

Claude Arpi

# HIMALAYAN RIVERS

## Geopolitics and Strategic Perspectives

ON OCTOBER 7, 1950 THE PLA'S SECOND FIELD Army marched into Eastern Tibet to 'liberate' the Roof of the World. Several factors can explain this move.

A few days after the beginning of the invasion, the *Xinhua News Agency* issued a communiqué that the PLA would soon achieve "the task of marching into Tibet to liberate the Tibetan people, to complete the important mission of unifying the motherland, to prevent imperialism from encroaching on even one inch of our sovereign territory and to protect and build the frontiers of Motherland".<sup>1</sup> This enumerates some of Mao's motivations.

The historian Warren Smith has quoted a Scottish missionary called Beatty working in eastern Tibet, who was told by a PLA officer that "large numbers of yak, wild and domestic animals would be needed to feed the PLA troops [in Tibet]. The PLA officers and men talked of going on to India once Tibet was in their hands."<sup>2</sup>

Communist China had not only decided to establish her *de facto* suzerainty over Tibet, (which had never relay existed)<sup>3</sup>, but it was the first step towards the South, the opening of the gateway to India and to other countries that China claimed as her own—Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, etc. Mao had termed Tibet as the palm of the hand with the five fingers being Ladakh, Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and NEFA.

Mao Zedong repeatedly stated his objective: "There are two winds in the world, the east wind and the west wind ... I think the characteristic of the current situation is that the east wind prevails over the west wind; that is, the strength of socialism exceeds the strength of imperialism."<sup>4</sup>

These words were pronounced in 1957, but even in 1950 "for China there was no question to let the west wind prevail, it was the 'sacred duty' of the Chinese to look which side the wind blows."<sup>5</sup> A 'sacred duty' to liberate Tibet, to make the East wind prevail!

When I started getting acquainted with the history of modern Tibet in the early seventies, I came across a book, *Communist China and Tibet* by Gingsburg & Mathos. It was pointed out: "He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont, threatens the Indian subcontinent; and he who threatens the Indian subcontinent may well have all of South-East Asia within his reach, and all of Asia."<sup>6</sup>

This sounded right and logical. Mao the strategist knew this well, as did the British who had always manoeuvred to keep Tibet as an 'autonomous' buffer zone between their Indian colony and the Chinese and Russian empires. The Government of independent India, upon inheriting the past treaties signed by the British, should have worn the British mantle with its advantages for Indian security and its sense of responsibility vis-à-vis Tibet. Unfortunately due to fear of appearing to be a neo-colonialist state, they failed to do this, without giving any thought to the consequences which would follow.

The importance of the strategic position of Tibet became even more obvious when China joined the restricted circle of the nuclear nations. Is there a better location than the Tibetan high plateau to position Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) with nuclear warheads pointed towards India or elsewhere? Strategically and geographically, Tibet was the ideal place to locate testing sites and for storing nuclear missiles.<sup>7</sup>

The 'coup' of Tibetan 'liberation' was therefore a master-stroke. It was a well-planned affair. The Indian Intelligence Chief, B.N. Mullik, a Nehru loyalist once wrote: "However, in everything that Mao Zedong does there is a purpose and a method, and, whilst keeping the main aim always before him, he often makes compromises in the details to prepare conditions for the next step forward."<sup>8</sup>

By colonizing the Roof of the World, Mao demonstrated to the world who the real leader of Asia was, while showing simultaneously that India



Claude Arpi, an author and a journalist writes regularly on Tibet, China, India and Indo-French relations in *The Pioneer*, the *New Indian Express*, *Rediff.com* and other Indian and French publications. His new books *Tibet: The Lost Frontier* will be launched in end May 2008. [claude@auroville.org.in](mailto:claude@auroville.org.in)

was incapable of defending a smaller country; thus Nehru was exposed as a 'paper tiger'.

From then onwards, the Government of India followed a strange policy of appeasement. The more virulent the attack or insult, the harder it tried to appease the Chinese and become their 'friends'. The *Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai* slogan was the most visible outcome of this policy.

#### CHINA'S GRAND PROJECTS

Let us for a moment consider China's contemporary problems.

Traditionally, the Chinese people's respect for their Emperor increases manifoldly when the monarch undertakes projects that no human mind can even conceive. After all, the Emperor is the Son of Heaven, and only in Heaven can projects such as the Grand Canal, the Great Wall or the Three Gorges Dam can be envisioned.

The most acute problems facing China today are food and water. The future of the Middle Kingdom depends on the success or failure of the present Emperor(s) to tackle these problems. The two issues are closely interlinked and, if not solved, are bound to have grave social, political and strategic consequences for the Chinese nation and indirectly for its neighbours, particularly India.

Some twenty years back, this was spelt out in a remarkable book written by one of the foremost world experts in agriculture, the American Lester Brown. His book, *Who Will Feed China*<sup>9</sup> published in the mid-eighties forced the Chinese leadership to rethink their agricultural strategies.

In the early 80's, the conversion of agricultural land to other uses (factories, residential areas, airports, roads, flyovers, etc...) had provoked the loss of 52 percent of Japan's grain harvested areas, 46 percent of Korea's and 42 percent of Taiwan's. China's development being similar to these three countries, though it had started later, Brown concluded that China will ultimately be unable to feed its own people.

Lester Brown cited the examples of the industrialised Asian countries which in spite of the best conditions have become grain importers. He prophesized: "In an integrated world economy,

*China's rising food prices will become the world's rising food prices. China's land scarcity will become everyone's land scarcity. And water scarcity in China will affect the entire world... It could well lead us to redefine national security away from military preparedness and toward maintaining adequate food supplies."*

The role of today's Emperor(s) is therefore to find water to sustain agriculture and ultimately feed the people of China. But water is disappearing fast from the Middle Kingdom.

To quote from another study of the *World Watch Institute*:<sup>10</sup> In 1999 the water table under Beijing fell by 2.5 meters (8 feet). Since 1965, the water table under the city has fallen by some 59 meters or nearly 200 feet, warning China's leaders of the shortages that lie ahead as the country's aquifers are depleted.

#### THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE TIBETAN RIVERS

One of the solutions for China is to divert the water from the South to North. The water diversion project was an essential part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Five-year Plan. Water will be diverted from the South via three channels in the eastern, central and western regions, respectively. The western route draws water to the upper reaches of the Yellow River to solve water shortage in the north-western regions. This is where the waters of Tibet are vital; it was another reason for Mao to 'liberate' Tibet.

Most of Asia's waters flow from the Tibetan plateau, the principal watershed in Asia. The Roof of the World is the source of Asia's ten major rivers. Tibet's waters flow down to eleven countries and are said to bring fresh water to over 85 percent of Asia's population, approximately 50 percent of the world's population.

Four of the world's ten major rivers, the Brahmaputra (or Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet), the Yangtze, the Mekong and the Huang Ho (or Yellow River) have their headwaters on the Plateau. Other major rivers originating in Tibet are: the Salween, the Irrawaddi, the Arun, the Karnali, the Sutlej and the Indus. About 90 percent of their runoff flows downstream to China, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

For us in South Asia, of main concern are the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Sutlej, the Arun and the Karnali whose waters give life to more than one billion people living downstream.

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Assam, it is joined by two other rivers (the Dihang and Lohit). Entering Bangladesh, the river unites with the Ganga and is known as the Padma, before becoming the Meghna-Brahmaputra after merging with the river Meghna. Finally it divides into hundreds of channels to form a vast delta which flows into the Bay of Bengal.

When the Tsangpo reaches its easternmost point in Tibet, it takes a sharp U turn known as the

It is roughly estimated that 10-20 percent of the Himalayan region is covered by glacial ice while an additional area ranging from 30-40 percent has seasonal snow cover. Himalayan glaciers cover around 100,000 square kilometers and store about 12,000 cubic kilometers of fresh water: the most incredible water tank one can imagine.

The perennial run of the rivers originating from these glaciers also result in a stable flow of water to regions which are dominated by monsoon rainfalls (with rain falling during only a few months of the year). Consequently, the Tibetan rivers, independent of seasonal precipitation patterns, are an important factor in sustaining hydrological regimes of South Asia.

**THE YARLUNG TSANGPO**

The Yarlung Tsangpo (or Brahmaputra in India) has an immense bearing on the life of hundreds of millions in the sub-continent.

It is the largest river on the Tibetan plateau, originating from a glacier near Mt Kailash. It is considered to be the highest river on earth with an average altitude of 4,000 meters. It runs 2,057 kilometers in Tibet before flowing into India, where it becomes the Brahmaputra. One of its interesting characteristics is the sharp U turn it takes at the proximity of Mt. Namcha Barwa (7,782 meters) near the Indian border.

Like the Nile in Egypt, the Yarlung Tsangpo has fed the Tibetan civilization which flourished along its valleys, particularly in Central Tibet.

The Yarlung Tsangpo enters in India in Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. When it penetrates

Great Bend.

In May 1994, *Xinhua News Agency* pointed out: “Chinese geologists claim that a remote Tibetan canyon is the world’s largest, bigger and deeper than the Grand Canyon. The Yarlung Zangbo Canyon, in the vast Himalayan range that encircles China, averages 3.1 miles (5 km) in depth and extends 198 miles (317 km) in length.”<sup>11</sup>

The Grand Canyon in Arizona is much smaller in comparison.

**FIRST PROJECT**

There are two versions of the Great Western Diversion. Let us look at the first one.

The Tsangpo project will have two components: one is the construction of the world’s largest hydroelectric plant that would generate twice the electricity produced by the Three Gorges Dam. The hydroelectric plant on the Great Bend of Yarlung Tsangpo will dwarf all these projects with a planned capacity of 40,000 Megawatts.

The second component of the project will be the diversion of the waters of the Tsangpo which will be pumped northward across hundreds of kilometers of mountainous regions to China’s northwestern provinces of Xinjiang and Gansu.

For South Asia and more particularly for India, the enormity of the scheme and its closeness to the Indian border can not be ignored. It is not only the sheer enormity of the project which has to be

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Diversion

considered, but the fact that if it is accomplished, it will have ominous consequences for millions of people downstream.<sup>12</sup>

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#### THE IMPLICATIONS

A reservoir for a 40,000 Megawatts capacity dam would create a huge artificial lake inundating vast areas of virgin forest within the canyon and beyond. The reservoir would stretch hundreds of kilometers upstream the Yarlung Tsangpo into the Kongpo region. Rare species of flora and fauna within the canyon<sup>13</sup> will be lost for scientific study. The Chinese authorities themselves admit that the Canyon is the home for more than 60 percent of the biological resources on the Tibetan Plateau.

Although the population in the canyon is rather small, the indigenous people will suffer great hardship and be forced to leave their ancestral lands; of course this may not be a problem for Beijing who has 'resettled' more than one million Chinese Hans since the beginning of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam.

Additionally, the water diversion scheme is likely to be a highly inefficient and wasteful exercise with billions of cubic meters of water being lost to evaporation, leakage, percolation, etc, through the 800 km-long canals and aqueducts.

If the project comes to fruition, Tibet and the world would have lost this virgin region and its canyon, a great treasure.

India and Bangladesh would be at the mercy of China for adequate release of water during the dry season, and for protection from floods during the rainy season. India knows from its own internal problems how difficult it is to solve a water dispute. When it comes to a transboundary question (where the boundary is not even agreed upon), it seems practically impossible to find a workable understanding.

#### ANOTHER PROJECT TO TAP TIBETAN WATERS

The second avatar of the project which got a lot of media coverage in the recent years is the Shuotian Canal. It is also linked with the Great Western Route.

The project is the brainchild of Guo Kai, the secretary-general of the Shuotian Canal Preparatory Committee. Guo Kai's life mission is to save China with Tibet's waters. He calculated that if waters from the Salween, the Mekong, the Yangtse, the Yalong and the Dadu (last two are Yangtse's tributaries) were diverted and directed to the Ngawa Prefecture of Amdo Province (Qinghai), the problem of recurrent water shortage in north and northwest China could be solved. Let us not forget that today, the Yellow River is dry for more than 250 days in a year.

Guo not only worked closely with experts from the Ministry of Water Resources and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), but he also made several on-the-spot investigations and surveys, before coming up with the details of his pharaonic scheme.

According to him, the 'Great Western Route' diversion could solve the water shortage in north China, bring drinkable water to Tanjing and even counter the desertification facing the north-northwest provinces. It is why it is considered so vital to the country's strategic security.

The *Southern Weekend*<sup>14</sup>, China's largest circulation weekly is very popular for its investigative journalism. On July 27, 2006 the magazine reported some of Guo's remarks, that the completion of the Railway line to Lhasa meant that that the 230,000 engineering staff attached to the project could now be transferred to work on the Shuotian Canal. The name Shuotian comes from the contraction of the origin of the canal near Shuomatan on the Yalung Tsangpo (near the town of Tsetang) and the city of Tianjing at the end.

The interesting aspect of Guo's *Great Western Route* has been that from the start the Chinese

military have shown a lot of interest in it. At the end of the 90s, Zhang Jinong, the Minister of Water Resources, formed the *Shuotian Canal Preparatory Committee*. The Committee was packed with army generals such as Xu Guangyi, Gao Cunxin and Wang Dingle. This clearly indicates the strategic implications of the scheme.

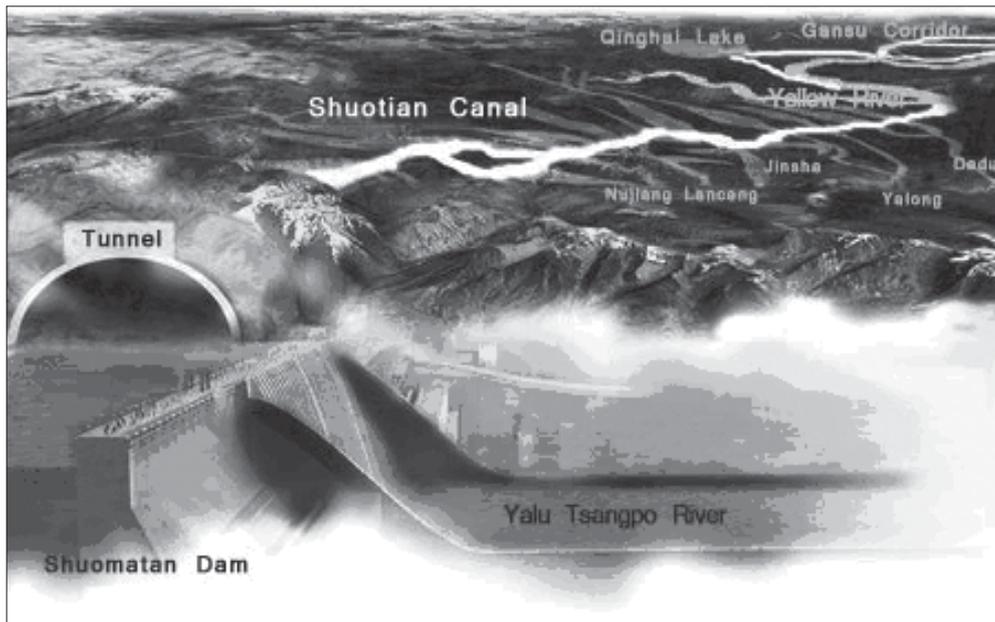
According to the *Southern Weekend*, the project had the support of 118 generals as well the backing of a large number of members (at least those with a military background) of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Guo estimated the total investment at around US \$ 25 billion.

In November 2005, the *Great Western Route* project got a boost with the publication of a book entitled *Save China Through Water From Tibet*, written by Li Ling. The writer used Guo's theme and arguments. It appears that more than 10,000 copies were ordered by various central government ministries and commissions, including the Ministry of Water Resources. Some observers will say that the project is a figment of the imagination of a few old retired generals (with the backing of journalists looking for scoops), but it is not the case. The fact is that the project has been widely read, studied and commented by government officials, scientists and NGOs in China. It was reported that in August 2005, Guo Kai was called to Zhongnanhai, the central government enclave in Beijing where top members of the Politburo reside. He was asked to present his concept in front of the Policy Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

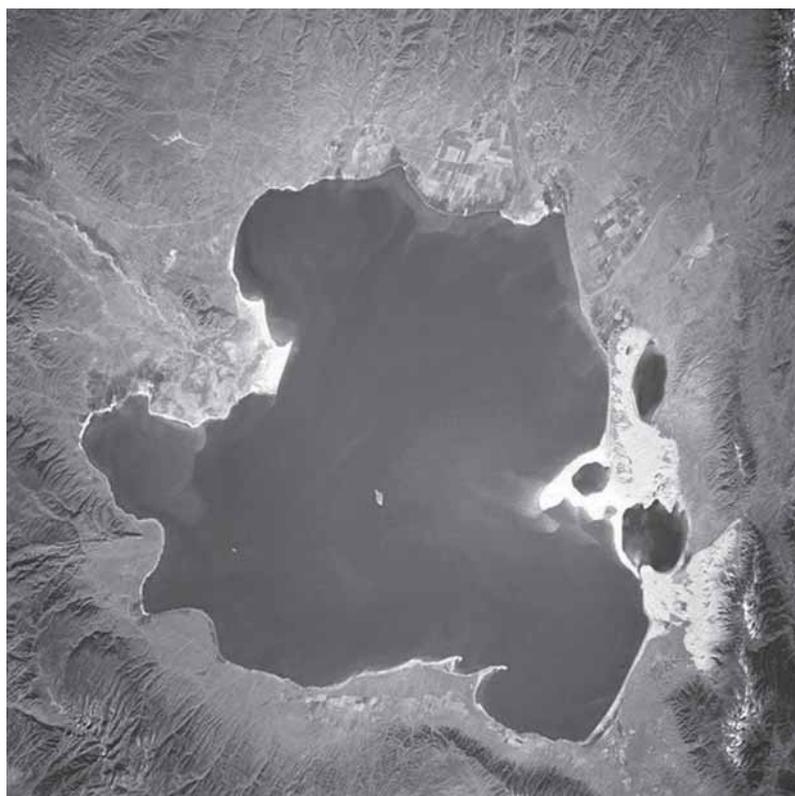
Already in 1999, an official field survey of the proposed canal was made by experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the State Development Planning Commission and representatives from the ministries of water resources, railways, forestry and land resources.

The report indicated that 600 billion cubic meters of water, (equal to 12 Yellow Rivers) was being wasted annually in Tibet [probably meaning going to India]. A dam at Shuomatan in Central

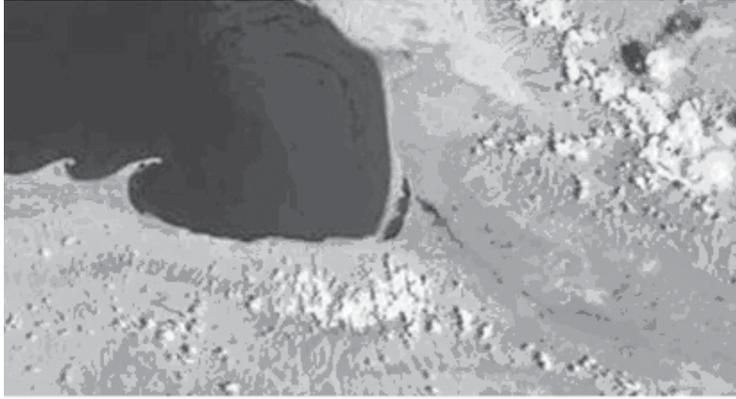


Tibet<sup>15</sup>, could divert some 200 billion cubic meters of water to the Yellow River. Later it could flow to Inner Mongolia to eventually reach its final destination, Tianjin.

According to the report, one of the main problems was that the influx of water was too important for the Yellow River to absorb. A reservoir would have to be built near the Lajia Gorge in Machen County of Qinghai Province (South of Qinghai Lake). The idea was to use this reservoir to send water to the desert areas of northern China while simply increasing the flow of the Yellow River during the dry season. For the



Qinghai Lake



Erhai Lake

purpose, a canal between the Lajia reservoir and the freshwater Erhai Lake (near the Qinghai or Kokoonor Lake) would have to be built. About 60 percent of the water would be sent to the north.

Guo calculated that the areas around the Erhai/Qinghai Lake have a much higher elevation than neighboring areas in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. It would therefore be easy to push down the waters into the three proposed diversions starting from the Erhai Lake.

One would link up with the Gaxan Lake in Inner Mongolia making the Badain Jaran desert into an oasis. This desert is one of the main sources of the recurrent sandstorms affecting Beijing. The second link could take the waters to the Junggar Basin, in the northwest and would supply Urumqi and Karamay in Xinjiang Province.

The last link would irrigate the arid Qaidam and Tarim basins and the Lop Nur, where the first Chinese nuclear test where conducted in the 60s.

In 2000, several individuals and organisations already started protesting in China. The Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE) published a "Strategic Study on Sustainable Development of China's Water Resources in the 21st Century". Academicians Qian Zhengying and Zhang Guangdou who had worked on the proposed

diversion, noted at least two potential wrongs. First, the scheme plans to divert water only into the Yellow River, forgetting other rivers in north and northwest China and second to force the lush southern scenery on the northwest would "violate the laws of nature".<sup>16</sup>

Since then other objections have come up. One is that the cost has greatly been underestimated; another one is "solving west China's water problem by means of a man-made eco-environment is impossible and will only lead to increased trouble in the future." It was pointed that the water of the reservoir at the Erhai Lake could easily be polluted by the saltwater of the nearby Qinghai Lake. The conclusion was: "The project has shortcomings in its theory, and will not work in reality."

But the old generals are insistent. General Zhao Nanqi declared in 2000: "Even if we do not begin this water diversion project, the next generation will. Sooner or later it will be done."

After a meeting in June 2006 in Beijing, Guo said that Jampa Phunsok, the chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region, believed that the project could benefit rather than harm the plateau's ecological environment.

During the same meeting, Wang Hao of the CAE said that trans-provincial water diversion should be the last choice, as it may also trigger ecological and relocation problems: "We are now conducting the South-to-North Water Diversion Project simply because we have no alternative, but we should bear in mind the lessons of the past and learn to avoid water diversion as we have learnt to avoid war." His conclusion was "Grand as Guo's scheme sounds, it may prove to be a castle in the sky."

The generals consider the Great Western Route scheme as a relatively easy project compared to the railway engineering feat which laid tracks at attitudes above 5,000 meters. They believe: "We have gained a great deal of experience in building dams, digging tunnels, protecting local ecology".

The conclusion of the *Southern Weekend* was, "A strategic perspective, the Great Western Route offers a tentative plan for the solution of the water

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shortage problem. However, neither side is able to present convincing data based on meticulous field surveys.”

The day after President Hu Jintao left India after his State visit in November 2006, the Chinese Minister for Water Resources, Wang Shucheng, declared that the proposal was “unnecessary, unfeasible and unscientific.” He added that it had no government backing: “There is no need for such dramatic and unscientific projects.” He however admitted: “There may be some retired officials that support the plan, but they’re not the experts advising the government.” For the first time, it was not a point blank denial.

The main issue remains that even if the project is not undertaken under its present form, the problem of silting and pollution of the Yellow River remains. On June 30, 2005, the CAS academician Ma Zongjin had already called a meeting of 40 experts and officials in Xiangshan (Fragrant Hill) to access the scheme. There was only one point to which everyone agreed: “All attendees agreed that water shortage is fast becoming an issue of national security, requiring urgent and immediate action.”

How China will solve this problem depends on the political and economic situation in the country and on its relations with its neighbours. Today the slogan is ‘the peaceful rise of China’. Development is the first priority, but this very development depends on water and also the ability of the leadership to feed its people. It is a tough proposition. But in ancient China, did not the term ‘Zhi’ mean both ‘to regulate waters’ and ‘to rule’?

### **The Arunachal Floods**

An event which occurred in June 2000 could be an illustration at a very reduced scale of what could happen if the Tsangpo project is some day completed. At that time, the breach of a natural dam in Tibet led to severe floods and left over a hundred people dead or missing in Arunachal Pradesh. It is not difficult to understand that areas downstream in Arunachal or Assam are extremely vulnerable to what takes place upstream in Tibet.<sup>17</sup> At the time of the incident, Rediff.com reported: “The flash floods that hit the border state of Arunachal Pradesh in June has made officials at the Central Water Commission sit up and take notice. As officials pour over the technical data, a new dimension that the Chinese Army in Tibet, as part of an experiment, may have deliberately blasted the dam has been added to the already hazy

picture.”

A few weeks later, a similar mishap took place on the other end of the Himalayas. *The Tribune* in Chandigarh reported this strange event<sup>18</sup>: “Even three days after the disaster, the mystery of the flashfloods in the Sutlej, which wrecked havoc along its 200-km length in the state, remains unresolved.” It added: “Experts are at a loss to understand where the huge mass of water came from.”

Imagine a 50-ft high wall of water descending into the gorges of Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh! In a few hours, more than 100 persons died, 120 km of a strategic highway (Chini sector) was washed away and 98 bridges destroyed.<sup>19</sup>The details of this incident were similar to the Arunachal Pradesh’s one.

A detailed study carried out a few months later by ISRO scientists confirmed that the release of excess water accumulated in the Sutlej and the Siang river [the Tsangpo] basins in Tibet had led to the flooding. Nearly a year later, the weekly *India Today* commented<sup>20</sup>: “While the satellite images remain classified, officials of the Ministry of Water Resources indicate that these pictures show the presence of huge water bodies or lakes upstream in Sutlej and Siang river basins before the flash floods took place. However, these lakes disappeared soon after the disaster struck Indian territory. This probably means that the Chinese had breached these water bodies as a result of which lakhs of cusecs of water were released into the Sutlej and Siang river basins.”

I remember some Indian ‘experts’ telling me at that time that ‘natural’ landslides happened everywhere; that it was no big deal.

Four years later, the ‘natural’ process occurred again.

In August 2004, as India and China were celebrating 50 years of the Panchsheel, an artificial lake on the Pareechu River appeared in Tibet.

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According to the Chinese authorities, it had been created by seasonal landslides. The Survey of India Institute at Dehradun estimated that the lake was 60 metres deep on a total area of 230 hectares.

With thousands of human and animal lives under threat with a breach of the Tibetan dam, a red alert was issued by the Himachal government, and armed and paramilitary forces were put on a war footing. The Rs 8,500 crore (Rs 8.5 billion) Nathpa Jhakri project employing more than 1,000 people had to be closed.

The matter had another aspect: national security. Would one of the most strategic roads on the Indo-China border again be washed away?

Although this time the Chinese government informed the Government of India about the impending mishap, Beijing remained completely mum to New Delhi's request to send a fact-finding team to Tibet.

Asked about the steps Beijing had taken to address New Delhi's concerns, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said: 'According to information available from the Tibet Autonomous Region, we know that landslides in surrounding hills caused clogging of the course of a river.' Kong refused to answer if China would give its clearance for the trip to Tibet of the four Indian experts.

One cannot help thinking that in 1960, when tensions between India and Pakistan were high, the two nations found the wisdom and the courage to sign the Indus Water Treaty. Some may say it was not an ideal document, but at least it had the merit of simply being in existence. Why can't India and China sign a similar comprehensive treaty? The Sutlej, like the Indus or the Brahmaputra does not belong to China alone, there are hundreds of millions of stake-holders in South Asia, who should also have a say. One of the problems is that Indian officials never dare to speak up for fear of 'jeopardizing' the warming up or the border talks with contentious issues.

Why cannot a river-water Treaty between China, India and Bangladesh, be signed to assure a decent life for all in the region?

#### JOINT DECLARATIONS: A FIRST MOVE?

In 2002, India and China agreed to exchange data on the trans-border rivers. In April 2005, Wen Jiabao, the Chinese Premier signed a Joint Declaration with his Indian counterpart. One article mentions the water issue: "In response to concerns expressed by the Indian side, the Chinese side agreed to take measures for controlled release of accumulated water of the landslide dam on the river Pareechu, as soon as conditions permit. It was noted with satisfaction that an agreement concerning the provision of hydrological data on Sutlej was concluded during the visit and that the two sides had also agreed to continue bilateral discussions to finalize at an early date similar arrangements for the Parlung Zangbo and Lohit Rivers."

In November 2006, the Chinese President Hu Jintao confirmed the above statement and further agreed that, "The two sides [India and China] will set up an expert-level mechanism to discuss interaction and cooperation on the provision of flood season hydrological data, emergency management and other issues regarding trans-border rivers as agreed between them."

In the *Shared Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* signed in January 2008 on the occasion of the Indian Prime Minister's visit to China, it is mentioned: "The Indian side highly appreciates the assistance extended by China on the provision of flood season hydrological data which has assisted India in ensuring the safety and security of its population in regions along these rivers."

Delhi pretends that it has achieved a 'mutual understanding'. But is it enough to dissipate the doubt in the public's mind? And has the goal of equitable sharing of information as well as water resources been achieved?

#### TEN THOUSAND METHODS COMBINED AS ONE

In a previous article, I have mentioned the book *Unrestricted Warfare*, written by two Senior Colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui. They argue that China should start surveying the ways to counter new forms of war as did Sun Tzu in his *Art of Warfare* over 2000 years ago.

One chapter speaks of "Ten Thousand Methods Combined as One: Combinations That Transcend Boundaries". It is the art of combining different elements of these various forms of warfare. One of

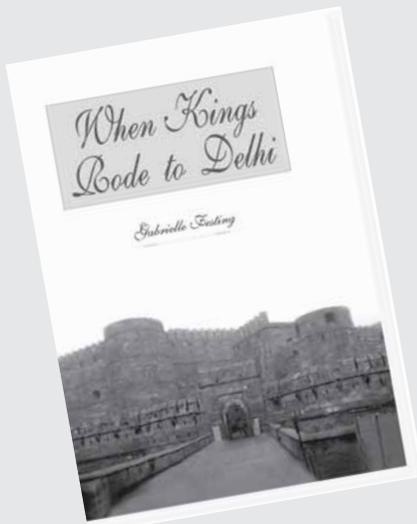
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the many ways of unconventional warfare identified by them is 'environmental warfare'.

India should certainly remain vigilant.

#### NOTES

1. Xinhua Communiqué, November 1, 1950, Peking.
2. Smith, Warren W., *Tibetan Nation* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 273 quoted from *Invasion of Tibet by Chinese's Liberation Army*, US National Archives, (793B.00/8-2150).
3. Already in 1903, the Viceroy Lord Curzon, had termed the Chinese suzerainty, a constitutional fiction..
4. Mao Zedong, *Problems of War and Strategy* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1954), p. 18.
5. Barnett Doak, *Communist China and Asia* (New York: Harper, 1961) p. 106.
6. Gingsburg & Mathos, *Communist China and Tibet* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).
7. It was in the fifties that the 'Ninth Academy', China's main nuclear research centre, was built on the Tibetan High Plateau.
8. B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru — The Chinese Betrayal* (New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1971).
9. Brown Lester R., *Who will Feed China?*, (New York: Worldwatch Institute, 1995).
10. For full article: *China's Water Shortage Could Shake World Food Security*, by Lester R. Brown and Brian Halweil, see website: <http://www.worldwatch.org/bookstore/>
11. *Tibet World News* (May 4, 1994), *China Claims Tibetan Canyon is Largest*.
12. The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Jaswant Singh, speaking on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, on March 5, 2008 said: "Sir, it is about the External Affairs Minister again. It is a very intriguing thing. I should not really be raising it until the discussion takes place on his statement. There is just one rather concise but intriguing sentence that the honourable Prime Minister made during his visit to the People's Republic of China. This is exactly what it says, "PM also took up the issue of trans-border rivers." I would like to caution you, Sir, that the question of the Brahmaputra and the great bend of the Brahmaputra before it debouches into Assam in the North East is a serious situation. "Sir, I have obtained for myself maps from the Space Research Organisation and they show that this gorge of the Yarlung Tsangpo and thereafter the Namcha Barwa mountain, has a drop of 2,000 metres. It is a narrow gorge, and 2,000 metres in a distance of about 15 km, which gives an enormous resource intimate to the people of China. I know there are plans to build a dam there. I would like to know what the response of the People's Republic of China is about that."
13. Though it is not yet well documented.
14. Or Nanfang Zhoumou.
15. Near the town of Tsetang, the cradle of the Tibetan civilisation.
16. On 24 January 2008, Reuters published a news story "*China sees little optimism in anti-desert fight*". It says: "Chinese Deputy Forestry Minister Zhu Lieke admitted that the fight against desertification in the western regions of the PRC, including vast tracts of the Tibetan Plateau, was so far largely unsuccessful. Speaking at a news conference at the end of an international desertification conference co-hosted by the United Nations, Zhu said the Chinese government spent billions of dollars planting trees to hold back the spread of the sands, but "in some areas which have been treated, vegetation has only just started to grow back and is very unstable". "If there is no effective solution in certain areas, the deserts will only keep spreading. In desert areas, there is a problem that damage continues at the same time as work goes on to turn back the sands", he added. Zhu outlined no new measures or funding to fight deserts, but re-affirmed an earlier government goal of bringing the problem "fundamentally under control" by 2010."
17. See also the following articles: *Breach in Tibet Dam Caused Arunachal Floods*, Times of India (July 8, 2000); *India Blames Flash Floods on Chinese Dam*, Agence France Presse (July 10, 2000); *Arunachal floods—dam breach in Tibet, China 'hushed' it up*, Indian Express (July 10, 2000).
18. *The Tribune* (4 August 2000), *Flood Started in Tibet?*
19. This writer personally witnessed the extensive damage while travelling to Spiti valley a few days after the incident.
20. *India Today* (25 June 2001), *Made In China*.



Hindustan has been a land of kings and queens; saints and ascetics; valour and fidelity. It has attracted invaders, preachers, travelers and traders in equal measure. Its history from the ninth century has been a tumultuous one – many dynasties were founded, which flourished and withered with time. During these years, Delhi had been in the centre of turmoil: invaded, anointed and plundered – only to rise again from the ashes.

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