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**A Shadow over the Himalayas:  
India's Tibet Problem**

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**Prem Shankar Jha**

*May 2010*



**Centre Asie**

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# Contents

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<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MANAGING THE TIBETAN ISSUE: A ROOT OF SINO-INDIAN TENSION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A transformed Tibetan autonomy movement .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The questions of ‘Genuine Autonomy’ and Greater Tibet .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>New Delhi’s misconception of the Tibetan issue in Beijing.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Rise in tensions over Arunachal Pradesh –</b>	
<b>Links to the Tibetan issue.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The turnaround at Hua Hin – Lessons for India.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Introduction

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During the summer of 2009, the Indian media were in a patriotic sweat over a rising crescendo of threats coming from China – threats that were, at the end, couched in language that presaged war. Then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Premier Wen Jiabao on the ‘margin’ of the Asia Pacific Economic Conference at Hua Hin, in Thailand, on October 24, 2009, and suddenly it was all over. Within days Indian headlines were back to the ‘normal’ subjects -- domestic politics, crime, corruption and cricket.

The most striking feature of this abrupt return to “normality” was its utter lack of curiosity. What happened at Hua Hin? How did the storm blow over? Was it only of the teacup variety or was there a real danger of war? The government tried assiduously to pretend that it was the former. Minutes after their meeting ended, an Indian spokesman told the media that neither of the two issues that the Chinese media had been harping upon – Delhi’s stubborn refusal to recognise the disputed status of its easternmost state, Arunachal Pradesh (which Chinese dailies called ‘Southeast Tibet’) and the Dalai Lama’s impending visit to the monastery of Tawang, claimed by Beijing to be the second most important holy shrine in Tibet – had come up for discussion during the talks. The Indian media were sceptical but since the Chinese were equally reticent, they soon found themselves starved of oxygen, accepted the implied government statement that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had ‘hung tough’ on both issues, and turned elsewhere.

Only when a carefully measured editorial appeared in the *Peoples’ Daily*, on November 4, eleven days later, did one get an inkling that something had truly changed for the better: “During the talks in the resort city of Hua Hin, Thailand”, it stated, “Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh agreed that the two countries should forge a strategic partnership to maintain regional peace and stability, achieve the goal of common development and harmonious prosperity. On the disputed border issues, the two sides agreed to narrow the differences through

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dialogue on the political principles already reached, and jointly work out a solution that goes in line with the interests of both sides. The two sides also need to ensure peace and create a friendly environment in border areas, as well as enhance cooperation and bilateral ties in various aspects". At the very end came a phrase that was designed to show that the crisis had truly blown over: "The consensus between Premier Wen and Indian PM Singh is just like a gentle breeze, clearing up *all the suspicion and misunderstanding* that have hindered bilateral relations over the past *decades*. Generally speaking, Sino-Indian relations witnessed smooth development over the past decades, but *some pending issues and unnecessary misunderstanding* have plagued bilateral ties. It is of vital importance to combat various pressures and challenges through collaboration. *Media from both countries should play a constructive role, creating a healthy environment to facilitate public opinion*". (Emphasis added).

The contrast between this, and the torrent of accusation that had preceded it in the Peoples' Daily's English language affiliate, the recently launched *Global Times*, showed that something very basic had indeed changed at Hua Hin. But not a single Indian newspaper or TV channel published any part of the *Peoples' Daily's* long editorial, much less bothered to analyse its meaning. This lack of curiosity is difficult to understand, because until October 24, China and India had indeed been locked on a course that was leading them towards another border war. The way in which Dr. Manmohan Singh and premier Wen Jiabao changed this course is one of the more significant diplomatic achievements of the past decade. But to appreciate this, and to make sure that the gain in mutual understanding at Hua Hin is not frittered away, it is necessary to understand what triggered the confrontation.

## **Managing the Tibetan Issue: A Root of Sino-Indian Tension**

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The root cause of China's ambivalence towards India is not the persistence of disagreement over the demarcation of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), or the status of Arunachal Pradesh, but its own failure to assimilate the Tibetans into the mainstream of its civilisation and politics. China's handling of Tibet in the Mao era had been a catalogue of blunders. After a visit to Tibet by Hua Guofeng in 1975, the Deng Xiaoping government had sought to set matters right, but by then too much damage had been done. Millions of Han and Sui Chinese had been settled in the greater Tibet area. By 2008, against six million Tibetans, the area hosted seven million others. As was captured in 2008 by the London-based film maker, Sun Shuyun in a BBC series entitled "A year in Tibet", and by the now-closed down Gongmeng Law Research Center in China, the benefits that Beijing may have garnered from the modernisation of Tibet—which the latter dubbed "the great destruction and the great creation" – were very largely nullified by the systematic discrimination in favour of Han Chinese that young, educated Tibetans encountered wherever they sought jobs, permits or places in educational institutions.

Beijing had always resented India's decision to shelter the Dalai Lama when he fled from Tibet in March 1959. It had not forgotten that the present Dalai Lama's predecessor, the 13<sup>th</sup>, had fled to India when the Manchus invaded Tibet and established a garrison in Lhasa in 1909, but had returned three years later to drive the Chinese army not only out of present day Tibet, but all the way across the Mekong river. That victory had enabled him, and the present Dalai Lama, to declare Tibet independent, sign a treaty with Mongolia, initial another with the British, and govern Tibet as an independent country for the next 37 years. It had also put a severe dent into China's claim to Tibet on the grounds that it had ruled it "continuously for seven hundred years". None of this would have happened if India had not been conveniently close by in 1909. So when the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama also fled to India in 1959, China's leaders began to wonder if history was not in danger of repeating itself. The Sino-India border war in 1962 was at least partially an outcome of this anxiety. It was intended to cut India down to size and minimize its capacity to act as a rallying point for pro-Tibet sentiment across the world. In this it was spectacularly successful. China/India comparisons stopped after 1962.

Sino-Indian relations remained in a deep freeze for the next twenty-six years. The ice was broken only in 1988 when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Beijing. The Chinese appreciated that despite the 1962 war, India had not changed its position on the admission of China to the UN in place of Taiwan. Nor had it given any sign of a change of heart on the status of Tibet. China's own bounding growth after 1980 also made it confident of assimilating the Tibetans over the course of time. In 1993 the two countries signed an Agreement on Peace and Tranquillity in the Border Regions during the visit of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to Beijing. That agreement and its successors in 1995 and 1996 froze the disputed border in the Himalayas by designating it the Line of Actual Control (LAC), identifying the sections that remained undemarcated, pulling back troops and agreeing not to overfly a 10 km wide strip of land over the LAC, and establishing a system for meetings between the field commanders on both sides to settle disputes that might arise. The 1993 agreement opened the floodgates for commercial and political exchanges. It was followed almost immediately by a spate of high level delegations from both sides. Trade boomed from less than \$1 billion in 1993-94 to \$40 billion in 2007-8. But even as Sino-Indian relations improved, other developments began to increase Beijing's uneasiness over Tibet. The most important was a transformation of the Tibetan autonomy movement that no one could have foreseen even a decade earlier.

### ***A transformed Tibetan autonomy movement***

The spread of the mobile telecommunications and the internet across the world and across China had enabled Tibetans in exile to establish and maintain continuous contact with Tibetans within China. It had also linked up Tibetans living all around the world. By the time of Wen Jiabao's visit to India in April 2005, which marked the high point of relations between Beijing and New Delhi, the Tibetans-in-exile were no longer a group of refugees seeking shelter from Chinese oppression and trying to find a political arrangement with Beijing that will enable them to go back to Tibet and live in peace. They had instead become a "virtual" nation capable of communicating and coordinating action across international boundaries. And Dharamsala had emerged as the seat of its "virtual" government.

These developments came to light abruptly on March 14, 2008 in Lhasa when a demonstration by about 400 Tibetans turned violent after the police tried to break it up. In the ensuing disorder the police opened fire and reportedly killed two Tibetans. The crowd vented its anger on the property and persons of ethnic Chinese who had settled in Lhasa. According to the Chinese authorities, this led to 18 civilian deaths. In the ensuing days the disturbance spread to towns and monasteries outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) to Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan, all parts of what the Dalai Lama has consistently described as Greater Tibet. In all, the Chinese authorities arrested 1,315 people.

The March riots forced the Chinese authorities to face three unpalatable facts: that their policy of assimilation had so far not succeeded; that disaffection was not confined to the TAR but was to be found over a far larger part of China; and that the Tibetan autonomy movement was slowly passing into the hands of younger people who felt fewer inhibitions against resorting to violence than their elders. Beijing immediately blamed what it called the “Dalai clique” for launching a carefully planned plot to discredit China before the Olympic Games. It published a detailed account of how this had been hatched during meetings in Brussels, New Delhi and Dharamsala over the previous ten months and accused the Dalai Lama of blessing it by allowing them to do their planning in Dharamsala. It claimed that seven India-based and international Tibetan organizations had met in Delhi in January 2008 and issued a “Declaration of Tibetan People’s Uprising Movement” in which they had claimed that China and Tibet were two different countries. This was clinching proof that while the Tibetans spoke of autonomy what they were after was the vivisection of China to create an independent state. Three of the seven were youth and women’s organizations – a clear sign of how far power had shifted away from the traditional leaders.

Throughout the following year Beijing continued to dismiss the Dalai Lama and his supporters as remnants of a feudal, oppressive, and predatory regime that the vast majority of the Tibetans were glad to be rid of. But its actions belied its words. In March 2009, in the lead up to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dalai Lama’s flight, it blanketed every known and potential trouble spot in Greater Tibet with soldiers and riot police equipped like space invaders, closed schools and colleges, and confined monks to their monasteries for weeks before the event. As a result, nothing happened. But China’s leaders must be wondering whether they will have to turn Tibet into a pressure cooker year after year.

Beijing’s changed perception of the Tibetan autonomy movement accounts for the sudden eruption of anti-Indian rhetoric on Chinese internet sites immediately after the March riots. While officially Beijing maintained a freezing politeness towards New Delhi, it gave full reign to semi-official and non-official websites to vent their wrath. But the anger was a mask for its growing consternation. Faced with a movement that was becoming more international, more integrated and more determined to push for independence, but unable to concede that its own failure to assimilate the Tibetans might be responsible, it had elected India to be its scapegoat.

## ***The questions of 'Genuine Autonomy' and Greater Tibet***

Although it has produced no concrete evidence of the Dalai Lama's involvement in the so-called plot, Beijing cannot be blamed for being wary of his intentions. Although the Dalai Lama has assiduously maintained that he accepts China's sovereignty over Tibet, two elements of his demand for 'Genuine Autonomy' make the Chinese suspect that he is not entirely sincere when he says so. The first is that through eight rounds of talks from 2002 until November 2008, he has steadfastly maintained that autonomy needs to be granted not to present-day Tibet (TAR) but to Greater Tibet. This includes the TAR, the whole of Qinghai, the southern part of Gansu Province, the western part of Sichuan Province and the north-western part of Yunnan Province (see Map 1 in Annex). In all, this makes up about a quarter of China's territory. To do this he proposes the separation of these areas from the provinces to which they presently belong, and their unification with the TAR to create a "single autonomous administrative unit".

The second element that Beijing finds unacceptable is "the right of Tibetans to create their own regional government and government institutions, and processes that are best suited to their needs and characteristics". The Dalai Lama wants the administration of Greater Tibet to be responsible for eleven subjects that will include not only language, religion, culture and education, but also protection of the environment, the utilization of natural resources, economic development, trade and public health.

The proposal for 'Genuine Autonomy' may have only been an initial bargaining position designed to start a negotiation, and not a declaration of what he would be prepared to settle for. But Beijing considers both of these impossible to concede because they involved the vivisection of four provinces and the creation of a second political system, within the same country, in which power does not flow *down* from the state to the people but flows *up* from the people to the state. It is very doubtful whether any government in the world would be able to make such wrenching changes in its constitution. But it was all the less possible for the Chinese state, which embodies not only the totalitarian traditions of communism but also the absolutist traditions of the Confucian state that preceded it. Beijing cannot believe that the Dalai Lama can be so naïve. So it has concluded that he was being devious, and that his demand for "genuine autonomy" was the thin end of the wedge in a push for eventual independence.

## ***New Delhi's misconception of the Tibetan issue in Beijing***

New Delhi has been singularly unaware of the peril into which it is being dragged by the changing equation between Beijing and the Dharamsala. It has been dismayed by the rapid deterioration of its relations with China since 2007 but is at a loss to understand why this is happening. For 12 years after the two countries concluded the Agreement on Peace and Tranquillity in the Border Regions in 1994, New Delhi firmly believed that the border dispute would die out as economic relations developed between the two countries. This belief was strengthened when China dropped claims to the erstwhile protectorate of Sikkim, which India had absorbed in 1974.

So when, on the eve of President Hu Jintao's visit to India in 2006, the Chinese ambassador in Delhi asserted China's claim to the vast region of Arunachal Pradesh, in India's far north-east, New Delhi reacted with consternation and allowed think tanks to dismiss the Ambassador's statement as an expression of his personal views and a diplomatic gaffe. It only realized that the remark had been made in earnest when Beijing began to go back on tacit agreements arrived at during the previous round of talks, and refused a visa to an official hailing from Arunachal Pradesh who was to visit China as part of an study visit of 107 IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officers, which consequently got cancelled.

What caused the sudden turnaround in Beijing, and why did it choose to highlight it just before Hu Jintao's visit? Indian strategists have built elaborate explanations based around the West's sudden discovery of India's dazzling nine percent growth rate, and the Bush administration's desire to pit India as a counterfoil to China in Asia. But there could be a much simpler explanation: China may have been reacting – in fact over-reacting – to an upgrading of the Indian government's formal contacts with the Dalai Lama that took place in 2005. In December 2005, the Ministry of External Affairs upgraded the level of its liaison officer for contacts with the Dalai Lama's office from an undersecretary to a Director. This came close on the heels of a meeting between the Dalai Lama and the Foreign Secretary in November 2005, and preceded another such meeting in February 2006. New Delhi may have wanted only to signal its continuing support for the Dalai Lama when he was facing a growing challenge to his authority within the Tibetan community. But Beijing interpreted this as a step towards the de facto recognition of the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile. It may also have been annoyed that Delhi had taken these steps only months after Wen Jiabao's visit and China's withdrawal of its claims to Sikkim. It therefore played diplomatic tit-for-tat by getting its Ambassador in Delhi to remind India of its claims to Arunachal Pradesh just three days before President Hu Jintao's visit to India in December 2006.

New Delhi's failure to link the deterioration of relations that followed with China's growing problems in Tibet arises from the vast asymmetry in the importance China and India attach to Tibet. To India, the Tibetans in exile (around 120,000) remain refugees who sought political asylum, and have now only to be discouraged from taking hostile political actions against China from Indian soil. Beijing, however, regards them as a well-knit insurgent group based in India that skillfully mobilizes international sympathy and uses the internet to reach Tibetans within China to foment an insurgency. To understand the vast disparity in perceptions, one has only to compare its problem in Tibet with India's problem in Kashmir. Both the Tibetan and Kashmiri communities are of the same size—about six millions. But while Kashmir valley accounts for only 0.13 percent, or 1/800ths, of India's land area, Greater Tibet accounts for a quarter of China's.

Whatever excuse New Delhi had for not understanding the link between China's predicament in Tibet and the worsening of the border dispute disappeared when, following the riots broke out in March 2008, Chinese think tanks and internet sites launched a tirade of accusations against India of conspiring with Tibetan "splittists" to endanger China. New Delhi recognized the danger this posed and sought to placate Beijing by asking the Dalai Lama not to indulge in political activities that would hurt India's relations with China. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the then-Foreign Minister, could not have been more explicit: "He is a respected guest in India. India will continue to offer him all hospitality, but during his stay in India, they should not do any political activity, any action that can adversely affect relations between India and China."

### ***Rise in tensions over Arunachal Pradesh – Links to the Tibetan issue***

Somewhat surprisingly, New Delhi continued to underplay, and even deny that there was a link between the question of Tibet and New Delhi's growing disagreement with Beijing on the unresolved border issue. This made it harden its stand on Arunachal Pradesh and remind China that it was going back on agreements already reached in various rounds of discussions on the border issue. Thus, in 2007 and 2008, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Arunachal Pradesh ("Southern Tibet") twice and former defence minister Pranab Mukherjee. On each occasion they publicly declared that Arunachal was an integral part of India (see Map 2 in Annex).

Beijing reacted sharply and began systematically to go back on the agreements it had reached with India since 1993. In 2007 it not only denied a visa to an official from the government of Arunachal Pradesh, but went back on the 1996 agreement not to patrol, or even overfly, areas within 10 km of the partially demarcated LAC, began an aggressive patrolling of the LAC, with its troops frequently crossing

over into what India considered to be its territory. It also began to lay claim to the monastery and town of Tawang, thereby reneging on the agreement “on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the settlement of the India/China boundary dispute” signed on April 11, 2005, which bound the two sides “to safeguard the interests of the settled populations in the border areas” in reaching a boundary settlement.

India responded to the increasing incursions by reinforcing its defences on the Arunachal border, sending two mountain divisions and an air force squadron, and reopening a number of helipads and forward airfields. Beijing reacted angrily through the pages of *The Global Times*, but omitted to mention that it was Beijing’s July 2007 decision to build a railway line from Lhasa to Shigatse, which will parallel the LAC, that forced India to take military precautions. For when the line is completed it will give China an overwhelming logistical and tactical advantage in the region.

The escalation continued in 2009, when China began to issue visas to Indians from Jammu and Kashmir on separate pieces of paper, on the pretext that these were disputed territories over which it did not recognise Indian sovereignty. Days before the UN General Assembly convened in New York China obtained an agreement in the board of the Asian Development Bank to agree to deny loans in the future for projects in disputed areas. And according to the *New York Times* (September 3, 2009), the Indian military recorded during the past year no fewer than 270 intrusions onto what India considered its side of the LAC.

By 2009 the border dispute had acquired a dangerous life of its own. But Beijing continued to intersperse its statements and actions upon it with periodic reminders that the main cause of its displeasure was what it regarded as India’s growing ambivalence over Tibet. On November 13, 2008, only days before the terrorist attack on Mumbai, a spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Office stated that China expected India to “ban activities aimed at splitting Chinese territory”. This was a pointed expression of displeasure that Delhi was allowing the Dalai Lama to go ahead with a grand conclave of Tibetan leaders in Dharamsala on November 17 whose explicit purpose was to chart a future course of action after China had rejected his blueprint for ‘Genuine Autonomy’ in Beijing two weeks earlier. Once again, India saw it as a way of supporting the Dalai Lama’s attempt to retain control of the Tibetan movement and steer it away from violence. But China saw it as the provision of another opportunity for the “Dalai clique” to work out strategies for fomenting insurrection in Tibet.

The confrontation came to a head on October 13, 2009. That morning the *Global Times* quoted a Foreign Office spokesman by name as having stated that “Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made another *provocative* and *dangerous* move by visiting the East Section of the China-India Boundary, which India calls Arunachal

Pradesh, on October 3 ahead of a local legislative election”. The *Global Times* quoted the spokesman, Ma Zhaoxu, as saying that China was “seriously dissatisfied” with the Prime Minister’s visit to “Southern Tibet”. Beijing deliberately underlined the seriousness of its intent by timing the Foreign Office statement to coincide with an editorial in the *Global Times*, which also appeared on October 13: “India’s recent moves – including Singh’s trip *and approving past visits to the region by the Dalai Lama* – send the wrong signal. That could have *dangerous* consequences”.

The Foreign Office statement deliberately broke several diplomatic taboos: it issued its warning directly and not through the *Peoples’ Daily*, the *Global Times* or one of its pet think tanks. It referred for the first time ever to the Indian Prime Minister by name, instead of making generalized statements of protest or displeasure. But most ominous of all was its choice of words – “provocative”, “dangerous”, “seriously dissatisfied”. Those schooled in the language of diplomacy know that these have often been used as preludes to war.

### ***The turnaround at Hua Hin – Lessons for India***

The fact that Wen Jiabao was the first to suggest a meeting to sort out differences needs to be viewed against the background discussed above. Far from being the “first to blink”, as some in the Indian media surmised, it was almost certainly part of a calculated strategy of offering the carrot only after the stick had been waved long and hard enough to thoroughly alarm New Delhi. Be that as it may, the Hua Hin meeting proved an unqualified diplomatic success for India. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh succeeded not merely in clearing China’s misgivings, but he did so without conceding China’s demand that the Dalai Lama be prevented from going to Tawang.

Notwithstanding the disclaimers of the Indian spokesman immediately after their meeting, there can be little doubt that the two Prime Ministers did discuss both the border and the Tibet issues. When asked pointedly at his press conference a day later, on October 25, whether he had discussed the Dalai Lama’s visit to Tawang, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh only said that it had not been raised at the *delegation level talks*. He did not say that Tibet had not come up during the 30-minute one-to-one talks with Wen Jiabao that followed. In fact, Dr. Singh gave the game away a little later during the conference when he said that he had discussed Tibet and the Dalai Lama with Wen Jiabao when they were sitting side by side at the State dinner. That dinner was held on the evening of October 24, eight hours *after* their meeting. It is inconceivable that either Prime Minister would have raised so serious a subject in such an informal and public venue if they had not already discussed it earlier. Dr. Singh’s remark revealed they had not only done so but

had achieved a sufficient degree of ease with each other over the subject to be able to touch also upon the potentially explosive issue of the harnessing of the Brahmaputra river.

What could Dr. Singh have said that put the Chinese Premier so much at ease? We will never know for sure, but subsequent developments give us a fairly good idea of what it might have been. Delhi did not restrict the Dalai Lama's movements. It reasoned that any such move now would become a precedent and open the floodgates for Chinese demands to curb his freedom within India. But Dr. Singh almost certainly reassured Wen Jiabao that India would make sure that his visit did not acquire political significance, whether in India or abroad. In the days that followed, Delhi took strong precautions to ensure that the Dalai Lama's visit remained a local and religious event. It prevented foreign journalists from visiting Tawang by denying them restricted area permits for Arunachal Pradesh. It was also extremely strict in issuing inner line permits to Indians. This did not entirely prevent a descent of outsiders on Tawang, as a number of permits had been issued several weeks ahead of time. But Delhi's actions prevented the visit from acquiring international significance and reassured Beijing that India had not changed its stance on the status of Tibet.

The crisis that had been brewing for almost three years has therefore been defused. Beijing has gone back to referring to the problem in Arunachal as a border dispute over which differences will continue to be narrowed over time. But the underlying problems in Tibet remain. The Dalai Lama remains in India with his freedom and respect unimpaired. The Tibetan community in India continues to grow, prosper and communicate with Tibetans in the West, and within China via internet. The Tibetan ethnic and political identity therefore remains undented. Thus a resurgence of Sino-Indian tension whenever the Chinese face problems in Tibet remains a distinct possibility.

New Delhi now has two alternatives: it can go back to pretending that its problems with its neighbor have been resolved. Or, it can consolidate the breakthrough at Hua Hin and offer its good offices to bring about a resumption of the dialogue on Tibetan autonomy within China between Beijing and the Dalai Lama. Beijing has so far given absolutely no sign that it would like India to play any such role. But it is battling with global recession, facing rising social discontent at home and cannot help but be worried by the deterioration of the situation in neighbouring Xinjiang. It is therefore entirely possible that Beijing might start looking for ways to limit the number of battles it has to fight.

## Conclusion

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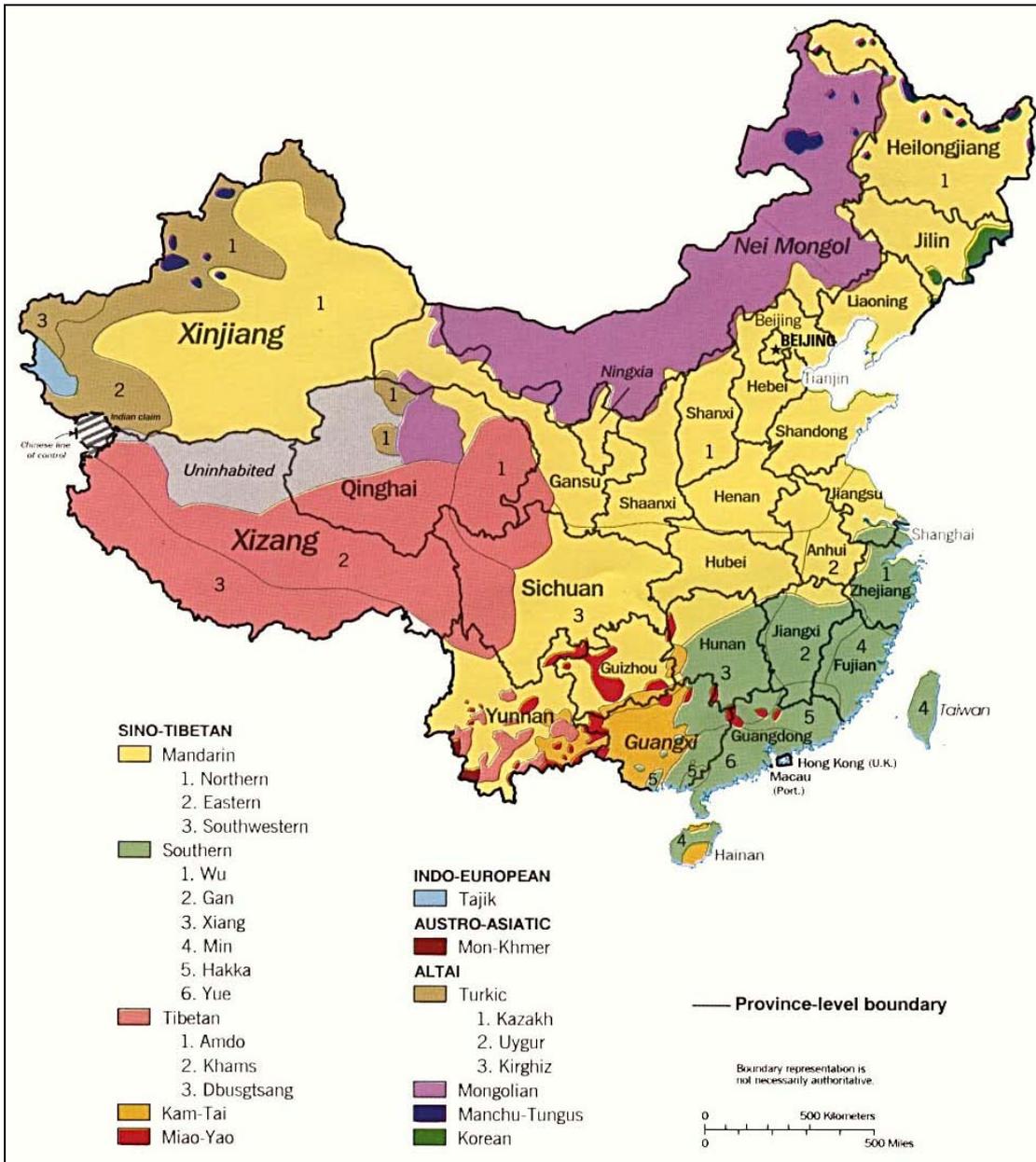
The understanding reached by the two prime ministers at Hua Hin has cleared the way for renewed co-operation between China and India. This was most apparent during the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, where the two countries coordinated their positions closely. The burst of fresh investment in China in 2009, which has far exceeded the two-year goal of 4 trillion yuan set by Beijing for China's fiscal revival package, has also led to a revival of bilateral trade, which had dipped dangerously in 2009. The return to normality has also cleared the way for investment. Chinese companies are currently eyeing \$50 billion worth of infrastructure projects in India, and New Delhi has lost some of its allergy to their bringing large numbers of Chinese workers to such projects.

But the problem that Tibet poses has only become dormant. From Beijing's point of view, the three-year rise in tension before Hua Hin has served its purpose, for it has forced New Delhi to stop believing its own constructions about China/India relations and recognize Beijing's concern over the change taking place in the nature of the Tibetan community in exile. But since New Delhi has no intention of interfering with the functioning of the Dalai Lama's government in exile in Dharamsala, Beijing has continued with its policy of boosting Pakistan's military and economic capability to checkmate India. The latest move in this game was its decision, announced in late April 2010, to break the rules of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and provide Pakistan with two nuclear reactors for power generation.

New Delhi has chosen not to react to the disclosure but it has duly noted that the underlying conflict of interest with Beijing has not disappeared. So long as China fails to reach a political understanding with the Tibetan community as a whole, China and India will enjoy only an uneasy peace. China's response to the earthquake that hit Qinghai province on April 14, and took more than 2,000 lives, shows that it has no intention of doing so, for while the Chinese media highlighted the rescue efforts made by the army and administration, it studiously downplayed the enormous effort that the Tibetan monasteries made to extricate, and help the survivors.

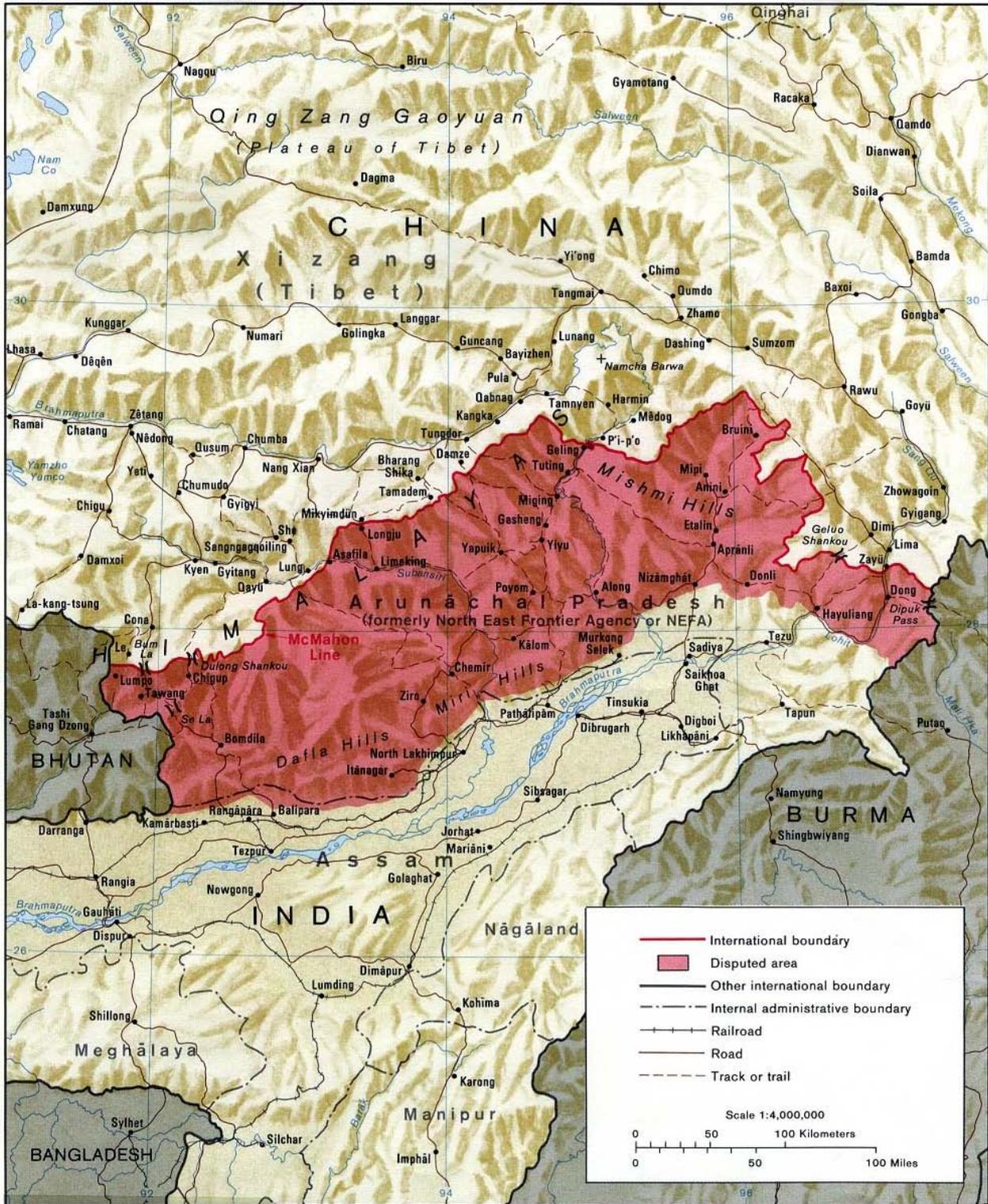
# Annexes

Map 1. China's Ethnolinguistic Groups



Source: The University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castaneda Library, 1983.  
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/china.html>

Map 2. China-India Border: Eastern Sector



Source: The University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castaneda Library, 1988.  
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