Tibet. The advice given by Nehru on the issue of armed resistance to the Dalai Lama, to officials of the Ministry of External Affairs, and to Mullik from time to time—at least from 1953 onwards—which has been declassified and is in public domain, has been reproduced verbatim in Chapter II and Chapter III of this monograph. In August 1958, Nehru had even personally warned prominent Tibetan émigrés not to indulge in anti-PRC propaganda (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). It is clear from this record that Nehru did not want any sort of trouble smacking of armed resistance against the PRC on Indian soil—not only because he did not want to displease the PRC but also because he strongly believed that any form of armed resistance would be counter-productive and detrimental to Tibetan as well as Indian interests.

Fifth, when Indian intelligence was being blamed for failing to provide actionable intelligence regarding PRC’s intentions to attack India, Mullik was to turn to Lord Mountbatten, at that time Chairman, British Chiefs of Staff Committee, with top-secret papers of the period to plead his innocence and solicit his help,¹⁶ knowing quite well about Nehru’s predilection for that sort of an Englishman. In contrast, Galbraith appears to have been aware of the impending PRC’s attack

on India and shared his knowledge of the same with the Department of State, a full five days prior to it taking place (refer Chapter VIII of this monograph). Further, in his history of MI5, the British internal intelligence agency, Christopher Andrew has asserted that the relationship between Mullik and the heads of MI5 was based on close personal friendship. 'At least in Mullik's time, the head of the Indian Intelligence Bureau was in greater sympathy with the head of MI5 than with the Nehru government.'¹⁷ No further details have been provided by Andrew in this regard.

Incidentally, in later life, Mullik was seen sporting a queue—a practice generally associated with the most orthodox Hindu.¹⁸ It has been suggested that 'Mullik was atoning for all that he did.'¹⁹ Thondup offers a defense for Mullik when he admits,

I had made a promise to B. N. Mullik to keep Indian intelligence informed of my political activities, but we could never let the Indian government know that we were using their country as a recruiting ground for the American CIA. Our work had to be carried out in the strictest of secrecy.²⁰

However, the needle of suspicion continues to point towards Mullik. It is admitted that further work requires to be done in the matter before any definite conclusion(s) can be arrived at.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Thondup and Thurston, p. 207.
- ² Nehru to the Dalai Lama, 7 August 1960, in Gopal, Vol. 3, pp. 140-141.
- ³ Mullik, pp. 209–227.
- ⁴ Ibid. p. 214.
- ⁵ Ibid. p. 216.
- ⁶ Conboy and Morrison, p. 282 (30/n).
- ⁷ Ibid. p. 156. Richard Helms went on to write a detailed account of his years spent in the CIA; however, he dismisses the covert operation in Tibet in one brief sentence. See Helms, p. 182.
- ⁸ Ibid. p. 283 (9/n). A meeting with a Near East Division functionary in 1961 is confirmative of the fact that by then, if not earlier, the emphasis within the CIA had shifted from armed resistance to political action (under ST BAILEY).

- ⁹ Mullik, pp. 240–241.
- ¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 241–242.
- ¹¹ Ibid. pp. 243–244.
- ¹² Ibid. p. 245.
- ¹³ All that Mullik is willing to share is this, ‘...I was absent from India for nearly five months due to some unavoidable reasons...’ See Mullik, p. 204.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 168–169.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. p. 170.
- ¹⁶ Ibid. p. 331/n.
- ¹⁷ Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011, as quoted in Halper and Halper, p. 158.
- ¹⁸ K. Sankaran Nair, *Inside IB and RAW: The Rolling Stone that Gathers No Moss*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2008, p. 99. The author is a former Director of the Research & Analysis Wing and had served under Mullik in the Intelligence Bureau.
- ¹⁹ T.V. Rajeswar, *India: The Crucial Years*, India: Harper Collins Publishers, 2015, p.172. The author is a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau and had served under Mullik in that Bureau.
- ²⁰ Thondup and Thurston, p. 172.

THE PRC'S IMPERIAL LEGACY

TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS, MAP MAKING, AND THE GREAT GAME

The PRC was unwilling to accept Indian territorial claims on the plea that these had emanated from her imperial (British-India) legacy¹—implying therefore the use of force and/or unfair means in their acquisition.² However, the PRC's territorial claims have eventually gone beyond the territories the ROC was to inherit from the imperial Manchu, and even beyond those what the PRC was to inherit from the ROC. The record of talks between Nehru and Chou En-lai during April 1960 is replete with examples of the PRC taking the exalted histories left by the Manchu court historians and the Republican Chinese maps at face value, and consequently making undue assertions favourable to itself. Additionally, the PRC has shown a deliberate aversion for maps and contemporary travel accounts which are not favourable to it by branding them as the work of imperialists³ and, therefore, not reliable and acceptable as evidence. Further, the PRC has deliberately tried to create an impression that Manchu and Republican China were victims of western and Japanese imperialism (the century of humiliation), conveniently ignoring the fact that they have, at the same time, been major beneficiaries of the Great Game and the Cold War. Clearly, the PRC has deployed these stratagems with the purpose of getting the better of others. In this Chapter and the next (Chapter XI of this monograph), it will be observed that British India was willing to sacrifice, among other things, the legitimate territorial claims of the princely state of Kashmir in favour of the Manchu, thereby emboldening its successors—the ROC and the PRC—to stake claim even to territory over which the writ of the Manchu never ran. On account of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia (a.k.a. the Great Game), the Manchu became a natural beneficiary of concessions granted by both rival Powers, as a result of one Power trying to deprive the other of territory.

First, the imperial Manchu, a non-native dynasty, was to almost double the territory under its control in a span of just one hundred years — 1660–1760.⁴ Diplomacy, warfare and modern map making enabled the Manchu to incorporate major portions of Amuria, Dzungaria and Kashgaria at the expense of the Mongols, Uighurs, Kazaks, Tajiks, Russians and others. By the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689) between the Manchu and the Tsar, the first between the two rival powers on the Eurasian continent, their frontier would be drawn north of the Amur River along the nearest mountain range. Interestingly, this treaty was negotiated on behalf of the Manchu by two French Jesuit priests⁵ in Latin (the language of the Treaty), with copies being made in Russian, Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese. The Mongols, who would soon be reduced to a third divisive force, were to gradually lose control over most of their territories, leaving the field open for Russian and Manchu advance in the areas vacated by them. The Manchu conception of its natural borders kept expanding as the armies marched west.⁶ Tibet was to be included in 1720, for what has been loosely described in some places as a protectorate under nominal Manchu suzerainty. Whereas others have ventured to suggest that the Dalai Lama was in a special priest-patron relationship—*choyon*⁷— with the Manchu, a fellow Buddhist.

Second, it were the Jesuits who prepared the first modern map for the Manchu of their empire by fixing a total of 641 points of latitude and longitude by astronomical and geographical measurements.⁸ Five woodblock editions and one copper edition of the map depicting the Manchu empire were to be produced between 1717 and 1726.⁹ Tibet was also mapped by the Jesuits¹⁰ from information provided from Chinese and Manchu sources.¹¹ Interestingly, on the largest edition of this map, only what constitutes as Han territory has been designated as China (Neidi during the Manchu period). Place names within this territory are written in Chinese characters whereas territory descriptions given elsewhere are in Manchu. Thus, China formed only one distinct part/province of the Manchu empire.¹² From the information smuggled to France by the Jesuits by 1725, Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville published his *Atlas de la Chine* in 1735, choosing to erroneously describe the Manchu empire as China, thus giving currency to that name.¹³ An interesting comparison has been made by Laura Hostetler with the help of a map depicting the extent of the Manchu empire (from the

Atlas of the Chinese (Manchu) Empire, brought out by the China Inland Mission in 1908), which has been superimposed on a map of the PRC published in 1987. These two maps show areas of incongruity. In the Manchu map, the Lingzitan Aksai Chin Plains (in the western sector) are not included as a part of the Manchu empire.¹⁴ When this fact was brought to the notice of the officials of the PRC in 1960, they were to dismiss the 1908 map of the Manchu empire as one that had been ‘inspired by imperialists.’¹⁵

Third, the Manchu encouraged the Tibetans into believing that the British in India had been instrumental in instigating the Gurkha (Nepal) attack on them in 1791.¹⁶ As a part of the Tibetan-Nepalese peace treaty concluded with Manchu help in 1792, the Chumbi valley (on the southern slope of the Sikkim Himalayas), was detached from Sikkim and arbitrarily ceded to Tibet,¹⁷ even though Sikkim had not sided with the Gurkha in this war. It is known that ‘Chumbi Valley divides Sikkim and Bhutan as if a dagger is thrust half way between the two of them, to within 25 miles of the plains of Bengal.’¹⁸ The Manchu realized the importance of control over a salient on the southern slope of the Himalayas that would provide easy access to British Indian territory in the plains of India—a lesson that the PRC was not to forget, and even wants to emulate.

Fourth, coming down to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Russians, by the Treaty of Lividia of 1879 with the Manchu, were not required to withdraw from the Ili valley in the Tien Shan Mountains.¹⁹ It was to be Halliday Macartney, a Scot of impeccable lineage,²⁰ who was to assist the Manchu to get back the Ili valley from the Russians by the Treaty of St Petersburg of 1881.²¹

Fifth, the Manchu had unilaterally and voluntarily withdrawn her troops from the Sarikol district in the foothills of the Taghdumbash Pamir because of Russian counter claims to that district.²² It was left to the British Pamir Boundary Commissioner (1895), General Gerard, to convince his Russian counterpart that the Manchu frontier lay westwards on the watershed so as to include the Taghdumbash Pamir and Sarikol in Manchu territory²³ (refer Chapter V of this monograph). British India had taken this stand only after it had decided to waive Hunza’s (Indian Kashmir) claim to that Pamir and Sarikol in favour of the

Manchu.²⁴ Earlier, George Macartney (the son of Halliday Macartney through a Chinese woman), a British India employee posted at Kashgar, was present to unofficially represent Manchu interests. Macartney had taken Gerard for an 80-mile tour of the Taghdumbash.²⁵ Using some ingenuity, he had arranged for the positioning of a Manchu soldier here, along with a temporary cabin made of mud and stone as his post or station. T. Hungerford Holdich, the Deputy British Pamir Boundary Commissioner writes,

...this was enough; it signified permanent occupation. Round about it were no “premises”; only a few drackle-tailed cocks and hens, with pessimistic mien ... This was interesting because the domestic fowl will not grow on the Pamirs.²⁶

In return for the gift of the Taghdumbash Pamir and Sarikol, which required, as stated above, the shifting of the Manchu frontier south-westwards of where it actually lay—or where the Russians believed it should lie, especially after the Manchu had themselves voluntarily withdrawn from that area—the PRC was to show its gratitude some 68 years later (in 1963) by inducing the Pakistanis to consent to parting with the Shaksgam Valley and adjacent areas, even beyond what had been gifted to it in 1895.

As a part of the Great Game, there was to be a competition of sorts between Russia and British India in denying each other territory, especially and including the area sandwiched between the Hindu Kush and the Karakoram in the south, and the Kunlun in the north. The resultant beneficiary of the rivalry in this area was the Manchu, as both Powers were not mindful if territorial gains were to accrue to the Manchu so long as one or the other rival would not get it for itself. The PRC was to exploit the inconclusive traces left behind by this rivalry some 45 years later to lay territorial claims even beyond what the Manchu had considered its territorial limits. The China Historical Geographical Information System project, covering the period between 221 BCE and 1911, has been in progress at the Harvard University since 2001. The results of this project could have come in useful for determining the extent of Manchu territories that were bequeathed to the ROC and eventually to the PRC. Alongside, what would have become available are the changes in Manchu territorial limits and

territorial status across time. However, the provinces of Sinkiang and Sikang, for some reason, have been kept outside the scope of the current project. Perhaps, it could be inferred from these omissions that the PRC (and the Americans under the PRC's pressure or otherwise) are not yet ready to let the truth emerge in respect of the Manchu frontiers with respect to British India, as considered by the Manchu themselves.²⁷

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 24 and 32. In the imperial manner of the English, the Manchu, as a matter of policy, kept themselves aloof from the subject races they ruled over—the Han (Chinese), Uyghur, Tibetan, and the Mongolian. To every town of importance in the conquered territories they added their own new city. Even in Peking there was the walled Forbidden City, begun by Kublai Khan, the Mongol, the entrance to which was generally not permitted to the Han (Chinese). From their separate quarters, the Manchu dominated the local population. Manchu officials, like the British officials in India, never relaxed into familiarity with the local population. Inter-marriage between the Manchu and the Han (Chinese) was forbidden. However, unlike the British in India, they made no attempt to pass on their culture to the subject races. See Skrine and Nightingale, pp. 19–20. See also See Thomas Laird, *The Story of Tibet: Conversations with the Dalai Lama*, London: Atlantic Books, 2006, consulted reprint edition, London: Atlantic Books, 2007, pp. 116, 164.
- ² *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 24, 36, 64, 69, 84, 87, and 90.
- ³ *Ibid.* p. 120.
- ⁴ Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 33.
- ⁵ Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Asia*, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005, pp. 167–169.
- ⁶ *Ibid.* p. 231.
- ⁷ *Choyon*, a Tibetan word, has been used to describe the Priest-Patron relationship that is said to have existed between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu in which for exchange of protection of his realm provided by the Manchu, the Dalai Lama agreed to act as the Manchu's spiritual counsellor. This special relationship was deemed to have ended with the overthrow/abdication of the Manchu. The Han (Chinese), a subjugated people, who replaced the Manchu, not being Buddhists like their Manchu overlords, could not continue with the *choyon* relationship, and chose instead to

erroneously assert that Tibet was a province of the ROC. In reality, the ROC never exercised any form of authority over Tibet. At the Simla Conference of 1913–14, the British were willing to accept ROC's nominal suzerainty over Tibet in return for the ROC accepting Tibetan autonomy in its internal administration. Since the Republican Chinese could not keep their part of the understanding, their suzerainty over Tibet could not be recognized during the period covered by their governance (1912–49). Although, the ROC sided with the Allies during World War II, the Tibetans chose to remain neutral, whereby they exercised a free choice in foreign affairs. In turn, the Allied powers, including Republican China, respected Tibet's neutrality. Accordingly, wartime allied supplies from India to China could not be made through Tibet's mule track route. For the purpose, American DC-3 pilots had to fly over the so-called 'hump' to reach destinations in the ROC. See Laird, pp. 113–115, 118–119, and 198–199. More importantly, when Britain renounced its extra-territorial rights in 'all territories of the Republic of China' by the Treaty of Chungking in 1943 (when Britain appeared to be at its weakest during World War II), it did not do so in Tibet and continued to exercise those rights there as Tibet then was not considered ROC territory. See Julie G. Marshall, *Britain and Tibet 1765-1947: A select annotated bibliography*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 449.

Zahiruddin Ahmad, who has put in 58 years (since 1959) of scholarship in Tibetology, brought his studies to a close with the publication of his sixth and last book, *The Historical Status of China in Tibet*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2012, wherein he has argued that the Mongols and the Manchus were neither suzerain nor sovereign in Tibet. In the 13th and 14th centuries, when China was a part of the East Asian Mongol Empire, there was a personal, religious relationship between the Mongolian Khan and the principal lama-ruler, the head of the Sakyapa sect, in Tibet. Briefly, it was a relationship between the Khan as the Giver-of-religious-offerings (Tibetan, Chinda) and the deity incarnate in the body of the lama as the Object-of-worship (Tibetan, Chone) and the recipient of these religious offerings. This personal, religious relationship cannot be interpreted as either 'Chinese suzerainty' or 'Chinese sovereignty.' See Ahmed, p. ix.

⁸ Perdue, p. 449.

⁹ Surveying and mapping of Eastern Turkestan by the Jesuits was to take place from 1756 onwards, and was completed a year after the conquest of that territory in 1759. The Manchu were to make use of the maps so prepared in planning and executing the campaign against the Uighers. In 1761, the Jesuits brought out a revised edition of the Manchu map of the 1720s. The Jesuits continued with their work of surveying and mapping the Manchu empire between 1768 and 1773. See William Huttman, 'On Chinese and European Maps of China', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. 14, 1844, pp. 117–127, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1798052>, accessed 15 May 2015.

- ¹⁰ The Manchu Emperor Kang Hsi had issued an edict in 1720–21 to map out Tibet. A reading of the translated version of the edict goes to show that Manchu knowledge of the distant parts of the realm was, at best, perfunctory. See W. R. Charles, 'The Emperor Kang Hsi's Edict on Mountains and Rivers of China,' *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. No. 4 (April, 1922), pp. 258–269, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1781510>, accessed 16 May 2015.
- ¹¹ The Jesuits mapped the southern part of Tibet and the Himalaya from the work of Manchu/Chinese lamas who had been sent out to 'survey' these areas. The Indus, which is described in the resulting Manchu map as the 'Ganga', is shown as sweeping round the western side of Kashmir to pass eastwards through the Lesser Himalaya. The other rivers of the Himalaya also bear little resemblance to fact. See Kenneth Mason, *Abode of Snow: A History of Himalayan Exploration and Mountaineering from Earliest Times to the Ascent of Everest*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955, consulted reprint edition London/Seattle: Diadem Books/*The Mountaineers*, 1987, p. 60. It would be interesting to learn to what extent the errors in the Manchu map conform to those in the Manchu edict (see Note No.10/n above).
- ¹² Hostetler, p. 75. While, the traditional Han (Chinese) territory accounts for less than one-half of the PRC's geographical land area, the current Han (Chinese) population is placed at over 93 per cent of the total. See Kalha, pp. 12–13.
- ¹³ *Ibid.* p. 62.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 34.
- ¹⁵ 'Report of the Officials of the Government of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question', Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi: Government of India, 1961, p. 66.
- ¹⁶ M.N. Gulati, *Tibetan Wars Through Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal*, New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2003, p. 192.
- ¹⁷ Palace, p. 156 (58/n). See also H. H. Risley, the *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1874, consulted 1928 reprint edition, New Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010, pp.18-19.
- ¹⁸ Gulati, p. 59.
- ¹⁹ Skrine and Nightingale, pp. 23–34. Russia occupied Kuldja and the Ili district in 1871, after the Manchu had been driven out of Kashgaria and Dzungaria, and one Yakub Beg was ruling the area. With the strategically located Ili valley in the hands of the Russians, the control of the Muzart Pass, which led into Kashgaria and the Talki Pass, which led into Dzungaria, vested with them.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 2.
- ²¹ *Ibid.* p. 27.
- ²² *Ibid.* p. 69. Sovereignty over the Pamirs was established through collection of a grazing tax from the nomadic Kirghiz who encamped in these eight valleys during the three short summer months. Khokand (Russia),

Afghanistan, Kashgaria (Manchu) and Hunza (Kashmir-India) collected these taxes at one time or another. See Skrine and Nightingale p. 19. By virtue of the fact that grazing tax was paid by the Kirghiz to one power or another—and sometime even to two—it entitled that power or powers to claim sovereignty over that portion of the Pamir in which the tax paying Kirghiz went for grazing purposes. The Kirghiz of the Taghdumbash Pamir, however, had been paying taxes to Hunza (Kashmir-India) since 1760 after the defeat the Kirghiz had suffered at the hands of one Salim Khan, the then ruler of Hunza. The Manchu, who considered the Kirghiz as its enemy, expressed satisfaction over the defeat of the Kirghiz. After the Manchu re-conquest of Eastern Turkestan in 1877, the Taghdumdash Pamir along with its valley of Sirikol, somehow became disputed territory. See K. Warikoo, *Central Asia and Kashmir: A Study in the Context of Anglo-Russian Rivalry*, New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1989, p. 165. Interestingly, the Sirikolis, who are a fair-skinned people with light eyes and hair matching those of Europeans, have more in common with the Hunzaites than with the Manchu. See T. E. Gordon, *The Roof of the World*, Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1876), consulted reprint edition, Delhi: Pranava Books, n.d.), p. 115.

²³ Ibid. p. 83.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 82.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 83.

²⁶ T. Hungerford Holdich, *The Indian Borderland: 1880-1900*, London: Methuen and Co., 1909; consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1996, p. 301.

²⁷ The results of CHGIS can be accessed at <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/data/chgis/downloads/v4/>. See also, Karl E. Ryavec, 'Manchu Empire or China Historical GIS? Remapping the China/Inner Asia Frontier in the Qing Period CHGIS, *Inner Asia*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2004, paper on the CHGIS project at the University of Wisconsin, at Stevens Point, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615344>. The author has expressed hope that CHGIS could yield useful inputs for the resolution of border disputes that China has had/is having with her neighbours. Accordingly, the very next year (2005) Ryavec approached the Henry Luce Foundation (which had earlier funded the CHGIS at Harvard) for funding the Tibet GIS Project. The Foundation provided funding for the proposed project (at the University of Virginia). The result is a historical atlas of Tibet. See Karl E. Ryavec, *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015. On the face it, one gathers the impression that the author appears to have laid relatively more emphasis on outputs, somewhat at the cost of inputs, with the underlying assumptions on these inputs not being clearly spelt out. It is for consideration whether the Indians could get associated with the two projects to obtain appropriate outputs regarding the evolution of their frontier with the Manchu, ROC and the PRC, which could provide useful information for the resolution of the boundary question.

CHINESE CHEQUERS: ONE-UPMANSHIP ON THE BOUNDARY QUESTION

HORSES IN WINTER ON THE LINGZITANG AND AKSAI CHIN PLAINS?

In a very imperial fashion, when the world was witnessing the beginnings of a wave of decolonization across Asia and Africa, the PLA was marching into Tibet to reclaim what had once been considered a Manchu protectorate. A PLA column on horses is said to have entered Western Tibet through Sinkiang. In order to buttress his assertion that the Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains were Chinese, during the talks with Nehru during (April 1960), Chou En-lai claimed that

The People's Liberation Army went to ... South Sinkiang in 1950 and thence to Ari district of Tibet through this (Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains) area by the end of 1950. This area is on a high plateau. In 1950, the People's Liberation Army transported its supplies on horses.¹

When Chou spoke of 'horses' and 'by the end of 1950' together, he gave away the truth about his gambit. The Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains comprise a desolate region at an elevation varying between 16,000 and 17,000 feet, and even more at places. The route, mostly through these elevated plains, between Sanju (the last inhabited village in Sinkiang) and Tanske, (the last inhabited village in Ladakh) is estimated at 350 miles. The portion of the road between the Changlung Pass and Kizil Jilga is considered the most difficult part of the route, aggravated by frequent snow and a piercing wind, which blows from morning to night. On this route, the supply of fuel is scanty, and the availability of grass (fodder) is just not there.² Details of the availability of fuel, fodder, and water at different camping sites on these elevated plains on the route taken by Captain Biddulph and his party (and on its variant taken by Captain Trotter) on their way from Leh to Yarkand, as a part of the Forsyth Mission, in September-October 1873 are known.³ It is no

wonder that Captain Biddulph chose sheep as pack animals to cross the elevated plains, because sheep

...can feed themselves as they go along, which ponies cannot do, and can pick up a subsistence on the scanty pasture grounds and among rocks where horses would starve. Each sheep was assigned a reduced load of 20 lbs. by Captain Biddulph in order to give it greater agility and enhanced marching distance.⁴

The position regarding fuel and fodder 'by the end' of the year (1950), with icy cold winds getting chillier and snow sometimes turning into ice beds, would surely have worsened. If the PLA took this route, as asserted, under these conditions, it certainly must have caused much worry and distress to it. It is left to the reader's imagination to guess as to what could possibly have happened to the poor horses and their miserable riders on these cold desolate plains. It is inconceivable to even think that a general worth his salt would have entertained the thought of sending a column of his forces through the Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains on horses in the winter of 1950 when there exists a much easier Eastern Route (Rudok or Changthang Route) lying in Tibetan territory, where fuel, fodder and water, relatively speaking, are plenty and easily available at different stages.⁵

It is on this route in earlier times, it has been suggested, that the flying hordes came to India from the north. This was the Royal Road referred to by William Moorcraft (the East India Company's veterinary doctor and explorer). Indian traders from the town of Najibabad traversed this route for years on their journey to Yarkand and back before the Tibetans closed it, sometime after the Tibet-Gurkha war of 1791-1792. Traders had to stop using this route for fear of the Changpas who, at the instance of the Tibetan officials at Gartok and Rudok, threatened travellers with death if they chose to traverse it.⁶ Mullik corroborates the material provided above by stating that there is evidence to show the PLA entered Gargunsa in Western Tibet not before June 1951. He also believes that the PLA did not come through the Lingzitang Aksai Chin Plains Route but took the easterly route, which is given as: Khotan, Nurmat Langar, Polur, Aqsu, Khizil Pass, Baba Hatim, Kokyar Pass, Altoon Pasha, Yashil Tso, Ibrahim Kol, Jawaza, Dung Ming, Zama Mangbo, Mense to Gargunsa.⁷ Thus, in all likelihood, the PLA column entering Tibet from Sinkiang (by the end

of 1950) would have used this Eastern Route instead of the more difficult route (virtually impossible for a modern army along with its commissariat in winter) across the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains. The question of the feasibility of an invading army coming from the north and using the Lingzitan Aksai Chin Plains Route (also known as the Chang Chenmo Route) had been discussed by members of the Royal Geographical Society, who were unanimous in their opinion that it would not be possible for an army with its commissariat to cross these Plains. Evidently, a winter crossing of these Plains had not been considered by them. The members apparently were under the erroneous impression that the flying hordes from the north had used this route, not then being in possession of knowledge of the existence of the easier Eastern Route.⁸

THE SEARCH FOR EASIER ROUTES TO EASTERN TURKESTAN

For many years, British India had engaged itself in searching for easier routes from Kashmir to Eastern Turkestan in place of the Karakoram Pass route.⁹ In this connection, the Chang Chenmo Route passing through the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains had been identified for the purpose in 1868 by H. Cayley,¹⁰ the first British Indian Agent posted at Leh, Ladakh. However, traders continued to prefer the Karakoram Pass Route, their preference being justified in Darwinian terms as a 'kind of natural selection' based on the experience of centuries that had dictated the choice of routes in the past.¹¹ The Chang Chenmo Route proved to be a failure despite the Kashmir Government building rest-houses and depots, apart from providing guides and dak (letter/message) runners across it (the route).¹²

It has been suggested that this route may have been used for some time when the Karakoram Pass Route had been considered unsafe on account of threats from robbers from Hunza and Nagar.¹³ Thus, the question of the PLA using this route during the end of 1950 in preference to the much easier Eastern Route does not stand scrutiny. However, on account of the special topographical features of the Chang Chenmo Route, the British had realized that this route would be suitable for wheeled carriage (at that time the only powered wheeled carriage available was the steam railway). It is highly likely that in wanting to take advantage of this topographical feature, the PRC built a road

across the plateau of Aksai Chin, north of the water parting, connecting Gartok and Rudok in Western Tibet to Sinkiang, which was inaugurated sometime in 1957. It was only after the CIA's covert operation in Tibet when Indians started to be viewed in inimical terms that the PRC was to come to Lingzhitang and the surrounding areas in the Indian watershed, presumably seeking territorial depth for the defence of their main arterial road through Aksai Chin, north of the Loksang Mountains.¹⁴ This range forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Karakash in the north and the Indus in the south.

CHOU'S DESCRIPTION OF THE TSUNGLING MOUNTAINS

Once again—for the purpose of laying claim to territory right up to the crest of the Karakoram Mountains, east of the Karakoram Pass—Chou in his discussions with Nehru in New Delhi during April 1960 chose to claim that the Kunlun Mountains, which form the southern boundary of the Tarim Basin of Sinkiang, were a part of the Karakoram.¹⁵ No doubt this was an attempt to gain unfair and undue advantage. To buttress his claim, Chou chose to erroneously equate the Karakoram with the Tsungling¹⁶ (which he refers to as Tsung) of classical Chinese geography. To reconcile these apparently erroneous and contradictory assertions, the Karakoram Mountains have to be considered as a 'horse-shoe-shaped indigesta moles of mountain masses'.¹⁷ But then, these horse-shoe-shaped mountain masses have already been identified with the Tsungling Mountains (with the Karakoram Mountains forming one constituent part of the same). This was done after Sven Hedin (the Swedish geographer and explorer) had considered almost all the material available from different sources, including Chinese (partly translated for the first time) in which the Tsungling happened to be either mentioned or described before he arrived at his description of these mountains.¹⁸

To begin with, in the first century BC, the Chinese described all mountain passages that led from the Tarim Basin to countries around the Oxus in the west as the Tsungling. While the Kunlun, mostly along with the Tien-shan, forms the upper or northern arm of the Tsungling, the lower or southern arm is provided by the Hindu Kush, sometime along with the Karakoram. During the early period, the Karakoram was said to be a part of the Tsungling. However, the Chinese traveller

Hiuen Tsang excludes the Karakoram from his Tsungling. Manchu geographers have considered the Tsungling both with and without the Karakoram, depending on how it has been depicted cartographically.¹⁹ During most of the nineteenth century, Moorcraft's description of the mountain ranges west of the (Karakoram) Pass as the Karakoram continued to be used, although some explorers preferred the Balti name of Mustagh or 'ice mountain' for these mountain ranges. Gradually, however, mountain ranges to the east of the Pass were included in the description Karakoram, although these ranges, unlike the ranges to the west of the Pass, do not form a water parting between rivers flowing south into the Indian Ocean and those flowing north into the Tarim Basin. These northern and southern arms join the meridional range, that is, the eastern rim of the Pamirs, which includes the Mustagh Ata Peak and is now often described as the Mustagh Ata Range. It is through this meridional range that all silk road routes from the Oxus to the Tarim Basin pass.

Clearly, the mountain ranges described as the Kunlun in the north and the Karakoram in the south were not known to Chinese geographers by these names. It was left to European geographers to dissect the Tsungling Mountains, and separate them into their constituent parts.²⁰ Hedin points out that on account of a double error having crept in in early Chinese geography, the Indian Ganges and the Chinese Huangho rivers were shown to have their source in the Kunlun, which in turn could have led to the depiction of one single range separating India from Eastern Turkestan in early European maps.²¹ This confusion could perhaps have been behind Chou's misunderstanding about the Kunlun being a part of the Karakoram and the latter being the same as the Tsungling.

Chou was to add the following.

Your Excellency (Nehru) and some other friends yesterday mentioned to me about Indians having deep feelings towards Himalayas (in respect of the eastern sector) ... Himalayas should become a mountain of friendship between China and India ... You can appreciate that the Chinese, particularly the Sinkianese, have the same feelings towards Karakoram ... and this should also become a mountain of friendship.²²

Citing an incomplete term from classical Chinese literature, Chou went on to give lessons in the geography of the region, which neither had their basis in Chinese literature nor did they represent physical reality on the ground. What made him to assert that the Kunlun was a part of the Karakoram Mountains and assume that they were the same as the Tsungling is not clear. As shown above, both the Kunlun and the Karakoram could have formed constituent parts of the Tsungling Mountains at some period of time or another. Thus, it is not for the Karakoram Mountains that the Chinese ever had special feelings; these feelings have always been for the Kunlun Mountains which are said to be the abode of, among others, Si-Wang-Mu, the goddess of the Kunlun.²³

THE GREAT CENTRAL ASIAN—SOUTH ASIAN WATER PARTING

To Nehru, Chou had said,

... the delineation of the western sector of the boundary has a basis, namely, the Karakoram watershed. The Karakoram has a very high peak called the Khunlun (Kunlun) mountain which lies between Sinkiang and Tibet ... to the west is the Karakoram range, whose watershed divides Hunza from Sinkiang and the watershed between Sinkiang and Ladakh ... (Karakoram) is the natural watershed. Broadly speaking, rivers and streams to the south and west of this belong to India while those to the north and east of it are on China's side.²⁴

It is clear that Chou chose to misinterpret—either through ignorance or design—the term ‘Karakoram watershed’ to erroneously include the entire region enclosed by the Kunlun, the Karakoram, and the meridional Mustagh Ata Range, i.e., the Tsungling Mountains. The PRC had not realized that this (Karakoram) watershed represents only those portions of the Karakoram Mountains that lie to the west of the Karakoram Pass, whose apex (the Shaksgam Valley) forms the divide between the drainage of the Tarim Basin in the north and the Indian Ocean in the south, and accordingly was considered the natural boundary only in that part of the western sub-sector. Regrettably, it appears that Chou was misinformed about the drainage, east of the

Karakoram Pass. He was clearly under the mistaken belief that ‘All water systems north of the Kongka Pass and Karakoram (even east of the Pass) flow towards the north’.²⁵

This erroneous line of reasoning was to lead Chou into believing that the crest-ridge of the Karakoram Mountains, even east of the Karakoram Pass was the watershed (forming the water parting between the drainage of the Tarim Basin in the north and the Indian Ocean in the south) in this part of the western sub-sector. Accordingly, the Karakoram Mountains east of the Pass do *not* form a water parting as they do to its west. Actually, the watershed in this portion east of the Pass (between Sinkiang and Ladakh) could be roughly taken as a line drawn diagonally northeast from the Karakoram Pass which passes north of the Lingzitang Plain and south of the Aksai Chin Plain and cuts across the crest-ridge of the Loksang Mountains, separating these Plains.

THE MANCHU AND ROC SURVEYS OF THE DISPUTED AREAS IN THE WESTERN SECTOR, EAST OF THE KARAKORAM PASS

To lend credibility to his assertions, Chou added the following.

In the year 1891 to 1892, the Manchu Government sent people to Karakoram and Chang-Chenmo valley for carrying out surveys. These people confirmed that our boundary lay here. We have records to prove this. The KMT also surveyed the Kongka pass. In fact, the local Government had invited some Soviet experts to come and do the survey.²⁶

There appears to be a context to Chou’s assertion which requires elucidating. Very briefly, British Indian military strategists believed that the ‘no-man’s land’,²⁷ or unclaimed land, or what really has also been considered as ‘regional commons,’ constituted a territorial gap between the Afghan and Manchu frontiers as well as between the Kashmir (India) and Manchu frontiers.²⁸ These territorial gaps, which had come to the notice of the Russians, who were believed to be coveting them, needed to be closed in order to ‘shut out Russia.’²⁹ The territorial gaps actually represented tracts of land that had been used over centuries for the trade pilgrim caravan routes. Remains of Ashokan as well as of later Buddhist times have also been found here.³⁰ Accordingly, for British

India to determine the issue of sovereignty over these territorial gaps was proving to be a highly vexatious and complex issue. It was believed that the prevailing dangerous situation in the region on account of these gaps could be exploited by the Russians to use the Pamir route (in preference for the traditional Afghanistan route) for military intervention through the mountain passes that led into Chitral and Gilgit in Kashmir (India).

There was no real evidence to show that any one particular country had ever actually exercised even loose political control over all these routes for sustained periods in the past. One Captain F.E. Younghusband, officer and explorer, who had been dispatched twice in 1889 and 1890 to examine these gaps, went about the task of attempting to close them with military precision. Younghusband explains.

The country described above (between Kunlun and Karakoram Mountains, west of the Karakoram Pass) is, for the most part, a 'no-man's land,' and to lay down any particular boundaries is at present very difficult ... the Mustagh (Karakoram, west of the Pass) Mountains here form a definite boundary between the countries under our influence and those under the authority of China (Manchu).³¹

The range of mountains which forms the watershed of the Indus River system ... is generally called by us the Hindu Kush in the western portion, and either the Mustagh or Karakoram Mountains in the eastern part ... I will refer to the portion of the Indus watershed extending from the bend of the Hindu Kush Mountains to the Karakoram Pass as the Mustagh (Karakoram, west of the Pass) Mountains.³²

...the Chinese (Manchu) have never asserted an authority over the valley of the Yarkand River, and it is only this year (1889-1890) that they have asserted any definite authority over Shahidulla district, the limits of their jurisdiction, for all practical purposes, having hitherto been the Kuenlun range, with frontier posts at Kugiar, Kilian, and Sanju. In their former (1759-1863) occupation of Turkestan (renamed Sinkiang after re-conquest), the Chinese (Manchu) made no pretensions to any authority on the southern side of the Kuenlun Mountains, and the Maharaja

(of Kashmir) built, and for some years occupied, the fort at Shahidulla ... Now, according to the latest information, the Chinese (Manchu) have stationed a guard at Shahidulla, and have therefore definitely set up a claim to that place.³³

The Maharaja of Kashmir had been claiming sovereignty over territories right up to Shahidulla, where a Kashmir garrison had been stationed. In this connection, during 1857, Adolphe von Schlagintweit (a Bavarian geologist and explorer) had found the fort at Shahidulla to be unoccupied, and Suget (in the valley of the Karakash River, less than 7 miles to its south) had been a simple camping ground at that time.³⁴ In 1865, W. H. Johnson (a British Indian surveyor associated with the survey of Kashmir), found the Kashmir garrison at Shahidulla.³⁵ Robert Shaw, the explorer, believed that the fort at Shahidulla had been built (renovated?) by the Kashmir government in 1864.³⁶ In November 1889, the Russian-Polish explorer, Captain Grombchevsky, who had been snooping around in these areas, had learnt that the Kashmiri garrison at Shahidulla had vacated the fort only a few months earlier, during the autumn months (September? 1889). It has now become clear that it was at the instance of Younghusband that the Manchu taotai (commissioner) at Kashgar and the concerned Amban (district officer) put a stop to grain supplies from Sanju and Kilian in Manchu territory to the Kashmir garrison at Shahidulla, thus compelling the Kashmiri soldiers to withdraw from their frontier outpost.³⁷ In his exploration of the region in 1913-1914, the Italian De Filippi found the fort at Shahidulla empty and deserted. In its place, an ROC's custom official was found to be located in a small fort at Suget,³⁸ constructed sometime after 1890.³⁹

The British in India were attempting to make the Manchu (empire) a buffer state provided it could be persuaded to extend its frontiers and, where necessary, 'meet with those of the other buffer state, Afghanistan.'⁴⁰ Accordingly, the Manchu occupation of the watershed region between the Kunlun and the Karakoram mountains, west of the (Karakoram) Pass, commenced only after Younghusband's visit to the area. He was successful in inducing P'an Ta-jen, the Amban (at Yarkand) to occupy that region.⁴¹ To Younghusband's great satisfaction, P'an is reported to have responded favourably. He 'considered the watershed ... defined as a natural (literally, a heaven-made) boundary, to be the frontier between Kashmir and Yarkand'⁴²

In doing so, British India was blatantly and gladly willing to sacrifice the claims of the Kashmir state to the watershed region west of the Pass.⁴³ In June 1890, Governor-General Lansdowne shared his views with Sir John Walsham, Britain's Minister to Peking, regarding the matter: '... the Russians would be wary of "complications with a neighbour (Manchu) at whose pertinacity in upholding her territorial rights" she has already had an experience in the Kuldja (Ili) dispute'.⁴⁴ Lansdowne instructed the Resident in Kashmir (the British Indian representative there) to inform the Maharaja at an opportune moment that British India considered the Indus watershed, west of the Karakoram pass, as the boundary between Kashmir and Sinkiang.⁴⁵ Nothing was said about the region east of the Pass. In November 1892, the Kashmir government complained to the Resident that the Manchu officials had put up two boundary pillars, one on the Karakoram Pass and another one some 50 feet on the southern slope of the Mountain,⁴⁶ and expected 'To maintain territory already acquired and in its possession and, in that case, the unlawful aggression of the Khatais (Manchu/Chinese) must be repelled, and the original boundary restored'.⁴⁷ The British Indian view was that 'no boundary marks will be regarded as having any international value' unless these had been erected "with the concurrence of both powers".⁴⁸

In all likelihood, as a consequence of Younghusband's visit to Sinkiang, the Manchu surveyor Li Yuan-ping was deputed in 1891-92 to 'survey' the area most probably between the Kunlun and Karakoram Mountains, east of the Karakoram Pass. As already referred to, the Manchu had been gifted the watershed region to the west of the Pass. Li Yuan-Ping is asserted to have 'surveyed' the area from the Kilik pass in the west (the Kilik pass being referred to here is most probably not the pass to the extreme western extremity of undivided India but the pass to the east of the Sanju pass) to the Kongka pass in the east, in addition to the elevated plains of Aksai Chin and Lingzitang and the valley of Chang Chenmo.⁴⁹ Apparently, Yuan-Ping could have been attempting to determine the water parting in this region, east of the Karakoram Pass, for he is reported to have advocated a method of demarcation based on the water system of Kashmir and Sinkiang,⁵⁰ the same principle that had been employed west of the Karakoram Pass. It is not known whether the Manchu effected any changes in its maps even at the district level as a result of Yuan-Ping's 'surveys.' It needs to be mentioned here

that in the absence of a triangulation grid and the time spent on the ‘surveys’, these ‘surveys’, in all likelihood, would have been no more than rudimentary route surveys, often employed by travellers in those days. Generally speaking, such surveys were even then not considered suitable for official map-making purposes.⁵¹

Accordingly, it has become clear that Chou’s knowledge of the area was based on these rudimentary route surveys which, as route surveys usually are of a perfunctory nature, resulted in some very rough sketches of the area. The Indian side issued a clarificatory note on 22 April 1960, stating the following.

Had this (the fact of the asserted Manchu and ROC surveys having taken place) been true, it is impossible that Chinese maps until today (April 1960) would be so crude and elementary. Very few of them show the features correctly. Many of them do not show any features at all. At best, the Chinese may have crude sketches prepared by a few travellers in this area. These cannot be called surveys. We (Indian side) have with us a number of very detailed accounts of our exploration and survey parties who visited the area, and fixed trigonometrical points and prepared scientific maps. Our records, therefore, are better evidence of our jurisdiction than any records the Chinese can produce ... Chinese (Manchu) maps of the 18th and 19th centuries showed the boundary of Sinkiang on the Kuen Lun. Similarly, the maps of the early 20th century (Manchu) and the postal map of 1917 (issued by the ROC) also showed the boundary on the Kuen Lun. It is only after the 1920s that the Chinese (ROC) maps show an alignment south of the Kuen Luen.⁵²

CHOU CLAIMS THE AKSAI CHIN ‘AREA’

To lay claim to the entire Lingzitan Aksai Chin Plains and the surrounding areas, Chou very cleverly chose to describe this entire region as the Aksai Chin area, without making a distinction between its constituent parts.⁵³ Nothing south of the Loksang Mountains has ever been described either as Aksai Chin or Aksai Chin area.⁵⁴ To lend credibility to his claim, Chou put forward the argument that Aksai Chin is a name derived from the Uighur (Turki) language.⁵⁵ Perhaps, he was not aware that many a time a different name was assigned to a

place, mountain, mountain pass, river, etc. depending on whether the person was from Turkestan in the north or Ladakh in the south. More often than not, depending on where the caravan *basbi* (guide) was from, the name for a place was given accordingly. It so happened that in the present case the caravan *basbi* of Adolphe von Schlagintweit (the first European to have been credited with crossing the said plains in 1857), one Mahomed Ameen Yarkandi, had been called to the Indian Army's Quartermaster-General's office sometime in 1862, where a rough sketch depicting caravan routes in the region was drawn. The words Aksai Chin appeared for the first time on this sketch and were written right across the blank space south of the Kunlun Mountains. According to Ameen Yarkandi, Aksai Chin was outside Manchu territory.⁵⁶ The Great Trigonometrical Survey (of India) would reach, and cover this area shortly thereafter as a part of the survey of the territories of the Maharaja of Kashmir (1855-1865).

PROTECTION ON THE PILGRIM TRADE ROUTES IN 'NO-MAN'S LAND'

Around 1832, Manchu officials in Eastern Turkestan issued an order waiving custom duty payable by traders plying different routes, including those to and from Kashmir, by voluntarily abandoning the reciprocal duty of ensuring the security of the routes. Traders from India using the Karakoram Pass Routes (confined to the watershed region west of the Pass) were refusing to pay custom duty to the Maharaja of Kashmir till such time as arrangements were made for their security on these routes.⁵⁷ Accordingly, the Maharaja started providing security on these routes until 1889 when, at the instance of Younghusband, the Kashmir garrison at Shahidulla had to withdraw from there (as referred to above in this Chapter of the monograph). This shows that during the first half of the 19th century neither the Manchu nor Kashmir coveted or laid claims to the territory along these routes—that is, not till the advent of the Russians and the British on the scene. It appears that the two (Kashmir and Manchu) were happy to levy custom duty for the sole purpose of meeting the cost of providing protection to pilgrims and traders on these routes.

Thus, it can be safely inferred that the Manchu administration had never reached the region between the Kunlun and the Karakoram Mountains,

whether to the east or to the west of the Karakoram Pass, in the eighteenth century as asserted by Chou⁵⁸—or even until the formation of the PRC in 1949. As has been referred to, the routes east of the Pass through the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains had never really been used by traders. It was the cartographical aggression of the ROC (see below), which Chou himself had earlier ridiculed, that brought the ROC's claim line south of the Kunlun in the region, east of the Karakoram Pass.

THE CARTOGRAPHICAL AGGRESSION OF THE ROC

Apparently, the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains had never been of much strategic value to the Manchu since it considered the Tarim Basin as a virtual fortress in itself—the land of the Four Garrisons—being enclosed by the Tianshan Mountains in the north and the Kunlun in the south. The Shun Pao map of 1934–35 (published privately during the ROC period) resorted to cartographic aggression by showing the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains as a part of the ROC's territory,⁵⁹ along with the non-Tibetan tribal belt south of the Himalayan watershed—covered by the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern sector—as a part of Sikang (then a Special Administrative District of ROC) *without* there being even a shred of evidence to show that the ROC (or the Manchu) had ever exercised jurisdiction over any of these two territories.⁶⁰

In the western sector, what Chou coveted was the entire landmass, virtually uninhabited, which falls in a rain shadow area enclosed by the Tsungling Mountains. The Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains are the eastern part of this landmass. On this landmass lie the ancient caravan trade pilgrim routes between India and China. British India was willing to divide this landmass on the basis of the watershed principle, and apportion a lion's share to the Manchu. Younghusband's efforts in regard to the region west of the Karakoram Pass have already been referred to. For the region east of the Pass, an offer was made in 1899 to the Manchu foreign office, the Tsungli Yamen, by the British Minister to the Manchu court, Sir Claude MacDonald.⁶¹ No response was received in the matter. The matter rests there. It is only when the PRC chooses to declassify the official records pertaining to the British Indian offer, that some light might possibly be thrown on Manchu diffidence in accepting it. It would also be interesting to know of Russian moves on

this issue, which would become possible when the records of the Tsar's War Office (since the eventual superior of the Russian Consul General at Kashgar was the Tsar's War Minister) are declassified. The British-Russian rivalry in the region and how it subsequently impacted the Sino-India boundary question requires further study.

CHOU AND THE McMAHON LINE

In so far as the eastern sector is concerned, Chou's position was that the McMahon Line was 'some dispute ... left to us by Imperialism.'⁶² He went on to expose his ignorance of the alignment of the Line, as he was clearly under an erroneous impression that British India had, through this Line, claimed territory even beyond the crest-ridge of the Himalayas on the northern slopes of these mountains. This is all too evident when during his talks with G.B. Pant, the Indian Home Minister, he stated: '...the Chinese people were also sentimental about the Himalayas. The northern parts of the Himalayas belonged to China and, therefore, they formed a common border between the two countries.'⁶³

Apparently, Chou did not know that the McMahon Line did exactly what he was in fact suggesting: it gave the northern slopes of the crest-ridge of the Himalayas to Tibet and the southern slopes to India through the application of the watershed principle (to the Himalayas) in the eastern sector. Further, convinced about the merit of his argument regarding the Karakoram Mountains, east of the Karakoram Pass, forming the watershed in this part of the western sub-sector, Chou went on to insist that if Nehru wanted the watershed principle to be applied to the eastern sector (the Himalaya), then the same principle should be applied to the western sector as well, when he said: 'If we take the watershed principle, it should be made applicable to both sectors.'⁶⁴

THE PRC'S STRATEGIC THINKING DICTATES TERRITORIAL CLAIMS

It is becoming increasingly clear that PRC's strategic thinking in respect of its frontiers with India changed significantly and dramatically after it chose to believe in India's complicity in the covert operation. From then onwards, it appears that the PRC began to feel the need to protect

its soft underbelly, which it believed could be achieved in the western sector by denying India any territory in the landmass enclosed by the Tsungling. By this stratagem the PRC would obtain three natural barricades: the Kunlun Mountains (in the north), the Karakoram Mountains (in the south), and the intervening inhospitable region enclosed by these mountain ranges, separating the Muslim dominated Sinkiang from India. This would make Sinkiang virtually impregnable from the Indian side in the south.

In the eastern sector, as a stratagem or otherwise, the PRC refused to acknowledge the legality of the McMahon Line. By implication, it claimed the entire non-Tibetan tribal belt with some Buddhist pockets south of the Himalayan watershed in order to protect Buddhist dominated Tibet by either sitting on the edge of the northern plain of Assam, south of the Himalaya, or employ it as a bargaining point (after keeping a salient or two-Tawang et al.-for itself) for the exchange of territory claimed by it in the western sector. Most probably, it was the latter reason that was the more significant one. Apparently, in 1955, the PRC had not considered a frontier with India, south of the Himalaya. In a conversation with the Panchen Lama in Peking (23 February 1955), Mao told the Lama: 'Now that the Tibetans are cooperating with the Han, our national defence line is not the Upper Yangtse River but the Himalaya Mountains'.⁶⁵

Thus, in 1955, the strategic thinking of the PRC appears to have been different. It started changing shape sometime after it began to believe in India's complicity in the covert operation in Tibet. After choosing to do so, the PRC picked up the slender threads bequeathed to it by the ROC (as if they were a gauntlet thrown at it), especially after Chou himself had ridiculed the ROC's cartographic aggression (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). For a person of Chou's position and stature, he should have known better than to advance claims in both sectors that do not even stand on foundations of sand. Evidently, he was ill advised in the matter.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF: THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

Speaking of the present, it seems clear that for the sake of establishing 'historical facts', the PRC has shown no hesitation in making use of ROC's maps, which go even beyond the exaggerated territorial claims

of the Manchu, and which Chou had himself ridiculed way back in 1954 (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). The PRC has also demonstrated that, if required, it can muster the necessary political will to use force in furtherance of its territorial claims in blatant disregard of international law, norms, conventions, and practice. This has also been witnessed in the South China Sea, where it continues to claim 80 per cent of that sea for itself based on the ‘Nine-Dash Line’ map issued by the ROC in 1947. This has been so despite the award of the tribunal of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague of 12 July 2016 finding no legal basis under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) for the PRC to claim historic rights to resources within the sea areas falling within the ‘Nine Dash Line.’⁶⁶ Significantly, the award is based on the Convention (1992), which the PRC itself helped to draft apart from becoming one of its willing signatories (1996). Despite all this, the PRC has chosen to reject the award as ‘null and void’—in complete disregard for international law and world opinion. In rejecting the award, and by its occupation, reclamation, construction of military facilities, and also by causing serious damage to the ecology of the region, the PRC has acted as a practitioner of hard power.⁶⁷ In doing so, the PRC has attempted to declare itself as the master of the South China Sea—the indisputable gateway from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean (and vice versa) through which flow an annual estimated over US\$ 5 trillion in merchandise trade.

As the cliché goes, history appears to be repeating itself in the South China Sea. The PRC has reacted to the award on the South China Sea by making the PLA’s Southern Theatre Command display its latest weaponry on state television in order to send a clear message that it is prepared to fight for advancing its territorial claims.⁶⁸ One way to explain the PRC’s present threatening posture in the South China Sea is that it is under the impression it can get away with it, like it could in the past. Five and a half decades ago, the PRC chose to use the PLA rather than the negotiation table for advancing territorial claims against India. No doubt the PRC got away with it then because of Cold War politics. Once again today, in the PRC’s calculations, the Americans are preoccupied in containing the Russians and fighting terror (in that order), and the time appears ripe for projecting force in the South China Sea for advancing its own territorial claim. In this way, it seems to be clearly demonstrating that it believes in putting itself as the final arbiter of

disputed territorial claims against militarily inferior rival claimants. It will be recalled that India had offered to make a reference of the Sino-Indian boundary question to any international authority, including the International Court at The Hague. However, the PRC rejected international arbitration even at that juncture (refer Chapter VII of this monograph).

By way of caution, it needs to be recognized that the PRC's state machinery continues to be a monolithic entity that has operated all these years without even a semblance of what is called the separation of powers. The PRC chooses to describe itself as a 'socialist market economy' without having had the advantage of being exposed to rational-liberal thought, one major manifestation of which is democracy and another being human rights. Till such time as it does not affect requisite changes in its socio-political structure, its methods will remain crude and primitive for advancing territorial claims in respect of those it does not consider its peer—unless it has reason to believe that there are mitigating circumstances to show that it should be seen to be acting differently. For the global community, it must take note of the fact that the proverbial pond is already half full and with another doubling of the PRC's GDP, that pond will be full (when the PRC's GDP reaches the level of the US GDP or even crosses it).

The global community stands at a critical juncture, with no elbowroom left for further procrastination in respect of sending a clear message to the PRC to play the game in the international arena in a fair and gentlemanly manner as per well-established international conventions, rules, and practices. In this connection, the PRC's leaders need to realize that Chou En Lai had himself assured that the PRC would not unilaterally change boundaries as the KMT had—and by implication repudiated the 'Nine Dash Line' as well (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). The award on the South China Sea has, in a way, put the PRC to a test in which it has to demonstrate whether it is willing to show respect for international law as well as past assurances in settling territorial disputes. In case the PRC is not willing to settle the dispute in the South China Sea according to the arbitration award and UNCLOS, then it is time for the international community to stand up as one, and settle it appropriately. The global community could come to regret it later if it does not take timely action in this matter. Having said this, it

needs to be added that no one grudges the PRC's rise in getting its 'rightful place in the world', whatever that means—provided it grows as a rational liberal society and not as a country uglier than pre-war Japan—by which route it could end up becoming a threat to global equilibrium and the global community itself.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Nehru-Chou Talks—V, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 118.
- ² *Report of a Mission to Yarkund in 1873, Under Command of Sir T.D. Forsyth*, Part I, Calcutta: Foreign Department Press, 1875, consulted reprint edition, Delhi: Pranava Books, n.d., pp. 245–248. The Yarkund Mission under the command of Sir T. D. Forsyth, ICS, comprised, among others, Lt. Col. T.E. Gordon, second in command, Captain Henry Trotter, Royal Engineers, the surveyor to the Mission, and Captain John Biddulph, 19th Hussars.
- ³ Details of the Chang Chenmo Route and its variant through Tibet are given under Route III & Route IIIa respectively in Section G of the Report. See *Report of a Mission to Yarkund in 1873, Under Command of Sir T.D. Forsyth, Part II*, Calcutta: Foreign Department Press, 1875, consulted reprint edition, Delhi: Pranava Books, n.d., pp. 426–430.
- ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 492.
- ⁵ Details of the Eastern or Changthang Route given by Captain Trotter (based on the 'Pandit,' native surveyor, Kishen Singh's route survey) are shown under Route XIV in Appendix G of the Report. See *Report of a Mission to Yarkund*, Part-II, pp. 442–444. See also Capt. Henry Trotter, 'On the Geographical Results of the Mission to Kashgar under Sir T.D. Forsyth in 1873-74', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. 48, 1875, pp. 173-234. See also Col. Sir S. G. Burrard, *Explorations in Tibet and Neighbouring Regions 1865-1879*, Vol. VIII, Part I, Dehradun: The Trigonometrical Survey, 1915, pp. 149-158, at <http://www.pahar.in/>. However, Shaw has been credited with being the first European to identify the eastern route in some detail, which he describes as the Eastern Route to Khotan in his paper. See Robert B. Shaw, 'On the Position of Pein, Charchand, Lob Nur, and Other Places in Central Asia', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 16, No.3, 1871–1872, pp. 247–248. While the Eastern Route was considered more suitable than the Chang Chenmo Route for pack animals, including horses, because of the relatively better availability of fuel, fodder, and water, the latter Route was considered suitable for wheeled carriage since it passed mainly through the Plains, albeit elevated. This could perhaps have been the reason why the PRC may have decided to build her Sinkiang-Western Tibet Highway through these Plains in disputed territory rather than along the Eastern Route, which lay in Tibetan territory.

- ⁶ *Report of a Mission to Yarkand, Part I*, pp. 247–249. Dutreuil de Rhins, the French explorer, in attempting to traverse the Rudok or Changthang or the Eastern Route, had to pay for it in 1893 with his life. See F. Grenard, *Tibet: The Country and its Inhabitants*, London: Hutchinson, 1904, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2010, pp. 13-154.
- ⁷ Mullik, p. 196.
- ⁸ See T.D. Forsyth, ‘On the Transit of Tea from North-West India to Eastern Turkestan’, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1868–1869, p. 202, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1798933>, accessed 13 May 2015. Forsyth was to make his first visit to Yarkand in 1870 as leader of the (first) mission to Yakub Beg.
- ⁹ G.J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier: A Study in Imperial Policy*, London: Published for the Royal Commonwealth Society by Longmans, 1963, p. 45.
- ¹⁰ H. Cayley, *Report on the Route to the Karakash River via the Chang Chenmo Valley and Pass*, Government of the Punjab, New Series, No. 2, 1868.
- ¹¹ Alder, p. 47.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- ¹³ Filippo De Filippi, *The Italian Expedition to the Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkestan 1913-1914*, London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1932, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2005, p. 279.
- ¹⁴ Erik Norin, *Geological Explorations in Western Tibet, III Geology, Publication 29 of the Scientific Expedition to the N-W Provinces of China (1927-35) under the leadership of Sven Hedin*, Stockholm: Thuletryck, 1946. See folded ‘Geological Map of Western Chang-Thang’ showing the Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains and the Loksang Mountains, in the inner rear cover pocket. See also Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China and India 1914–1950: A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1989, p. 400. The *Central Asia Atlas* was published in 1966 as the 47th Report of the Sino-Swedish Expedition (1927–35) under the leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin. According to Lamb, this *Atlas* provides excellent maps of the Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains and clearly shows the Loksang range, separating the two Plains (like in Norin’s map). Interestingly, immediately after World War II, the US Army Map Service took charge of the unpublished material pertaining to the *Atlas* and, after making changes in various territory names, published it in 1950 as a part of their AMS-1301 series. In 1966, after the Sino-Indian conflict, the *Atlas* was published, with additional data on local vegetation and water bodies, as an expedition publication. See National Institute of Informatics, Digital Silk Road Project, Digital Archives of Toyo Bunko Rare Books.
- ¹⁵ Nehru-Chou Talks—IV, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 70-71.

- ¹⁶ Ibid. p. 74, and Nehru-Chou Talks—V, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 117.
- ¹⁷ Sven Hedin, *Southern Tibet: Discoveries in Former Times Compared With My Own Researches in 1906–1908*, Vol. VIII, Part I: ‘The Ts’ung-Ling Mountains’, Stockholm: Lithographic Institute of the General Staff of the Swedish Army, 1922, pp. 3–88, at <http://www.pahar.in/>, accessed 13 May 2015. Tracing Fa Hian’s route to India, the former Surveyor General of India, T. Hungerford Holdich had suggested that the Tsungling could be the Karakoram Mountains, which was shown to be erroneous by Sven Hedin. See T. Hungerford Holdich, *The Gates of India*, London: Macmillan, 1910, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2000, pp. 174–189.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 87–88.
- ²⁰ It is to Alexander von Humboldt that the credit goes for describing the mountain ranges that skirt the Tarim Basin in the south as the Kunlun Mountains. While this happened in 1831, it was only in 1929 that the name Kunlun was firmly established in geography. See Sir Sidney Burrard, ‘The Mountains of the Karakoram: A Defence of the Existing Nomenclature’, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3, September 1929, p. 284. It is William Moorcraft, an East India Company veterinary doctor, who is generally credited with first applying the name Karakoram in circa 1820 to the range of mountains that lie immediately to the west of the Karakoram Pass. See Burrard, September 1929, p. 279; and Ph. C. Visser, ‘The Mountains of Central Asia and their Nomenclature’, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (August, 1930), pp. 138–142, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1783978>, accessed 20 December 2015. See also Sir Charles Close (in the Chair), ‘Nomenclature in the Karakoram: Discussion’, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 76, No. 2, August 1930, pp. 149 and 156, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1783980>, accessed 9 June 2010. It was only in 1937 that the Survey of India officially recognized the description Karakoram. See Kenneth Mason, ‘Karakoram Nomenclature’, *Himalayan Journal*, No. 10, 1938, pp. 1–2, at <http://www.himalayanclub.org/journal/karakoram-nomenclature/>, accessed 3 January 2014.

The meridional range had been known to medieval geographers by the name of Bolor or Bolortagh. See Colonel Veniukoff and T. Michell, ‘Additional Remarks on the Bolor Highland’, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 13, No. 5, 1868–1869, pp. 342–351, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1799684>, accessed 13 May 2015. Aurel Stein’s initial take on the Tsungling was a bit different: he excluded the Karakoram from it. He identifies the meridional range as the Tsungling which he believes is the same as the Imaus (a.k.a. Taurus) of classical western geographers. See Sir Aurel Stein, ‘A Chinese Expedition across the Pamirs and Hindukush, A.D. 747’, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 116/n–117/n, at <http://www.pahar.in/>, accessed 13 May 2015. Seven years later, Stein was to include

the Karakoram in the south (and the Kunlun in the north) in his 'Tsungling'. See Sir Aurel Stein, 'On Ancient Tracks Past the Pamirs', *Himalayan Journal*, No. 4, 1932, pp. 1–2, at <http://www.himalayanclub.org/hj/04/1/on-ancient-tracks-past-the-pamirs/>, accessed 30 November 2015.

- ²¹ Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, Vol. 8, Part I, pp. 7–14.
- ²² Nehru-Chou Talks—IV, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 73–74.
- ²³ J.F. Blacker, *Chats on Oriental China*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908, pp. 57–58.
- ²⁴ Nehru-Chou Talks—IV, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 70–71 and 117. See also (Col.) Sir S. G. Burrard (with A. M. Heron), *A Sketch of the Geography and Geology of the Himalaya Mountains and Tibet*, Revised Edition, Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1933, consulted reprint edition, New Delhi: Facsimile Publisher, 2016, pp. 255–260.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 71 and Nehru-Chou Talks—V, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 117.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 71.
- ²⁷ (Capt.) F. E. Younghusband, *Report of a Mission to The Northern Frontier of Kashmir in 1889*, Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1890, consulted reprint edition, Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973, p. 99.
- ²⁸ Alder, pp. 278–280.
- ²⁹ Mehra, p. 58.
- ³⁰ H.N. Kaul, *India China Boundary in Kashmir*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2009, pp. 15–18.
- ³¹ Younghusband, p. 99.
- ³² *Ibid.* p. 92.
- ³³ *Ibid.* pp. 99–100.
- ³⁴ Filippi, p. 424 (1/n).
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* p.424.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 424.
- ³⁷ (Capt.) M. Grombchevsky, 'Foreign Frontier', *Proceedings of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1890, pp. 128–129, as quoted in K. Warikoo, *Central Asia and Kashmir: A Study in the Context of Anglo-Russian Rivalry*, New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1989, p. 48 (227/n).
- ³⁸ Filippi, pp. 424–425.
- ³⁹ Parshotam Mehra, *An 'Agreed' Frontier: Ladakh and India's Northernmost Border 1846–1947*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 63. In November 1892, when Dutreuil de Rhins and Grenard were at Suget, they found there a newly constructed fort. See Grenard, p. 30.

- ⁴⁰ Ibid. 59.
- ⁴¹ Ibid. p. 64.
- ⁴² Ibid. p. 65.
- ⁴³ Ibid. p. 71.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 59-60.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 62.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 75.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 76.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 75.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 105.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 106.
- ⁵¹ 'Notes (Exploration in Central Asia)', *Himalayan Journal*, No. 8, 1936. The categorization of different surveys include (a) regular departmental surveys, (b) exploratory surveys, and (c) explorers' route surveys. Only the first category is considered fit for official map making. In rare cases, topographical details have been filled in by exploratory surveys, such as those made around Southern Sinkiang by Aurel Stein, with the assistance of surveyors loaned by the Survey of India. In this connection, please see Survey of India's sheet nos. 42, 51, 60, 61, 69, 75, 80, 89, and 98. Route surveys as a rule are not used for official map-making purpose.
- ⁵² Appendix—I, containing the Government of India's 'Comments on Certain Observations Made by Premier Chou En-lai' during Nehru-Chou Talks—IV in New Delhi on 22 April 1960, in the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, *Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 78-80.
- ⁵³ Norin, pp. 25-31. All along, Lingzitan and Aksai Chin have been considered as 'two separate and distinct plains.' See Office Note by A Stapleton, 7 January 1897, Foreign Department, FD, Secret F, January 1898, Proceedings, pp. 160-169, as quoted in Mehra, p. 79. The Lingzitan and Aksai Chin Plains, which are separated by the Loksang Mountains, have a combined length of 100 miles (in north-south direction). Of this, the Lingzitan Plain is 15-16 miles in length. The eastern Aksai Chin Plain (not in Indian territory) extends at its eastern extremity up to 82° E, just north of lake Lighten. The Indian claim line on this Plain, however, extends up to 80° E, thus dividing the Aksai Chin Plain between India and the PRC. While the Aksai Chin Plain has a mean elevation above sea level of 15,000 ft., the Lingzitan Plain is higher by around 1300 ft. See Mehra p. 80.
- ⁵⁴ Fredrick Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories: A Geographical Account*, London: E. Stanford, 1875, consulted Indian reprint edition, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1976, pp. 344-349. The Loksang Mountains and the topography of the area around them are described.

- ⁵⁵ Nehru-Chou Talks V in New Delhi on 23 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 117.
- ⁵⁶ Mehra, p. 79.
- ⁵⁷ Janet Rizvi, *Trans-Himalayan Caravans: Merchant Princes and Peasant Traders in Ladakh*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999, consulted paperback edition, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 193.
- ⁵⁸ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 52.
- ⁵⁹ The Chang Chenmo Valley, south of the Lingzitang Plain, was to be cartographically absorbed through the Ta Ching Kua map of 'New Tibet' published in 1951 when PRC's 'liberation' of Tibet was in progress. See Appendix—I, containing 'Comments on Certain Observations Made by Premier Chou En-lai', in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 80.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 80. See also Sir Robert Reid, *History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam from 1883-1941*, Shillong: Assam Government Press, 1942, consulted reprint edition, Guwahati/Delhi: Spectrum Publications, 1997, p. 295. Until 1939, Siking was a Special Administrative District of the ROC, when it became a province. In 1950, Siking was split along the Yangste into Sikang to the east and a separate Chamdo Territory to the west. The truncated Sikang was merged with Sichuan in 1955, when that province ceased to exist. Later, in 1965, Chamdo was merged with the Tibet Autonomous Region. The expanded China Historical GIS project should throw interesting light on how the non-Tibetan tribal territory south of the Himalayan watershed in the eastern sector was cartographically absorbed in the ROC, and later in the PRC.
- ⁶¹ Alastair Lamb, *The China India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for R.I.I.A., 1964, pp. 102–104.
- ⁶² Nehru-Chou Talks—II, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 24.
- ⁶³ G.B. Pant-Chou Talks in New Delhi on 21 April 1960, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 44.
- ⁶⁴ Nehru-Chou Talks—IV, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, pp. 73.
- ⁶⁵ 'Dui xizang gongzuo de zhongyao zhishi (wei chuban de shouji)', n.d., transcript of meeting, as quoted in Goldstein, Vol. 2, pp. 510–511.
- ⁶⁶ Halper and Halper, p. 340 (4/n).
- ⁶⁷ Jayant Prasad, 'All at the South China Sea', *The Hindu*, 1 August 2016.
- ⁶⁸ Press Trust of India, 'China Unveils New Weapons after South China Sea Verdict', *The Hindu*, 24 July 2016.

CONCLUSION

In an attempt to obfuscate issues, the rupture in Sino-Indian relations leading to the conflict of 1962 is sought to be projected as an ‘un-anticipated consequence’ of the CIA’s covert operation in Tibet.¹ In this regard, the author of the book, Reidel, has attempted to assert that ‘how big a role it (the covert operation) played (in creating that rupture) is hard to discern in the absence of access to China’s archives.’² Clearly, this line of reasoning appears as a lame excuse when it is fully known that the PRC as a non-democracy is under no compulsion whatsoever from its civil society or otherwise to place official records in the public domain, as democracies often do as a part of their transparency initiative. However, Indian and American responses covering the period of the covert operation have been quite accurately recorded, are well documented, are getting declassified, and have been considered in the writing of this monograph. Thus, the question before us is: was the Sino-Indian conflict an un-anticipated consequence of the covert operation in Tibet? Or, was it an integral part of it?

For the sake of argument, if all the outcomes of the covert operation identified in Chapter V of this monograph—namely, the rupture in Sino-Indian relations leading to the conflict of 1962; the underlying aim of weakening International Communism; the vengeful and ruthless manner of Tibet’s amalgamation with the PRC; the loss of an opportunity of working towards Tibetan ‘autonomy’ in a peaceful manner; and the replacement of India by Pakistan as friend (and ally?) of the PRC—were all to be clubbed together as the ‘un-anticipated consequences’ of the covert operation, the question that would naturally arise is: what then was the intended purpose of that operation? To begin with, it will be recalled that Eisenhower chose not to keep Nehru informed of the covert operation (when the two had met in Washington in December 1956), especially when, as a part of the operation, Thondup et al. were to be located in Kalimpong and Darjeeling in Indian territory, and that CIA aircraft would be required to fly over Indian airspace to

make aerial drops to destinations in Tibet. If the intended purpose was to be as simple as that of providing assistance to resistance fighters in Tibet, Eisenhower would not have chosen to remain hesitant in taking Nehru into confidence about the operation. Surely, he would have known all along that Nehru would come to know of it in some form or another from other sources in due course. Conversely, if the Indians were a part of the covert operation, then Eisenhower would have kept Nehru informed of it. However, the CIA kept only Mullik informed at some stage(s); but to what extent, is not known. It has already been shown that the officially stated purpose does not carry conviction, and requires a greater degree of transparency in its articulation (refer Chapter V of this monograph). Also, as already shown, to complicate matters those operatives of the CIA, who were connected with the covert operation in one way or another, have chosen to either dodge the question of stated purpose when it was put to them, or have remained silent about it in their interviews and writings.

The other question that arises is: why were the Americans not making mid-course corrections during the implementation of the covert operation when they found that the 'un-anticipated consequences,' which, putting it mildly, were grave and far outweighed any anticipated consequence? The Americans had every opportunity to review the covert operation after John F. Kennedy took over the Presidency from Eisenhower in January 1961, when it was already known that armed resistance had virtually died down (even before April 1960). In this regard, John Kenneth Galbraith, the American Ambassador to India at the time, on the basis of material shared with him during a briefing arranged for him at the CIA headquarters in March 1961, expressed serious reservations on the covert operation in Tibet. He remarked, "This sounds like the Rover Boys at loose ends."²³ In an operation of this nature, when the 'un-anticipated consequences,' or, putting it differently, the collateral damage far outweighs or exceeds the anticipated consequences, then that operation is expected to be capped, rolled back, and even terminated. This did not happen to the covert operation in Tibet. Possibly, that the covert operation was allowed to proceed with all its 'un-anticipated consequences' lends credibility to the view that some of these 'un-anticipated consequences' could actually have been the *anticipated consequences* of the operation.

Moreover, it needs to be underscored that the covert operation in Tibet was just one component of a bigger operation put in place by the Americans through their National Security Council Directives of 1954–55. These were aimed at waging the Cold War against the Soviets and their allies, known collectively as ‘International Communism.’ It will be recalled that the CIA had smelt blood when it came to learn of Khrushchev’s speech of February 1956 denouncing Stalin, and advocating the co-existence of the capitalist and communist systems (refer Chapter VI of this monograph). The CIA got to work immediately after obtaining a copy of that speech in April 1956. It initiated a series of covert operations to sow discord amongst the world’s communist parties, and promote spontaneous manifestations of discontent in communist countries with a view to weaken International Communism. The covert operation in Tibet, which too was approved during this period, most probably had to do with the overall aim of weakening International Communism rather than to create a minor irritant for the PRC. Had the Americans really wanted to create trouble for the PRC, they would have chosen to do so in 1951 or thereabouts—when the PLA was facing a food crisis and the road network in Tibet was non-existent—rather than wait for the situation to stabilize in Tibet for the PLA, as the CIA did.

An examination of the US actions toward the PRC, right from her coming into existence in 1949 and until the early 1960s, when hostility between the two appears to have peaked, reveals that these purportedly hostile actions had more form than content. During this period, the USA did not take major steps that would adversely impact the PRC’s strategic concerns or interests. First, when it became known that China had fallen to the communists, fears of a PRC takeover of Tibet began to emerge which would naturally shake up the Tibetans. Despite attempts by the Tibetans to rally support for the acceptance of their independent status, the Americans were most reluctant to accept it—although during World War II they had respected it by not sending military assistance to the KMT and the Communists through Tibet which, unlike the ROC, had remained neutral.

Second, there was to be no real encirclement of the PRC as SEATO was to have no teeth, and was, on the contrary, just a subterfuge to arm some countries like Pakistan. As a matter of fact, through SEATO,

as things played out, India found itself being troubled more than the PRC, for whose encirclement it had been established (refer Chapter I of this monograph).

Third, even as the CIA's covert operation unfolded, it turned out to be a low intensity affair that would not shake PRC's hold over Tibet in any way—significant or otherwise (refer Chapter IV of this monograph).

Fourth, the Americans even started respecting the PRC's sentiments when they chose not to criticize it too sharply after the Sino-Soviet differences became apparent from 1956 onwards. This was a part of the self-imposed 'strategic silence' (refer Chapter V of this monograph).

Fifth, by 1961, when Soviet military hardware supplies to the PRC were drying up, the British (naturally, with American approval) made up for it by agreeing to sell dual purpose long-range transport aircraft capable of ferrying troops and carrying ammunition non-stop to Lhasa (refer Chapter V of this monograph).

Sixth, the Americans who were in talks with PRC since 1955 gave an assurance of neutrality in the event of a Sino-Indian conflict. This made the PRC feel secure, and led to preparations for an attack on India (refer Chapter VII of this monograph).

Seventh, even after the Sino-Indian conflict, American military assistance to India remained insignificant so as not to send wrong signals to Pakistan—and to the PRC as well (refer Chapter VII of this monograph).

The process of welcoming the PRC in the American camp was to be formalized through the Shanghai Communiqué (in 1972). This had varying implications for India, Tibet, and the nations on the South China Sea Littoral.⁴ A year earlier (1971), during his meeting with Chou, Kissinger was to inform him that

President Nixon has authorized me to tell you that the USA will not take any major steps affecting your interests without discussing them with you and taking your views into account.⁵

The progress we have now started will send enormous shock waves around the world. It may panic the Soviet Union into

sharp hostility ... It will have (a) major impact on our (South-East) Asian allies ... It will increase the already substantial hostility in India.⁶

There is no doubt that the CIA's covert operation in Tibet has had a lasting impact. Even today, Chinese authors tend to scrupulously tow the official line according to which the root cause of the 1962 war was the Indian attempt to undermine the PRC's rule in Tibet for the purpose of converting it into a 'buffer zone.' From the very beginning, the PRC found it convenient to blame India for armed resistance in Tibet rather than take the blame on itself for the manner in which it had handled the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet. It has already been shown (refer Chapter VIII of this monograph) that the PRC's official line is without basis. Moreover, no useful purpose will be served by towing the official line any more. Instead, the PRC needs to view the matter in a calm and objective manner, and take a deeper look at the reactions that were caused on account of the heavy footprint of the PLA, apart from the rash policies and harsh actions of the Communist Party of China's cadres in Tibet.

In this context, to suspect India or Nehru of duplicity, and to suggest that India was harbouring designs on Tibet does not stand to reason, and fails scrutiny. On the contrary, what emerges is a multitude of causes which came to the fore after the PRC chose to suspect India of complicity in the CIA's covert operation in Tibet. Among these causes, some could be the following: the PRC's worldview; its Manchu imperial legacy; inherited KMT maps; and its revolutionary fervour. All these combined together to produce responses that became strident, virulent, and even unmanageable after the covert operation started having its effect—especially after the Dalai Lama was granted refuge in India. The aim of the covert operation appears to have been, on the one hand, to 'sow seeds of discord' between the PRC and India, which was achieved through making the former suspicious of the latter's complicity in the armed resistance in Tibet, and, on the other, to stiffen the backs of the Indians—so that a resolution of the boundary question would remain elusive. In this, the Americans succeeded fully. As has been shown the consequences—intended or otherwise—of the covert operation in Tibet were very much to the disadvantage of both the Indians and the Tibetans. They only helped the PRC and the Americans.

Indeed, the covert operation in Tibet took the Americans one step forward in the Cold War against the Soviets. Eventually, the Americans were to win that war, with the PRC by its side. Naturally, the PRC was to gain being a part of the winning side.

During these past 39 years or so, the PRC has steadily forged ahead, leaving India way behind. The gap between the two countries has only been widening, despite reports of a PRC slowdown. India has ceased to be in a position of being an equal to the PRC. When compared to India in economic and military matters, the PRC is much stronger currently than it was in 1962. After securing a permanent membership of the United Nation's Security Council and emerging as a major military and economic power, the PRC has acquired greater leverage in the international arena. The advantage definitely vests with the PRC. In addition, it has clearly demonstrated its preference for using the PLA rather than the negotiating table for settling territorial disputes, especially where it thinks it can get away with it. Its foreign policy in such cases seems to be more sword than a shield.

In any negotiation⁷ on the boundary question with the PRC at this juncture, India is highly unlikely to obtain a settlement that could be better, or even somewhat similar,⁸ to the one it could have obtained in 1960-1961,⁹ or thereabouts. The time is just not opportune for India to conclude a boundary agreement with the PRC and change its map. Just like the Republican Chinese and the PRC and their immediate predecessor the Manchu who, in their weakest periods refused to enter into any boundary agreement and, on the contrary, kept issuing maps so as to lay territorial claims when the time would be ripe, the Indians too should accordingly not change their map. The Indians can wait for better times unless, for some reason, it becomes possible to believe that realization is dawning upon the PRC to treat neighbour India in a fair and friendly manner. No doubt this would, to all intents and purposes, be in the realm of wishful thinking.

Thus, it appears that no useful purpose would be served in trying to make the PRC change its mind on the boundary question. The acceptance of a well-defined status quo on the boundary question for arriving at a modus vivendi as a tentative and interim measure may appear one pragmatic way out. When the time is ripe, and both countries are ready

and willing to arrive at a ‘reasonable, equitable and friendly’¹⁰ settlement on the Sino-Indian boundary question, one way forward would be to accept the principle of watershed for delimiting, delineating, and demarcating the border in both sectors as suggested by Chou—the watershed in the western sector being determined by the water parting of the rivers flowing into the Tarim Basin in the north, and those flowing into the Indian Ocean in the south. In places in the eastern sector, where river gorges or valleys bisect the Himalayan crest-ridge watershed, the border will need to be delimited with care so as to deny salients to either country. Alongside, what is urgently required is India taking decisive steps to improve itself. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi has been elected on this very promise.

ENDNOTES:

¹ Reidel, p. 179.

² Ibid. p. 179.

³ Ibid. pp. 59–60.

⁴ Halper and Halper, p. 231. Whereas American ships and aircraft have been exercising their right to navigational passage and over flights from time to time across the globe, including the South China Sea, as per the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea, these measures reflect an ad hoc response to the PRC’s claim to most of that Sea rather than a determined and well thought out strategy by America and its allies to counter such an illegal claim, especially in the light of the arbitration award.

⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, Kissinger and Chou, 9 July 1971, Box 1033, NSC Files, Miscellaneous Memoranda Relating to HAK Trip to PRC, July 1971, Document 34, p. 6, as cited in Halper and Halper, pp. 230 and 339 (43/n).

⁶ Ibid. p. 26, as quoted in Halper and Halper, pp. 230-231.

⁷ It has been suggested that the Sino-Indian ‘Agreement of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the Sino-Indian Border Areas’ of September 1993 gave de facto recognition to the Line of Actual Control on the frontier between the two countries as the ‘permanent international border.’ See Rajeswar, pp. 231–232. Rajeswar appears to have overstated the position. The Agreement of 1993, along with the ‘Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field Along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas’ of December 1996, aimed to bring the two sides together to resolve the boundary question. However, the agreement setting out ‘Political Parameters and Guiding Principles’ of April 2005 has been described as a step forward in the negotiation process. It

accepted that the boundary question would be resolved in a 'package way.' See Kalha, p. 218.

- ⁸ The PRC had suggested to the Burmese in January 1962 that it was willing to drop its map claim in the western sector and retain only the area held by it on the ground, that is, the Aksai Chin Plain. A month later, the PRC's embassy in New Delhi offered fresh terms for a settlement, which were to include the joint Sino-Indian use of the Aksai Chin road, a joint commission to demarcate the Ladakh frontier, and recognition by the PRC of the McMahon Line as the international border. See 'CIA Staff Study on Sino-Indian Border Dispute', Section 3, p. 24. In March 1962, in Geneva, the PRC made an offer to the Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs, R.K. Nehru that it might give up its map claim to a part of Ladakh, retaining only the Aksai Chin Plain, that is, the area occupied by it on the ground. See 'CIA Staff Study' under reference p. 25. It has also been suggested that the Indians were deliberating the possibility of recognizing the PRC's 1956 claim line in Ladakh in the western sector in exchange for the recognition of the McMahon Line in the eastern sector. See 'CIA Staff Study' under reference, p. 42. In the event, had the Indians decided to recognize the PRC's claim line of 1956 in the western sector in exchange for the recognition of the McMahon Line in the eastern sector, it would have entailed surrendering an Indian claim to around 12,000 sq. miles of disputed territory in favor of the PRC, apart from what it had already received from Pakistan in that sector.
- ⁹ It is not known whether action has been taken at the Government of India's end after 1961—when the officials presented their Report on the boundary question—to further strengthen India's case on the same. If not, then steps need to be initiated on this on priority, for such action should go a long way in softening the PRC's case on the boundary question.
- ¹⁰ Nehru-Chou Talks IV, 22 April 1960 in New Delhi, in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, Vol. 60, p. 73.

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In this monograph, the author provides evidence to show the assertion made by Gyalo Thondup (the Dalai Lama's older brother) in his book, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong* (2015), that the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 was one of the outcomes of the US Central Intelligence Agency's covert operation in Tibet (1956 onwards), appears true and correct. It has also been shown that the CIA's quiet admission, through Bruce Reidel's book, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War* (2015), about the Sino-Indian conflict being an 'unanticipated consequence' of the covert operation, does not appear to be correct. The interpretations offered so far to explain the events leading to the Sino-Indian conflict are based on incomplete and selective use of material and accordingly fail scrutiny. The originator of the Forward Policy School was the CIA, which was to be taken to new heights in a popular account by Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (1970). Since then, sufficient material has been declassified along with written accounts by persons associated with the covert operation becoming available, which reinforce the findings. This monograph presents an objective account of a very crucial six-year period (1956-1962) in the histories of India and China (and Tibet) -- the countries directly involved in the conflict.

Sunil Khatri holds a bachelors and masters in technology from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and a post-graduate diploma from the Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi. As a member of the Indian Administrative Service, he served in several districts of the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh and was chief executive, on three separate occasions, of three state level public enterprises. In the Government of India, he has served in various capacities in the Ministries of Petroleum Chemicals & Fertilizers, Finance, Defence, Industry, and New & Renewable Energy. He retired as Special Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh. Khatri has published papers covering areas such as poverty, growth and public enterprise. He was invited twice to co-edit two special issues of Public Enterprise, a journal of the International Centre for Public Enterprise, Ljubljana, Slovenia. For the past eight years or so, he has been engaged as an independent researcher on the Sino-Indian boundary question. This is his first publication on the subject.



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