

Mao's return to power passes through India

People may ask if there is contradiction to abandon a territory gained by heroic battle. Does it mean that the heroic fighters shed their blood in vain and to no purpose? This is to put the wrong question. Does one eat to no purpose simply because he relieves himself later? Does one sleep in vain because one wakes up and goes about? I do not think the questions should be asked thus; rather one should keep on eating and sleeping or fighting. These are illusions born out of subjectivism and formalism and do not exist in real life.

Mao Zedong

One angle which has been insufficiently studied is the Chinese angle of the 1962 war. Why did China suddenly decide to slap Nehru? Who decided to inflict the worst possible humiliation on India?

Historical sources are still sparse, but going through some of the documents listed at the end of this paper one can get a fairly good idea of the Chinese motivations or more exactly the 'political' compulsions which pushed the Great Helmsman into this win-win venture.

This paper goes into the internal struggles within China between 1959 and 1962 and the role of Mao Zedong during these crucial years, with an emphasis on the tumultuous year (at least for the Party) 1962 and its consequences for Sino-Indian relations which culminated in an armed conflict in October-November 1962 and the circumstances under which Communist China went to this war.

A study of the CIA, Russian and East European archives, already partially opened, throws new light on the real motives behind the Chinese attack.

Further, in the early 1990's, a few Chinese historians gave their take on the events which led to the War.

The Great Leap Forward

One of the greatest crimes against humanity was kicked off by Mao Zedong in February 1958. Known as the 'Great Leap Forward', it resulted in the largest man-made starvation episode in the history of mankind. By initiating the Leap Forward, the Great Helmsman's objective was to surpass Great Britain in industrial production within 15 years. For the purpose, every Chinese had to start producing steel at home, with a backyard furnace. In agriculture, Mao thought that very large communes would cater for a many-fold increase in the cereal production to make China into a heaven of abundance. Introduced and managed with frantic fanaticism, it was not long before the program collapsed. However, the more the plan failed, the more the party cadres provided inflated production figures to Mao and consequently additional millions died of starvation. Officials had no choice but to do so if they wanted to keep their jobs.

Only one man tried to raise his voice against the general madness and sycophancy. This was Marshall Peng Dehuai. The old companion of Mao (from the Long March days) was then defence minister.

Marshal Peng was a simple, honest and straightforward officer¹.

At the Lushan Conference² in July 1959 on the occasion of an informal discussion about the Great Leap Forward, Peng wrote a long personal letter to Mao about the tragedy that he had witnessed in the countryside and the misery of the people. Instead of discussing the letter with him, Mao

¹ The Dalai Lama once told me: 'He was my favourite Chinese'.

² Officially the 8th Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The Conference's name comes from the name of the resort on Mount Lu in Jiangxi Province.

distributed Peng's personal communication to all the Party cadres and Old Peng was soon 'purged'. The Chairman could not bear to be 'criticized'. The Great Leap Forward continued till 1961/1962. Some books, such *The Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine* by Jasper Becker have brilliantly documented this human tragedy.

As tension increased on the Indian border during the first months of 1962, did Nehru realize that China was a starving nation? In fact, very few grasped what was going on in China at that time. On his return from a visit to Beijing in 1961, François Mitterrand, who later became the president of France, wrote: "Mao is a humanist...a new type of man in whom doctrinal rigour is allied with a vigilant realism."

Outside China not many knew that by the end of 1961 Mao was practically out of power. It was Lui Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping who were ruling the country, struggling to introduce economical reforms, first in the field of agriculture.

Dr Zhisui Li, Mao's personal physician, recounts that in 1961 "[Mao was depressed over the agricultural crisis and angry with the party elite, upon whom he was less able now to work his will, Mao was in temporary eclipse, spending most of his time in bed."

It is not difficult to imagine the state of China after three years of extensive famine. Frank Dikötter, a scholar at the University of Hong Kong has recently published a new book on the subject, *Mao's Great Famine*³. It is based on his studies of the Chinese regional archives.

To the question, 'How many died?' Dikötter replies: "There will never be a satisfactory answer to that question, if only because in the midst of the great famine so few reliable statistics were kept. So far, every noteworthy estimate has been based on the official figures on population size and on birth and death rates for 1950-82, published for the first time in the 1984

³ Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine*, (London, Bloomsbury Publishing Co., 2010)

Statistical Yearbook by the National Statistical Bureau, or on the official figures of the 1953, 1964 and 1982 censuses. Immediately following the publication of the Statistical Yearbook, Basil Ashton used the official evidence to propose a figure of 30 million premature deaths during the 1958-62 period, when the overall population stood at roughly 650 million. Judith Banister, a professional demographer, also looked at the population statistics and concluded that an estimated 30 million excess deaths appeared during 1958-61."

His final conclusions are that older studies have generally underestimated the number of casualties. It could therefore be double: "It is very difficult to venture an alternative death toll, all the more since so many of the key sets of archival statistics remain prudently under lock and key, far removed from the eyes of prying historians. But there is enough archival evidence, from a sufficiently large diversity of party units, to confirm that the figure of 43 to 46 million premature deaths proposed by Chen Yizi, who was a senior member of a large working group that sifted through internal party documents around 1980, is in any likelihood a reliable estimate. The death toll thus stands at a minimum of 45 million excess deaths.

It could be even worse than that. Some historians speculate that the true figure stands as high as 50 to 60 million people. It is unlikely that we will know the full extent of the disaster until the archives are completely opened. But these are the figures informally discussed by a number of party historians. And these are also, according to Chen Yizi, the figures cited at internal meetings of senior party members under [Premier] Zhao Ziyang. Yu Xiguang, an independent researcher with a great deal of experience, puts the figure at 55 million excess deaths."

Interestingly, the People's Liberation Army figures are unknown and therefore not taken into account. Some scholars said that Mao and his Defence Minister Lin Biao continued to feed their troops relatively well.

It is probably true for those posted opposite Taiwan and on the Tibetan plateau, though there are very few studies on the subject. However one point remains: how could a nation wage war against another when its people were so weak and tens of millions were dying of hunger?

This was probably one of the reasons why in September/October 1962, the leadership in Beijing decided to slap India and then quickly return to their barracks. But I will come back to this later.

The Seven Thousand Cadres Conference: Mao withdraws

Nineteen sixty-two was a very significant year for India and China and for Mao Zedong. It ended up with the attack by the People's Liberation Army on the Indian positions in NEFA and Ladakh and dealt the most formidable blow India has ever received since her Independence.

In January, an expanded Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was convened in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Known as the Seven Thousand cadres' conference, it was to discuss the shortcomings of Great Leap Forward and provide the regional leaders a chance to express their grievances. By that time, Lui Shaoqi was in command as the Chairman of the People's Republic.

The Conference was attended by party and military cadres from the regional bureaus, provinces, cities, prefectures, and counties, together with heads of the industry. Dr Li, who wrote the biography of Mao remembered: "The participants were not the select party elite who made the decisions about how the country would be run but the cadres responsible for implementing higher-level decisions in their local areas. In Beijing, they ate good food, stayed in good hotels, and were well entertained at night. The leadership wanted their support⁴."

⁴ Li Zhisui, Dr, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (London: Arrow, 1996)

As the head of Chinese State, Liu Shaoqi was the master of ceremonies. On the first day, he spoke for three hours. Though Lui did not attack Mao directly, he explained that in some provinces the farmers believed that the 'difficulties' were 30 % natural and 70 % man-made. The term 'man-made disaster' was in itself an indictment of the Great Helmsman.

Lui stated: "In general our successes have been primary, shortcomings and errors are secondary, they occupy a second position. I wonder if we can say that, generally speaking, the ratio of achievements to setbacks is seven to three, although each region is different. One finger versus nine fingers does not apply to every place. There are only a small number of regions where mistakes are equal to one finger and successes equal to nine fingers."

Mao was deeply unhappy; the 'one finger versus nine fingers' quote was referring to earlier speeches by Mao on the situation in the countryside (nine fingers were fine, only one was facing problems).

But Liu continued: "In general, we cannot say it is merely one finger, but rather three, and in some places it is even more, for instance in the Xinyang region [in Henan] or in the Tianshui region [in Gansu]."

Dr Li recalled what went on behind the scene: "Liu Shaoqi ...consulted Mao about the speech he was preparing for the Seven Thousand cadres' conference. Mao said he did not want to see it. He wanted the meeting to be 'democratic'. The participants would be encouraged to present their own opinions, based on their experiences in their own jurisdictions, and the draft of Liu's speech would then be revised on the basis of what the participants had said."

Mao probably did not expect that he would be implicitly attacked. Liu who had the support of the majority of the cadres contradicted Mao's explanation that the country's economic disasters had been caused by the weather. He said: "Natural disasters hit only one region of the country ...Man-made disasters strike the whole country. We must remember this lesson."

Another thing that Mao did not appreciate was the move to rehabilitate the Communist officials who had opposed 'left adventurism' during the Great Leap Forward, in other words those who had denounced the madness of the scheme. This first and foremost applied to the courageous Marshall Peng Dehuai.

Dr Li later wrote: "I knew the Chairman was furious. 'He's not using the class standpoint,' Mao complained to me right after the meeting. '[Lui is] not addressing the question of whether we are going the capitalist road or the socialist road. He [Lui] talks about natural disasters versus man-made disasters. This kind of talk is a disaster in itself".

At that point in time, one person stood up and defended Mao: this was Lin Biao who had replaced Peng as Defence Minister. Lin, who would lead the attack on India a few months later, asserted: "The thoughts of Chairman Mao are always correct." This newly found alliance between Mao and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Chief was, no doubt, one of the most important factors in the 1962 conflict. According to Mao's personal physician: "Mao, as usual, rarely attended. While administrators from all over the country met nearby to pour out their complaints, Mao spent most of his time in the Great Hall of the People's Room 118, ensconced on his extra-large bed, 'resting' with the young women assembled there for his pleasure, reading the daily transcripts of the proceedings that were taking place in the same building."

After a month, as the meeting could not conclude, Mao decided that it was enough: he would withdraw for sometime ... to stage a comeback against 'left adventurism' and the 'capitalist roaders' later.

He was already preparing his return and his counterattack. He knew by heart *The Art of War* of Sunzi. He would demonstrate his mastery in the following months.

Chairman Mao's retreat

With Mao not attending, the Seven Thousand Cadres' Conference was an opportunity for officials who had suffered during the Great Leap to complain openly: "A giddy euphoria set in as they got to speak their minds", remembers Dr Li.

Though the Great Helmsman was never directly mentioned, the ultra-leftist policies of the Great Leap Forward were openly denounced. But in China to attack the Emperor's policies has always been considered as an attack on the Emperor.

The Chairman remained contemptuous; he told his doctor: "[They] complain all day long and get to watch plays at night. They eat three full meals a day-and fart. That's what Marxism-Leninism means to them."

Finally, Mao had no choice but to admit some 'mistakes', though "no one, so far as I knew, ever directly suggested to Mao that he offer a self-criticism. It was part of his political strategy", remembers Dr Li.

Mao had always been convinced that he had not done anything wrong.

However, as Dr Li says: "He intended to remain the center, the nucleus, of the nation even as he retreated to the second line." Further, he knew that Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were not loyal to him: "The country had two chairmen⁵, two centers, two nuclei, and that Mao could not accept."

As a great strategist, he decided to take the responsibility of the Great Leap Forward. It was purely a way to reassert his supremacy in the Party.

On January 30, 1962, he delivered a speech: "For all errors directly or indirectly attributable to the central authority, I am responsible ...because I am Chairman of the central authority." However, he never listed or even mentioned by name 'his' mistakes; he nevertheless said that "I don't mean that others should try to evade their responsibilities, indeed, many others also have a share of the responsibility. But I should be the first person to

⁵ Mao Zedong was Chairman of the CCP and Liu Shaoqi, Chairman of the PRC.

assume responsibility for the errors." Lui and Deng were clearly targeted, especially after Mao had attacked the 'household contract' for the farmers⁶. It was the first (and probably the last) time Mao 'accepted' that he had done something wrong. As the Great Strategist was slowly 'retiring' in his room with his female attendants, "Party and state operated increasingly independent of Mao", recalled Dr Li.

It was the occasion to start restructuring the agricultural sector according to the 'household contract' scheme, to change the production pattern by reducing the size of communes and restart normal farming practices. In February and March 1962, the State Commission on Science and Technology convened a meeting to rehabilitate the scientists and the intellectuals. Mao was not happy, but the new leadership did not ask his opinion.

Vice-Premier Chen Yi even said: "There is something other people won't dare to say, but I will. China needs intellectuals, needs scientists. For all these years, they have been unfairly treated. They should be restored to the position they deserve."

It was a direct insult to Mao who started recruiting to prepare his counter attack. One of the first to join the Chinese leader was Chen Boda who had praised the Great Leap Forward saying that the dawn of Chinese communism had finally arrived: "China was [now] accomplishing in one day what took twenty years to accomplish under capitalism. China had been transformed. Communism was around the corner."

⁶ According to Wikipedia: "In traditional Maoist organization of the rural economy ...farmers are given a quota of goods to produce. They were compensated for meeting the quota. Going beyond the quota rarely produced a sizeable economic reward. In the early 1980s peasants were given drastically reduced quotas. What food they grew beyond the quota was sold in free market at unregulated prices. This was an instant success, quickly causing one of the largest increases in standard of living for such large number of people in such short time.

About of the millions of deaths, Chen considered it as collateral: "This is an unavoidable phenomenon in our forward march," but for Dr Li, Chen was a "mean, petty and ambitious man". That was the type of personage Mao liked to have around him.

Mao used to confide to his doctor: "Some people are talking about a household contract system, which is really nothing but a revival of capitalism. We have governed this country for all these years, but we are still able to control only two thirds of our society. One third remains in the hands of our enemy or sympathizers of our enemy. The enemy can buy people off, not to mention all those comrades who have married the daughters of landlords."

All these events inside the Middle Kingdom had consequences on the foreign policy of China which like the agricultural and cultural policies, show signs of opening up of the new leadership to the world. The relations with India were inevitably to be affected, positively in a first time and for the worse after the return of Mao.

The Three Reconciliations and the One Reduction

In the early 1960's, Wang Jiaxiang was still one of the senior-most leaders of the CCP. Two decades earlier, he had attended Sun Yat-sen University, a Soviet institution which trained young revolutionary leaders. While in Moscow, Wang founded 'The 28 Bolsheviks', a group whose objective was to bring the Soviet revolution to the Middle Kingdom. These '28 Bolsheviks' were eventually sent back to China to take leadership of CCP.

After the founding of the PRC in 1949, Wang was appointed first as Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Soviet Union, and then returned to Beijing as the Under Secretary of the Foreign Ministry.

In 1951, Wang became Minister in the International Liaison Department which dealt with foreign communist parties. As such he had an important

role in giving directions to the foreign policy of China. In 1956, he was promoted as Commissioner and Secretary of the Central Committee of CCP. During the Lushan Meeting in 1959, he objected to the catastrophic agriculture policy of Mao. Once, when one of his colleagues told him about the suffering of the people that he had witnessed during the Great Leap Forward, it is said that Wang started weeping. While his close friend, Zhang Wentian⁷ incurred the same fate as Peng Dehuai and was purged. Wang managed to temporarily survive; he even remained an important voice in foreign policy.

Wang's grand idea was to reconstruct China. For this, it was necessary for the People's Republic to have a 'softer' foreign policy line towards the United States, the Soviet Union, and India. Wang also thought that China should spend less on 'foreign aid', when China itself was going through such difficult times. His reasoning was: "Why to invest in propaganda in other Communist countries to try to rival Soviet Union when peasants are starving and the country needed to be reconstructed?"

Wang thought that the Government should issue a statement defining the general principles of its foreign policy; he believed that peaceful coexistence needed to be stressed.

His theory became known as the 'Three Reconciliations and the One Reduction'⁸. The three reconciliations were with the US, the Soviet Union and India and the reduction referred to unnecessary foreign expenditures. Wang Jiexiang spoke with Liu Shaoqi, the boss of the Party in the absence of Mao and Lui apparently agreed with him. On 27 February 1962, Wang put his thoughts in a letter to Zhou Enlai and other senior leaders. The letter was not sent to Mao who had 'withdrawn' after the Seven Thousand Cadres' Conference.

⁷ Also one of the '28 Bolsheviks'

⁸ *san he yi shao* in Chinese.

A Chinese scholar, Niu Jun studied Wang's letter in a Working Paper⁹ published by the Cold War International History Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. I shall quote from his paper: "Shortly after the talk by Liu Shaoqi, on February 27 [1962], Wang Jiexiang wrote a letter to Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yi expressing his opinions regarding China's foreign policy. This letter has not yet been publicly disclosed, but its contents have been widely used in many studies. Wang Jiexiang subsequently wrote additional reports raising ideas on important issues concerning Chinese foreign policy. Wang Jiexiang's letter and reports give the only comprehensive and systematic review of Chinese foreign policy available to date."

It is greatly helpful to understand China's relations with India, especially at a time when Delhi had adopted a 'Forward Policy' for its Northern frontiers. Niu Jun continues: "Wang Jiexiang's recommendations can be divided into two parts. First, he attempted a full-scale, systematic review of some deeper issues in the previous foreign policy, including its fundamental goal, a basic judgment about the probability of a world war, an understanding of the relationship between war, peace, and revolution, an understanding of the plausibility of peaceful co-existence, etc. Second, he offered suggestions about further adjustments."

Niu Jun explains that Wang Jiexiang challenged to some extent the usual Communist "foreign policy route, which was probably the main reason why Mao Zedong later sharply criticized his views. To Mao, a concrete policy may be discussed, but the fundamental theoretical concept should never be questioned."

In the second part of his letter, Wang enunciated the fundamental principles of foreign policy strategy and "the principles dealing with some concrete

⁹ 1962: *The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy* published by the Cold War International History Project, (Working Paper # 48); see,

issues. In hindsight, it is evident that the policies the Chinese leaders adopted before the summer of 1962 were in accordance with the strategic principles laid out by Wang Jiaxiang."

The Chinese scholar believes that: "Some of his suggestions for dealing with certain concrete issues, however, became impractical as the situation changed. For example, Wang Jiaxiang suggested that new methods be employed to break through the impasse over the Sino-Indian border conflict."

The proposal for peace talks on the border issue in the correspondence between the Governments of India and China in the spring and summer of 1962 were probably a direct consequence of this new policy, though by the end of August, the tone changed and threats were added to the proposal for negotiations.

Niu Jun said that "the suggestions of Wang Jiaxiang stemmed from common domestic and international backgrounds. They shared the same principle, which is to argue for a more pragmatic and stable foreign policy, creating a favorable international environment for solving China's economic difficulties."

For the Chinese scholar, "the deteriorating international situation hindered the ability of Chinese leaders to implement some of those policies and even forced them to adopt decisive methods, including the use of force".

However we shall see that it is mainly the return of Mao Zedong on the center stage and the 'leftisation' of China's foreign policy which brought the renouncement to the policy of 'peaceful coexistence' and ultimately the armed conflict with India. Niu admits that "the border incidents were not the main causes that forced Mao Zedong to shift foreign policy [later in the year]."

In fact, it is definitely the other way around: because of the changes in the ideological basis, the foreign and defence policy of China hardened; the conflict with India was the ultimate consequence.

Wang's policies however became visible at the World Peace Congress held in Moscow from 9 to 14 July; according to the US scholar MacFarquhar in his *Origin of the Cultural Revolution*¹⁰: "[China and Soviet Union] acted with restraint. Though both sides maintained their positions some agreements were reached."

Regarding India, the same scholar explained: "Wang Jiaxiang seemed to be seeking at least a partial revival of the 'Bandung line' of the mid-1950s, according to which non-communist independent nations of the Third World were regarded as allies in the overarching struggle against imperialism. The line had effectively been discarded in the aftermath of the 1959 Sino-Indian border clash, and as a result of the Sino-Soviet dispute.

In his argument with Khrushchev, Mao had rejected the possibility of 'peaceful transition' from bourgeois regimes like Nehru's India to proletarian dictatorship and insisted that they would have to be overthrown by revolution."

On June 3, *The People's Daily* published a rather moderate editorial on Sino-Indian relations; it was one more sign of the softer line in Beijing's foreign policy.

The Geneva conference on Laos is another example of the (temporary) change of wind in Beijing. On 23 July, the International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos was signed in Geneva between 14 states and Laos. It was the outcome of the International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question which lasted from May 16 to July 23. The agreement was

¹⁰ Roderick MacFarquhar, *The origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Volume III (New York, the Columbia University Press, 1997). Chapters 12 and 13, (*Mao changes the Signals* and *War in the Himalayas, Crisis in the Caribbean*) are particularly enlightening.

signed by both the Chinese Foreign Minister and the American Secretary of State. Chen Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister affirmed that the peaceful outcome of the issue was "a major contribution to the cause of world peace". This policy unfortunately did not last long, mainly due to the internal power struggle and the return of the Great Helmsman, as we shall see. However, it seems obvious that the Sino-Indian conflict would have not degenerated the way it did, if Wang Jiaxiang's policies had been followed.

The Taiwan factor

A factor which played an indirect, but important role in the Sino-Indian conflict is the attitude of the United States towards the Guomindang (GMD) government in Taiwan.

At the beginning of May 1962, some GMD agents had begun to infiltrate into the mainland. The US Commander-in-Chief in the Pacific and CIA's officials in Taipei requested Washington's support to 'return to the mainland'. For many in Taiwan, this was very much on the cards; a consumer tax was even levied for the purpose by the Taipei government. The island's Army was requested to prepare operational plans and purchase of naval and amphibious vessels.

Taipei knew about the difficulties faced by the Communist regime after the Great Leap Forward and the intense power struggle at the highest levels of the CCP. Was it not the right time to re-conquer the mainland?

According to Roderick MacFarquhar: "All this Nationalist excitement reportedly caused a certain amount of panic among Chinese leaders, and it resulted in a massive reinforcement of the PLA positions in Fujian province opposite Quemoy, perhaps by as many as half-a-million troops, in case a full-scale assault should take place. General Luo Ruiqing, the PLA Chief-of-Staff believed that it was not a question of whether there would be a war,

but how the PRC should fight the war: repel the enemy before he reached the coast or lure him deep into the hinterland.”

The crucial question for the Communist leadership was: would the American troops support their Taiwanese ally. Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai decided that the only way to ascertain the facts was to ask the Americans directly. At that time, the only conduit with the United States was through the Chinese Embassy in Poland.

On June 22, Wang Bingnan, the clever Chinese Ambassador to Poland invited John Cabot, his US counterpart, for tea the next day¹¹. Despite the short notice, Cabot accepted. Cabot’s instruction was, “first exhaust everything Wang has on his mind”. The meeting was held in a reception room in the Chinese Embassy with just a Chinese interpreter who served for both sides and a US note taker.

After referring to the situation in Southeast Asia and expressing some concern about the US military build-up in South Vietnam and in Thailand, Wang took up the main issue: Taiwan.

A cable sent to Washington a day later by the US Ambassador reads: “Wang then said his government wished to call attention to situation in Taiwan area. Chiang Kai-shek clique was preparing invasion Chinese Mainland and this preparation had support US Government. He then discussed at some length military preparations on Taiwan including increase US military and economic aid. He said US playing with fire, such attack would not benefit US and US would bear responsibility for it.”

After expressing his pleasure at the progress on Laos¹² and the reduction of tension in the region, John Cabot said that he was authorized to state that

¹¹ The US State Department, Foreign Relations of the United States (1969–1976), Volume XVII (Washington DC); see <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v17>

¹² As we have seen, the International Agreement on the Neutrality of Laos would be signed in Geneva on July 23, 1962 between 14 states and Laos.

the "US Government had no intention of supporting any GRC [Government of the Republic of China] attack on Mainland under existing circumstances. I [pointed out [that] GRC committed not to attack without our [US] consent. I then noted ChiCom [Chinese Communist] military build-up opposite Taiwan and said if this defensive, it was unobjectionable."

Cabot reminded Wang that the United States had a formal treaty with GRC and also of the 1955 resolution regarding the defense of Taiwan and Pescadores¹³.

He further added that "any effort to take off-shore islands would require major military operation which could not be easily limited and in such event there was serious danger US forces would become involved."

The issue was so important for Beijing that the Chinese Ambassador requested his counterpart to repeat his statement.

Cabot did so: the US had "no intention of committing or supporting aggression against [the Chinese] side anywhere" and brought up the US proposals for "an agreement renouncing use of force by other side".

Wang came back on his point: he had received some information that Chiang Kai-shek was planning to attack the mainland. He strongly believed that without a US support, Chiang would not dare to attack; he wanted assurance from Taiwan also.

The US Ambassador said he could not speak for the GRC, though he assured Wang that that his country had no intentions of supporting any attack on Mainland 'under existing circumstances': "If GRC forces invaded the Mainland it would be contrary to their commitments to us and I said I did not believe they would do it".

¹³ The Formosa Resolution was passed by the Congress on 29 January 1955. The Resolution pledged that the US would protect Taiwan. The US President was authorized to employ American forces to defend Formosa and the Pescadores Island.

At the end, the US Ambassador reiterated that an attack from the GRC would be without support of US: "We would clearly disassociate ourselves from any such attack." But Wang continued to insist: "a simple statement of disassociation would not suffice."

When Cabot replied that the US would also like to have some assurances from Beijing that they will not attack Taiwan, there was long silence and then Wang replied, "the question of [our] attack does not arise".

The US side just regretted that it was not possible to have reciprocal assurances, Wang told him: "we have not faced the problem on our side by seeking a settlement by force."

A note¹⁴ was sent to President Kennedy on June 24: "Ball and Harriman believe the Chinese Communist demarche was made because of anxiety that the Nationalists might invade. They believe the Communists are also concerned about local unrest in the area into which Communist troops have been moved."

Many years later when Wang Bingnan wrote his memoirs; he admitted that the American decision conveyed to him by Cavot "had a great impact on policy decisions at home".

It was clear for the Chinese leadership that there was no question of opening two fronts at the same time. With the US assurance that Taipei would not receive support from Washington to attack China 'under existing circumstances', Taipei was left to try to re-conquer the Mainland on its own; this was not practically and militarily possible.

In the coming months, it would be an important factor which would help to take the decision for an eventual armed showdown with India.

The return of Mao: the Beidaihe Conference

¹⁴ Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, China Security, 1962-1963, also <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v17>.

Dr Li who continued to follow Mao day and night, knew that the wind was changing: "In the summer of 1962, [Mao] emerged from his retreat. When he told me he would call two major party conferences in the upcoming months, I knew that his counteroffensive was about to begin. What I did not know was who would be attacked first."

In May, the Finance and Economics Small Group prepared a report to be taken at the next work conference to sort out agricultural problems. It was the occasion. It is not clear if it is Mao who called the conference in the sea resort of Beidaihe or if the decision originated from the Small Group, but as soon as the Conference opened, Mao took the helm.

As the Harvard scholar MacFarquhar explains: "He [Mao] discarded the agenda and substituted his own: class, contradictions, and the current situation. He focused his attack on the three winds: the wind of excessive pessimism, the wind of going it alone in the countryside, and the wind of reversing correct verdicts."

Liu Shaoqi had suggested the setting up of a core group of twenty-two senior leaders to discuss sensitive issues. Mao agreed at the start, though soon he suggested the names of some of his supporters to be co-opted. According to his physician, during the previous months, Mao had spent much of his time looking for a theoretical justification to attack, in Marxist terms, those who had opposed him earlier in the year: "Like all Chinese leaders, he needed Marxist morality to justify his actions. By relying on Marxist morality, he could mobilize the masses against the leaders he wanted to purge."

On the first day, he gave a grand speech on *Classes, the Situation, and the Contradiction*. His main argument was that 'classes' still remained after the introduction of socialism:

Do classes actually exist in a socialist state? There are people in other countries [meaning Soviet Union] who hold that classes no longer exist and the Party is thus the Party of the whole people, and not a class

instrument, not the instrument of the proletariat ...Does this apply to a country like ours? Let us discuss this question. I have spoken to several comrades from the large regions about this, and understand that there are some people who are very surprised when they hear that classes still exist in China.

Even after the collectivization of property¹⁵ class struggle persists, argued Mao. Contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between the capitalist road and the socialist road, continue too, he warned, threatening the capitalist roaders:¹⁶

If we recognize the existence of classes in our country, we should also recognize the existence of a contradiction between socialism and capitalism. The vestiges of classes are long-lasting, as are contradictions. ...If there were no classes there would be no Marxism, and it would turn into a theory of no contradictions, a theory of no conflict. There are at the moment some peasants who are kicking up a fuss and wanting to go it alone, but just what is the percentage? Some say 20 or 30 per cent ...In the final analysis, are we going to take the socialist road or the capitalist road? Do we want rural co-operativization or don't we? Should we have 'fixing of farm output quotas for each household' or collectivization?

Mao warned his colleagues that the rural issue was for him a matter of principle. He emphasized that conflict was basic to Marxism; in 1957 already the solution to this 'contradiction' had been the Anti-Rightist Campaign. It had dramatic consequences for the Party who cut itself off from the professionals, the intellectuals and the artists:

¹⁵ As for example, during the Great Leap Forward.

¹⁶ Such Liu Shaoqi or Deng Xiaoping who were 'fixed' a few years later during the Cultural Revolution.

Mao attacked the 'household responsibility system' adopted earlier by the Party: "In the final analysis, are we going to take the socialist road or the capitalist road? Should we have fix of farm output quotas for each household?"

Mao condemned pessimism: "Our achievements are great. There are quite a lot of problems. The future is bright. I tend to be not particularly pessimistic with regard to the problem of the current situation. All is not gloom." It was an indirect critic against those who 'could not see the bright side': "What is one to do about those people who haven't gone all out? They energetically trumpet individual operation and darkness, and eagerly discuss shortcomings and errors, but they have no energy for discussing brightness or the collective economy'.

Lui Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping were clearly targeted: "We have been discussing difficulties and darkness for two years now; it's become illegal to discuss brightness."

Mao was ironical: during the Seven Thousand Cadres' Conference 'no solution has been reached'. In his *Origin of the Cultural Revolution*, MacFarquhar remarked: "behind Mao's tactical devices in this relatively brief speech on 9 August 1962, one can detect elements of the thinking which would lead eventually to his decision to launch the Cultural Revolution: the degeneration of the Soviet revolution, the danger of China becoming infected, the need for class struggle to prevent that, the shortcomings of Chinese senior cadres, their failure to deliver the goods."

His attack against the Soviet Union was also directed at India, considered as a 'lackey of Moscow': "The Soviet Union has been in existence for several decades, but it's still revisionist and serving international capitalism. In reality, it's counterrevolutionary. In the book *Socialist Upsurge in [China's] Countryside* there was a sentence which said that the capitalist class had been eliminated, and all that remained were the remnants of capitalist

thinking. That was wrong and must be changed. ...The capitalist class can be reborn; that's how it is in the Soviet Union."

During the Tenth Plenum of the Party's Eighth Central Committee which followed the Beidaihe Conference in September, Mao's theoretical argument continued: "China was facing a danger of capitalist restoration that had to be fought through relentless class struggle".

Regarding Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi who had begun to rehabilitate the intellectuals and scientists, he affirmed: "The party has not yet properly educated the intellectuals. The bourgeois spirit hangs like a ghost over their heads. They are vacillating."

His old enemy of Lushan, Peng Dehuai who had submitted an appeal for his political return, was further accused of different crimes such as colliding with the Soviet Union and other 'reactionary forces of the world'. According to Mao, Peng wanted to conduct a worldwide counterrevolutionary, an anti-communist chorus!

And more interesting for us, Li Wang Jingxian, the father of the theory of 'The Three Reconciliations and the One Reduction' was accused of being a revisionist and was threatened to be dismissed. Wang eventually kept his job, but lost all his responsibilities after the Conference. The return of Mao undeniably marked a hardening of the foreign policy of China; the sudden attack on India a month later would be the first manifestation.

It appears that the situation on the border and the conflict with India was only discussed in general terms at Beidaihe, as nobody knew for sure which side the wind would finally blow during the following weeks and months. The foreign and defence policies of China were clearly very much dependent on the outcome of the power struggle amongst the CCP leadership.

In Beidaihe, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai gave a report on the Sino-Indian border and some orders were subsequently sent to the Army. Mao is said to have approved and given two reasons why China should not yet counter-

attack: "Nehru had to be allowed to expose himself and the international community had to be convinced of India's aggression. Two days later, Mao wrote an eight-character comment on the situation on the Sino-Indian border: *wuzhuang gongchu, quanya jiaocuo* (armed coexistence, jigsaw pattern).

By that time, it was decided: "No matter with border defence is small; every matter must be checked with Beijing". And Beijing was now synonymous with Mao Zedong.

The Poisonous Arrow: the situation in Tibet

During his speech at Beidaihe, Mao brought up another issue in his diatribe against his opponents: the Panchen Lama and the situation in Tibet. The Tibetan Lama who had been made Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region when the Dalai Lama left for India in 1959, had dared to criticize the policies of the Party in Tibet.

Dr Li recounted: "Then [Mao] turned his opprobrium against the Panchen Lama of Tibet, denouncing him as 'an enemy of our class'. [After the 1959] crackdown, the Panchen Lama, ordinarily subservient to Beijing, was now arguing that Beijing's so-called 'democratic reforms' had moved too far to the left. He hoped that the ultraleftist trend in Tibet could be corrected."

The Tibetan factor, or the weakness of the supply lines to India for the People's Liberation Army, is a factor which impeded longer military operations against India at the end of 1962; discontent was indeed brewing on the Roof of the World.

This appears unmistakably in the 70,000-character petition sent by the Panchen Lama to Zhou Enlai and Xi Zhongxun¹⁷ in April 1962. The Chinese Premier requested Xi Zhongxu, Li Weihan¹⁸, Zhang Jingwu¹⁹, Zhang

¹⁷ Xi Zhongxun is the father of the present Vice-President of China, Xi Jinping.

¹⁸ The boss of the United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee

Guohua²⁰ to read and study the Panchen Lama's petition. When the Lama died in 1989, Xi Zhongxun wrote in *The People's Daily* that the Tibet experts found "most of the comments and suggestions [of the Panchen Lama were] good; they could be implemented, but some had gone too far."

The Panchen Lama listed several problems such the 'suppression of the Rebellion' in 1959. Each time, after agreeing with the official line, he criticized it: "The rebellion in Tibet was counter-revolutionary in nature, being against the Party, the motherland, the people, democracy and socialism. Its crimes were very grave. Thus, it was entirely correct, essential, necessary and appropriate for the Party to adopt the policy of suppressing the rebellion. However, when these points were implemented..." And then he mentioned the grievances of the Tibetan population.

Then he took on the 'Democratic Reform', the 'Production in Agriculture and Animal Herding', 'Livelihood of the People', the United Front policy for the 'nationalities', 'Democratic Centralism', the Dictatorship of the Party and finally the most important for him, the freedom of religion. Each time, he used the same pattern. The Panchen Lama paid a heavy price²¹ for having dared to write what everyone knew.

Very few analysts have pointed out that a longer war would have been very difficult to sustain in the atmosphere of 'rebellion' prevalent on the Roof of

¹⁹ In 1951, Zhang was sent as Representative of the Central Committee of the CCP to the Dalai Lama; later first secretary of the Tibet Work Committee.

²⁰ Zhang Guohua led the main attack force in the 1950 Chamdo campaign against Tibetan forces. Zhang was chosen for his special knowledge of Tibetan culture; Mao Zedong did not want to alienate the Tibetans and gave strict instructions "to do united front work" by respecting the local religion and customs. Zhang became Secretary of the CPC Tibet Committee from 1950 to 1952, until he was replaced by Zhang Jingwu. Zhang headed the Tibet Work Committee, which negotiated the Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. He became a PLA Field Commander during the Sino-Indian War.

²¹ The Panchen Lama spent the years from 1964 to 1978 in solitary confinement and rehabilitation camps.

the World at that time. Though openly siding with the 'reformists' camp led by Lui Shaoqi and Deng, the Panchen Lama was also warning the Communist leadership of the resentment of the so-called nationalities.

The Ten Plenum: Mao consolidates his position

The purges amplified during and after the September 1962 Tenth Plenum. One man was given the responsibility by Mao: Kang Sheng.

For years, he would be responsible for security and intelligence work particularly during the Cultural Revolution. He was closely associated with Mao Zedong, but also with Jian Qing, Mao's perverse wife. Dr Li reported that Kang Sheng had sponsored Jiang Qing's membership in the party and arranged for her to go to Yanan in the 1930's, where she met and married the future leader of China. Both Kang Sheng and Jiang Qing were native of the same Shandong province.

Dr Li writes that Kang suffered schizophrenia: "He and Jiang Qing became particularly close after 1966, during the Cultural Revolution. ...Jiang Qing was always solicitous and respectful of Kang, more solicitous than I ever saw her with anyone else. She asked his opinion on everything and took his answers to heart. She called him Kang Lao, one of the most respectful and affectionate forms of address available in the Chinese language." Ironically, that he was the only person to whom she ever accorded such an honor, according to Dr Li.²²

Mao's physician gives a rather dark description of the personage: "I usually tried to avoid Kang Sheng, sensing in him some deeper evil that I could never fully explain. He had the look of deceit about him. Even his photographs, I think, convey an air of evil. I associated him with the dark

²² After he died in 1975, Kang was accused of sharing responsibility with the Gang of Four for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution and posthumously expelled from the party.

side of the party, with all the dirty work that had to be done, delving into people's pasts, finding new enemies, suggesting new targets for attack." The first consequence of Mao's return was the violent attack on the Chinese Vice-Premier Xi Zhongxun. Kang accused him of supporting the rehabilitation of Gao Gang²³. It was a plot hatched by Kang to get a senior official close to Peng Dehuai and the Panchen Lama out of the way as a warning. Kang Sheng was fully responsible for the investigation on the so-called 'the Xi Zhongxun anti-party plot'. Ultimately, Kang Sheng implicated some three hundred cadres from the party, government, and military, including Central Committee members and Xi finally lost his job.

Dr Li wrote: "I knew Xi Zhongxun well, and the charges against him and his supporters were fabricated. But Kang Sheng's job was to depose and destroy his fellow party members, and his continuing 'investigations' of ranking party leaders in the early 1960s laid the groundwork for the attacks of the Cultural Revolution to come. Many casualties followed immediately in the wake of the Tenth Plenum."

The father of Vice-President Xi Jinping was soon sent down to Henan and later put under house arrest.

Armed Coexistence, Jigsaw Pattern

In a previous issue of the IDR, we mentioned Neville Maxell's theory about the Henderson-Brooks report: "the report includes no surprises and its

²³ Gao Gang (1905–1954) was a CCP leader during the Chinese Civil War and the early years of the PRC. He became the victim of the first major purge within the CCP since before 1949. The so-called 'Gao Gang Affair' was an attempt to displace Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai from their key posts in government. Gao thought he had Mao Zedong's approval for such a move when in the summer of 1953, he began to approach senior cadres requesting their support. His activities were revealed to Mao by Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping. The Chairman told Gao that his actions were unacceptable. Under considerable pressure, Gao took his own life in August 1954 (adapted from *Wikipedia*).

publication would be of little significance but for the fact that so many in India still cling to the soothing fantasy of a 1962 Chinese 'aggression'." Maxwell argues that the Forward Policy which began to be operative in December 1961 in the Eastern Sector was the root cause of the conflict between India and China. He quotes particularly the Dhola Post, which the Chinese considered as their territory, while India believed the area was a part of India.²⁴

²⁴ Maj Gen. DK Palit who was DMO during the conflict and is the author *War in High Himalaya* wrote about the doubts regarding the alignment of the McMahon in this area: "Later, almost as an afterthought, Niranjana [Maj. Gen. Niranjana Prasad, GOC, 4 Infantry Division] told me about the incident of the Dhola post and about his doubts regarding the alignment of the McMahon Line in the area west of the Nyamjang-chu. He said that whereas all the way from the Burma border to the Nyamjang valley the McMahon Line, as marked on the quarter-inch scale Survey of India map sheet, coincided with the Himalayan Crestline, westwards from Khinzemane the Line was marked as lying well to the south of the main Thag-la ridge. (The extent of the area between the Thag-la crestline and the McMahon Line marked on the map was about 60 sq km.)

A patrol had set out across the Nyamjang River in mid-July to establish an Assam Rifles post near the Bhutan border. The political officer's representative accompanying the patrol had insisted that the Thag-la ridge itself was the watershed border and that was where our post should be. The patrol leader, a regular army officer, disregarded this advice because his map clearly showed the McMahon Line as passing well south of the ridge. Accordingly, he established a post on the southern bank of the Namka-chu, a stream flowing along the lower slopes of Thag-la ridge. He called it Dhola post, though in actual fact the site was known as Tsedong. Actually Dho-la was a pass on the ridge 3 km to the south.

HQ 4th Division had referred the doubt about Thag-la ridge to HQ XXXIII Corps, asking for clarification on the exact alignment of the McMahon Line west of Nyamjang-chu. Niranjana had also suggested in his letter that if indeed the border lay along Thag-la ridge, he would like to establish his post tactically on the crest of the ridge, rather than in the valley below. In the month that had since passed he had received no reply and now, he added, the Chinese had beaten him to it because they had occupied Thag-la ridge. He told me that he would still like a clarification of the correct alignment of the border and asked me to have the reply expedited from Army HQ."

For Maxwell, the Indian action in this area was THE provocation which triggered the war. The policy of the Chinese government in the first months of 1962 followed the motto *Armed Coexistence, Jigsaw Pattern*. Practically, it meant that while both Armies were building their positions in the Western and Eastern sectors, both governments of China and India continued to 'coexist', exchanging a voluminous correspondence, sometimes bitter, sometimes more conciliatory.

For example, in a note given by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Embassy of India in China on July 21, the Chinese diplomacy affirms: "The Chinese Government has repeatedly stated that China is not willing to fight with India and the Sino-Indian boundary question can be settled only through routine negotiations. It has all along exercised the greatest forbearance and self-restraint towards Indian armed intrusions and provocations on many occasions. However the Chinese Government can by no means sit idle while its frontier guards are being encircled and annihilated by aggressors."

This jigsaw policy (opening new posts and offering negotiations) could have continued longer, at least till the winter, but this is without taking into account the 'return of Mao'.

On the Indian side, there was no unanimity in the Indian Army about holding the 'forward' posts (or creating new ones). Many saw the practical difficulties. Former Indian Chief of Army Staff, Gen. K. S. Thimayya was one of them: "I cannot even as a soldier, envisage India taking on China in an open conflict on its own. China's present strength in man-power, equipment and aircraft exceeds our resources a hundredfold with the full support of the U.S.S.R. and we could never hope to match China in the foreseeable future. It must be left to the politicians and diplomats to ensure our security." Unfortunately, Nehru had till the last day the absolute certitude that there could be NO war with China. He was comforted in this position by his

intelligence Chief, B.N. Mullik who had no clue of what was happening in China.

The 'jigsaw' built-up however continued. On August 4, (two days before the beginning of the Beidaihe Conference), Beijing wrote: "The Chinese Government approves of the suggestion put forth by the Indian Government in its note for further discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries. There need not and should not be any pre-conditions for such discussions. As a matter of fact, if only the Indian side stop advancing into Chinese territory, a relaxation of the border situation will be effected at once. Since neither the Chinese nor the Indian Government wants war, and since both governments wish to settle the boundary question peacefully through negotiations, further discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries should not be put off any longer. The Chinese Government proposes that such discussions be held as soon as possible, and that the level, date, place and other procedural matters for these discussions be immediately decided upon by consultations through diplomatic channels."²⁵

Nehru himself probably saw the increasingly frequent missives from Beijing as a bluff; the 'Chinese won't attack' remained the leitmotiv, the 'jigsaw' could continue for months, he thought; in three months time, winter would settle over the Roof of the world and nothing serious could then happen. South Block answered the Chinese offer: "The Government of India are prepared, as soon as the current tensions have eased and the appropriate climate is created, to enter into further discussions on the India-China boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials as contemplated

²⁵ Note given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China, 4 August 1962

during the meeting of Prime Minister Chou [Zhou] Enlai with the Prime Minister of India in 1960.”

Unfortunately, with the return of Mao at the helm of affairs in Beijing, the current situation could not ease, on the contrary.

Some analysts believe that the swift take-over of Goa in December 1961 boosted the moral of the Indian Army; the top brass thought that they could handle the China problem similarly. Could the Portuguese enclave really be compared to the Middle Kingdom and the Portuguese police to the highly trained People’s Liberation Army?

As the Chinese ambassador, Pan Zili was leaving his post in India, the Indian Prime Minister invited him for lunch. During the informal talks, Nehru confirmed that India was ready to discuss the border issue without precondition.

Around that time, on the side of the Laos Conference in Geneva, the Indian Defence Minister Krishna Menon met the Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi. Both also decided to restart the ‘negotiations’.

Unfortunately during a debate in the Parliament, the Prime Minister had to back track about the preconditions; this probably helped Mao to prove that nothing could be expected from the Indians.

People’s Liberation Army reorganization

In the meantime, the preparations were going on the Chinese side. The two main fronts (Western and Eastern) were reorganized and a third command added.

While the Ladakh front was given to General He Jiachan, the Commander of the Southern Xinjiang Military District, a new Eastern sector headquarters was set up for the Western front, opposite NEFA. The commandment was given to an old Tibet hand, Lt.-Gen. Zhang Guohua²⁶.

²⁶ See note 30.

He had commanded the Eighteenth Army Corps of Southwest Army (2nd Field Army) under Marshal Lui Bocheng during the Tibet campaign. He was responsible of the 'Liberation' of Chamdo in October 1950 and had marched in Lhasa with his troops in September 1951. He had now 3 divisions at his disposal.

Probably sensing the deep resentment of the Tibetan populations (as we have seen in the 70,000 character letter from the Panchen Lama to Zhou Enlai), a third command was created in Lhasa. The Tibetan Autonomous Region's Political Commissar, Tan Guansan, who had tried to capture the Dalai Lama in March 1959, was given the responsibility²⁷.

This reorganization probably occurred in May-June at a time when there was not yet question of a full-fledged conflict; but the Chinese were not ready to take the risk to be unprepared (which was not the case of some Indian generals).

The posting of the experienced Zhang Guohua and the creation of new command meant that Beijing expected NEFA to be the main theater of

²⁷ On March 15, 1959, General Tan Guansan, sent a threatening letter to the Tibetan leader: "Respected Dalai Lama, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your two letters dated March 11 and March 12. The traitorous activities of the reactionary clique of the upper strata in Tibet have grown into intolerable proportions. These individuals, in collusion with foreigners, have engaged in reactionary, traitorous activities for quite some time. The Central People's Government has long adopted an attitude of magnanimity and enjoined the Local Government of Tibet to deal with them seriously, but the Local Government of Tibet has all along adopted an attitude of feigning compliance while actually helping them with their activities, with the result the things have now come to such a grave impasse. The Central People's Government still hopes that the Local Government of Tibet will change its erroneous attitude and immediately assume responsibility for putting down the rebellion and mete out severe punishment to the traitors. Otherwise the Central People's Government will have to act itself to safeguard the solidarity and unification of the motherland."

Two days later, the Dalai Lama left for India.

operations; further they knew that Tibet was the softy belly of the Chinese defence.

Another change worth mentioning is the recalling of Marshall Lui Bocheng who had masterminded the Tibet campaign in 1950 (with his old companion Deng Xiaoping). Though 'politically retired', Liu had kept the reputation to be of one of the most brilliant strategists of the Liberation Army. He had also been appointed as the head of the Strategy Small Group attached to the Military Affairs Commission.²⁸ His mission was to oversee the planning for a 'counterattack' in case of an eventual Indian attack.

One can do here the parallel between Mao who do not hesitate to use for professional advices of somebody 'politically' opposed to him with Nehru who preferred to surround himself with unprofessional sycophants. This will eventually weight heavenly in the fate of the conflict.

During the first months of 1962, the PLA had rather strict rules of engagement laid down by the Military Affairs Commission: within 30 km inside the LOC, Chinese units were not permitted to fire weapons, patrol and go hunting; within the 20 km "no target shooting, manoeuvres, or demolition"; if Indian troops penetrated these lines, the Chinese troops had first to issue a warning and ask them to retreat; if this did not work, they had then to confiscate the Indian weapons and later return them.

But as both sides continue to reinforce their respective positions, the rules were not always followed.

Marshall Lui Bocheng's²⁹ assessment of the Indian preparations, south of the McMahon line was: "copper head, tin tail, stiff back, slack belly". What does it mean is not very clear to me.

Copper head applies probably to the forward formations. An informant tells me that it means 'courageous, bold'. 'tin tail' implies the poor

²⁸ Today known as the Central Military Commission.

²⁹ Also known as 'One-eye Dragon', a bullet had passed through his eye in 1916.

communications between Tezpur, the Corps Headquarters and the front on the McMahon Line; 'stiff back' may be for the rigidity of the Indian commanders who had never heard of *The Art of War* of Sunzi and finally 'slack belly' refers perhaps to the situation in India in general³⁰. This is my interpretation.

The political situation in Beijing

The political situation in Beijing was very fast changing.

The Emperor had staged his return first in Beidaihe, then on the occasion of the Tenth Plenum in Beijing. Wang Jiaxiang was on his way out and the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing knew that the time had come to wait for the new wind to blow before continuing with the *san he yi shao* (The Three Reconciliations and the One Reduction) policy.

The Beidaihe Conference ended on August 26 after 3 weeks of intense 'ideological' debate, marked by the unexpected come back of Mao. The first consequence was the 'leftisation' of the foreign policy.

Niu Jun, the already quoted Chinese scholar, gives a definition to the 'left turn' taken by Mao: "In Chinese politics, to put it simply, a leftist policy means one that pursues goals that are ahead of their time or higher than realistically possible. When extended to the domain of foreign policy, left or extreme left policy has four basic characteristics.

- First, on the theoretical dimension, leftist policy holds a dogmatic attitude toward the traditional doctrine of time. It refuses to make a concrete analysis of the continuously changing international political situation. ...[It] denies the existence and meaning of detente in international situations, and does not acknowledge the possibility of maintaining peace over the long term.

³⁰ This is a personal interpretation.

- Second, leftist policy exaggerates China's position and influence in world politics. A manifestation of this is the theory of 'China as a center of revolution,' which proclaims China as 'the focus of world contradictions and the center of the world revolutionary storm'...
- Third, leftist policy places so-called proletarian internationalism in the supreme position, denying the paramount status of national interests in making and implementing foreign policies.
- Fourth, in terms of specifics, leftist policy calls for struggling against imperialism, revisionism, and anti-revolutionists, and adopts strategies such as 'striking enemies with two fists,' and 'attacking in all directions'.

The Sino-Indian relations should be seen in this context, particularly important is 'China as a center of revolution' and the struggle against imperialism (represented by Nehru).

Interestingly the nasty correspondence between the Government of India and China calmed down during the Beidaihe Conference.

Statistically, China had sent 13 notes to Delhi in July and Delhi had replied with 18 notes; the same rhythm continues till August 6 (6 notes for China against 2 notes for India). During the next fortnight, Beijing sent only 3 notes to South Block while Delhi dispatched 7 missives. But by the end of the Conference the old rhythm of July started again and the tone became more and more virulent.

It is clear that the end of the Beidaihe Conference and the beginning of the Tenth Plenum were a watershed in Chinese stand on the border dispute. The end of August saw a larger number of Chinese border posts and the reinforcement of the Chinese defence positions on the frontier with more materiel, equipment and personnel brought in.

One sure sign that Mao had won the first battle was the rejection of Peng Dehuai's application for rehabilitation; the reason was that he was siding

with the 'three ni's and the one tie'; in other words Kennedy³¹, Nikita Khrushchev³², Nehru³³, and Tito³⁴.

Fire will eventually be consumed by fire

In a Note dated September 13, 1962, Beijing hardened the tone. It quoted 6 recent incidents where India had trespassed into Chinese territory (in the Ladakh sector only): "The Indian Government should be aware that shooting and shelling are no child's play; and he who plays with fire will eventually be consumed by fire. If the Indian side should insist on threatening by armed force the Chinese border defence forces who are duty-bound to defend their territory and thereby arouse their resistance, it must bear the responsibility for all the consequences arising therefrom."

In India, the mood is not conciliatory.

The Chinese government cited a speech of Nehru in the Rajya Sabha on August 22 1962: "Prime Minister Nehru stated outright that on the Sino-Indian boundary question the Indian Government is following a 'dual policy' and intends to gain from China what it seeks to gain by political pressure, military pressure or other pressures'. To adopt one policy or another is India's own business. But the Chinese Government wishes to point out that China will welcome negotiations, if seriously intended, but will resist, whenever attacked, and that it will bring India no good to pursue a policy of sham negotiations and real fighting."

Though both parties will continue to speak of negotiations till beginning of October, it was not under the same terms.

³¹ Ken-ni-di

³² Ni-ji-ta He-lu-xiaa-fu

³³ Ni-he-lu

³⁴ Tie-tua

Around that time, Mao said that the Indians had been pressing the Chinese along the border for three years: "if they tried it a fourth year then China would strike back," he warned.

Internal Situation

By early October, Mao was in total control of the events and the people in Beijing. He was assisted by his submissive servitor, Zhou Enlai and his new protégé and the heir apparent, Defence Minister Lin Biao. Several other leaders participated in the decision to 'slap' India. Not only Liu Shaoqi, still Chairman of the PRC, but Deng Xiaoping and perhaps more importantly Marshals Liu Bocheng, He Long, and Xu Xiangqian as well as General Luo Ruiqing, the Army Chief attended some of the decisive meetings. Lui Bocheng was the main strategic advisor; Lui was against the idea of simply throwing out the Indian border troops by pushing them back after 'breaking up their attack, and surrounding them', he wanted a more decisive victory. As preparations were going on in Beijing, the Indian leaders were not too worried. They continued issuing orders to throw the Chinese out of the Indian territory. Unfortunately, the Indian Army was not physically ready to implement the politicians' order.

A few days earlier, Prime Minister Nehru had left for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London, while Defence Minister Krishna Menon went to perorate at the UN in New York. By the beginning of October the Indian Army Chief was nervous; he began to ask orders in writing from his political boss who lived in another world. No problem, said the Defence Minister, he would cable them from New York.

One historian wrote that the notes exchanged between India and China "combined truculence directed at each other and reasonableness addressed to the outside world."

October 6: China decides to go to war

According to Chinese historians who wrote the history of the 1962 conflict, a first key meeting was held early October, perhaps on October 6 in the morning.

Defence Minister and Deputy CMC chairman, Lin Biao reported about the situation in the Tibet and the Xinjiang Military Regions; in another words the Western (Aksai Chin-Ladakh) and Eastern fronts (NEFA). Lin said that the Indians continue to advance and often open fire on Chinese outposts; ten Chinese personnel had been killed or wounded during the last few days. Though the Chinese forces strictly followed the principle of not firing first, the situation in both sectors was fast worsening: the Indian Army had begun to concentrate troops and deploy artillery to both sectors.

Even more serious, the Chinese military intelligence had gathered that Indian forces were planning an attack on Thagla Ridge on 10 October. As we shall see, this information was absolutely correct.

Mao then addressed his colleagues: "It seems like armed coexistence won't work. It's just as we expected. Nehru really wants to use force. This isn't strange. He has always wanted to seize Aksai Chin and Thagla Ridge. He thinks he can get everything he desires."

It is clear that from the start Mao did believe that 'coexistence' could work. The Chairman continued: "We fought a war with old Chiang [Kai-shek]. We fought a war with Japan, and one with America. During none of these, did we fear. And in each case, we won. Now the Indians want to fight a war with us. Naturally, we don't have fear. [But] we cannot lose ground; once we lose ground it would be tantamount to letting them seize a big piece of land equivalent to Fujian province. ...Since Nehru sticks his head out and insists on us fighting him, for us not to fight with him would not be proper. Courtesy emphasizes reciprocity."

As he has always done in his career, Zhou Enlai agreed with his mentor: "We don't want for a war with India. We have always strove in the direction [of avoiding war]. We wanted India to be like Nepal, Burma or Mongolia, i.e. solve border problems with them in a friendly fashion. But Nehru has closed all roads. This leaves us only with war. As I see it, to fight a bit would have advantages. It would cause some people to understand things more clearly." Mao acquiesced: "Right! If someone does not attack me, I won't attack him. If someone attacks me, I will certainly attack him".

As often in China, after a few leaders agreed to the direction to take, a larger meeting is called to invalidate the decision and work out the details.

The meeting was held in the outskirts of Beijing³⁵ on March 6.

Mao chaired the meeting and informed the PLA top brass that it has already been decided to go to war with India: "The purpose of bringing all of you together today is to convene a military [technical] meeting," he said.

The Chairman elaborated: "Our border conflict with India has gone on for many years. We did not want war and originally we sought to solve [the issue] through peaceful negotiations. But Nehru is unwilling to talk and has deployed considerable forces, insistently demanding a fight with us. Now, it seems that to refuse a fight is impossible. If we fight, what should be our method? What should this war look-like? Please everyone contribute your thoughts on these policy issues."

Then Foreign Minister Chen Yi spoke on the diplomatic aspect of the conflict with India. According to Chen, the problem started in 1954 when India

³⁵ To this new meeting held at Xishan (Western Hills) were present Mao Zedong; Premier Zhou Enlai; Foreign Minister Chen Yi; Defence Minister Lin Biao; Marshal Liu Bocheng; Marshal Ye Jianying; Chief of Staff General Lou Ruiqing; Vice Chief of General Staff Yang Chengwu; General Shao Hua, the head of the PLA General Political Department; General Qiu Huizuo, the head of the General Logistic Department, Lt Gen. Zhang Guohua, the Commander of the Tibet Military District and He Jiachan, the Commander of the Xinjiang Military District.

published an official map showing the McMahon line as a definitive national boundary³⁶. Chen stated "At present, India occupies or claims 1,250,000 square kilometers of Chinese territory³⁷. Forty-seven Chinese personnel had been killed or wounded in attacks by Indian forces on the border. China had devoted considerable diplomatic effort to achieve a negotiated settlement, but Nehru is unwilling to sit down and talk; moreover he has adopted a provocative forward policy. ... It seems we can only meet him [Nehru] on the battlefield."

Mao then explained why China needed to go to war with India: "A war between China and India is truly a most unfortunate event. [I] have recently been reading books on Indian history and was struck by the friendly, beneficial interactions between China and India in the 7th - 9th centuries³⁸." Mao recounted the circumstances of the 'one and a half' Sino-India wars: "The first war had been in 648 A.D. when a Tang dynasty emperor had dispatched troops to assist the legal claimant to a throne to a subcontinental kingdom — after the other claimant had killed 30 members of a Tang diplomatic mission. A Tang-strengthened force defeated the usurper, who was captured and sent to the Tang capital Changan [Xian], where he lived the rest of his life"³⁹.

³⁶ Chen Yi's assertions are contrary to the facts. At the time of signing the Panchsheel Agreement in 1964, Zhou Enlai declared "all matters ripe for settlement have been discussed". At that time, the Chinese Premier knew perfectly well that Indian troops were stationed in Tawang. My book, *Born in Sin: The Panchsheel Agreement* goes into detail on this issue; Beijing was aware that the McMahon line was the border between India and Tibet in 1954.

³⁷ In NEFA. China still claims Arunachal as its own territory (the so-called Southern Tibet).

³⁸ Mao refers probably to the Chinese pilgrims such as Faxian (395–414) or Xuanzang (629–644) who visited India.

³⁹ This is of course the Chinese version of the event. In fact this event illustrates the power of the Tibetan empire at the time of the Tang Dynasty. After the pilgrim Xuanzang returned

Then Mao spoke of the 'half war' in 1398 "when Timurlane captured Delhi. This was a great victory, but was followed by the slaughter of over 100,000 prisoners and looting of all precious metals and gems across the land. This was a 'half war' because Timur and his army were Mongols from both Inner and Outer Mongolia. Mongolia was then part of China, making this attack 'half' Chinese."

For the Chairman, the morale to be learnt from history: "First, the PLA had to secure a victory and knock Nehru to the negotiating table and second, Chinese forces had to be restrained and principled."

Marshal Ye Jianying told his colleagues that on his 1957 visit to India, he had met Lt. Gen. B.M. Kaul⁴⁰. Ye informed Mao that though Kaul had served in the Burma during World War II, Kaul had no actual combat experience. Ye said that Kaul seemed "to be a very rigid, [even] if an impressive looking soldier. Still, he was one of India's most outstanding commanders".

Mao cut him to say: "Fine, he'll have another opportunity to shine."

It was not to be the case.

to China in 642 AD, he briefed the Emperor on the state of the Dharma in India and the patronage of the great Indian King Harshavardhana for the Buddhist faith.

To thank King Harsha, the Chinese Emperor decided to send a new mission to India under Wang-hiuen-tse. The mission left China in 646, but by the time it reached India Harshavardhana had already passed away a few months earlier. As the king had no son, one of his Ministers, Arjuna, had ascended to the throne. Unfortunately, Arjuna was not well disposed towards Buddhism and when the Chinese envoy and his thirty-man escort reached his palace they were slaughtered, with the exception of Wang and one of his ministers who managed to escape to Nepal, from where he sent a message to Songtsen Gampo who decided to immediately dispatch an army of 12,000 Tibetan troops and 7,000 Nepalis. After a short battle in Hirahati in Bihar, Arjuna was deposed and King Kama Rupa of Assam was enthroned. The Emperor of China was said to have been so grateful to Songtsen Gampo for his prompt action that he asked his subjects to build a statue of the Tibetan king on his own tomb.

⁴⁰ Lt Gen. B.M. Kaul was appointed Corps IV Commander a few days earlier.

The Chairman then spoke of the possible isolation of China on the world scene. He did not consider that it was a 'decisive factor': "China needn't fear isolation, as long as the front line troops fight well, we will be in an advantageous position. ...It's better to die standing, than to die kneeling. If China fought successfully, in an awe-inspiring way, this will guarantee at least thirty years of peace".

Historian Xu Yan affirmed that the rejection of China's 'final' offer to negotiate, as well as Nehru's continuation of his Forward Policy, forced Mao and the CMC to consider 'a large scale counter-attack' against India.

On October 3, Beijing had written to Delhi: "The Chinese Government regrets that the Indian Government has once again refused its proposal for speedily and unconditionally holding discussions on the Sino-Indian boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials of the two countries. The Indian Government has also refused the Chinese Government's reiterated proposal that the armed forces of each side withdraw 20 kilometres along the entire border. ...The proposal for each side to withdraw 20 kilometres would obviously hinder the Indian side from carrying out its aggressive activities in the eastern as well as the western and middle sectors."

Delhi did not agree to the 'unconditional' negotiations, the 'occupied' Indian territory had to be vacated first. Regarding the 20km withdrawal, it was in India's disfavor due to the mountainous terrain on India's side and the flat Tibetan plateau on China's.

Later in the communication, Beijing added: "The Indian Government pretentiously repeated in its note that discussions on the boundary question can only be held after the border tension has been eased. This is downright hypocrisy. Can it be that the Indian troops' crossing the so-called McMahon Line and firing at Chinese frontier guards are an Indian effort to ease the border tension? Whenever India attacks, China is sure to strike back. The

Indian Government must bear responsibility for all the serious consequences arising from this. ...Hollow words can deceive no one and calculated deeds of continuously altering the status quo of the boundary unilaterally and by force will certainly bring India no good."

When Mao decided to punish India, had the Communist leadership received the Indian answer to the above communication from Beijing?

It is likely that the Communist regime had got Delhi's answer a few hours earlier. India wanted China to vacate the occupied part of the Indian territory in the Aksai Chin area as a precondition: "The Government of India have repeatedly stated their desire to enter into talks and discussions, first to devise measures to reduce tensions and to create a climate of confidence, and then to undertake purposeful and constructive discussions in the improved climate to resolve the differences between the two Governments over the border question. The Government of India's approach in this matter of talks and discussions has been clear and straightforward — preliminary talks to ease tensions and to create the appropriate climate of confidence to be followed by further purposeful talks, after implementation of measures to ease tensions and restore confidence have been taken, to resolve differences between the two Governments on the boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials. If there has been any double-dealing or hypocrisy, it is entirely on the Chinese side."

With each side accusing the other of intransigence, a conflict could hardly been avoided.

Lou Ruiqing, the Chinese Chief of Staff was authorized by Mao to start 'a fierce and painful attack on Indian forces. If Indian forces attack us, you should hit back fiercely. ...[you should] not only repel them, but hit them fiercely and make them hurt"

The CMC decided that the main attack will be launched in the eastern sector (NEFA), however Chinese forces in the western sector should 'coordinate' their actions with the eastern sector.

It was logical at a military point of view, but also 'ideologically' coherent; it was the route that the Dalai Lama had used three years earlier to take refuge in India; it is was the best way to show the connection between the two events. Though this is not mention in the Chinese (or Indian) sources, it is clearly an important factor.

When Chinese generals started to work on the details of the military operations, they soon realized that the campaign could not be sustained for a long time. It was therefore decided to terminate the war "with a unilateral Chinese halt, ceasefire, and withdrawal".

Historian Shi Bo⁴¹ believes that in view of "practical difficulties associated with China's domestic situation", the PLA troops "would quickly disengage and end the fighting as quickly as possible" after achieving their military objectives.

'China's domestic situation' is obviously referring to the power struggle within the Party and the return of Mao to the center stage.

This was wise from the Chinese point of view; further in India, the trauma associated with the conflict would remain for decades.

Mao acknowledged that a war with India presented several dangers:

- Nehru enjoyed great international status;
- India was a leader of the non-aligned movement;
- India enjoyed great international prestige as an advocate of non-violence;
- Both the United States and the Soviet Union were courting India;
- India saw itself as the leader of the 'third force' in the world.

⁴¹ Shi Bo, editor, Zhong yin da zhan jishi (Record of events in the big China-India war) Beijing: Da di chubanshe, 1993

However according to the PLA's calculations, China was militarily far superior to India (Indian forces were not prepared and their strength was 1/6th of the Chinese troops).

Beijing anticipated some negative reactions from Washington and the Western world in general (and perhaps even from Moscow), but the long-term benefits of a severe, but limited blow, would compensate and ultimately bring peace for several years between the neighbours.

An attack in the Namkha Chu area

Who is going to attack first?

Lt. Gen. BM Kaul, the new Corps IV Commander planned *Operation Leghorn* on the Namkha Chu near the Thagla ridge for October 10. Maxwell quoted Kaul as saying that he was "taking every possible step to outwit the enemy and capture our objective".

Maxwell added that Kaul "was aware of heavy Chinese build-up below Thagla ridge, with artillery, heavy mortars, and medium machine-guns, apart from other dangerous weapons they possess such as recoilless guns and automatic rifles."

One understands better the warning of Marshal Ye Jianying who told Mao that Kaul was inexperienced, when reads Maxwell account of the preparations of the Indian attack: "Kaul reached Dhola Post on the afternoon of October 7, and spent the rest of the day studying the ground, which presented discouraging difficulties on the Indians side with deep and fast-flowing Namka Chu. The Chinese dominated the Indian positions and lines of communications, and had prepared strong bunkers and cleared timbers with infantry and equipment, taunting the Indian troops who tried to cut logs with entrenching tools and shovels. On the evening, Kaul sent another message to New Delhi, bypassing the regular channel through Army H.Q., in an immensely lengthy report, chatty and descriptive, more like a letter to a

fond uncle at home than military signals. It took eight hours to transmit the lengthy message".

The clash occurred on 10 October, but it was the Chinese who stroke first. It appears from Chinese sources that 'the counter-attack' was only to serve as a deterrent against the Indian assault; the leadership had not finalized the details of the full-fledged attack as yet (though the decision in principle had been taken).

A Note given by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Indian Embassy in Beijing on October 10, 1962 states: "On 9th October 1962, a batch of the Indian troops which had intruded into the Che Dong [Tseng-jong] area north of the 'McMahon Line' crossed the upper reach of the Kechilang river to establish an aggressive strong point at Chihtung (more than 4 kilometres north west of Che Dong). At 09.20 hours on 10th October the aggressive Indian troops launched from Chihtung a fierce attack on the Chinese frontier guards stationed near Chihtung, killing and wounding 11 Chinese frontier guards. The Chinese frontier guards were compelled to act in self defence; by the afternoon of the 10th, the fighting was still on. At 09.40 hours on the same day, the Indian troops which had intruded into and stationed in Che Dong fired provocative shots at the Chinese frontier guards stationed at Paitsai, which is opposite to Che Dong across the river."

It was the most serious incident so far. Lt. Gen. B.M. Kaul, the Corps IV Commander flew immediately back to Delhi. The next day a high-level conference was held in the capital.

In his *China's India War*, Neville Maxwell writes: "Despite of the dangerous crisis that India faced, Nehru still did not bring the Cabinet or the Cabinet Defense Committee for consultation. Kaul opened the meeting, reporting the battle in all graphic and subjective accounts. When asked for recommendation, Kaul did not urge to withdraw 7 Brigade, but proposed to seek speedy and copious military assistance from the United States, which

Nehru dismissed with some irritation. Kaul then suggested postponing the eviction operation and then pulling 7 Brigade back to better tactical positions, but other participants contradicted. A consensus appeared that eviction operation had to be postponed, but no clear instructions were issued."

But the following day, as the Indian Prime Minister was flying off to Sri Lanka, he told the journalist: "Our instructions are to free our territory". In other words, it meant that the Chinese had to be thrown out of India. The press interpreted thus Nehru's statement: "Mr. Nehru has told the country, clearly and firmly, what it has been waiting to hear, that the armed forces have been ordered to throw the Chinese aggressors out of NEFA and that until Indian territory in that area is cleared of them there can be no talks with China."

The next day, the Chinese newspapers reported: "Nehru has ordered that India must totally rid Indian-occupied Chinese territory of Chinese troops". This was the pretext that Mao needed to teach India and Nehru a lesson. An editorial in *The People's Daily* mentioned: "a massive invasion of Chinese territory by Indian troops in the eastern sector seems imminent". The Communist newspaper questioned: "How could the Chinese possibly be so weak-kneed and faint-hearted as to tolerate this? It is high time to show to Mr Nehru that the heroic Chinese troops with the glorious tradition of resisting foreign aggression can never be cleared by anyone from their own territory. ...All comrade commanders and fighters of the People's Liberation Army guarding the Sino-Indian border, redouble your vigilance! Indian troops may at any time attempt to carry out Nehru's instructions to get rid of you. Be well prepared! Your sacred task now is to defend our territory and be ever-ready to deal resolute counterblows at any invaders."

The dies were cast.

The Chinese preparations

On the day of the Namkha Chu incident, a meeting of military leaders was summoned in Beijing. Zhou Enlai briefed the senior Army officials; he said that India had decided to occupy disputed territory instead of seating for peaceful talk on the border dispute as it was done with Nepal, Burma, and Mongolia.

A 'strategy small group' of the CMC chaired by Marshal Liu Bocheng had planned the details of the military operation. That day, Liu presented four 'options' for the conduct of the War.

The crux of success for Lui was "let us concentrate in places where we have a local superiority to achieve a swift war and a swift decision [in China's favour]". It was therefore necessary to possess superior material, weapons, and forces in one place, concentrate on this place to quickly win battle. Liu said that the PLA should not disperse; and the troops should fight well as the final victory was directly connected to the prestige of the Chinese army and nation. The Chinese should not be arrogant; some of the best Indian forces face the PLA [in NEFA]; some have fought in World War II. No question of suing 'mechanistic' tactics such as infiltration, isolation or encirclement in this war. The motto should be 'kill, wound, and capture the enemy by gnawing the flesh off their bones'.

Soon after the attack on the Thagla ridge on October 10, the State Council had requested General Lei Yingfu and General Lou Ruiqing to give a report on the sudden India's 'expanded offensive' on the Thagla ridge.

On 16 October, five reasons were given for India's new 'aggressive attitude':

- India wanted to make Tibet 'a colony or a protectorate of India';
- India wanted to get more assistance from the U.S. and Soviet and become of the anti-China campaign;
- India wanted to 'achieve hegemony in Asia' by increasing India's status with smaller African and Asian nations;

- To divert 'class and national' contradictions within India.
- China was 'bluffing'. Nehru believed that China 'was weak and could be taken advantage of, China barks but does not bite'. Nehru believed that 'no matter how they attack us, we will not hit back'.

Note that Tibet is always the first reason which dictates India's attitude according to the Communist regime in Beijing.

When he received the report, Mao agreed: "It seems like it is indeed that sort of a situation. In this case, we cannot but fight a war. Well, since Nehru says we only 'bark but don't bite,' we absolutely must fight. We have no other choice. We might as well accompany him [in fighting a war]."

On 16 October, the CMC decided to 'annihilate' the Indian troops who has dared to attack the PLA in NEFA.

Then Mao questioned if the PLA could face some problems, suggesting that the PLA may underestimate the Indian defenses. He was reassured by Zhang Guohua, the Commander in Tibet who had the responsibility of the 'NEFA' front. According to a Chinese source, the PLA had had positioned 10,300 men to teach a tactical lesson to the Indian Brigade 7 (6,000 men) commanded by Brig. John Davi.

For Beijing, the Eastern front was clearly the most important. This for several reasons:

1- Beijing had never accepted the existence of the McMahon Line and they considered that Dhola post was north of the Line⁴².

⁴² We already mentioned the doubts raised by the GOC, 4th Division about the location of the Dhola Post. In his *War in High Himalaya*, Palit explains further: "On my return to Delhi I referred the Thag-la dilemma to the Director of Military Survey. The latter commented that as the existing maps of the area were 'sketchy and inaccurate, having been compiled from unreliable sources', the map co-ordinates of the new post quoted by the patrol leader were of doubtful accuracy. He confirmed that the recognised border was the watershed, but qualified this statement by adding 'the exact alignment of [this] will depend on accurate survey'. This, he added, would take two to three years to complete.

2- Militarily, the supply lines were easier to maintain with Lhasa and Chengdu in Sichuan, than with Xinjiang for the Western front.

3- The Dalai Lama had crossed the border very close by the Dhola Post at Khinzemane and it was a way to avenge the bitter pill that the Communist had swallowed when the Tibetan leader took refuge in India three years earlier.

The decision was confirmed, the main would occur in the Eastern Sector.

The Soviet factor

That was not greatly enlightening so I sent the file to the Ministry of External Affairs. The Historical Section of which replied: 'We may permit the Army to extend the jurisdiction, if they have not already done so, up to the line suggested by them.' Since the Chinese had already occupied Thag-la, I went to see Dr S. Gopal, Director of the Historical Section (and, incidentally, son of the then President of India) in order to double-check before I passed on this decision to HQ 4th Division. Gopal explained that at the time of the boundary talks with the Chinese, the government of India had been aware that the actual terrain in the area of the trijunction was different from that depicted on the quarter-inch scale map sheet.

The Chinese were therefore given the reference in northings and southings (91° 40' East, 27° 40' North). He noted on the file: 'This point was further north of the tri-junction shown on our maps and nearer the point now suggested by Army Headquarters. Furthermore, the Chinese had been told that the alignment (of the McMahon Line) followed Thag-la ridge, which is also the ridge shown by Army Headquarters in the sketch.' What Gopal had not told me - and I found out only later - was that the Chinese had not accepted our arguments and had counter-claimed Thag-la ridge, as well as the valley at Khinzemane, as Chinese territory. I passed on Gopal's remarks to HQ Eastern Command for onward transmission to 4 Infantry Division, but by then it was mid-September and events in that remote region on the border of Bhutan and Tibet had already reached a critical stage.

Although the post at Dhola had been established as early as June, for three months the Chinese had made no protest about its sitting. This was probably in conformity with the relatively soft diplomatic approaches by both Delhi and Peking during July and August."

Two 'foreign' factors had contributed to the Sino-Soviet split before 1962: one was the Sino-Indian border row in 1959 and the other one, the Cuban crisis that would erupt on October 22.

Though, Moscow had sided with Beijing in March 1959, when an uprising of the Tibetan population in Lhasa forced the Dalai Lama to flee to India, a few months later, when a first clash occurred on the McMahon Line, the Russians refused to support the Chinese. They believed that the flare-up had been provoked by China's intransigent attitude on the McMahon Line. They further advised both parties to settle the matter by 'peaceful means'. For China, this was a betrayal and the Soviet attitude was violating the 'principles of proletarian internationalism'. Mao considered Nehru as 'half-man and half-devil' and he thought that China should wash off his face so that it won't be frightening, like a devil's.

Though Moscow systematically refused to be a mediator between the two parties or even organize a historical conference with scholars and historians from both sides to present their findings on the border issue, Khrushchev and his colleagues had tried to influence the Chinese leadership to change their stance and accept some compromise. A report prepared by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1959, concluded that a change in China's approach could only occur "as a result of review by the leaders of the PRC of their foreign policy conceptions as a whole". China was certainly not ready to change its stand. Mao still believed in usefulness of war, had he not said, "Some people have ridiculed us as the advocates of omnipotence of war. Yes, we are: we are the advocates of the omnipotence of the revolutionary war, which is not bad at all, but good and is Marxist."

The Cuban crisis did not improve the relations between China and the USSR. For a long time, Khrushchev tried to hide the built up of missiles in Cuba from the Chinese. He thought that he alone could reap the benefits.

In the September's Conference, while Mao was staging his comeback, his anti-Soviet mood hardened in Beijing.

Since a first clash with India in August 1959, Beijing felt that Moscow had become more pro-Indian: prior to the event, the Russians had provided India with some military helicopters and transport planes which were used in the border hostilities.

The NEFA front was therefore important for Mao who wanted to teach Khrushchev a lesson; the Soviet leader had 'supported' the Indian stand on the border issue in this area in 1959.

This time, Beijing took its precautions. Chinese sources said that on 8 October, a Chinese leader, probably Zhou Enlai, told "the Soviet Ambassador that China had information that India was about to launch a massive attack along the Sino-Indian border and that should India attack we would resolutely defend ourselves. He also pointed out that the fact that Soviet-made helicopters and transport planes were being used by India for airdropping and transporting military supplies in the Sino-Indian border areas was making a bad impression on our frontier guards."

The Chinese were keen to have some kind of assurance from Moscow that the 1959 episode will not happen again.

A few days later, Khrushchev made sure to convey the message that he stood by the Chinese. When the Chinese Ambassador Liu Xiao⁴³, called on Khrushchev, he was given a two-hour long audience and invited him for a farewell dinner party on 14 October with the entire CPSU Presidium. Khrushchev spoke to Liu with nostalgia of the pre 1958 Sino-Soviet relationship. His hope, he said, was the two nations would forget past quarrels, and start on a fresh leaf: "if there were differences between Moscow and Beijing on the issue of transition to socialism, life itself would instruct them who was right," he told his interlocutor.

⁴³ To be replaced by Ambassador Pan Zili who had just left his post in India.

In its dispute with India, the Soviet Union was with Beijing, he continued: "This was the unanimous position of the CPSU Presidium. Nehru's comments as he left New Delhi airport for Sri Lanka showed that he was propitiating domestic reaction. If unhappily there were an attack on China, 'we stand together with China'. If the Chinese wished, the Soviet Union would proclaim this the following day; it had not done so previously to avoid driving the Indians into the arms of the Americans".

Liu Xiao informed Khrushchev that "Indian troops were massing on the eastern sector of the frontier, and that if they attacked, China would resist them." According to the Memoirs of the Chinese Ambassador, Khrushchev affirmed that this information corroborated his own information, adding: "If the Soviet Union were placed in China's position it would select the same measures. A neutral attitude on the border issue was impossible; if China was attacked, it would be an act of betrayal to declare neutrality". Beijing could count on Moscow who needed China's support in the Caribbean crisis. A few years ago, the US diplomatic archives were declassified. An interesting *The Foreign Relations of the United States* took place in Beijing on February 23, 1972. President Nixon and his NSA Henry Kissinger were briefed by Zhou Enlai about the 1962 conflict. Zhou explained China's 'official position: "Neville Maxwell mentioned in the book that in 1962 the Indian Government believed what the Russians told them that we, China, would not retaliate against them. Of course we won't send our troops outside our borders to fight against other people. We didn't even try to expel Indian troops from the area south of the McMahon line, which China doesn't recognize, by force. But if your (e.g. Indian) troops come up north of the McMahon line, and come even further into Chinese territory, how is it possible for us to refrain from retaliating? We sent three open telegrams to Nehru asking him to make a public reply, but he refused. He was so discourteous; he wouldn't even do us the courtesy of replying, so we had no choice but to drive him out. You

know all the other events in the book, so I won't describe them, but India was encouraged by the Soviet Union to attack."

We have quoted earlier some of the 'telegrams'. The Indian may have been discourteous, but the Chinese were plain threatening.

In any case, once Khrushchev's assurance obtained, the last hurdle to begin the operations was removed: Nehru would get his slap.

It started on October 20 in West Kameng division and spread all over the Northern Sino-Indian border. This part of the story is too well known to be recounted again.

The great strategist had come out of his bed to strike back.

The Chinese motivations

The Chinese motivations: the Tibetan Trauma

John W. Garver, an American scholar has done a fascinating study on *China's Decision for War with India in 1962*. Using Chinese sources, Graver analyzed the 'root cause' of the conflict according to Beijing.

He affirms: "There is unanimous agreement among Chinese scholars that the root cause of the 1962 war was an Indian attempt to undermine Chinese rule and seize Tibet. The official PLA history of the 1962 war argues that India sought to turn Tibet into a 'buffer zone'. Creation of such a buffer zone had been the objective of British imperial strategy, and Nehru was a 'complete successor' to Britain in this regard. Nehru's objective was creation of a 'great Indian empire' in South Asia by 'filling the vacuum' left by British exit from that region. Control over Tibet was, Nehru felt, essential for 'mastery over South Asia, and the most economical method for guaranteeing India's security'."

According to Xu Yan, a professor of history at the PLA's National Defense University, the Indian Prime Minister aspired throughout the 1950's to make Tibet a 'buffer zone'. Xu is quoted by Garver as saying: "Nehru imbibed

British imperialist ideology, and believed that India should dominate neighboring countries.”

Xu uses some quotes from Nehru about his aspiration to make India the leader of the Indian Ocean region. For the Chinese historian, the Indian independence struggle put an emphasis on ‘pure nationalism’, without the ‘class analysis’ which should always be associated to ‘nationalism’ according to orthodox Marxism, both element being inseparable.

One remembers that less than two months after the March 1959 Tibetan uprising (the Chinese called it ‘Tibetan rebellion’), *The People's Daily* published a long diatribe against Nehru *The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy*.

The draft of the article is said to have been reviewed 26 times by Mao and some of his senior colleagues in the Party, before being published on May 6, 1959. This unquestionably demonstrates the theoretical and ideological importance of the text.

The article affirms: “The war of rebellion unleashed by the handful of traitors in Tibet has been quelled... Now Tibet faces a peaceful revolution, that is, the democratic reforms in Tibet... This is a revolution — the continuation in Tibet of the great people's revolution which swept the Chinese mainland around 1949. Because of obstruction by the former local government of Tibet, this revolution has all along been delayed in Tibet during the past eight years since the peaceful, liberation of Tibet... The revolution in Tibet has been accelerated by this rebellion and with the democratization of Tibet, the history of foreign intervention in Tibet will finally come to an end. This is absolutely necessary for the true consolidation of Sino-Indian friendship...

Mr. Nehru has on many occasions expressed his sympathy with the so-called ‘aspirations of the Tibetans for autonomy’ and his opposition to what he called ‘armed intervention’ by China. His statement of April 27 [1959 in Parliament] is somewhat more systematic. ...Nehru did not explain what kind

of society in Tibet he referred to as a 'static, unchanging society fearful of what might be done to it in the name of reform'. But this is precisely the starting point of the whole question. Our discussion must and can only begin here... The Dalai Lama is by no means highly respected unconditionally by these people as Nehru says. The so-called 'sympathizers' are only usurping the name of the Tibetan people, the name of Tibetan autonomy and the name of humanitarianism."

Then the article continues: "In discussing Tibetan society, although Nehru does not oppose reforms and does not deny the past vested interests played in the rebellion, still on the whole, he not only fails to touch on its extremely cruel system of exploitation, but virtually lumps together the vast majority of the exploited with the tiny minority of the exploiters. On this basis, he denies that a handful of upper-strata reactionaries are responsible for the rebellion in Tibet, describes the just action of the Chinese people in putting down the rebellion as a 'tragedy' and expresses sympathy for the rebellion. Thus, he commits a most deplorable error. As friends of India and as the people whose affairs Nehru is discussing, we deem it necessary to point out this error. If one agrees with Nehru's logic, not only the revolution in Tibet, but the whole Chinese revolution would be impermissible..."

And then: "Although the Indian Government has no desire to occupy Tibet or make Tibet formally independent, it really strives to prevent China from exercising full sovereignty over its own territory of Tibet. In this respect certain political figures in India have followed the tradition of the British Government of the past—they only recognize China's 'suzerainty' over Tibet, like India's 'suzerainty' over Bhutan and Sikkim. What they call 'autonomy' for Tibet is different from national autonomy as laid down in clear terms in the Constitution of China, different from the national regional autonomy practiced in Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, Kwangsi and Ninghsia; rather it is a kind of semi-independent status. True, Tibet is not a province but an

autonomous region of the People's Republic of China, with greater powers and functions than a province as laid down in the Constitution and by law." It is amusing to read these lines more than 52 years.

Zhu Weiqun, the Director of the United Front Department who is the Chinese counterpart for negotiations with the Dalai Lama's Envoys published a hard-hitting interview on the website *China's Tibet* on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 'Liberation' of Tibet (May 23, 2011). Zhu Weiqun said: "The Peaceful Liberation of Tibet marked the crash of the attempt of the imperialism and a minority of Tibetan reactionary upper class to separate Tibet from the whole country".

The 1959 uprising in Lhasa marked the collapse of this grand justification that China had liberated Tibet.

We recently quoted this declaration about the 'handful of upper-strata reactionaries' to Dr Lobsang Sangay, the newly elected Kalon Tripa (prime minister) of the Tibetan Government in exile.

Dr. Sangay said: "In March/April 2008 as well as in 1987-89, Tibetans from all walks of life, farmers, uneducated nomads, educated youth, old people, everybody came down in the streets. Thousands and thousands protested against the occupation." And he added with a smile: "In exile, we have a Kalon Tripa [himself] who has a commoner background. If they really interested to find who the reactionaries are, they may look at certain Communist leaders in Tibet."

When he asked him to you explain why in his opinion, the Chinese leadership was still using this illogical argument after 60 years, he answered: "Well, from the start, they did not have any legitimacy. They used sheer force to occupy Tibet. They have no legitimacy whatsoever." That is the point, in the Communist psyche they had 'liberated' Tibet, but the 'masses revolted' against their own 'emancipation', they had to find a scapegoat and that was India and Nehru.

It is crucial to understand this point to find Mao's motivations to attack India in September/October 1962.

To come back to Xu Yan's analysis, he wrote: "Nehru aspired to turn that region into a 'buffer zone' between China and India. This was Nehru's consistent objective throughout the 1950s."

It is a fact that most Chinese historians consider that the 'decisive factor' in the deterioration of the situation (and subsequently the War) was India's policy of 'protecting the Tibetan splittists'.

Garver quotes from another article, this time by Wang Hongwei, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Wang has a similar argument: "Prior to 1947, Britain's objective was to bring Tibet within its 'sphere of influence'. Britain sought 'Tibetan independence', and continually attempted to instigate Tibet to 'leave China'. Nehru was deeply influenced by this British thinking through education in Britain and by assimilation of the mentality of the British ruling class. In 1959, the Indian government 'supported the Tibetan rebels', permitted them to carry out 'anti-China activities' on Indian territory, and even gave some Tibetan rebels military training. Simultaneous with this, India advanced claims on Chinese territory. Implicitly but clearly, the purpose of India doing this was to achieve Tibetan 'independence' by instigating Tibet to 'leave' China."

These Chinese views are not corroborated by the facts.

Just to give an example, in a letter to Nehru of 28 July, 1952 Zhou Enlai for the first time officially requested the 'regularisation' of the Indian Mission in Lhasa. While recognising the legitimacy of India's trade and cultural interests in Tibet, the Chinese Premier suggested that the political agency at Lhasa should be "regularised by its transformation into an Indian Consulate-General in exchange for the opening of a similar Chinese Consulate in Bombay." It was immediately agreed by Nehru. Had he wanted an

'independent' Tibet, to downgrade the full-fledged Mission in Lhasa, would have been the last thing to do.

Further, when S. Sinha, the Indian Representative in Lhasa, asked for a loan of Rs. 2 lakhs to help the forces fighting for Tibetan independence, Nehru clarified the policy of the Government of India vis-à-vis the Mission in Lhasa⁴⁴.

In a cable to Sinha, he informed him that it would be "improper and unwise for our representative to get involved in Tibetan domestic affairs or intrigues". He added that India was naturally friendly towards Tibetans, but this should not give anyone the impression of possible interference or help. He concluded by telling his Representative: "We have to judge these matters from larger world point of view which probably our Tibetan friends have no means of appreciating."⁴⁵

The facts show that Nehru systematically refused to help the Tibetans in their struggle for autonomy.

Graver says: "One of the most extensive and nuanced Chinese accounts of events leading up to the 1962 war is by Zhao Weiwen, long time South Asian analyst of the Ministry of State Security. Zhao's account of the road to war also begins with Tibet and attribution of aggressive motives to Indian policy moves."

According to Zhang, from 1947 to 1952 "India ardently hoped to continue England's legacy in Tibet". The 'essence' of the British policy had been to

⁴⁴ Sinha in his report mentioned three main groups in Lhasa. The third group "claiming to be the champions of Tibetan freedom and culture. This group was in need of funds to build up its units in Tibetan villages and amongst the middle classes. Funds were available from foreign countries particularly from the USA, but the group did not wish to receive help from the countries which had nothing in common with Tibet. It looked upon India for help and sought a loan of Rs .2 lakhs."

⁴⁵ SWJN, Series II, Vol. 19, *Cable to Indian Mission, Lhasa* (repeated to Political Officer, Sikkim), New Delhi, 6 September 1952, p. 651.

"tamper with China's sovereignty in Tibet to change it to 'suzerainty' thereby throwing off the jurisdiction of China's central government over Tibet under the name of Tibetan autonomy."

Zhang believes that it was some 'right wing forces' (presumably the Jan Sangh) who 'refused to abandon the English legacy' in Tibet and pressured Nehru.

More interesting, Zhang asserts that Nehru 'harbored a sort of dark mentality' and demonstrated an 'irresolute attitude' in 1959: "On the one hand he said that Tibet was a part of China and that he did not want to interfere in China's internal affairs. On the other hand, he permitted all sorts of 'anti-China activities and words' aimed against China's exercise of sovereignty over Tibet."

For Zhao, it is Nehru's 'dark mentality' made him support the 'anti China forces' who wanted to throw off the jurisdiction of China's central government in Tibet.

Interestingly, all these comments on the causes of the 1962 War were written in the 1990's. They look as a justification for the War. Graver commented: "This is probably due to the fact that published scholarship in China is still expected to explain and justify, not to criticize the decisions of the Chinese Communist Party, at least on such sensitive matters as war and peace."

Very few in India realize the 'ideological' trauma that the Tibetan uprising in March 1959 and the Dalai Lama's subsequent flight to India has been for Communist China. Mao had to take revenge.

The Final decision

Apparently Mao had still some doubt. Politically he could not afford to have a semi-victory, a triumph was necessary to assert his newly recovered position at the head of the Communist State. His ideological high stand on the

agriculture policy had to be back by a resounding victory against the 'arrogant' Prime Minister of India and the insult inflicted by the Dalai Lama when he took refuge in India three years earlier. The affront had to be avenged.

Till the last minute, Mao had some questions:

- Should China permit Indian forces to advance a bit further into Chinese territory under the Forward Policy to show the world that China acted in self defense?
- What should be the main objective of the attack against India?
- Should the attack focus on the Aksai Chin in the West, which was the main bone of contention between India and China?
- At a military point of view, an attack in NEFA had better chance to succeed as larger formations could concentrate in the area which was more accessible with easier lines of communication and supplies.
- To prove Nehru's stubborn and hegmonist attitude, NEFA was ideal as Nehru would then be compelled to agree the McMahon Line was not an 'established fact', but a disputed border and only negotiations could achieve a lasting peace and the settlement of the border issue.
- Further winter was approaching fast, should the operations be postponed for a few months (July-September was the best period for military operations)? The Tibet Military district had warned that the snow in winter could trigger 'great difficulties' in moving supplies and reinforcements across the high passes.
- The Army intelligence informed the leadership that presently [in October 1962] the military balance tilted heavily in China's favor. It might not be the case in a few months time.

Considering all these points two days later, the CMC⁴⁶ met gave the formal order for a 'self defensive counter-attack war'.

Some conclusions

- The first conclusion is that, if Mao Zedong had not managed to stage a come in August/September 1962, the War with India would have probably not taken place. Of course, with 'if' many sections of world history could be rewritten, but it is a fact that once Mao's ideological hard-line prevailed in Beijing, it was difficult to avoid a clash.
- Tibet played a central role in Beijing decision to go to war with India. After having 'liberated' Tibet in 1950, Mao and his colleagues never swallowed the fact that Tibetan masses revolted against the Chinese occupiers in March 1959 ("Nehru instigated and backed up the treason and rebellion of the reactionary clique of the upper social strata in the Tibet region", said Beijing). Some historical facts remain: one lakh or so of Tibetans who fled to India were from ALL the strata of the society and that ALL were given political asylum in India.
- For Mao, it was a win-win situation. Having inflicted a rout to India, his stature in the CCP structure was reinforced, so was his Defence Minister's, Lin Biao. Mao could now further establish his position and prepare his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution during which all those who had dared to oppose him at the Seven Thousand Cadres' Conference were purged or killed (amongst them, Lui Shaoqi and Peng Dehuai).
- Mao was winning on all fronts: he humiliated India on the Himalayan front (without Soviets material support) and on the Caribbean front, he was triumphant (without doing anything). Had Kennedy backed out, the Chinese would have proven right: 'imperialists are paper tigers'; and when Moscow

⁴⁶ Mao, Zhou, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Lo Ruiqing, and Marshals Liu Bocheng, He Long and Xu Xiangqian participated in the final meeting.

retreated, Mao demonstrated that 'peaceful co-existence used by contemporary revisionists' could not help Asian or African (or Cuban) 'fraternal' parties in case of severe crisis. Mao proved to the Chinese masses that Nehru was just a 'paper tiger'.

- Mao believed that 'ideology prevailed over realism'. After the Sino-Indian conflict, his protégé, Lin Biao was comforted in his position as heir-apparent. Lin has always argued that ideology was more important than weapons, revolutionary ideals more important than strategy. In the case of the Sino-Indian conflict, the Marxist theory had proved superior to the bourgeois revisionism of Nehru.

A few months after the war, Mao affirmed that "the merit of the PLA is that its political ideology is always correct". Does this explain the swift victory against India? Perhaps not, but it reinforced Mao and Lin Biao 'ideological' position in the power struggle within the Party.

- Another lesson one can be drawn from the tumultuous 1962 year: the 'peaceful rise of China' very much depends on who is at the helm of the Middle Kingdom. It is all the more important to watch the change of guard in 2012.
- Vice-President Xi Jinping's father was the first casualty at the beginning of Mao's return to power. His purge was a prelude to the Cultural Revolution. Let us hope that the future President will remember these awful months when he become President of the PRC and Chairman of the CMC.
- If one accepts that the Chinese leadership (mainly Mao) decided to go to war with India on October 6 only, the PLA had not preparing for years for the eventuality of a conflict. It reminds me of this telling story of a senior Indian Officer who was taken prisoner of war in Tibet/China after the October 1962 debacle. One thing that he noted was the proficiency of the Chinese in Indian languages: "It was a real surprise for us when one day a Chinese woman came and recited some of Bahadur Shah Zafar's poems, much to the

delight of us all, but particularly so of Rattan [another Indian officer prisoner of war]. This lady and Rattan did have an exchange of couplets of Zafar's poems written while he was pining away in Rangoon for his homeland after deportation by the British from his last Mohgul kingdom in Delhi following the so-called mutiny of 1857. The Chinese had certainly prepared for this war most diligently because they had interpreters for every Indian language right in the front line. This Urdu-speaking woman must have lived in Lucknow for a long time."

You don't get translators in different Indian languages in just two weeks. It only means that the Chinese Army had meticulously prepared for any eventuality.

Some historical documents/papers useful to understand China's angle to the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 are listed below:

My website contains several important documents to study the conflict; see <http://www.claudearpi.net/index.php?nav=documents&id=20&lang=1>

Most of the following documents can be downloaded from my site.

- *The History of Conflict with China, 1962* (Chief Editor S.N Prasad), The History Division, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 1992
- *Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Governments of India and China* (White Paper VII), July-October 1962
- *Henderson Brooks Report: An Introduction*, Neville Maxwell, April 14-20, 2001
- *The Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1962
- *The Sino-Indian Conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sino-Soviet Split*, October 1962: New Evidence from the Russian Archives
- *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute* (The Polo CIA series, XVI)
- Intelligence. Report Factionalism in the Central Committee: Mao's Opposition since 1949
- *1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy*: Cold War International History Project, (Working Paper # 48)
- The Secret Report of the 10th Panchen Lama — Report on the sufferings of the masses in Tibet and other Tibetan regions and suggestions for future work to the central authorities through the respected Premier Zhou Enlai, 1962

Some books have been extremely helpful to grasp the situation in China in 1962

- Roderick MacFarquhar, *The origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Volume III (New York, the Columbia University Press)
- Li Zhisui, Dr, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (London: Arrow, 1996)
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- Wang Hongwei, Ximalaya shan qingjie, zhong yin guanxi yan jiu (The Himalayas Sentiment: A Study of Sino-Indian Relations, Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1998
- Xu Yan, Zhong Yin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang (True history of the Sino-Indian border war), Hong Kong: Cosmos Books Ltd., 1993
- Zhao Weiwen, Yin Zhong guanxi fengyun lu (1949-1999) (Record of the vicissitudes of India-China relations (1949-1999), Beijing: Shi shi chubanshe, 2000.