



ISSUE BRIEF

No 93

January 2017



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Pakistan: Test of Submarine Launched Cruise Missile

On 9 January 2017, Pakistan claimed to have successfully test-fired a Submarine Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) ‘from an underwater, mobile platform.’¹ The reports add that, ‘Babur-3 is a sea-based variant of Babur-2 Ground-Launched Cruise Missile, which was successfully tested earlier in December last.’ The current Pakistan’s Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General ZM Hayat hailed the test as a ‘hallmark development as a step towards reinforcing policy of credible minimum deterrence’.² Whether the claim is fake, as some experts have termed it, is not the important question. What merits examination are the technical aspects and the strategic imperatives behind Pakistan’s quest for a sea-based nuclear deterrence, and the likely trajectory of this quest.

Pakistan’s Strategic Imperatives³

Pakistan is geographically a linear shaped country.

While this configuration allows it to rapidly mobilize its army, the country can also be overrun quickly by a competent adversary. Pakistan, conscious of its lack of strategic depth, the economic lag behind India, and the increasing conventional forces asymmetry versus India, has long been looking at ways to deter India from punitive actions and to offset India’s conventional military superiority.

Largely spurred by the loss of East Pakistan, and a perception of a ‘hostile, bigger and better-armed India’, Pakistan had achieved a capability ‘to rapidly assemble a nuclear device if necessary’ around the mid-1980s^{4,5}. Since then, Pakistan has been utilizing two primary tools to have its way in the sub-continent. First, terrorism and ‘proxy war’ to continuously bleed India; and second, brandishing nuclear weapons to thwart punitive actions by India. The Pakistani nuclear arsenal has grown since then. According to the November 2016 report by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Pakistan has a nuclear weapons stockpile of 130–140 warheads and appears to have plans to increase its arsenal further.⁶ The authors of the “Nuclear Notebook-Pakistani Nuclear Forces, 2016” further estimate that Pakistan’s stockpile could

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potentially grow to 220–250 warheads by 2025, making it the world’s fifth-largest nuclear weapon state.” Evidently, Pakistan sees nuclear weapons as: (1) an instrument that allows it to wage *offensive* proxy war, but provide it a *defence* against retaliatory punitive action; (2) a strategic equalizer of power asymmetry, i.e. they balance India’s conventional military superiority even as Pakistan pursues revisionist policies by posturing that ‘any war would be a nuclear war’; (3) a guarantor of security in absence of ally support; it’s alliances with the United States and China earned it sparse support for military adventurism in the past; and (4) a strategic lever for extracting maximum aid from the United States, Europe, China, and some countries in the Middle-East. Pakistan has been successfully using its nuclear weapons and the threat of their falling into hands of terrorists to blackmail the West, with the military maintaining that it is the sole entity that stands between its nuclear weapons and the jihadis.⁷

The initial period saw Pakistan drop hints about possessing nuclear weapons (e.g. astride Operation Brass Tacks, 1987). It’s blatant ‘sabre-rattling’ of nuclear weapons however, began astride the 1999 Kargil Conflict and Operation Parakaram (December 2001-02). Building on the strategic lessons learnt during these two operations, India adopted the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) around 2005-06. The CSD envisions the Indian Army mobilizing and commencing strikes almost simultaneously, and operating just below the actual thresholds which could trigger a nuclear response from Pakistan. This was followed by Pakistan periodically ‘lowering (of) the nuclear threshold’ and posturing that ‘any conflict would turn into a nuclear war’. However, the threat scenario, India’s conventional fighting doctrine and nuclear response strategy, and the international environment possibly led to a perception in Pakistan that its nuclear deterrence was perhaps not being taken too seriously by India.⁸ Pakistani concerns escalated on account of three factors.

These are as follows:

- First: Particularly from the mid-2008, the Pakistan Army has got progressively embroiled in its restive western tribal regions. This has debilitated Pakistan’s capability to posture and position adequate military force on its eastern border.
- Second: It does not have nuclear-capable missiles that can cover entire India (this is likely to change once Pakistan completes

the development of the Shaheen 3 ballistic missile)⁹ In contrast, its lack of strategic depth meant that longer-range Indian ballistic missiles could cover the entire Pakistani landmass. In other words, India enjoyed a de facto ‘second strike’ despite not having a submarine-based nuclear deterrence. This rendered Pakistan very vulnerable to a disarming strike or a devastating Indian second-strike.

- Third: The ‘development of an indigenous nuclear submarine’ and ‘pursuit of ballistic missile defence’ by India.

In view of such dynamics, Pakistan started looking at a full-spectrum capability. Its quest for a submarine-based nuclear deterrence and the co-opting of the 60-km range Nasr/HATF-IX Battlefield System with a Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) are part of that effort. Pakistan, unable to lease a nuclear submarine even from its ‘all-weather friend’, then opted for a three-pronged programme. These were mentioned as under:

- First: It began a programme for developing a nuclear-powered submarine. However, the challenges of designing, refining, manufacturing and operationalizing such a complex system, which requires a compact nuclear power plant, are immense. Hence, even if such a programme is hugely successful, it is unlikely that Pakistan will be able to field such a system before 2025 at the earliest.
- Second: To tide over the interim period, it commenced development of cruise missiles [the Babur Ground-Launched Cruise Missile (GLCM) and Ra’ad Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM)] for a ‘second strike’ potential. Based on compact, agile launch platforms, cruise missiles are difficult to detect and destroy.
- Third: It decided to modify a developed GLCM for emplacing on a conventional submarine. The overall objective is to place a nuclear-deterrence aboard conventional submarines and then transfer it to nuclear-powered submarines as and when the latter are operationalized.

Pakistani Efforts: Sea-Based Nuclear Deterrence

Sea-based nuclear weapons are traditionally based on a nuclear-powered submarine. Thus, a Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear (SSBN) is the ultimate representation of nuclear strike-force readiness and credible strategic deterrence. It can provide both a ‘first-strike’ and a ‘second-strike’ option. It can also act as an important tool for preventing a conventional conflict from escalating into a nuclear exchange. However, the development of SSBN is a very challenging process and has a long time-line. Besides, countries with such platforms are extremely reluctant to share that technology.

In July 2009, the then Pakistani Foreign Ministry reacted to India’s launch of its first indigenously built nuclear-powered submarine (26 July 2009) by asserting that, ‘continued induction of new lethal weapon systems by India is detrimental to regional peace and stability’, adding that ‘Pakistan will take all appropriate steps to safeguard its security and maintain strategic balance in South Asia.’¹⁰ It thus, appears that a decision to develop a capability to launch a SLCM from an advanced conventional submarine for the short- to medium-term may have been taken in the early half of the last decade.

Pakistan Navy’s Major Submarine-related Projects

Around 2010, Pakistan had finalized three major submarine-related projects with China, which are being progressed. These are as follows: (1) acquisition/construction of eight advanced submarines; (2) construction of a Submarine Rebuild Complex (SRC) at Ormara; and (3) construction of a Very Low Frequency (VLF) station near Turbat for communication with strategic submarines (commissioned in November 2016).^{11,12}

Pakistan’s Naval Strategic Forces Command

In May 2012, Admiral Mohammad Asif Sandila, the then-Chief of Pakistan’s Navy, announced ‘the formal establishment of the Naval Strategic Force Command of Pakistan’, adding that the Naval

Strategic Forces Command (NSFC) will be the ‘the custodian of the nation’s 2nd strike capability ... will strengthen Pakistan’s policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence and ensure regional stability’.¹³ In March 2015, Lieutenant General Khalid Ahmed Kidwai (retired), the former Director General of Pakistan’s Strategic Plans Division, indicated that the submarine programme is ‘a work in progress’, adding that ‘this capability will come into play in the next few years’.¹⁴ Acknowledging that assured ‘second strike’ capability comes from a sea-based platform, he explained that:

Without calling it a specific nuclear submarine, or something, broadly speaking a second-strike capability, a limited second-strike capability, a modern second-strike capability for Pakistan, will be helpful. I can say with confidence that we are not too far away from it.

Babur Ground-Launched Cruise Missile

Its design and development had started in 2000 and commencing 2003, the Babur GLCM has been subjected to a number of tests. The Babur is designed for tubular launch, and since 2008 Pakistan’s National Development Complex (NDC) has been exhibiting this system on a Transporter-Erector-Launcher (TEL).¹⁵ Thus, its ability to be launched from a ground-platform is well-established. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists assesses (Pakistani Nuclear Forces, 2016) that Pakistan had operationalized the Babur GLCM in 2014.

Modifying the Babur for Submarine Use

In ships and submarines, cruise missiles are usually fired from a Vertical Launch System (VLS), although a submarine can eject cruise missiles through its torpedo tubes. The Babur, with a diameter of roughly 520 mm, if suitably modified, can be accommodated either in the torpedo tubes or the vertical launch tubes of a submarine. It is possible to fit the Babur in the Pakistan Navy’s Agosta-90B submarines. Equipped with the MESMA Air Independent Propulsion (AIP), the Agosta-90B is armed with four bow 533-mm torpedo tubes. Depending on the speed, the MESMA AIP allows underwater endurance between 30 and 60 days.¹⁶

It is known that the testing of the Babur-3 SLCM has been going on for some time. The recent test of the Babur-3 and the associated timeline therefore validate the view that the Babur is expected to find use first in an advanced conventional submarine.

While it is not fully confirmed whether Pakistan has modified the Agosta 90B for the Babur-3 cruise missile launch, the fact remains that Pakistan will definitely have a sea-based nuclear weapons capability after the receipt of the first lot of the contracted conventional submarines (eight) from China, if not much earlier. However, it is one thing to make a nuclear-capable cruise missile and quite another to mate it successfully to a submarine for underwater-launch. The complexity associated with an underwater launch stems from the fact that the missile, stored in a submarine, has to thereafter pass through two different mediums, viz., water and air. Associated aspects are trajectory control, booster separation, high thermal stresses, water tight integrity, and the underwater motion in all three planes of the firing platform itself. A number of successful trial firings from the parent platform are therefore required before the capability can be operationalized.

Precedence: Conventional Submarine for Nuclear Deterrence

Though submarines that carry nuclear weapons are usually nuclear-powered, there is design-precedence for conventional submarines carrying nuclear-tipped missiles. The Dolphin-class submarine of the Israeli Navy, built specially by M/s Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) AG, Germany, reportedly has the ability to launch Israel's indigenous, nuclear-capable SLCMs. The former Soviet Union's Golf-class Type 629/629A conventional submarines could carry three vertically launched nuclear-tipped missiles, the R-21 (range: 1300-1600 km). These missiles were fitted vertically in a capsule ensconced on a protrusion in the hull. China's Type-032 Qing-class conventional submarine (SSA), a one-of-a-kind test-platform, can reportedly carry two JL-2 nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles in what appear to be a VLS.¹⁷

Implications

Some open-source reports hint that the technology for the Babur-3 was covertly supplied by

Pakistan's 'all-weather' friend (in violation of Missile Technology Regime (MTCR)). Regardless whether China helped Pakistan or not, in strategic terms this is a landmark achievement for Pakistan.

However, with a reported range of 450 km, the Babur-3, when operational, would be able to cover just the Indian cities and critical infrastructure along the coastline up to a depth of 350-400 km. What is noteworthy is that it will be in a position to strike at any Indian bases in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

At this juncture, it is not clear which model Pakistan will adopt for its nuclear weapons armed conventional submarines. A Continuous At-Sea Deterrence model is ideal for maintaining a credible strategic deterrence. This requires at least one submarine armed with nuclear weapons always deployed underwater. The Continuous At-Sea Deterrence model of smaller Western nations like the United Kingdom and France envisions possession at least three to four nuclear-powered nuclear-weapons armed submarines, with one being on patrol at any time.^{18,19,20} Pakistan, however, has a total of three Agosta-90B submarines. Hence, it cannot maintain a near Continuous At-Sea Deterrence even if it mates two of these AIP-equipped conventional submarines to nuclear weapons. The other option is the 'bastion' model employed by Russia during the latter part of the Cold War. Although this model allows the deployment of different platforms to protect strategic submarines, the submarines can be tracked when they slip away from known locations just prior to hostilities.

An AIP-equipped conventional submarine armed with a nuclear-capable cruise missile can address Pakistan's interim requirement for a second-strike capability against India. Pakistan and India are contiguous nations and the lower under-water endurance of an AIP-equipped submarine versus a nuclear-powered one will not be such a great limitation. It needs to be noted that Pakistan's nuclear posture is primarily India-centric. Such a platform would also serve China's strategic requirements of keeping India focused towards a Pakistani threat.

The Pakistani decision to place nuclear weapons on conventional submarines holds potential benefits, as well as significant risks. On the benefit side, a credible second strike capability has the potential to dissuade Pakistan from resorting to TNWs at the first military setback. However, given the Pakistan Army's commitment in FATA-KP and the overall

Indo-Pak conventional forces asymmetry, Pakistan will remain under pressure to posture and perhaps even use nuclear weapons. It can ill-afford to allow deep ingress by Indian offensive forces. On the other hand, nuclear weapons on conventional submarines bode ill for regional strategic stability. There is no way Indian anti-submarine warfare forces can distinguish between a Pakistani conventional submarine carrying nuclear weapons from one that is not. However, an attack on a Pakistani submarine equipped with nuclear weapons is likely to encourage their preemptive use ('use it or lose it'). An associated danger stems from the radicalized elements and over-zealous personnel in the Pakistani military. Although submarine-based nuclear weapons are protected from unintended launch through a series of measures, the fact remains that nuclear capable cruise missiles have to be launch-ready prior to departure from port. It is not known whether Pakistan would be able to put in place fail-safe safety protocols and personnel reliability programmes. Therein lies the risk of deliberate, illegal use of nuclear weapons.

On the surface, it seems that Pakistan has been able to match India point-for-point in the hardware part of the nuclear game. Hence, some experts feel that Indian planners too should consider either similarly modifying a conventional submarine, or leasing an appropriate conventional submarine for the interim period up to the full operationalization of the Arihant-class SSBNs. Their premise is such a step could allow India to rapidly field a Pakistan-specific conventional submarine(s) equipped with a nuclear deterrence, while retaining the Arihant-class SSBNs for deterrence against China (Constant-at Sea Deterrence). The reality, however, is that Pakistan, unable to either lease a nuclear-powered submarine or build a nuclear reactor, has opted for a low tech, 'poor man's version'. In contrast, India's indigenous SSBN programme is far more advanced and progressing well. With a 3,500-4000 km Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) under testing, a broader, regional sea-based deterrence is clearly within sight. Persisting with the Arihant-class therefore appears prudent. Such a step would also not impinge on regional strategic stability, a regime to which India has consistently subscribed.

Notes

1. This statement was contained in a press release by Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The statement can be found at the link below. https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=3672#pr_link3672
2. "Press release by Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) dated 09 Jan 2017".
3. Brigadier Kuldip Singh (Retd), 'Please also see "Evolution of Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine – Analysis"', by Brigadier Kuldip Singh (Retd), *Eurasia Review*, 4 January 4, 2017.
4. Shahid-Ur Rehman, *Long Road to Chagai: Untold Story of Pakistan's Nuclear Quest*, (Islamabad: Print Wise Publication), 1999.
5. '1982 US National Intelligence Estimate'; 1993 *Report to US Congress on Status of China, India and Pakistan Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Programs*. Bill Graham, M.P, 'Canada and the Nuclear Challenge: Reducing the Political Value of Nuclear Weapons for the Twenty-First Century', Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, December 1998. Khalid Iqbal, "'Pakistan to Never Face 1971-Like Situation Again: AQ Khan'", *The News*, 10 January 10, 2010.
6. Hans M Kristensen and Robert S Norris, "'Pakistani Nuclear Forces, 2016'" by Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, Vol. 72, No. 6, 368–376, available at; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2016.1241520>, accessed on 26 December 2016.
7. During a seminar in the United States "'US - Pak Relations: Recent Developments & Implications for India'" in the US, the German-Marshall Foundation had stated that Pakistan is relentlessly and gainfully playing the "Loose Nuclear" card to its advantage in order to get the requisite aid from the United States/West, and it coined a new term for Pakistan's conduct, "Nuclear Weapons Enabled Terror" (NWET).)
8. Please also see Brigadier Kuldip Singh (Retd), "'Evolution of Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine – Analysis'", by Brigadier Kuldip Singh (Retd), *Eurasia Review*, 4 January 4, 2017.
9. Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference 2015, "'A Conversation with Lt Gen. Khalid Kidwai'", Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference 2015, dated 23 March 23, 2015.: The Shaheen 3 nuclear-capable ballistic missile, with a range of 2,750 kms, is designed to reach Indian islands so that India cannot use them as "'strategic bases'" to establish a "'second strike capability'".
10. US Congressional Research Service report, 'Pakistan's

- Nuclear Weapons’, ‘‘Remarks of the Spokesman on the Launching of the Indian Nuclear Submarine’,’ PR. No. 288/2009, 27 July 27, 2009,. US Congressional Research Service report, ‘‘Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons’’, of August 2016.
11. Sandeep Unnithan, ‘‘China’s Ssubmarine Nnoose Aaround India’’, by Sandeep Unnithan, India Today, 4 December 4, 2014.
 12. ‘‘Pakistan Commissions New Naval Base With VLF Transmission Station’,’ dt 16 November 2016, available at; <http://quwa.org/2016/11/16/pakistan-commissions-new-naval-base-with-vlf-transmission/>, accessed on
 13. ‘‘Naval Chief Inaugurates Naval Strategic Force Headquarters’,’ Inter Services Public Relations, 19 May 19, 2012.
 14. A Conversation With General. Khalid Kidwai. 2015,. ‘‘Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference 2015’,.’ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,. Transcript, 4–5, 23 March 2015, available at 23. <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/03-230315carnegieKIDWAI.pdf>, accessed on.
 15. US Congressional Research Service report, ‘‘Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons’’, of August 2016.
 15. Hans M Kristensen and Robert S Norris, ‘‘Pakistani Nuclear Forces, 2016’’ by Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, Vol. 72, No. 6, 368–376, available at; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2016.1241520>, accessed on
 16. ‘‘Warships Forecast ©2009 July 2009 Agosta-90B’’.
 17. IHS Jane’s Fighting Ships 2015-2016.
 18. UK’s Ministry of Defence, ‘‘The Future of the United Kingdom’s Nuclear Deterrent’’: The UK’, which presently has four ‘Vanguard’ SSBNs armed with Trident D5 SLBMs, always has at least one (with 16 missiles) on patrol under its ‘Continuous At Sea Deterrence’ programme.
 19. January 2014 Testimony of US ONI Senior Intelligence Officer Jesse Karotkin to the US China Economic & Security Review; Statement by Eric Wertheim, author of *Naval Institute’s Guide to Combat Fleets of the World*, to USNI News on 02 February 2014.
 20. Arms control expert Jeffrey Lewis.

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ISSUE BRIEF

No 92

January 2017



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The Making of China's Foreign Policy

V Mahalingam

If you thought that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in the People's Republic of China is the principal player in the making of the country's foreign policy, you may be mistaken. The reality is best explicated by two out of place incidents which occurred in late 2012.

The provincial government in Hainan, the home to one of China's major naval bases, authorized¹ its maritime law enforcement agency's vessels to interdict and search foreign vessels illegally operating in the islands waters which according to China include much of the intensely disputed South China Sea.¹ In an interview to Reuters, Wu Shicun, a senior official in the province's foreign affairs office confessed that since he was not a part of the People's Congress he couldn't say for sure if Beijing had, in fact, even seen the new rules before they became official. The fact that a provincial government can

Key Points

- China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) does not formulate major foreign policies or decisions but implements them.
- The Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) and the Politburo of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) are the principle players connected with the crafting of China's foreign policy.
- The Central Policy Research Office, the General Office and the International Department (CPC/ID), the three departments under the CPC Central Committee have a major role in the official foreign policy mechanism in China.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is a body under the State Council headed by the Prime Minister, but owing to its relative position and authority within the system, the Party controls China's Foreign Policy.
- Diplomats and foreign policy professionals handling China can no longer deal with a single agency and hope to impact and sway foreign policies.

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unilaterally make rules on one of China's most sensitive diplomatic problems ignoring the country's foreign ministry highlights the helplessness of the Chinese MFA and the frailty of the system.

In yet another case in 2012, China's map printed in its newly revised passports claimed ownership of the entire South China Sea and Taiwan enraging its neighbours.² China's official maps have long included Taiwan and the South China Sea as its territory, but reproducing this on passports could be seen as a provocation since it requires other countries to tacitly endorse the claims by affixing their official seals to the documents. The passports meant for ordinary citizens, were issued by China's Ministry of Public Security (MPS). Commenting on the issue, Zhu Feng, at Peking University's Center for International and Strategic Studies said that the MPS had probably acted in this manner to show their support for China's sovereign claim.³ China's former Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi was, however, described as being 'furious' upon hearing the news.⁴ Obviously, the Foreign Ministry was not consulted on this decision.

According to a report published by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in early 2012, no fewer than 11 government entities from the tourism administration to the navy, play a role in the South China Sea.⁵ All, the ICG said, have the potential to take action that could cause diplomatic fallout.

Who then are the actors relevant to the making of China's foreign policy?

The Official Policymakers

Today far too many actors have a role in the crafting China's foreign policy. Principal amongst them include the Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) of the Communist Party of China (CPC), though none in the PSC is specifically in charge of foreign policy.⁶ The Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG) is yet another major player.⁷ FALSG, headed by the General Secretary (Xi Jinping), is a committee consisting of a number of PSC members and other leading CPC officials meant to advise the leaders on how they should proceed on any given issue of interest. The most important LSGs are attached to the Central Committee and report to the PSC. Decisions affecting foreign policies are also deliberated in, among others, the Taiwan Affairs LSG (TALSG) and the Financial and Economic Affairs LSG.

Departments Under the Communist Party of China Central Committee

Three bodies under the CPC Central Committee have a major role in the official foreign policy mechanism in China, namely, the Central Policy Research Office, the General Office, and the International Department (CPC/ID).⁸

The Policy Research Office conducts research, provides advice, and drafts policy documents ahead of major decisions. The General Office controls flow of information to decision-makers and manages their schedules besides providing administrative support to the Politburo. The heads of these offices are very intimately connected with diplomacy at the highest levels. For example, when Xi Jinping travels abroad, the heads of General Office and Central Policy Research Office, namely, Li Zhanshu and Wang Huning, (Politburo member), respectively act as his advisors.⁹ Being senior in rank, they are placed higher in protocol and treated accordingly than the highest ranking foreign affairs professionals, namely, Yang Jiechi the State Councillor in-charge of Foreign Affairs or Wang Yi the Foreign Minister.

The CPC/ID is an active organ under the control of the Central Committee of the CPC that furthers the geopolitical and foreign policy interests of the Party.¹⁰ The set up has played a crucial role in strengthening China's position in problem areas such as the South China Sea and Taiwan, pushing projects such as One Belt, One Road (OBOR) and influencing the next generation of foreign leaders through youth exchange programmes.¹¹ As a long-term measure, CPC utilizes the department to develop friendly relationship with rising foreign politicians and influencers in cases where the relationship with the country is troubled.¹²

State Council and Foreign Policy

The State Councillor Yang Jiechi and the Foreign Minister Wang Yi are part of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the executive organ of the China's central government headed by the Premier Li Keqiang. State Councillor ranks immediately below the Vice-Premiers and above the Minister.

State Council is similar to the Council of Ministers in other countries but CPC exercises strict control over the Council. The Prime Minister is elected by the

National People's Congress (NPC) on nomination by the President. That explains the relative importance of the MFA within the system.

Other Government Bodies

China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and other government bodies such as the People's Bank of China (PBC), the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), an agency under the State Council, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of State Security regularly attempt to get the better of the MFA in the formulation of China's foreign policy. This has resulted in implicit discord between the MFA and other foreign policy actors.

The Ministry of Commerce regulates the overseas activities of companies through trade organizations such as the China International Contractors Association (CHINCA), engaged in promoting the development of China's foreign investment, international project contracting, labour service co-operation, and other international economic and technological co-operation.¹⁴ MOFCOM also allocates the majority of Chinese foreign aid, a perennial issue of contention with the MFA.

The PBC's influence on foreign policy stems from its power as the China's Central Bank to dictate domestic monetary policy, reflecting China's growing connect with foreign economies and international markets.

The NDRC is a foreign policy actor in areas that has an effect on China's economic development, especially in the energy sector. Its influence is most apparent in its authority over Chinese climate change policy. It has a role in ensuring access to critical resources, such as oil and natural gas.

The Ministry of Finance has a say in the international programmes of other government ministries because of its control over the national budget. It is also responsible for tariffs and China's limited contributions to multilateral aid.

The People's Liberation Army

The People's Liberation Army has historically been a player in Chinese foreign policymaking. However, its role has been brought to a near end following the reform process initiated by Xi Jinping. Since then, military commanders have

been kept away from the decision-making process in the civilian domain.

Other Foreign Policy Actors

The other actors who influence foreign policy include the business sector, financial institutions, energy companies, import cartels, local governments, research institutions, and academia.

In countries where China's relationship is dominated by economic ties, commercial motives have a greater impact on policies. The overseas activities of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) too have become a consideration in the formulation of China's foreign policy. China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) has played a major part in territorial disputes with South-East Asian countries and Japan over the Spratly Islands and the East China Sea, respectively because of the untapped oil and gas reserves and connected commercial interests. China Iron and Steel Association (CISA), an import cartel responsible for negotiating favourable annual benchmark prices for import of iron ore, has its place in influencing foreign policy.

The government controlled Export-Import Bank of China (Eximbank) and the China Development Bank (CDB) play a key role in supporting the overseas outreach of Chinese businesses. Eximbank is tasked with expanding Chinese trade while the CDB seeks to promote Chinese economic and infrastructure development.

What is the Status of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China's Foreign Policy?

In China, the formal rank and authority of different bodies are relatively well-established which are determined according to one's position in the Communist Party. The State Counsellor Yang Jiechi who is in charge of the day-to-day management of China's diplomacy and Foreign Minister Wang Yi are mere members of the 204-member Central Committee, the third-level power structure of the Party, below the PSC and Politburo indicating the level of importance of the MFA amongst the institutions linked to China's foreign policy.

The status and importance of the MFA as a policymaker has declined over the past decade. China's expanding

international role and the growing complexity of global issues have compelled the MFA to depend on other agencies for expertise resulting in its loss of influence. In the process the foreign policy decision-making entities have proliferated. Today, China's MFA does not make policy but merely implements them. However, in the case of states considered less important, MFA determines policies in accordance with China's larger policy framework. MFA is also the central agency in respect of China's relations with the European Union (EU) with the exception of France and Germany.

In international negotiations, the MFA has traditionally been the lead organization even though other ministries may have provided the expertise on specific issues under discussion. At the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference both the head and deputy head of the Chinese delegation were MFA officials, while PLA officers representing the General Armaments Department and General Staff Department were delegation members.

This has changed. Of late, the MFA which had all along been heading the Chinese team in international negotiations has been forced to take a back seat. For example the NDRC headed the Chinese delegation at the 2009 Climate Summit in Copenhagen, and the MFA's participation was limited to an embarrassing status of delegation members. Towards the end, Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in Copenhagen and took charge of the Delegation for negotiating at the final stages of the Summit. At that point in time, the views within the Delegation fluctuated on China's final position. To avoid China being branded 'agreement spoilers' MFA officials were inclined to make compromises to accept changes to China's earlier position of not being in favour of fixed targets for both developed and developing countries. The NDRC, on the contrary, stuck to its initial position. Finally at a crucial meeting with key summit participants, which included Brazil, India, South Africa and the United States, Wen Jiabao who favoured MFA's position was opposed by the senior NDRC representative in the delegation and consequently, no compromise was reached, the west labelling the incident the 'Copenhagen fiasco'.¹⁵

Conclusion

The authority and jurisdiction over foreign policy formulation in China has slipped out of MFA's hands over a period of time. The MFA does not

put together major policy decisions or formulate major policies, but implements them. With the top foreign ministry officials not finding a place in the PSC or the Politburo, the Foreign Ministry lacks the political authority and standing resulting in it sliding low down on the pecking order. Consequently, a number of competing departments and agencies headed by senior ranking officials and some having influence over economic issues have started prompting important foreign policy decisions and have encroached upon MFA's domain. Some of these agencies do have domain interests but one-upmanship, the necessity to prove their loyalty to the country and to its leadership, and the ego needs to demonstrate one's authority may also be the contributing factors for the ingress into MFA.

The MFA has failed to keep pace with the growing intricacies of global issues and China's increased involvement in world affairs. Essential structural changes to cope with the new situation and the requirements for crafting and exercising effective control over the implementation of its foreign policy had also not been put in place. It has failed to remain on top professionally to dominate China's foreign policy scene. The lead role accorded to party functionaries over professional government entities has also contributed to MFA losing its clout.

Diplomats and foreign policy professionals handling China can no longer deal with a single agency and hope to impact and sway policies. The existence of multiple agencies exercising influence over China's policies is a reality. Country's representatives and negotiators need to be aware of the interests, stakes, and relative influence of various agencies as well as the competition and rivalries between competing departments to be able to manage foreign policies effectively. The need to make necessary structural changes to the foreign policy establishments at various levels to meet the challenges arising out of the proliferation of agencies and personalities shaping foreign policy in China should not be lost sight of.

India needs to factor in the larger context of the changes that are taking place in the region and sound the appropriate agencies and individuals in Beijing's policymaking loop to be in a position to leverage China's attitude and policies favourable to India. If handled appropriately this may be an opportune moment to extract concessions from China on the border issue and to force China to control Pakistan's

policies towards India. This needs an understanding of the larger situation in play in the region.

With Russia and Iran expressing their willingness to join the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a part of China's grander vision of OBOR, China's aims to exploit the Corridor as a pivot around which its own economy can be integrated with that of the economic blocks of the region, namely, the Russian led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), SAARC, and Iran. It hopes to develop Xinjiang as a dry port and a trading centre for the combine besides providing a rationale to the restive Uighur Muslim population in Xinjiang to join the main stream. It views Pakistan as the catalyst to facilitate the process. Consequently, China-Pakistan relationship is likely to grow much stronger in the near future.

At a time when Beijing is making efforts to increase its influence in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives, and Myanmar by investing heavily in their infrastructure projects, more than one country failing to attend the Regional SAARC Summit in Pakistan accusing Pakistan of sponsoring terrorism and interfering in their internal affairs is a major setback to China's larger ambitions. It needs the co-operation of these countries for the success of its OBOR project.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor has gained importance as a major factor in Beijing's foreign policy. It is aware of the advantages of India participating in the CPEC project. It is also deeply concerned about the risks to the project which may include terror threat to the CPEC, disturbances in Baluchistan, escalating terror menace and instability in Afghanistan, the consequences of Pakistan meddling in Afghan affairs and above all, the United States ability to exploit allegations of corruption presently haunting Pakistan to engineer a 'colour revolution' whose contours were clearly visible during the 'Azadi March' blockading Islamabad's Red Zone in August 2016. These issues can seal China's economic ambitions as well as its ability to advance its influence in the region in a major way.

With these concerns in view, China will make every effort to get the 'terror sponsor' tag off Pakistan's back which has isolated Pakistan amongst the countries of the world and SAARC countries in particular. Its effort to prevent Masood Azhar being designated by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a terrorist, not naming Pakistan sponsored Afghan Taliban or Haqqani network as terror outfits, destabilizing Afghanistan besides its decision to adopt a 'flexible approach to delisting Afghan individuals from the UN sanctions

lists' in the gathering held on December 26, 2016 in Moscow are part of the larger intent.

China will make all efforts to equate Pakistan with India and sponsor the country in international negotiations to boost its status to be able to play its new found role. Blocking India's entry into Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and inclusion of Pakistan in December 2016 meet held in Moscow on Afghanistan are part of the scheme. India's protests regarding its territories being violated in the process of developing CPEC are likely to fall in deaf ears.

Zhang Gaoli, the Vice Premier and a member of the PSC, Wang Huning, a Politburo Member and the Head of the CPC's Central Policy Research Office, Vice Premier, and a Politburo Member Wang Yang, are constituents of the OBOR Leading Group's leadership. They are also members of the Central Financial and Economic Leading Small Group (CFELSG) and Central *Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms (CDRLSG)* which is headed by Xi Jinping. Li Zhanshu, the Head of the General Office of the Communist Party's Central Committee and a Politburo member has a day-to-day working relationship with the Xi Jinping. CPC/ID headed by Song Tao which furthers the geopolitical and foreign policy interests of the Party besides NDRC headed by Xu Shaoshi and MOFCOM led by Minister Gao Hucheng, may be some of the institutions and officials who may have the necessary clout to assist India to leverage China's India policy.

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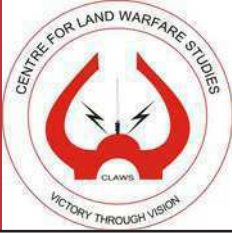


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ISSUE BRIEF

No 91B

February 2017



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Securing Tibet: The Dragon Way

*To govern the nation, we must govern our borders;
to govern our borders, we must first stabilize Tibet.*

Xi Jinping¹

Annexing Tibet in 1951 and dictating the Seventeen Point Agreement was relatively easy for China, but despite six decades of Chinese control, the assimilation of Tibet into mainland China has been much harder. Tibetan identity questions the very root of China's One Country, One Language, One Religion philosophy. The initial annexation (or liberation as the Chinese like to call it) was to use the large Tibetan landmass as a buffer, but over the years it has not been the asset it was envisaged as. Taking a more aggressive stand on Tibet allows Xi Jinping, the current Chinese President to give the impression of a strong nation and be seen as a leader proactively fulfilling the 'Chinese dream' of 'great rejuvenation of the

Chinese nation'. There have been developments on various fronts to secure China's control over Tibet in recent times. This article explores the extent of their success.

Impact of Military Reforms on Tibet

China has raised the political rank of the Tibetan Military Command and put it under the direct jurisdiction of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) ground forces. After the 2016 military restructuring, most of the provincial military commands are under the control of the newly established National Defense Mobilization Department of the Central Military Commission. Their focus will be on the regional militia reserves and local conscription. 'The Tibet Military Command, on the other hand, is under the leadership of the Chinese ground forces, which suggests that the command may undertake some kind of military combat mission in the future.'² Tibetan Military Command falls under

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the Western Theatre Command, headquartered at Chengdu. During the military restructuring, the Lanzhou military region and the Chengdu military region were integrated to form the larger Western Command.³ This will allow greater coordination within China for potential disputes along the Sino-Indian border. China has also been militarizing the shared borders further, both on the Tibetan side and the Pakistan side.⁴ ‘We have noticed an increase in capability and force posture by the Chinese military in areas close to the border with India’, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for East Asia, Abraham M Denmark told reporters during a news conference after the Department of Defence submitted its Annual Report to the US Congress on Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China.⁵ China disputed this, relying on the old party line of being committed to safeguarding peace and tranquility in the region and peaceful settlement of disputes with India.⁶

China has also implemented a new border regulation for the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), expanding the scope of the earlier regulation which has been in force since 2000. The designated border areas under the new regulation now include land ports, trade zones, and scenic spots. Wang Chunhuan, the Deputy Director of the Theoretical Marxism Institute of the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (TASS) who participated in the amendment was quoted as saying the following:⁷

The update of border regulation provides a legal foundation to combat potential terrorist activities in the future brought by the further opening-up of Tibet as the Belt and Road initiative has positioned Tibet as a gateway to South Asia, even though the border areas do not face severe terrorist challenges at present in general.⁸

This can potentially be used against Tibetan separatists in the future.

China is the largest importer of energy worldwide, importing over 60 per cent of its demand and this number is only set to grow. It is dependent on the South China Sea route for around 83 per cent of its oil imports. The

One Belt One Road provides China with a shorter route for imports from Central Asia and West Asia. Investing in this land route will reduce Chinese dependence on the important sea lanes of navigation which pass through the busy Malacca Straits and South China. As a keystone in the Chinese vision for the next century, Tibet plays an unparalleled role. Tibet is strategically located to support China’s increasing foray into South Asia. It can act as a convenient entry point for both the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh China India Myanmar (BCIM) corridor, linking them to its lesser developed hinterland. Tibet reported a total trade volume of more than 5.66 billion yuan (US\$ 815 million) in 2015, engaging in bilateral trade with 77 countries and regions.⁹ The increased militarization is the direct result of the Chinese desire to protect its heavy infrastructural investments. ‘Military capability in the region must be stiffened so as to “absolutely not allow any person, at any time, in any way, to separate out any part of Tibet”’, Wu Yingjie, the region’s Communist Party Chief said, echoing the increasing party focus on Tibet.¹⁰

Increased Infrastructure Development for Better Connectivity to the Mainland

Enhanced connectivity has played a pivotal role in fulfilling Chinese ambitions of greater economic prosperity. The Chinese government has emphasized rapid development of the transport system ever since the modernization post-Cultural Revolution. After the rapid growth that accompanied development in central and southern region, the emphasis shifted to connecting the more far flung areas. China’s Tibetan policy seeks to modernize Tibet’s economy and people, increasing their income and reducing their isolation by inextricably linking Tibet’s economy with the rest of China.¹¹

China created large, urban centres like Lhasa and Shigatse in Tibet and developed the infrastructure considerably, increasing effective control over the region.¹² The 2012 National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP) decided to accelerate

the development of a comprehensive modern transport system further. Tibet secured its first highway, the Motuo highway in 2013. The construction of the Qinghai-Tibet highway and the Qinghai-Tibet railway were subsequently completed, overcoming geological challenges like plateau permafrost and desert land.¹³ The Sichuan-Tibet railway project, which will reduce the journey time between Lhasa and Chengdu by over 17 hours, is also scheduled to be completed within the current Five Year Plan (2016-20) (Map 1).¹⁴

its plans to connect to both the OBOR in the West and BCIM in the South. Moreover, Tibet is geographically contiguous to Xinjiang, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan—key provinces for the Belt and Road initiative which is focusing on the lesser developed interior regions of China. Crucial strategic projects like the Chengdu-Lhasa highway have been sanctioned. China also wants to leverage Tibet's strategic geographical location to extend its influence in Nepal. The rail and road cargo link between Nepal and Tibet was operational by the end of December 2016 and the first batch of trucks



Map 1: Rail Lines in Western China

Source: 'Taming the West, The Communist Party Deepens Tibet's Integration with the Rest of the Country', *The Economist*, 21 June 2014, available at <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21604594-communist-party-deepens-tibets-integration-rest-country-taming-west>; accessed on 8 January 2017.

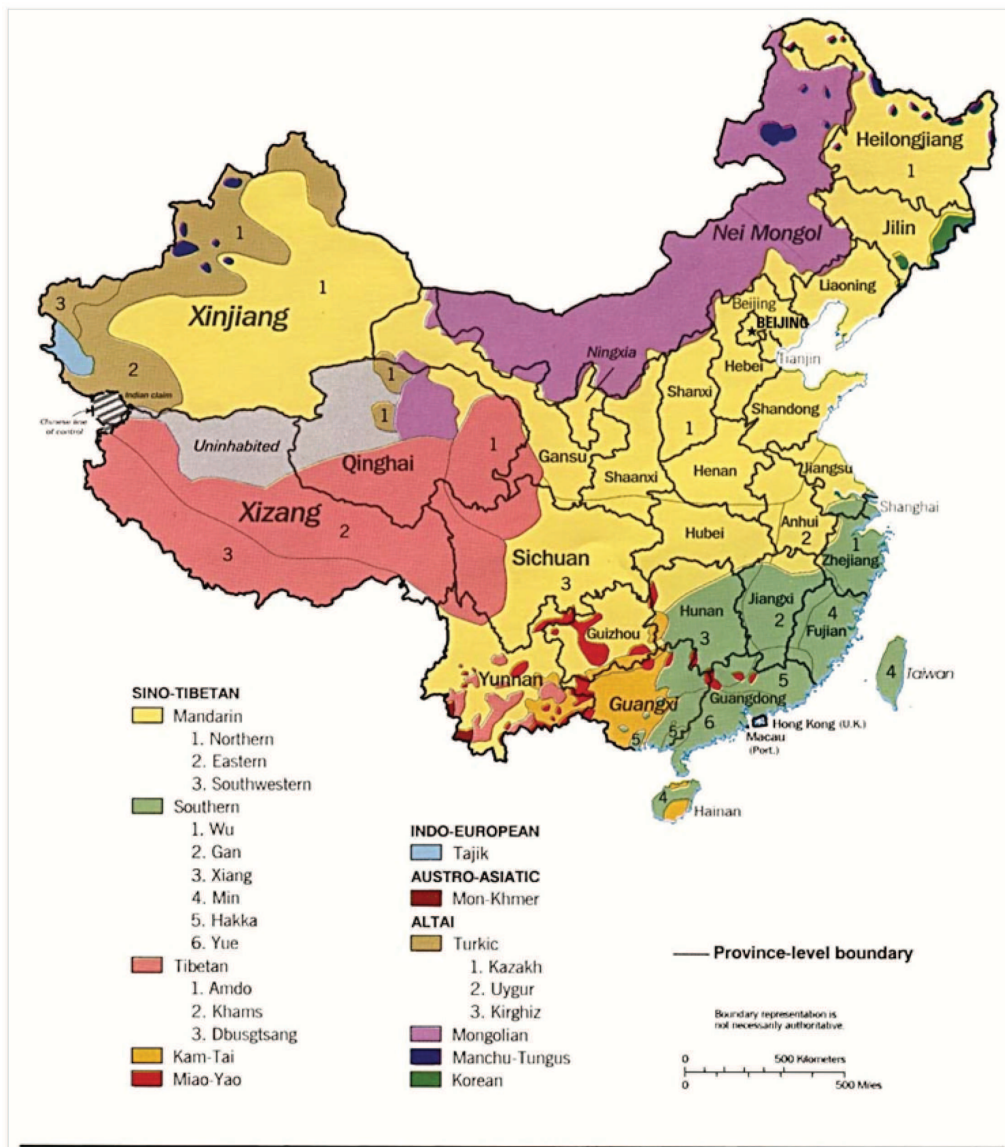
Despite gradual increase in Chinese development in Tibet over the years, announcement of the One Belt One Road initiative has led to an unprecedented increase in Chinese activity in the Tibetan plateau. Tibet is the starting point for the planned China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a major route envisaged under the Belt and Road initiative. It is a crucial gateway into Central Asia as well. The Tenth Tibet People's Congress announced

carried goods worth over US\$ 2.8 million.¹⁵ Further extensions from the strategic Tibetan border town, Gyirong into Nepal has also been agreed upon. An extension of the existing Qinghai-Lhasa highway is envisaged. Feasibility studies are being conducted to extend a rail link from Lhasa to Nepal.¹⁶

Greater Economic and Cultural Integration of Ethnic Tibetans

China’s approach towards ethnic Tibetans has been twofold; first, greater integration economically by greater development in the region and second, culturally by increasing restrictions on personal liberty, especially religious freedoms. The promotion of Han migration into the TAR to change the demographic profile of the area is ancillary but has its own role to play in the Chinese scheme of things.¹⁷

The Tibetan population is divided across the TAR and three provinces in China.¹⁸ This 1965 administrative division failed to divide the Tibetan movement for autonomy. While Tibetans are a minority in all provinces except the TAR, many small, remote villages in these three provinces have retained some degree of local autonomy by virtue of their isolation and the lack of Han settlers.¹⁹ The movement for autonomy is strong across the entire Tibetan population (Map 2).



Map 2: Linguistic Groups in China

Source: Available at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_ling_90.jpg, accessed on 7 January 2017.

The brutal suppression of Tibetans in 2008 marked a turning point in China's policy towards Tibet. The *taoguan yanghui* era has definitively ended now. President Xi Jinping has never used this phrase which roughly translates to hiding one's strength and biding one's time. Security restrictions which were tightened after the 2008 popular uprising in the TAR are still

government has responded by arresting the family members of the 'activists'. It is interesting to note that the majority of these self-immolations took place in the Tibetan populated regions outside the officially demarcated TAR (Map 3).

The 2016 border regulation also empowers the government against terrorists. There has been no



Map 3: Tibetan Self-immolations 2009-16

Source : 'International Campaign for Tibet, Map: Tibetan Self-immolations From 2009-2016', 2 March 2016, available at <https://www.savetibet.org/resources/fact-sheets/self-immolations-by-tibetans/map-tibetan-self-immolations-from-2009-2013/>, accessed on 7 January 2017.

in place.²⁰ They have even been extended to Tibetan populated regions outside TAR as well.²¹ There has been a crackdown on lawyers, human rights activists, and journalists. Internet access is severely restricted in Tibet, far greater than in other regions of China. Freedom House, a think tank working on democratic rights, has reported waves of self-immolation by Tibetans protesting CCP rule. According to the International Campaign for Tibet, there have been 144 known immolations since 2009.²² The Chinese

history of terrorist activity in the region, and the term is probably a euphemism for 'separatists'. The broader powers given to the border police under this regulation can potentially be misused in the future. This is keeping in line with the harsher stand being taken against Tibetan activists. Despite vowing to implement the rule of law, China continues to blatantly disregard it. Thousands of Tibetan monks were forcefully evicted from their homes at Larung Gar in eastern Tibet, in complete disregard for their right to religious freedom.²³ There are intrusive

state controls on monasteries including ‘management committees’ run by the local or Communist Party and constant surveillance, age restrictions to become a monk and even those who become monks are subject to patriotic ‘re-education.’²⁴ A senior Communist leader has even asked them to behave in a ‘patriotic and law abiding’ manner.²⁵ In the Qinghai Province’s Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture distributed a document in early 2015 (prior to the Dalai Lama’s 80th birthday) outlining various activities that would be construed as support for Tibetan independence, outlining punitive punishments for these. This list included even benign activities like burning incense.²⁶ Despite such rigorous restrictions and efforts to brainwash, the popularity of the Dalai Lama has not dimmed. The Tibetan response to the Chinese White Paper on Tibet expressed their sentiment by stating that ‘His Holiness the Dalai Lama remains the irreplaceable jewel in the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people.’²⁷

The Chinese White Paper on Tibet published in 2015 went so far as to:

[H]ope that the Dalai Lama will put aside his illusions in his remaining years and face up to reality, adapt his position, choose the objective and rational path, and do something of benefit to overseas Tibetan compatriots in exile.²⁸

Brushing aside the Tibetan movement for genuine autonomy as a mere delusion, the Chinese narrative of history claims ‘that has been part of China since antiquity’ and any attempt for independence would be dividing the Chinese nation.

Recently, China has started taking an even more aggressive stand against the activities of the Tibetan government-in-exile, the Central Tibetan Administration. While China has always protested against meetings of world leaders with the Dalai Lama, it has now started isolating the Tibetans by flexing its economic muscle. The Pope refused to meet the Dalai Lama in December 2014 due to pressure exerted by the Chinese.²⁹ China imposed unilateral sanctions on the land-locked Mongolia for inviting the Dalai Lama, increasing tariffs, and cancelling scheduled talks for developmental aid. The Chinese government strongly protested a meeting

in December 2016 between the Indian President and the Dalai Lama held on the sidelines of the Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit organized by the Kailash Satyarthi Foundation.³⁰ Protesting the meeting with an Indian head of state, China warned India about not interfering with its ‘core interests’, a nebulous concept that has expanded over the years.

The Chinese government has also coerced over 7,000 Tibetan pilgrims holding Chinese passports to prohibit them from attending the Kalachakra festival presided over by the Dalai Lama in Bodhgaya, India.³¹ There have been reports of confiscation of Tibetan passports. Members of the Tibetan-government-in-exile also claim that some people were threatened with arrest of family members back home and other severe consequences if they did not return immediately. In keeping with past behaviour, China vehemently denies this claim, citing examples of some Chinese citizens who are attending as evidence to support their stand. China has also branded this religious ceremony as a ‘political tool’.³² Despite the Kalachakra being conducted smoothly in the past, it is speculated that China took such harsh action in 2017 since it was organized by the Central Tibetan Administration.³³

This increased opposition to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama can be linked to the Chinese attempt to control the future leadership of Tibet after his death. The Dalai Lama has made public his desire to not reincarnate. The Chinese administration wants to ensure that he not only reincarnates but also picks someone more favourably disposed towards the Chinese government.³⁴ If the Dalai Lama chooses not to reincarnate, the already divided Tibetan movement will lose a common figure head that all factions acknowledge, complicating any future negotiations. A moderate leader willing to toe party line will be ideal from the Chinese point of view. Instances from the past Chinese behaviour can shed some light on potential future action. The Chinese imprisonment of the candidate chosen as the Eleventh Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama since 1995; simultaneously choosing Gyaincain Norbu, their own candidate to fulfill the duties of the Panchen Lama could be one potential path.³⁵ Recognition of two candidates as the Dalai Lama

could also split support among the Tibetan population, and while there is speculation that China might use this as a means to split the Tibetan movement, it might actually make it harder for the Chinese to negotiate a single, widely accepted settlement. In such a scenario, another route China could take would be to engage Lobsang Sangay, the elected sikyong (Prime Minister) of the Tibetan government in exile who enjoys support across the political spectrum. His strategy, the 'five-fifty' is that the Tibetan political leadership will make efforts to gain autonomy within China within the current elected term but also prepare a long-term strategy for the next 50 years.³⁶ Autonomy within China is also the position taken by the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People which encapsulates the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach. Lobsang Sangay proposes something similar to the 'one country, two systems' but suspects that Chinese mistrust of the Tibetans due to ethnic differences is acting as a roadblock for negotiations.³⁷

Another facet of economic development in the region is that it will invariably lead to job opportunities, resulting in migration to Tibet from other regions. This 'irresistible historic tide of development' in Tibet is being packaged as one that brings Tibet into the twenty-first century but this narrative brushes over the potential influx of migrants who will mostly be the Han Chinese.³⁸ This can change the demographic profile of the region permanently. Freedom House Report 2016 has cited an official plan which aims to increase the 'permanent urban population' of Tibet by approximately 30 per cent by 2020, with many new settlers likely to be ethnic Chinese.³⁹ However, despite rapid Han-ization of urban areas, the rural areas continue to be largely Tibetan. The theory that China is trying to reduce the dominance of ethnic Tibetans in the TAR to weaken the Tibetan identity and movement should therefore be taken with a pinch of salt.⁴⁰ TAR is too large and sparsely populated for ethnic profile change to be successful as a stand-alone policy. The Chinese policy towards Tibet is instead geared towards modernizing the ethnic Tibetan population by modernizing the region, homogenizing it instead of preserving its unique heritage.⁴¹

Tibet : A Constant Irritant in the Sino-Indian Relationship

Tibet shares a long border with India and any developments directly affect national security in India. After the 1959 Tibetan uprising, India gave refuge to the Dalai Lama and a large Tibetan population. As home to the Tibetan diaspora of over a lakh people, and the seat of power for the Central Tibetan Administration, India holds a unique position in the China-Tibet relationship. Even though India has never tried to use Tibet as leverage, refuge to the Tibetan population has been a constant irritant in India-China relations. While there have been some positive cross-border developments like an understanding in 2015 between China and India to step up collaboration in fields such as drug control and illegal immigration, the illicit arms trade and other cross-border crimes, it has had a rather limited impact.⁴²

The invitation to Lobsang Sangay, the head of the Tibetan government-in-exile to Indian Prime Minister Modi's swearing in ceremony in 2014 irked China to such a degree that in private meetings, India had to reassure that it recognizes Tibet as an integral part of China and does not support any separatist activity within its borders.⁴³ China lodged a protest when the Dalai Lama chose to visit Arunachal Pradesh, parts of which China claims as South Tibet. China also strongly protested Richard Verma, the US Ambassador to India's visit to Arunachal Pradesh.⁴⁴ An invitation to Losang Sangay by Richard Verma was again protested vehemently.⁴⁵ When China protested the Dalai Lama meeting the Indian president at the sidelines of an event organized for Nobel laureates and children, India justified it by classifying the event as a 'non-political'.⁴⁶

China's biggest concern regarding Indian support to Tibet is that it provides a platform to keep the Tibetan cause alive. China is relying on bullying tactics but India must hold its own as a responsibility to the large Tibetan population residing within India and as a regional power which is directly affected by developments in Tibet. India should rely on its democratic credentials and inextricably link the recognition of Tibet as an integral

part of China to genuine autonomy in the region.

The 'Chinese dream' of securing its status as a great power and regional pre-eminence can only be achieved after internal control of the party over China is secure. CCP is losing influence over the Chinese people, especially away from the centre of power. The Tibetan demand for autonomy and the perpetuation of their religious and cultural beliefs threaten party rule. It is the potential revolution of ideas that China is most afraid of since it goes to the root of one-party rule in the country. China follows a strict policy of brutal suppression of political ideas or religious beliefs, which challenge the party's authority and over the years, Tibet has been subjected to one of the most restricted regimes in the world. The Chinese government has praised the rich cultural heritage of Tibet, acknowledging its role in attracting tourists in the White Paper on Tibet. Ironically, it is trying to wipe out this unique cultural heritage through its actions.

Conclusion

China has used both the carrot and the stick but the Tibetan movement to preserve their identity continues to stay alive. Despite using numerous tools in its arsenal ranging from military reform and stronger anti-terror laws to greater economic integration and cultural repression, the process of Tibetan integration with mainland China remains incomplete. It is the perpetuation of CCP rule which is threatened by the cultural ideas and separate history of Tibet. China's actions indicate that it has increased efforts to silence dissent in Tibet. It is attempting to integrate the existing population of Tibet with the rest of the mainland to an extent that it becomes completely dependent on it. While this is an interesting strategy, Tibetans are a deeply religious society and economic interdependence coupled with religious repression will not be enough to obscure their distinct identity. China has also invested heavily in the development of Tibet and another uprising like the one in 1959 could have ramifications on the economic integration planned by China under the

Belt and Road initiative. A more liberal approach towards individual practices and beliefs as long as they do not threaten Chinese sovereignty is a more sustainable long-term approach for China to adopt.

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