

## Original Paper

# India-Bhutan Relations: A Small State's Quest for Freedom

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### **Abstract**

*Bhutan is located on the eastern ridges of the Himalayas between the Assam-Bengal Plain of India to the south and the Plateau of Tibet of southwestern China to the north. In British India the colonial administration established a classical hegemonic relationship with the remote kingdom. In the Treaty of Punakha (1910) the sovereignty of the Bhutanese Royal government was recognized in exchange for submitting control of foreign relations to the British. In independent India, the Himalayan Kingdoms were sandwiched between India and China, facing an uncertain future about their political sovereignty. India concluded a new Treaty with Bhutan (the India-Bhutan Treaty of Peace and Friendship) in 1949, which was designed to remain in force "in perpetuity," consolidating the essence of the British hegemonic policy of controlling smaller neighbors, with India being the new imperial power. Bhutan became a member state of the UN in 1971 after India finally agreed to sponsor its application, but the small state has limited authority to conduct foreign relations without prior consent from India, and it does not even enjoy formal diplomatic relationship with any of the five permanent members in the United Nations. Bhutan's quest to wield control over its own affairs free of the influence of India remains unfulfilled.*

### **1. Background**

Since the days of British colonial occupation of the Subcontinent, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan have been considered as the "belt of buffer States lying between India and China." (Note 1) Both of these major Asian powers view the belt as being within their security parameters, and seek to increase their influence over these states. Since 1947, as the communist leadership of China was more occupied in its domestic power struggle against the Kuomintang, and India took the initial lead and was able to establish absolute control over two of the three Himalayan states, including Sikkim and Bhutan. Sikkim was formally annexed within Indian federation in 1975 as the consequence of India-aided civil disturbance and subsequent military operation. In the case of Bhutan, although it maintained a façade of sovereignty,

India established complete hegemonic control through the 1949 Treaty. Sauvagerd (2018) squarely blames Indian policy of domination for the discord and insecurity in Himalayan region:

South Asia and the Himalayas in particular are characterized by an environment of regional discord. The geographical Indo-centricity on the ground has strongly contributed to this phenomenon, not only reinforcing India's supremacy in the region but further making it extremely difficult or the smaller states to bypass India and actively engage with each other directly. (Note 2)

Sikkim was an autonomous princely state under the jurisdiction of the British Crown. After the British left, Sikkim was made a Protectorate of India until the 1970s. It had a King and enjoyed a degree of freedom in domestic administration. However, Indira Gandhi, encouraged by the success in dividing arch-rival Pakistan in 1971 through the Bengal military campaign, decided to do away with whatever independence Sikkim had been enjoying by annexing it. She was under the impression that China was contemplating some mischief in the neighbouring Himalayan state, and therefore decided pre-emption would be a better option to demonstrate Indian hegemony in the Himalayas. Under her instruction, the Indian intelligence organization RAW instigated an agitation led by the Sikkim Congress with the demand to fully integrate Sikkim into India. The pro-Indian party under the leadership of Lendup Dorji passed a resolution in the Sikkim Parliament for a complete merger with India. When King Chogyal (the titular ruler of Sikkim) protested, the Indian army swept into his palace and forced him into submission. Sikkim was made a state of India on 16 May, 1975. G. B. S. Sidhu, the RAW chief in Sikkim during the period of controversial process of annexation, and D. P. Dhar, principal secretary of Indira Gandhi, narrated the story with considerable details in their memoirs (Note 3).

Bhutan is a small Buddhist kingdom with an area of slightly more than 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>, landlocked between India and China, the two principal powers in the region (Figure 1). India inherited the British colonial era treaties with the Kingdom and it decided to continue substantially the identical hegemonic relationship with Bhutan as the British had. A new India-Bhutan Treaty was concluded in 1949, basically in line with the 1910 British India-Bhutan Treaty (also known as Punakha Treaty), whereby India stamped its total control over Bhutan's external relations.

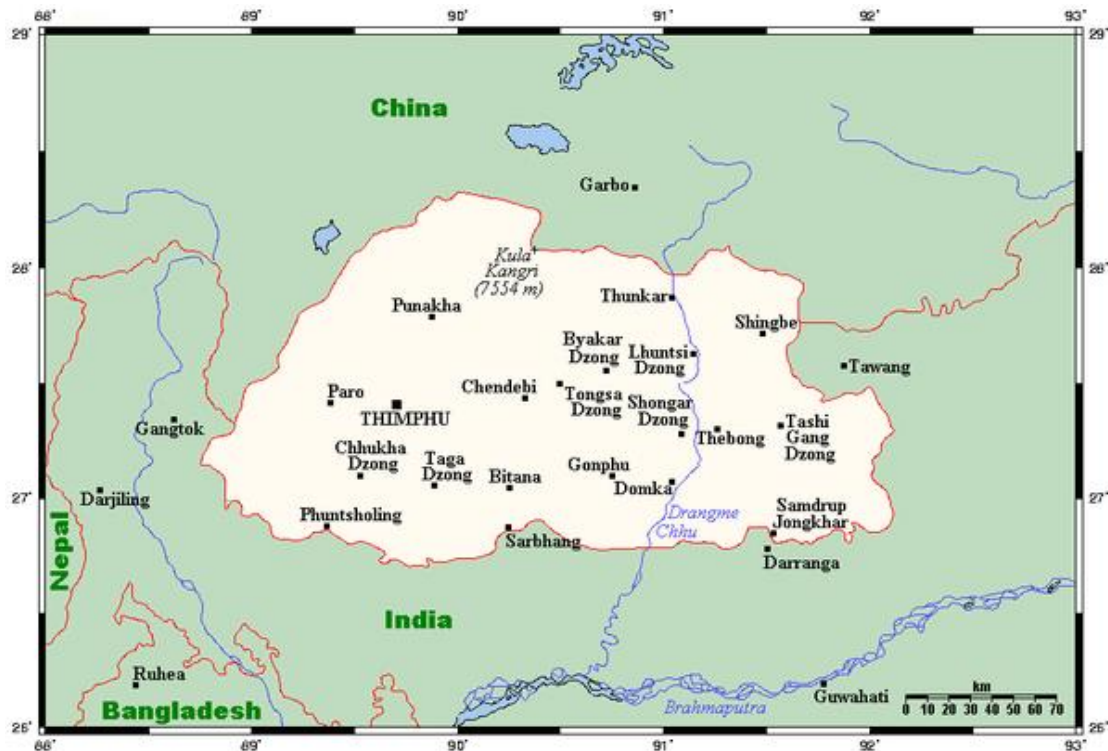


Figure 1. Geographical location of Bhutan.

Source: Bhutan Map. (2017, November 12).

The Treaty of 1949, Article 2, states:

The Government of India undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part the Government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations.

According to Poullose:

By securing effective control over the external relations of Bhutan and by establishing a protectorate over Sikkim, India like Britain, wanted to exclude all foreign influences and intrigues from this area (Note 4). Prior to the conclusion of 1910 Punakha treaty, the British used to regard Bhutan as an independent nation, but the 1910 Treaty relegated Bhutan to a state under British suzerainty. In substance, the post-colonial era did not bring any change in the status of Bhutan by signing the 1949 Treaty with India. Although the term “Protectorate” was not used either in 1910 or 1949, Bhutan had lost its independence under international law since 1910. According to international law and convention, a sovereign nation has the inherent right to enter into foreign relations and freely conclude treaties with other sovereign nations. Bhutan could not exercise that authority without explicit permission from Delhi, and was not even permitted to develop diplomatic relations with any country in the world until 1968. Delhi allowed Bhutan to establish its first such formal international relationship with a sovereign state in January 1968, nearly two decades after the conclusion of India-Bhutan Treaty. Not surprisingly, it was India with whom Bhutan established its first formal diplomatic relation, with the appointment of the first Indian Resident

(representative) in Thimpu. Prior to this, a colonial-style Political Officer looked after Indian hegemonic interest in the Bhutanese “capital.” Bangladesh was the second country that India allowed to establish diplomatic relations with Bhutan in 1973, followed by Kuwait in 1983 (as discussed below).

In 1971, India sponsored Bhutan to become a member state of the UN, to begin its journey in the global arena. It was only natural that China supported Bhutan in its effort to end long period of isolation by joining the world body. It may be noted that at the point of Bhutan’s joining the UN, it did not have diplomatic relations with any of the permanent members of the UNSC; indeed, India still does not allow Bhutan to establish formal diplomatic relations with any of the five permanent members. However, this blatant hegemonic policy of India has failed to stop China from making contact with the Bhutanese government. Despite China and Bhutan not having formal diplomatic relations, there have been periodical border talks between the envoys of the two countries since the 1980s.

## **2. Bhutan’S Journey to the Outside World**

The Bhutanese leadership realized that the Himalayan Kingdom would not be regarded as truly independent by the outside world so long as the 1949 hegemonic arrangement with India limited its authority to freely engage with other independent countries. When Bhutan expressed its desire to establish relations with outside world in the late 1950s, India “firmly” advised against such initiatives, and reminded the government that Indian “advice” was binding under the existing Treaty. Bhutan then started pleading with New Delhi to at least allow it to join multilateral institutions, including the UN. As Bhutan showed keen interest in joining the world body, India undertook a delaying tactic by giving assurance that it would sponsor at appropriate time. It took Bhutan more than two decades to finally convince India that it would remain an obedient vassal state of the hegemonic power and follow Delhi’s instruction in all international issues where Indian interests were at stake. However, due to India’s stalling tactics prior to deciding to sponsor Bhutan’s effort to join the international body, the Bhutanese people and government started to resent Delhi’s dominating attitude. T. N. Kaul, a former senior Indian bureaucrat who served as foreign secretary from 1967-1972, mentioned in his memoir the Bhutanese aspirations to gaining international recognition and their frustration at India’s attitude. Even the Bhutanese Queen had to request the Indian diplomat during his visit to Thimpu in 1964. The Queen pleaded:

You think we don’t trust India. That is not true. We believe that India is the only country that can help us to achieve our natural aspirations. But any hesitation on India’s part to get us into the UNO naturally raises suspicion among our people. I can assure you that once India gets us into the UNO, there will be no suspicions, but complete trust between us (Note 5).

After joining the UN, Bhutan immediately returned the favour to India by becoming the second state to recognize the independence of Bangladesh, on 6 December 1971, at the peak of India-Pakistan war. At the time of recognizing the independence of Bangladesh by Bhutan, Dhaka was still under the central

authority of Pakistan, only to fall to combined Indian and Bangladesh liberation forces ten days later. An Indian diplomat wrote of Bhutanese recognition to Bangladesh:

When India broke Pakistan into two pieces in 1971, Bhutan and Mongolia were the first to back India's push for Bangladeshi independence (Note 6).

Bhutan also established its first embassy outside India in Dhaka in 1973. The membership of the UN was most important to Bhutan, as it was seen as international recognition to its long-held aspirations to sovereignty. By the end of the 1970s Bhutan started to feel the burden of 1949 Treaty more heavily in the context of her new-found status as a member of the UN, and it renewed its pleas to India to revise the Treaty so that it could be freed from formal hegemonic bondage. At a press conference in Bombay in September 1979, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk stated that the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1949 needed to be updated in the interest of both countries, so that nothing was left to "open interpretation." (Note 7) As in the past, India advised the King to be patient, with the assurance that India would consider the proposal at an appropriate time. Bhutan had to wait for another decade to establish diplomatic relation with the next sovereign nation, the small GCC state of Kuwait. With India's consent, Bhutan established formal diplomatic relation with the tiny but oil-rich gulf state in 1983. In the same year, Bhutan and Nepal, historic adversaries and neighbours, also established formal diplomatic relations. Thus, the slow journey of Bhutan in international relations commenced, and by 2011 it had established full diplomatic relations with only 25 countries, which doubled to 50 by 2021.

### **3. Revision of Hegemonic Treaty**

India ultimately agreed in 2007 to the amendment of the 1949 Treaty by removing Article 2, thereby freeing Bhutan from the formal obligation of seeking Indian guidance on foreign relations. The controversial Article 2 now states:

In keeping with the abiding ties of close friendship and cooperation between Bhutan and India, the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Government of the Republic of India shall cooperate closely with each other on issues relating to their national interests. Neither government shall allow the use of its territory for activities harmful to the national security and interest of the other (India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty, 2007).

Through this amendment, Bhutan gained a certain degree of sovereignty, at least on paper. Thereafter, the country moved towards democracy, and it had its first parliamentary election in December 2007. In April 2008 Jigme Y. Thinley became Bhutan's first democratically elected Prime Minister, with his party winning 45 out of 47 seats in the Parliament. Although the post-2007 renegotiation of the India-Bhutan Treaty places Bhutan in a relatively independent position to conduct its international relations, it is not yet free from India's hegemonic control. Bhutan has a nominal army, which is ranked weakest in the world, according to the Global Firepower survey. It has no navy or air force, and relies entirely on the Indian Air Force for any contingency. India has had a permanent military presence in Bhutan since 1961,

and it established the Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) in Bhutan with the stated objective for the training of the personnel of the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA). Eminent political analysts share the view that military assistance to Bhutan was an unwritten but very significant part of the so-called Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship of 1949.

The strategic depth of India received a boost with India establishing in Bhutan a 1,000-member-strong Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) to train the Royal Bhutan Army. Indian military units are still positioned in Bhutan, 50 years since the creation of IMTRAT, apparently the necessity of training could not be fulfilled in half-a-century. IMTRAT has its headquarters at Haa Dzong in Western Bhutan. The country does not have a Minister of Defence, and the Indian Commandant of IMTRAT acts as the informal advisor to the King of Bhutan, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Bhutanese Army. The Indian Army unit that initially was entrusted with the stated responsibility of training the Royal Bhutan Army was later de facto included in the Indian security system (Note 8).

#### **4. Post-2007 Indian Hegemony in Bhutan**

Any expectation of the first democratically elected Government of Bhutan that the revision of the 1949 colonial treaty with India has given it the automatic right to pursue truly independent foreign policy was proven wrong before the second parliamentary election of the country. On the side-lines of the Rio+20 Summit in Brazil in 2012, Bhutanese Prime Minister Thinley had a meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in which they discussed bilateral issues. Bhutan was keen to contest for a non-permanent member seat of the UNSC for the term 2013-14, and according to Bhutanese side, Thinley sought Chinese support for its bid. However, some Chinese media reported that speedy establishment of full diplomatic relations with China along with opening a Chinese embassy in Bhutan was also discussed, among other bilateral issues. India took this as an attempt of balancing act from Thimpu to break free from the clutches of Delhi. A leading newspaper of India carried the story on 23 June 2012 with a cautionary tone:

India confronts a new strategic situation in its neighbourhood as its staunchest ally Bhutan prepares to establish full diplomatic ties with China. Until now, Bhutan had been the only South Asian country where China did not have a presence. (Note 9)

Reaction from Indian side was quick and devastating for both the people and the Government of Bhutan. India wanted an immediate regime change in Bhutan, and to that effect, announced the withdrawal of fuel subsidies given to Bhutan as part of the bilateral economic deal just prior to the second parliamentary election scheduled in 2013. Bhutan has an election system where the winner has to receive more than 50% of the vote, forming an absolute majority. The Bhutanese Constitution further states that, in the case of multi-party competition, if a party fails to get more than 50% votes in the first round of elections, then the leading two parties should contest in the second round of voting to decide the ultimate winner. In the 2013 primary round, the incumbent DPT came first in the first round with 45% of the votes falling short by only 5% to gain outright victory, followed by the pro-Indian PDP with 33%. India announced the suspension of fuel subsidies just before the final round of voting, to express its displeasure towards the

incumbent Bhutanese government. Although India claimed that the withdrawal of subsidy was a bureaucratic lapse from both India and Bhutan, most of the neutral analysts are of the opinion that India withdrew the subsidy to punish the incumbent Bhutanese Prime Minister for holding talks with China without taking prior approval from New Delhi (which would not have been granted). Sauvagar (2018) makes a penetrating comment in this regard:

To summarize, Thinley's attempt to establish diplomatic relations with India's archrival China led to a shift in the South Asian regional power's strategy toward Bhutan. New Delhi increased its pressure on Thimphu by withdrawing petrol and kerosene subsidies, thus pursuing hard hegemonic foreign policy means. India's aim was to realize its own goals—ones focused on its security concerns in the region—and as part of this forced Bhutan to change its politics by enforcing sanctions on the Kingdom. (Note 10)

A report published on 3 July 2013 in a Bhutanese newspaper quoting a letter from Indian Oil Corporation to the Government of Bhutan lends support to this view:

The Bhutanese has found that the withdrawal of LPG and Kerosene subsidies might very well be a diplomatic measure taken by the Government of India. This comes to light because of the letter sent from the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to the Government of Bhutan that says, 'The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India has advised IOC through Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas regarding withdrawal of subsidy for supplies of SKO (Kerosene) and LPG to Bhutan with immediate effect.' (Note 11)

India's desire for regime change was subsequently fulfilled. In the final round of election held in July 2013, the pro-India candidate, Tshering Tobgay of the PDP, defeated the incumbent Thinley. As expected, New Delhi warmly welcomed the election results, and the new Prime Minister returned the gesture by halting his predecessor's policy of the Kingdom's outreach to other countries, especially China. With the change of government in Thimphu, India also changed its Bhutan policy from hard to softer hegemony. With the victory of PDP, India could feel satisfied that its strategy succeeded in making high fuel prices an election issue, as it added to the charges of economic mismanagement by Thinley during his term as the first democratically elected Prime Minister in Bhutan. *The Hindu* reported on July 31, 2013, the immediate restoration of the fuel subsidy by New Delhi:

Now, the decision to resume subsidy was conveyed to Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay when he met Indian ambassador V. P. Haran in Thimphu on Monday, said official sources. Bhutan had already sent a formal request to the Ministry of External Affairs in this respect. (Note 12)

The arm-twisting act of India can be seen as a classical hegemonic behaviour, whereby a hegemon imposes economic sanctions (e.g., the denial of market access, freezing of sovereign assets, suspension of special benefits, or halting of aid) to punish weaker states for trying to achieve independent political and military objectives. Prime Minister Tobgay continued to obediently follow New Delhi's guidance in

conducting the external relations of Bhutan during his five-year tenure. During the visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, just before a scheduled round of dialogue between Bhutan and China on the border dispute, the Bhutanese Prime Minister publicly announced immediately after Modi had concluded his visit that there was no question of establishing a Chinese embassy in Bhutan, seeking to reassure New Delhi of Bhutan's absolute loyalty.

In September 2016, Bhutan again showed its complete subservience to India. A SAARC summit was scheduled to take place in Pakistan that year which India wanted to scuttle, as the bilateral relations between the arch-rivals had by then fallen to its lowest level. The Kashmir situation was then extremely volatile, and India accused Pakistan of aiding in cross-border terrorist attacks. In an effort to isolate Pakistan in South Asia, India decided to boycott the meeting. Although according to the SAARC Charter boycotting a member country is sufficient grounds to postpone, delay or cancel summit meetings, India did not want to appear petulant and to be solely blamed for making the regional grouping non-functional. New Delhi thus asked Bhutan to announce its own non-participation of Islamabad Summit, to strengthen India's diplomatic position. Prime Minister Tobgay obliged New Delhi by announcing the boycott of Islamabad summit even before India officially did the same, although Bhutan has no bilateral discord with Pakistan. It should further be noted that India's vassal regime in Bangladesh also dutifully announced a boycott of the summit, as well as the US-installed puppet Government of Afghanistan, as they were unhappy over Pakistan's supposed support of the arch-enemy Taliban.

The summit was eventually cancelled, and until now no such summit could be held; the last SAARC summit was held in Nepal in 2014. The interference of India in the internal politics and external relations of Bhutan clearly demonstrate that the revision of 1949 Treaty might have given Bhutan relatively more sovereignty on paper, but practically it is still under complete hegemonic control of New Delhi. The author would argue that from India's point of view, the fundamental basis of the India-Bhutan relationship has not changed much with the revision of the Treaty. Indian intentions have remained the same beneath the diplomatic language of modified Article 2, and Bhutan is completely subservient to Indian control in regards to its foreign policy. Bhutan is obligated to respect India's security concerns regarding South Asia in preference to its own geopolitical interest.

## **5. China Factor and the Future of Indian Hegemony**

In its long history, Bhutan was mainly a part of the Himalayan and not of the South Asian system. Chinese interactions with the Bhutanese were through Lhasa, as Bhutan has always been connected to Tibet in multiple ways. Bhutan in fact owes its origin as a nation-state to a Tibetan monk, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, who arrived in Bhutan in 1616; he founded the state and ruled for 35 years. (Note 13) Namgyel, also known as "Bearded Lama," passed away in 1651, but his death was concealed for nearly half a century to prove that he was after all, divine. (Note 14) Even the British colonial rulers used to acknowledge the importance of China in formulating their Bhutan policy. After the annexation of Tibet by China in the 1950s, the tiny land-locked, small state of Bhutan became sandwiched between two



giants. India has so far succeeded in preventing Bhutan from establishing formal diplomatic relations with the Asian superpower by taking hard hegemonic actions when necessary. However, even the Indians have lately started discussing how long this hegemonic control can be maintained. In addition to desiring normal relationship with China for economic reasons, Bhutan needs it to secure its sovereignty.

Ignoring China at the behest of India for a perpetual period cannot be an option for Bhutan. There are also limits to how much pressure India can bring to bear on Bhutan, especially in the era of parliamentary democracy. The pro-Indian Prime Minister Tobgay badly lost in the last parliamentary elections held in Bhutan in 2018. His PDP was relegated to third position in the first round of voting, and as a consequence of complete rejection of voters they are not even a viable opposition party. This time the voters elected the DNT to lead the nation, and it appears that the domestic politics in Bhutan is still evolving. So far, in the three National Assembly elections held since establishment of parliamentary democracy in 2008, the Bhutanese people have chosen three different parties to form governments. As parliamentary democracy takes roots in Bhutan, questions will be increasingly asked about the rationale of maintaining “hegemonic” neo-colonial ties with India, and about the Indian military presence in the country. Furthermore, due to geographical contingency and economic necessity, no country in South Asia can ignore China just to satisfy the hegemonic desire of India. Some scholars even consider China an integral part of South Asia.

China shares common borders with four (Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan) out of seven South Asian states (the other three are Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives), making it an integral part of South Asia. (Note 15)

Among the four South Asian countries with whom China shares land borders, India and Pakistan are its historic adversary and close ally, respectively. China has made considerable progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in neutralizing Indian influence in Nepal, the other Himalayan land-locked state. China naturally considers Indian hegemonic control over neighbouring Bhutan to be against its security interests, and it displayed its clear intent to challenge Indian hegemony in Bhutan in the course of military stand-off with India in Doklam in 2017. The land boundary between Bhutan and China has not been demarcated yet, as Bhutan is not free to decide on international affairs because of its treaty obligations with India. Negotiations between China and Bhutan to demarcate the border have been going on since the 1980s, when India finally allowed Bhutan to commence direct negotiations with Beijing. India previously insisted that China had to negotiate with it, as New Delhi is authorized to look after foreign relations of Bhutan according to 1949 India-Bhutan Treaty, but China flatly rejected to go through this charade, asserting the view that Bhutan should talk directly to China regarding the border dispute. (Note 16)

The first round of China-Bhutan talks on the boundary issue was held in Beijing in April 1984. In 1996 it appeared that a breakthrough was imminent, as Beijing offered the so-called “package deal” to Bhutan, offering to exchange 495 km of valley to the north under its control for 295 km of pasture land to the west under Bhutanese control. Geo-strategically important, Doklam is included in the 295 km of Bhutanese land that China wanted to retain under the package deal. The then King of Bhutan appeared

inclined to accept the Chinese proposal, but India vetoed the Chinese offer, as it considers Doklam to be a vitally strategic point, which (if ceded to China) could threaten the security of the Indian northeast.

Doklam area in western Bhutan, which overlooks India's Siliguri Corridor—also called the 'Chicken's Neck.' It is a narrow tract of land, not more than 20 to 60 kilometers wide and connects India's northeastern states with the rest of the country. If China were to control the Doklam area, it would have 'the key to India's choke point in the Siliguri. (Note 17)

Arguing against the package deal, an Indian author states:

In getting an overarching influence over the Chumbi Valley, China gets a better hold over Tibet, thus weakening any potential cards India would want to play at a later stage.

(Note 18)

This argument clearly shows the Indian intention to stop Bhutan from arriving at a bilateral border deal with China that might weaken India's hegemonic grip over the small Kingdom, and undermine its influence in the Himalayan region. Beijing is very much aware of the Indian strategy. Since the first meeting in 1984, China and Bhutan have concluded 24 rounds of border talks without any resolution, mainly due to Indian objections. Probably to test the resolve of India, on 8 June 2017, Chinese troops with construction vehicles and road-building equipment began extending an existing road southward in Doklam, prompting Indian troops to cross the Sikkim border into Doklam on 16 June to block the Chinese troops from constructing the road. After a period when both sides stood firm and stared at each other, on 28 August, India and China announced that they had withdrawn all their troops from the area as a result of back-channel diplomacy. With both sides claiming victory, the *status quo ante* was restored, but the dispute raised important questions about the balance of power in the region. Bhutan, geographically caught between the two nuclear powers, breathed a sigh of relief, and issued a statement welcoming the withdrawal of foreign forces from its soil.

However, it is to be seen how long the present stalemate continues. While India holds a dominant position to act as a barrier in the development of China-Bhutan relations, there is no guarantee that this position is permanent. The face-off between the Chinese and Indian forces at Doklam was a sign of Beijing's growing assertiveness in the Himalayan region. Under the circumstances, it is imperative for Bhutan, a small landlocked state situated between the two Asian giants, to maintain peaceful and friendly ties with both India and China. In the case of India, its policy of hard hegemony may eventually antagonize the people of Bhutan and in the process push them into the waiting arms of China.

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## Notes

Note 1. T. T. Poullose, "Bhutan's external relations and India," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2, (April 1971): 195.

Note 2. Monja Sauvagerd, "India's strategies on its peripheries: A case study in the India-Bhutan relationship," *ASIEN* 146 (January 2018): 56-77.

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Note 7. Syed Aziz-al Ahsan and Bhumitra Chakma, "Bhutan's Foreign Policy: Cautious Self-Assertion?," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, No. 11 (November 1993): 1043-1054.

Note 8. Thierry Mathou, "Bhutan-China Relations: Towards a new step in Himalayan Politics," Proceedings of the First Seminar on Bhutan Studies, *Centre for Bhutan Studies*, (2004): 388-411.

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Note 11. "Ministry of External Affairs of India advised "IOC" to withdraw LPG and Kerosene subsidies to Bhutan," *The Bhutanese*, July 3, 2013 (<https://thebhutanese.bt/>)

Note 12. Sandeep Dikshit, "India to restore gas, kerosene subsidy for Bhutan," *The Hindu*, July 31, 2013 (<https://www.thehindu.com/>)

Note 13. Pranav Kumar, "Sino-Bhutanese Relations: Under the Shadow of India-Bhutan Friendship," *China Report*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (August 2010): 243-252

Note 14. For details, see Dasho Sangye Dorji, *The Biography of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgye: Pal Drukpa Rinpoche*, (KMT Publishers, Thimpu, 2008).

Note 15. Mohan Malik, "South Asia in China's Foreign Relations," *Pacifica Review: Peace, Security & Global Change*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (August 2001): 73-90. (<https://www.tandfonline.com/>).

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