CONCLUSION
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Numerous studies of ethnicity have appeared in recent years, making it one of the most widely studied political phenomena of modern times. In the present context an attempt is made to analyse ethnic conflict in Central Asia from a comparative perspective. The two cases under study - Tibet and Kazakhstan have special significance. Among Chinese minorities Tibetans' struggle for independence, the intensity of their pro-independence feelings, are not only greater than other minority nationalities but are exceptional. Their deep faith in the Dalai Lama and Buddhism have been motivating factors.

Kazakhstan is the only republic of former Soviet Union with titular nationalities in minority. Inspite of increasing Russian presence under Soviet rule and greater industrialization and development levels, proportional representation in power structure, the first ethnic disturbances in Gorbachev era occurred in its capital, Alma-Ata. The events triggered a chain reaction throughout the former Soviet Union. Since major ethnic demonstration occurred around the same time (in an era of liberalization and democratization) in Tibet and Kazakhstan, the two cases are ideal for a comparative analysis. During the course of this study the following hypotheses are tested.

First, ethnic conflict in Central Asia is facilitated by the over all liberalization policies in the Soviet and Chinese societies. Communist reforms led to the emergence of civil societies and simultaneously strengthened ethnic ties. The negative results of
liberalization - population transfer, economic crisis, scarcity of resources, loosening of controls with regard to religion and culture accentuated ethno-national feeling and realization of absence of true democratic rights. All these phenomena led to conflict of interests among the ethnic groups involved - Tibetans vs Chinese, Kazakhs vs Russians.

Second, ethnic conflict is correlated to worsening economic conditions in the two societies. In case of Tibet, though industrialization took place to improve the economic conditions, the fruits of this process are hardly enjoyed by native Tibetans. Domination of Chinese in key posts of economic life resulted in unemployment, and poor living standards of Tibetans when compared to migrated Chinese who are given all the facilities including more incentives and allowances. This attempt has been a means to underpopulate Tibetans and make their presence insignificant in their homeland.

In Kazakhstan, Gorbachev launched Perestroika to restructure economic life to end stagnation and other negative phenomenon-low productivity etc. This process started with purges in Republican Party leadership which was supposed to facilitate new set of reforms. The replacement of Kunayev by an ethnic Russian, Kolbin led to violent ethnic clashes.

Third, the moving spirit of ethnic conflict is the assertion of ethnic identities manifested in language, culture, religion etc. Tibetans used various forms of religious practices as a means of protest at various demonstrations. Language and cultural symbols also played an important role in expressing nationalist feelings. Kazakhs, though most russified among Central Asians, used religious, cultural symbols, historic figures to assert their ethnic identity. Similarly many new journals appeared in Kazakhs language to portray only Kazakh people. Thus Tibetans and Kazakhs strongly felt that
their ethnic identities were distinctly opposite to the Chinese and the Russians respectively.

Fourth, the use of religion, culture, language for expressing nationalist feelings further reveals the tenacity of these factors as political weapons. This clearly shows that politicization of ethnicity is taking place in Tibet and Kazakhstan in an unprecedented manner.

Fifth, despite some similarities between ethnic conflict in Tibet and Kazakhstan, they led to different outcomes. This may be explained in the light of legitimation crisis faced by the state (unitary and federal frameworks) international factor (recognition but no support in case of Tibet, and both recognition and support from the Islamic States), the population size of the minority in question. The last point-population size, played a crucial role in assessing the result of ethnic conflict in Central Asia. In China, minorities constitute a mere 8 per cent where as in Soviet Union they constituted nearly half of the total population. Chinese adopted an Unitary framework which gave not more than autonomy to its minorities. Since the former Soviet Union gave republican status to Kazakhstan on par with Russia, it enjoys, in theory, right to self-determination upto a right to secession. Thus the federal framework with constitutional right made independent moves easier in Soviet Union than in China. In other words, in Soviet Union the structure of legitimacy of nationhood was legally recognized. Paradoxically, nationalism which is the concomitant manifestation of such nationhood, was squarely denied. Herein lies the central contradiction out of which post-Communist nationalism arose as the inevitable public expression of nationhood.
When hegemonic controls were loosening with the advent of Perestroika and Glasnost, anti-Russian and nationalist sentiments were expressed publicly by non-Russian minorities. Thus, when conditions were ripe, ethnic nationalism could unite all segments of the population against Moscow and evenly supply leadership in the form of existing republican institutions and elites, established by the Soviet Constitution itself and legitimated by decades of propaganda. Similar conditions are absent with regard to Tibet. However, it may be hoped that the growing nationalist aspirations may be realized if pro-democracy movement succeeds in China. In a speech delivered at the first Congress of Chinese students scholars in the United States, held in Chicago July 1989, Yan Jiaqi proposed "federalism" (lianbang guojia) under a democratic system as the best hope both for reforming China's internal politics and ultimately for resolving the problems of Hongkong, Taiwan and Tibet.

A system wide crisis in the Soviet Union led to forced independence of Kazakhstan along with other republics. In China the rigidity of the unitary system and the rule of PLA restricted the scope of independence for Tibetans. Despite this, Tibetans are prepared to sacrifice anything for reaching their goal of independence - including their lives and become martyrs. This reminds one of verses in Bhagavadgita (3:35 & 18:47) "Better is one's own law (Dharma) though in itself faculty than an alien law (Chinese rule) well accomplished. Surely death in one's law of being is better; perilous it is to follow the law of another's being"... "When one does work regulated by self-nature one doesn't incur sin". The Tibetan independence movement with its basis on peace and non-violence is remarkable. Change of moods is as natural to human beings as nations. The future of Tibet lies in the hope that a more honest and
respectful relationship may one day emerge between Tibetans and the Chinese to fulfil the genuine nationalist aspirations of Tibetans within Tibet and in-exile. Kazakhstan too is hoping for a more friendly relations with Russia to cope with continuing and newly emerging problems after disintegration. In both the cases, the neighbouring nations have a positive role to play in brining about a peaceful change for a better tomorrow.

The emerging new Central Asia in the post-Communist era is a goldmine of issues and question that concern policy makers scholars and students of international relations.