

Instigation of Rebellions in Tibet

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The land area called Tibet, in south-western China, is a vast and strategically important part of the Chinese nation, resting on the borders of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. The size of Tibet, if including most of the sparsely inhabited Tibetan Plateau as part of its territory, amounts to 970,000 square miles which is almost 4 times bigger than France.

The Chinese authorities, however, recognise the part of Tibet located on the western side of the plateau, and in 1965 the area was formally established as the Tibet Autonomous Region by Beijing. The Tibet Autonomous Region consists of 472,000 square miles which is still much larger than nearly every European country.

Tibet is the highest region on earth with an average altitude above sea level of nearly 4,400 metres. The overall temperature in winter remains below freezing. In the winter of 2018/2019, the coldest in Tibet for two decades, the average temperature was minus 4.3 degrees Celsius which was almost half a degree lower than in usual years.

Many Tibetans live outside of cities and towns. Sixty-nine percent of inhabitants in the central part of the Tibet Autonomous Region were living in rural areas by 2017. There they have farmed yaks and sheep on the high altitude, semi-arid grasslands and valleys, while they grow crops such as barley.

With the introduction by Beijing of healthcare programmes in Tibet since 1951, the average life expectancy of Tibetan residents has grown significantly. At the start of 2020 the typical life expectancy in Tibet was 70.6 years, whereas in 1950 it had only been 35.5 years. Because of its elevation and challenging land, the population of the Tibet Autonomous Region in 2022 consisted of a still modest 3.64 million people; but this is a population increase of around 15 percent since 2012.

Asia's biggest rivers can be traced to Tibet such as the Yangtze, the Mekong, and the

Yellow, which are a vital water source for many people living in nations like China, India, Pakistan and Thailand.

In modern history Tibet was reintegrated to China just over 300 years ago.

The Qing dynasty of China assumed control over the region in 1720, when Chinese soldiers that year defeated and expelled the Mongol forces of the Dzungar Khanate from Tibet. Yet the history of Tibet as being part of China dates much further back, to the mid-13th century, when the region was incorporated to China under the Yuan dynasty. China's authorities have strongly argued that Tibet continued to be a Chinese territory during the Ming dynasty which lasted until 1644.



Over elapsing centuries one of the greatest challenges to China's control over Tibet occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, in the immediate years after the successful culmination of the Chinese revolution in 1949. The revolution re-established China's independence after many years of meddling in the country by the Western powers, such as from the United States.

After 1948 the US had "lost China to communism" and policies were undertaken in Washington to reinstate their authority over China, with territories like Tibet identified as target areas. The CIA and to a lesser extent the US military helped to instigate anti-Chinese insurrections in Tibet, such as occurred from 1956 in the Kham and Amdo areas in the eastern part of the Tibetan Plateau.

The CIA directly intervened in Tibet and following 1956 went so far as to fly hundreds of Tibetan militants to the US, where they underwent training by CIA personnel at a facility in

the state of Colorado. This military training centre, called Camp Hale, was built for US mountain troops in 1942 and was positioned high up the Rocky Mountains. In the latter stages of World War II, some Wehrmacht troops captured by the US Army in North Africa were sent to Camp Hale where they were kept prisoner.

After completion of training at Camp Hale the “Tibetan freedom fighters” were flown in planes belonging to a CIA airline, called the Intermountain Aviation and Intermountain Airways, and also by the US Air Force, to a secret base for operations against China constructed in the town of Aspen, a Colorado skiing hotspot.

The failed 1959 rebellion in Tibet against Beijing’s authority was most heavily encouraged by Washington. As early as May 1957 armed Tibetan groups were created with CIA support. The following year (June 1958) an anti-Chinese guerrilla army, the Chushi Gangdruk Volunteer Defense Force, was established and its members were subsequently armed and trained by the Americans. The 1959 rebellion was supported not only by the CIA but by intelligence agents from India and Nepal, countries that were staunch US allies at the time.

Image: The 14th Dalai Lama in 1956 (From the Public Domain)



The 14th Dalai Lama, an influential religious leader who is alive today, managed to evade Chinese government troops in March 1959 during the insurrection. Through wearing a disguise, on 17 March he fled Tibet southwards to India having been escorted to the border by CIA-trained Tibetan militants. Beijing’s soldiers were understandably enraged when they discovered the Dalai Lama was nowhere to be seen.

The Dalai Lama’s older brother, Gyalo Thondup, also still living, had a leading role in the 1959 revolt. Thondup was in contact with the Americans for years. He had visited Washington in 1951 and provided intelligence details and local knowledge about Tibet to senior American officials.

Thondup insisted the Dalai Lama was not told about CIA assistance to the Tibetans which is obviously untrue. US State Department documents, released in August 1998, outlined that the Dalai Lama himself received from the CIA \$180,000 every year from the late 1950s to 1974. This means the Dalai Lama was already being furnished with large amounts of

American money at the time of the 1959 rebellion. The sum of \$180,000 in 1959 is currently worth almost \$2 million.

The Dalai Lama was previously receiving a financial allowance from the CIA dating to at least the early 1950s, and maybe as far back as 1949, at the end of the revolution. The CIA budget, relating to Tibet, was multiple times larger than the funds that were allocated for the British and US-led coup against the Iranian government of Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953.

The Dalai Lama has backed the unification of separatist groups in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, with the ultimate aim of these Chinese regions seceding altogether from China. The Dalai Lama said,

“Geography, history and currently Chinese occupation is connecting our three peoples. I remain optimistic that the true aspirations of the peoples of East Turkestan [Xinjiang], Inner Mongolia and Tibet will be fulfilled in a not too distant future”.

American media later acknowledged the covert CIA training of Tibetan militants in Colorado. The CIA was also involved in funding “Tibet Houses” in cities like New York and Geneva, while the CIA’s budget extended to providing “educational opportunities” to Tibetans at Cornell University in New York, and supplying the insurgents with military equipment.

On 6 January 1960 for example, unmarked CIA aircraft flying over Tibet dropped to the militants below 650 pallets containing weapons, medical supplies, and food. In the weeks before that, CIA planes had dropped military hardware such as hundreds of American M1 Garand rifles, grenades, mortars, and machine guns.

Two more CIA air drops consisted of a further 1,170 M1 Garand rifles, 200 cases of ammunition for the rifles, and 20 cases of grenades. The M1 Garand was the firearm most commonly used by the US Army in World War II and the Korean War, but by 1957 the rifle was considered obsolete by the Americans.

Another CIA air drop in early 1960 amounting to 430 pallets, which contained weapons and other supplies, was sent to 4,000 Tibetan insurgents below. Their position was identified by China’s military pilots and heavily bombed. Occasionally, Chinese warplanes dropped leaflets ordering the militants to surrender and to ignore the Americans.

The Chinese aircraft often attacked enemy positions in the morning, at about noon, and then at around 3 pm or 4 pm. Fifteen warplanes would arrive in groups of five with each carrying between 15 to 20 bombs. Once the enemy forces were located, it was not a hard task for China’s pilots to execute their combat mission. Across the Tibetan Plateau there is scarcely any cover in which to conceal men and equipment. For the Chinese airmen the most difficult job was finding the enemy due to the vastness of the land.

According to a retired CIA officer living in the eastern United States, the Americans wanted to inflict injury on the Chinese in Tibet, and were aware they would be unlikely to drive Beijing’s divisions out of the area.

Image: Tsarong in captivity (From the Public Domain)



Tibetan guerrilla forces, with logistical support provided by the US, attacked China's lengthy supply lines in Tibet and attempted to tie down Chinese soldiers and make life difficult for them. These attacks, although they inflicted damage, could not succeed over time because of the greater size of China's military; and the fact that, compared to the enemy, Beijing's troops were also better equipped and had advanced weapons like the Chinese Type 56 assault rifle, which was first produced in 1956.

Control over the Tibetan Plateau is crucial for China. Robert Barnett, an author who focuses on Tibet, wrote that the Tibetan Plateau from a military viewpoint is important because it is made up of the high ground and central, south and east Asia converge around it.

From the late 1950s CIA training camps were set up in Nepal including close to Pokhara, Nepal's second biggest city, and in the district of Mustang, where Tibetan insurgents were trained by CIA operatives. There were at least 15 camps being used which were spread over Nepal, India, and inside China itself in Tibet.

By using Nepal and India as bases, the Americans were involving those two countries in the conflict against China. In the year 1964, the CIA spent \$500,000 (worth \$5 million today) on the guerrillas in Nepal; \$400,000 (\$4 million today) for the training of Tibetans in Colorado; \$225,000 (\$2.2 million today) on equipment, transportation and expenses; \$185,000 (\$1.8 million today) for flying to India the Tibetans trained in Colorado; \$125,000 (\$1.2 million today) for expenses, equipment and supplies to Tibetan reconnaissance teams, and on the storage of supplies, aircraft refuelling, agents' salaries, and formulation of traineeships for the network of agents in Tibet.

Moreover, the CIA in 1964 spent \$75,000 (\$744,000 today) on maintaining the Tibet Houses in New York, Geneva, and other cities; \$45,000 (\$446,000 today) on "educational programmes" for 20 Tibetan youths; and the Dalai Lama of course received his annual \$180,000. The Dalai Lama's entourage stressed that he never spent any of the money on himself.

A security guard for the Dalai Lama, Lobsang Tsultrim, said that he was hired by the CIA in 1964 and had no qualms about it. The insurgents could be naive and were often unable to comprehend that the Americans were using them for their own strategic purposes. The Dalai Lama, regardless, admitted that the US military aid was "entirely political" in nature.

At the end of 1962 the Americans were granted access to an airfield beside New Delhi, India's capital city. From this airfield the Tibetan militants were flown to Colorado in groups of 40 or 50 men.

Upon finishing their training in the US they were returned to India by aircraft, and shortly thereafter north to Tibet where they jumped out of the planes and deployed their parachutes. Hundreds of other Tibetan insurgents were flown to the American-held islands of Okinawa and Guam where they received training in guerrilla warfare, and they were then sent back to Tibet to fight against the Chinese forces.

A joint CIA-Indian command centre was set up in New Delhi in the early 1960s, as relations between India and China continued to worsen during this period. The Dalai Lama's brother, Thondup, was forefront in directing US military aid through India's northern region of Darjeeling across the Indian-Chinese border into Tibet.

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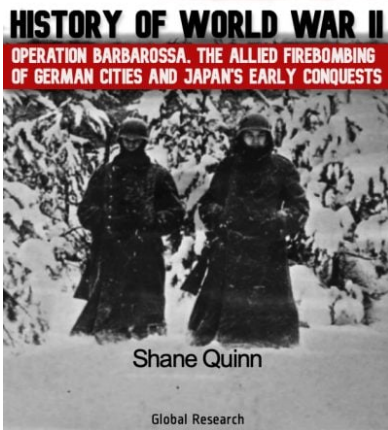
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History of World War II: Operation Barbarossa, the Allied Firebombing of German Cities and Japan's Early Conquests

By Shane Quinn

The first two chapters focus on German preparations as they geared up to launch their 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, called Operation Barbarossa, which began eight decades ago. It was named after King Frederick Barbarossa, a Prussian emperor who in the 12th century had waged war against the Slavic peoples. Analysed also in the opening two chapters are the Soviet Union's preparations for a conflict with Nazi Germany.

The remaining chapters focus for the large part on the fighting itself, as the Nazis and their Axis allies, the Romanians and Finns at first, swarmed across Soviet frontiers in the early hours of 22 June 1941. The German-led invasion of the USSR was the largest military offensive in history, consisting of almost four million invading troops. Its outcome would decide whether the post-World War II landscape comprised of an American-German dominated globe, or an American-Soviet dominated globe. The Nazi-Soviet war was, as a consequence, a crucial event in modern history and its result was felt for decades afterward and, indeed, to the present day.

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