

Line of Actual Control (LAC)

Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie road

C H I N A

THE ANGRY HIMALAYAS

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

Siachen
Glacier

Daulat
Beg Oldie

Chin
plateau

Shyok

Galwan Valley

Leh

Darbuk

Hot Springs/Gogra area

Pangong Lake

Ladakh

China
administered
Tibet

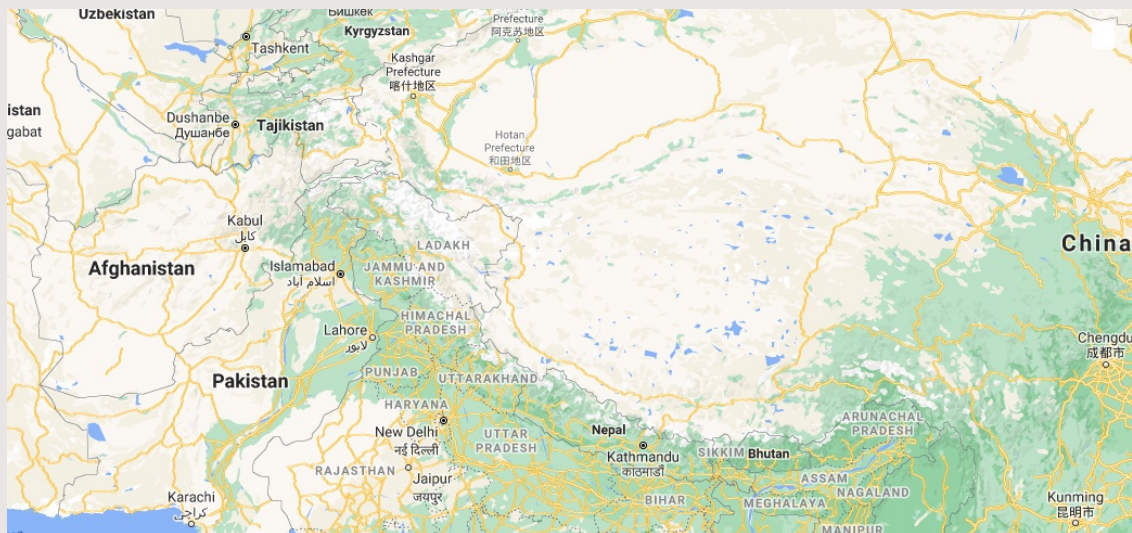
INDIA

THE ANGRY HIMALAYAS – String of Pearls vs Garland of Opium

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

The Himalayas are reverberating with the crackle of boots as India and China array an Armageddon of military might that spans across 4056 kilometres, poised to strike at each other. The supremely confident Chinese have silently stretched over the last decade a String of Pearls, a network of military and commercial facilities developed by them in countries falling on the Indian Ocean between the Chinese mainland and Port Sudan. It is a strategic encirclement of India, a carefully crafted design that has been going on for the past several years.

Ever since the Chinese forcibly occupied Tibet in 1950 and enslaved the Tibetans, they have aggressively pursued a policy of claiming large chunks of Indian territory under the garb that it is disputed.



Map of Chinese occupied/administered Tibet

After the occupation of Tibet, wars erupted between India and China in 1962, then we have the conflict in Nathu La, the Tulung La ambush in 1967, Doklam Plateau standoff in 2017, and the latest 2020 expansionist move and military confrontation in Galway valley in Ladakh in 2020.

There is an air of trepidation around the world, two nuclear forces in confrontation mode, a belligerent China intimidating a resurgent India under the dynamic tutelage of Shri. Narendra Modi. The pusillanimity of the Nehruvian era stands replaced by a dynamic urge to repulse, to compel cooperation and readiness to match Chinese bellicosity.

In the passage of time India has forgotten its past, generations of Indians have grown up with scant knowledge about how in the past Indian forces had humbled and humiliated the Chinese. We never teach about the Opium Wars in our History classes, consequently we are apprehensive about the Chinese.

The first Governor General of India, Warren Hastings, unleashed the Opium devil on China. Traders were roped in to drown China in Opium, Jardine and Matheson joined with the Jewish Sassoon and Parsee smugglers in the vanguard of this trade assault, which later culminated in the First Opium War fought between 1839 to 1842. By 1840 it is estimated that there were 10 million Opium addicts in China. The Opium addicted Chinese were no match for the military contingent under Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Gough, capturing Canton on 27 May 1841.

Who were the troops that Sir Hugh Gough was leading? Every Indian will be proud to learn that the British Army comprised of:

- 1st Company Madras Rifles
- 2nd Madras Native Infantry
- 6th Madras Native Infantry
- 14th Madras Native Infantry
- The Bengal Army

The Unit of the Madras Foot Artillery was awarded the honour and title ‘Dragon Troop’, as this Unit captured a Chinese Dragon cannon.

The Chinese were defeated thoroughly and were forced to conclude treaties with the British. If we read History correctly, it is Indian troops that defeated the Chinese. It was the Madrasis, Punjabis and Bengalis who jointly defeated the Opium addicted Chinese army.

Another conflict erupted in 1860 and the Second Opium War began. In this Second Opium war, four brigades of Indian Infantry

- Sikh Regiment
- Madras Regiment
- Bombay Native Infantry
- The Ludhiana Rifles

took part in the sacking of the Summer Palace Yuanmingyuan, the imperial summer palace of the Qing Dynasty. This summer palace was razed to the ground by the British and Indian forces.

Opium war

The Opium Wars finally caused the overthrow of the Chinese Qing dynasty and the credit for this should go to the Indian Army contingents. They bravely participated in the Opium Wars that left China devastated and humiliated.

THE ANGRY HIMALAYAS – Newsroom24x7

The Himalayan kingdom of Tibet famous for its monks, monasteries and esoteric spiritual practices, was politically not having a smooth run. At times it was independent, at other times ruled by the Chinese as a vassal State. Besides racial and linguistic differences, it is the uniqueness of the political and cultural system developed by the Tibetans which is the basis of their claim of independence from China. After the end of Mongol rule in China, Tibet once again became independent. China's Ming dynasty did not make any attempts to establish direct control over Tibet. The subsequent Manchu Qing dynasty of China, however, re-established more direct Chinese rule over Tibet in the 18th century. But by the time of 1903 the Qing emperors in Peking (Beijing) did not have any direct control over Tibet, leaving the area under the control of the local Dalai Lama. At this point of time, Lord Curzon, the British Viceroy, became apprehensive about Russia's expansionist designs. Fearing Russian aggression into Tibet, Lord Curzon sent an expedition of British-Indian troops, comprising of Sikh Pioneers, Gurkhas and Indian Army engineers, under the command of Colonel Francis Younghusband, who concluded The Treaty of Lhasa with Thubten Gyatso (1876-1933), the 13th Dalai Lama of Tibet. This success earned him a Knighthood in 1904.



Francis Younghusband and Indian soldiers in Lhasa

India has every reason to be proud of its armed forces, if foreigners could motivate us and vanquish the Chinese, it can again be repeated. What we lack is our inability to teach our glorious History to our young generations. George Santayana the Spanish-American philosopher had opined “Those who do not learn History are doomed to repeat it.” Either we do not teach History or if at all we teach, it is misinterpreted and then taught. History is now being doctored by movie scriptwriters in which invaders and marauders are glorified and the local war heroes are sidelined. This trend needs to be reversed or else coming generations will develop a disconnect with our past.

Coming to the present, the Chinese fear of Opium needs to be rekindled. If they threaten us with a string of pearls, we need to threaten them with their ancient enemy- Opium. The Chinese are taught History, their students are taught that the period in History between 1839 to 1949 is the Century of Humiliation, also known as the Hundred years of Humiliation.

Losing defeats to foreign powers cited as part of the Century of Humiliation include:

- Defeat in the First Opium War (1839–1842) by the British-Indian forces
- The unequal treaties (in particular Nanking, Whampoa, Aigun and Shimonoseki)
- Defeat in the Second Opium War (1856–1860) and the sacking of the Old Summer Palace by British, Indian and French forces.
- The Sino-French War (1884–1885)
- Defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) by Japan
- The Eight-Nation Alliance suppressing the Boxer uprising (1899–1901)
- British-Indian expedition to Tibet (1903–1904)
- The Twenty-One Demands (1915) by Japan
- Japanese invasion of Manchuria (1931-1932)
- The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945)

India needs to rekindle the memories of the Opium Wars in the Chinese. Our enforcement agencies are constantly seizing and destroying Opium and other Psychotropic Substances. It would be better if these are conserved and kept ready for air dropping on China in the event of a war. The Chinese proclivity for Opium should once again be their Achilles Heel. Let us get ready for Opium War III. If they are flaunting their String of Pearls, let us show them our Garland of Opium.

The Angry Himalayas: Tibet Needs a Warrior – Monk or Dob-dobs

Dr G Shreekumar Menon

The Tibetan people occupy the one million square mile Tibetan plateau, the highest land-mass in the world, averaging 14,000 feet in altitude, but China is sitting pretty, illegally occupying 2.5 million square kilometres of Tibetan land.

Tibet is an ancient nation with a recorded history dating back to 127 B.C.E. The Tibetan Empire reached its peak during the 7th and 8th centuries, conquering parts of Nepal and India, the Silk Route states, and briefly even T'ang China. The Tibetan kings imported Buddhism from India from the 6th to the 9th century, and became so devoted to its teachings of nonviolence and enlightenment that they neglected their empire.

In March 1959, spiritual leader Dalai Lama escaped from his homeland in Tibet amid a Chinese crackdown and was granted refuge in India. India granted the Tibet leader asylum on April 3, 1959 and permission to establish a government-in-exile in the northern hill station of Dharamsala, already a sanctuary for thousands of Tibetan exiles fleeing Chinese repression.

In 1949 and 1950, the People's Liberation Army of the People's Republic of China invaded the eastern provinces of Amdo and Kham. In 1951, over forty thousand battle hardened Chinese soldiers marched unopposed into the Tibetan capital of Lhasa. It took the People's Liberation Army only two weeks to surround and capture Tibet's army, including the country's governor-general and his staff. With the army destroyed and no response to Tibet's appeals to the United States, India and Britain for aid, the newly enthroned fifteen-year-old Dalai Lama sent a delegation to Beijing to negotiate. On May 23, 1951, the delegation had no other option but to sign the Seventeen-Point Agreement which accepted Chinese control over Tibet in exchange for promises to leave the Dalai Lama in control of the country's internal affairs and Tibet's religion and culture untouched—promises the Chinese broke almost immediately. Since the invasion, an estimated 1.2 million Tibetans have been killed as a result of the Chinese occupation. By 1969, approximately 6,250 monasteries, the cultural centres of Tibetan life, had been destroyed. Prisons and labour camps are among the most common methods of persecution. Numerous Tibetans have perished from starvation and hard labour while in captivity. The most serious threat facing Tibetans is the systematic transfer of Chinese people into Tibet. More than 8 million Chinese have now settled in Tibet, a population transfer that threatens to overwhelm the remaining 6 million Tibetans and their distinct ancient Buddhist culture. Most of Tibet's monasteries were destroyed in the 1960s and 1970s during China's Cultural Revolution. Thousands of Tibetans are believed to have been killed during periods of repression and martial law. The Dalai Lama says 1.2 million people have been killed under Chinese rule.

Tibet continues to be under the illegal occupation of China and thousands of refugees eke out their living on the streets of India selling carpets, rugs and artefacts. There is no worthwhile independence movement, hardly any military or monetary aid to support resistance against the Chinese might. The Free Tibet movement is supported by a few Western anti-China forces, however there is no strong liberation movement worth the name.

Tibet freedom movement

Not satisfied with gobbling up Tibet, the Chinese want to roll down the Himalayas into India. If India is not alert it will face a similar situation as Tibet. Vast chunks of Indian land are being claimed by the Chinese from time to time to suit their expansionist designs. Buddhist pacifism and Hindu tolerance cannot subdue Chinese bellicosity. The time has come to resurrect Warrior-Monks or Dom Doms of Tibet.

Tibet warriors Kham, a region in the south east of the ancient mighty Tibetan Kingdom is the birthplace of all Khampas, the legendary and fierce warriors mentioned in Tibetan history. The Khampa warriors or Buddha Warriors as they are also known have been an integral part of Tibetan Army and have been protecting His Holiness Dalai Lama throughout. For a Khampa, life is always dedicated to his land and he is expected to fight till the last drop of his blood. When Communist China started invading the land of Buddha in 1950, and razed their monasteries in eastern Tibet, the Khampas or the “Buddha Warriors” put up fierce resistance. Despite the hardships and the political and military pressure from both China and Nepal, the Khampas did succeed in temporarily taking control of large areas of Tibet during the territorial conflict. However, China and Nepal joined forces to crush the Khampas and the Dalai Lama, being the ultimate authority in Tibetan Buddhist culture, sent the Khampas a taped message asking them to lay down their arms to spare themselves a bloody confrontation. While some of the warriors accepted the Dalai Lama’s request, few of them chose to commit suicide rather than face dishonour by surrendering. Those who surrendered were murdered in cold blood by the joint team of Chinese and Nepalese army including the entire leadership of Khampa movement as also their last General Wangdu.

Starting in the mid-1700s, the British began trading opium grown in India in exchange for silver from Chinese merchants and soon the British began shipping tons of Opium into China using a combination of commercial loopholes and outright smuggling. Consumption of opium in China skyrocketed, as did profits, and the Narcotics bonanza ultimately ruined China. Though trafficking activities of British maritime merchants led to the full blown emergence of the Chinese Opium problem, smuggling through the land route by Tibetans also had a role in China's 'Century of Humiliation'. India was not the only source of Opium, the fields of Yunnan and Sichuan cultivated large quantities of this precious commodity. While the Tibetan Opium problem is very minor in quantitative terms, the role of Tibetans in running illicit drug trafficking through the imperial borders is noteworthy. Indian Opium was smuggled under British supervision into Xinjiang via Kashmir, Badakhshan (Afghanistan) and Kokand, an Uzbek State on Xinjiang's western border, and to flow ultimately into mainland China.

Rangpore, now known as Rangpur in present day Bangladesh, was a centre for Opium cultivation even before the British set foot here. Market mechanisms directed Opium flows in multiple ways. Two States within easy reach of Rangpore was Cooch Bihar on its northern border and Bhutan further north. When Cooch Bihar came under British control, a trade route emerged between Rangpore and Tibet across Cooch Bihar. Thus Rangpore became a centre of Tibetan Opium trade. The political geography of local trade was on the side of smugglers. The multiple crisis faced by the Qing dynasty after its defeat in the first Opium War (1839-42), including the complete collapse of its authority in Xinjiang during the 1870's, removed all dynastic limitations on the opium traffic, permitting an unfettered expansion of the market system into regions of inner Asia.

Tibet is home to an exceptionally beautiful genus of poppy known as *Meconopsis*. Among these is the famous blue poppy, but different species grow a range of striking colours including yellow, red and purple. These poppies grow in the thin air of the alpine regions of Tibet and are amongst the highest growing flowering plants on earth.



Is it not time for India to resuscitate the Tibetan poppy hills? Is it not time to galvanize the Khams to revive the Opium trade and subject China to Opium War III?

Strengthening Indian military prowess cannot deter the Chinese from their expansionist designs and manoeuvres. A strong energized Tibetan freedom movement is long overdue. Most of the Tibetan refugees are wandering in the streets of India selling rugs and trinkets. They need to be consolidated, motivated and compelled to liberate Tibet. They need to be groomed and trained to become spies, saboteurs and insurgents who by using guerrilla tactics can wreak the Chinese invaders. Chinese troop movements across China Occupied Tibet (COT) can be crippled and decimated by such Tibetan guerrilla groups. Self-immolating Buddhist Monks cannot guarantee Tibetan freedom but a vibrant insurgency reverberation across COT, can rattle the Chinese and derail its wide expansionist plans in various directions. The Uighur Muslims who are undergoing enormous repression can be motivated to open up another flank against the Chinese. If such strategies are not developed, the Chinese will soon gobble Nepal and Bhutan, and then their preposterous border claims will extend to Kolkata and Mumbai, as their goal is accessing Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Indian rulers need to think for the next hundred years, so also all countries facing Chinese expansionist urges cloaked as border disputes. An economic boycott of China as mooted by the Americans can bring Chinese economy to a grinding halt, create dissension against the present ruling dispensation and pave way for democracy in China, Tibetan independence, Uighur independence and autonomy for Hong Kong. India will have to become the torchbearer in this emerging restructuring of China.

The Angry Himalaya: Opium Wars – How China Lost Vladivostok to Russia

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

Haishenwei or the Bay of Sea Slugs was a relatively small Manchu settlement under the sovereignty of the Qing dynasty. The first territorial disputes between China and Russia can be traced to the 1600s when Russia encouraged its people to settle down in the region. By 1680, however, China took over control of this region, that eventually led to the signing of the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 between the Qing Dynasty and Russia.

During the First Opium War that occurred between September 1839 and August 1842, fought between India-Britain and the Chinese Qing Dynasty, the British began exploring and mapping this stretch of the coast and named it as Port May. 167 years later, when the Second Opium war broke out, Russian military presence increased in this region.

How China Lost Vladivostok to Russia

Historical accounts of the Opium Wars, written by Western historians has focussed mainly on Britain, France and China under the Qing dynasty, while India and Russia are neglected. The role of Indian soldiers and the then Indian Army formations have been totally ignored and undue importance and credit given to British Army officers. Because of its unique role, particularly during the Second Opium War, Russia acquired a significant amount of former Manchu territory, including Vladivostok that is its largest port on the Pacific coast.

The first Opium War ended in 1842, when Chinese officials signed, at gunpoint, the Treaty of Nanjing. The treaty provided extraordinary benefits to the British, including:

- an excellent deep-water port at Hong Kong;
- a huge indemnity (compensation) to be paid to the British government and merchants;
- five new Chinese treaty ports at Guangzhou (Canton), Shanghai, Xiamen (Amoy), Ningbo, and Fuzhou, where British merchants and their families could reside;
- extraterritoriality for British citizens residing in these treaty ports, meaning that they were subject to British, not Chinese, laws; and
- a “most favoured nation” clause that any rights gained by other foreign countries would automatically apply to Great Britain as well.

In 1856, the second Opium War broke out and continued until 1860, when the Indian-British and French forces captured Beijing and forced on China a new round of treaties, indemnities, and the opening of 11 more ports referred to as Treaty Ports.

In 1860, Indian, British, and French troops landed near Beijing and fought their way into the city. Negotiations quickly broke down and the British High Commissioner to China Lord Elgin ordered the combined Indian-British troops to destroy the Imperial Summer Palace, a complex and garden where Qing Dynasty emperors had traditionally handled the country's official matters.

Shortly after that, the Chinese emperor fled to Manchuria in northeast China. His brother negotiated the Convention of Beijing, which, in addition to ratifying the Treaty of Tientsin, added indemnities and ceded to Britain the Kowloon Peninsula across the strait from Hong Kong. The war ended with a greatly weakened and battered Qing Dynasty.

Russian diplomat Count Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev had witnessed the havoc and plunder that the Indian, British, and French forces had unleashed upon Beijing, including the burning down of the Old Summer Palace, specifically ordered by Britain's Lord Elgin.

James BruceElgin, having set his eyes on the loot and destruction of the Forbidden City, next, compelled the Chinese to sit at the negotiating table with Count Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev a Russian statesman and diplomat, as the mediator in what came to be known as the Convention of Peking between China, Russia, Britain and France.

As a result of this convention, in October 1860, the British acquired the Kowloon Peninsula and control over Hong Kong. Among other agreements, opium was made legal, a move that economically benefited France and Britain. From China's perspective, these agreements were exploitative and sharply skewed in favour of the two western nations.

Knowing how desperately China was trying to protect its capital, Ignatyev pushed for the Qing rulers to accept the terms of the agreements, and also threw in what the Chinese call "Outer Manchuria" for Russia, an area significantly larger than what it had originally desired. One part of this territory is now called the Primorsky Krai. Russia gained 400,000 square miles, without fighting a battle. This area of the Primorsky Krai, along with the Golden Horn Bay, with its administrative capital as Vladivostok, became an important sea port for Russia and allowed the country to expand economic and military influence in this part of the Pacific. It is also known as the Russian Maritime Province. Today, Vladivostok is the base for the Russian Pacific Fleet.

The face of East Asia was refigured in this process. Chinese historians' target foreigners as morally culpable for having used Opium to intoxicate, impoverish and demoralise the Chinese people, in what is also referred to as "policies to empoison". In China today the Opium Wars are the traumatic inauguration of the country's modern history. All nations around China contributed to the "Century of Humiliation"



The Sino–Russian border was realigned in Russia’s favour along the Amur and Ussuri rivers. As a result, China lost Outer Manchuria (an area of more than 1 million km), and access to the Sea of Japan.

Russia’s involvement in the Opium Wars is often overlooked or not accorded importance by Western Historians. A young Russian Major General Nikolay Ignatyev ensured Russian success at the Convention of Peking and the Chinese ceded even more land to the Russians, giving them control of everything between the River Amur and the Golden Horn Bay. Ignatyev’s astute diplomacy is one of the glorious highlights of the Opium Wars, obtaining 400,000 square miles of strategic territory without a single shot being fired is unparalleled and unprecedented in World History.

Chinese social media, are full of aggressive demands to recover this lost territory. A posting on a popular Chinese internet forum, for example, claimed that the Chinese people “are all in tears” when they see that the “table of unrecovered territory” includes Vladivostok and other lands now controlled by Russia. Chinese are taught at school about “unequal treaties” and foreign land grabs. Chinese are taught that Vladivostok city and much of eastern Russia was and, one day, should again be Chinese.

Chinese social media anguished outpourings read like these “Today we can only endure, but the Chinese people will remember, and one generation after another will continue to remember!” and another wrote, “We must believe that this ancestral land will return home in the future!” South China Morning Post quoted one Weibo user.

There is an important lesson here for Indians who are in the habit of not teaching history to their posterity in its entirety, the lessons to be learnt from different conflicts, the losses suffered, and most important, the obligation of future generations to continue efforts to reclaim lost territories. While the Chinese compulsorily teach their youngsters about the Opium Wars, in Indian history texts there is zero mention of the role of the various Indian Army regiments of those days who participated in the battles and ensured the defeat of the Chinese. Territories lost by India are written off by short sighted politicians using specious arguments like “.... not a blade of grass can grow there”. The perspicacious observation of American philosopher George Santayana becomes relevant here “Those who do not read history are bound to repeat it”. Indians should start dissecting History and learn why there were losses, how the losses occurred and the trauma suffered by our ancestors at the hands of barbaric invaders.

The Angry Himalayas: Is It time for Opium War III?

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

The defeat of the Qing Empire in the Opium Wars led to different European powers claiming monopoly over different parts of China. China not only had to face the onslaught by Indian, British and French forces but also other small neighbouring countries. In 1852, King Mongkut (Rama IV) of Siam (Thailand) bowing to British pressures, established a Royal Opium Franchise, which was then farmed out to Siamese Chinese. Three years later, under the terms of the Bowring Treaty, Siam accepted British opium free of duty, with the proviso that it was to be sold only to the Royal Franchise. (A year later, in 1856, a similar agreement was negotiated with the United States.) The opium farm became a source of wealth and power to the royal government and also to the Chinese secret societies or triads that operated it.

Western nations were also quick to demarcate chunks of Chinese territory as falling in their sphere of influence. Britain claimed 'because of Hong Kong, the Pearl River Basin is my sphere of influence'. Further to the west, the French claimed 'well, we've got Vietnam, and therefore the Red River Basin of south China is our sphere of influence'.

"The British would further claim 'Shanghai is a very important commercial centre of ours, so we claim the whole of the Yangtze River Basin to be our sphere of influence'.

Similarly, Germany got Shandong province and tried to extend it along the Yellow River. Russia claimed Manchuria and what is now Chinese Turkestan. Thus the Opium Wars disfigured and mutilated the map of China.

Present-day Chinese are taught that the Opium Wars were wars of aggression that led to the hard lesson that "if you are 'backward,' you will take a beating." These lessons shaped the rationale for the Chinese Revolution against imperialism and feudalism that emerged, and then succeeded, decades later.

One phrase that is ubiquitous in China, so that new generations learn the hard lessons of national integrity is: "Wu wang guo chi. "Don't forget national humiliation".

Opium Wars

Students in China are taught about the ravages caused by foreign powers during the Opium Wars. Every Chinese text book contains gripping images of the ransacked Imperial Palace-Yuanming Yuan, which was destroyed on 18th October 1860. Though the destruction was a powerful symbolic act which culminated in the ending of the Qing dynasty it was carried out in retribution for the brutal torture and murder of British, Indian and French prisoners of war. Many reports have described it as China's ground zero – a place that tells a story of cultural destruction that everyone in China knows about, but hardly anyone outside. The palace's fate is bitterly resented in Chinese minds and gets constantly depicted in Chinese popular films, generating acrimonious social media debates, and furious arguments about international art sales belonging to the Opium War period.

The ruins are even now meticulously preserved – piles of scorched masonry, lakes with overgrown plants, lawns with a few stones scattered where many buildings once stood. The site swarms with Chinese visitors, taken there regularly as part of a government-sponsored “patriotic education” programme.

Students in China are taught that the palace had the most beautiful collection of architecture and art in the country. Yuanmingyuan meant – Garden of Perfect Brightness – where Chinese emperors had built a massive complex of palaces and other fine buildings, and filled them with cultural treasures.

A new digital reconstruction by a team at Tsinghua University gives a vivid idea of what this extraordinary place looked like when, in 1860 a joint Indian-British-French army ransacked, destroyed and looted it.



Summer Palace

Immediately after the Summer Palace's destruction in 1860, the 8th Earl of Elgin made a triumphant entry to the centre of Beijing, his procession symbolising British and Western domination – and Chinese humiliation.

Many famous personalities of the British Empire were actively involved in trading opium, including Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, Raffles, and Swettenham. Jardine, Matheson & Co was the biggest importer of opium into China.

After the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests against communist rule, China's leadership has tried to reinforce its dictatorship by bolstering patriotic pride in the country's history – and teaching citizens that only a strong government can prevent a repeat of the 19th Century humiliation by foreigners. The ruined site of the old Summer Palace offers an ideal place to ignite patriotic fervour, and ignite in future generations a secret desire for revenge.

The Chinese Communist Party projects that it is setting right the injustice of the century of humiliation by achieving “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” China’s authoritarian dictator President Xi Jinping has widely promoted the “Chinese Dream” of achieving rejuvenation. Called ‘fuxing’ in Chinese, this rejuvenation is an end state in which China would overcome the humiliation of colonial history and become the most dominant power on the planet. China’s new found wealth is the key factor driving its expansionist agenda. China’s “wiping clean” of past humiliations involves a grandiose agenda of unbridled expansion into more than 20 countries, comprising the following:

1. Entire Tibet has been conquered and the population undergoing severe repression and ‘ethnic cleansing’.
2. The Indo-Tibetan border is now claimed to be the Indo-Chinese border, new border disputes are being raked up and China now occupies 38,000 sq km of Indian territory in Aksai Chin. Fresh claims have been made on Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. These led to the recent clashes between the PLA and the Indian Army in Galwan area on June 15th 2020.
3. Japan – Parts of South China Sea particularly Senkaku Islands, Ryukyu Islands are claimed by China.
4. Vietnam – China claims large parts of Vietnam on historical precedent (Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644). Also, Macclesfield Bank, Paracel Islands, parts of the South China Sea and the Spratly Islands.

5. Nepal – China claims parts of Nepal dating back to the Sino-Nepalese War in 1788-1792. China claims they are part of Tibet, and hence a part of China.
6. China has claimed all of North Korea on historical grounds (Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368).
7. The Philippines – Parts of the South China Sea are contested between China and Philippines. The Philippines took this to the International Court of Justice, where they won the case but the Chinese did not abide by the order of the ICJ.
8. Russia – 160,000 square km is still unilaterally claimed by China, despite China signing several agreements about the disputed areas.
9. Singapore – Parts of the South China Sea are contested by both countries.
10. South Korea – China has claimed all of South Korea on historical grounds (Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368).
11. Bhutan – Bhutanese enclaves in Tibet, namely Cherkip Gompa, Dho, Dungmar, Gesur, Gezon, Itse Gompa, Khochar, Nyanri, Ringung, Sanmar, Tarchen and Zuthulphuk, Kula Kangri, and the western Haa District of Bhutan is claimed by China.
12. Taiwan – China claims all of Taiwan.
13. The Paracel Islands, also called Xisha Islands in Vietnamese, is a group of islands in the South China Sea whose sovereignty is disputed among China, Taiwan and Vietnam and Burma.
14. Laos – China claims large areas of Laos on historical precedent (China's Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368).
15. Brunei – China claims the entire Spratly Islands.
16. Tajikistan – China claims the entire Tajikistan based on historical precedent (Qing Dynasty, 1644-1912).
17. Cambodia – China has claimed parts of Cambodia on historical grounds (China's Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644).

18. Indonesia – Parts of the South China Sea are claimed by the Chinese.
19. Malaysia – Parts of the South China Sea, particularly the Spratly Islands in which Brunei is also involved.
20. Mongolia – China claims all of Mongolia on historical precedent (Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368)

But, Mongolia, under Genghis Khan, had occupied China!

What Beijing calls the “wiping clean” of past humiliations would involve the complete gobbling up of Asia under one pretext or the other. Economic policies are covertly forging the way for military aggrandizement. It is the same old formula of Great Britain that erupted into the Opium Wars.

The present Chinese Communist Party (CCP) like the Qing Dynasty will lead China into self-destruction and will take down the Chinese people, society and the Chinese economy down with it. It will undo what in 1992, the visionary leadership of Deng Xiaoping did to attract foreign investment:

- Exemption from corporate income tax.
- Exemption from VAT and other business taxes.
- Free/cheap land and rent.
- Exemption from social welfare payments for employees.
- Exemption from personal income taxes for foreign employees and executives.
- Freedom from control by the CCP.
- Freedom from worker unions.

The average salary of a Chinese worker in the private sector was US\$ 150 per year, working 12 hours a day, 6 days a week with no attendant benefits required to be provided to the worker. These measures encouraged rapid flow of foreign investment into China. However, in 2020 all these exemptions have been withdrawn and now foreign owned companies pay 35% tax.

China XiChina also introduced China Compulsory Certification (CCC) where foreign owned companies had to hand over all details, designs, processes of their products and services along with samples to Chinese authorities. This resulted in cheaper copycat products flooding countries at throwaway prices, leading to China's economic domination of world markets. This uncontested monopoly has tempted Premier Xi Jinping to fantasize about Asian territorial annexation under one pretext or the other.

Globally there is fear and anxiety about Chinese secret aspirations and intentions. Many countries are seriously contemplating an economic boycott of China which will cripple its economy. USA and India have already started tightening the noose, if other nations join in this endeavour, the Dragon will face another round of 'Humiliation', and like the Qing dynasty ended, the Xi Jinping rule will shatter into smithereens. In 2020 it is the same Opium War players preparing for the next round – India, UK, USA, France, Japan and 20 other nations of Asia. The battlefield is getting readied.

The Angry Himalaya: The Incredible Story of 'Looty' the Pekinese Toy – Dog

Dr G Shreekumar Menon

Victor Hugo once described the Yuanmingyuan as one of the wonders of the world. This miracle palace was extolled as the 'Versailles of the East'. From 1709 to 1860, it was the grandest imperial garden with over 1,000 palaces, 100 viewing points, and thousands of treasures, covering an area of 350 hectares. It embodied the highest level of oriental fantasy art.

Yuanmingyuan was originally founded in the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1661–1722) in 1709 as a gift to his fourth son, Emperor Yongzheng (1678–1735). After Emperor Yongzheng ascended to the throne, the Old Summer Palace continued to expand. The construction and expansion lasted for 150 years. It was a gorgeous palace comprising marbled palaces, stately temples, towers, an extensive collection of gardens, pools, and fountains plus swarms of swans, ibis, and peacocks. The whole palace was painted and decorated with gleaming marbles, precious stones, coloured glazes, enamels, bronze and stone wares, statues, and sculptures. This grand palace was described as “the thousand and one dreams of the thousand and one nights” built by “architects who are poets”.

During the Second Opium War, Indian, British and French troops invaded Beijing, ransacked the Old Summer Palace, and looted its treasures, which are now displayed in museums around the world. After the looting, they set fire to the entire palace. It was said that the fire lasted for 3 days and nights. Almost all the buildings were burnt down. Only crumbling marble buildings remained. The splendour and magnificence of Yuanmingyuan disappeared in this fire.

The scale of the looting was of such huge magnitude that according to UNESCO, there are approximately 1.64 million Chinese antiques on exhibit in 200 museums in 47 foreign countries.

An unlikely loot that the marauders laid their hands on was the prized Pekingese dogs which was the proud possession of the Chinese aristocracy. When the Emperor Xian Feng fled with all of his court to Chengde, an elderly aunt of the emperor could not be taken and had to be left behind. When the combined Indian, British and French troops entered the palace quarters she committed suicide. She was found with her five Pekingese dogs mourning her death. These prized toy dogs were rescued and later on transported to England. Captain Dunne of the 99th Regiment presented the exotic Pekingese to Queen Victoria of Great Britain in April 1861, and she appropriately named it ‘Looty’.

Looty was considered as the smallest and most beautiful dog in the entire country.

Of the remaining toy-dogs, Lord John Hay took a pair, later called Schloff and Hytien, and gave them to his sister, the Duchess of Wellington, wife of Henry Wellesley, 3rd Duke of Wellington. Sir George Fitzroy took another pair, and gave them to his cousins, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond and Gordon.



Pekingese

The Pekingese also known as the Lion-Dog, Pekingese Lion-Dog, Pelchie Dog or Peke, is an ancient breed of toy-dog originating in China. They are called Lion-Dogs due to their resemblance to Chinese guardian lions. The breed was favoured by royalty of the Chinese sovereign court as both a lap dog and companion dog, and its name refers to the city of Peking, present day Beijing.

A romanticized description of the Pekingese is a long-form poem entitled “Pearls Dropped from the Lips of Her Imperial Majesty Tzu-Hsi Dowager Empress of the Flowery Land.” The dowager empress bred Pekingese in her royal kennel as well as breeds like Pugs and Shih Tzu. “Let the Lion Dog be small; let it wear the swelling cape of dignity around its neck; let it display the billowing standard of pomp above its back, the “dropped pearls” of wisdom begin. ... Let its eyes be large and luminous; let its ears be set like the sails of war junk; let its nose be like that of the monkey god of the Hindus. Let its forelegs be bent; so that it shall not desire to wander far, or leave the Imperial precincts. Let its body be shaped like that of a hunting lion spying for its prey.”

“People say it is the most perfect little beauty they have ever seen,” wrote Captain John Hart Dunne, who discovered the dogs at Yuanmingyuan and let Looty make the voyage to England in his forage cap. But the queen was reportedly underwhelmed with the new addition to her royal menagerie. Looty initially refused most food, which was entirely in keeping with its pampered living. The Chinese aristocracy encouraged the Pekingese to be “dainty in its food so that it shall be known as an Imperial dog by its fastidiousness,” and recommended the breed be fed “sharks fins and curlew livers and the breasts of quails,” as well as “the milk of the antelopes that pasture in the Imperial parks” (1)– items that clearly were not on the menu at Balmoral Castle, where the queen was presented the toy-dog Looty.

Friedrich Wilhelm Keyl was the only pupil of the animal painter Edwin Landseer, who was one of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert’s favoured artists. Keyl executed many oil paintings and smaller-scale watercolours and chalk drawings of royal pets and animals. Queen Victoria commissioned Keyl to make an oil painting of Looty as he was considered ‘the smallest and by far the most beautiful little animal that has appeared in this country’(2). When Keyl was asked to sketch Looty he was told he must ‘put something to show its size as it is remarkably small’. The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1862 (catalogue no.296). Looty, is depicted here sitting on a red cushion in front of a Japanese vase. Beside the dog are a bunch of flowers and his collar, on which are sewn two little bells. A copy was presented to Captain Dunne in whose family it became an heirloom.

But Looty’s life was not happy as it had to encounter the hostility of other palace dogs. “He was a very lonely little creature, the other dogs taking exception to his Oriental habits and appearance,” recounted the New York Times.

Looty initially lived at Buckingham Palace and was lonesome but later on went to live a sumptuous life of luxury at Windsor Palace until death in 1872. The gender of Looty is also not known with clarity. When Looty died in 1872, he was buried in an unmarked grave at Windsor Palace. The location of his grave is still unknown. While other pets who died were given ornate monuments, Looty did not get any monument.

Looty's isolation in the Palace holds important lessons for nations of the world facing China's aggressive expansion designs. Riding high on an unprecedented wave of economic prosperity, that has led to the flooding of world markets with cheap substandard goods and products, China's new found formula is 'economic subjugation culminates in territorial annexation'. Country after country is facing the prospect of geographical borders getting arbitrarily redrawn, oceans and islands being gobbled up, in the backdrop of the spectre of awesome military might, that China exhibits in the media from time to time. Blockades and isolation from different countries are being reported every day in the media. China's economy depends on the \$2.49 trillion export market with the majority of its trade surplus coming from the US and Hong Kong. If other countries impose bans on Chinese products like how India's largest trade body Confederation of All India Traders(CAIT) has vowed to reduce the sale of Chinese products, it could impede the Chinese economy. The global isolation of China will be like how Looty was isolated by the other palace dogs of Balmoral Castle.

The Angry Himalayas: Eight Nation Alliance Crushes China in 1900

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

Yuanmingyuan, the Imperial Palace plays a very curious role in every Chinese defeat. In 1900, an anti-Imperialist and anti-Christian wave of resentment broke out in China. The rebels, mainly young Chinese farmers and workers, kept confined more than 900 foreigners in Beijing's Foreign Legation Quarter. The siege was the dramatic denouement of months of anti-Imperialist and anti-Christian sentiment that swept across China at the turn of the 20th century. This uprising known as the Boxer Rebellion, cast a long shadow on Chinese history throughout the 20th century.

To quell the Boxer Rebellion and liberate the confined foreigners an Eight-Nation Alliance invaded and occupied Beijing. The alliance force consisted of about 18,000 soldiers, comprising of 4,300 Russian infantry, Cossacks and artillery; 8,000 Japanese infantry; 3,000 British, mostly Indian infantry, cavalry and artillery; 2,500 US soldiers and Marines with artillery; and an 800-man French Brigade with artillery. Austria, Italy, and Germany although they were members of the Eight-Nation Alliance did not make any major military contribution. This battle is also known as Battle of Peking or the Relief of Peking.

China-India-faceoff

Though it is referred to as an Eight Nation Alliance, India was also a part of this Alliance as services of Sikh and Punjab Regiments were utilised by the British. Thus it was technically a 9 nation alliance against the Chinese.

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On August 4, 1900, a relief force of more than 3000 soldiers from Sikh and Punjab regiments left Tianjin, part of the larger eight-nation (nine nation) alliance that was dispatched to aid the besieged quarter, where 11 countries had set up legations. Indian troops were also dispatched to guard churches and Christian missionaries, the targets of the Boxer uprisings.

On June 20, 1900, the Boxers, more than 100,000 strong and led by the court of Tzu'u Hzi, besieged the foreigners in Peking's diplomatic quarter, burned Christian churches in the city, and destroyed the Peking-Tientsin railway line.

The eight nation (nine nation) military alliance was led by Alfred von Waldersee (June 1900 – September 1901) and thereafter by Edward Seymour (September 1900 – September 1901).



(Representative U.S., Indian, French, Italian, British, German, Austro-Hungarian and Japanese military and naval personnel forming part of the Allied forces – yr 1900)

The Chinese were simply overawed by the sight of the Sikh soldiers and their imposing turbans and fierce moustaches. They feared them very much and so the British deployed Sikh soldiers as law enforcement officers in ports like Shanghai, where their trading companies had set up a large presence by the early twentieth century. The Chinese feared them so much that the British deemed that they did not even need guns when on duty!



Sikh soldiers in China

The objective of the alliance forces was to fight their way into the city of Peking, make their way to the Legation Quarter and rescue the 900 foreigners besieged there by the Chinese army. Peking had formidable defence fortifications. The city was surrounded by walls 21 miles in length and split up into 16 gates. The wall around the Inner city was 40 feet tall and 40 feet wide at the top. The wall around the adjoining Outer city was 30 feet high. The population living within the walls was estimated to be about one million people

Despite such strong defences, the Alliance forces defeated the Chinese army at the Battle of Beicang (Peitsang) on 5th August and at the Battle of Yangcun (Yangtsun) on 6th August and on 14th of August, the Russian, Japanese and French forces entered Peking. The Chinese were defeated, and Peking wore a battered look. Soon large scale looting and destruction began. The Eight Nation (Nine nation) alliance soldiers went berserk looting, destroying, burning and raping. Yuanmingyuan was devastated once again and the remaining treasures were looted. The soldiers destroyed buildings, sawing off pillars and reducing wooden bridges to piles, and pulled down the trees with large ropes. The destruction of Yuanmingyuan or the Old Summer Palace was complete.

The destruction of the Temple of Heaven deserves special mention. It was the most important of Beijing's imperial temples. It was where emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties (from 1420 to 1900) worshiped the God of heaven and prayed for good harvests. It has been described as “a masterpiece of architecture and landscape design”. Located in southern Beijing, the Temple of Heaven covers an area of 270 hectares, and is one of the largest existing architectural complexes in the world, with a collection of over 12,000 artefacts.

A gilded bronze bell was looted by a British General from this Temple complex and later gifted to an Indian cavalry unit. The bell, part of a 16-bell set, used to be displayed in front of the Palace of Good Harvest at the Temple of Heaven, where Chinese emperors held annual sacrificial rites to pray for good harvests. The 15 other bells, which date to the 1368-1644 Ming dynasty, remain missing. In 1994 the Indian Army magnanimously returned the bell to the Chinese who hung it back in the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. For this restoration of their prized antique the Chinese are ungrateful.

The 15 other bells, which date to the 1368-1644 Ming dynasty, are still missing, probably in the custody of private museums or millionaires.

Much water has flown under the bridge since the defeat of the Chinese in the Boxer Rebellion. As on 2020, the Chinese have in their expansionist zeal fomented border disputes with more than 18 countries. Apart from territorial disputes, the Chinese have claimed the South China Sea apart from the islands, reefs, banks and other features therein. An estimated US\$3.37 trillion worth of global trade passes through the South China Sea annually, which accounts for a third of the global maritime trade. 80 percent of China's energy imports and 39.5 percent of China's total trade passes through the South China Sea, hence the greed of the Chinese to possess exclusive maritime rights in this area.

Apart from the territorial disputes with over 18 countries, the Chinese have trade disputes with USA, which can engulf into a global war involving many nations. If in 1900 it was an eight (nine) Nation alliance against the Chinese, 2020-2021 could see more than 21 Nations joining ranks against them. Even an economic blockade can cause severe disruption and uprisings against the present regime in China.

In any future conflict with China, nations should target the Yuanmingyuan again for destruction. It is very dear to the Chinese but yet has played a secret role in every Chinese debacle. Perhaps, the Vastu configuration is not in perfect order. Indians would recall the repeated destruction of the Somnath Temple in Gujarat, over 16 times by Mahmud of Ghazni. Perhaps some Vastu defect in the Temple alignment invited repeated destruction at the hands of a foreign invader. Ultimately, Mahmud of Ghazni was killed by Raja Bhoj King of Malwa kingdom who led an alliance of Kings from other States.

History proves that well-coordinated alliances are effective in containing any enemy. If in 1900 it was the Eight Nation (Nine Nation) alliance that humbled the Chinese, then a 21 nation alliance in 2020 can effectively thwart the aggressive designs of the Chinese Dragon.

The Angry Himalayas: Will Modi make Xi's 'China Dream' into a 'China Nightmare'?

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

THE ANGRY HIMALAYAS – Newsroom24x7

Xi Jinping has vowed to make China great again. The Opium Wars had delivered a critical blow to the Chinese psyche, and, since then, reviving the ancient glory of China has been a secret ambition of all Chinese leaders. Military modernization and building “world class forces” is an integral component in the strategy to make China great again. Land borders and coastlines are being redrawn aggressively to boost the geostrategic status. The Indo-Tibetan border (China occupied Tibet – COT) has been activated to trigger significant tensions. Xi Jinping is opiated with delusions of a grand ‘China Dream’, and redrawing the Indo-Tibetan border is a priority ambition. The hectic military preparations never anticipated the ‘Modi Storm’ at the other end, that threatens to convert the ‘China Dream’ into a ‘China Nightmare’ This will doubtless be a challenging time, Xi’s greedy vision encountering Modi’s resolute defiance. This encounter can define the world of the next few decades, as also the strategic visions of two leaders on either side of the Himalayas.

Narendra Modi vs Xi Jinping



While India is a chaotic democracy, China is desperately hiding their internal instabilities and uncertainties. That the control of borderlands should determine the future of two paramount leaders living on either side of the Himalayas, appears strange and interesting.

The progressive radiating of power and prestige of both Modi and Xi should not culminate in a military conflict. This COVID pandemic time is most inappropriate to threaten each other regarding self-defined vital interests. Further both nations being nuclear powers any conflict carries the risk of escalating into a nuclear showdown. It has also to be borne in mind that Beijing has recently revealed that it has built 3,000 miles of deep tunnels to protect and hide its ground based, dual capable missiles and related nuclear warhead systems.

China possesses dual capable ballistic and cruise missiles more than any other country. Asia is targeted by more such missiles than any other region. Unlike air and sea based missiles, ground launched systems can be securely communicated with and fired instantly upon command. As such, they are ideal for use in a first strike. These accurate, dual capable missiles can inflict strategic harm against major bases and naval operations when carrying conventional warheads.

But, if in the event of a collision course becoming inevitable, as formidable weapons have been readied on either side, India needs to remind China of its bete noire – Opium. Till China reprioritizes policies toward peacefulness, India can use a grand strategy to unleash the power of Opium once again on China. There is a subconscious fear within the Chinese leadership that a relapse of the debilitating Opium addiction among Chinese people can imperil their grandiose aggression plans. Bitter memories of the Opium Wars still linger in the minds of millions of Chinese, assiduously nurtured by text books that fuel feelings of victimhood and vengeance. In the Opium Wars, though China had advantages over the British in terms of strategic depth, numerical superiority in troop strength, familiarity with battle terrain, and excellent coastal fortifications at the entrances to the Pearl and Yangtze Rivers, it lost miserably to the unrivalled power of Opium, which the combined British and Indian armies took advantage of. The chronic Chinese addiction to Opium ensured the overwhelming success of the combined Indian and British forces. An utterly emaciated and Opium addicted Chinese population could offer no resistance, for, Indian Opium had rendered them totally incompetent and cowardly. This weapon only needs to be reactivated to give China its next brush with devastation and humiliation.

Today there is a far wider array of plant based and chemical based illicit drugs, far superior to Opium, that can be used as weapons to cause social destruction. Not only in China but also in Vietnam War and Afghanistan Wars, Opium has accredited itself well as a potent weapon. There is no reason why it need not be resuscitated and utilized once again against the Chinese.

Today, China itself uses drugs to destabilize rival countries. Fentanyl, a synthetic Opioid, manufactured by China, is behind the ongoing American public health crisis. Also known as the Doomsday Drug, Fentanyl has stunning efficiency in its addictive property. China White or China Girlan illicit analogue of the analgesic Fentanyl, is a Heroin like drug, manufactured in bulk by China and flooding the world markets. Is it not a covert, offensive war? Why not use the same strategy to counter the Chinese? No doubt, India is a signatory to various international treaties that expressly prohibit the cultivation, distribution and transportation of all kinds of Narcotic substances, but it should also be borne in mind that drug production and trafficking are entrepreneurial in nature and fragmented in practice. Between drug manufacturers and end users are multiple and often overlapping layers of transportation and distribution networks, each involving only a few private traders. This entire trade, organizationally and operationally is controlled by private businesses and freelancers. The government and its enforcement agencies remain mute spectators, in this game monopolized by traders. This arrangement has been in existence since the time of the Opium Wars and functions with enviable speed and efficiency around the globe. Terror organizations are heavily dependent on the Narcotics trade to finance their activities. Fortunately, China has a festering separatist problem in the Xinjiang region, known as Uyghur–Chinese conflict. This conflict, brewing for long, in China's far-northwest autonomous region of Xinjiang centred on the Uyghurs, and Kazakhs who are Muslim minority ethnic groups and who make up the largest population in the region.

The Chinese repression of the Uyghurs involves forcible sterilizations, detention in centres for what is known as re-education, and demolishing mosques.

Xinjiang is of particular concern, given recent geopolitical developments in the region and the construction of the Gwadar port in Pakistan, which aims to provide Xinjiang with a road link through Pakistan and possibly Afghanistan. China's 'War on Terror' is focussed on Uyghurs of Xinjiang. The broader Chinese counterterrorism narrative in Xinjiang includes drug interdiction measures.

Another potential region that can be exploited is Zhangmu Port in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and located on the Nepal border, which witnesses a lot of drug trafficking. The 110-kilometre-long TAR-Nepal border has more than 128 locations which are used by traffickers for movement of contraband goods.

Tibet has a rich history of Cannabis consumption. It was particularly valued as it was used in many Tibetan Buddhist Tantric rites. In the Tantric sex rites, Cannabis was used to heighten awareness. Also, Mahayana Buddhists believed that in the six years preceding his enlightenment, Buddha survived on just one Hemp seed per day. Buddha is sometimes depicted with a begging bowl containing Cannabis leaves. Tibetan Hashish is known for its superior quality and dark colour, unlike the Indian and Pakistani varieties that are greenish inside.

The Angry Himalayas: Proliferating Chinatowns – Threat to Global Security

Dr G Shreekumar Menon

In this article, the focus shifts from the tense borders of India versus China Occupied Tibet (COT) to the global arena, which is witnessing and experiencing, Chinese expansion in the guise of Chinatowns, which are exclusive Chinese settlements, housing, businesses, recreational and residential dwellings. Areas known as “Chinatown” have been built in Europe, America, South America, Asia, Africa, Australia, Middle East and even in India. Currently, there are 35 Chinatowns in 19 countries spread over Asia, Europe and USA, having exclusive Chinese stores, restaurants, temples and residences. Chinese migration to different parts of the globe to set up industries, constructing infrastructure projects and international trade has enabled the mushrooming of Chinatowns.

If India were to encourage by way of tacit connivance, drug-trafficking via Tibet and the Xinjiang region, the Chinese will have to confront the spectre of their dark and humiliating past. India needs to keep its non-military options open at all times. Drug traffickers can make Xi's 'China Dream' into a 'China Nightmare'.

Binondo in Manila, Philippines established in 1594, is recognized as the world's oldest Chinatown. USA has the largest number of Chinatowns. The Manhattan Chinatown in USA has the largest concentration of ethnic Chinese in the Western world while the Flushing Chinatown in Queens, New York is reckoned as the world's largest Chinatown. There are many more Chinatowns under construction in different parts of the world.

Chinatown in India is situated at Tiretta Bazar (or Teriti Bazar) area of Central Kolkata. Another Chinatown is located at Tangra, Kolkata.

All Chinatowns across the world are cluttered with small Chinese restaurants, souvenir shops, leather goods shops, stalls selling everything from silk robes to lucky cats. A range of food carts and hawkers fill the streets. There are plenty of clothing stores, umbrella shops, and boutiques offering party dresses.

In addition, Moneychangers are ubiquitous dealing with a variety of currencies. However, lots of clandestine businesses thrive in the by lanes of many Chinatowns. Secret organizations called Tongs exist for providing support and protection. Gambling, prostitution, supplying bodyguards, narcotics trafficking, and human trafficking are other standard fixtures. There are other dreaded secret gangs like the Triads, which are involved in every illegal activity.

However, what should be of universal concern is as to why the government of China is promoting setting up of Chinatowns in almost every country. It is common knowledge that the Chinese government employs diverse methods of espionage overseas. The Ministry of State Security, the United Front Work Department, and the People's Liberation Army function through a vast network of front organizations to monitor dissidents, supporters of the Tibetan independence movement, Uyghurs as well as the Taiwan independence movement, the Hong Kong independence movement, Falun Gong, and critics of the Chinese Communist Party. Among the tactics employed are cyber spying, signals intelligence and human intelligence. Industrial espionage is actively pursued to obtain access to commercial, technological and military secrets. Facial recognition and surveillance, artificial intelligence (AI) technology are continuously being improvised inside China to keep track of Uyghurs, a Muslim minority. Security concerns and deep rooted suspicions over Chinese developed 5G wireless networks, has prompted many countries to put on hold collaborations in the telecom sector. India has alerted companies to avoid using Chinese-made telecommunications equipment, suspecting that it may have spy capabilities embedded within it. Also, there are reports that China is using dozens of study centers that it has set up in Nepal near the Indian border in part for the purposes of spying on India.

Chinese student spies in US universities and research establishments is receiving lots of attention from many intelligence agencies. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Chinese students and researchers come to the U.S. annually. There are estimates in circulation that the FBI is opening a new China-related counterintelligence case about every 10 hours. Of the nearly 5,000 active FBI counterintelligence cases currently underway across the country, almost half are related to China.

Chinese intelligence agencies are cultivating expatriate Chinese scientists, businesspeople and students to gain access to latest technology and scientific studies. The sheer size of the Chinese student population at US universities presents a major challenge for law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Campus spying is difficult to detect. A lot of ideas, technology, research, and innovation is incubated in university campuses, and that's why it's the easiest place to steal. To deter campus espionage, various intelligence agencies have been persuading universities and research institutions to tighten up policies governing outside relationships, travel disclosure and conflicts of interest for graduate researchers and professors. This modus operandi employed by China is unique in the way it seeks to harness its citizens abroad in the service of a national policy covertly designed to extricate latest technological innovations and ideas in order to leapfrog the West in technological supremacy. Thus China is actively engaged in a multifaceted effort to misappropriate cutting-edge technologies which it wants to utilize for domination. Students are an easy and inexpensive investment that can be manipulated to become channels of information and data flow. In order to facilitate easy recruitment of students the Chinese government has floated a Thousand Talents Plan. By recruiting and deploying large number of student spies there is a critical counterintelligence threat to the USA and other Western countries. This has led to university monitoring of other nationalities as well, especially, those who are involved in studying science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Intelligence agencies have also been visiting universities and American tech companies to dissuade them from collaborations with Chinese entities. As a result, several universities, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University and the University of Illinois, have cut off research collaborations with Huawei.

Chinatowns scattered across the world play an important role in the intelligence gathering architecture. Exclusive enclaves of Chinese nationals, their businesses, restaurants, fancy shops, temples, Feng-Shui shops, glitter and gloss of brightly coloured paper lanterns provide an excellent setting for exchange and transfer of confidential data.



Chinatowns provide a James Bond like theatrical setting where spies and their handlers can safely exchange secret information. In the present context of rampant COVID 19 transmission across the world, it would be safe to assume that Chinatowns must have played a critical role in its spread.

The Chinatown at Kolkata is situated in a sensitive belt. Border of Bangladesh is just about 500 kilometres away. The 60-kilometre long and 22-kilometre wide Siliguri Corridor is about 580 kilometres from Kolkata. It is also known as the “Chicken’s Neck”, connecting India’s north-eastern states with the rest of the country. The Siliguri Corridor, through the rail and road networks passing through it, sustains the primary military formations located in the North East which will counter the Chinese during any conflict. The road which China has started building in the Doklam plateau will give it the capability to launch an overwhelming offensive during a conflict with India. This could choke the corridor and cut off the North East from the rest of India. This will be problematic for the Indian military formations.



Doklam

India and China are at present in a confrontation mode in the area close to Sikkim – the tri-junction between India, Bhutan and China. The face-off followed Indian troops opposing construction of a road by the Chinese in the Doklam plateau. Also known as Donglang or Dolam, the plateau belongs to Bhutan. This road is a cause of concern for India. If completed, it will shorten the distance for the Chinese army towards India's strategically vulnerable 'Chicken's Neck' area—the Siliguri Corridor. Kolkata's Chinatown can be effectively used by the Chinese as a spy base for a variety of intelligence operations. India needs to maintain a special watch on Kolkata's Chinatown.

It will be prudent on the part of nations to discourage setting up of new Chinatowns, the existing ones also need to be redeveloped and made multi-cultural, in order to upset Chinese futuristic expansionist designs.

The Angry Himalayas: Seismological Armageddon in the Making

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

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The Himalayas are presently the epicentre of a massive impending showdown between two mighty Asian armed forces i.e. India and China. Never have the mountain ranges experienced the tumultuous presence of over a lakh of heavily armed troops on either side, along with tanks, missiles, rockets, mountain guns and artillery. Non-stop convoys of army supply trucks keep straddling the remote mountain ranges to ensure steady supplies of essentials. At altitudes of over 15,000 feet high and temperatures as low as -30 degrees Celsius, this desolate terrain, defies our conventional notions of a battlefield.



Helicopters, transport aircraft and routine sorties by fighter jets add to the turbulent atmosphere pervading the desolate mountain ranges.

The Chinese have deployed a new lightweight 122-millimeter calibre wheeled howitzer besides a wheeled vehicle mounted HJ-10 anti-tank missile system.

The Chinese Army recently commissioned a batch of vehicle-mounted PCL-181, a 155 millimetre wheeled howitzer.

With the above new weaponry, the Chinese are conducting live-fire drills in the eco-fragile Himalayan mountain ranges.

The drills featured anti-aircraft shooting and precision artillery strikes on Indian formations, missile installations, communication hubs, positions, bunkers and camps. Weapons used include Type 15 lightweight tanks and HJ-10 anti-tank missiles as well as PLZ-07A 122mm self-propelled howitzers and PHL-11 122mm self-propelled rocket launchers which were being deployed and used at high altitude for the first time.

“In the drill our forces overcame the harsh environment, closely coordinated and integrated air and land forces in modules, applied the tactics of whole-area joint attack and three-dimensional penetration to seize control, combining the artillery bombardment with precision sniping, as well as drone reconnaissance and strike,” said the Brigade Commander, Zhang Jialin.

The Himalayan mountain range is estimated to have been formed about 50 million years ago. Presently, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Afghanistan and China Occupied Tibet (COT), control different sectors of the over 2400 kilometre stretch of the Himalayas.

China border The Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) covers nearly 95 districts starting from the foothills in the south (Shivalik); the region extends to the Tibetan Plateau in the north (trans-Himalaya), and extends beyond Bhutan and touches Myanmar. The IHR is the source of fresh water for a large part of the Indian subcontinent, approximately estimated at around 1,600,000 million m³ of water annually for drinking, irrigation, and hydropower. An estimated 40 million of the population reside in this region. Apart from this, the IHR abounds in important medicinal herbs and shrubs.

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For the first time in its 50-million-year history, the Himalayas is likely to be subjected to intense bombardment by high-tech explosives and armaments. Will the fragile Himalayan mountain range be able to withstand the unprecedented bombardment that can occur between the two Asian giants? What will be the impact on the biosphere? Hardly any research has been done to assess the potential military impact on the Himalayan environment. What is certain is that any conflict will certainly cause overwhelmingly negative effects on the ecosystem structure and function.

In the book *Communist China and Tibet* by George Gingsburg & Michael Mathos, it is revealed that Chairman Mao firmly believed that “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!” Chairman Mao therefore made annexation of Tibet as a key factor in Chinese expansionist policy. His words indicate the future expansionist design “Tibet is the palm we take over, then we go after five fingers-Ladakh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh”. The Chinese have started thrusting their fingers aggressively, is it not time to chop off the protruding hand?

For world peace and blocking Chinese military aggrandisement it is imperative that all nations unite and dislodge China from Tibet. The continued occupation of Tibet acts as an impetus to invade the Himalayas and thereafter the Gangetic plain. The centrality of Tibet is restricted not just to Sino-India relations, but needs to be viewed from a global perspective. Most appropriately, the present Indian government under the leadership of Mr. Narendra Modi, is foiling the aggressive dream of Mao and his successors. It is just not going to be a cakewalk over the Himalayas for the Chinese.

However, this is no excuse for deficiencies in our intelligence gathering capabilities. Time and again India is caught napping and the enemy is repeatedly surprising us. Nations around the world will be reviewing our intelligence capabilities, and the laxity of our agencies will not be appreciated. Be it 1962, Kargil or Ladakh, why is it that repeated intelligence failures are occurring? Our resources and assets are reasonably sophisticated to give timely alerts and inputs about any mischievous endeavours. The only inference possible is that many are guilty of a lackadaisical approach and this is costing the nation very dearly. It does not require much common-sense to understand that the entire stretch of the Indo-China border and Indo-Pak border are a lacerated and festering wound that can aggravate at any time. Those who have been lax in the performance of their duties should be held accountable and there is an urgent need to revamp the Intelligence gathering machinery which is spread out among multiple agencies. That all of them were caught on the backfoot and were outmanoeuvred and outclassed by the enemy is a matter of deep concern. Amassing the borders now with soldiers and weaponry will be of no avail. The impact of the presence of over a lakh of soldiers, sophisticated missiles, explosives, rockets and mortars, on the fragile high-altitude topography is largely unknown. Further, in the event of a conflagration, the likelihood of earthquakes, breakup of the mountains and entire collapse are yet to be studied. India and China have blasted the Himalayan mountains to construct a network of roads, air-fields, tunnels, bridges and dams. Whether these manmade structures will crumble and contribute to the Armageddon? Seismological intelligence and assessment of consequences of a conflagration between the two warring nations need to be done by an international body of scientists, for, if the Himalayas tremble and disintegrate, the whole world will have to join the ensemble.

The Angry Himalayas: Extending theatre of conflict to South China sea

Dr. G. Shreekumar Menon

THE ANGRY HIMALAYAS – Newsroom24x7

In this concluding episode of the series on The Angry Himalayas, the volatile South China Sea is the area of focus. If on one side the Chinese are rattling the Himalayas by military intrusions, in the Far East they are agitating the South China Sea, as their expansionist zeal is bloating beyond measure.

The naming of seas after certain countries has generated many disputes.



China's "ultraquiet submarines"

Though the South China Sea is bordered by Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam, China claims complete sovereignty over the sea, and the naming of the sea as “South China Sea” has a lot to do for the Chinese claiming exclusive ownership of the entire sea and all the islands therein, including some countries! To justify the ridiculous claim of ownership of the seas, the Chinese have conceived a demarcation, referred to as the nine-dash line. It is sometimes called as the ten-dash line and also as the eleven-dash line. It refers to the undefined and vaguely demarcated line drawn by China (People’s Republic of China) and Taiwan (Republic of China), for their claims of the major part of the South China Sea. This has predictably generated lots of disputes between China and the other countries of the region. Philippines refers to this sea as West Philippine Sea, Indonesia calls it North Natuna Sea. Presently, there is no unified legal framework governing the South China Sea. Currently, the most relevant, legally-binding agreement governing the South China Sea is the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“UNCLOS”). In addition, there are various other Treaties entered into by the regional countries.

The UNCLOS Member States that border the South China Sea are: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, China, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore. Cambodia and Thailand have signed UNCLOS, but have not yet ratified the Treaty.

The Parties to the Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and China.

The Parties to the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea are Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

The Contracting Parties of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, as amended, which border the South China Sea are: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and China.

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Thus there are a plethora of Treaties involving the South China Sea, and the region can erupt as a major flashpoint, if China proceeds to assert its exclusive ownership, which is bound to happen sooner or later. To be combat ready, the Chinese conduct regular naval exercises including live-fire exercises.



In response, the United States of America has been carrying out periodic naval operations in the South China Sea to assert navigational rights and freedoms in the contested waters, without prejudice to sovereignty disputes. The U.S. in recent exercises involved the Royal Australian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force. The U.S. sent the aircraft carrier groups of the USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan into the heart of the South China Sea.



An F-A-18E Super Hornet launches from the flight deck of USS Ronald Reagan in South China Sea

Recently, on November 03rd 2020, India, U.S., Japan and Australia carried out the Malabar Naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal.

A similar naval exercise needs to be conducted involving all the countries that have the South China Sea as their maritime border, in which India also needs to participate. Indian presence in the South China Sea would be a reminder of the Opium Wars in which China faced a massive rout.

Gen. B.P. Rawat, India's Chief of Defence Staff, recently observed that "In the overall security calculus, border confrontations, transgressions, and unprovoked tactical military actions spiralling into a larger conflict cannot therefore be discounted." This writer is of the opinion that in any future Indo-China conflict, India should open up a new flank in the South China Sea. Restricting any military engagement only on the Himalayan mountains will not be to India's advantage. Instead, igniting a conflagration in the South China Sea can internationalize the scope of the conflict and China would face pressure on two major fronts.

Indian naval presence in the South China Sea was during the Opium Wars under the leadership of the British. A warship by name HMS Calcutta was deployed in the Second Opium War, and was the flagship of Rear Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, under the command of Captain William King-Hall.

It was a major vessel having a total crew of 720 men comprising 38 officers, 69 petty officers, 403 seamen, 60 boys and 150 marines. The ship was launched on 14th March 1831. This ship took part in the first attack on Canton and in the assault on the Taku forts in 1859.

Similarly, the British, dumped Opium in large quantities in China using the services of prominent Indian and British businessmen of those times. Among the leading Opium traders was Matthew Jardine. His company Jardine, Matheson & Co owned two ships, named 'Mangalore' and 'Carnatic' which regularly carried Opium from Indian ports to China. A brawl involving the crew of the ship 'Mangalore' with Chinese locals ultimately culminated in the Battle of Kowloon, which China lost.



The First China War Medal 1842 was awarded to the British and Indian troops. If the fighting joint Indo-British Army and Navy proved their mettle, equally, traders and businessmen activated the Opium trade with China, which was dominated by a Parsi trader – David Sassoon. By the 1870s, David Sassoon had come to monopolize the trade of opium to China, having pushed the British firm Jardine Matheson and other Parsi traders of Bombay out of the business. By the end of the 1850's it was said of him that "silver and gold, silks, gums and spices, opium and cotton, wool and wheat– whatever moves over sea or land feels the hand or bears the mark of Sassoon and Company". During 1830-1831 alone, the Opium trade volume of the Sassoon's was estimated to be around 18,956 chests of Opium. By the end of 1836 the figure had swelled up to nearly 30,000 chests. In 1839, the Manchu Emperor ordered that the Opium trade be halted. He ordered the Commissioner of Canton, Lin Tse-hsu, to lead a campaign against opium. Lin seized 2,000 chests of Sassoon opium and threw it into the river. An outraged David Sassoon demanded that Great Britain retaliate militarily. Thus, the Opium Wars began with the British Army fighting as mercenaries of the Sassoon's!

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The Opium war culminated in 1842 with the signing of “The Treaty of Nanking.” This included special clauses inserted to guarantee the Sassoon’s the right to enslave an entire population with opium! The notable provisions in this “peace treaty” included full legalization of the opium trade in China, compensation for the opium stockpiles confiscated by Lin, and territorial sovereignty for the British Crown over several designated offshore islands”.

Defeat of China at the hands of the joint Indo-British army culminated in China bowing to the demands of Sassoon and giving him exclusive rights to drug an entire nation! David Sassoon and his sons came to be known as “The Rothschild’s of The Far East,” for their complete monopoly over the opium trade.

The Second Opium War resulted in a new “Peace Treaty” of Oct.25, 1860 which boosted the Opium trade from India by the Sassoon’s. In 1864 alone the Sassoon’s imported 58,681 chests of opium and by 1880 it had skyrocketed to 105,508 chests making the Sassoon’s the richest Jews in the world! The Sassoon’s even began licensing opium dens in each British occupied area with large fees being collected by their Jewish agents. Sassoon would not allow any other race to engage in what he called “the Jews’ business.” The Opium trade from India, spearheaded by David Sassoon completely ruined China.

Our Army, Navy and Traders are fully capable of re-enacting the same dynamism as of their ancestors and inflicting crippling damage to the Chinese economy. The Government needs to seriously think of setting up a Far East Indian Naval Fleet to be based in the South China Sea, which move will keep the Chinese on tenterhooks. Any Indo-China conflict in the Himalayas should reverberate in the South China Sea also.

Any Chinese misadventure in the Himalayas will be a costly gamble. No doubt, both countries will be affected if ever a conflagration breaks out. Neither side will be desirous of having a missile chat!

That apart, India's Agni-IV and V missiles, can hit locations anywhere in China, including the Port of Shanghai, the largest and busiest seaport in the world.

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