



S a y P e a c e F i r s t

# PCS Center

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Situation Update 101

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## Insecurity in Security

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The burgeoning Chinese, Indian and Pakistani influence raises alarm in transitional Nepal which has an open border with both China and India. India encircles it from three sides east, west and south with a 1,751 km long largely porous border, unmarked and unguarded, whereas China lies to the north with 1,414 km of inaccessible border. It is not possible to cross this border owing to elevation of snowy mountains and tight security on the Chinese side. The recent Nepal(*Nepo*)-India cross border opening has been an ideal conduit for alleged spies. Nepal has also been a favorable terrain for smuggling illegal goods, arms and ammunition, counterfeit currency notes, Free Tibet literature, etc. Nepal, India and China have been close neighbors for a long time indeed.

Escalating Chinese influence in Nepal has been a grave concern to India. The cordial Sino-India friendship raises suspicion because of India's role in the Republic Nepal proclamation in May 29, 2008. The *Nepo*-India enmity strengthened when King Birendra adopted a "Peace Zone" policy on his coronation day on February 24, 1975. The situation further aggravated while Birendra protested against the merger of Sikkim to India on April 4, 1975. Sikkim had the annexation of Greater Nepal ceded to the East India Company under the Sugauli Treaty of 1816. Article 8 of the Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 annulled all previous treaties and agreements signed between Nepal and the British Government, but in vain. The hostility with India brought *Nepo*-China closer while Nepal purchased air defense artillery from Beijing in June 1988 through the secret pact, ignoring the Arms Assistance Agreement of 1965 with India. India protested vigorously stating that Nepal's action had violated the spirit of peace and friendship treaty, but Nepal insisted that she had the sovereign right to determine her own defense requirements.

Nepal's National Intelligence Department (NID) has listed 23 Buddhist monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley with six of them placed as 'very sensitive' and 17 'sensitive' in terms of the Free Tibet movement. Some of them have stored weapons (eKantipur: December 5, 2009). International communities namely, Japan, Taiwan, USA and European nations, etc. financially

support the three dozen Buddhist monasteries (eKantipur: December 6, 2009). On September 15, 1974, the Nepalese Army disarmed some 9,000 *Khampas* (Tibetan tribesmen resisting Chinese authority) engaging in guerrilla warfare from the soil of Mustang, Nepal.

Chen Bingde, CoAS of the PLA of China paid his first ever official visit to Nepal, leading an 18-member high level army delegation including Tibetan Commander from March 23-25, 2011. That visit was a major step to expand China's strategic security influence to further tighten the "One China" policy with the left-alliance government in Nepal.

During Prachanda's premiership, China submitted a draft proposal of a Peace and Friendship Treaty in the changed political context on February 27, 2009, but this could not materialize owing to the stand of right parties that would not sign. It was not their brainstorming, but the whisper of Indian establishment.

Yunus Ansari, a TV shop owner detained in the tightly-guarded Central Jail for his alleged involvement in possessing fake Indian currency was fired at by the Indian contract killer Manmit Singh Bhatia at 11:30 am on March 10, 2011. But he suffered a bullet injury in the back. The same assailant had shot dead Majid Manihar at a hotel in Nepalgunj in October 2009. Jamin Shah, media person, was shot dead by two masked men on a motorbike in Lazimpat in broad daylight on February 7, 2010. It is to be remarkable of that Bhatia was contracted by the Special Task Force of India (Kantipur: March 24, 2011).

India's security concerns exponentially increased while Indian Airlines Flight 814 en route from Kathmandu to New Delhi was hijacked by five Kashmiri insurgents sympathetic to Pakistan on December 24, 1999. The hijackers forcefully landed the aircraft in Kandahar, Afghanistan, via Dubai, Amritsar and Lahore. The hijacking ended in seven days after Indian authorities were compelled to release three jailed Islamic militants.

The Indian government suspended its flights to Nepal for six months. Fearing such incidents would be repeated in Kathmandu, India put forward the idea of establishing its marshals in Nepal, but in vain. Indian aircrafts still carry security marshals. Air marshals conduct tough security check-up to all passengers of Indian Airlines Flights en route from Nepal to India putting temporary check-point in front of the airline(s) not trusting with Nepal's security measures and personnel. India fears Nepal becoming a shelter of Islamic fundamentalists and mafia.

In three-day (April 21-23, 2011) official visit in Kathmandu, Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna expressed a serious concern on trans-border crime and uttered the need for increased security cooperation between the security agencies of the two countries revising Extradition Treaty and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). He wanted to formalize the Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement (BIPPA) to ensure protection of Indian investment and proposed to keep Indian security forces at the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal. He also raised a concern of Maoist cadres' protests against India and Indian Ambassador Rakesh Sood. On October 6, 2010, Sood was protested by the Maoist cadres even throwing a shoe at him at Faplu airport claiming of India's interference in Nepal's internal affairs. However, none of the proposals of Krishna were addressed officially. The extradition treaty is a decade old demand of India. Even former King Gyanendra rejected proposal of the extradition treaty putting kingdom at risk.

Some Indian businessmen are threatened in Nepal as well as Nepali youth working in the Gurkha regiment in the Indian Army. Large numbers of Nepali workers (servants, guards, etc. in India) are often extorted of their belongings and money by the Border Security Force while traveling back to their homeland. India is silent on such repeated incidents.

After hobnobbing with Indian power and politics in New Delhi, the Tarai-Madhes leaders threaten to revolt if the left-alliance government tries to proclaim a New Constitution by a two-thirds majority. Bijaya Kumar Gachhedar threatened that they will launch a people's movement shaking hands with the armed insurgents and criminals against such a Constitution. All cultural based leaders of the Tarai-Madhes parties have issued a circular to their cadres living in the Tarai-Madhes to register Hindi as their mother tongue during the ongoing national census in 2011 (Republica: April 10, 2011). Such leaders have more faith in Indian power and politics and vice versa. People in general are against on such circular and prefer to continue their generation-old Maithili, Bhojpuri and Awad languages.

Nepal expelled Mohammed Masood, an upper division clerk at the Pakistani embassy in Nepal after recovering counterfeit Indian currency notes from him (Economic Times: August 24, 2003). On April 12, 2001, Pakistani First Secretary Mohammed Arshad Cheema was arrested by Nepalese police for possessing more than 16 kg of RDX. Two days later, Cheema and his wife were deported from Nepal (Hindustan Times: January 1, 2001). However, the Embassy refused the allegation. Their press release stated that the Cheema couple had been "framed on false and fabricated charges" violating international diplomatic conventions. CNN-IBN stated that Khalid Mehmood, a senior ISI officer working in the Embassy's Education Department, runs the network with the help of another ISI officer called Jamil Alam (October 26, 2008). These are only a few examples.

Nepal's security situation is in a critical state. China asks Nepal to restrict Tibetan freedom fighters. During the first formal visit by Maoist supremo Prachanda in October 2009, Chinese President Hu Jintao asked for a long-term association and Prachanda assured he would resist anti-Chinese activities from Nepal. India fears intensification of People's War in her territory. Why does India intend to put Nepal under her security umbrella?

First, India wants to stop direct confrontation with China. She tries to weaken China strategically and financially, supporting free Tibetan campaigners.

Second, India's strategic security alliance with USA has isolated her from South Asia. Her ambition is to make Nepal's position similar to Bhutan's. The turning of a deaf ear to sign a new treaty and to resolve *Nepo*-India border encroachments has been derailed. Remarkably, most of Nepal's leaders and bureaucrats took shelter in India after abandoning the unfavorable political terrain in Nepal in the past. The bitter truth is that most of the armed insurgents in Nepal, including the Maoists are fostered, sheltered and financed by India.

Third, both China and India pay more attention to their security forces' recommendations rather than addressing problems through political and diplomatic means. Security forces in South Asia have hostile relations on the desire to test their power, competition of their new strategies, proliferation of their numbers, arms and ammunition and prevention of criminal acts.

Fourth, India feels it should control anti-Indian Muslim fundamentalist campaigns in Nepal. India's proposal of an extradition treaty for deportation of third country nationals is an example

of it. Remarkably, none of the elected governments have completed their full-term in Nepal because of the Indo-China lose-win strategic and regional games.

As Nepal's security forces often comprise their professional ethics with power, politics and property, both China and India do have less trust upon Nepal. China and India desire to have their strategic presence in Nepal in the name of security of their people and nation. India intends to intensify free Tibet movement and human rights violation issues to influence the rapid economic development and military power of China from the land of Nepal on the back up of USA. And China wants to stop it. Thus, Nepal is dipping into an insecurity quandary that being restricted people pray for freedom from risk, threat and injustice for their sovereignty, dignity, integrity and unity.

Indeed, a small land-locked country surrounded by two of the world's most populous and growing superpower nations, Nepal is caught in a unique pull-push insecurity situation as it gropes for true democracy.

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