Andres Gonzalez

10/11/2020

HW 1

Article Title: China and India water ‘dispute’ after border stand-off

Source

Source 2

Reflection:

China’s place upstream of the Brahmaputra river provides the country with essential data to understand and document the flows and monsoons that affecting it’s downstream neighbor, particularly. Hydrological data is highly prized due to it’s ability in mitigating the worst impacts of seasonal floods in India’s Northeast region, especially as weather impacts worsen with climate change and possibilities arising of channeling tributaries into regions experience. Due to the political tensions along the Northeast border and the inefficiency of the monitoring stations on China’s side of the river, data-sharing has become a dangerous political tug of war. While China leverages this hydrological data, India also holds back data from it’s own downstream neighbors, Bangladesh and Pakistan, and retains flood data for future forecasting that can impact neighboring flood management

The issue of data as an extension of political tit-for-tat is not new in border conflicts, but it is an issue that often goes under documented, especially when we consider how nuanced the relationships are between upstream and downstream countries. With the increasingly precarious role of climate change on flood management, data can contribute critical perspectives that could prevent loss of life and displacement. While the article highlights the data relationship of India and China, the same issues can apply across some of the largest and most vulnerable hydrological systems, such as the Colorado River between Mexico and the United States, or the Itapúa estuary between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina. Both upstream and downstream, the impacts of flood and drought creates dangerous and extreme events for populations on either side of the border. While in the short myopic vision of realpolitik, it may appear as though the upstream neighbor is at advantage, longer term realities will cause displacement and hazards on both sides of any border. Data, much like hydrology, lives in a shared ecosystem – isolated it will remain a drop of water that never connects to the wider ocean.