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INTELLIGENCE STUDY

BHUTAN BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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FOREWORD

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The situation in Bhutan, an isolated, semi-independent Himalayan border state pressed between the Tibetan plateau and India's Brahmaputra plain, offers a potential threat to Indian security. India's efforts to maintain a predominant influence in the country and thus to block any Chinese Communist efforts at penetration are complicated by antiforeign sentiment and internal instability in Bhutan.

Geography not only makes Bhutan a strategic buffer state but it also is in large part responsible for Bhutan's unusually primitive conditions. Mountain ranges of over 20,000 feet fragment the country into separate valleys, each ruled by a particular clan or clans. There are no towns or industry, and the authority of King Wangchuck is narrowly circumscribed by the powers of local lords and Buddhist lamas.

During the past year or two, Bhutan's political stability has been increasingly threatened by local intrigue, and recent efforts to modernize the country have contributed to the problem. External assistance in road building and other development efforts has come almost entirely from India, but these efforts have aroused anti-Indian feeling among the Bhutanese. One branch of the powerful Dorji family provided the royal prime minister for some years and led the modernization effort, but in November 1964 apparently lost out--at least temporarily--to a more conservative group of royal advisers.

The limited intelligence available on the area includes no indications that Peiping is attempting to establish a strong Chinese position in Bhutan, but there are many exploitable opportunities. Should China gain such a position, India, which now leaves its border with Bhutan almost totally unmanned, might face the problem of Chinese agents--and possibly military personnel--within 25 miles of the principal access routes to the disputed North East Frontier Agency, which was the scene of a major Indian defeat during the 1962 Chinese invasion.

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I. BHUTAN BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA

The Bhutanese political crises of 1964 were a matter of special interest to New Delhi because this Indian-oriented mountain state is a vulnerable part of India's frontier with Communist China; the Indian-Bhutanese border would be hard to defend and has long been virtually unmanned. Indian concern over a possible increase in Chinese influence in semi-independent Bhutan arises not from any known Chinese intention to upset the status quo, but rather from certain inherent vulnerabilities of this backward area to Chinese subversion, accompanied by the recent increases in internal political tensions. Various topographical, ethnic, and political factors make Bhutan not only a backward but also a divided country, where the king must compete for influence with a number of local feudal lords and where such modernization as has occurred seems to have heightened political antagonisms without having significantly strengthened central political controls.

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II. LAND AND PEOPLE

Occupying some 240 miles of the Sino-Indian borderland, mostly at altitudes ranging from 5,000 to 24,000 feet, the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is one of the more remote countries of the world. Its location and terrain make Bhutan potentially difficult for either India or China to control effectively; the rugged mountainous terrain divides and compartmentalizes the country, creating great communication problems and helping to perpetuate local ethnic and political differences. The most important fact governing the life and activities of most Bhutanese--religious and lay, noble and common--is the valley from which they come, each valley being distinct in its history and character. Historically, the major rivals for power have been the barons of the Paro and Ha valleys of western Bhutan and those, like the present King, who were barons of the Tongsa Valley in central Bhutan. King Wangchuck currently rules from Thimbu. (See annex I: The Geography of Bhutan.)

Bhutan's culture and form of government are derived from Tibet, just as the ruling Bhotias themselves are descended from Tibetan invaders of the 9th Century A.D. The Tibetan dialect of Denjong-ke is commonly spoken and Tibetan ways of living are widely followed, but Tibetan authority was never effectively established in Bhutan and the Bhotias have a clear sense of separateness from their former suzerains. It was fear of domination from the north which made the Bhotias willing to allow first Britain and then India to exercise a protective control over their foreign relations.

There are three main ethnic groups in Bhutan. The ruling Bhotias make up about 60 percent of the country's 850,000 population and occupy the fertile valleys of the western Inner Himalayas.

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Another 15 percent of the population, found principally in the eastern Inner Himalayas, are of aborigine stock. These aborigines have a less developed culture than the Bhotias and are considered inferior by them. Although slavery has been abolished, they have traditionally been the Bhotias' slaves or menial servants. Unlike the Bhotias, the aborigines have a castelike division. Their religion is a Druk-pa Buddhism strongly influenced by primitive spirit worship. The eastern aborigines are politically subservient to the Bhotias, but the area's poor communications, as well as the ineffectiveness of the government bureaucracy and army has permitted the overwhelming majority of the aborigines to be relatively unaffected by Bhotia culture or government. There probably is some degree of hostility between the two groups.



TRADITIONAL BHUTANESE
MILITIAMAN

The remaining 25 percent of Bhutan's population are ethnic Nepalese in the duars, the southern part of the country bordering the Indian plain. This group has most of its social and economic ties with India, Sikkim, and Nepal.

Bhutan is further divided by religious differences, though nearly all its inhabitants profess some variety of Buddhism. Druk-pa (Red Hat) Buddhism is the state religion, and the King is its head; nearly a quarter of the state's revenue goes to support some 4,000 Red Hat lamas--or Buddhist monks--living in eight major lamaseries, principally in the more populous western part of the country. The reformed (Yellow Hat) Dalai Lama sect, which is the preponderant religious group in Tibet and is less influenced than the Druk-pa sect by the native animism of the area, also has some adherents in Bhutan; these are viewed by the monarch and his Red Hat supporters with reserve, if not hostility. Also under royal disfavor is the small Towang Movement, consisting of a few influential lamas who recognize as their religious leader not King

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Wangchuck but the head of the Towang Monastery in India. The Indian Government, however, has apparently not supported the Towang Lama as a political rival to the King.

Bhutan's lamas exercise considerable political influence, partly because of their general prestige and partly because of family ties with the feudal aristocracy. Although Druk-pa Buddhism is a barely institutionalized religion, Bhutan's numerous dzongs (monastery-forts) serve as centers of religious as well as of military and social activity. The lamas are drawn from both the feudal aristocracy and the ordinary farmers, but there is a strong tendency for the lamas closely related to the lay aristocracy to become most influential. The division between the ruling feudal-lama group and the peasant farmers is more important in Bhutanese society than any division between religious and lay leaders.

Probably the most important line of division in Bhutan is that between clans. In general, each valley is dominated by a particular clan or clans, and in important political disputes the line-up between opposing sides is most frequently by clan. There is a strong tendency for individual lamas, as well as homogeneous lama-series, to ally themselves with specific clans rather than form independent political organizations.

The clans vary in influence. Broadly speaking, they are divided into two groups. Those clans which claim descent from Bhutan's first Bhotia ruler (the first Dharma Raja) are called Chu-je or Chos-rje (of which King Wangchuck is a member) and have the greatest influence; certain of these clans traditionally hold the highest secular and religious posts. There is also a larger, but slightly less influential, group of clans--the Wa or Wang--which are descendants of the first Dharma Raja's followers. The number, functions, and relations of these two major clan groups are not clear; there appear to be various internal factions and rivalries.

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III. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Bhutan is almost wholly undeveloped. It has no towns, no industry, no public electricity, and no currency of its own. (It uses Indian financial facilities to the extent it requires them.) Less than one percent of its population is literate. Most of the population are farmers, the remainder being shepherds. Living standards are primitive, although the average citizen is adequately fed and clothed.

Although little of Bhutan's land can be cultivated, there is no land shortage. Peasants frequently move from one area to another if they believe their original home to be unproductive or, as is frequently the reason, if they believe it to be unlucky. All land theoretically belongs to the King and the peasants must pay rent, in kind or labor, which serves the same function as taxes. The level of taxation is probably not onerous, though it is a source of dissatisfaction. The local lord, or dzongpen, has a group of retainers who collect from the peasants, usually through the clan, joint family, or valley headman. Royal revenue is apparently derived from the area which the King directly rules, especially his family barony of Tongsa Dzong, as well as from Indian subsidies. He probably receives some tribute from the nobility. Most of the revenue goes to support the ruling class and the lamas. In return, the rulers are expected to maintain order and to protect the peasants.

New taxes and labor levies have occasioned substantial dissatisfaction. Bhutan, however, is one country not affected by the "revolution of rising expectations" and the government has been under no pressure to encourage economic development. Potential for development exists in the country's considerable natural resources--coal deposits, rivers suitable for hydroelectric projects, and extensive forests. These resources are largely unexploited because of primitive communications.

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In 1960, King Wangchuck decided that his country's ability to resist foreign influence as well as the long-term stability of the monarchy required that he modernize Bhutan's social and economic structure. A network of roads was considered a necessary first step. Bhutan was then virtually roadless and its rivers are not navigable. At present the only significant link between the Brahmaputra-Gangetic plains and the Inner Himalaya is the poorly maintained road from Phuntsholing to the Paro Valley in western Bhutan. The Indians have built another road from the eastern Bhutanese valley of Tashi Gang Dzong to the Indian city of Dewangiri; this road, however, is designed as part of an alternative route to the Indian city of Tawang from the Indian plains rather than as a link to Bhutan. There are no roads to Communist-dominated Tibet, nor are any planned, but there is an extensive network of trails.

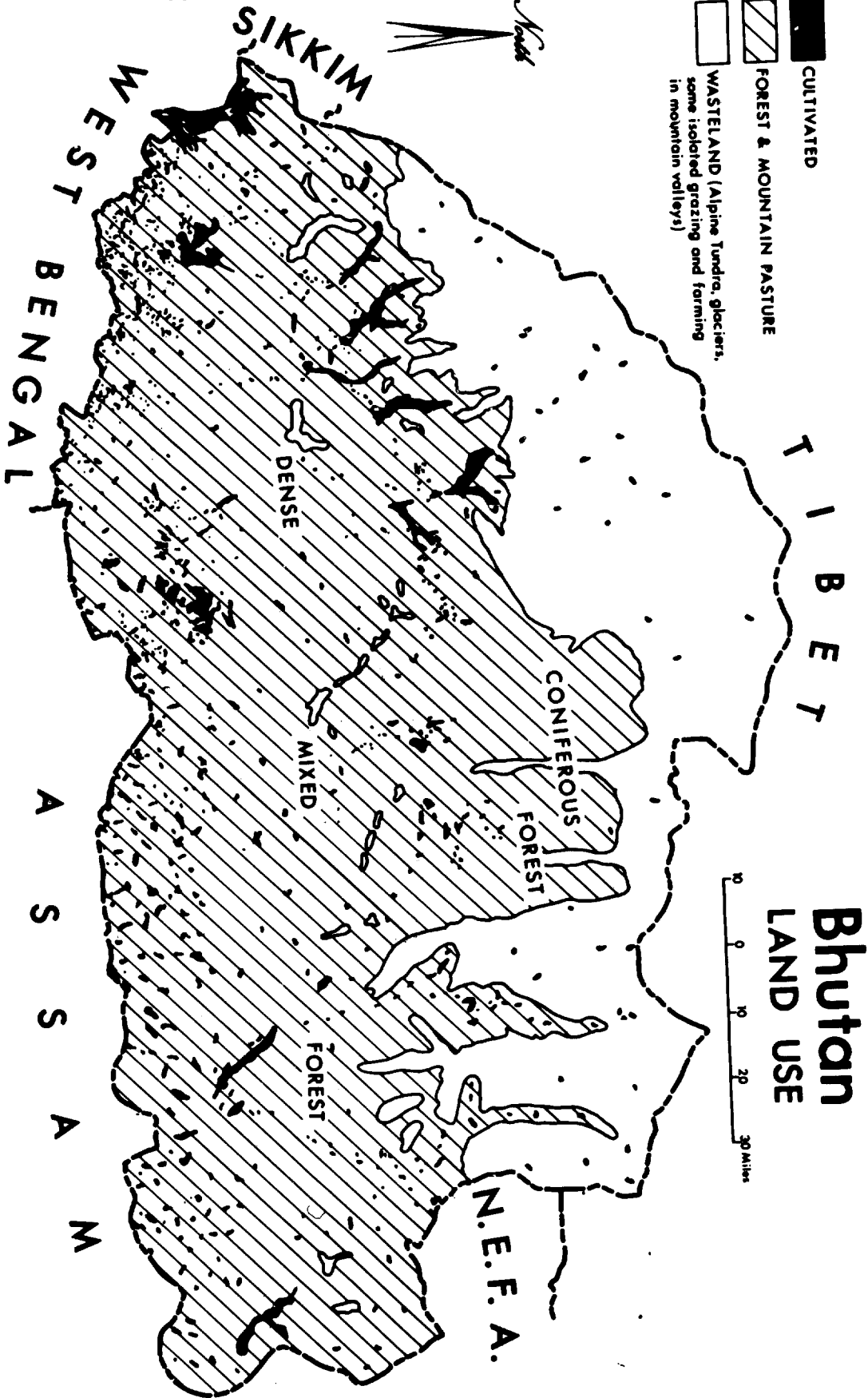


SECTION OF MOTORABLE ROAD

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The source of external aid for economic development in Bhutan is almost exclusively India, and almost all the funds to date have been earmarked for roadbuilding or other forms of communication related to India's defense such as bridges and airfields. Between 1947 and the Chinese invasion of India in 1962, Indian aid to Bhutan came to about \$3.7 million. India is now committed to spend \$36.7 million on Bhutanese development over the period 1961-66. This is in addition to the \$105,000 yearly grant which new Delhi is obligated by treaty to give to the monarchy.

Apart from strategic considerations, India also has purely economic motives in seeking to improve Bhutanese transportation. It would like to draw on the modest rice surplus which, along with certain Tibetan-style art work, has long been Bhutan's chief export. Previously the rice went north to Tibet, but since the Tibetan revolt of 1959 this market has been partially closed to Bhutanese trade. In addition, India is planning an 18,000-kw. hydroelectric power project on the Jaldhaka River that will require construction work along the Bhutanese border. Work on this project appears to be suspended at the present time, however.

So far, however, Indian aid has not improved the Bhutanese standard of living nor improved the Indian image in Bhutan. For the most part, Indian aid has had an unsettling effect. Many Bhutanese resent the forced labor levies required by road building and dislike the arrogant attitude of the Indian supervisors. Recent Indian statements that Bhutan will not be able to absorb the amount of aid earmarked for it, and indications that India may not try to defend any of Bhutan except the southern border area suggest that India's aid will continue to be modest.

On the whole, the Bhutanese Government has been displeased with the level of Indian aid and has been casting about, with India's reluctant consent, for help from other countries. Through its membership in the Colombo Plan for mutual aid among countries with interests in South and Southeast

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Asia, Bhutan has received some small amounts of aid from fellow members and hopes to gain more. In addition, negotiations have long been under way with a Swedish firm for a paper mill, and Japan has tentatively agreed to set up a rayon mill. A few French nuns reportedly have been admitted to help modernize Bhutan's primitive medical facilities; a few English schoolteachers reportedly have been hired for Bhutan's 70 government-run schools. For the foreseeable future, however, Bhutan will have to rely on India for most of its aid.

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IV. INTERNAL PROBLEMS

The composition and policy of the the government of Bhutan are determined essentially by the clan alliances of local feudal lords and politically influential lamas, and by the relation of these leaders to royal authority and to the Indian presence. Little is probably known outside the country, however, about the composition and dynamics of these alliances at any given moment.

Besides these long-standing determinants of Bhutanese events, a new and important factor has been the limited modernization Bhutan has been undergoing for five years. Modernization will, of course, benefit some members of the ruling group and hurt others, but to the extent it affects weapons and communications it clearly tends to strengthen the royal authority at the expense of local lords. Probably the great majority of the ruling group, besides being influenced by characteristic lamaistic conservatism, fear that major changes in traditional Bhutanese isolation, customs, and laws would endanger their authority. A small but highly effective faction led by the Dorji family of the Ha Valley, however, had, until the Dorjis were ousted in late November 1964, managed to guide the government's policies toward increased contact abroad and, to a lesser extent, toward reform at home. The Dorjis had been the pre-eminent feudal family, second only to the royal dynasty, from the early part of the century when the Wangchuck dynasty came to power. The Dorjis' pre-eminence in southern Bhutan and their position as Bhutan's principal representative abroad encouraged them and their followers to advocate further foreign contact; at the same time, this advocacy aroused the apprehensions of their rivals.

Limited evidence suggests that the relative influence of the modernizers and the traditionalists at any particular time is dependent on King Wangchuck's attitude. Very little is known about the character of the King, however, and his outward actions on modernization have vacillated. He ascended

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the throne in 1952 at the age of 25, his education presumably having been confined to Bhutan. Upon assuming the throne, he probably came somewhat under the influence of the older and somewhat cosmopolitan prime minister, Jigme Dorji. In 1953, the King married Jigme's sister, Ashi Kesang, and in 1960 he supported the Dorji-inspired program of internal reform and increased contact with the outside world.

He also established in 1955, a 130-man national assembly, or Tsongdu. Although a quarter of the membership is appointed by the King and some additional seats are held by leading lamas, the majority of assembly members are village leaders elected by the heads of families in each valley. The Tsongdu has



ROYAL FAMILY

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met fairly regularly and debated government policy. It does not, however, enjoy legislative power, its influence being limited to criticism and advice. The King is also advised by an appointed eight-man royal council.

Apparently, as the King grew older he came increasingly in conflict with his prime minister. All those who opposed the Dorjis for various reasons, including of course the traditionalists, came to see an opportunity in the growing conflict between the King and the Dorjis. In April of 1964, when the King was in Europe under treatment for his heart condition, a group of traditionalist army officers aided by the King's high-born mistress, Yan-ki, assassinated Jigme Dorji. The King was rushed home from Geneva, and with Indian prompting, he arrested, tried, and executed some of the leaders of the plot. Many of those involved in the plot, however, including Yan-ki, remained in the King's favor.

Six months after Jigme's assassination, the King returned to Switzerland, leaving the country in the care of his personal assistant, who is known as Derek; Jigme's brother, 30-year-old Prime Minister Lhendup Dorji; and the commander of the Bhutanese Army, Brigadier Ugyen Thangpi. Frictions grew between those loyal to Derek and those loyal to Lhendup; Derek claimed, like the previous conspirators, that the Dorjis were plotting to increase their authority. The Derek group intimidated the Dorji faction, and Lhendup's principal allies--including Brigadier Thangpi--fled to Nepal before the King's return. King Wangchuck met Lhendup in Switzerland and directed him to stay out of the country indefinitely.



LHENDUP DORJI

Upon his return to Bhutan, the King assumed the functions of prime minister and replaced the Dorji allies with more conservative men. The principal

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change he made was the appointment of his half-brother, Dasho Wangchuck, as commander of the Bhutanese Army. In the event of the King's death, absence, or prolonged incapacitation, Dasho would also be acting head of the Bhutanese Government during the minority of King Wangchuck's son, who is now about 10 years old.

Apparently, this anti-Dorji group, consisting of major Bhutanese traditionalists as well as some anti-Dorji modernizers, enjoy the King's support. This group is probably also supported by the Indian Government, which may anticipate that the lessening of Dorji influence will give it broader influence.

The future policies of this group, however, are obscure. Although many of its members in the past opposed modernization, the group may benefit --through graft, control of modern weapons, and commercial operations--from the Dorji-inspired modernizing policies, and thus become more sympathetic to those policies. Many of its members, moreover, probably opposed the Dorjis for reasons having nothing to do with modernization. Their ability to work together for positive policies is still largely untested. A further factor making for instability is the possibility that the ousted Dorjis will attempt some kind of political comeback.

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V. INDIAN RELATIONSHIP AND INFLUENCE

India formally refers to Bhutan as a "protected area," indicates on official maps that the Indo-Bhutanese boundary is not an international one, and in public statements avoids characterizing Bhutan as a sovereign country. The Indo-Bhutanese treaty of 1949 assures Bhutan's internal autonomy but requires that it be guided in its foreign policy by Indian advice. This is substantially the same relationship as that established with Great Britain in 1907.

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[Redacted] Consequently, the Dorjis, presumably with the King's support, had steadily attempted to downgrade the foreign policy clause when they were in power.

Bhutan's leaders apparently recognize the mutual dependence involved in India's need of their country as a buffer state and Bhutan's need of Indian support to retain even its present limited independence. As late as the summer of 1962, the government of India stated that it would "insure the protection and inviolability of the territory of Bhutan," but it has no obligation by treaty to do so. Indeed, Indian military planning suggests that the Indian Army does not intend to defend the Inner or Great Himalaya area in the event of a Chinese move into these areas.

New Delhi would, however, probably use its armed forces--stationed in Bhutan for road building and for training the Bhutanese--and its intelligence service to attempt to counter a Chinese subversive or paramilitary threat.

India's influence in Bhutan has increased over the past few years. The period after Jigme's assassination in April 1964 offered enhanced opportunities for the expansion of Indian influence. Divided on the issue of modernization as well as divided over their personal relation to the Dorjis, Bhutan's ruling circles were probably not able to present their customary united front against the Indians. Moreover, the key role played by the Indians in the restoration

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of the Dorjis at that time probably also warned those Bhutanese--modernizers as well as traditionalists--who might have worked openly against the Indians. Furthermore, the anti-Indian forces have had difficulty in finding an appropriate leader. The King's health was uncertain and in the period just after his return to Bhutan following the assassination, he apparently followed Indian direction in most respects.

The new prime minister, Lhendup Dorji, was young, inexperienced, and lacked political tact. By late summer 1964, he appeared in his public statements to be increasingly amenable to Indian influence. After his ouster in the winter of that year, however, Lhendup stated that he believed the Indians were responsible for his removal. The Indian intention was, according to Lhendup, to replace the Dorjis with officials, preferably Indians, who would be controlled by New Delhi.

Those who have now replaced the Dorjis as the King's principal advisers are probably no less anti-Indian than the Dorjis--possibly more so--and many of them have in the past opposed the modernizing policies advanced by the Dorjis and supported by New Delhi.

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The King, moreover, will require at least some Westernized officials for certain technical and representational functions and may now--in the absence of the Dorjis--have to rely on Indians for those posts. Previously, Bhutan's very limited foreign relations had been carried on by the Dorjis.

India provides Bhutan with military and intelligence training which is specifically aimed at countering Chinese subversion. India has 200 to 400 officers stationed near Thimbu for training purposes and several times that number working on Bhutan's roads. The Indians are now training part of the Bhutanese militia, which numbers between 1,500 and 5,000. In addition, Indian officers are scheduled to help train and equip more personnel for Bhutan's inadequate northern border checkposts.

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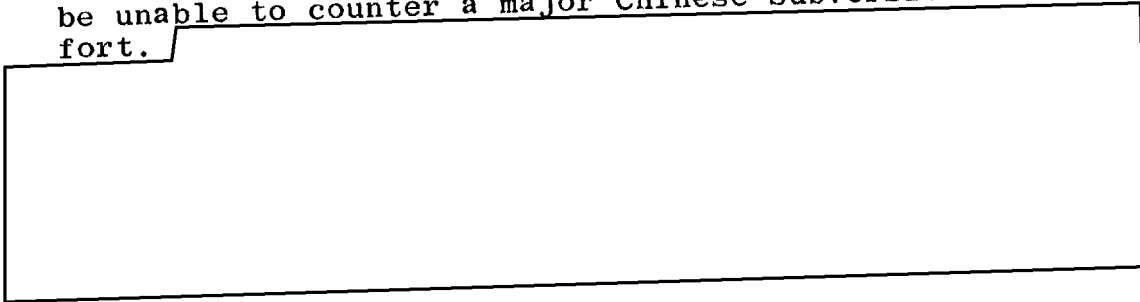
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These checkpoint personnel are at present ill equipped, ill trained, and probably largely ineffective in preventing infiltration from Tibet. India also helps support checkpoints to the south at Phuntsholing, at Chukka at the junction of the Wong Chu and Pa Chu rivers, and at the branching of the road to Paro Dzong and Thimbu.

Currently without Indian aid, Bhutanese security forces are probably competent to suppress local and uncoordinated revolts, but probably would be unable to counter a major Chinese subversive effort.

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VI. CHINESE RELATIONSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Bhutan fell under formal Chinese suzerainty about 1720 with China's conquest of Tibet, and tribute was paid and annual messages were exchanged sporadically throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1876-77 China supported Bhutanese resistance to British suggestions for road building, in 1885 the Chinese mediated an internal dispute, and in 1890 China selected the senior feudal lord in Bhutan. During this period, the British Imperial Government was not consistent in treating Bhutan as either a subject or as an independent government.

In 1907, a treaty was signed between Great Britain and the ruler of Bhutan which effectively recognized Bhutan as a separate country under British protection and guidance. Chinese governments have neither publicly accepted nor strongly protested this arrangement. Independent India has substantially continued the policies established by Great Britain.

The Chinese Communists over the years have published several maps showing portions of Bhutan as Chinese territory. Peiping, however, dropped some of these "map claims" in maps published in 1962 and apparently does not intend to make an issue of them. Chinese unwillingness to acknowledge Indian responsibility for Bhutan's foreign relations and Bhutan's unwillingness--at least publicly--to deal with the Chinese have prevented border negotiations or any formal ties between the two.

Bhutan and China maintained fairly amiable relations until the Chinese suppression of the 1959 Tibetan rebellion. At that time certain enclaves in Tibet over which Bhutan had long exercised a quasi-sovereignty were taken away. The loss of these enclaves, combined with the disorder in Tibet, the more than 4,000 Tibetan refugees who entered Bhutan, and the subsequent deterioration of Sino-Indian relations led Bhutan to attempt to close its northern borders in 1959 or 1960. During the 1962 Chinese invasion of India, China stated that its troops would not enter Bhutanese territory so long

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as Bhutan maintained its neutrality

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A major Chinese asset in Bhutan is the Bhutanese fear and dislike of the Indians, and the unavailability of any power except China which could effectively counterbalance India's influence. Potential opportunities for China are also present in Bhutan's long-standing ethnic and religious differences and in the rivalries of the clans and feudal lords.

Although there is no hard evidence of any Chinese effort to exploit the situation in Bhutan, Bhutan's isolation is such that a substantial Chinese influence in the countryside or at court could be present without being authoritatively reported to the West.

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smuggling--rice from Bhutan, wool and salt from Tibet--continues across the border. It would not be difficult for Chinese agents to make repeated clandestine crossings of sections of the frontier that are well provided with trails, although it is unlikely that major units could move across the border undetected at any one time.

The Chinese also have some means of exploiting Bhutanese religious differences, particularly through the use of friendly Tibetans. Although King Wangchuck is formally head of the Druk-pa church, historically there have been competing religious offices: the Deb Raja, who was the king's religious equal until 1907, and a shabdung, a very senior religious leader who was active until at least 1917. In the past two years, there have been reports of renewed activity by shabdungs, some of whom, allegedly, have been murdered at the king's direction. India may be in contact with a shabdung whom New Delhi may be planning to support at some future time. There is, of course, a possibility that the Chinese may be doing the same. Rumors have also circulated that the Chinese are harboring a Deb Raja, who could serve as a rallying point for many dissatisfied elements.

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Presently, the lamas are not unified, but tend to ally themselves with feudal lords of their own clan. Nevertheless, a strong religious leader with a pro-Chinese political orientation--possibly with support from Tibet--would be a likely rallying point for dissatisfied or ambitious Bhutanese, lay and religious.

Outside the Bhotia community, the ethnic Nepalese minority of the duars poses a minor subversive threat which may be susceptible to Chinese exploitation. Forbidden to enter the Inner Himalaya, the industrious Nepalese have virtually made southern Bhutan an ethnic extension of Nepal. They feel no loyalty toward the King, and the monarchy considers them foreigners. The Nepalese, however, have little interest in opposing the already slight authority of the government and for the most part are politically apathetic. It is highly unlikely that this group could do more than embarrass and strain the government security forces.

The Bhutan State Congress, an organization which seeks to represent the Nepalese, is small and weak. It calls for some type of separation for the duars' area: autonomy, independence, or connection with a "Great Nepal" consisting of Nepal and the Nepalese-dominated areas of Sikkim, northern India, and Bhutan. The leader of the Bhutan State Congress, D. B. Gurung, is now in exile in Siliguri, West Bengal. A civil disobedience campaign was undertaken in the Bhutanese village of Sarbhang in 1954, and infrequent rumors of Nepalese discontent have since been heard.

The Bhutanese State Congress could not effect its separatist demands without the aid of an outside power. The situation is capable of exploitation by the Chinese, even though they have no direct access to the duars, which are geographically contiguous to India. One access would be through Sikkim, where China is rumored to have agents. There are also about 1,000 Communist Party of India members--most of them Chinese-oriented--in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal who could also be used to infiltrate the duars and to encourage subversion.

Of all possibilities for subversion, however, one involving the Nepalese would be most difficult

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for the Chinese, least likely to endanger the government at Thimbu, and easiest for the Indian Government to counter.

There are persistent reports--none of them confirmed, however--of Chinese attempts to form alliances with various feudal leaders. Indians with contacts in Bhutan have at various times asserted that the Dorji group, the anti-Dorji group or even the King himself have been in regular contact with the Chinese. Reports have also been received of clandestine radio messages being broadcast from Bhutan by Chinese sympathizers or agents. Some senior officials around the King are said to be ethnic Chinese who have acquired Bhutanese citizenship. One Bhutanese leader, Wang-di, is overtly pro-Chinese and has lived in Tibet since he fled the country in 1959.

The King commands fairly reliable support throughout the country and it would be difficult for the Chinese to subvert his authority at this time. He has, however, a history of severe heart attacks, most recently in March 1963. Despite frequent statements from the palace affirming the King's complete recovery, it is probable that both his vigor and life expectancy have been reduced. A prolonged period of royal incapacity--probably involving his absence from the country--or the King's death would disturb Bhutan's already unstable politics and strongly enhance Chinese opportunities in the area. The King's authority would probably be replaced by a regency, presumably headed by his half-brother, Dasho, who is now commander of Bhutan's army and who in the past has been associated with traditionalist elements. His character and sympathies are even more obscure than those of the King. The death of the King could produce a sharp conflict among rivals for power; the Queen Mother--a strong opponent of the Dorjis--might be prominent in such a struggle.

The danger of an unsophisticated Bhutanese Government inviting a strong Chinese presence, possibly supported at some future time by military or quasi-military forces, into the country out of pique or fear of the Indians is an ever-present possibility, and would become greater in the event of the King's death or incapacitation. The prospects for China's

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establishing its influence within Bhutan without a formal invitation depend not so much on Bhutan's ability to resist such an incursion, which is marginal, but on Chinese intentions. It is unlikely that the Chinese would make a move so provocative to both the Indians and Bhutanese as one involving direct military force. Much more likely would be a subversive or a paramilitary effort.

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VII. NEPALESE AND PAKISTANI RELATIONSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Bhutan's internal politics may be further unsettled--to Chinese advantage--by the activities of Nepal and Pakistan, both of which feel threatened by India, and both of which would like to see India's influence in Bhutan lessened.

After the dismissal of Lhendup and his followers, five supporters of the deposed prime minister fled to Nepal. There they were well received and were permitted to make anti-Indian statements. These refugees reaffirmed their loyalty to the King but stated that their removal was part of an attempt by India to secure control over Bhutan. It was rumored that Lhendup Dorji would join his followers by going to Nepal via Pakistan.

The existence of a group of exiled dissidents who probably retain the support of substantial adherents in Bhutan itself is a constant threat to King Wangchuck's authority and to Indian influence. Indian support of exiled Nepalese insurgents is still sharply recalled in Nepal, and Pakistan has in the past given arms and training to dissident Indian tribal elements.

Nepal, which feels itself in danger of being absorbed by India, would like to see another Himalayan state achieve full independence. Prospects for a Pan-Himalayan state, consisting of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, capable of resisting Indian influence would be enhanced by an independent Bhutan. Pakistan, which also fears India, would probably be willing to support such a scheme, if for no other reason than to curry Nepal's favor.

Both Nepal and Pakistan, however, will be chary of involving themselves very deeply in Bhutan's murky politics, and both may indeed give the dissidents only limited support in the hope of gaining the cooperation of King Wangchuck himself.

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VIII. POSSIBILITIES OF A SINO-INDIAN CONFRONTATION

Although the governments of India, Communist China, and Bhutan are probably seeking to avoid hostilities within Bhutan, a move by either of the large powers might precipitate a parallel action by the other.

Indian fears of covert Chinese Communist activity in Bhutan have already led New Delhi to press King Wangchuck for greater Indian influence in Bhutan, and this pressure itself may arouse Wangchuck's apprehensions, possibly leading him to look toward Peiping as a counterweight to New Delhi. Conversely, Indian moves to station troops near the Sino-Bhutanese border or to carry on an aggressive intelligence program in neighboring Tibet would probably result in a sharp Chinese reaction. Such domestic factors as a renewed outbreak of factional conflict--particularly in the event of the king's death or incapacitation--would be another major stimulus to Sino-Indian competition.

A confrontation would not be in India's interests. If Bhutan ceased to be a buffer state, India would have to man the Indo-Bhutanese border with forces sufficient to resist a Chinese attempt to cut India's supply lines into the North East Frontier Agency and Assam. This border has been almost undefended, the Indians relying on Bhutan's rugged terrain to give them time to counter a Chinese thrust.

The performance of Chinese and Indian troops in the border conflict of 1962 suggest that India would be hard pressed to contain a determined military thrust by China into Bhutan. The Indian Army would probably move to occupy the duars and could possibly hold this area in the south. India's ability to control the key central valleys is much more open to question. China would probably occupy, with little or no opposition, the most strategic areas of the Great Himalayan area.

Even a mere political reverse for India in Bhutan would be a sharp blow to the Shastri government's

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prestige, and, indeed, to the prestige of the ruling Congress Party itself. Such a blow, coming not too long before the 1967 general elections, would compound the continuing difficulties the coalition has experienced over food production and religious and linguistic rivalries, and could be a significant factor in undermining India's political stability. It could also undermine India's influence in Nepal and Sikkim.

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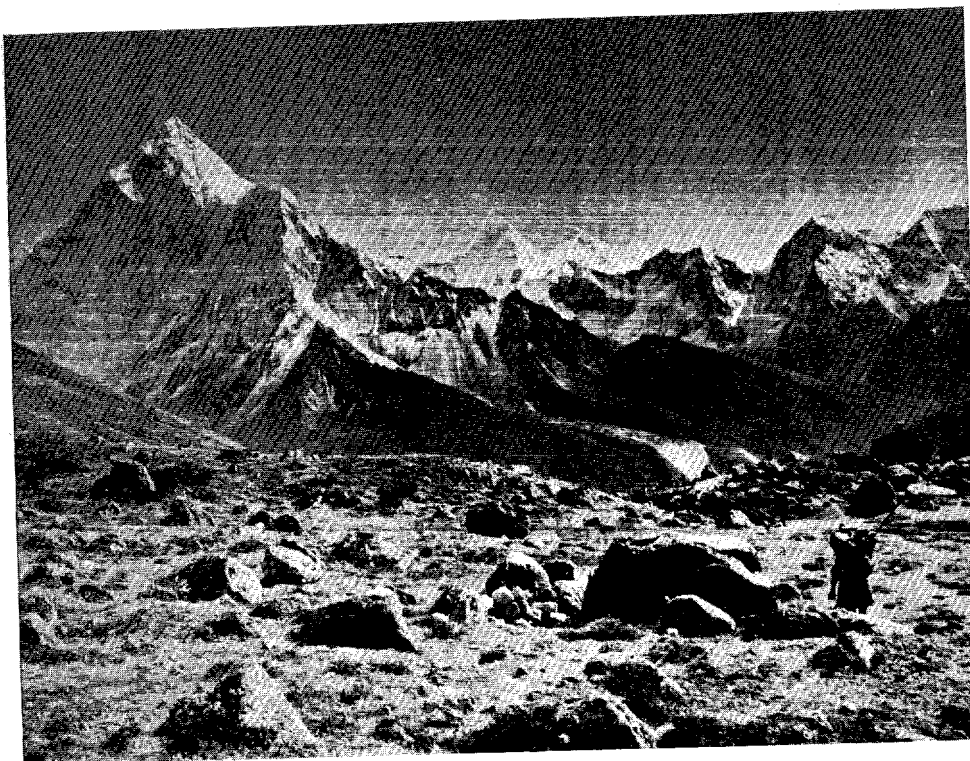
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ANNEX I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF BHUTAN

The 240-mile Sino-Bhutan border is a sparsely inhabited zone of the Great Himalayas ranging from 20,000 to 24,000 feet. Its northern slopes, as well as the marginal mountains (19,000 to 20,000 feet in elevation) of the Tibetan plateau have low precipitation; the southern slopes of the Great Himalaya, however, are heavily glaciated and are subject to the June-September monsoon. Only the alpine pastures--ranging from 12,000 to 18,000 feet--are regularly inhabited, and then only in the summer by shepherds. The snow line varies in this area, but in general follows a height of 17,000 feet.

There are only two major breaks in these mountains; one near the entry of the Lhobrak River



GREAT HIMALAYAN TERRAIN ALONG TIBET BORDER

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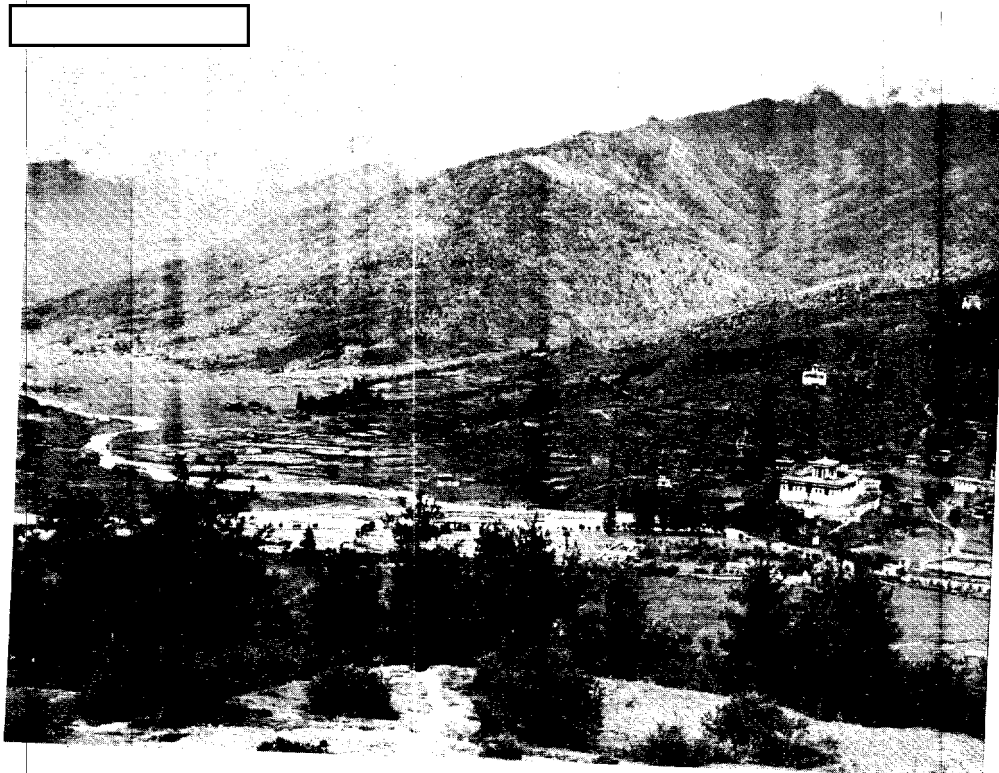
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in eastern Bhutan and another near the entry of the Torsa (Amo) River from the Chumbi Valley of Tibet.

The best passes for access to Bhutan from Tibet are the Kyu La and Ha La at about 14,000 feet in the Amo River region of the west. This route has not only been traditionally the favored one into Bhutan from Tibet but, despite the necessity to transit Tibet, has also long been considered the best natural route between India and Bhutan. There are several more difficult (10,000 to 16,000 feet) passes from Tibet into Bhutan: Kar Chunga, Sergong La, Tremo La, Lingshi La, Me La, and Bod La are the most important. There are no roads in this area, and travel by foot or pack animal is slow.

Winter in the Sino-Bhutanese border region is extremely cold and windy, and makes travel in rugged and snowy terrain very difficult. Travel is hampered in early spring by the rampant streams of melted ice and snow, and in summer by the heavy rains.



PARO VALLEY

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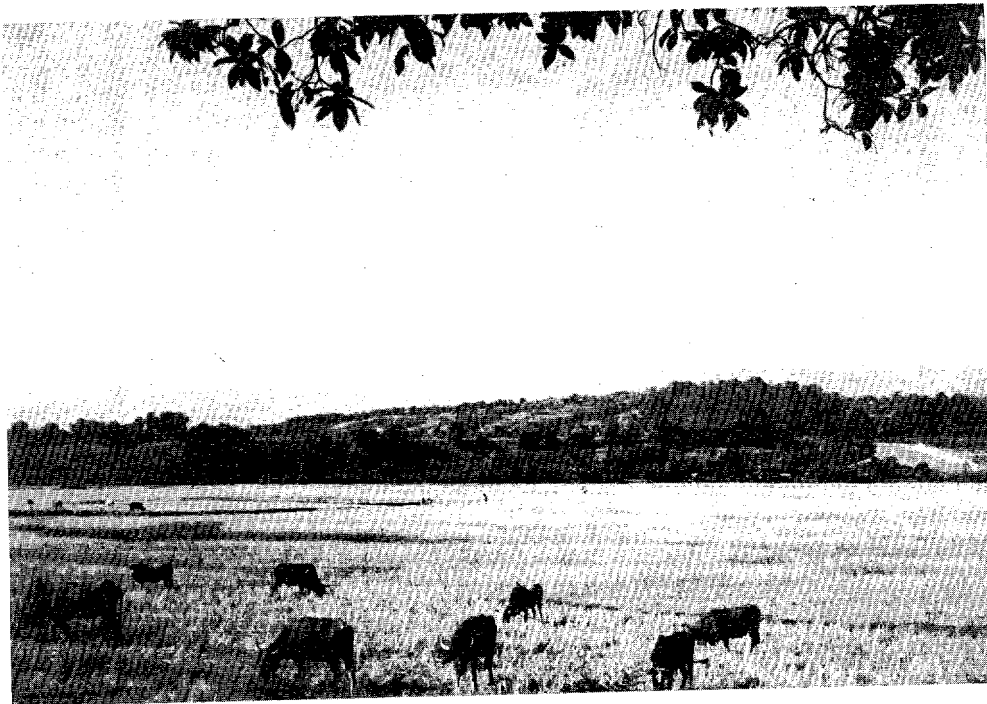
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Three quarters of Bhutan's ruling Bhotia population live in the mile-wide central valleys (about 5,000 to 9,000 feet in elevation) of the Inner Himalayas. Among the Inner Himalayan valleys, those west of the Black Mountains of central Bhutan--most notably the Torsa (Amo), Ha, Paro Wong, and Sankosh--are of greatest political importance. As well as being separated from the eastern valleys by the Black Mountains, the major western valleys are separated from one another by a series of high and complex interconnecting hills and ridges. Physical communication between these valleys is difficult. There are a few radio facilities at major points, but they are unreliable.

South of the Inner Himalaya, in an unhealthy strip approximately 10 miles wide, are the low, damp, and rugged foothills of the Himalayas and part of the bordering Indian plain. This area is called the duars. The vegetation of the southernmost section of the duars is characterized by heavy savannah grass and bamboo. Portions of the northern duars are more rugged than the southern duars are and are

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DUARS PLAIN NEAR INDIAN BORDER

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often broken by spurs of the Inner Himalaya. There are 18 passes to India along the duars: 11 into West Bengal and 7 to Assam.

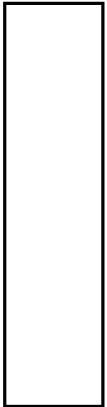
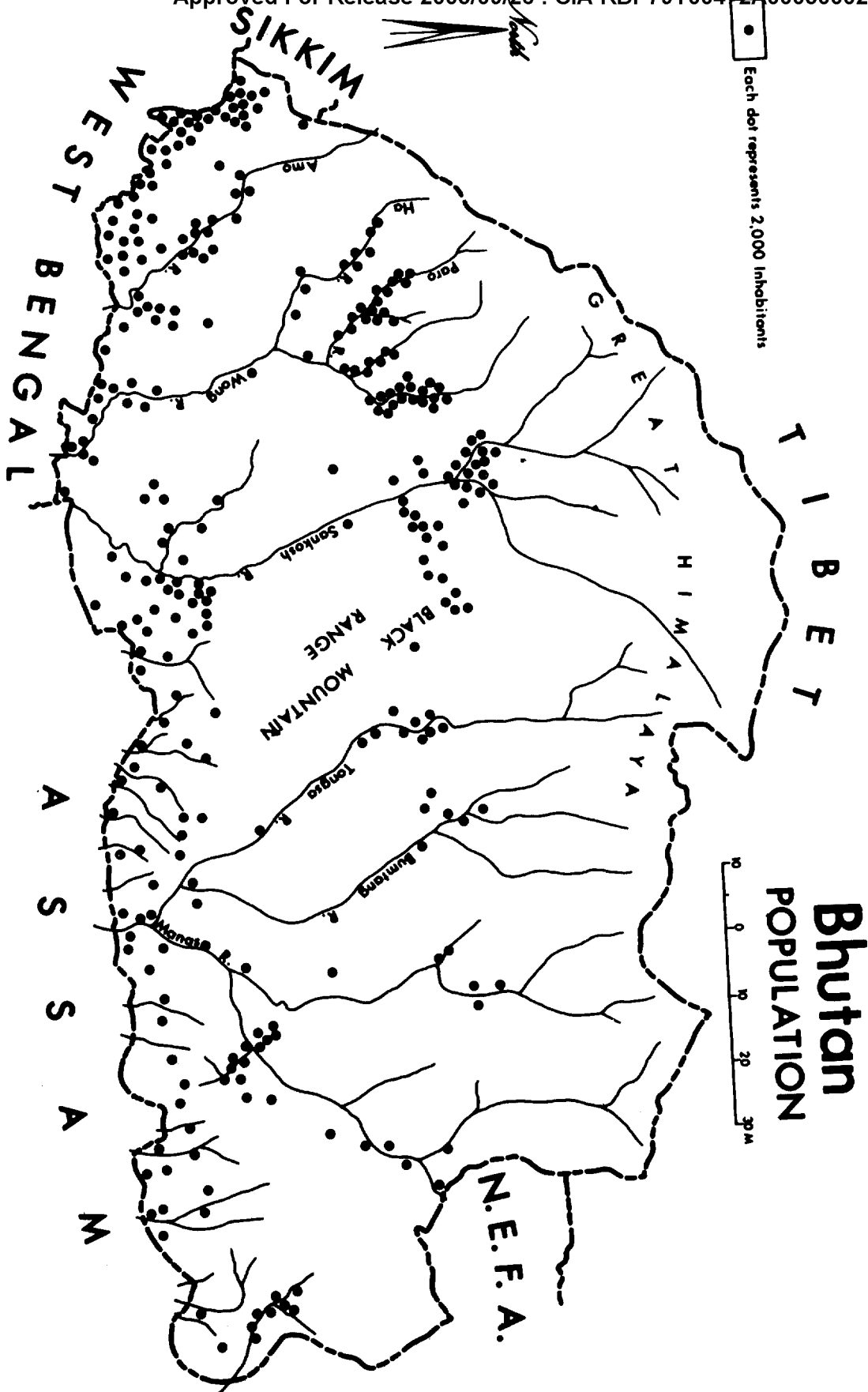
Even with the recent construction of roads from India to Bhutan, it would be difficult to transport Indian military aid to the major populated valleys of central Bhutan. A 110-mile single-lane road originating at Phuntsholing, India, is capable under optimum conditions of taking four-wheel-drive 3-ton trucks to Paro Dzong or Thimbu in 10 hours. Washouts, however, are common, and the journey--by jeep--generally takes about three days. Both Thimbu, the new capital, and Paro Dzong are approximately six days of hard trekking along this road from the Indian border. There are helipads at Paro Dzong and Thimbu, and probably a few light plane landing strips in the major valleys.

Bhutan has no cities, but centers of population are spread through the country's major valleys. The main centers are at Paro Dzong in the Paro Valley; Thimbu (Tashi Cho Dzong) in the upper Wong Valley; Ha Dzong in the Ha Valley; Punakha and Wangdu Phodrang in the Sankosh (Punakha), or Mo Chu Valley; and Tongsa Dzong in the Tongsa Valley; all but Tongsa are in western Bhutan. Tashi Gang Dzong, Lhuntsi Dzong and Mongar Dzong are the principal populated points in lower lying areas of the eastern Inner Himalayan region.

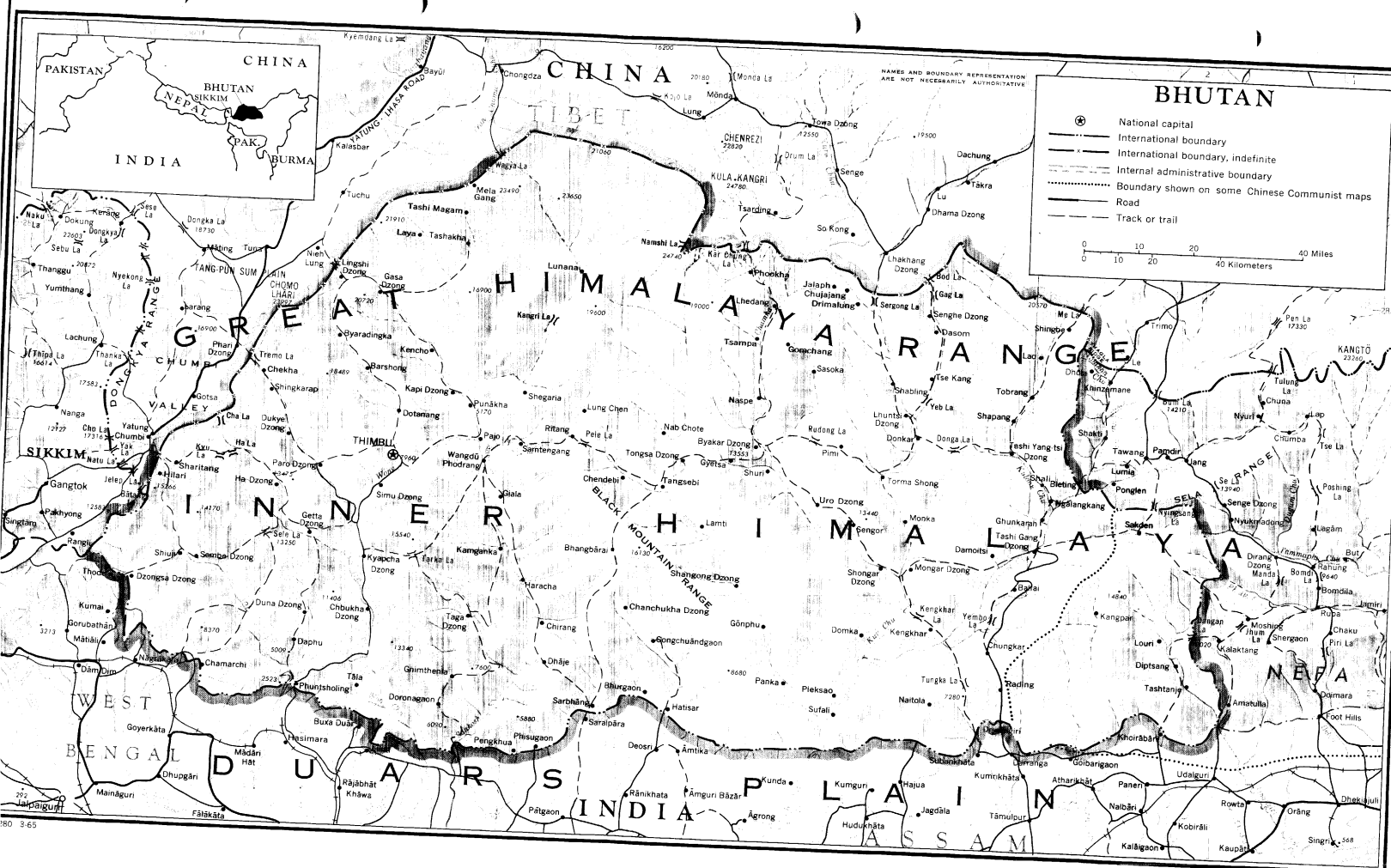
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