

## Chapter 5

# Arunachal Pradesh in the Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute: Constant Claims, Changing Politics

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The main point of contention in the Sino-Indian boundary dispute was originally the Aksai Chin area in the Indian northwest. In the mid-1980s, however, the core of the dispute shifted eastward to the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. This essay makes the argument that while Arunachal Pradesh remains central to the boundary dispute its significance for the two parties to the dispute has varied over time. For China, the shift in emphasis to Arunachal was in large measure tied to the Tibet question, and this emphasis has, if anything, become more important in recent years as instability and protests in Tibet have increased. For India too, Arunachal's significance has grown, owing mostly due to the increased Chinese attention. But India also appears to be moving from defending Arunachal militarily within a purely bilateral context to defending Arunachal and strengthening Indian claims in the international context.

This essay also argues that Arunachal ought to be seen in the Sino-Indian relationship not only within the context of the boundary dispute but also within the framework of centre-periphery relations in China and India and in the larger context of the differences between the Chinese and Indian political systems. The nature of Arunachal Pradesh's relations with the rest of India, including the Indian central government, is important not just for the

Indian body politic but also for Sino-Indian relations and for Beijing's relations with Tibet. If in India, this centre-periphery relationship is a just and equitable one, maintaining a fair and necessary balance between local aspirations for peaceful and sustainable development alongside national security considerations, then India and Arunachal can become the model to follow for China and Tibet—it is in this way that Arunachal will best fulfill its role as the 'first line of defence for India'.

This essay is divided into four sections including a conclusion. The first section looks at how Arunachal Pradesh is currently involved in the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, the second, looks at how China's stress on Arunachal is a part of its inability to stabilize Tibet; and the third section looks at India's own relationship with Arunachal.

## Arunachal and the Boundary Dispute Today

For the Chinese, Arunachal Pradesh may today be at the heart of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute but the boundary dispute itself is increasingly less at the heart of the Sino-Indian relationship. And this appears increasingly the case also for India, even as it does not countenance any territorial concessions or disturbing of settled populations,<sup>1</sup> and remains in general, far more sensitive to the persistence of the boundary dispute than China is.

Indeed, the Special Representative-talks mechanism that China and India began in 2003 and the 2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles, in essence, signaled that China and India had to resolve their dispute politically rather than purely on the basis of historical or legal factors. This in effect also suggests that resolution of the dispute has now become tied to other factors, such as for example, Chinese perceptions of Indo-U.S. ties, the state of affairs inside Tibet and ups and downs in Sino-Indian economic relations.

If this is so, then the centrality of the boundary dispute itself to Sino-Indian ties must necessarily decrease. On the other hand, incidents of Chinese incursions across the LAC appear to have gone up in recent years (Shukla 2012). And incursions have taken place all along the LAC. Further, even leaving aside the matter of incursions, the Chinese have been particularly vocal on Arunachal Pradesh and Tawang in recent years.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese have reacted sharply to visits to Arunachal by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in February 2008 (Chaudhury 2008) and October 2009 (*Indian Express*



2009a)), President Pratibha Patil in April 2009 (*Indian Express* 2009c), and Defence Minister AK Antony in February 2012, to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Arunachal's statehood (Dasgupta 2012). Also in 2009, Beijing objected to the Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang (*Indian Express*, 2009b) and to New Delhi approaching the Asian Development Bank for loans for projects in the Northeast Indian state (Samanta 2009; see also Ministry of External Affairs 2009).

While many of these instances are one-off events, incursions and accusations of the Chinese 'nibbling' away at Arunachali territory have been constant (Author's interviews 2008a, 2011). The other constant problem has been the issuing or denial of Chinese visas to Indian citizens from Arunachal.

### Chinese 'Incursions'

The issue of Chinese incursions in Arunachal Pradesh is a long-standing one with reports in the public domain dating back to at least 2003 (*Times of India* 2003). Both the issue of incursions and that of the alleged steady occupation of Indian territory by the Chinese, can be dealt with very simply. As long as there is no agreement between the two sides on the exact alignment of the LAC, neither side can really say that the other is in violation of any agreement or of having intruded into its territory.<sup>3</sup> 'Incursions' by both sides therefore, must be seen as a natural fact of life on the LAC between China and India and will continue, whether out of genuine belief that the territory in question belongs to the side that makes the 'incursion' or out of a need to show presence in areas still infrequently visited by both sides.<sup>4</sup>

Deliberate incursions into areas long-accepted as clearly belonging to the other side's control must be viewed against the background of either local-level belligerence or of the larger context of Sino-Indian relations. While it is certainly possible that local-level army commanders can deliberately engage in provocation, it remains an unlikely scenario given the sensitivity around such actions in both capitals or at least in both militaries. On the other hand, the highest authorities could conceivably sanction deliberate incursions because relations are perceived to be deteriorating on another front or as a form of signaling (such as a warning) or indeed out of a wrong assessment of the possible responses by the other side. For instance, the general increase in Chinese incursions (as seen in Indian media reportage) appears to coincide also with the improvement in Indo-US relations and so can be interpreted as

a reflection of Chinese concerns about whether this relationship is aimed at containing China.<sup>5</sup> In this case, it is almost unquestioningly assumed that it is only the Chinese government that can engage in such deliberate provocation and not the Indian government; but, it is not always clear why it is assumed that the Indian government has not engaged or will not engage in such deliberate provocation for the reasons mentioned above.

Meanwhile, it perhaps makes ample military, and often economic, sense to 'nibble' away at territory as it were, or occupy it steadily, if any side thinks it can get away with it and if it has the capability to sustain its presence. Given the still poor state of transport and communication infrastructure on the Indian side and the vastly superior progress made in the same department on the Chinese side, it is but natural that the Chinese will engage in such activity and even have 'succeeded' as far as Indian perceptions are concerned (Author's interviews 2008a, 2011). In any case, the fact remains that China's 'new forward policy'<sup>6</sup> is facilitated by the availability of resources for military modernization and upgradation of infrastructure on its side of the border on the one hand and India's slow speed in getting things moving on the ground (even if resources are no longer such a huge constraint), on the other.

### China's Visa Policy for Arunachalis

China's visa policy for Indian citizens from Arunachal Pradesh is another long-standing issue between the two sides.

In the late 1980s, then Arunachal Chief Minister Gegong Apang and Speaker T.L. Rajkumar were denied Chinese visas on the grounds that Arunachalis did not need visas at all since they were 'Chinese citizens' anyway. In 1995, however, a team of four Arunachali women, including the prominent social activist Jarjum Ete, received Chinese visas to participate in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (Ete 2012). And in 2006, two Arunachali state government ministers Tsering Gyurme and Chawna Mein were also first denied visas before apparently visiting China on tourist visas; the former even visited Tibet (Dholabhai 2007). Similarly, Vishal Nabam, Arunachal Pradesh Congress (I) member, and later an advisor to Arunachal Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu, visited China on a month-long tourist visa the same year (*Economic Times* 2011).

Two cases from 2007 brought the issue to greater prominence at least in India. In April, a team of 48 Indians invited to an international science and



technology fair in China, originally included four Arunachalis. However, the invitation was revised later and the Chinese dropped C.P. Namchom, legislator from Lohit, Tajom Taloh and Tape Bagna, both IAS officers, and Tasso Butung, another official. New Delhi agreed to this arrangement and only 44 eventually went. Next month, however, in a team of over 100 IAS officers on a New Delhi-planned study tour to China, the lone Arunachali officer, Ganesh Koyu, was denied a Chinese visa, again on the grounds that he did not need one (*Financial Express* 2007). This time however, India refused to accept the Chinese action and cancelled the entire delegation's visit in response. It is notable that in between the two trips, Kiren Rijiju, then Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh belonging to the opposition BJP, had raised the issue in Parliament of the April visit that had excluded Arunachalis (Dholabhai 2007). Rijiju himself has travelled to China while a Member of Parliament on a diplomatic passport (Rijiju 2012).

A new development in China's visa policy vis-à-vis Arunachalis was seen in January 2011 when China issued stapled visas to two Arunachalis, copying a policy it had recently adopted with respect to Indian citizens of Jammu and Kashmir. The two Arunachalis—a weightlifter and his coach—had been invited to participate in a weightlifting event by the Chinese Weightlifting Association and were prevented from proceeding by Indian immigration authorities (*Times of India* 2011b; see also Ministry of External Affairs 2011b). In June, five Arunachali members of an Indian karate team to China were also issued stapled visas. The Arunachalis—two officials and three sportspersons, part of a large Indian contingent headed to an Asian-level karate competition—were again stopped at Indian immigration and prevented from proceeding (Kashyap 2012). Interestingly, there were reports earlier, of the Chinese embassy agreeing to issue visas to the Arunachali karatekas after intensive discussions with Indian authorities (*Times of India* 2011a).

In the latest instance, China refused to issue a visa in early January 2012 to an Indian Air Force (IAF) officer, Group Captain M. Panging from Arunachal Pradesh slated to leave for China as part of a 30-member Indian military delegation. The delegation later left with just half the complement of officers that had originally planned to travel. While no information is available so far on the nature of the denial of his visa, it seems unlikely that he was like Apang, considered as not requiring a visa because this would mean that the Chinese were allowing an Indian military officer to enter China freely.

How does one explain this Chinese visa policy? Does this show the

Chinese to be inconsistent or is there a method to be discerned in China's actions? Available information in the public domain does not allow us to reach any definite conclusions. Partly, this is because there are inconsistencies of detail in how the same news event is reported in different English dailies and partly because the reports are not comprehensive enough leaving many crucial questions unanswered or important aspects unaddressed. This reflects either an inability to understand the whole issue in its complexity or a tendency to sensationalize without bothering to get to the root of the matter. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs' statements meanwhile, are often perfunctory and no less opaque.

Broadly, it would appear that China has adopted multiple approaches to issuing visas to Arunachalis. Ordinary civilians, including political leaders from Arunachal Pradesh, it would appear can come under three approaches—no visa required, regular stamped visas or stapled visas. Officials of the central government however, have either been told they did not need visas or, as in the latest case of the IAF officer, refused a visa altogether.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, one could argue that from saying that no visas were required, the issuing of stapled visas to Arunachalis is possibly, a step forward—an acknowledgement that the area in question is disputed, and by implication, amenable to resolution by negotiations. A senior Chinese scholar associated with the Chinese Foreign Ministry-affiliated think-tank, China Institute of International Studies, has argued that stapled visas were only a 'pragmatic' step designed to allow people of Arunachal to visit China, even as his country's position on the dispute remained unchanged (*Economic Times* 2011). Further, refusing visas as in the case of the Arunachali IAF officer, might be considered still another step forward as far as China is concerned given that refusal of visas is a more acceptable practice internationally and from India's point of view, than China simply claiming Indian citizens as its own or discriminating against Indian citizens from a particular area in the nature of visas issued (Jacob 2011a, 2012).

### China and Tibet

For China, Arunachal or NEFA as it was then known had little significance in the early years of the dispute when the attention was on Aksai Chin and as exemplified by its withdrawal from the region in 1962 after ending military operations. A number of reasons have been mooted for what set off the new



Chinese emphasis on the importance of Arunachal Pradesh in the 1980s.<sup>8</sup> There appear to be at least four factors.

First, Arunachal is rich in mineral, water and timber resources and is therefore important for the Chinese from the point of view of the economic development of the Tibet Autonomous Region (Garver 2001: 109).

Second, the Chinese apparently discovered fresh historical evidence in the 1980s which suggested that links between the Buddhist-majority parts of Arunachal Pradesh and the Tibetan administration in Lhasa were stronger than the Chinese originally believed—Tawang is the birthplace of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and is believed to have paid taxes<sup>9</sup> to the traditional Tibetan administration in Lhasa. Therefore, Beijing started pressing stronger claims on Arunachal.<sup>10</sup>

Third, in their boundary negotiations during the 1980s, India introduced the idea of a sector-by-sector approach to settling the boundary dispute instead of accepting the so-called 'package deal' of the Chinese. While New Delhi assumed this would allow the two sides to resolve the easier areas of the dispute first before moving to more difficult ones (Singh 2011: 87), Beijing saw this as an opportunity to adopt a maximalist approach in every sector of the boundary dispute.

And fourth, the Chinese central government possibly perceives that stressing its claims of Arunachal Pradesh being part of Tibet territory will somehow reinforce its legitimacy as a defender of Tibetan interests. This is especially germane given that the present Dalai Lama has acknowledged Arunachal to be a part of India (*Times of India* 2008),<sup>11</sup> and given that the Indian government has not prevented him from visiting the disputed territory on various occasions (Roy 2009).

In the context of China's recent troubles in Tibet beginning with the protests in Tibetan areas in March 2008 on the eve of the Beijing Olympics, it is the second and fourth explanations that possibly have the greatest salience. Indeed, the boundary dispute in its basic essence is only a euphemism for the larger problem of the place of Tibet in Sino-Indian relations (Jacob 2011b). In this context, China's travails in Tibet and with Tibetans under its control deserve greater explication.

The Tibetans protests in March 2008 that affected not just the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) but also Tibetan areas in the neighbouring provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Gansu, has brought home to Beijing that its policy of relying on the economic development of Tibet is not sufficient to mitigate separatist tendencies in the region. The protests in Tibet, including

frequent incidents of self-immolation in 2011, have garnered international attention more for emotive issues such as 'cultural genocide' or for issues of geopolitics rather than the increasingly economic content of Tibetan grievances. So far, Tibet's economic development as envisioned by central government authorities in China has involved huge fiscal transfers and attempts to improve market integration with the rest of the country by means of mega infrastructure projects. While Tibet has been posting double-digit growth over several years now,<sup>12</sup> Tibetans believe that such growth has been largely cornered by Han, including Hui (Han Muslim), migrants. The fact that Han Chinese establishments were specifically targeted during the 2008 protests, show just what Tibetans themselves think of the kind of economic development that they are witnessing (*Economist* 2008).<sup>13</sup>

Despite Beijing's efforts to provide an alternative discourse to that of the Tibetan demand for independence, its Tibet policy has continued to suffer from a Han bias for a number of reasons besides Han chauvinism. For one, economic development requires skills that Tibetans do not usually possess at the current juncture and which slack is taken up by non-Tibetan outsiders. For another, the economic development strategy in Tibet, as in other parts of China, is one of developing economic growth poles from which growth can spill over to the surrounding regions with time. As a result, transport and energy infrastructure are generally geared to cater to larger urban concentrations at the cost of rural areas. These reasons act as both cause and effect where Han migration is concerned and draws complaints from Tibetans who are mostly concentrated in the countryside and who in urban areas have to compete with Han Chinese (Schrei 2002; International Campaign for Tibet 2003).

For China's leaders, the domestic implications of protests and instability in its minority areas are the more serious long-term concern than any international opprobrium. For long, the idea in China has been that economic development and prosperity would make up for constraints on political rights and for other political ills. However, despite several years of sustained economic attention, rising income inequalities and regional disparities are providing additional reasons for political discontent and cultural and ethnic grievances in China's western periphery, including Tibet (Author's interviews 2008b; see also International Campaign for Tibet 2003).

With the Tibetan protests of 2008, the Chinese authorities returned to the familiar tactic of blaming the 'Dalai clique' for fomenting the unrest



(*People's Daily* 2008). More than the economic development of Tibet, it is anybody or any influence threatening the Communist Party of China's (CPC) legitimacy that is Beijing's primary concern. And these influences include not just the Dalai Lama but India too, because it hosts both the Tibetan leader and the Tibetan government-in-exile. India, is thus, viewed with distrust and suspicion by Chinese military and strategic circles.

It is therefore, not surprising that China is particularly sensitive to Indian activities whether of a political or economic nature involving Arunachal or 'southern Tibet' as it calls this area. And given its relative superiority in infrastructure connectivity on its side of the disputed boundary, it is perhaps inevitable that Beijing will use the method of LAC incursions to warn India or at the very least to show hawkish constituents in China that the government and the CPC are being proactive and are capable of defending China's national interests against foreign hands.

At the same time, the Chinese leadership, including its military, is rational enough to understand that China's overall global situation is such that it probably has more to lose by provoking a conflict with India. Indian predictions therefore, of any impending Sino-Indian conflict of whatever scale sanctioned by Chinese central government authorities, are way off the mark and suggest a poor or non-existent understanding of China's national decision-making process and its perceptions of its national interests.

### India and Arunachal

For India, the significance of Arunachal post-1962 existed primarily in the military realm and as a reminder of the defeat of 1962. For several decades in fact, physical infrastructure development in Arunachal was first deliberately not undertaken owing to fears of the Ministry of Defence and other central government ministries of providing the Chinese additional advantages in case of another attack (Garver 2001: 99). Today however, infrastructure development is being carried out in response to China's own military modernization and massive infrastructure development in Tibet.

New Delhi while continuing its stress on the military significance of Arunachal is nevertheless, aware that at a time when the chances of major conflict between India and China are diminishing, the importance of Arunachal in the context of a resolution of the boundary dispute lies in building an international case for its retention by India and to counter

perceptions of lack of economic and infrastructure development in the state especially when contrasted with Tibet's. Thus, while road infrastructure in Arunachal ostensibly has military implications, they remain thoroughly inadequate for the purpose. Nevertheless, they highlight the fact that it is economic development and international assistance in such construction that is India's main focus.

To push such an agenda, the Indian government has particularly taken to targeting Arunachal's vast natural energy resources, especially hydroelectric power potential,<sup>14</sup> as inducements for domestic investors and foreign multilateral funders.<sup>15</sup> There is no doubt a case to be made for economic development in Arunachal and helping its social, cultural and political institutions to modernize themselves in the age of globalization but the question is whether the Indian government has a well-thought out strategy in place for the purpose.

Larger problems of balancing economic growth with improvement in living standards and sustainable development, including environmental protection and resource utilization, are becoming an issue in Arunachal as they have been for a long time in Tibet. For example, it has been argued that the Indian central government's policies on hydroelectric power do not take into account environmental concerns, including flooding induced by dam construction, of not just ecologically-sensitive areas but also of culturally—and historically—sensitive sites for many of Arunachal's ethnic minorities (Author's interviews 2011). Other massive infrastructure projects in Arunachal such as the Trans-Arunachal Highway have also generated environmental concerns and even concerns about the ability to preserve ethnic identities and cultures as formerly isolated valleys get connected and the influx of 'outsiders' increases.<sup>16</sup> In Arunachal, the desire to preserve ethnic privileges and separation from the outside is a fairly strong trend contending with aspirations for modernization and increased access to the outside world (Author's interviews 2011).<sup>17</sup>

Further, the huge infrastructure development in Arunachal has also led to massive corruption. In a pattern familiar from Tibet, subsidies or development funds are often shared among a patron-client network of political actors (see Naughton 2004: n. 1, 288), including various levels of governments, other institutions and individuals.<sup>18</sup>



## Conclusion

From a wider geopolitical perspective, China could well turn belligerent on the boundary dispute for a number of reasons. These include concerns about a potential Indo-US ganging up against China, the possible weakening of Pakistan such that it allows India another opportunity to take advantage as it did in 1971, or fears that a combination of these two events might affect the Chinese hold over Tibet. However, these events are not as likely as most Indians like to think and China itself appears to understand that it will have to deal with India independent of any US- or Pakistan-related concerns and that at the end of the day India's place as an important factor in the Tibet question is undeniable (Jacob 2011b). Considering both the Chinese positions together, it would appear, perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, that the Chinese are willing to be flexible on the boundary dispute and that its reiterations (such as the claim on the whole of Arunachal Pradesh), retractions (such as on the issue of "settled populations"), apparent hardening of claims (such as on Tawang or in the form of the increasing frequency of LAC incursions) or perceived inconsistencies (such as on visas for Arunachalis) must be viewed only as negotiating tactics.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the essential purpose of the rather detailed examination of internal developments in Tibet and Arunachal is to draw out broad similarities in the conditions in both regions despite the differing political dispensation in each country. Tibet, in the post-reforms process in China, and Arunachal, in the post-liberalization era in India, have both begun to be shaped in different ways from the rest of their immediate neighbouring provinces/states and certainly from the other Chinese provinces or Indian states further away. These comparisons could also provide indicators at least to Indian authorities how situations can deteriorate in a context of development activities perceived as exploitative, exclusionary or insensitive to local concerns and wishes.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, no matter when the boundary dispute is resolved, there are larger issues that require focus for both central governments in terms of the wider gamut of their bilateral ties certainly, but also in terms of their policies vis-à-vis their peripheral provinces. India, in particular, given its democratic dispensation and its relative weakness in material capabilities vis-à-vis China has all the greater incentive to improve the quality and application of its democracy in its border states, including Arunachal Pradesh. This would require more transparent processes and greater popular say in development

and infrastructure projects than exists in Arunachal, today; this in turn, could prove a model for China-Tibet relations.

Arunachalis often proudly claim that they are the 'first line of defence for India'; indeed, Arunachalis wear their patriotism on their sleeves. It is time now, to consider this 'frontline' as more than a military concept but also one in terms of ideas and norms. Arunachal must also proudly be the 'first line of defence for India's democracy.'

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Article VII in the treaty states that "[i]n reaching a boundary settlement, the two sides shall safeguard due interests of their settled populations in the border areas" (Ministry of External Affairs 2005). Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told his Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee in Hamburg early June 2007 that the 'mere presence' of settled populations did not mean that China was giving up its claims (Samanta 2007).
2. On the eve of Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to India in November 2006, the Chinese ambassador in India declared on a television channel that his country considered Arunachal Pradesh as part of Chinese territory (*Rediff.com* 2006). Given its timing and given the nature of his job, what was really an unsurprising statement by the envoy of China's position on the boundary dispute was blown out of all proportion by the Indian media. This incident can be said to mark a watershed in terms of the interest taken by the general Indian public in Sino-Indian relations and hence also contributes to the perception of increased violations by the Chinese of the LAC.
3. Former Indian Army Chief, Gen. Deepak Kapoor, stated as much in an interview on television (*Indian Express* 2008).
4. At least on the Indian side, there are several vast areas along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh that see Indian troop presence only once a year, usually in the form of long-range patrols (Author's interviews 2011).
5. John Garver also talks about China keeping the boundary dispute open as a deliberate way of keeping the India 'sober' vis-à-vis Tibet (Garver 2011: 105-15).
6. I have used this expression elsewhere to suggest that the Chinese might be engaged in such activities not so much to provoke conflict but to create conditions for cooperation (Jacob 2011: 135-39).
7. A question raised in the Rajya Sabha asked specifically if the government was "aware of the facts that China made it clear that it would not issue visas to any official from Arunachal Pradesh and China would continue to issue stapled visas to non-official from Arunachal Pradesh" (Ministry of External Affairs 2011a).
8. John Garver quotes a Chinese journal of international affairs declaring in 1986 that, '[t]he main area of conflict is in the eastern sector,' (Garver 2001: 104).
9. As in the case of many other terms used to describe or explain the nature of the historical relationship between China and Tibet, whether these were really 'taxes' in the modern sense of the word, is debatable.
10. It is perhaps worth remembering that in 1960, a similar development had taken place on the Indian side when the MEA discovered records in British archives in London that suggested India's claims to Aksai Chin were stronger than originally thought. This allowed



Nehru to take a harder line on Aksai Chin after having hitherto expressed doubts about the strength of India's claims (Raghavan 2006: 3889).

11. Earlier in 2003, the Dalai Lama had declared that Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh were part of Tibet.
12. The TAR's GDP has grown at over 12 per cent since 2000, and in 2007, it was 14 per cent or 2 per cent higher than the national average. Rural income too has registered double digit-growth since 2002 (*Economist* 2008: 28).
13. It is also important to note that the 2008 protests had significant numbers of ordinary citizens involved in them, in addition to monks.
14. There are some 170-odd dams of all sizes constructed or currently under construction in Arunachal Pradesh.
15. A cursory look at the list of projects completed and awaiting completion in Northeast India in general shows that a large number of these are related to developing physical infrastructure in the region (North Eastern Council 2005).
16. The primary concern on 'outsiders' relates to the massive influx of labourers from other Indian states for the building of dams and roads. There are however, both intra-ethnic and intra-generational differences of opinion in Arunachal, on these matters (Author's interviews 2011).
17. The desire for cultural preservation appears also to have been appropriated by environmental activists campaigning against mega-hydroelectric projects in the state.
18. In the specific case of Arunachal, however, it has been stated by some social and environmental activists in the state that corruption is "democratic" owing to the small size of the various ethnic groups and the ability, in fact, compulsion, of tribal leaders to distribute the largesse to their ethnic compatriots (Author's interviews 2011).
19. Neville Maxwell, too, has argued that the claim on Tawang was merely a Chinese negotiating ploy (Communication to the author, London, 2 June 2010).
20. Interestingly in 2007, Jaya Bachchan MP in the Rajya Sabha raised a specific question to the External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, asking "whether it is a fact that discontent in Arunachal Pradesh has reached such a level that people there are thinking in terms of aligning with China." Mukherjee replied in the negative (Ministry of External Affairs 2007).

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