



## INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS & THE ROLE OF GEOPOLITICS

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There are numerous evidences to believe that the 21st century is becoming an Asian century. The rise of three Asian powers: India, China and Japan and China's goals to become a global power competitor have made the rise of Asia highly important. The interest of the major world powers in the Asian continent has increased tremendously as they are apprehensive of the rise of China. Not only that there is a tremendous rise in China's economic clout but China seems to have a strong strategic agenda as well. It wants to pursue the goals of a China dominated Asia which naturally makes the Himalayan region strategically important due to China's traditional interests and claims in the region .The reorientation of India's foreign policy in the post-Cold

War phase substantiated strongly by economic reform policies has helped her in emerging fast in the global political scenario.<sup>1</sup> India's policy of building strong ties with middle level powers, sharp transformation of Indo-US and India-Japan relations, India's entry to ASEAN and East Asian summit, steady economic growth ,acquisition of nuclear capabilities and arms build up have given India role and recognition. Does China feel a competition with India in its quest for Asian supremacy is an important issue .It is no doubt that there is sufficient space for India-China collaboration. However, India and China are not only two Asian collaborators or competitors. There are significant issues which have geo-strategic and geo-political significance for India. In fact ,the peaceful coexistence and cooperation between India-China on a sustained basis would depend much on the resolution of these issues. India and China

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C. Raja Mohan,(2003). *Crossing the Rubicon:The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi:Viking

India.



have long but disputed boundary in the Himalayas. China's military preparations all over the Himalayan region, the Tibetan question, China's interest in Pakistan, and the Chinese presence in and around the Karakoram, Chinese claims over Indian territories, the question of North-East and relations with Myanmar, China's quest for improving relations with smaller South Asian neighbours, China's growing interest in the Indian Ocean region and the security of Andaman sea, etc, are some of the important issues in shaping India-China relations. It clearly indicates that the geo-strategic and geo-political equations in the Himalayas are core to India-China relations. It is clear that the dynamics of India-China relations depends much upon the geo-politics of the Himalayas. Not only the India-China border disputes and the Chinese territorial claims but the increasing Chinese influence in South Asia and China's maritime interests are parts of its broader geo-political and geo-strategic interests in the Himalayas. Therefore, it can be argued that the geo-politics across the Himalayan divide is fundamental to India-China relations. It may particularly be emphasized here that a number of issues like security, defense and strategic orientation, relations with the neighbours like China, Pakistan, etc, India's role in world politics depends to a large extent on the geo politics of the region.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Himalayan Border Land**

The Himalayan region constitutes a geographical unit of very high significance due to the geo-strategic considerations. Stretching between Central and South Asia and part of South-East Asia, the Himalayan region has been historically important for trans-border socio-cultural, trade and migratory linkages. The countries which form part of the trans-Himalayas region include India, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Tibet lost the status of an independent entity of this region after its occupation by China. The Himalayan region includes three parallel mountain ranges: the

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Olaf caroe, (1960). The Geography and Ethics of India's Northern Frontiers, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 126.



great Himalayan ranges, the lesser Himalayas and the outer Himalayas.<sup>3</sup> The north most ranges of the Himalaya is called the trans- Himalayan range and is located most of its parts in the Qinghai-Xinjiang plateau ,North of the great West and to East valley of the Yarling-Zangbo river. The trans Himalayan region is although divided from the great Himalayan ranges for most of its length, it merges with the

great Himalayan ranges in the western sector known as the Karakoram range where India Pakistan-China form a tri juncture. It indeed forms strategically the most important segment of the Himalayan ranges for several reasons .The Himalayas have been described as the land of snow. It contains some of the highest peaks of the world. Due to harsh climatic conditions and resource scarcity the region is very sparsely populated. However, there are several passes in between the great Himalayan ranges, which have been used for travel, trade and invasions. Therefore, they are not impeneterable.<sup>8</sup> In the modern times the situation along the Himalayan border lands on the north have entirely changed due to a strong network of roads. As a result, despite natural barriers the Himalayas have become more vulnerable in modern times. The geopolitical importance of the Himalayan region may beunder stood in the following terms:

1. The region is of high strategic importance for India due to its close connectivity with China and Pakistan.
2. The region is rich in mineral and natural resources.
3. It forms a tri juncture between Central Asia, South Asia and South East Asia.
4. The areas adjacent to the region form the nerve centre of Islamic extremism and cross border terrorism.
5. The major world powers are extensively interested in the region particularly after the emergence of the independent states of Central Asia. The ‘great game’ of the super powers in the Central Asian region has added to the geo-political importance of the region.

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Ram Rahul,(1978). *The Himalayas as a Frontier*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

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Afsir Karim, (2009). Strategic dimensions of the trans-Himalayan frontiers, in K. Warikoo (ed.), *Himalayan Frontiers of India, Historical, geo-political and strategic perspectives*. London : Routledge.



6. India's conflictual relations with Pakistan and China and each other's vital stakes in the region have added to its significance.
7. There are ample areas of cooperation for the utilization of resources, containment of terrorism and reducing big power interference in the region.

### **Geo-Political Importance of the Himalayan Region**

The Himalayan region has been historically important but in contemporary phase its politico-strategic and economic importance has multiplied due to a number of reasons. The whole of the Himalayan border land forms politically, a highly fragile and unstable region. The Jammu & Kashmir region in India, northern parts of Pakistan, POK, Afghanistan, Xinjiang region of China, Tibetan region, Nepal and Bhutan together form a highly unstable and conflict ridden zone. There are challenges of political instability and conflicts. The societies are traditional and lack openness. The region is faced with ethno-religious uprisings. There is lack of economic development despite huge unexploited resources available in this area. The religious extremism and terrorism, arms and drug trafficking, etc are becoming serious problems in the whole of the

region. Pakistan's patronage to Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism, cross border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, terrorism and destabilizing tendencies in Afghanistan, Islamic extremism in Xinjiang and ethno-religious uprising in Central Asia are major causes of concern for the countries of the region. The United States, Russia, China, India and other powers are immensely interested in the region in the name of containing terrorism and ensuring political stability. As a result, the trans-Himalayan region has become the focal point of the renamed 'great game'. The economic resources of the region are also an important factor behind the external interference in the region. The region offers vast scope for trade, economic cooperation, investment, exploitation of natural and mineral resources. It also forms an important security belt for the countries South of the Himalayas. The North-South transport corridor has both strategic and economic significance. The emergence of the independent states of Central Asia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union has changed the geostrategic and geo-economic complex of the trans-Himalayan region. Three states of Central Asia. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan form part of the trans-Himalayan region, but the region also forms a gateway to rest of the states of Central-Asia. The Central



Asian states are passing through a complex process of nation building. The Central Asian states are also witnessing revival of Islam. The region is becoming a haven for international terrorism. The Islamic extremism is gaining new forms in Central Asia. The states adjoining the trans-Himalayan region are faced with ethnic uprisings and conflicts. In Kyrgyzstan, sharp divisions between southern Kyrgyz and northern Kyrgyz are seriously threatening the integrity of the country. Thus and Hordes are engaged in power politics in Kazakhstan. Tajikistan is yet to overcome the on slaughters of civil war that caused 50,000 lives some years back. Islamic extremism is becoming a serious problem in Uzbekistan and other countries. Narcotics terrorism and arms trafficking is a serious problem in Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Baluchistan and Pakhtoonistan regions of Pakistan are faced with ethnic strife and underdevelopment. They have been demanding autonomy. Central Asia offers vast prospects for trade, cooperation and investment. The huge oil reserves and other rich mineral and natural resources have attracted the major powers towards this region. America has tried to make its presence felt in the region in the name of war on terrorism, while China and Russia are in search of creating a balance of power. India is also in search of its stakes in the Central Asian region. Thus the power politics is taking new shapes in Central Asia. America, Russia and China have given millions of dollars of aid to the region. The power politics in Central Asia has direct implications for the trans-Himalayan region.<sup>5</sup>

### **India-China Border Dispute**

The frontiers are considered to be most important resources of a country. In fact, peace, stability and prosperity of a country depend largely on its peaceful frontiers. A clearly delineated frontier

provides not only a sense of security to a country but also recognition to its political identity. It is actually necessary in order to promote a sense of identity and nationalism. It is as such necessary that the frontiers are clearly defined and approved by the concerned countries. It is equally important that the borders should be free of claims and counterclaims, disputes and

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<sup>5</sup>Dorothy Woodman, (1996). *Himalayan Frontiers: A Political View of the British, Chinese, Indian and Russian Rivalries*, New York: Praeger.



controversies. It may also be pointed out here that generally a natural boundary is considered to be less disputable and more secure in comparison to unnatural borders. In South Asia, the frontiers have been a source of dispute and conflictual relations. The partition of India and the consequent emergence of Pakistan as an independent state also gave rise to serious border dispute with far reaching geo-political consequences. India has also experienced minor border disputes with Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. India's border dispute with China has been a major factor not only to influence relations between the two countries but also affecting geo-political and geo-strategic calculations in the Himalayas. The Mc Mohan Line boundary dispute has been at the heart of India-China relations. China had boundary disputes with as many as 14 countries. China has resolved border disputes with several countries. In South Asia China has settled boundary questions with Nepal and Bhutan. However, India-China boundary dispute still persists. China laid claims over a large area of South of the great Himalayan ranges which it termed as its lost territories historically. China rejected the boundary line between the two countries called Mc Mohan Line and claimed Aksai Chin in the North-Eastern section of Ladakh district in Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh in the North-East. The Aksai Chin area provides Chinese access to Pakistan through Karakoram highway, while Arunachal Pradesh, particularly the Tawang valley forms an area of high strategic importance. The boundary between India and China was delineated in the Shimla convention of 1913-14 concluded between the representatives of China, Tibet and British India. Sir Mc Mohan, the Foreign Secretary of British India drew up 850 km long Mc Mohan line as the border between British India and China, based on the highest watershed principle. The border with Tibet had not been demarcated before that. While Tibet accepted the boundary line China did not agree to it and claimed the area up to Assam as its own territory. It is significant to note that after its formulation in the Shimla agreement of 1913-14, no notice was taken of the Mc Mohan line for a long time. The withdrawal of the British colonial power from South Asia, India's independence and China's emergence as a strong communist state in 1949 changed geo-politics in the Himalayas. China denounced the Mc Mohan line and asserted upon its claims over the South of the Himalayas. China's occupation of Tibet in 1950 was a clear indication of its assertion over its so-called lost territories. On 7th November 1959, Chinese Premier Chou-En-lai proposed that both sides should withdraw their troops twenty kilometers from the Mc Mohan line. In 1962 China attacked India and occupied a large part of its territory. Thus, it was for the second time, after the occupation of



Tibet, that China acted to grab Indian Territory in the Himalayas. The fact remains that till date China is in occupation of approximately 38000 sq. km. Indian Territory in Jammu and Kashmir. China claims nearly 90,000 sq. km Indian Territory in Arunachal Pradesh and about 2000 sq. km in the middle sector. Beijing's consistent position has been that it does not agree to Mc Mohan line. China has built up its military establishments near to the border. The whole area has been connected by strategic road network. India too has strengthened its accessibility and the military capabilities in the Himalayan region. Now the air lifting is possible up to Zimithang and Naruka Chu. In 1984 India established an observation post on the bank of Sumdorong Chu .Except for some armed insurrections in Nathula in 1987 and the Chinese incursion in to the Sumdorong Chu in 1980, there have not been armed clashes between the two countries over the border issue. Nevertheless, China has been invariably indulging in army movement in the region and infiltration in order to pressurize India .After a long silence, in December 1988, the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China. The Prime Ministers of the two countries agreed on this occasion to settle the boundary question through the guiding principle of "Mutual Understanding and Accommodation and Mutual Adjustment". It was a new opening and generated some hopes regarding the resolution of the border issue. It was also agreed that while seeking the mutually acceptable solution to the boundary issues, the two countries should develop their relations in other fields and make efforts to create the atmosphere and conditions that could be helpful in resolving the dispute. It was perhaps this understanding which prompted the two countries to enter the fields of trade and commerce .The two countries agreed to establish a joint Working Group(JWG) on the boundary issue at the Vice-Foreign Ministerial level. An Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas was signed between the two on 7 September, 1993. After more than thirty years of border tension and stalemate, high-level bilateral talks were also held in New Delhi starting in February 1994 to foster "Confidence-Building Measures" between the defense forces of India and China, and to ensure a new period of better relations. In November 1995, the two sides dismantled the guard posts in close proximity to each other along the borderline in Wang dong area, making the situation in the border areas more stable. The idea seems to be to ease the tension in the border areas. During President Jiang Zemin's visit to India at the end of November 1996, the Government of China and the Government of India signed the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual



Control in the China-India Border Areas, which was indeed a significant step for the building of mutual trust between the two countries. These agreements were helpful in providing an institutional frame work for the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas. However, the situation has remained as it was so far the border tangle is concerned. Though lot has been done during the Sino-Indian official border talks, with number of border related CBMs placed in, the border issue remains mired in various bilateral and domestic compulsions and contradictions on both sides. Border ‘encounters’ between India and China have been less although tensions have often been generated owing to real disagreements that exist between the two sides in demarcating the Line of Actual control. During the Indian Prime Minister’s visit to China in June 2003 India and China signed a Memorandum on Expanding Border Trade, which included Nathula as another pass on the India-China border for conducting border trade. During Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao’s visit to India in April 2005, the two sides signed an agreement on political settlement of the boundary issues, setting guidelines and principles. In the agreement, China and India affirmed their readiness to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary issue through equal and friendly negotiations. India’s foreign minister S.M. Krishna visited China in April 2010. Premier Wen Ziabao visited India in December 2010. It shows that there is a change and openness but the perceptual differences between the two countries relating to the border tangle have continued. It may also be mentioned here that the border issue has not been considered as a matter of core interest in the Chinese perception, as indicated by China during a visit to Beijing by the special envoy of the Prime Minister of India in July 2010. The two countries have not been able to reach any conclusions in nearly 13 rounds of border talks so far.

### **Tibet and the Himalayan Geo-Politics**

Tibet forms the nerve centre of the geo-political and geo strategic considerations in the Himalayas. History bears testimony to the fact that both Nepal and China tried to establish their suzerainty over Tibet at one or the other point of time. It clearly endorses that Tibetan region separating the main land China from South Asia has strategic significance since



earlytimes.<sup>12</sup> China exercised its control over Tibet soon after the establishment of strong communist regime in that country. The Chinese government signed a seventeen point agreement with Dalai

Lama that recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.<sup>7</sup> A large number of Tibetans including Dalai Lama had to leave Tibet subsequently and take refuge in India and a large number of Tibetan refugees went to Nepal. Despite the fact that the Tibetans have been staying in India for such a longtime and that they have a government in exile, India's Tibet policy carried lot of confusion India in a way recognized China's control over Tibet or at least never opposed it. It was viewed as an autonomous region of China. China has believed that its frontiers in the South can be best protected by its complete control over Tibet, which forms a huge wasteland. China has strongly opposed internationalization of the Tibetan question and international support to Dalai Lama for the movement of Tibet. In fact, India's support to Dalai Lama has been a bone of contention between China and India. China considers Tibet as an area of its core interest and has strongly condemned the United States for playing against the Chinese interest and supporting Dalai Lama. What China would like is that Dalai Lama returns to Tibet and accept Chinese authority. China is aware of the popularity of Dalai Lama as a religious leader not only in Tibet but also else where in the world. China's strategy has been to secure Xinjiang and Tibet which form two important frontiers. In fact, China's security perception has been that the defense of the mainland China through land boundaries depends upon its control over these two regions. As pointed earlier, Xinjiang forms a strategically significant tri- juncture on the western region. It is a Muslim dominated area and the possibilities of infiltration by the Islamic terrorist groups have always been there. China took the ethnic riots in Tibet in March 2008 and in Xinjiang in July 2009 quite seriously. China has tried to develop a strong net work of strategic roads in Tibet right up to the borders which link the border regions to the main land China. China has also established military bases in Chhumbi valley and other areas. China has been seriously interested in the

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P. Stobdan, (1991). Tibet and the Himalayas: A Strategic Dimension to India's Security, *Strategic Analysis*, XIV (6) , pp 687-702.

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P. Stobdan. *Tibet and the security of the Indian Himalaya belt*. in K. Warikoo (ed.), n. 8, p.102.



modernization and development in Tibet that would further consolidate its hold over there. Large scale investments have been made in the Tibetan region for energy and industrialization. A large number of farming and irrigation projects have also been launched. In 1980 China introduced new education policy in Tibet. Its main objective has been to integrate Tibet with the mainland China. In 1987 The Tibetan was recognized as an official language. The Dinghai -Tibet railway network established in 2006 has been the railway network on the highest elevation. China's watershed management plan in Tibet may have far reaching consequences for the countries of South Asia. The project is being considered as one of China's most ambitious projects in the field of water resources development. This project consisting of the diversion of the waters of the river Yarlung Tsagpo (Brahmaputra) has two parts: one is the construction of the world's largest hydro-power plant on the Great Bend (where Brahmaputra takes a u turn and then enters into India). The second one is the diversion of the waters of the river Yarlung Tsagpo which will be pumped northward across the mountains to Xinjiang and Gansu regions. If this mega project is implemented then India and Bangladesh will be at the mercy of China for the release of waters in Brahmaputra. China believes that if by any chance Tibet becomes independent a vast buffer between China and the rest of Eurasia would break down. Therefore, China's consistent efforts have been to consolidate its control over Tibet in all respects. The pro-Tibetan agitation in the West has been seen by China as a threat to its national security. However, it may be added here that the Chinese occupation of Tibet sharply changed the geo-politics of the Himalayas and added to security risks not only to India but rest of South Asia as well. It is true that Tibet is not an issue in India-China relations. But it is also a fact that the Chinese occupation of Tibet changed the geo-politics of the Himalayas which the colonial powers never experienced. India's support to Tibetan refugees has its implications for India-China relations and also to China's security and strategic dynamics south of the Himalayas.

### **China-Pakistan Nexus and its Strategic Implications**

The growing China-Pakistan nexus has not only posed serious security threat for India in the



Himalayas, but it also reflects upon China's assertiveness in South Asia. China has been supporting Pakistan since the beginning. China has extensively supported Pakistan's arms buildup and nuclear programme. The Karakoram highway has facilitated China's direct access to Pakistan and beyond. China has supported Pakistan vis-à-vis India on many occasions. For Pakistan China's support is important.<sup>8</sup> The recent issue of Visa to the Kashmiris visiting China has been a significant issue. China has started giving visa to Kashmiris visiting China stapled to their Indian passports. The Indians working in Kashmir have been denied visas on their Indian passports. The presence of 7000 to 11000 Chinese soldiers in POK is a matter of security concern for India. The Chinese troops in Gilgit-Baltistan region were said to be meant for providing flood relief and humanitarian assistance. However, it has its implications as the region has high strategic value. China is engaged in building some key infrastructure projects in the POK including the Gilgit- Baltistan region upgradation of Karakoram highway connecting Punjab and Xinjiang, hydel and irrigation projects in Gilgit- Baltistan and a feasibility study to build a railway linking between Gwadar and Xinjiang through Pok China is interested in energy resources. China is also concerned about the Uighur separatist movement in Xinjiang. Thus, China has its stakes in Pakistan and Pakistan needs China. It naturally has implications for India's security.

### **The Question of Peace & Stability in the North East**

India's seven North Eastern states form border with Bangladesh, Bhutan, China and Myanmar. The whole region obviously has a high strategic value. It has already been pointed out that the border with China is disputed and China has already occupied a large part of the Indian territory in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. On the other hand Myanmar forms a 1643km. long border with Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. Bangladesh forms border with Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram. Thus, the North Eastern region is surrounded by these countries. On the other hand this region is linked with

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<sup>8</sup>P. L. Bholia, (1986). *Pakistan-China Relations, Search for Politico-Strategic Relationship*, Jaipur : RBSA.



the rest of India through a small strip called chicken neck between Nepal and Bangladesh. The North-Eastern states are faced with insurgencies, unrest and violence since a long time. Peace and stability in the region has proved to be a big challenge for India, while the region has immense strategic importance in the overall context of its security in the Himalayas. The cross border support to armed insurgent groups of the North-East has been a serious challenge to India's peace efforts in the region. Despite a comprehensive economic development programme in the region, the cross-country linkages of insurgents are a matter of concern. China declared in early 1980's that it would no more continue with the policy of supporting the insurgent groups outside. However, the fact remains that the insurgent groups have their hide outs in the neighbouring region and have been procuring Chinese arms from Yunan via Myanmar. They have been operating their training camps in Myanmar and these countries have become safe heavens to such elements whenever they are in trouble in the Indian Territory. Bangladesh has also been an important factor along with China and Myanmar. It is important that the supply of arms and ammunition from across the border has to be stopped first. There fore, both China and Myanmar constitute an important factor in India's efforts to contain insurgency in the North East.

### **Maritime Security Concerns**

China has also become an important factor in the maritime security of India particularly in the Andaman Sea. The Andaman Sea where India's Andaman and Nicobar islands are located has

immense strategic importance for India. These islands are located quite near to the Myanmar Ocean boundaries and separated from Koko island of Myanmar by a small Channel.

China's objective has been to establish its powerful presence in the Indian Ocean for which Myanmar carries high importance for her. The distance between Yunan region of China and the seacoast through Myanmar is about 1000 kms. China has entered into riverine cooperation with Myanmar to develop traffic and trade facilities in Mekong and Irrawaddy rivers. Apart from inland water transport, China has also helped Myanmar in developing railway and road transport infrastructure. China is also largely engaged in developing port facilities in Myanmar Sea such as Sittwe port near Bangladesh and on Koko and Ramree Islands near Andaman and Nicobar islands. This apart, China has also been interested



indeveloping port facilities in Zaiditkyi, Mergui and Tanintharyi islands all along the coastal line of Myanmar. China has in fact, been in search of finding alternative sea routes to Strait of Malacca in order to ensure unabated supply of oil and natural gas in case of any violent activities in the South China Sea. China's access to the Indian Ocean through Myanmar not only indicates China's overwhelming stakes in Myanmar but it also has significant geo strategic implications for India and Bangladesh.

### **China's Growing Concern in South Asia**

China has shown tremendous interest in the South Asian region over the years. China's objectives have been three: search for market and resources, security and strategic ties and encirclement of India in its own homeland. China has friendly relations with Pakistan and China has become a major source of Pakistan's military and nuclear buildup. Pakistan is important for China not only in the context of its interest in Central Asia, Indian Ocean and Afghanistan but also in containing infiltration of Islamic terrorism in Xinjiang. China has cordial relations with Nepal and China has come up in a big way in Nepal in the post-Maoist insurgency phase. China was the largest investor in Nepal in 2010. With Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also China has cordial relations. China is interested in developing deep water ports in Sri Lanka. China has also been the largest trading partner of India with 61.74 billion US \$ trade in 2010. China has been pursuing its greater participation in SAARC. It can be said that China's cordial relations with the smaller states of South Asia strengthens its overall geo-political situation in the Himalayas.

### **Conclusion : India's Options and Challenges**

China has been quite assertive in ensuring its geo-political and geo-strategic interests in the Himalayas. The control over Tibet and occupation of huge Indian Territory in the West and the East has brought China in a highly advantageous position. China has used these territorial controls for strategic and military build up. On the other hand the Karakoram highway has cutoff India from its access to Central Asia. China's linkages with Pakistan and its cooperative relations with rest of the countries of the South Asian region, China's engagement with Myanmar and its growing interest around the Andaman Sea has posed security challenges to



India.China's emergence as an economic and military power has further added to its position in the Himalayan region. China is worried for the security of Xinjiang region and it is also concerned of its control over Tibet. China's strong security network and its cooperative relations with Pakistan are an asset to her. India's border dispute with China is a matter of concern. It is not possible for her to overlook the illegal Chinese occupation of its territory. However, there has not been any breakthrough over the border tangle. Pakistan's control over Gilgit, Hunja and Baltistan has been a matter of serious concern for India because it has also brought China in an advantageous position in the region due to Pakistan-China nexus. India needs to develop a coherent Himalayan policy as its security depends much on the security of the Himalayan borderland. India's consistent efforts should be to let China realize that the border question is an area of core interest. India has many disadvantages in all over the Himalayas. The whole of North-East and Jammu Kashmir region is sensitive. India has conflictual relations with Pakistan. Being on the Southern slopes of the Himalayas India has strategic disadvantages too. Therefore, in place of aggressive postures an approach of peaceful negotiations would be beneficial to India. It has been suggested by many that India and China need to enter into multilateral engagements. Some steps have already been taken up towards trade, investments, bilateral and regional cooperation, cultural exchanges, etc. Yet, India has to be conscious about its areas of core interest as well as its larger interests in the Himalayan borderland.