



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

China's Weaponization of Water in Tibet: A Clear and Present Danger

Support National Defense Authorization Provision Combating China's Scheme to Control Asia's Water

Senate SEC. 1241 DEVELOPMENTS INVOLVING THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

WHAT THE PROVISION DOES

Senate SEC. 1241 adds to the existing annual report on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China (PRC) an analysis of the PRC's military and security strategy on the Tibetan Plateau, including risks posed by political and regional conflicts, resource control and water-related resource conflicts, and infrastructure development.

WHY IS THE PROVISION NEEDED

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is increasingly prioritizing the militarization of Tibet, Asia's high ground. The PRC regime utilizes its control over Tibet and its resources to advance its goal of regional hegemony. Weaponization of water is one of its most potent tools in a growing arsenal used to coax, threaten, or punish downstream countries. Construction of hundreds of dams on Tibet's rivers stands to accelerate regional instability, the likelihood of a conflict over water access, economic development, and health. All while threats to US partnerships and interests in South Asia face further uncertainty. The US must increase monitoring and analysis of this crucial front to assess the PRC's malign influence and secure long-term US strategic interests.

- Tibet is Asia's high ground and source of the entire region's major rivers. 1.8 billion people downstream depend on these rivers for food, clean water, and economic development, including India, Pakistan, and Vietnam.
- Water scarcity is rapidly increasing, already exacerbating existing tensions and the risk of regional instability.
- China is pursuing massive construction of hundreds of hydropower dams, disregarding risks to downstream nations and constraining their independent access to clean water. These dams are highly vulnerable to and can trigger massive disasters like floods, mudslides, breaches, and earthquakes.
- China's weaponization of water will grant it even more leverage to manipulate and co-opt countries in the region by controlling vital upstream resources.

