

## INDIA'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH SIKKIM

VALENTINE J. BELFIGLIO

Sikkim is situated in the most strategic and exposed position in the frontier region between India and China. Not only is Sikkim the major channel of communication between India and Tibet, it is also the connecting link between the predominantly Hindu culture of the Central Himalayan Region, and the Buddhist and Animist communities of the Eastern Himalayan Region.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese threat has been responsible for a greatly stepped up program of road construction and economic development in Sikkim, as well as Bhutan.<sup>2</sup>

### INDIAN AID AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

In 1952, Sikkimese Maharaja Sir Tashi Namgyal, the Chogyal (ruler) of Sikkim and Indian Prime Minister Nehru met and formulated Sikkim's Seven Year Plan. Since then Sikkim has prospered economically as the result of the implementation of two economic plans. The first one began in 1954 and lasted until 1961. On March 15, 1955, the Maharaja of Sikkim recommended the Seven Year Plan to his people with the following words:

I would now earnestly call upon my people to set themselves, with purpose and determination to the fulfillment of this great adventure. I am confident that with the implementation of the Plan, we shall have advanced far towards achieving the welfare and happiness of the people.<sup>3</sup>

The second plan began in 1961 and terminated in 1966. At the end of the second plan the Kingdom had shown an annual per capita income of Rs 700, approximately double that of India, its benefactor. The two plans have been financed from funds provided by India as outright grants.<sup>4</sup> India spent a sum of Rs 32.369 million on the Seven Year Plan (1954-1961). An examination of the plan is provided in the following table:

---

<sup>1</sup> Leo E. Rose, "India and Sikkim: Redefining the Relationship," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XLII, No. 1 (Spring, 1969), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Karan, "Sikkim and Bhutan: A Geographical Appraisal," *Journal of Geography* (February, 1961), p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Chandra Das Rai, "Sikkim 3-Seven Year Plan," *United Asia*, Vol. XII, No. 4 (1960), pp. 360-361.

<sup>4</sup> "Sikkim Parties Share Hostility to China," *Hindustan Times*, June 1, 1967, p. 9.

TABLE 1  
EXPENDITURES ALLOCATED TO SIKKIM DURING THE  
1954-1961 SEVEN YEAR PLAN

Project	Expenditure in Rs Million
Agricultural and Rural Development	1.300
Horticulture	1.121
Minor Irrigation Works	0.155
Animal Husbandry	0.292
Dairying and Milk Supply	0.552
Forest	2.258
Co-operation	0.542
Power Project	2.983
Cottage Industries	0.387
Other Industries	1.440
Roads and Buildings	13.901
Communications	0.001
Road Transport	1.670
Education	2.322
Medical and Public Health	2.273
Buildings	1.026
Cultural Organizations	0.146
Total	Rs 32.369

SOURCE: Adapted from information obtained from the Information Service of India, Political Office, Gangtok, Sikkim, July 5, 1968, p. 16.

The emphasis on road construction evident in the first plan doubtless reflects India's concern for being able to transport its troops to Sikkim to meet any military threat from the Communist Chinese. Also it is understandable that without good roads and bridges none of the other schemes under the plan could be developed. Medical aid would remain static, the farmers' markets would be restricted, education would be departmentalized, etc.<sup>5</sup>

In the second plan (1961-1966) India doubled its aid to Sikkim, with the major emphasis again on road construction. Table 2 shows the expenditures allocated to Sikkim during the implementation of the Five Year Plan (1961-1966). An examination of the plan demonstrates the area of road construction to be of greatest concern to New Delhi.

It is an important consideration to take note of the fact that both the Seven Year Plan and the Five Year Plan were completely financed by the Government of India.<sup>6</sup> The greatest emphasis of both plans has been on communication and transportation development. Before

<sup>5</sup> "Sikkim 3-Seven Year Plan," *op. cit.*, p. 361.

<sup>6</sup> "Bhutan and Sikkim," *Information Service of India, Political Office, Gangtok, Sikkim, July 5, 1968, p. 17.*

TABLE 2  
EXPENDITURES ALLOCATED TO SIKKIM DURING THE  
1961-1966 FIVE YEAR PLAN

Project	Expenditure in Rs Million
Agricultural Production	2.892
Minor Irrigation	0.145
Animal Husbandry	1.179
Dairying	0.209
Forests	5.379
Soil Conservation	0.456
Fisheries	0.026
Co-operation	0.315
Power	5.305
Cottage Industries	0.935
Other Industries	0.241
Roads	26.084
Road Transport	4.400
Tourism	0.524
Education	7.682
Health	4.267
Housing	0.632
Publicity	0.140
Press	0.440
Cultural Activities	0.139
Marketing Centers	0.174
Secretariat Building	0.525
Community Center	0.306
Planning Development	1.242
Total	Rs 63.637

1954, there were only 50 kilometers of motorable road between Gangtok and Rangpo, on the West Bengal-Sikkim Border; and only 342 kilometers of motorable roads throughout the entire country. By 1962, several jeep tracks in lower Sikkim and about 153 kilometers of the North Sikkim Highway connecting Gangtok with Lachen and Lachung in North Sikkim had been constructed. Former pathways inaccessible to motor vehicles have been developed into roads capable of supporting mechanized traffic. These include a road between Rishi on the West Bengal border, and Jalepla on the Tibet border; a road from Gangtok to Natu La on the Sikkim-Tibet border; and other roads in eastern Sikkim.<sup>7</sup> On June 29, 1965 a Rs 500,000 suspension bridge linking Kalimpong, a sub-division in West-Bengal, and Western Sikkim at Malli was completed. The 292 foot long bridge traversed the Teesta River and linked the Sikkim-Namgyal highway with the Siliguri-

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Gangtok highway.<sup>8</sup> The bridge was subsequently "washed away by heavy landslides" but plans have been drafted to build it again. In addition 19 "long bridges"<sup>9</sup> were constructed in outlying areas. As a result of the road construction programs, almost all parts of Sikkim are within easy reach of Gangtok and the Sikkim Nationalized Transport operated services on all important routes. Sikkim has neither airfields nor railways, but Gangtok is connected to the Indian Air terminal and railhead of Silguru by a motorable road via Rangpo.<sup>10</sup> Under the 1950 Indo-Sikkimese Treaty, communications are managed by the Government of India. Under the Indian Development assistance programs, Sikkim has increased the number of Post and Telegraph offices from two to nine.

Before the onset of the two development plans, 88 schools with a total enrollment of 2,500 students existed in Sikkim. "With the termination of the Second Plan, there were 191 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, 1 public school, 1 technical training school and one monastic school."<sup>11</sup>

The Government of India has donated about Rs 1 million since 1958 to the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, at Gangtok, where Mahayana Buddhistic Studies are carried on. Two hundred fifty Sikkimese students have been trained in India on scholarships made available by the Government of India.<sup>12</sup>

There are plans for a college to be established in Gangtok in 1971, and four Adult Education Centers have recently been established. The total student enrollment in July, 1968 was 15,000.<sup>13</sup>

About one-third of Sikkim's 2,828 square miles of territory are forested, and lumber is considered one of the Kingdom's greatest assets. The Sikkimese Forest Department has been engaged in soil conservation and afforestation programs. Sikkim sells timber to India for its railway development projects. The Forest Department has also embarked upon a tea plantation program which is providing jobs for hundreds of Tibetan refugees. Contour surveys are also being carried out for a proposed tea garden and reclamation area to be located at Kewzing.<sup>14</sup>

Sikkim has considerable hydro-electric potential. In 1961 the Rangni Hydel Project was completed and is now generating 2,100 kilowatts of electricity for the Gangtok area.<sup>15</sup> The project was expanded during the Five Year Plan, and is now the principal source of power supply

<sup>8</sup> "Bridge with Sikkim Inaugurated," *Hindustan Times*, July 8, 1965, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> "Sikkim's March to Progress," *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Statesman's Yearbook 1968-1969*, p. 424.

<sup>11</sup> "Bhutan and Sikkim," *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> "Sikkim's March to Progress," *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Karan, *The Himalayan Kingdoms*, p. 72.

to Singtam, and Rangpo. In addition, it will soon be supplying hydro-electric power to adjoining areas in West Bengal.<sup>16</sup>

A micro-hydel project in Manul in North Sikkim is also under construction, and plans have been completed for three more hydel projects at Rothak Geyzing and Lagyap.<sup>17</sup>

Before the commencement of planning, there were only two hospitals in Sikkim. At the conclusion of the Five Year Plan, there were 5 government hospitals, 24 government dispensaries and 4 sub-dispensaries. Medical complexes consisting of a maternity ward, and isolation ward, and a T.B. ward have been completed in almost every district. Government programs for the eradication of such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis, venereal disease, Kols Azar, and intestinal worms have had remarkable success. One hundred fifty-four village water supply schemes have also been instituted with Indian help. Indian army doctors have been quite active in all of these programs.<sup>18</sup>

Agriculture has traditionally been the chief support of Sikkim's economy. Ninety-five percent of the population of Sikkim depends upon agricultural production for their livelihood. In order to assist in the development of this vital area, a Department of Agriculture was created in 1955.<sup>19</sup> Under Indian grants the Department has given Rs 400,000 in loans to needy farmers and opened 100 acre farms at Geyzing, and Ribdi to provide quality seeds. A crash program to step up food production and provide seeds, fertilizers and technical expertise to farmers has also been introduced.<sup>20</sup> Government demonstration centers have been set up at Tadung, Lachen and Gangtok.<sup>21</sup> A Department of Animal Husbandry recently established, has taken steps to improve the quality and yield of wool, improve cattle and sheep breeds, and provide veterinary hospitals and dispensaries for all district headquarters.<sup>22</sup>

Since 1960, the Sikkim Mining Corporation, a joint undertaking of the Governments of India and Sikkim has been instrumental in sponsoring systematic mineral development. Copper, lead and zinc are mined in appreciable quantities. In addition the Five Year Plan has provided for an industrial survey of the Kingdom to determine possibilities for setting up of industries based on forest products.<sup>23</sup> A Rs 13 crore paper pulp project with Indian collaboration is currently under consideration.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Bhutan and Sikkim," *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19; *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> "Bhutan and Sikkim," *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Karan, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> "Bhutan and Sikkim," *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Karan, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>24</sup> "Indian Aid for Sikkim Paper Pulp Project," *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

Twenty-four co-operative societies and four fair price shops are now functioning in Sikkim. A sum of Rs 840,000 was given in 1965 to Sikkim by India to start four small-scale industries. These include a wire nail factory at Rangpo, a gas plant at Rhensek, an orchard sanctuary at Gangtok, and an extension of the nursery at Rhenock.<sup>25</sup>

A third plan (1966-1971) is currently in effect. Under the plan, India is contributing outright grants totalling Rs 90 million to Sikkim, with the accent on further industrialization. Allotments have also been made for improving agriculture.<sup>26</sup>

Virtually the entire development budget is met by India through direct grants-in-aid, loans or subsidies. Article IV of the Text of the Indian-Sikkim Peace Treaty issued in Gangtok, on December 5, 1950 forbids Sikkimese acceptance of foreign aid from countries other than India. The Article asserts:

- (1) The external relations of Sikkim whether political, economic or financial, shall be conducted and regulated solely by the Government of India and the Government of Sikkim shall have no dealings with any foreign power.<sup>27</sup>

Sikkim is interested in such multi-national aid programs as the Colombo Plan or in private foreign capital investment. However, the Indian Finance Minister, Morarji Desai made it quite clear during his visit to Gangtok in March 1968 that the government of India is not disposed to approve foreign collaboration in the development of industries in Sikkim.<sup>28</sup> Indeed most of the local commercial and credit structure is dominated by Indian merchants and bankers domiciled in Sikkim. Even the recently established Sikkim State Bank is closely connected with the Indian State of Marwari banking firm. In addition, Sikkim's industrial development program has been entrusted to a corporation in which 92.5 percent of the share capital is held by the Kamani Engineering Group of Bombay.<sup>29</sup>

#### INDO-SIKKIMESE TRADE RELATIONS

The restrictions on Sikkim's external relations with other countries under Article IV of the Indian-Sikkim Peace Treaty of 1950 also applies to Sikkimese trade, which is consequently limited to India alone. Imports from Sikkim to India include:

1. Cardamon
2. Oranges and apples
3. Potatoes

<sup>25</sup> *Hindustan Times*, March 31, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> "Sikkim Parties Share Hostility to China," *op. cit.*, p. 9; Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> "Text of India-Sikkim Peace Treaty," Issued in Gangtok on December 5, 1950, *Texts of Documents 1947-64*, Lok Sabha, New Delhi, 1964, p. 170.

<sup>28</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Imports from India to Sikkim include:

1. Essential textiles
2. Foodstuffs
3. Other consumer goods.<sup>30</sup>

Under the 1950 treaty and supplementary arrangements, Sikkim has almost been constituted as an integral part of the Indian economy. The procedures under which Sikkim obtains its foreign-exchange requirements from India are not specifically mentioned in the treaty, but rather stem from the pattern of economic relations implicit in the treaty provisions, and from the fact that the Indian rupee is the only legal currency in the state. Article V of the 1950 treaty states that the government of Sikkim agrees:

not to levy any import duty, transit duty, or other import on goods brought into, or in transit through Sikkim, and the Government of India agrees not to levy any import or other duty on goods of Sikkimese origin brought into India from Sikkim.<sup>31</sup>

The treaty thus bars Sikkim from imposing excise duties on imports that it has gained from Indian economic assistance. The Sikkimese Maharaja has spoken of the "very great disadvantage to us, and suggested that this is an appropriate subject for negotiations."<sup>32</sup> Sikkim has been even more dissatisfied by the system by which India has collected and retained excise duties on goods imported into Sikkim. The Sikkim Executive Council claimed in 1967 that:

It is true that the financial aid amounting to Rs 12 crores or so given to Sikkim during the past 14 years of the plan period by the Government of India has considerably increased the revenue of Sikkim. But the granting of aid which has generated the increase has been more than offset by Indian excise duty levied on all the goods imported to Sikkim from India, which has not been transferred to Sikkim so far. And this excise duty paid by Sikkim amounts to nearly a crore of rupees per annum.<sup>33</sup>

If these figures are correct, Sikkim has obtained approximately Rs 120 million in aid from India since 1953, but has paid nearly Rs 140 million in excise duty during the same period. The implication is that Sikkim would have been better off if it had not received any economic aid from India but had itself imposed excise duties on Indian imports.<sup>34</sup> Sikkimese officials have resented the Indian Foreign Ministry's restrictions on Sikkim's exports and other contacts with the outside

<sup>30</sup> "Bhutan and Sikkim," *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> "Text of India-Sikkim Peace Treaty," *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>32</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, Peter Braestrup, "Sikkimese Want Pact with India That Gives Them More Self-Rule," *New York Times*, July 2, 1967, p. 3.

world.<sup>35</sup> The Maharaja is particularly unhappy that the state cannot trade and earn hard currency from Cardamon.<sup>36</sup>

#### POLITICO-LEGAL RELATIONS

India's relations with Sikkim have as their foundation the India-Sikkim Peace Treaty signed by both countries, and issued in Gangtok on December 5, 1950. The Treaty was patterned after a March 17, 1890 Convention between Great Britain and China in relation to Sikkim and Tibet. The Convention signed at Calcutta delimited the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet, and according to Article III, both Governments agree to respect the boundary as defined in Article I and to prevent acts of aggression from their respective sides of the frontier. In accordance with Article IV, regulations regarding trade communication and pasturage were appended to the Convention.

Article II of the treaty had the effect of making Sikkim a protectorate of the British Government. It provided:

(2) It is admitted that the British Government, whose protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognized had direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State, and except through and with the permission of the British Government, neither the Ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any kind, formal, or informal, with any other country.<sup>37</sup>

British suzerainty was thought by the British to have been established by an earlier treaty which Britain imposed upon Sikkim in 1861. This view however, was repudiated by the Tibetans who proceeded to engage in official activities in Sikkim. In 1888, a British military expedition drove the Tibetan army out of Sikkim and pursued it into the Chumbi Valley in Tibet. The Chinese suzerains of Tibet then ordered their resident in Lhasa to make peace and the 1890 Calcutta Treaty was signed.<sup>38</sup> The *London Times* in commenting on the signing of the Treaty said: "It is understood that the main effect of the treaty is to confirm the British claims to treat Sikkim as a feudatory State."<sup>39</sup>

A controversy arose almost immediately after Indian independence over whether India automatically inherited the paramount rights the British had enjoyed in the border states. India argued that as the successor government, it enjoyed all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the British. The Sikkim Court disagreed and argued that

<sup>35</sup> *New York Times*, July 2, 1967, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Hindustan Times*, June 1, 1967, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> "Convention Between Great Britain and China Relating to Sikkim and Tibet (1890)," Texts of Treaties, Agreements and certain exchange of notes relating to the Sino-Indian Boundary. *Indian Society of International Law*, New Delhi, 1962, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> Karan, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>39</sup> "Sikkim," *The London Times*, March 24, 1890, p. 5.

independent India was "a new juristic person" which could not "claim to be subrogated to the rights and obligations of the British Government."<sup>40</sup> Paramountcy had lapsed, the Sikkimese insisted, with the British withdrawal from India. The political climate in Sikkim during the negotiations with India in 1950 was seriously disadvantageous to the Sikkim government. Internal disorders in the state had reached alarming proportions between 1947-1949, and the very survival of the ruling dynasty had seemed to require outside support. With the exception of a small (300) man State Police, the only military force in Sikkim at the time was an Indian army detachment that had been sent to Gangtok during the disturbances in May 1949. The Chinese occupation of Tibet, with all that this implied for both India and Sikkim, occurred between the signing of the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1949, and the signing of the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty. This latter Treaty in particular reflected New Delhi's heightened concern with frontier security.<sup>41</sup> Articles II and XI, deal with Sikkim's relationship with India regarding Sikkim's internal affairs.

Article II states:

Sikkim shall continue to be a Protectorate of India and, subject to the provisions of this Treaty, shall enjoy autonomy in regard to its internal affairs.<sup>42</sup>

Article XI states:

The Government of India shall have the right to appoint a Representative to reside in Sikkim; and the Government of Sikkim shall provide him and his staff with all reasonable facilities in regard to their residential and office accommodations and generally in regard to their carrying out their duties in Sikkim.<sup>43</sup>

In theory, the Maharaja of Sikkim controls the State's internal affairs. However, he is aided by an Indian appointed civil servant who acts as the Principal State Administrative Officer. The Indian officer called a *Dewan* is permanent chairman of the State Council. His duties are rather similar to those of a prime minister, and he has now become an essential part of the Kingdom's administrative machinery. The *Dewan* is appointed by the Government of India with the approval of the Maharaja.<sup>44</sup> There is also an Indian financial adviser, an Indian chief engineer, an Indian director of the state distillery and Indians at the head of other important departments of Government.<sup>45</sup> Hence, India

<sup>40</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 33; Gyalmo Hope Namgyal, "The Sikkimese Theory of Landholding and the Darjeeling Grant," *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Vol. III, No. 2 (July 21, 1966), pp. 47-60.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> "Text of India-Sikkim Peace Treaty," *op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>44</sup> "Parliamentary Government Sought for Sikkim," *Hindustan Times*, September 1, 1960, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Statesman's Yearbook 1968-1969*, p. 424; Karan, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75; "U.S. Army Area Handbook for Nepal (With Bhutan and Sikkim)," p. 383.

and Sikkim share in the executive-legislative functioning of the Sikkimese government. Article VI of the treaty grants India further control over the internal affairs of the Kingdom; in particular, control over Sikkim's transportation and communication systems. The Article states:

(1) The Government of India shall have the exclusive right of constructing, maintaining and regulating the use of railways, aerodromes and landing grounds and air navigation facilities, posts, telegraphs, telephones and wireless installations in Sikkim. . . .

(3) The Government of India shall have the right to construct and maintain in Sikkim roads for strategic purposes and for the purpose of improving communications with India and other adjoining countries.<sup>46</sup>

Although the Kingdom exercises judicial power over its subjects, Article XII of the 1950 treaty gives India supremacy in judicial disputes regarding interpretation of the treaty itself. Since many of the articles deal with matters concerning Sikkim's internal affairs, the Article indirectly gives India juridical control over these affairs. Article XII reads:

If any dispute arises in the interpretation of the provisions of this Treaty which cannot be resolved by mutual consultation, the dispute shall be referred to the Chief Justice of India whose decision thereon shall be final.<sup>47</sup>

Article IV, which grants India domination over the political, economic and financial external relations of Sikkim has already been discussed. As a result of Article IV, Sikkim has not, nor may it have external relations with any country other than India. In addition, the unit of exchange in Sikkim is the Indian rupee.<sup>48</sup>

Despite Indian influences, the Maharaja exercises strong authoritarian control over his Sikkimese subjects and areas of the Sikkimese government not covered by the 1950 treaty. In 1960, a delegation from the Sikkim National Congress Party presented a memorandum to Prime Minister Nehru of India seeking a promise that India would not interfere when the Party "launched civil disturbances" in an effort to attain a more democratic rule. The group was particularly interested in securing a constitution, since Sikkim has none, and a parliamentary form of Government. The delegation also asked for the abolition of the post of *Dewan*, and the formation of a Constituent-Assembly to write the desired constitution. India failed to act, and the Party's attempt for reforms were aborted.<sup>49</sup>

India has been most adamant about limiting Sikkim's relations with all other nations through the Indian Government, particularly in

<sup>46</sup> "Text of India-Sikkim Peace Treaty," *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Grimes, "Two Sikkimese Ask Closer Indian Ties," *New York Times*, August 27, 1960, p. 5; *Hindustan Times*, September 1, 1960, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> "Sikkimese Prod India," *New York Times*, August 27, 1960, p. 5; *Hindustan Times*, September 1, 1960, p. 3.

the case of Communist China. In December 1963, China sent a condolence message to the new Maharaja of Sikkim, Thondup Namgyal, upon the death of his father. India, upon learning of the incident, issued a protest to the People's Republic, that "this was a breach of protocol."<sup>50</sup> In April 1965, Liu Shao-chi, Chairman of the People's Republic of China, sent the Maharaja of Sikkim a telegram of congratulations on the occasion of his coronation. In a note sent to the Chinese Embassy in Delhi, on April 9, 1965, the Government of India said that the Chinese action "is totally unacceptable." The note went on to say that the Chinese Government was well aware that the external relations of Sikkim were the responsibility of the Government of India, and any communications either formal or informal from the Government of China to the Government of Sikkim or its Chogyal (Maharaja) should be channeled through the Indian Government.<sup>51</sup>

Publicly and superficially the relations between India and Sikkim have been warm and friendly. In Gangtok on April 6, 1965, the Sikkimese Maharaja extolled the friendship of the two countries:

"India is a great and peaceloving country and we feel secure in her protection. The bonds of friendship between our two countries are strong and indissoluble. I take this opportunity to affirm that it will be our purpose and endeavor to further strengthen these bonds in the fullest measure."<sup>52</sup>

After the Maharaja concluded his speech, Mrs. Lakshmi Memon, India's Minister of State of External Affairs, asserted:

We are certain that your benevolent guidance will lead the people of Sikkim to great prosperity and well-being and will preserve and promote cultural and spiritual values.<sup>53</sup>

Underlying the cordiality and camaraderie of such statements there has existed great tension between the two nations, as Sikkim has sought to attain greater internal and external autonomy. In a joint statement, issued in June 1967, three members of the Executive Council of Sikkim stressed the need for a "thorough change" in the provisions of the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty. The statement contended that any right which had become the responsibility of India under the treaty had been entrusted to her by Sikkim. It was therefore, an obligation on the Government of India to "gracefully sponsor our membership of various international organizations." The statement said that since Sikkim had signed the treaty with India, it was within her rights as a sovereign nation to demand its revision. The note concluded:

<sup>50</sup>"India Protests to Peking over Message to Sikkim," *New York Times*, December 23, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup>"Protest at Message to Sikkim," *Hindustan Times*, May 6, 1965, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup>"Sikkim Maharaja Affirms Friendship with India," *Hindustan Times*, April 15, 1965, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

Every country has the inherent right to exist and maintain its separate identity and to review and revise its Treaty obligations in the wake of changing circumstances.<sup>54</sup>

On May 19, 1967, the Maharaja of Sikkim told newsmen in Gangtok that the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 had to be "reviewed" in view of the changed situation since the treaty was signed. This was the first time that the Maharaja had spoken publicly of the need to review the treaty, although he had earlier expressed similar views about the matter to members of the Sikkimese Court. Asked how soon he would seek review of the treaty the Maharaja said:

We await the convenience of the Government of India. We have chosen to throw our lot with India. We share the ideology that you (India) follow. This does not, however, mean merger with India.<sup>55</sup>

He also spoke of economic independence as being "more important than political independence in the present day world."<sup>56</sup> Mr. Vincent Coehli, a local representative for the Government of Sikkim said in July 1967 that he had a great distrust of "New Delhi's colonialism." He spoke with great disfavor of the Indian Foreign Ministry's restrictions on Sikkim's exports and other contacts with the outside world. To gain a visa to enter Sikkim a foreigner must apply several days in advance to the Indian Foreign Ministry, which may or may not grant him permission.<sup>57</sup> India appears to face a great dilemma with regard to Sikkim. Sikkimese authorities have attempted to maintain a neutral attitude toward the Chinese Communists and have exercised care to avoid actions or disputes which might be used as a pretext for retaliatory tactics by the Chinese Government.<sup>58</sup> The Maharaja of Sikkim had said as late as May 19, 1967: "Sikkim was a small country and she did not seek a quarrel with the north (China)."<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, the Chinese continued to remain in strength along the northern borders.<sup>60</sup>

#### DEFENSES

The defense of Sikkim is the responsibility of the Indian Army. The 1950 Treaty grants India the right to station troops anywhere in the country, take any measures regarded as necessary to defend it,

<sup>54</sup> "Call for Revision of Indo-Sikkimese Pact," *Hindustan Times*, June 24, 1967, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> "Sikkim Ruler on Need to Review Treaty with India," *Asian Recorder*, Vol. XII, No. 25 (June 24-28, 1967), pp. 7755-7756.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7756.

<sup>57</sup> Braestrup, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Foreign Affairs Studies Division, The American University, "U.S. Army Area Handbook for Nepal (with Bhutan and Sikkim)," p. 387.

<sup>59</sup> *Asian Recorder*, June 18-24, 1967, p. 7756.

<sup>60</sup> "Heavy Casualties Inflicted on Chinese at Nathu-La," *Hindustan Times*, November 24, 1967, p. 9.

control all imports of arms, build strategic roads and track down fugitives within the country. Article III of the treaty states in part:

(1) The Government of India will be responsible for the defense and territorial integrity of Sikkim. It shall have the right to take such measures as it considers necessary for the defense of Sikkim or the security of India whether preparatory or otherwise, and whether within or outside Sikkim. In particular, the Government of India shall have the right to station troops anywhere within Sikkim.<sup>61</sup>

In December 1960, the Sikkimese Maharaja expressed a desire for increased participation in its own defense.<sup>62</sup> The Army, then consisting of only 60 men, was used primarily to guard the Maharaja's palace. India agreed to establish and equip a separate militia force of 280 men to be trained and commanded by Indian officers to help man the border outposts.<sup>63</sup>

The size of the Sikkimese army was later raised to 560 men, a strength at which it remained up to October 1968. The Sikkim guard is not under the direct command of the Indian army, however, nor is it currently used as a border defense force. In times of emergency, such as during the border firings in September 1967, the guard is available for defense purposes, and presumably would then come under the authority of the Indian army commander in the area.<sup>64</sup> *The New York Times* reported the Indian troop strength in Sikkim in July 1967 at 40,000 men.<sup>65</sup>

Briefly summarizing:

## I. INTERNAL RELATIONS:

a. *Rule Making Authority*—Under the control of the Maharaja, who is aided by the Indian *Dewan* (or prime minister), nominated by India.

b. *Rule Application Authority*—Under the control of the Maharaja and the elected State Council, assisted by the Indian *Dewan* and other Indian department heads.

c. *Rule Adjudication Authority*—Under Sikkimese control except for those matters dealing with Article XII of the 1950 Treaty, in which case the Chief Justice of India has the final say, e.g., transportation, communication, defenses, etc.

d. *Economic Aid and Investments*—India is the sole provider of Sikkim's foreign aid, and its sole economic investor. This has been required under Article IV of the 1950 India-Sikkim Peace Treaty.

<sup>61</sup> "Text of the India-Sikkim Peace Treaty," *op. cit.*, p. 169.

<sup>62</sup> "Sikkim Wants Its Own Military Force," *Hindustan Times*, December 8, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> "U.S. Army Area Handbook for Nepal (With Bhutan and Sikkim)," p. 388.

<sup>64</sup> Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>65</sup> *New York Times*, July 2, 1967, p. 3.

e. *Internal Communication and Transportation* — India has ultimate control over the communication and transportations network of Sikkim under Article VI of the 1950 India-Sikkim Peace Treaty.

f. *Currency* — The medium of exchange in Sikkim is the Indian rupee.

*Conclusion:* Sikkim and India share control over the internal relations of Sikkim. India's control over economic aid and investments, internal transportation and communications, and the use of the Indian rupee as a medium of exchange, all give the Indian Government enormous influencing leverage. A *Dewan* and other Indian officers constitute an indispensable part of the Government's administrative machinery. However, the Maharaja must approve the *Dewan's* appointment, and the former exercises strong authoritarian control over his Sikkimese subjects and governmental areas not covered by the 1950 Treaty.

## II. EXTERNAL RELATIONS:

a. *Diplomatic Representation* — Article IV of the 1950 India-Sikkim Peace Treaty places the external relations of Sikkim under the regulatory power of the Government of India.

b. *Foreign Trade* — Article IV places a similar restriction on Sikkim's foreign trade.

*Conclusion:* The external relations of Sikkim are under the control of the Government of India.

## III. DEFENSES:

Article III of the 1950 India-Sikkim Peace Treaty places the defense of Sikkim under the protection of the Government of India. A small 560 man self-defense force exists in Sikkim, but it is trained by Indian officers and is inconsequential to Sikkim's defense.