In March 2013, a new leader walked onto the stage in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing; Xi Jinping had been selected to lead the Middle Kingdom for the next 10 years. A few months earlier, he had been nominated Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chairman of the powerful Central Military Commission.

At the end of the National People’s Congress, the composition of the State Council (or Cabinet) was announced, with Li Keqiang stepping into Wen Jiabao’s boots as China’s Premier. Li has four vice-premiers and five state councillors to help him carry out his difficult task.

As the new leadership takes over the command of the second largest world economy, an issue which remains alive and could create serious problems for China in the near future, is the unstable situation on the Tibetan plateau.

It needs to be carefully watched by India which shares a 4,000 kilometre border with China. For centuries, the Sino-Indian border was the Indo-Tibetan border; India had a peaceful neighbour and a peaceful border. Today, it is not the case: whatever happens on the Roof of the World has implications for India and the sub-continent; this is particularly true for the rivers flowing from the Tibetan plateau to the Indian plains and the social instability on the Roof of the World.

The Central Working Coordination Small Group on Tibet

It is necessary to say a few words about China’s decision mechanism for policies on Tibet, particularly about the Central Working Coordination Small Group on Tibet.1

Since the beginning of the Deng Xiaoping’s era, the Tibet Policy of the People’s Republic of China has been formulated during the five Tibet Work Forums.2 A Tibet Work Forum is usually held every five or ten years to discuss the CCP’s Tibet policies. These large meetings are attended by some 200 to 300 senior cadres, amongst others by the members of the all-powerful Politburo’s Standing Committee, senior PLA generals, representatives of the People’s Armed Police, United Front Work Department officials, regional leaders, etc. The last Tibet Work Forum (the Fifth) was held in January 2010 in Beijing.

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1 Also known as Small Group on Tibet, one of the Leading Small Groups (LSG) on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.
The Small Group on Tibet is responsible for the implementation of the policies decided during the Tibet Work Forum. The chair of the Small Group on Tibet is usually held by the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) chairman. During the CCP’s 17th Congress, the Chairman of the Small Group on Tibet was Jia Qinglin, the then CPPCC chairperson. Other probable members were Ma Kai, Meng Jianzhu, Ling Jihua, and Du Qinglin and other unnamed officials.

After the 18th Party Congress leadership change, these leaders have secured good jobs, they will probably continue to participate in the deliberations of the Small Group on Tibet.

The reconstituted Group, under the Chairmanship of Yu Zhengsheng and with more or less the same membership than the previous one, has been immediately involved in the implementation of China’s Tibet policy. This implies that no or little improvement can be expected in Tibet in the near future.

Yu Zhengsheng

During an inspection tour in Sichuan Province from 6 to 8 January 2013, Yu Zhengsheng called on monks and nuns to be patriotic and observe Chinese laws as well as monastic rules. Yu was participating in a seminar along with Tibetan Buddhist representatives in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan.

Yu pleaded with the monks, that they should support the government’s efforts to manage monasteries in accordance with the law. His argument was that the government should offer public services to monasteries and manage them as a socialist society. He wanted a unified and strong motherland, while developing ‘stabilised Tibetan areas’ which would, in turn help “ethnic groups improve the lives of the people and brighten the prospects for Tibetan Buddhism”.

Yu also said that the fight against the Dalai Lama clique should continue, adding that it was necessary “to create a favourable social and political environment for economic development and the improvement of people’s well-being”.

Ganzi became the first ethnic minority autonomous prefecture after the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949. The prefecture is still one of the poorest in China. Yu assured the monks that the key to development in the Tibetan areas was the development of infrastructure and the public services. Once done, it would help to increase the incomes of farmers and herdsmen. Yu asked the cadres and officials to improve their work style and serve the masses wholeheartedly.

This gives some indication of the direction in which the Small Group on Tibet is likely to proceed. After visiting Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Kham) in January, Yu Zhengsheng visited Gansu (in the former Amdo province) in early July 2013.

In Gansu, Yu called for “for lasting prosperity and stability in China’s Tibetan regions by improving local livelihoods and fighting the 14th Dalai Lama clique.” More importantly, from 1 to 6 August 2013, Yu Zhengsheng conducted an ‘inspection tour’ in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, particularly Lhasa and Ngachu; the most extraordinary part was that nothing appeared in the Chinese (or local) press before Yu was back in Beijing on 6 August evening. It shows the level of nervousness of the leadership.

Outside China, it is difficult to believe that an official responsible for a region at the highest level of the government can stay for nearly one week in this region with the world being informed of it only after he had left. Xinhua quoted Yu Zhengsheng saying that development remains ‘fundamental and the key’ to addressing all issues related to Tibet. The Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference was keen “to promote efforts to rule Tibet by law and seek a regional development path with Chinese and local characteristics.”

Like Xi Jinping, when he addressed the Tibetan delegation in March in Beijing, Yu spoke of “achieving leapfrog economic and social development in Tibet and long-term stability”. Yu referred to (and rejected) the Dalai Lama’s proposal for ‘high-degree autonomy in Greater Tibet’; he said that it “runs counter to China’s Constitution, the law, and the fundamental interests of Tibetan Buddhism.”

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3 Ma Kai was President of the National School of Administration. In 2012, he became member of the Politburo of the 18th CPC Central Committee. In 2013 he became Vice-Premier of the State Council. Ma will be responsible for the economy and internal party matters. He was part of former Premier Wen Jiabao’s staff and advisor to former Secretary General Zhao Ziyang.
4 Member of the Politburo of the 18th Central Committee. Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Politics and Law Commission, in other words, the new security boss of China. Meng takes on the mantle of Zhang Yongkang as the boss of the security apparatus.
5 Ma Kai and Meng Jianzhu are part of the Politburo, while Ling Jihua is now heading the United Front Work Department. Du Qinglin is part of the CCP’s General Office, a crucial posting.
Yu asked the monks to “have a clear understanding of the secessionist nature of the Dalai Lama clique and resolutely safeguard national unification, ethnic unity and Tibet’s harmony and stability ...and comprehensively implement the ethnic and religious policies of the Communist Party of China and actively guide religions so they adapt to a socialist society.” Nothing new, except that his words did not help in calming down the situation.

The ‘secret’ visit was unusually long (six days) and seems to have focused on the way “to scientifically develop ideas for the development of Tibet, strengthen infrastructure construction and cultivate industries.” In this context, it is interesting a look at the officials who accompanied Yu to understand the true objectives of this long visit. They were:

- Zhang Yijiong, the Executive Vice Minister of the United Front Department. He stepped into the shoes of Zhu Weiqun and is ‘responsible for any future dialogue with Dharamsala.
- Du Ying, a Deputy Director of the State Development and Reform Commission, in other words, the Planning Commission.
- Sithar, a German-speaking Tibetan earlier posted in Europe, now working for the United Front Department.
- Weng Mengyong, a Vice Minister in the Transportation Ministry. His boss and minister, Yang Chuantang, used to be vice-chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Government.
- Shuai Junqing, Vice-President of the State Grid Corporation of China who obviously accompanied Yu to study the feasibility of harnessing Tibet’s hydropower potential.

Interestingly, despite this high-level visit and the ‘instructions’ given by the Central leadership, Driru, one of the main towns of Nagchu remained in turmoil.

**The Case of Ngachu**

The case of Ngachu is interesting: despite regular ‘inspection tours’ by several high-level dignitaries of the Communist Party (including Yu Zhengsheng), the Prefecture is still boiling.

Nagqu Prefecture is one of the seven prefectures of the Tibet Autonomous Region; it is the largest with an area of 450,537 square kilometres for a population of 400,000. The prefecture is divided into 11 counties with Nagchu Town as capital. As Nagqu is located on the Qinghai-Tibet railway line, Beijing plans to make the prefecture one of the main economic hubs on the Tibetan plateau.

In May 2013, Yu Zhengsheng chaired his first Small Group on Tibet in Beijing. Apart from the Central officials, the meeting of the Small Group on Tibet is said to have been attended by cadres from Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan, Sichuan provinces as well as the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).

Soon after the meeting, the Party Secretaries from these areas went back to their respective provinces and gave speeches on the importance of Yu’s instructions and comments. A few days later, Yu visited Xinjiang; from his declarations, one can guess what Yu told the Party cadres in Beijing. He called for greater efforts for improving people’s living conditions, ‘promoting ethnic solidarity’ and ‘social harmony’; he also emphasised ‘social stability’.

On his return to Tibet, Chen Quanguo, the TAR’s Party Secretary went for an inspection tour of the Nagchu Prefecture; he carried Yu’s message to “bring stability and harmony to Nachu.” Unfortunately for Secretary Chen, the day he was returning to Lhasa, thousands of Tibetans gathered in Driru county (Chinese: Biru in Nagchu Prefecture). They met at a sacred Tibetan mountain to demonstrate against the Chinese government’s planned mining projects in Driru County. *The Tibet Post* reported: “On 24 May 2013, over 1,000 trucks [probably cars] loaded more than 5,400 Tibetans from the four major areas, including Pekar, Nagshoe Phudha and Tsala gathered in Dathang town, near the sacred mountain in protest of the growing Chinese mining tensions in the county”.

The mountain, called Lhachen Naglha Dzambha, is rich in mineral resources. It was said that the local Tibetans ultimately managed to stop the mining at the holy Mountain, though for days, the situation was reported tense in the Driru county, on the protest site where the local authorities deployed a large number of paramilitary personnel, especially after two protesters Gonp and Abu are said to have died in a car accident on their way to the site.

According to Radio Free Asia (RFA): “Mining operations in Tibetan regions have led to frequent standoffs with Tibetans who accuse Chinese firms of disrupting sites of spiritual significance and polluting the environment as they extract local wealth. ...Waste from the mines, in operation since 2005, has been dumped in the local river, and mining activities have polluted the air.” This was bad luck for Mr. Chen who had just preached ‘stability’. It was however not the first time that such an incident has happened.
In October 2012, two Tibetan cousins Tsepo, 20 and Tenzin, 25, self-immolated in front of a school in Driru. Tibetans in exile told RFA that the cousins shouted slogans calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama before setting themselves alight. They also pleaded for all Tibetans to be ‘united like brothers’. RFA commented: “Tibetans in Driru have been in the forefront of opposition to Chinese rule in the Tibet Autonomous Region since deadly riots in the region in 2008, with monks and nuns protesting and abandoning monasteries in order to defy ‘intrusive’ new Chinese regulations.”

At that time, Lobsang Gyaltzen, who has since become the head of the government in the TAR, had stayed two weeks in the area to pacify the Tibetans. The Party’s senior cadres’ exhortations do not seem to work on the local population.

This goes in parallel with the recurring looting of the underground wealth of Tibet. A website, Meltdown in Tibet, highlighted the crucial role of the railway line: “Mining and mineral exploration have increased dramatically on the Tibetan Plateau since the 2006 arrival of the Golmud-Lhasa railway link, and due to government programmes and promotion. Along with the large government and business controlled mines, small unregulated mining operations are popping up all over the plateau. Due to low salaries, minimal health and safety standards, and weak environmental laws, normally uneconomic mineral deposits can be mined profitably by Chinese companies. Corrupt officials are willing to cut costs even more.”

In 2007, Xinhua had announced: “Chinese geologists have discovered 16 large copper, iron, lead and zinc ore deposits along the Qinghai-Tibet Railway route since 1999, said the country’s top geological surveyor.” Meng Xianlai, director of the China Geological Survey (CGS) under the Ministry of Land and Resources told the Chinese agency: “Geologists initially found five non-ferrous metal deposits along the 1,956-kilometre railway with total possible reserves of more than 20 million tons of copper and 10 million tons of lead and zinc.”

In early October 2013, The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) reported that the People’s Armed Police had beaten and detained 40 Tibetans. The local government apparently used threats and intimidation tactics to enforce the ‘mass-line’ policy, a brain child of President Xi Jinping. The TCHRD says: “Touted by the Chinese government as a means to bring the party leadership closer to the needs and concerns of the masses, the reality is the policy is aimed at bringing every Tibetan under the direct surveillance of the party’s human and technological surveillance machinery.”

The human rights organisation mentions: “A host of highly-intrusive mass surveillance campaigns such as the ‘Benefit the Masses, Solidify the Foundation’, ‘The Grid Management’ system, ‘New Socialist Villages’ and the recently-announced ‘Advanced Joint Household’ system are now being implemented in TAR. The official justification behind all these campaigns is that these campaigns would benefit the Tibetans in two ways: by providing long term stability and prosperity.” Those who do not comply with these regulations are severally punished. According to the TCHRD, on 28 September 2013, a serious confrontation occurred between the Chinese security forces and the local Tibetans in Mowa Village in Diru County. The Tibetans rebelled against the compulsory order (under the ‘Nine Must Haves’ campaign) to fly the five-starred red flags during the National Day celebrations.

TCHRD explains: “Local Tibetans in Mowa had refused to fly Chinese flags on their rooftops, a space...”

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6 The Mass Line is the political, organizational and leadership method developed by Mao Zedong. In 2013, the CCP launched a year-long ‘mass line’ education campaign to strengthen Party-people relations. On June 18, Xi Jinping declared that the ‘mass line’ is the lifeline of the Party and the campaign will act as a ‘thorough cleanup’ of harmful and undesirable work styles such as formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance. He urged the Party’s members to boost ties with the people and fight corruption.

7 According to The Tibet Daily, the United Front Department decided to promote the ‘Nine Haves Monasteries’
1. Have a poster of the four national leaders
2. Have a national PRC flag
3. Have a motorable road to the monastery
4. Have a good source of water
5. Have electricity
6. Have a TV set
7. Have the capacity to show films
8. Have a reading room for books
traditionally reserved for sacred prayer flags; instead they threw the flags into a nearby river to express their disapproval. Armed police and the military arrived later to rein in the Tibetans.” This led to an inevitable confrontation. The local authorities in Diru County announced that the Tibetans who refuse to comply with official rules would be punished; Tibetan protesters would have their children expelled from schools; their sick relatives would not receive medical care in hospitals; and they would not get licenses to harvest the famous *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, a pricey caterpillar fungus used as an aphrodisiac in China.

Since 10 September 2013, the Tibetan Autonomous Region authorities have sent some 18,000 Chinese cadres to Diru to intensify the party’s ‘mass line’ policy. These cadres have been conducting ‘patriotic education’ campaigns among local Tibetans, demanding them to pledge their ‘love and gratitude’ to the Party and the nation.

The same day, Wu Yingjie, a TAR Deputy Party Secretary, who has been camping for weeks in Nagchu and Dortho, a Chinese born in Tibet who is Nagchu Prefecture Party Secretary (and TAR’s Standing Committee member) ordered the release of the 40 arrested Tibetans. On 29 September 2013, another protest took place with 4,000 students of County Primary and Middle schools after they were informed about the threat to expel their classmates whose parents had participated in the earlier protests. The County Middle School has later been closed indefinitely.

A day after the National Day (on 2 October), local Tibetans in Diru County once again defied the security forces by putting up human blockades along the major highways which had been occupied by the security forces. They demonstrated against the annihilation of the Tibetan identity. Four Tibetans are said to have been killed by bullets in the demonstrations.

To give an idea of the scale of the ‘monitoring’ of Tibetan activities, Xinhua recently admitted that 60,000 cadres had been stationed in 5,459 villages and 1,877 monastic institutions in TAR. According to TCHRD: “These cadres will either work as village level party secretary or as ‘work team’ cadres running political education campaigns and espionage activities under another controversial campaign known as ‘The Six Ones’. It reminds many of the black day of the Cultural Revolution. What is strange is that despite the visits of so many dignitaries (including Yu Zhengsheng) the situation remains extremely volatile.

### The Party Prepares for the post-Dalai Lama Period

The Communist Party of China seems to be preparing for the period post-Dalai Lama. This translates into the ‘spiritualisation’ of the Communist leadership on the Tibetan plateau. It seems paradoxical, but the atheist Communist Party of China (CCP) is getting increasingly interested in spiritual matters. The CCP has started promoting some reincarnated Lamas, known in China as ‘Living Buddhas’, in a much larger way than in the past.

Ironically, the atheist regime in Beijing seemed more and more interested in the system of governance through ‘reincarnation’. In 2007, the Chinese State Administration for Religious Affairs in Beijing issued State Order No.5 stating the “Management Measures For the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism”. Beijing then started to promote ‘Living Buddhas’ in the name of the Communist Party. Beijing has recently been trying its utmost to increase its control over reincarnations of Tibetan lamas (and ultimately the Dalai Lama), thus legitimising the Communist rule over the Himalayan region. The Party has obviously decided to play the ‘religion’ card to resolve the Tibet issue.

On 11 March, *China Tibet Online* published a photograph of the ‘Chinese’ Panchen Lama,8 Gyaltset Norbu⁹ taken as he was casting his vote. The caption reads: “The 11th Panchen Lama fulfils his role as a Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) member.”¹⁰

The Communist Government seems determined to fully play the ‘Panchen’ card against what it calls ‘the Dalai and his clique’. At that time, the Chinese government announced that the 11th Panchen Lama had been elected member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, China’s top political advisory body: “Three years after making his political debut, [he] has been entrusted with a more important role of advising China on state affairs.”¹¹

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8 Gedun Choeki Nyima, the boy recognised by the Dalai Lama as the real Panchen Lama is still under house arrest somewhere in China.
9 Baingen Qoigyijabu in pinyin
10 [http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2011-03/14/content_22131847.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2011-03/14/content_22131847.htm)
Beijing anticipated that the 23-year old Panchen Lama could contribute politically because of his ‘religious influence’. The Chinese-selected Panchen Lama visited Tibet between 27 August and 13 October. Xinhua reported: “The 23-year-old Panchen Lama, one of the two most revered living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism, has performed religious rituals, including sutra interpretations and giving blessings, for thousands of Tibetan Buddhists at several monasteries in the region since 27 August.”

Who is the other most revered ‘Living Buddha’ in Tibetan Buddhism? The Dalai Lama! Beijing does not like to write his name or even hear his name, though his status seems to be acknowledged. Even more interesting, Xinhua reveals: “The Panchen Lama lived in seclusion at the Zhaxi Lhunbo Lamasery [Tashilhunpo monastery] in Xigaze [Shigatse] Prefecture, the traditional residence of reincarnated Panchen Lamas, from 12 September to 7 October.”

Why in ‘seclusion’ when he is on his ‘annual inspection tour’? This gives some indication about the difficulties Beijing has to control the Tibetans. According to earlier reports, Gyaltse Norbu was staying at the Dechen Phodang, the ‘summer’ residence of the Panchen Lamas, outside the main Tashilhunpo monastery. Some of the photos published by the Chinese news agency showed Gyaltse Norbu performing a puja, but with very few monks around.

Xinhua reminds us: “As a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference National Committee, China’s top political advisory body, the Panchen Lama also held discussions with members of Tibetan religious circles and visited local farmers and schools to gather their opinions on social and religious issues.” No photos were published of these meetings and encounters. Did they really take place?

On 10 October, Gyaltse Norbu visited the Sakya monastery. Here again, the crowds seemed sparse, if not to say nonexistent. The Lama is said to have looked at some palm-leaf manuscripts of Buddhist texts, met a few devotes and ‘worshipped’ inside one of the temples. Where were the Tibetans? Gyaltse Norbu’s other public appearance was at the end of August in the Jokhang Cathedral in Lhasa. At that time, he had discreetly met with the TAR Party officials. This was not reported in the Chinese English media.

The question is ‘why such a low profile visit/inspection tour’ after all the noise in March? After all, Gyaltse Norbu is supposedly the main tool for the Chinese propaganda in Tibet. Has something gone awry?

This perhaps explains an interview given by Prof. Jin Wei of the Central Communist Party School to a Hong Kong weekly, earlier this year. She said: “Under the current circumstances, there will be ‘Twin Dalai Lamas’, with one reincarnation recognised abroad and one domestically, leading to more complicated issues, having great impact on the stability and security of the Tibetan region. If the ‘Dalai Lama impasse’ can be broken, we should fight to have the Dalai Lama reincarnation arise within the country. Although we can use ‘Drawing Lots from the Golden Urn’ to prevent the reincarnation from arising overseas, there is a historical precedent for Living Buddhas designating their own successors. We must use every effort to avoid the embarrassment of the ‘Twin Panchen Lama’ event.”

She admits that the ‘Golden Urn’ process was manipulated; this has been described in detail by Arjia Rinpoche, a former Abbot of Kumbim monastery who participated in the ‘ceremony’. Arjia Rinpoche, who now lives in exile in the US, recounts: “I boarded a chartered jet for the return trip to Beijing. On the airplane, Li Tieying, the Chinese delegate, called Jamyang Shepa Rinpoche and me into a private sitting room. Ye Xiaowen was also there. Both of them looked especially pleased with themselves. Li Tieying placed the event in the context of great moments in China’s history, while Ye Xiaowen dutifully took notes. After a while Li Tieying, looking a bit tired, donned an oxygen mask in the unpressurized cabin and went to sleep.”

Then, the true story came out: “Ye Xiaowen, a large, dark-complexioned man, continued to chat informally with us. Exuberant with the success of the past several days, he unwittingly revealed a shocking secret: ‘When the Dalai Lama announced the name of his chosen candidate, the government immediately sent out charter jets, usually reserved for members of the Politburo, to the birthplaces of the three final candidates in the Naqu district of Tibet. They put the boys and their families on the three jets and whisked them away into hiding’. He proudly continued, ‘When we made our selection we left nothing to chance. In the silk pouches of the ivory pieces we put a bit of cotton at the bottom of one of

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12 Head of the Chinese delegation during the selection process.
13 Minister in the State Administration for Religious Affairs. He was responsible for the selection of a new Panchen Lama.
ISSUES

them, so it would be a little higher than the others and the right candidate would be chosen.' We were
dumbfounded! Certainly we had had our suspicions,
but we never expected proof that the process was
completely rigged. Goose bumps rose on my skin,
but Jamyang Shepa Rinpoche and I kept silent, our
heads lowered, pretending we had heard nothing
unusual. After we were dismissed and heading back
to our seats, Jamyang Shepa Rinpoche looked at me
incredulously and shook his head."

But now, even the well-scripted selection of a Chinese
Panchen Lama seems to fail; if the trustworthy
candidate is not that dependable, the situation
becomes delicate for the Chinese authorities. Further,
if everything had worked as planned by the Party,
Gyaltsen Norbu being a 'Nagchu boy', he should
have been the one to go and extinguish the fires in
the restive Prefecture. In other words, the 'selection'
process through the Golden Urn may reveal itself a
complete flop for Beijing. It is probably why
'thinkers' such as Prof. Jin Wei have started offering
of other solutions.

In the meantime, the Panchen Lama selected by the
Dalai Lama remains under house arrest. On 26 and
27 September, in Geneva, the UN Committee on the
Rights of the Child reviewed China’s record,
including in Tibet, as part of its compliance review
under the UN Child Rights Convention.

International Campaign for Tibet reported: "The
Committee questioned the Chinese delegation on the
whereabouts of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was
disappeared by Chinese authorities in 1995 after he
was recognised by the Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen
Lama. The Committee asked if China’s contention
that the Panchen Lama had been given higher
education and living a happy life had been confirmed
by an independent authority, as had already been
asked by the Committee in 2005. The Chinese
government refused to answer this question".

One more embarrassment for Beijing! All this creates
an atmosphere of instability not favourable to
stability. One can understand Beijing, the legitimacy
of their 'liberation' of Tibet may be postponed for
several decades if the Dalai Lama takes birth in India.

This emerges from a secret Chinese document which
has been smuggled out of Tibet and later translated
by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and
Democracy, in Dharamsala. The document, dated
October 2008 is called “A Handbook on Psychological
Counselling and Protection During Stability Maintenance
Work in Tibetan Areas”. It was drafted by the medical
staff department of the Sichuan’s PAP Corps. Its
objective is to counsel the paramilitary forces doing
‘maintenance stability work in Tibetan areas’, a
euphemism for repression of peaceful gatherings on
the Tibetan plateau. The ‘handbook’ was prepared
to take care of the psychological health of the armed
police. Various hospitals and heath institutes
participated in drafting the document which
explained: “The purpose of this handbook is to create
awareness on common psychological problems faced
by PAP soldiers in stability maintenance in Tibetan
areas and to identify common psychological
problems to strengthen the ways and means to
handle such problems while carrying out stability
maintenance tasks” Because the PAP’s 'psychiatric
well-being is needed to maintain stability'.

The handbook answers the questions of the stressed
soldiers in a question and answer format. First
question: How to ease mental stress faced by stability
maintenance troops in Tibetan areas? The answer
gives the background of 'the work': “Ever since the
soldiers began their responsibility of maintaining
stability in Tibetan areas, despite all the risks and
dangers, on the whole they have kept a determined
mind, without succumbing to fear, and made lots of
efforts bearing all hardships.”

But it is not so easy to control unarmed non-violent
Tibetan crowds. The handbook says: “However, the
environment of Tibetan areas is very unique and
special, and carrying out activities there entails lots
of complexities.”

Indeed, 60 years after the so-called Liberation of
Tibet, the Chinese stress out as soon they reach the
plateau. The handbook goes in detail into different
cases of severe headaches, nightmares, flashbacks of
brutal episodes such as beating (self-immolations had
not begun when the manual was written): “if you
face unbearable experiences such as insomnia, it
would have an extremely negative impact on your
responsibility to carry out work successfully.” The
unnecessary psychological traumas should be
resolved in an appropriate time, says the manual. It
explains further: “If you are suffering flashbacks, you
should close your eyes and imagine that you are
zooming in on the scene like a camera. It may feel
uncomfortable. Then zoom all the way out until you

Post-trauma Stress Disorders

One strange phenomenon has to be mentioned here.
It demonstrates the difficulty faced by Beijing to
‘stabilize’ Tibet. While Beijing’s propaganda likes to
state that the Tibetans enjoy ‘unprecedented freedoms’, its People’s Armed Police (PAP) suffers
in an unprecedented manner on the Roof of the
World.
cannot see anything. Then tell yourself the flashback has gone.”

It appears now that special teams have been visiting the region, spending months at a time counselling Chinese troops.

**Some Conclusions**

First, let us see the ‘stability’ of the Tibetan plateau.

In May 2013, Meng Jianzhu, a member of the all-powerful Communist Party’s Politburo, in-charge of the security in China visited Zhejiang Province. He spoke to the CCP’s cadres about developing the ‘Fengqiao Experience’ to be emulated elsewhere in China.

**What is this Fengqiao Experience?**

Fengqiao is a town in Zhuji City in Zhejiang Province. According to *The People’s Daily*, in Fengqiao “the Party and government bear their respective responsibilities for definite work, relying on the masses, diffusing contradictions, safeguarding stability and promoting development to ensure that minor problems can be settled without going out of the village, major problems can be resolved without going out of the town and contradictions are not passed on to the leadership”. The Party’s conclusion is “the experience of Fengqiao is worth being popularised”. It is clear that China faces such a serious problem in Nagchu and other areas on the Tibetan plateau that it is unable to implement the Fengqiao experience. Beijing has to constantly intervene in Tibetan issues, which often gives a bad image to the Party.

This is a big thorn in the Middle Kingdom’s foot. India should be aware of it and keep watching how the situation develops.

Second issue: the infrastructure development on the plateau.

The Indian Defence Minister A.K. Antony recently assured the Parliament: “After ‘years of neglect’, India is fast developing capabilities near the China border, including building of roads, raising of two mountain Divisions, many new airfields and landing grounds.” Mr. Antony conceded that China was ‘superior’ in terms of border infrastructure as India, “because of the 1962 war, India was late in deciding on building roads and other capabilities near the Line of Actual Control.” On the ground the situation remains grim and the ministerial promises may take time to materialize.

On the other side of the border, two more airports have recently been put into service on the Tibetan plateau. One is the Daocheng Yading airport, located in Daocheng County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province which started operating on 16 September. On 19 August, Xinhua had reported the arrival of an A319 passenger plane from Sichuan Airlines which “marked the opening of the Xiahe Airport of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. It is the first ‘civil’ aviation airport built in ethnic [Tibetan] areas of Gansu Province as well as the only plateau airport at an elevation of 3,198 metres in Gansu,” said the official news agency.

Then, the construction of a new airport to serve Dawu Township, capital of Golog (Golok) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP) in Qinghai Province will begin later this year. For Beijing, it will also help control the ‘restiveness’ of the Tibetans in the area.

One could cite many more examples of Chinese advance in terms of infrastructure, nonetheless the fact remains that after more than 60 years, Beijing has not been able to ‘liberate’ Tibet; the situation is extremely worrisome for the leadership.

In the remote likelihood of a conflict, the ‘instability’ on the plateau would in some way, balance India’s unpreparedness on the Himalayan slopes.