

THE HISTORIC INFLUENCE OF THE TIBETANS-IN-EXILE ISSUE ON SINO- INDIAN RELATIONS

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Abstract

Recent years witnessed the military tensions in the border areas between China and India and the rising antagonistic feelings between the people of the two countries. The border dispute seems to become a problem that has to be solved. In fact, the border dispute is neither the most critical issue nor the main obstacle of Sino-Indian relations, not to mention being completely solved by military action. Both history and reality show that the Tibetans-in-exile issue is the crux of long-term discord between China and India, and the most urgent issue that calls for a solution. the Tibetans-in-exile issue not only worsened the Sino-Indian relations in the late 1950s, which triggered a large-scale war later, but also caused the fact that the successive governments of the two countries have been bearing a grudge against each other and in discord constantly, unable to reach a settlement on the border dispute. Furthermore, the Tibetans-in-exile issue could even serve as a time-bomber endangering the stability of both nations, which made China and India carry a heavy historical burden. At present, the spiritual leader of the Tibetans in exile has stepped into his later years, the Tibetan government-in-exile also tends to fall into extremism, which urgently calls for an established consensus between China and India and an acceptable solution for both sides. Only in this way can the imminent trouble affecting the peaceful development of the two countries be fundamentally eliminated. This article will explore the historical origin and the development of the Tibetans-in-exile issue, and further analyze its impacts on the past and future Sino-Indian relations, and propose a workable solution for the issue in the end.

Keywords: Tibetans in exile; Sino-Indian Relations; Dalai Lama; Rebellion in Tibet; Tibetan Independence

1. INTRODUCTION

Discord continues between China and India since the 1962 Border Dispute, giving rise to a lingering national antagonism that many would be in the belief that a compromise cannot be reached mainly because of the border conflict. It is de facto more of a lack of strategic trust of the two countries than the cause of the problem. Throughout the past and the present, India's sufferance and support of "Tibetan Independence" instigated by the Tibetans in exile have been the bane of the enmity. The honeymoon period from 1954 to 1958 had constituted a short peace and mutual reassurance but had been diminished out for the Tibetans in exile. Grudge harbors successive governments of the two countries where suspicions and precautions against each other seem eternal. The origins and the development of the Tibetans-in-exile issue is necessary to be sorted through in an attempt to give an in-depth analysis covering the past and the potential impacts in the foreseeable future. In view of this, countermeasures are to be proposed in this paper for a feasible reference to relevant theoretical and practical works.

2. THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THE TIBETANS-IN-EXILE ISSUE

By the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the fire of invasion from the British colonists had spilled over into Tibet. Natives were forced to leave their homeland and lived in exile. The Indian subcontinent, also a Crown Colony, adjacent to Tibet at that time was wrapped up so that the interstate trouble was laid and remained unsolved. 1947 saw the invaders' evacuation from the South Asia, while India inherited its suzerain's policy against China, carrying on turning Tibet into a buffer state and managing a unilateral hold of various alleged "privileges" and illegal boundary divisions. Jawaharlal Nehru, the founding prime minister of India, and his government was obedient to the Hindu-centric point of view, coveting that the country would one day be the economic and political hub that influenced from southeast Asia to Central Asia, even to the Pacific region. As Kuomintang(KMT) and Tibet's claim to resume the territorial sovereignty south of the McMahon Line, the India side who just emerged from the British colonial rule gave a resolute No to such request. The Nehru administration directly remained Richardson, the Anglo-Hindu representative to Lhasa, in office and altered his title as the representative of India in order to indicate the succession of policy. It also made use of the Chinese Civil War and incited the Tibet government to provoke a second "Incident of the Expulsion of Chinese" with the intensification of the so-called independence.

India had made up its mind that a friendly relationship between the two countries should be valued since the founding of the People's Republic of China, while it was loath to give up the British heritage over Tibet-related privileges and the boundary problems, and was more radical than its Anglo counterpart. During the liberation of Tibet in early years, India tried every attempt to thwart China's exercise of sovereignty over the municipality. It also claimed that China's membership of the United Nations would be a failure without its support. The south Asian country even seized the inherent territory before the Liberation Army could take hold of Tibet. Such actions had been an overflowing part of what British Raj used to regulate, as Longju, an upstream region of Subansiri River that even the British had never set foot on, had for a time been occupied. India once and again shielded the rebels in exile, shutting its eyes to the Sino-India friendliness the moment when the separatist activities were baffled. That had fanned up the flames of the independence, which resulted in Tibetans-in-exile events much more severe to deteriorate the bilateral ties.

The Communist Party and Chinese government couldn't put a brake on the reactionary forces, both from home and abroad, and their ambitions to alienate Tibet from China, despite all efforts for the good of the Sino-India tie and domestic ethnic unity. On March 1959, the upper-layer of the reactionaries launched an armed rebellion under the wing of India and the United States. Copious of insurgents led by Dalai Lama and unwitting monks and civilians fled to other countries like India where was open for a great number of emigres. The period of quiet shaped by the Tibet Agreement (started in 1954) then was suddenly muted. With the China-India-brotherhood slogan glittered, contradictions were going apparent enough to start a war. The unaddressed exile issue had spoiled the mutual trust and put a heavy historical burden on the domestic affairs of both sides.

3. DISRUPTION TO THE SINO-INDIA TIE

India was the second non-socialist country that gave recognition of New China after Burma. The two countries had been taking on a virtuous momentum since the formal diplomatic relation was established in 1950, though disparity of social system and foreign strategy, and conflicts were accompanied. China was compelled to side with the socialist camp owing to western's diplomatic isolation, economic blockade and military encirclement by the early 1950s. Asserting the biggest democratic state around the globe, India had a considerable visibility among the third world countries and a cordial connection with the Occident, with its pursuit of nonalignment. With the halo, it lent a big hand to China over international affairs including the draft decision in the 5th General Assembly to deliver the republic to the legal membership position in September, 1950. Nehru and his officers and the Indian UN representatives had called upon the resumption of China's legal seat more than 30 times by 1958. For another, it tried at full stretch to protect China's legitimate interest over the Korean War in a more objective way against the pressure from Western nations. Perching in the presidency of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, India had made significant endeavors for the repatriation of prisoners of war of both sides. Its links to the old regime remnants of Kuomintang were left no more when it came to the Taiwan issue. India even sent a refusal to the meeting for peace with Japan held in San Francisco in 1951, to stand against the States' "Two Chinas" tune. Nehru had reiterated time and again to affirmed the One-China policy with repeated statements of support of the recapture of Taiwan and its affiliated islets amidst the tense cross-strait relation in 1956 and 1958 respectively. Furthermore, India had taken an active initiative to explore a more open and amicable room for China to enter the third world stage, and to help the Chinese civilians in the U.S. for their homecoming schedule. On the contrary, China also reached out to this friend when it was in need – the famine in 1950, for example, was alleviated thanks to the first barter agreement with China, who

then couldn't even be sure of its own food supply, in January 1951, before six others were settled within five years, with the total export of rice 710,000 tons. In April 1954, Premier Zhou Enlai expressed his aired grievance upon Geneva's shutting the door upon Nehru, who was dedicated in leading the third world countries, appealing that India should play its part in safeguarding the peace of Asia. Given this, such organizations as Chinese People's Committee for World Peace (CPCWP) and China-India Friendship Association were assembled in Beijing and Shanghai in August 1955 to plead that Goa should be recovered from the Portuguese colonists to complete the India map. On December 19th, 1961, much tense as the Sino-India relation was, China still declared its support of India's advance to the retrieve of Goa. Cooperation weighed much more than conflicts between the two from 1949 to 1959, if we take a look at the bigger picture. The year 1954 was an exceptional year that put Tibet Agreement set up and premiers of the two countries into a reciprocal exchange.

Unfortunately, a turning point emerged five years later when India's hospitality was demonstrated to Dalai Lama who fled into the control area of the country on March 31th, 1959. By April 3th, Nehru announced in Lok Sabha that Tibetans in exile would be provided with political asylums. He went in person to Mussoorie to meet with the controversial monk three weeks later. Meanwhile, a plethora of comments and actions aimed at calumniating China and interfering its internal affairs came out to the public. Most Indian parties had even set up groups that backed the Tibet rebels. Flocks of mob were allowed to run riot in the Chinese consulates in India and affront the Chinese president. This had out of question put a breakpoint on the line shared by the two countries. What's worst, Dalai was acquiesced to build a so-called Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharmasala in the northwestern part of India in September, 1960. There seemed undoubtedly that the tie was more fragile.

4. DESTRUCTION OF THE STRATEGIC MUTUAL TRUST

India couldn't but to put aside the buffer state plan and reconsider the relationship with China after the peaceful liberation of Tibet. Suffered from a state of flux and austerity as China did, India was then in the face of an extreme challenge left by British Raj though it was founded anterior to the east Asian counterpart. Domestic turbulence, underdeveloped economy and poor livelihood had put it in the cart, while the U.S.-Pakistan and U.K.-Pakistan alignment in accordance with Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Baghdad Pact were clamping it down. In addition, Goa, which was occupied by Portugal with the support of the U.S., was missed to the reunification. Likewise, what was hanging over China was the economic recovery and development, as well as the protracted war against the western hostile forces over the Taiwan issue, the legitimate status in the UN and Korean War. The shared experience of combating imperialism and colonialism had brought its peace and common development requirement to the two neighbors. Under the Cold War, it was a great delight that China, the most populated socialist country, and India, the most populated capitalist one, could gain mutual confidence to preserve Sino-Hindu peace to promote cooperation between Asian and African countries, and to expand economic construction. The 1953 Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence put forward by Premier Zhou was sought after by Indian comrades the very first, so that the amity had become the theme then. The amity, however, was not perfect and seamless. What was discordant remained, of which the border predicament was the most salient.

The Sino-Indian border runs about 1056 miles (1700 km), and was sectioned into eastern, central and western parts. The early invasion to Tibet and the violence from India's army had put many regions along the border into controversy. The moment Tibet Agreement was signed, a rule was also noted down: consultation upon the revocation of all special rights handed down from the British Empire was the focal discussion, but the boundary arrangement was out of the agenda. After that, the Nehru administration vilified that China had tacitly approved the colonial demarcation of the McMahon and the Johnson Line on the pretext of the ignorance of the border, encroaching regions like Rgyud-ba, Pulam Sumda and Wuje, etc., covering a total area of more than 2000 sq km. That occupation triggered the first military stand-off between China and India. Diplomacy, however, was exerted to allay the tension before the dispute was finally put off, in that a higher credit was maintained before 1959. More than 13 letters between Premier Zhou and Nehru revealed that the mutual trust came to fall apart because of India's hostility over the Tibetans in exile, and that the arguments were going increasingly acute. The China authorities had aware that inrush of rebels into India had activated its immediate military advance to the east part, overstepping the McMahon Line and slopping over the boundary marked in India's map in the current publication.

It was a crude interference, China believed, in the domestic affairs and a tangible threat to the homeland security when India absorbed a mass of Tibetans in exile and lifted up its gun against the old friend. China had a fundamental change of the look at the opponent's diplomatic policy and Nehru himself, and improve the preparedness in case the two countries were to be at war. An armed clash occurred in Longju, east section of

the border, and Kongka Mountain Pass, west section, in August and October, 1959 respectively. The bloodsheds had aggravated the crisis of mutual confidence. For one thing, India sneezed at China's suggestion of the 20 km retreat, and for another, turned the negotiation on border dispute down. It even showed self-satisfaction and believed it was bolstered by superpowers as the U.S. president Eisenhower paid a visit to New Delhi on December, 1959 and Soviet leader Khrushchev followed two months later. Insatiable and much tougher, it bore a more radical move. The 1961 "Forward Policy" was one of the typical cases that managed to push its armies to China's line of actual control and end up with epic warfare. The bilateral relationship has hence been frozen up for decades.

5. A BLASTING FUSE OF THE OPPOSITION

The feeling of opposition was stirred out of the partial protection to the insurgents and the high-sounding accusation of China's "incorrectness". Seven times had Nehru talked openly about the Tibet situation from March to April in 1959 was excessive from the political perspective. He expressed the sympathy on what the Tibetan people had "suffered" and the objection to China's military "intervention". The Ministry of External Affairs, known as the foreign ministry of India, violated the international conventions, rumoring what was called Statements of Dalai Lama. Its agitation of Tibet independence and denouncement to the Chinese government was fierce. The Indian medias acted alongside their pivot with all sorts of anti-China propagandas, in which China's counter-insurgency was distorted as a plain robbery and imperialism. The misreports exacerbated the resistance of the entire India, be it official or folk, and set off two extensive anti-China campaigns within five months from April to September.

The Chinese indignation was even more violent about what India had done. It warned in March that "the counter-insurgency was no more than a domestic affair without disturbance. Any conspiracy that tries to split Tibet, the inseparable territory of China, off will be a complete failure". Thereafter, China had taken multiple diplomacies to remonstrate India's interference. Such articles and editorials as No More Expansionist Intervention in Our Affairs, China's Sovereignty Allows NO Violations, and Warning: Dirty Tricks Prohibited! were published in mainstream journals like People's Daily and Guangming Daily. They were suited to extend China's stance and sentiments at that moment. The republic, nevertheless, was not planning to break with India, but to hope that Nehru would wake up and get back on track. Chairman Mao Zedong urged on April 25th Hu Qiaomu, standing committee member of the Advisory Committee of CPC, Wu Lengxi, president of Xinhua News Agency and Peng Zhen, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress that "For our unforeseen needs, don't curse Nehru roundly, not on any account!" Pan Zili, China's ambassador to India, made a clear written statement on May 16th that the American Imperialism was the major enemy. The west would not antagonize India while the east had already set the Occident against itself. China hoped that India should abide by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and make abrogation to the wreck of the friendship. Nehru, however, turned a deaf ear to either the warnings or the persuasions, but kept receiving the Tibetans in exile, and shielded the Dalai Clique to give unreasonable charges to China right at the UN. The issue was therefore becoming lingering and internationalized.

The nonalignment had been basically abandoned after the Border Dispute, while a dual one with U.S. and the Soviet Union was picked up to fight against China. The CIA-India joint, with hired young Tibetans in exile, had built an estimated 10,000 Indian special frontier forces in Chakrata Military Base (at Uttar Pradesh near the Sino-India border) in November 1962. Four months after that, the emigres were allowed to throw a commemorative activity for the fourth anniversary of the insurgency. Worse still, the Tibetan Government in Exile was given secret support to release the Constitution of Tibet and set up bureaus in New York and Geneva. Before a multitude of slanders, India had voted yes to China's "infringement" upon Tibet's human rights in 1965. Although Indira Gandhi offered an idea of amicable settlement, successive governments in India were reluctant to give in upon the critical problem that a genuine reconciliation is never achieved. Tibetans in exile, even to this day, is a huge thorn that is sometimes sharp and rampant.

6. A HEAVILY BURDENED HISTORY

Since Dalai Lama and his entourage had set foot in the Indian controlled zone on March 31th, 1959, miscellaneous rebels and unwitting monks and civilians had fled one after another into India. The side south of the line claimed that the peak number of the so-called refugees who had been given aid to was up to 50,000.

The phenomenon was an arm-twisting one to China. Trouble had hit the second Five Year Plan of India (1959-1961), in which "the public-operated part could never be accomplished in investment, production and employment sectors." Also, a critical shortage of grain was then at the corner compared to the hasty desire to increase more population. Disastrous effects were born between its incapability of taking care of its own and

the massive Tibetans in exile – that is, the lasting burden on society and a hint that would one-day touch ethnic conflicts off. A developing country as it was, and is, many people were struggling on the edge of the poverty line, let alone the ceaseless incoming of refugees, that the whole country was in the soup for survival. The requisition of the native land, in the second place, would be a must to accommodate the foreigners, who would then be looked upon with hatred. So far, the native-immigrant friction is occasional. There were examples of separatism along with the tide. India, a mere geographical name, had never set up a unified dynasty covering the South Asian subcontinent. The centrifugal pull induced by religious and racial antinomy after the partition of India and Pakistan had put it on the brink of disintegration. The open defiance with China had also motivated independence movements from the native minorities including Sikhs, Nagas, Mizos and Gurkhas, etc.

The reception would leave the entire community unrest because of some of the Tibetans who could have no property and land would go fanatic at the instigation of extremist groups like Tibetan Youth Congress and Tibetan Women's Association. Those emigres were factors that was also contagious to the CPC for the image tarnished by India had perplexed China into a passive position in the international arena. The independence force, on the other hand, had been penetrating and damaging Tibet's stability and development under the screen of religious and cultural exchange. Intercommunication between the two peoples had never stagnated even during the freeze-up time. But it was precisely that close link had the separatists taken advantage of to fabricate rumors and start riots, cutting in the prosperity of the region. Moreover, the force had ganged up with reactionaries as Taiwan independents, Xinjiang independents and Hong Kong independents, and other massive movements, with even the Falun Gong Cult involved in, to jeopardize the national security. How Tibetans in exile is going to be remains inconclusive, which is at the same time uncertain to China, who had made several contacts with Dalai and no substantial progress was made with the U.S. and India in the way. Old and feeble, the supreme leader of the exiles is now loosening on the increasingly extreme independence force, which is getting more difficult to tackle with in the days to come.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Tibetans in exile has been an annoyance for six decades, redundant, morbid for the normal growth of the Sino-India relation, and even direct to the military confrontation. The Anglo was after all the apple of discord. And India's blindness to the British legacy – namely an antagonistic strategy against China and support of the Tibet independence – sat at the crux of the long-term disharmony. Following up the improved relationship in 1970s, China focused more on the exchange with India in economy and culture in a spirit of the sincerest overture and a principle of progressing from easier issues to more difficult ones, intending to soften or put aside the Tibet problem. The southern neighbor, however, would not subside that it tried to bargain with China by indulging the emigres to create confusion and troubles, coercing China into making concession on other issues or the choice that benefited India. Recent years have witnessed a more intensified country daring China's bottom line with Tibetans in exile. That has put the two countries, once again, at the crossroad of what that has been through. India is bound to pay the price of a worse mistrust or even a new clash if it is still clinging its own course on the wrongdoings.

Being hostile towards one another will only make the game internecine. The United States and its alliances try to alienate India from China over the years, by drawing the latter over to its side, for only one purpose: infighting between these two Bric nations with the fastest-growing economies and the maximum population to decrease or eliminate the emerging countries' possibility to surpass it, who is ambitious for the global dominance. The U.S. will enjoy conquer without a battle if the Sino-India tie is not fixed. Moreover, whether the two are able to get out of the middle-income trap is crucial for the development of economy and the society for both sides in the foreseeable future. With a peaceful ambience, the Belt and Road Initiative of China, or Look East Policy, Monsoon Plan and the Spice Trail of India will surely be unimpeded. The two countries are obliged to pay more attentions to the Tibetans in exile and reach an early consensus to wipe out the obstacle and the latent danger that ferments potential secessionism and terrorism.

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