

The Chinese Interests in the Himalayas

The People's Republic of China and Nepal: A Case Study

ULRICH GRÜNDLER

This paper deals with the interests the People's Republic of China has in the Himalayas as exemplified by the case of Nepal. The study shall not try to give a minute account of the development of the Sino-Indian border dispute because that would be out of the scope of this topic. It will instead concentrate on the emerging Chinese policy towards Nepal as one aspect of the foreign relations of the People's Republic of China.

The basis of Peking's foreign policy

The leadership that came to power in Peking in the autumn of 1949 was very unique in character. All of the new rulers of China had been arduous nationalists in their youth who wanted to build a new, prosperous, independent, and strong China. The only way of attaining this goal in their eyes was by means of revolution. Through a long protracted guerrilla war which lasted for more than twenty years, they had seized power.

This revolutionary background had changed their whole way of thinking and world outlook. They themselves had experienced that it is possible to change the fate of a whole country if one only has a strong determination and is willing to concentrate all one's efforts on the achievement of one single goal. They had also experienced that "all power comes out of the barrel of the gun" and that it is therefore necessary to build up a strong military power under the control of a revolutionary party. So they had developed a military outlook by no means comparable to that of Western military establishments and which from the very beginning left no room for an emerging industrial-mil. complex getting control over politics. The Chinese pursued a politico-military strategy in which politics have always been of greater importance than military considerations. The new leadership in Peking had also developed a very effective relationship between theory and practice. Their historical experience had shown them the necessity to cling to a visionary voluntarism, but on the other hand make a realistic assessment of one's resources and capabilities at any given moment.

After establishing their new regime in Peking they had to tackle problems of foreign relations in a more formalized manner. But since 1949 foreign politics have only been of minor importance for the government in Peking and have always been decided by domestic policy considerations. During the years from 1949 to 1953 the most important task was to lay a lasting and solid foundation for the establishment of a new socialist society. When the new government was inaugurated in Peking

on October 1, 1949, not even the unification of the whole country had been finished. Hainan, Tibet, and T'aiwan still had to be liberated. The first two areas were brought under control until the end of 1950 while T'aiwan is still the refuge of Chiang Kai-shek. But the new regime was not only troubled by the task of uniting the whole country. For the first time in modern Chinese history they tried to build new structures which were able to penetrate the whole society and mould it according to the revolutionary views held by the leadership of the Communist Party of China. To lay the foundation for a transformation into a socialist society meant that Peking had not only to repair the damage done by the Sino-Japanese war and the subsequent civil war, but also destroy the old order in economy, education, social organization, and family life. It is only too understandable that especially during the first stages of this process the government could not pay much attention to the sphere or foreign affairs.

The resources People's China had at her disposal during the first years have been quite limited. Of course, the new government enjoyed the support of the USSR but the relationship between Moscow and Peking had never really been with our strains. Mao Tse-tung had never gotten the wholehearted support of Stalin and therefore was not too willing to sacrifice Chinese interests for the Soviet Union. But very soon he had to do so in order to safeguard the territorial integrity of China during the Korean War. Substantial military forces and energies were bound in this war, others were used to establish effective control over Tibet or had to be concentrated opposite T'aiwan where Chiang Kai-shek once more enjoyed the support of the USA.

The main obstacle in establishing normal foreign relations proved to be the containment policy the United States also applied with regard to China. After 'manifest destiny' in its latest form of 'missionary imperialism' (as the US had less commercial than missionary, educational and sentimental interests in China) had totally failed, the Americans who thought themselves to be the true friends of China had to face a new order. This regime not only expelled them but also fought against them in a new type of war which cannot any longer be won by pure material superiority. After the USA for half a century had proved that it is not able to support a revolution (and therefore is counter-revolutionary in the true sense of the word) the only reaction to this traumatic experience was a policy of negation, the refusal to accept new facts and changed circumstances. In this situation the People's Republic could only seek the help it needed for building a new economic and social order from the Soviet Union.

With the limited military resources, politically isolated by the US, economically in a weak position, there was not much China could offer to the developing states in Asia. But she could provide the elites of these countries with a model of a successful revolution and show them how to build a unified state through a new type of politico-military organization. The Chinese empire that had crumbled for a long time emerged in a new form and the elites in the states of South and South-East Asia knew by historical experience that it might be better to accommodate themselves with the rulers in Peking. The pure size and potentialities of China immediately had their impact and so far could only partially be bought off by the USA.

Peking — Kathmandu — New Delhi

It was in this national and international environment that the Chinese interests in the Himalayas gradually developed. In this area China has a common frontier with India, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. The overriding interest in the eyes of Peking was to safeguard the security of Tibet. It was therefore necessary to have at least no inimical regime at its southern border. Peking always had to fear that the ethnic, linguistic, and religious affinities between the Tibetans and the different tribes inhabiting the Himalayas give rise to a nationalism that might undermine Chinese rule in Tibet. Another question in point was the unsolved boundary problem. As I confined myself to the relations between People's China and Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and the Indian Union are only partly involved. But one might say the policy of the People's Republic towards Nepal is only one aspect of her relations with India.

Nepal by tradition has been regarded as part of the Anglo-Indian and, after 1947, of the Indian sphere of influence. This historic relationship dates back to the year 1791 when Nepal concluded the first treaty of trade with British India. In 1816 the Treaty of Sagauli gave the British the right to appoint a Resident for Nepal. More important was the fact that starting with this treaty they began recruiting the famous Gorkha soldiers for their army. When more than 100 years later India in 1947 became independent it retained the former British privilege of recruiting Gorkha soldiers in a so-called standstill agreement. It is therefore understandable that when Peking sent troops into Tibet in 1950 there rose a feeling in New Delhi that the privileged Indian position in Nepal might be in danger. The Indian government tried to preserve its influence by concluding a treaty with the Himalayan Kingdom. Article II of this "Treaty of Peace and Friendship" stipulates that the government of both states would inform each other about all developments with regard to neighbouring states which impair the friendly relationship between India and Nepal¹. As the People's Republic is the only independent neighbour of Nepal besides India, New Delhi tried by this wording to establish a power of control over Kathmandu. During the first years this caution proved to be unnecessary as there did not exist diplomatic relations between Peking and Kathmandu. But since 1950 Nepal became more and more aware of the "big brother" in the North and when in 1953 the annual tribute Lhasa had already paid for nearly 100 years² did not arrive in Kathmandu, public sentiment rose in favour of a normalization of relations between Nepal and China. Especially Nepalese merchants feared for their traditional privileges in Tibet. The government in Kathmandu was in the beginning rather reluctant to establish normal diplomatic relations.

The "Robin Hood of Nepal"

One of the reasons was that China had granted asylum to Dr. K. I. Singh, a politician of the Nepali Congress party who in January 1953 with the help of the party army had

¹ Text of this treaty in: G. Jain, *India meets China in Nepal*, London: Asia Publishing House 1959, p. 164 *passim*.

² As the result of a lost war Tibet since 1856 had to pay Nepal annually 10,000 rupees. Cf. Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 160 *passim*; Werner Levi, *Nepal in World Affairs*, in: *Pacific Affairs*, Richmond, Vd., 1957, p. 242 *passim*.

tried an abortive coup against the new government formed by his own party. At this time Dr. Singh was already at odds with the Nepali Congress Party.

The Nepali National Congress had been founded in Banares, India, in January 1946 with the support of Indian socialists. One year later at its first congress in Calcutta T. P. Archarya who at that time was in jail was elected its first president. In March 1950 it merged with the Nepali Democratic Congress and assumed the name Nepali Congress. One month later M. P. Koirala was elected president. The end of that year brought the revolt against the rule of the Rana family which for more than 100 years had held the hereditary post of Prime Minister. In November King Tribhuvan fled into the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and was later flown to New Delhi, against the strong protests of the Rana Prime Minister. He only returned in February 1951 after a compromise with the Rana family which had to give up its traditional right.

During the revolt in November 1950 K. I. Singh had been a commander of the Nepali Congress troops, which had given support to the King, in western Nepal. He failed however to take the town of Bhairawa and ever since blamed the Congress for not giving him support. After the return of the King he went on fighting and was later arrested. Still in jail he engineered the coup of January 1953. After its failure he fled to Lhasa.

The Communist Party of Nepal which had unofficially given support to Dr. Singh through demonstrations was afterwards dissolved³. During his stay in China Dr. Singh became a legendary figure and got the name "Robin Hood of Nepal". After more than three years in exile in Peking he was allowed to return to Kathmandu in September 1955. In 1957 he even became Prime Minister for a short period and during this time followed a strongly pro-Indian policy. After King Mahendra, who had succeeded King Tribhuvan to the throne in 1955 had made an end to the parliamentary system in December 1960 and introduced the Panchayat-System, K. I. Singh remained quiet for number of years. In March 1964 however he advocated a movement for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and was promptly arrested. In August he was jailed to two years because of contempt of state and preaching of disaffection. This has ended his role in Nepalese politics so far.

Peking enters the stage

The fact that Dr. Singh had been granted asylum in 1952 was no real obstacle for the development of good relations between Nepal and China. More important was that Kathmandu had to be aware of Indian opposition. Only after the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet Nepal could think of establishing normal relations with China. Peking seems to have taken the initiative in this matter. The Chinese interest was to have good relations with neighbouring states in order to break the military encirclement by the US. In the years 1954–55 the People's Republic for the first time became an actor in world politics. The first fruit of this new stage in Chinese foreign policy was the Sino-Indian agreement of April 29, 1954, in which New Delhi recognized the Chinese sovereignty over Tibet.

³ Cf. Leo E. Rose, *Communism under high atmospheric conditions*, in: Robert A. Scalapino, *The communist Revolution in Asia, Tactics, Goals, Achievement*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall 1959, p. 347; Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 35 *passim*.

A few weeks later on his way back home from the Geneva Conference Chou En-lai and Nehru proclaimed the famous "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence". These developments and the moderate posture China had taken during its first appearance in the international diplomatic arena at Geneva served to increase the respect paid to her by the states in South and South-East Asia. This new Chinese policy paid off when Peking was invited to take part in the Bandung Conference in April, 1955. Chou En-lai not only used this forum to enhance the status of the People's Republic as a reputed member of the international community of states but also had a number of talks with the different delegations which, among others, led to the normalization of relations between Peking and Kathmandu. In the end of July 1955 a Chinese delegation visited Nepal and on August 1, signed a communique about the establishment of diplomatic relations on the basis of the "Five Principles"⁴.

In May 1956⁵ a large delegation led by Vice Premier Ulanfu attended the coronation of King Mahendra. Some months later, on September 20, 1956, Nepal and China signed an agreement by which all former agreements between Nepal and the Tibetan area of the People's Republic were abrogated. Nepal was allowed to establish three trade missions in Tibet. The agreement also included stipulations for pilgrimages and local traffic⁶. A few days later the Nepalese Prime Minister Acharya went to Peking. During his visit a Sino-Nepalese friendship society was founded. The more important result of his talks was the first agreement on economic aid which was signed on October 7, 1956. After the successes of the first five-year-plan from 1953–57 Peking was able to grant Nepal 60 mill. rupees for a period of three years. One third was to be paid in cash, two thirds to be delivered in machines, equipment, construction materials, and consumer goods. Article II stipulated that no strings should be attached to this grant and no personnel should be sent to Nepal. The government of Nepal would be totally free in spending the grant, without Chinese interference⁷.

Peking's generous attitude was further demonstrated when Chou En-lai in January 1957 during a visit to Kathmandu made a gift of 50,000 Nepalese rupees to an orphanage and another one of 10,000 to a buddhist monastery⁸. But all these efforts to develop friendly relations were endangered by the Tibetan revolt in 1959. In Kathmandu the government which during the last few months had been occupied with constitutional problems and preparations for the first Western-style elections⁹ once more became aware of the particular position of the country vis-à-vis China. Especially politicians of the Nepali Congress felt concerned. In May, 1959, the Congress made the proposal that the Bandung powers should mediate between Lhasa and Peking and that the Tibetans should have the right to decide themselves

⁴ Verträge der Volksrepublik China mit anderen Staaten, Teil I: Süd- und Ostasien, bearbeitet im Institut für Asienkunde, Hamburg, Frankfurt-Berlin: Metzner 1962, p. 205 passim.

⁵ China Quarterly, London, no. 26, 1963, p. 90; Contemporary China, ed. by Stuart E. Kirby, Hongkong: University Press, vol. II, 1958, p. 218; Jain (op. cit., p. 114), claims that the delegations visited Nepal in February.

⁶ Verträge der Volksrepublik China . . ., loc. cit., p. 206 passim.

⁷ *Ib.*, p. 220 passim.

⁸ Contemporary China, loc. cit., p. 241.

⁹ Cf. Satish Kumar, The Panchayat Constitution of Nepal and its Operation, in: International Studies, New Delhi, Oct., 1964, pp. 133–153.

whether they wanted autonomy or not. The Nepalese government first remained calm but in August, 1959, alerted the guards at the 500-mile-long northern border and proposed a large increase in the defense budget. At the beginning of November Prime Minister B. P. Koirala declared that there was no danger for Nepal, a view which was not shared by other Nepali Congress politicians. At the end of the month, the government found itself in a dangerous situation. It saw the possibility of foreign intervention, interestingly enough not by China but by India. On November 27, 1959, Nehru had promised to defend Nepal, probably to calm down the domestic opposition against him after clashes of Indian with Chinese troops in disputed border areas. The Nepalese government clearly saw the danger that its country might get involved in a major confrontation between India and China. On November 29, Prime Minister Koirala expressed his hope that the Indians would act only "if such help was sought by Nepal". In December, 1959, there were reports that Chinese troops had crossed the border into Nepal at two points and were cutting wood, but these reports were quickly denied by the government.

Kathmandu obviously tried not to antagonize Peking. On the other hand the Nepalese government also gave help to some 2,000 Tibetan refugees. Apparently Peking did not regard this as a provocation as China rather feared the arming of Tibetans in India. This question therefore did not disturb the coming border talks.

In January, 1960, Prime Minister Koirala, after talks with Nehru in Delhi, went to Peking for negotiations¹⁰. The Chinese government at this moment was quite willing to reach an agreement in the boundary question. Peking needed a period of consolidation. After the failure of the "Hundred-Flowers-Movement" there had been a discussion about the direction of future policy. For the time being the "revolutionaries" had gained a victory over the "pragmatists" and enforced the policy of the Three Red Banners. But the Great Leap Forward and the People's Communes because of counter-revolutionary activities and setbacks in agriculture caused by bad weather did not have the anticipated results. In addition to that foreign relations had also deteriorated. Peking became increasingly disappointed about the policy of the "new Tsars" in Moscow. Khrushchev had not only proposed a summit meeting within the framework of the UN Security Council (including Chiang Kai-shek), he also did not support the People's Republic in autumn 1958 in a military solution of the T'aiwan question. The lack of aid for the development of Chinese nuclear energy and the "spirit of Camp David" in Chinese eyes were other signs of an emerging Soviet revisionism. Besides this there remained the constant threat posed by the remnant KMT forces in the Burmese-Laotian-Thai border area and the increasing US activities in Laos¹¹. Security was of utmost importance for Peking in this situation. Displaying a conciliatory attitude towards smaller states by settling minor border problems would also obstruct US plans to drag more states into SEATO and so prevent a further encirclement.

After having concluded a border agreement with Rangoon in January, 1960, Peking signed a similar agreement with Kathmandu on March 21, 1960. Both governments

¹⁰ China Quarterly, loc. cit., p. 92.

¹¹ Cf. Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos*, London: Pall Mall 1964, p. 127 passim; Roger Smith, in: *Asian Survey*, Berkeley, 1962, p. 63 passim. Peking might also have feared that American and Chinese Nationalist agents were operating from Indian territory (Cf. Harold C. Hinton, *Communist China in World Politics*, London: Mac Millan 1966, p. 255).

noticed with satisfaction that their countries had always respected the traditional boundary (not "McMahonline"!) and lived together in friendship. The two governments therefore concluded this agreement on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence and to prevent any incidents in the future a common commission would be set up to delineate the whole border¹².

On the same day a new aid agreement was concluded. The new grant of 100 mill. rupees should be utilized within three years together with the 40 mill. rupees still left over from the aid of 1956. "On request of the government of His Majesty the King of Nepal" the Chinese government for the first time would send the necessary number of experts and technicians to help in organizing the different aid projects. Travel expenses would be paid by the People's Republic, wages which should not exceed those of comparable Nepalese personnel (a very important feature in Chinese aid policy in order to prevent bad feelings) were to be financed out of the grant¹³.

One month after these agreements Chou En-lai paid a visit to Kathmandu and on April 28, 1960, signed a "Treaty of Peace and Friendship"¹⁴. Apparently the question of the ownership of Mt. Everest remained somewhat unclear¹⁵. Rumours in Kathmandu that China had laid claim on Mt. Everest led to demonstrations. The government, however, did not make a clear statement on this question. In January 1963 Foreign Minister Tulsī Giri declared after a visit to Peking that China had agreed to the Nepalese point of view¹⁶.

The relations between the People's Republic and Nepal seemed to improve further. King Mahendra in December 1960 had suspended the constitution because of growing political unrest. He had to face an opposition that went underground and tried to launch a guerrilla war from Indian territory and he, therefore, was only too glad to get support from Peking. During his visit to the People's Republic in October, 1964, China promised to build a highway between Tibet and Kathmandu. Peking was to pay 3.5 mill. pound sterling for the section of the highway on Nepalese territory. The aid was not to be repaid and there were no strings attached to it. This agreement like others compared favorably with Western aid programs because they were concluded on the basis of equality. Moreover, as Joshi and Rose observed, they "amounted to a recognition of the capacity of the Nepalese to govern their own country without supervision"¹⁷.

¹² New Development in Friendly Relations between China and Nepal, ed. by the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, Peking: Foreign Languages Press 1960, p. 21 passim.

¹³ Verträge der Volksrepublik China . . . , loc. cit., p. 222 passim.

¹⁴ New Development . . . , op. cit., p. 29 passim.

¹⁵ Verträge der Volksrepublik China . . . , loc. cit., p. 224 passim. Actual work only started in 1964. Cf. Der Ostblock und die Entwicklungsländer, Vierteljahresberichte der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Hannover, 1965, p. 232.

¹⁶ New York Times, Late City Edition, Jan. 25, 1963. See also Bhwan Lal Joshi and Leo E. Rose, Democratic Innovations in Nepal, A Case Study of Political Acculturation, Berkeley, 1966: University of California Press, p. 370 passim.

¹⁷ *Ib.*, p. 242 passim.

The Sino-Indian War

But the history of Sino-Nepalese relations is not characterized by a chain of uninterrupted Chinese successes. "... October 20, 1962, came as a traumatic shock to government circles in Kathmandu"¹⁸. The Sino-Indian war made an end to the atmosphere of security in Nepal. Kathmandu once more looked to Delhi as a potential source of support. Indo-Nepalese relations improved when shortly after the outbreak of hostilities between India and China the insurrection in the Indo-Nepalese border area was terminated, reportedly on order from Delhi¹⁹.

But, as in 1959, it was the Indian side which, for security reasons, was much more interested in such an improvement. And once more nationalistic sensitivities of the Nepalese proved to be more important in the long run than security considerations. King Mahendra did not want his country to become a protectorate of India and during the following years maintained a precarious balance between the two countries on either side. He naturally preferred to take aid from both countries. As there did not exist any major difference between the People's Republic and Nepal relations developed on quite friendly terms. In 1965 China promised Nepal further aid for the construction of the East-West-Highway between Kathmandu and Pokhara²⁰. When in 1965-66 the Nepalese trade offices in Shigatse, Kuti, and Keyrong had to be closed, this apparently did not cause any friction as the consulate in Lhasa was allowed to carry on its operations²¹. The year 1966 brought a further improvement. When Crown Prince Birenda Bir. Bikram Shah-Deva visited Peking in June and July, he was not only received and treated by all important Chinese leaders including Mao himself, the Chinese government also promised Nepal another grant of 160 mill. rupees²² with no strings attached. Later that year both countries concluded an agreement on economic and technical cooperation until 1971²³.

Even the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China first did not cause any change in the relations with Nepal. In March, 1967, Peking sent 20,000 tons of rice "as part of the free grant of aid previously agreed upon"²⁴ and when the then Acting Minister of Foreign Trade Lin Hai-yung made a visit to Nepal he promised Chinese help for a 10,000 kw power station in Sun Kosi²⁵. Shortly afterwards, in July, 1967, the Cultural Revolution showed its first effects. There were anti-Chinese demonstrations in the streets of Kathmandu²⁶. Mutual accusations followed but half a year later both governments were on friendly terms again and in December, 1967,

¹⁸ *Ib.*, p. 433.

¹⁹ *Ib.*, p. 446, 479; cf. also Hinton, *loc. cit.*, p. 461; *New York Times*, November 9, 1962.

²⁰ *Peking Review*, Peking, vol. VIII, no. 37, September 10, 1965, p. 3.

²¹ *Asian Almanac*, Johore Bahru, vol. 6, no. 52, p. 3092 *passim*.

²² *Selections of China Mainland Press (SCMP)*, US Consulate General, Hongkong, no. 3736, July 12, 1966, p. 30. *The Far Eastern Economic Review*, Yearbook 1967 (Hongkong 1966, p. 278), speaks of 150 mill. rupees, but in October 1966 Nepal thanked for the conversion of 160 mill. rupees into 12 mill. pound sterling because of the devaluation of the rupee. Cf. *SCMP*, *loc. cit.*, no. 3806, Oct. 24, 1966, p. 35 *passim*.

²³ *SCMP*, *loc. cit.*, no. 3949, Dec. 12, 1966, p. 37 *passim*.

²⁴ *SCMP*, *loc. cit.*, no. 3902, March 20, 1967, p. 26.

²⁵ *SCMP*, *loc. cit.*, no. 3950, June 1, 1967, p. 48.

²⁶ *SCMP*, *loc. cit.*, no. 3978, July 12, 1967, p. 31 *passim*; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Yearbook 1968, Hongkong 1967, p. 252 *passim*.

Peking promised money for the maintenance of the Kathmandu-Kodari highway until March, 1969²⁷.

In May, 1968, Premier Bista during a visit to Peking praised "the Aranike road, the Prithvi road, the brick and tile factory, Kathmandu and Birganji warehouses, and the Sun Kosi hydroelectricity and the proposed ring road project" as "examples of this growing friendship"²⁸. He also signed a new trade agreement²⁹. The mentioned ring road project became more concrete when Peking later that year agreed to build the Kathmandu-Bhaktapur road³⁰. During Bista's next visit to China in May, 1969, Peking declared that it would deliver consumer goods worth 48 mill. dollar³¹ and Bista showed his gratitude by lauding the "cooperative and friendly relations"³². One month later there was another occasion for Peking to show that her foreign policy after the Cultural Revolution had gained new momentum. Prime Minister Chou En-lai, Li Hsien-nien, Vice Premier, and Kuo Mo-jo attended a reception of the Nepalese embassy given at the fiftieth birthday of King Mahendra. The Nepalese ambassador in his address especially pointed out that the Chinese development projects in Nepal had always been completed ahead of schedule. In his answer Li Hsien-nien commented that "China's aid to Nepal is very little". He once more stressed that the relations between China and Nepal are founded on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence³³.

This is the more important because at the same time the relations between Kathmandu and New Delhi started to deteriorate rapidly. On June 24, Prime Minister Bista in an interview spoke of "special relations" between Nepal and India. He said "the impression that Nepal alone had benefited from this is not correct. But to our way of thinking, it is not possible that Nepal should compromise its sovereignty for India's so-called security. The theory of special relations with Nepal outside geographical, social, and economic realities is out of step with modern developments in our relations"³⁴. But this is exactly the point of view the Indian government is not willing to accept. In New Delhi's eyes "India and Nepal form one security community, their defense being indivisible"³⁵. In exchange for development aid Nepal should regard India as her master. So when the Prime Minister in his interview said with regard to the Indian personnel in the checkpoints at the Sino-Nepalese border and the Indian military group in Nepal "His Majesty's Government feels that they can and should be withdrawn", this was felt as a severe blow in New Delhi. As one commentator lamented: "The old phase of Indo-Nepalese relationship, when India had a large say in Nepal's affairs, both domestic and foreign, is definitely over."³⁶ This is the more astonishing as according to this commentator "whatever political influence India

²⁷ SCMP, loc. cit., no. 4084, Dec. 12, 1967, p. 16.

²⁸ SCMP, loc. cit., no. 4188, May 29, 1968, p. 20.

²⁹ Asian Almanac, loc. cit.

³⁰ SCMP, loc. cit., no. 4272, Oct. 4, 1968, p. 39.

³¹ Japan Times, Tokyo, May 24, 1969, p. 8.

³² News from Hsinhua News Agency, London, May 28, 1969.

³³ See Peking Review, no. 25, June 20, 1969, p. 27 *passim*.

³⁴ Cited in: Peking Review, no. 28, July 11, 1969, p. 29.

³⁵ Dilip Mukerjee, Signs of the Times, in: Far Eastern Economic Review, Hongkong, no. 26, July 10, 1969, pp. 126-128, here p. 126.

³⁶ N. C. Sen, Changing Indo-Nepalese Relations, in: China Report, New Delhi, vol. V, no. 5, Sept./Oct., 1969, pp. 20-22, here p. 20.

has in Nepal was the result of Nepal's own choice"³⁷. Consequently, when Nepal's National Assembly on June 29 called on India to withdraw her military training advisory group and the personnel at the checkpoints³⁸, New Delhi did not yield to this wish but tried to bring pressure upon Kathmandu. During the Indo-Nepalese talks in Delhi from August 29 to September 3, the "Indian delegations told the Nepalese side that . . . India would not allow herself to be unduly pressurized in regard to security matters which affected the defense of both countries. It said that if Nepal failed to check Chinese activities in the region, India would be obliged to take appropriate precautions along the Indo-Nepalese border." The Nepalese in their landlocked country obviously know what to understand by the term "appropriate precautions" when they think of the transit traffic going through Indian territory. This of course touches a sensitive nerve in Kathmandu. In Nepalese eyes it is only another sign of India's paternalistic attitude towards Nepalese problems. As about 98% of Nepal's foreign trade of some 120 mill. US dollars is with India, and another 1% with Tibet, the Indian policy is of utmost importance³⁹.

The Indian military personnel is still stationed in Nepal and when Foreign Minister Singh visited Kathmandu on invitation by King Mahendra in February of 1970, this question was not even discussed⁴⁰. Interestingly enough at the same time India and Nepal held discussions on the transit traffic⁴¹. Peking's comment on these developments deserves some attention. Already in July, 1969, a Chinese analysis said: "The Indian expansionists have invented a theory of so-called 'special relationship' in order to control their neighbours and unleash aggression against them. This theory was put forth by Indian Minister of External Affairs during his visit to Nepal early in June when he said: 'We have a special relationship with Nepal, bound by history and tradition.' According to this 'special relationship', India may keep a military advisory group and military personnel in Nepal and let them stay on; . . . she may obstruct and undermine Nepal's foreign trade by taking advantage of her geographical situation. Objection to all this means sabotaging this 'special relationship', and India will impose a 'blockade', and so on and so forth. To put it bluntly, what the 'special relationship' theory advanced by the Indian expansionists means is that India's relations with neighbouring countries are not relations of equality between sovereign states, but a 'special relationship' in inequality, namely, relations between a big country with 'unlimited sovereignty' and a small country with 'limited sovereignty'"⁴².

In contrast to the development of her relations with India, Nepal's contacts with China further improved. A government delegation took part in the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the People's Republic of China and afterwards toured the country⁴³, the Nepalese Minister for Transport, Communications, and Public Works addressed a meeting of the Sino-Nepalese Friendship Association and in January,

³⁷ *Ib.*, p. 21.

³⁸ *Asian Almanac*, vol. 7, no. 32, p. 3841.

³⁹ *Asian Almanac*, vol. 7, no. 45, p. 3638 *passim*. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Yearbook 1970, Hongkong 1969, p. 212.

⁴⁰ Summary of World Broadcasts, BBC, London, Part 3, The Far East, FE/3299/A3/4, Febr. 4, 1970.

⁴¹ Summary . . . FE/3302/A3/6, Febr. 11, 1970.

⁴² *Peking Review*, no. 28, July 11, 1969, p. 28.

⁴³ *Fei-ch'ing yüeh-pao*, Taipei, vol. 12, no. 9, Nov. 1, 1969, p. 103.

1970, the premier and his entire cabinet took part in a reception at the Chinese embassy⁴⁴.

Peking's low-key posture

If we look at the record of Sino-Nepalese relations since the foundation of the People's Republic and try to answer the question whether the Chinese interests in the Himalayas as illustrated by the Nepalese example can be characterized in terms of revolution or Realpolitik one tends to say that the latter is the case. As Nepal still is an undeveloped country it is difficult to revolutionize a population that is structurally diffuse and shows a low degree of interest articulation and aggregation. Peking's policy has invariably addressed the King whose strongly established position could guarantee Chinese security. As the hostilities between India and China have shown the surmounting interest of Peking is to deny New Delhi access to strategically important positions in the Himalayas from where an attack against the People's Republic might be launched. Therefore, China also respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sikkim⁴⁵ and Bhutan whom Peking offered "a fair and reasonable solution" of the yet unsolved boundary question⁴⁶.

Of course, the Chinese leadership also aspires to world revolution. Their policy has been characterized by a transposition of strategy and tactics of the guerrilla war to international politics. In their eyes the world revolution is only possible by the application of guerrilla strategies to international relations. Only in this case the guerrilla can fully utilize his greatest asset, the "monopoly of patience". But Chinese foreign policy has always followed still another principle of Maoist policy which in the words of Mao's close-comrade-in-arms Lin Piao says: "The liberation of the the masses is accomplished by the masses themselves — this is a basic principle of Marxism-Leninism. Revolution of people's war in any country is the business of the masses in that country and should be carried out primarily by their own efforts; there is no other way."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ See News from Hsinhua News Agency, London, Nov. 25, 1969, and Febr. 1, 1970.

⁴⁵ Cf. Far Eastern Economic Review, Yearbook 1967, p. 318.

⁴⁶ SCMP, loc. cit., no. 3812, Nov. 1, 1966, p. 24 passim.

⁴⁷ Lin Piao, Long live the Victory of People's War, Peking: Foreign Languages Press 1967, p. 38.