

War of Liberation - The Battle of Chamdo (Tibet)

Mr Claude Arpi®

Introduction

During the first week of Oct 1950, as Tibet was invaded by the People's Liberation Army, Communist China stated that it was 'liberating' Tibet. It is not the place here to enter into this debate, but one can see that several decades later, the Tibetans, particularly the first ones to be 'liberated' in Eastern Tibet, still disagree with this interpretation. The Battle of Chamdo, the first and only encounter between the Tibetan and Chinese forces is, however, interesting to look at for several reasons. Tibet, a Buddhist Nation was not militarily and tactically ready to oppose the seasoned troops of Mao (and some of China's brilliant commanders). From the start, The Land of Snows stood no chance, especially without outside support.

Many in Tibet still believed that increasing the number of *japa* (recitation) or *parikramas* (circumambulations) around the monasteries and *stupas* of Kham, would be sufficient to make the Truth Prevail. As Robert Ford, the British radio operator posted in Chamdo, remarked, "*The gods are on our side*" was the mantra most oft-repeated in the town, "*but it seemed to me that something more Churchillian was needed*". For the Chinese, it was a well-prepared operation in two stages: the fall of Chamdo, the capital town of Kham province during the Fall of 1950 and then the advance to Lhasa during the next season.¹

India was fooled into believing that Communist China wanted a 'negotiated' settlement with the Tibetans: it was never the case. Marshal Liu Bosheng in a message in Aug 1950 made it clear that he was going to 'liberate' Tibet. Opposite the Chinese strategists

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was *Ngabo Shape (Ngabo Ngawang Jigme)*, the Tibetan Commissioner for the Kham province, a weak leader, ready to surrender; he was obviously not the military *chef de guerre* that Tibet needed at this point in time to defend itself against the onslaught of the PLA.

It has to be noticed that Mao Zedong entered the Korean campaign on the same day (07 Oct) as the PLA crossed the Yangtze and started its Tibet campaign. It shows the confidence the Communist leadership had in the local PLA commanders. What follows is a narration of the Battle of Chamdo, the opening battle for 'liberation of Tibet' which has been primarily compiled from Chinese and Tibetan sources.

Marshal Liu Bocheng Communique

On the first day of Aug 1950, a message from Marshal Liu Bocheng, the Chairman of Southwest Military and Political Committee, was widely distributed by Xinhua: "[The] People Liberation Army will soon march towards Tibet with the object of driving out the British and American aggressive forces so as to make Tibetans return to the Great Family of the People's Republic of China (PRC)." The general lines of the 'liberation' were given as under :-

"As soon as the Liberation army enters into Tibet they will carry out the Programme of National Regional Autonomy, religious freedom, protection of Lama church and will respect the religious belief and customs of the Tibetans, develop their languages and characters as well as their educational and their agricultural, pastoral, industrial and commercial enterprises, and work for betterment of the peoples living standard."

Did the CCP's Central Committee have the intention to seriously implement these policies? It is difficult to say.

Liu's message continues, "The military and political systems prevailing in Tibet now will remain as they are and will not be changed. However the present Tibetan Army will become a part of the National Defence Force of the PRC". It was ominous for the Tibetans. Liu generously added: "All expenditure of the People's Liberation Army when they enter into Tibet [will be borne] by this Central People's Government so as to reduce the burden of the Tibetans."

The die was cast.

Terrain – The Province of Kham

Please refer to Map 1. The map gives a good idea of the terrain of Kham Province in which the operations were conducted. The province of Kham (Dotoe in Tibetan) was traditionally known as Chuzhi Gangdruk, ('four rivers and six ranges'). The four rivers are: the Salween, the Mekong, the Yangtze and the Yalong. The six ranges which form the watersheds for these river systems are : the Tsawagang range (5100-6700 m) which includes Mount Kawa Karpo (6702 m), it lies between the Salween and the Mekong; the Markhamgang range between the Mekong and the Yangtze; the Zelmogang range (4800-5400 m), between the northern reaches of Yangtze and Yalong; the Poborgang range (4800-5600 m), between the southern Yangtze and the lower Yalong; the Mardzagang (5100-5700 m), between the upper Yalong and the Yellow river; and the Minyak Rabgang range (4800-7750 m) with Mount Minyak Gangkar (7756 m), the highest mountain in Kham, between the lower Yalong and the Gyarong.

The Military Plans for the 'Liberation'

On Aug 23, Mao Zedong sent a telegram to the Southwest Bureau of the Central Committee; it is entitled: "Strive to Occupy Chamdo This Year and Advance to Lhasa Next Year". This cable, repeated to the Northwest Bureau in Qinghai (Amdo Province), lays down the Communists' military plans for the year 1950 and 1951.

Answering a note that he had received three days earlier (probably from Liu Bochong) Mao writes: "The plan to push for occupying Chamdo this year and to leave three thousand men to consolidate Chamdo is good. You can actively make preparations according to this plan, and when it is ascertained by the end of this month or the beginning of next month that the road has reached Ganzi (also written Kardze) without obstruction, the advance can go ahead. It is expected that Chamdo will be occupied in Oct. That would be advantageous for pushing for political changes in Tibet, and marching into Lhasa the next year."

Indian Perspective

A few days earlier, KM Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador in China had met Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Foreign Minister. The Ambassador reported to Delhi: "I am satisfied that the representations we have made have had two important results; the Chinese will not now

proceed to attack Tibet unless all efforts at peaceful settlement have been exhausted. ...Short of giving Tibet its privileged position; China, I am convinced, would do everything to satisfy Tibetans, at least for the time, and will not proceed to military action.” **In retrospect, an unrealistic assessment!**

This is further borne out by the thinking then prevailing within the Indian foreign establishment. As an illustration, **please refer to Appendix A** (Nehru and Tibet) for the contents of Note from the Prime Minister to the Foreign Secretary.

On Aug 22, the Ambassador had handed over an aide-mémoire to the Chinese Government in which he stated that the Government of India “have no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet and no desire to seek any novel privileged position for themselves or their nationals in Tibet.”

Setting the Stage

The next day, the Great Helmsman could affirm: “Now India has issued a statement recognising Tibet as China’s territory, only expressing hope that the issue can be settled peacefully, not by force. ...If our army can occupy Chamdo in Oct, there is the possibility of pushing the Tibetan delegation to Beijing for negotiations, begging for a peaceful solution... right now we are using the strategy of urging the Tibetan delegation to come to Beijing and reducing Nehru’s fear.”

The strategy was clear. The PLA had to occupy Chamdo before the winter; stop the advance for a while; get time to force ‘an agreement’ with the Tibetans and then complete the ‘liberation’ by advancing to Lhasa in 1951. In his telegram to Chengdu, Mao explains: “When Tibetan representatives arrive in Beijing,² we plan to use the Ten Points already decided as the basis for negotiations, urge the Tibetan representatives to sign it, and make the Ten Points an agreement accepted by both sides. If this can be done, it will make things easier for advancing into Tibet next year.”

In other words, it would be a *‘peaceful liberation’*.

It is what happened in May 1951 when the Tibetan ‘negotiators’ were forced ‘under duress’ to sign the 17-Point Agreement; the road to Lhasa lay open. In Aug 1950, Mao rationalises further: “Your plan to leave 3,000 men in Chamdo for the winter after

occupying it, not to advance into Lhasa this year, and withdraw the main force back to Ganzi may be seen by the Tibetans as a gesture of good will. The matter of 30 airplanes is in process, but it takes time. You should not count on them in the short term. All the provisions for the 16,000 men marching from Ganzi to Chamdo have to be carried by manpower and yaks, and 3,000 men among them will need provisions for winter. ...Part of the grain and meat (needed by troops) may be purchased in Chamdo etc., and have you prepared some gold, silver and goods that Tibetans need, such as silk, to take with you?"

That was it. The military operations could start.

The Battle of Chamdo

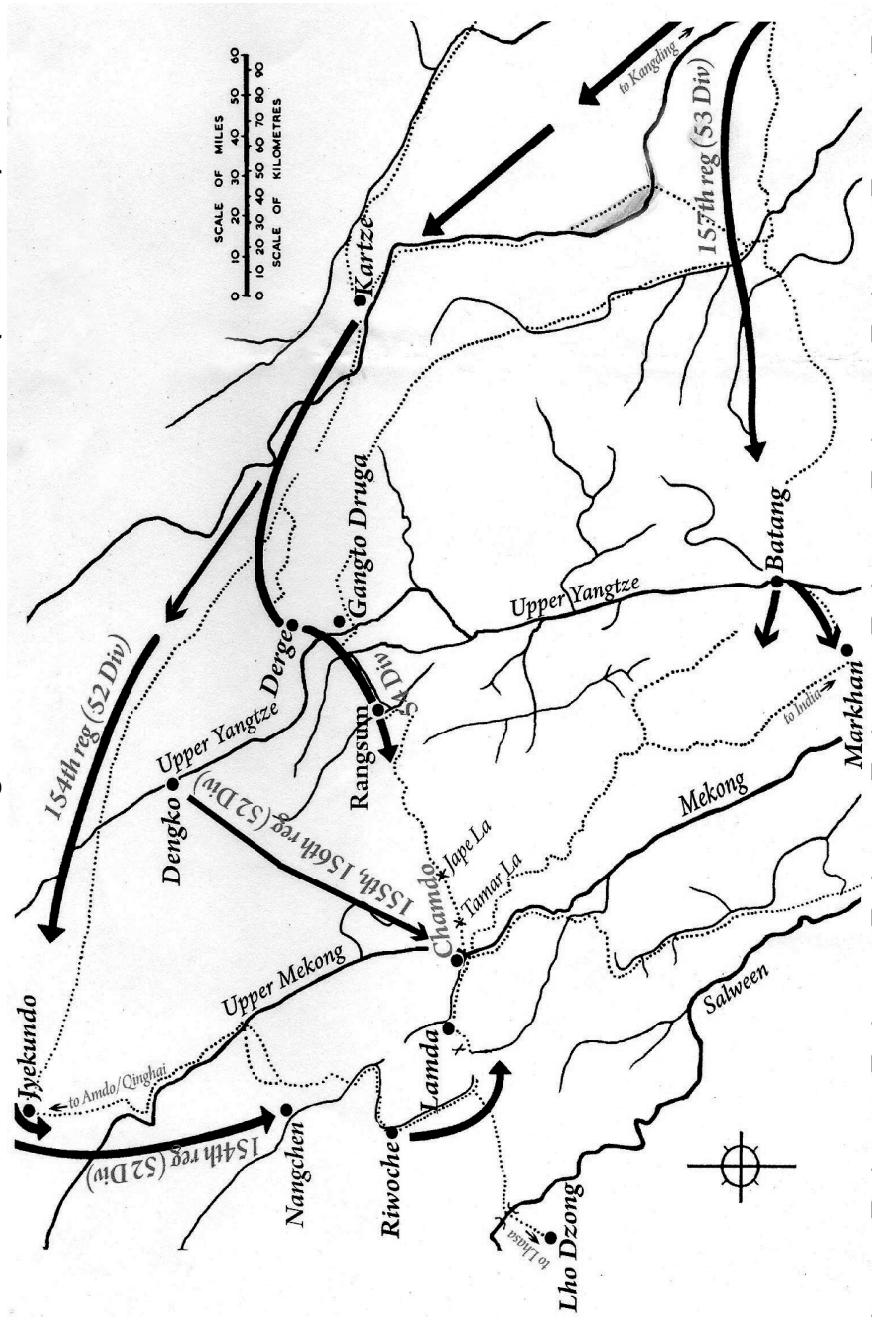
Please refer to Map 2. For the description of the Battle of Chamdo, our source is a Chinese text called *Detailed Report on Battle of Chamdo* by the 52nd Division of the 18th Army of the People's Liberation Army. It is part of a Chinese report, *The Liberation of Chamdo*, which was translated by two independent researchers, Jianglin Li and Matthew Akester.³

While reflecting the views of Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China, it shows that the Battle of Chamdo was a military operation conducted in a professional manner by the 18th Army of the Second Field Army, with the possibility to receive support from the North (Qinghai), the South (Yunnan) and even a few troops from Xinjiang. What is surprising is the elaborate planning of this military operation. Comparatively, the leaderless Tibetans were novices and stood no chance in front of the calculated tactical moves of the PLA. We shall see that the Chinese learned a lot during the Chamdo operations; this is apparent in their 'Summary'.

While Panikkar in Beijing was talking peace and dialogue, the PLA's slogan in Eastern Tibet was: "Surround more, annihilate more; surround less, annihilate less" or "Cutting into the heart of the enemy position, penetrating, separating, surrounding and annihilating the enemy."

It did not mean that some of the Tibetan troops did not fight well, particularly the Gadang regiment under *Dapon Muja*. It is a tragedy that nobody in India thought of studying the Battle of Chamdo. It might have prepared us better for what was to follow 12 years later!

Map 2
PLA Advance from Cheng-Tu for the Battle of Chamdo (Main Effort)



Chinese Narrative of the Battle of Chamdo

The Chinese report tells us that after crossing the Jinsha river (*Drichi* in Tibetan or Upper Yangtze) from Oct 06 - 09, the troops reached the vast plateau of a thousand li ⁴ in length and width and in coordination with supporting troops, units of this division were divided into three wings – Left, Middle and Right, for the attack on Chamdo, a powerful pincer attack targetting the 1500-li-long position of the Tibetan army commanded by Chamdo Governor *Lhalu*.⁵ It has to be noted that before the operations started, Governor *Lhalu* had been transferred to Lhasa. Robert Ford was not happy with Ngabo who ‘seemed too cool and confident’. It was one could say, ‘a British understatement’.

The report continues: “During the fourteen days of rapid advance and fighting, all units were moving across the unfamiliar plateau without accurate maps. Soldiers carried loads of 60 or 70 jin⁶, climbed more than 50 high mountains and crossed rivers over 60 times. On an average, foot soldiers covered 72 li (36 km), cavalry 80 li (40 km) a day, those who had to march day and night moved up to 36 hours continuously without enough food. However, all units answered the call by party committees of both the army and the division and endured extreme hardships, annihilated all the defending troops in Chamdo on schedule, and successfully completed the capture of Chamdo.” The battle of Chamdo commenced on 06 Oct 1950 and was concluded on 24 Oct 1950.

How Such a Quick Success?

It is explained in detail: “[the PLA] annihilated five *Dapons*,⁷ the main force of the Tibetan army, and over 2,000 militia, liberated the region North to Qinghai,⁸ South to Yunnan,⁹ East to Jinsha river, West to Luolong (Lhorong Dzong) and Leiwuqi (Riwoche), a vast area more than one thousand square li. The success further strengthened our unity with Tibetans, West of the Jinsha river, laid the foundation for advancing next year (1951), struck blows directly and indirectly at the British and American imperialist invaders, inspired people in the near east and repaid the people of the whole country who had warmly supported us.”

Of course, apart from the poor Robert Ford, who would soon be captured and kept for five years in a Chinese prison, there were no imperialists around. But the Tibetans had to be ‘liberated’

from something or somebody. It was an easy alibi for the world at large, and particularly for the gullible Indian Ambassador in Beijing. The military operation to 'liberate' Tibet also demonstrates how Mao's concept of a 'Liberation War' was applied on the ground.

The Report continues: "...Tibetans have warmly supported us (taking in and escorting individual stragglers, delivering information, guiding the way, providing transportation, building bridges, preparing firewood and fodder, etc.), all of this shows that we had good influence by carrying out the policies conscientiously before the attack and shows the tangible benefits brought to Tibetans during our westward march. This is a small accomplishment we achieved in the past, and it is also a major pointer for the future in the liberation and construction of Tibet."

The 'political' instructions to the ground forces were: 'Three Keep-in-Mind'¹⁰ and 'Eight Things-to-Do'.¹¹

The Political Department of Tibet Military Area Command in Chengdu later prepared "A Brief Report on the Battle of Chamdo by Southwest Military Area Command". One gets an idea of the role of the 'liberated populations' (the Tibetans) in the military operations: "Before the battle, troops had gone through comprehensive education on minority policy and conducted work aimed at uniting with the minority people in a planned way. This work contributed greatly to accomplishing the battle smoothly," notes the Report.

Of course, the situation rapidly changed and by mid-1950s, the Khampa guerrillas started resisting the 'liberation', but that is another story.

To come back to the Report of the Battle, it notes: "In this battle, troops advanced rapidly for 15 days with heavy loads across the high plateau a thousand kilometers in length and width, wrapping up...entire enemy position 1500 li (750 km) in length and accomplished the task on schedule, completely annihilated the third, the seventh, the eighth, the fifth and the tenth Dapon, altogether five Dapons (battalions) under Tibetan Frontier Envoy Commissioner General (*Ngabo, the 'Domey Chikyap*), captured ...over 3,000 men. This victory is fundamentally due to correct leadership by strong support from the people of the whole country, coordination from supporting troops (particularly engineers), and the eight-month long preparation."

In some places, the Tibetans fought quite well. As noted by Melvyn Goldstein, already in Aug, the Tibetans fought a pitched battle at Denkok: "The battle of *Dengo* [*Denkok*] was technically a victory for the Tibetans, in that they had pushed the Chinese back and demonstrated they could contend with the People's Liberation Army. The battle boosted the morale of the Tibetan forces in Kham, but it did not alter the basic military situation of the Tibetans, who were woefully undermanned and underarmed." **But at the time, Mao and his generals had not completed the preparations for the Battle of Chamdo.**

Analysing the Tibetan Opposition

We shall not go into the details of the operations, but it is worth stopping for a moment at the Chinese analysis of their opponents, the Tibetan troops:

- (a) The enemy had no focus, no depth and attached no importance to flanks.
- (b) Enemy lacks systematic strategic planning and command, they fought wherever they were attacked and were easily misled (deceived) by us. After we crossed the river from Dengke (Dengo or Denkak on the Yangtze River), it was quite possible that the enemy might mistakenly believe, based on historical experience, that the Chinese could be stopped.
- (c) The enemy had never experienced large scale battles.
- (d) The Tibetans had no knowledge of modern military science and were equipped with few heavy weapons.
- (e) Their combat capability was not strong.

The Chinese estimated that there were three possibilities:

- (a) The Tibetans would retreat without fighting and escape without hesitation ("if this happened, it would definitely make it more difficult for us to annihilate them")
- (b) The Tibetans would scatter at the first contact, everywhere in the mountains and wilderness to entangle us ("this would make it more difficult for us to annihilate them").

(c) The Tibetans would concentrate forces and put up strong resistance in strategic locations (“this was exactly what we were hoping for, for we were absolutely sure that we would annihilate them thoroughly and completely”).

After the first encounter in Denkok in Aug, the Chinese report comments: “we did not seize the moment of strength to strike the enemy a fatal blow. The enemy might mistakenly think that our combat capability was not strong”. But this was not the real Battle of Chamdo. Mao wanted to complete the logistic preparations before delivering the fatal blow to the Tibetans as also perhaps, a sense of complacency amongst Indians.

A First Step - Well Accomplished

The Report gives insight into the strategy, the Battle of Chamdo was the first step towards Lhasa: “Liberating Chamdo, annihilating the main force of the Tibetan army in the area east of Upper Mekong, *Enda* (South of Chamdo) and *Riwoche* lays the foundation for advance into Lhasa next year 1951 and liberate the entire Tibet.” The report further describes the battle, “We decided to deploy a powerful right-flank pincer composed of infantry and cavalry, providing strong points to offset each other’s weaknesses, making a detour via Batang and Nangchen and pushing forward vigorously and aggressively. Troops should not be blocked by small numbers of enemy, doing everything possible to clear away obstacles and encircle bravely...the entire force, cutting off the enemy’s routes of withdrawal from *Enda* to *Gyamda Dzong* in *Kongpo* (on the way from Chamdo to Lhasa, North of the NEFA) and from *Riwoche* to *Nagchu*, the two main escape routes, making it impossible for enemies to escape even if they intended to slip away without fighting. Performance of troops in this wing is the key to success or failure in annihilating more than three Dapons of the enemy force.

The middle wing (of the force) should cut into the heart of the enemy position by way of penetrating, separating, surrounding and annihilating the enemy within the entire enemy position and advancing straight to Chamdo”. If the enemy did not rest, we wouldn’t rest; when the enemy took rest, we annihilate them.

The left wing force crossed the river at *Kamtok*, marching slowly by way of *Dongpu*, *Jomda* and *Jueyong* to draw in the

enemy. They seized the Damala Pass (between Derge and Chamdo) and controlled Sichuan bridge. The order of battle and missions for each of the three forces (Right, Centre and Left) are given at **Appendix B**.

The Chinese also wrote down the lessons of the battle and analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the Tibetan Army. It makes interesting reading:

- (a) All Tibetan troops were organised in a comparatively primitive way. Troops have neither controlling HQ, nor maps.
- (b) Everything was handled by one single officer-in-charge.
- (c) Special reconnaissance troops and communication equipment were very outdated.
- (d) They did not fight aggressively and lacked counter attack capability. In several battles we did not find the enemy launching any counter attacks.
- (e) Lack of systematic strategic thinking.
- (f) No attention paid to protect flank and rear while deploying the forces. No knowledge of using the terrain to block our advance.
- (g) No night combat experience.
- (h) No guards posted at encampments.
- (i) Enemy were slow in climbing mountains; the PLA 156th regiment's speed was nearly one third (33 per cent) faster than the speed of the enemy.
- (j) In terms of tactics: the Tibetans were good at riding horses, highly skillful at shooting and utilising terrain and ground, but not good at carrying out coordinated operations.

There is certainly some exaggeration in the above account, but the lack of larger strategic thinking cannot be discounted. One should also not forget that the Tibetan troops were less than 5,000 (perhaps 7,000 if one includes the local militia) and the PLA along the main direction of attack numbered around 20,000.

The tactics used against Tibetan army are also mentioned in the Report:

- (a) The key is to encircle the enemy
- (b) No need to worry about breaking through Tibetan army's positions, the only worry is not being able to encircle them.

- (c) Once the supply line is cut, enemy will retreat in disorder without fighting.
- (d) Based on special conditions of the plateau, cavalry is the key to annihilate the enemy, and the guarantee of success.
- (e) Good coordination between infantry and artillery must be ensured.
- (f) Importance of good reconnaissance and information about the enemy through local sources by cultivating Tibetans.

Lessons for Future

Perhaps more interesting for India are the suggestions on the PLA structure and equipment required for future operations during the decades of 50s and 60s. The Summary recommends:

- (a) A division should have a cavalry regiment to fulfill the task of circling and surrounding the enemy.¹²
- (b) A regiment should have a mounted reconnaissance company to facilitate communication and reconnaissance.
- (c) Mounted reconnaissance company can perform tasks of circling and surrounding in small actions.
- (d) One engineers platoon should be allocated for building bridges, handling boats, and clearing away obstacles to increase speed of advance.
- (e) Reduce mountain artillery, increase recoilless rifles, high-angle guns, dynamite, detonators, fuses and explosives.
- (f) Quality and style of current field engineering equipment needs to be improved.
- (g) The current pattern of uniforms must be changed and quality must be improved, otherwise it will not be able to last the season. It is better to make the uniform with strong and durable cloth; shoulders, backsides and knees should be reinforced.
- (h) Weight of coat should be reduced. Comforter should be changed into soft, warm, damp-resistant, lightweight, larger size wool blanket which can be used as mattress pad as well as comforter.
- (j) Raincoat and damp-resistant canvas should be combined into one, based on current raincoat size and shape, adding more rubber to make it thicker so it can be used to wear and

to spread as bedding. Quality of shoes should be improved, soles should be softer and the upper part should be higher, water-proof and damp-resistant.

(k) Headgear should better be a helmet with goggles fixed on.

(l) Regiment and above level should be equipped with larger radio sets of 50 watts or more.

(m) All food should be of high quality, less quantity, long-lasting and easy to carry; otherwise it increases soldiers' burden, reduces their physical strength, slows down marching speed and has negative impact on accomplishing missions.

Conclusion

It is generally known that the PRC had annexed Tibet through the use of military force in 1950-51 but not enough is known or written about – how it was achieved ? In that context the Battle of Chamdo is an important landmark, for it was this battle that opened the door for the PLA to march into Tibet. Yet, the PLA on Mao's directions chose to halt here and wait till the 17 Point Agreement between the PRC Government and the local Government of Tibet could be signed in Beijing on 23 May 1951 which opened the way for peaceful 'liberation' of Tibet by the PLA.

The occupation of Tibet was quite different from the annexation of Xinjiang which was primarily a military operation and was completed within 3-4 months, commencing on 12 Oct 1949. It may be remembered that the PRC came into being on 01 Oct 1949. As against this, for the 'liberation' of Tibet the PLA carried out preparations for nearly eight months (Jan-Aug 1950). Further, according to Mao's instructions, the 'liberation' of Tibet was to be as much, if not more, a political affair than a purely military affair. Obviously there were sensitivities involved and these were well understood by the communist leadership of the time.

Notwithstanding the above, the PLA preparations were thorough and deliberate and no aspects; political, social or military were overlooked. The force level employed (a field army plus some other units / formations) was overwhelming, an extremely well thought out military strategy (advance from four directions) and above all, a favourable international environment left nothing to chance. Thus the Battle of Chamdo, the opening gambit sent a very powerful signal to the Tibetans and the world about the Chinese

intentions. In terms of ground strategy the annexation of Xinjiang and Tibet was a masterly stroke towards securing and consolidation of frontiers of a newly emerged state soon after the Second World War.

Endnotes

1. The PLA entered Lhasa on September 9, 1951, as planned.
2. They would come in May 1951.
3. The entire text in English is available on the blog: War in Tibet. See <http://historicaldocs.blogspot.in/2013/03/documents-related-to-battle-of-chamdo-i.html>
4. Two Li roughly equals one km.
5. His title was 'Domey Chikyap' or "Eastern Commissioner", one of four regional commissioners looking after the administration of the Tibetan provinces. Jianglin Li and Matthew Akester commented : "It was a wishful title, since the Lhasa government actually governed no more than half of Dotoe [Kham] , and none of Domey [Amdo], in this period".
6. 30 to 35 kg.
7. *Tibetan forces consisted of small regiments (800 to 1000 men) each commanded by a Dapon, equivalent of a colonel, though it was the highest rank in the Tibetan Army.*
8. The First Field Army of Marshal Peng Dehual..
9. 42nd Division of the 14th Army.
10. You must obey orders; you cannot take even one needle from the masses; you must turn over to the government things acquired from the enemy.
11. "You must speak gently to the people; you must buy and sell honestly; you must return the things you borrow; things which are broken or lost must be replaced; you may not beat or scold people; you may not destroy or harm the crops; you must not tease or bother females; you may not abuse prisoners of war.
12. During 1962 Operations, PLA forces operating in Ladakh had a Cavalry regiment consisting of four companies which were repeatedly used for cutting of routes of withdrawal and as mobile troops.

Appendix 'A'**Nehru and Tibet**

As the PLA were making lightning advances in Kham, the Indian Prime Minister talked of Peace. On November 19, 1950, Nehru wrote a note to KPS, the Foreign Secretary; he was deeply upset with the notes/cables received from Harishwar Dayal, the Political Officer in Sikkim and Sumul Sinha, the head of the Indian Mission in Lhasa. Why?

Nehru explained: "I am a little tired of reading the telegrams that come to us from our Mission in Lhasa and our Representative in Sikkim." As a far-reaching drama unfolds on India's borders, the Prime Minister (who is also Foreign Minister) complains that he is 'tired' of these two remarkable diplomats: "They are full of their advice to us as to what we should do and criticism of us for what we may have done. I think that it is about time that we reminded these representatives of ours what their functions are and what they are supposed, and what not, to do," remarked Nehru.

The note to the Foreign Secretary continued: "We want from them full information and appraisals of the situation. We want also their own recommendations. But, it seems to me that their messages go beyond this and indicate a lack of confidence in the Government of India and an apprehension that we might do the wrong thing unless they stop us from doing it. They live in remote parts, cut off from the rest of the world, and judge all world events from their own immediate environments. They appear to have hardly any conception of broad policies in terms of what is happening in the world."

Dayal and Sinha were probably unable to 'understand' the implications of what was happening in the Korean peninsula and in particular the 'mediator' role that Nehru wanted to play in the crisis, but these two officers were witnessing one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, a peaceful independent nation being swallowed by a powerful one, in the name of 'liberation'.

Appendix 'B'
 'Liberation' of Tibet – Force Levels and Missions for the Battle of Chamdo

Ser No	Direction of Attack	Force Level	Mission	Remarks
1	Amdo (Qinghai)	A cavalry unit of approximately 800 men from the 1 st Field Army	To advance to Lhasa from North and assist 82 nd Division	Commander – Ziqong
2	Northern Thrust from Chengdu (Sichuan Province)	18 th Army / 2 nd Field Army, comprising 82 nd and 84 th Divisions. Force divided into three components as under :- (a) Right Flank - 154 th Regiment / 52 nd Division comprising Qinghai Cavalry, reconnaissance company and an artillery company (b) Central Group comprising 155 th , 156 th Regiments of 52 nd Division and an artillery battalion (c) Left flank comprising 54 th Division with engineers battalion and an artillery company	This was the main effort Cross Upper Yangtze to Ngende-Lamda, cut off road to Lhasa Cross Upper Yangtze at Danglo, move southwards and attack Chamdo (i) Cross Upper Yangtze at Gangto Druga. (ii) Carry out diversionary attacks to deceive the enemy about the main attack and support Central Group attack on Chamdo (iii) Isolate Chamdo from South	Commander – Zhang Linlin
3	Southern Thrust from Chengdu (Sichuan Province)	82 nd Division / 18 th Army / 2 nd Field Army	(i) 157 th Regiment, artillery company and an engineer company to cross Jialing river at Druga Lung (West of Baidang) and destroy the enemy force at Marikhen (ii) Main force of the 82 nd Division to advance to Pomda and Pasbo to cut off routes of withdrawal	Commander – Mao Poyi
4	From Yunnan (South)	42 nd Division / 14 th Army / 2 nd Field Army	(i) One battalion each from 152 th and 153 th Regiments already at Kunqishen and Dechen to cross the enemy forces at Yining, Mengong and Duliang (ii) Remainder force to advance in a northerly direction as a diversionary move for deception.	Commander – Li Jiang
5	From Xinjiang Military Command	An independent cavalry division / 2 nd Army	To advance through Aksai Chin to Ali and open the rear door (from the West) into Tibet	Commander – Jiaohan