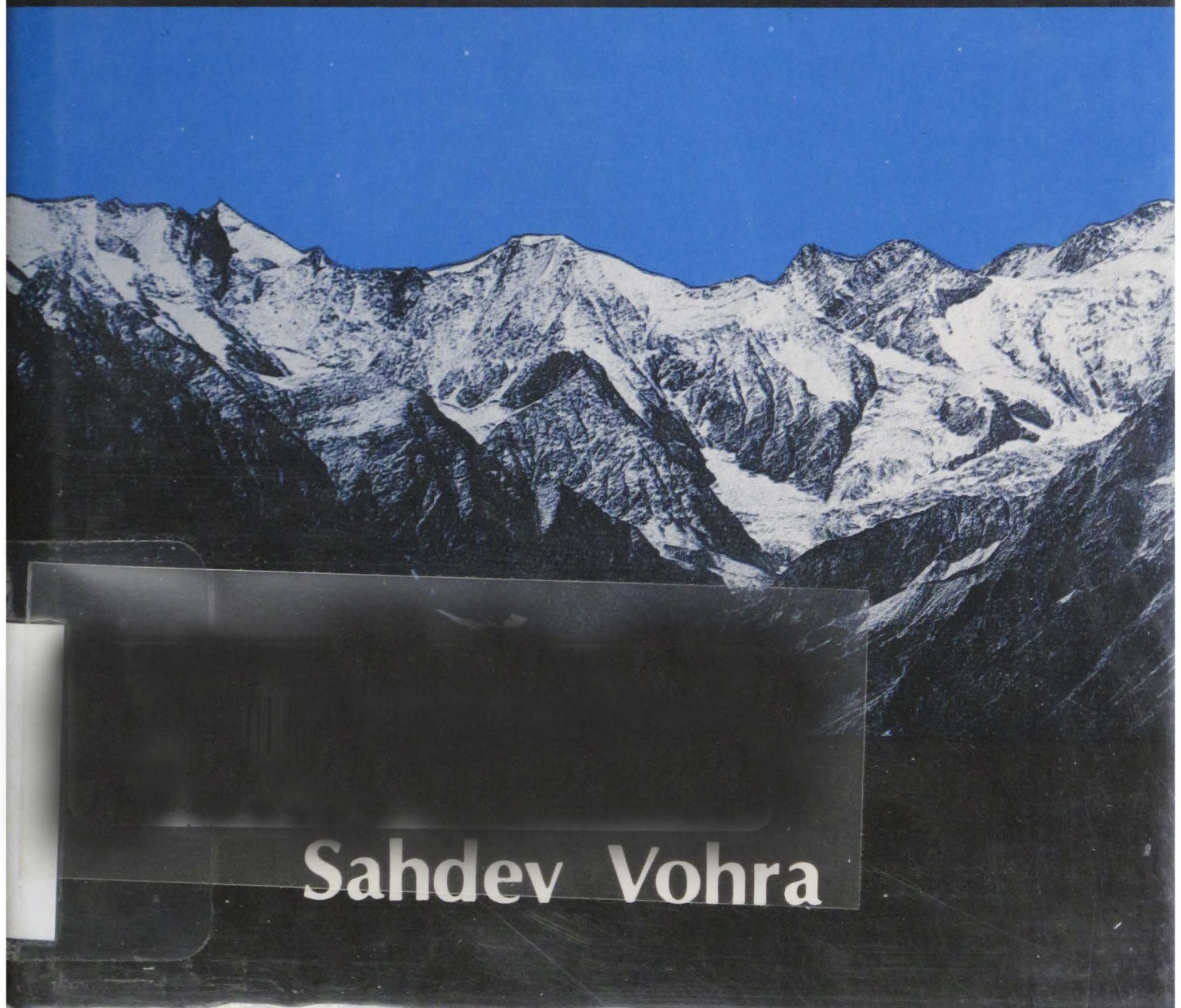


# THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF INDIA



Sahdev Vohra

**THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF  
INDIA - THE BORDER DISPUTE  
WITH CHINA**

**SAHDEV VOHRA**

**INTELLECTUAL PUBLISHING HOUSE  
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## Introduction

India's northern frontier came into dispute on account of the Chinese advance into Ladakh and the Himalayan border land in the 1950's, culminating in the Thirty one Day's War of 1962. The Chinese claimed later that for the advance into Tibet in 1950, they had sent the troops of the People's Liberation Army not only to Chamdo from the east of Tibet, but also through the Aksai China area south of Sinkiang. Whatever be the correctness of this claim, soon after the signing of the Indo-China Trade Agreement of 1954, Chinese encroachments started south of the six passes in the Uttarakhand region of Uttar Pradesh in that very year. It was in Ladakh however that the Chinese stepped up the pace and extent of their occupation till by 1962 the area occupied included not only Aksai Chin but west of it from the Chip Chap river to the Chang Chenmo valley, and further south to Spanggur Lake.

Earlier, the western part of Indian frontier with Sinkiang was taken over by Pakistan in 1947 when it occupied Hunza, Gilgit, Chitral and Baltistan which were part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The frontier between this occupation and the Chinese occupation of Aksai Chin and adjacent territories was left with India in so far as Sinkiang is concerned. This comprises the area around the Karakoram pass, the Siachen glacier which gives rise to the Nubra river, and the Rimo glacier which gives rise to the Shyok river, besides the Karakoram Pass itself. The Chinese have opened a route from Sinkiang to Pakistan and another one from Sinkiang to western Tibet through Aksai Chin. The original route from Kashmir to Sinkiang through the Karakoram pass lies unused.

To the east of Ladakh, the boundary with western Tibet is relatively undisputed. There are no substantive claims in respect of this part of the border which the Chinese have made. The Tibetans have had a peaceful border with India right through the ages, not only here,

but along the Himalayan mountains right upto Burma. The Chinese have however made claims south of the Himalayan ranges particularly in respect of the whole of Arunachal Pradesh in the north-east. But unlike in Ladakh, the Chinese have not attempted any substantial encroachment upon this area.

How far the Chinese are seeking a new border for their security and how far the Chinese have a legitimate claim in history to any of these disputed areas, are questions relevant to the settlement of the border dispute between India and China. The present study may afford some clues to the lines on which a settlement may be reached.

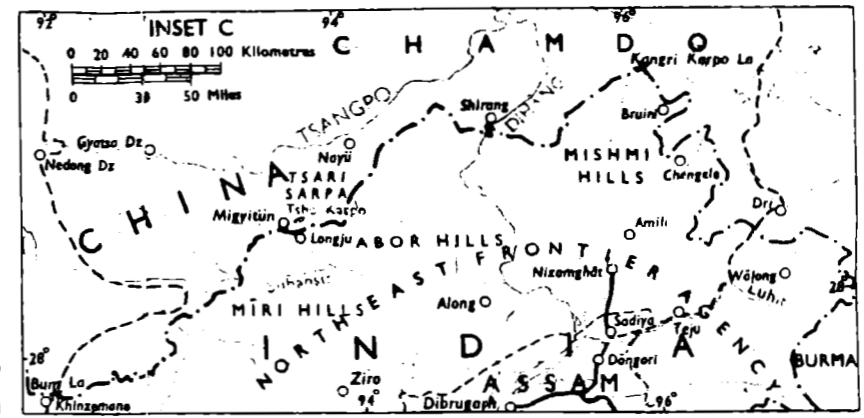
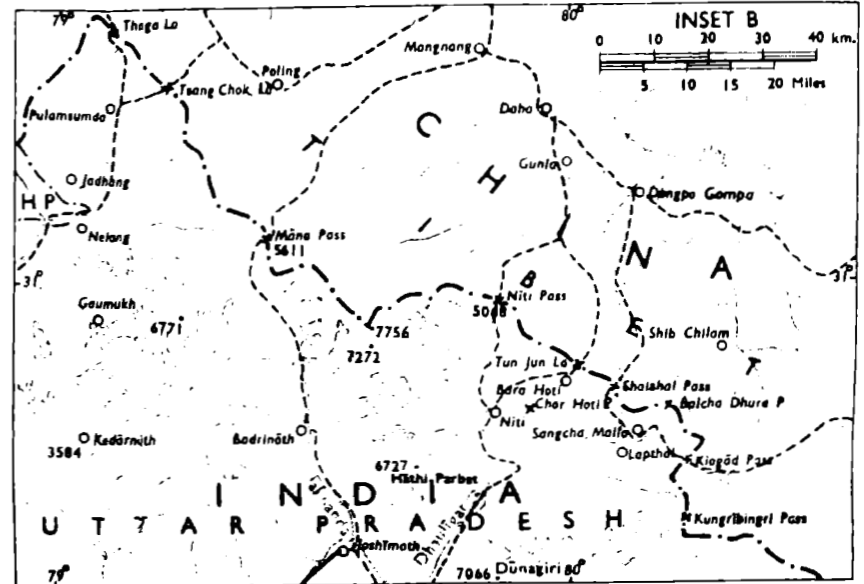
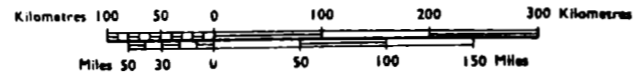




# NORTHERN FRONTIER OF INDIA

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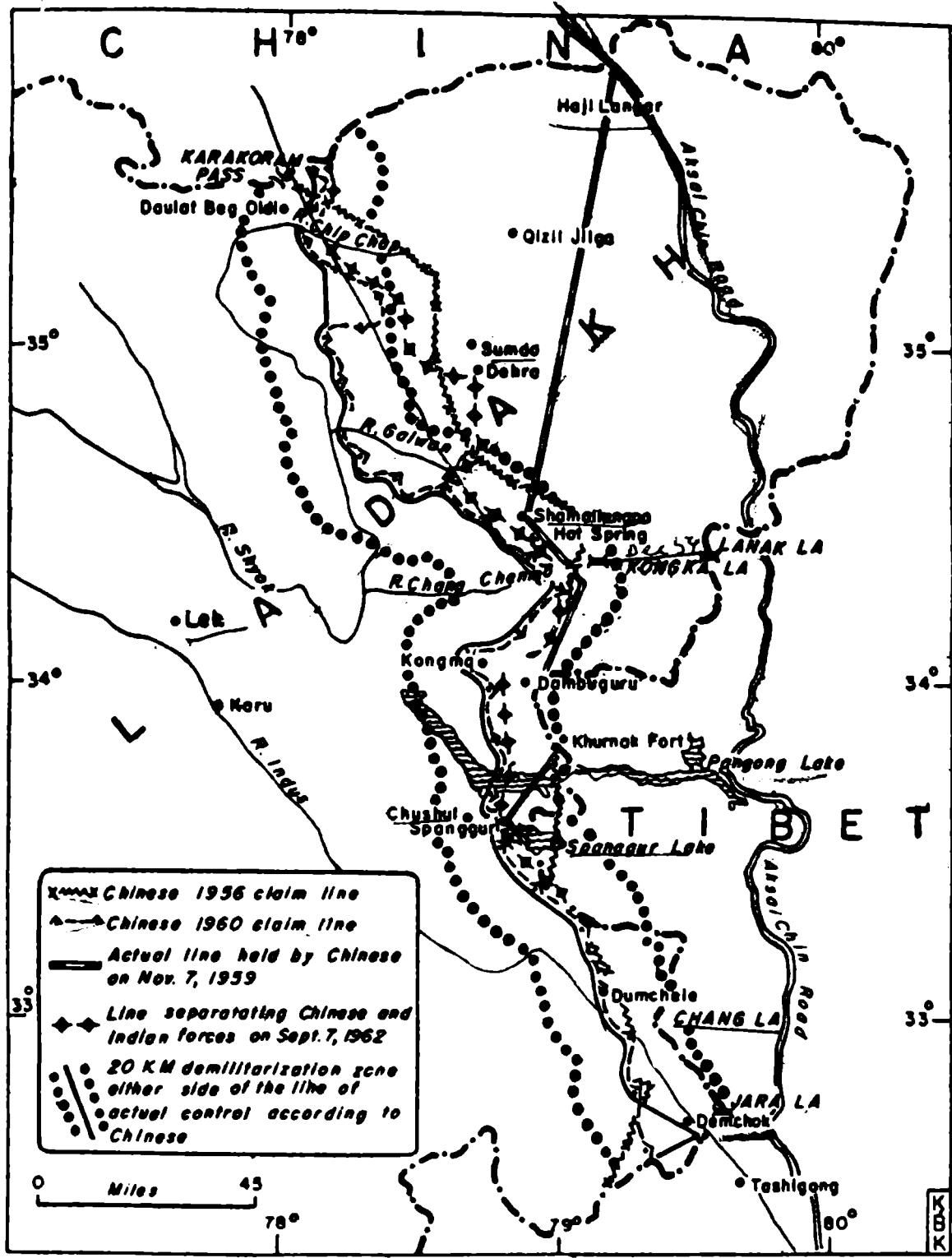
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## Sinkiang and Ladakh

India recognised Tibet as a part of China in 1950. Similarly, the USSR had accepted China's occupation of Sinkiang a year earlier, although it had been in control of large parts of Sinkiang and of its warlords for several decades. Thus the two countries most affected, India and the USSR, had made no protest against the occupation of Tibet and Sinkiang by China. India was as much affected by the Chinese occupation of Sinkiang as she was by the advance of China into Tibet. Claiming that the route from Sinkiang to Tibet lay through Aksai China in Ladakh, China built a road in the fifties connecting Yarkand with Rudok in Tibet—trespassing through Ladakh, south of the Kuen-Lun range. In order to understand the claims and interests of India in the region trespassed into and later occupied by China, it will be necessary to trace the course of political rivalry between Russia and British in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Central Asia, as also the rule of Sikh and Dogra rulers of Jammu and Kashmir who conquered Ladakh including Baltistan and the areas to the West of it, called by the common name of Dardistan in the 1830s and 1840s.

On March 9, 1846, the British signed a treaty with the Sikhs after the first Sikh War, one of the clauses of which is related to Kashmir. It was as follows: "The Maharaja (Dhuleep Singh) hereby agrees to recognise the independent sovereignty of Rajah Gulab Singh in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to him by the British Government". Seven days later, Gulab Singh and the British signed the Treaty of Amritsar by which the British transferred to him "all the hilly or mountainous country eastward of the Indus and west-

ward of the river Ravi". Thus the independent state of Jammu and Kashmir came once more into existence.

It was also provided in the treaty that the eastern boundary, that is, the boundary with Tibet was to be laid down by the Joint Commissioners to be appointed by the signatories. The British also invited the Chinese Government to send its representative to join in this task. Neither the Chinese nor the Maharaja of Kashmir, however took part in the survey of 1847 carried out by Strachey and Cunningham. As reported by Cunningham, the leader of the boundary Commissioners, "The boundary is well defined by piles of stones, which were set up after the last expulsion of the Sokpo or Mongol hordes in A.D. 1687. The Chinese Government had excused themselves from the Survey by stating that the frontiers were well known and there did not seem to be any need to define them.

Ladakh and Baltistan had been brought under Dogra rule by Zorawar Singh by 1840. To the north and north-west, the rulers of Hunza, Nagar, Gilgit, etc., had also been brought under Dogra rule during the 1830s. Their kingdoms were of great interest to the British in the quest for security of their empire against possible Russian advance across the Hindukush and the Pamirs. The British policy fluctuated between allowing Kashmir to control these quasi-independent rulers and dealing with them direct through subventions or by invading them. The Dogra rulers set up their Governor at Gilgit and continued to control this area till the 1930s when the British had taken over control of Gilgit under an agreement with the Maharaja for a limited period. But in 1947 the British officers of the Gilgit Scouts, at Gilgit handed over the area to Pakistan. The rulers of Hunza and Nagar paid tribute to and obtained subsidy from the Kashmir Darbar after the late sixties of the 19th century. Further to the west lay the kingdom of Chitral which also accepted Kashmir's control. Chitral was in conflict with Afghanistan which regarded it as a tributary of the ruler of Badakhshan and thus a part of Afghanistan. Afghanistan had also claims on Kafiristan, Dir, Swat and Bajaur.

The British policy towards Afghanistan was aimed at securing a buffer zone north and south of the Hindukush passes. To this end they relied on the Raja of Kashmir to control Hunza and other Dard rulers. In the areas not under the control of Kashmir, the British had captured Swat and posted a resident in Kafiristan. They were paying heavy subsidies to the ruler of Chitral and helping him against the

threat from Badakhshan. North of the Hindukush they were trying to strengthen the position of the Amir in Badakhshan while inducing the Amir to give up his trans-Oxus possessions. This was in accordance with an understanding that the British had reached with Russia in 1873 to let the Russians have a free hand in Bukhara and in the area north of the Oxus.

The British had also to secure Afghanistan from Russian advance in the area further to the west from where Afghanistan could be approached north of Herat. Russia took Merv in 1884 and in retaliation Afghanistan advanced to Panjdeh but Russia wrested it from the Afghans in 1885. It appeared for a time that the British and the Russians would come to a fight as the British Government considered that the road to Herat and thence to India would be at the mercy of Russia. Britain suffered from an attack of "Mervousness", as it was called at the time by the Liberals, but calmer counsels prevailed and they proposed the appointment of a Joint Commission to demarcate the boundary. This beginning brought the two nations on a path which reconciled their ambitions, even though the Afghans had to be forced to accept a settlement which reduced their area. In 1887, the Afghan boundary from Hari Rud on the Iran border to Khwaja Saleh on the Oxus was successfully demarcated. East of Khwaja Saleh, the boundary of Afghanistan and Kashmir with Russia was similarly later, settled by a Joint Boundary Commission in 1895.

The frontier areas of Kashmir and the mountains to the north of them are a conglomeration of some of the highest peaks, plateaus and desert regions. The plateau of Ladakh is separated from the Tarim basin to the north by the Kuen-Lun and the Karakoram ranges. In between these mountains is the Raksam Valley in the west and the source region of Yarkand and Karakash rivers to the east. Further to the east are the Aksai Chin salt plains. The fertile Raksam Valley is about a hundred miles long and is bounded on the west by the Taghdumbash Pamirs. The Karakorams west of the Karakoram pass are called the Muztagh range which curves west to merge into the Hindukush mountains. North of the Karakoram (Muztagh) and bounded on the east by the Sariqol range are the Pamirs. The Pamir regions are the top of this gigantic mountain system and comprise the Pamirs, the Little Pamirs and the Taghdumbash.

The Russians had begun to explore and occupy the Pamirs after the Agreement of 1885 for fixing the border of Khwaja Saleh on the

river Oxus. The upper reaches of the Oxus and the Pamirs upto the Sariqol range to the east was a vacuum in which the British while unable to go themselves were keen that the Russians should not advance, for fear that the passes across the Hindukush and the Karakoram would become accessible to them. At first they tried to induce Afghanistan and China to occupy this area but they found that neither of them was in a position to resist the Russian advance, nor were they willing to oblige the British by taking on this responsibility. China was piqued by Britain having denied her claim to Hunza. Afghanistan was unhappy over Russia having been given a free hand in the trans-Oxus possessions of Afghanistan and also because the British were tightening their hold over Swat, Dir and Bajaur, as well as Chitral which was claimed by Afghanistan as tributaries of Badakhshan.

The British had started exploration of the area on both sides of the Hindukush and the Karakoram ranges. In 1870, Hayward who was trying to explore the passes from the south into the Pamirs, was murdered and the ruler of Yasin, who was a nephew of the ruler of Chitral, was involved. Another explorer, Gordon, reported that Chitral lay on the route from the Pamirs across the Hindukush via the Barogil pass which was easy to negotiate. An official party under Colonel Lockhart was sent in 1884 to follow up this and other possible routes from the Pamirs. They explored the area and reported that the Barogil pass was no doubt easy to cross but no roads led from it to Chitral. They reported that, instead the Dora pass needed watching as a potential route from across the Hindukush to Chitral. In 1888, however, a Russian explorer Grombchevsky crossed the Karakoram Range by Mintaka pass to Hunza and was received by the ruler of that State. The focus of interest thus shifted from Chitral to Hunza. Younghusband was sent to explore the routes coming from north of the Karakoram mountains. He started from Leh and followed the route to Sinkiang from Ladakh. When he reached the fort of Shahidulla after crossing the Karakoram range, he met with the Kirghis living there. With their help, he went west to the Yarkand valley and Raksam in the area north of the Karakoram ranges and there he came upon the Russian soldier Grombohevsky who was this time coming from across the Pamirs and was on his way to find a route into Ladakh. They met in the Teghdumbash Pamirs and the Russian continued east while Younghusband explored the passes leading south to Hunza, namely, the Khunjerab, the Shamshal, and the Mintaka passes across the



Karakoram. In 1891, it became necessary for the British to send an expedition to Hunza. As mentioned earlier, its ruler Safdar Ali had received the Russian explorer Grombchevsky. He had also organised a confederation of Dard rulers against the British. Col. Durand led an expedition and defeated the rulers of Hunza and Nagar. His prompt action proved decisive and the revolt subsided.

Younghusband was sent once again to explore the possibility of Russia advancing into the Pamirs from Sinkiang. In 1891, he was exploring the Pamirs and ran into the Russian party under Ianov at a place called Bozai Gumbaz. He was arrested by Ianov and was allowed to go provided he did not further trespass "Russian" territory. He managed to return through Afghanistan. The British lodged a protest at Younghusband's arrest and an apology was forced from the Russians, and the latter had to admit that Younghusband had not been arrested on Russian territory. The territory was not Russian but then it was not British either. The gap between the Afghan and Chinese territory lay wide open down to the passes across the Hindukush and Karakoram ranges and the conclusion was obvious that a frontier line needed to be fixed. This was the best safeguard that the British could possibly extract in the face of the unwillingness of the Chinese and the Afghans to take on the Russians in the Pamirs.

A settlement with the Russians had become urgent. But the Amir of Afghanistan had first to be placated. Since his wishes could not be met in the area across the Oxus, he had to be compensated otherwise. The Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, Henry Durand went to Kabul and negotiated a broad-ranging settlement in 1893. He agreed to give up any claim to Kafirstan but retained Swat, Dir and Bajaur. Asmir, which was claimed by Chitral was also given to Afghanistan. South of the Kabul river a line of demarcation was agreed to be drawn up between Afghanistan and India. The Amir was given a written assurance by the British that they would come to his aid in case of aggression and his annual subsidy was raised from Rs. 12 lakhs to Rs. 18 lakhs.

Thus armed with the freedom to abandon Afghan claims north of the Oxus, the British could now confirm the same to the Russians to induce them to settle the boundary of the Pamirs east of Lake Victoria according to the agreement of 1873 between Britain and Russia. The Pamir Boundary Commission set up by the two powers completed its work in 1895 and Russia was allowed to annex the Pamirs with the

exception of Taghdumbash. Afghanistan agreed to hold Wakhan as a small wedge inserted between the two empires to preclude their borders touching each other. "It is not an imposing buffer this long attenuated arm of Afghanistan reaching out to touch China with the tip of its fingers. It is only eight miles wide at one point. But this was enough to lay at rest the spectre of Russian advance on India".\*

East of the Pamirs, Sinkiang consisted of the great depression of the Tarim basin with the Tien-Shan mountains bounding it on the north. North of the Tien-Shan was the Ili region abutting on Russian Turkistan. Just as Afghanistan had to pass under the British sphere of influence before the potential threat of a Russo-British collision could be averted, Sinkiang was seen as a possible area of conflict between the two powers. China was not strong enough to withstand pressure from either of them to maintain the independence of Sinkiang, without having to lean to the side of one or the other or playing the two against each other.

Sinkiang was incorporated into the Chinese empire in 1758 by the emperor Chien Lung. As Skrine who had been Counsel General at Kashgar records, China had occupied the country five times and lost it four times. Its Turki population was largely the Uighars of the oases and the valleys, and a small population of the Kirghis who were a nomadic and pastoral people moving about in the upland areas. The local Muslim rulers ousted by the Chinese had shifted to Khokand (Ferghana) in western (now Russian) Turkistan and attempted from time to time to regain their kingdom. In 1867, a protégé of these ex-rulers, one Yakub Beg established his rule in Yarkand and other areas south of the Tien-Shan and called it Kashgaria. Yakub Beg turned towards the British in India for help and support. Professing interest only in trade between Sinkiang and Kashmir, the British sent a mission to Yarkand under Forsyth in 1870. But the Russian forestalled them. In 1871, having taken Kuldja in north Sinkiang, which was a key to the kingdom of Kashgaria from the north, they signed a commercial agreement with Yakub Beg in 1872 giving them a special favoured treatment in respect of taxes on Russian imports.

The British were exploring various routes leading from Ladakh to Sinkiang. Apart from the route over the Karakoram Pass, the Chang-Chenmo route via the Salt Plains of Aksai Chin in north-east

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\* Sir Thomas Holdich "The Indian Borderland" 1903

Ladakh was known to be used by caravans from Yarkand even in the depth of winter whereas the route through the Karakoram pass was quite impassable for half the year. The British therefore signed in 1870 a treaty with Kashmir on trade with Central Asia and to explore the route through the Chang Chenmo Valley. Article I of this treaty reads, "With the consent of the Maharaja, officers of the British Government will be appointed to survey the trade routes through the Maharaja's territories from the British frontier of Lahoal to the territories of the Ruler of Yarkand, including the road via the Chang Chenmo Valley". This would show that the Lingzi-Tang plains and Aksai Chin were part of Kashmir (Ladakh) since the British entered into an agreement with the State for the right to explore a route through the area to Sinkiang. The British agent of Leh, Dr. Caylay had in 1867 explored along the Chang Chenmo Valley and across the Lingzi Tang plain as far as the Karakash river. In 1868, Hayward homeward bound from Kashgar had used this route and Forsyth had used it in 1870 on his mission to Kashgar. Another exploratory mission through the area was one led by G. Hendersdon who had led the advance party of the Forsyth Mission to Yakub Beg. It describes the journey through Lingzi-Tang to the Sanju pass on the Kuen Lum.\* The party crossed the Salt Plain of Aksai Chin and reached the upper Karakash, passed the Shahidulla outpost built by Kashmir and reached another fort built by the Yarkandis about twenty miles further away. This route was followed by the main Forsyth mission.. Forsyth concluded a trade agreement with Yakub Beg in 1874. This included an article regarding the posting of a permanent British representative at Kashgar. Yakub Beg was however unwilling to implement it lest he may have to accept a similar request from Russia. When Forsyth sent Robert Shaw from Leh to take over as Counsel, Yakub Beg hurriedly sent him back. The trade treaty with the British remained a dead letter and Yakub Beg died suddenly in 1877.

China now showed unexpected energy and organising ability and sent a strong force to re-establish her hold over Sinkiang in 1878. It was now that the area was named Sinkiang\*. By the treaty of St. Petersburg, Russia agreed to give back Kuldja and this was added to Sinkiang. The first Russian Counsel at Kashgar, Petrovsky, arrived in

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\* G. Henderson and A.O. Hume, "Lahore to Yarkand", 1873.

\* Meaning "New Dominions".

November 1882 and set about his task in a masterful way. He felt that he was fully competent to intervene in the affairs of the local Chinese representatives, and effectively safeguarded and promoted Russian interests. The British on the other hand were not able to secure permission to send a representative and had to resort to the device of unilaterally posting an official at Kashgar for the "transaction of Indian official matters". Macartnay took over this post in 1890 but the Chinese never recognised his presence till the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 when for the first time they recognised him as Counsel.

## II

As stated earlier the area between the Karakoram and the Kuen-Lun ranges comprises, from west to east, of the Taghdumbash Pamir and Raksam Valley, the source region of Yarkand river and Karakash river and lastly Aksai Chin further east. The Aksai Chin area provided the Ladakhis with salt and with rather un-appetising pastures for their goats, sheeps and yaks. The British were disappointed at their meagre success in Sinkiang and at the poor prospects of trade between Sinkiang and India. The Russians were able to gain an upper hand in Sinkiang and to maintain their dominant position. All that remained for the British was to secure their border or rather that of Jammu and Kashmir against any possible encroachment from across the Kuen-Lun mountains which formed the southern boundary of Sinkiang. For this purpose, Younghusband had, on his way to Hunza from the north, earlier visited Shahidulla in 1889 in the trans-Karakoram area. The few Kirghis who lived near Shahidulla had petitioned to the British agent at Leh for protection against the Kanjutis, i.e., the inhabitants of Hunza. This fort had been built by the Kashmir Government in 1863 to protect the trade caravans from Kashmir to Turkistan. Younghusband found that after their return to Sinkiang in 1878, the Chinese claimed their boundary to extend upto the Kuen-Lun passes of Kilian, Kugyar, and Sanju. Earlier, Ney Elias, the British agent at Leh had during the years 1879-80 visited Sinkiang and he was also told by the Chinese that "They considered their line of 'Chatze' (posts) as their frontier-Kugiar, Kilisan, Sanju, Kiria". In 1885, Elias again visited the trans-Karakoram area unofficially and had recommended that the Chinese be induced to occupy the country between the Karakoram and the Kuen-Lun ranges. Younghusband,

while submitting his report on his 1889 visit to Shahidulla, recommended regarding his mission to Shahidulla and Hunza,\* that the area east of Shahidulla should not be offered to the Chinese as was proposed to be done with regard to the area west of it.

On a second trip, Younghusband met the amban of Yarkand on his way to the Pamirs, on 5 September 1890, and told him "He (the Viceroy of India) had been led to believe that the Chinese considered their frontier extending only as far as the Kilian pass and that the intervening territory was a tract of 'no man's land' ....He had since, however, learned that the Chinese were undertaking the protection of the trade route...."@. It was by such means that China was encouraged by the British to extend her boundaries south of the Kuen-Lun.

### III

The Russians had been exploring the area of the Pamirs and south of the Kuen-Lun mountains. In 1887, Grum Gjimailo explored the upper reaches of the Yarkand river south of the Kuen-Lun mountains. In 1888, Grombchevsky on his return from Hunza had visited the upper reaches of the Karakash river and reached Shahidulla. As a counter measure to the Russian moves the British now succeeded in persuading the Chinese to make forward moves into the trans-Kuen-Lun areas. In 1892, the Chinese entered Shahidulla and set up a 'pillar' on the Karakoram pass. The British prevented the Raja of Kashmir, Amar Singh from taking any action against the Chinese. They also connived at the Chinese claims over the Taghdumbash Pamir in the Kashmir territory beyond the Karakoram range. These claims came about as follows:-

In 1847, the ruler of Hunza had helped the Chinese authorities in Yarkand to put down a rebellion in Sinkiang. For this he had received for his people the right to graze cattle in Raksam Valley and the Teghdumbash Pamir. The Chinese had on this basis claimed the vassalage of Hunza. The claim of the Chinese had been rejected by the British in 1889 in respect of Hunza but they encouraged the

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\* "The Northern Frontier of Kashmir", F.E. Younghusband, p. 101, Republished in 1973 by Orient Publishers, Delhi.

@ Quoted in "Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China" W.F. Van Ekelen p.161.

Chinese to move into the Taghdumbash area. By 1895, information was received that the Chinese had started patrolling the Taghdumbash area.

In 1896, Macartnay presented an Atlas called "Johnson's Atlas" of 1894 containing maps of the region and published by the Government of India, to the Chinese Tao Tai. This atlas was seen by the Russian Consul General Petrovsky at whose instance the Tao Tai was led to protest to Macartnay that Aksai Chin should be shown as part of Tibet. The Tao Tai did not, at any rate, regard it as part of Sinkiang as China was to claim after 1950.

As far as can be ascertained from Chinese sources, the areas south of the Kuen-Lun mountains were never claimed as part of Sinkiang. In the maps published during the reign of emperor Chien Lung (1735-96) who encouraged historical and geographical research, and of emperor Tao Kuang published in 1821 and 1824 the Kuen-Lun continued to be the boundary. As late as 1890, when the Chinese Minister Hung Ta-Chin had furnished a map to Macartnay at Kashgar both Aksai Chin and Lingzi Tang had been shown south of the boundaries of the "New Dominions". The Chinese claimed in 1960 during the negotiations of Indian and Chinese officials that they had sent Russian surveyors to the area in 1940-41 but the Indian side pointed out that these surveys in fact pertained not to this area but rather to the Sino-Russian boundary.

An agreement was signed in March 1963 between the Governments of China and Pakistan on the alignment of border between China (Sinkiang) and that part of India (Jammu and Kashmir) which had been seized by Pakistan in 1947. Pakistan ceded to China the Aghil range and Shakesgam valley adjoining Siachen glacier. This is an area of some 1050 square miles. At the same time, China ceded to Pakistan Shimshal valley further to the west, an area of 750 square miles beyond the Karakoram Range. This area comprises the Oprang valley and the Darband-Darwaza pocket and enables Hunza use of salt mines and grazing facilities in that area.

The Chinese have built up a system of roads to improve their frontier security in Sinkiang. These roads emanate from Yarkand: one leads to Tibet via Aksai Chin and the other via the Khunjerab Pass to the Pakistani capital. This tie up between Pakistan and China brings them together on their respective frontiers with Afghanistan and Russia. It is in this context that we have to examine the interest

displayed by Pakistan in regard to Siachen glacier, which lies to the south and east of Shaksgham valley ceded to China.

## **Siachen's Strategic Location**

After the cease-fire in Jammu and Kashmir in 1949, Baltistan and Gilgit/Hunza portions of Ladakh were left with Pakistan. The Siachen glacier lies at the north-east of Baltistan. The Sino-Pak agreement of 1963 had ceded to China the Shaksgham valley that lies to the west of Siachen. This has brought China to the south of the Aghil mountains. Likewise, by taking Akasi Chin from India, China came to the south of the Kuen-Lun mountains. The attempt of the Government of Pakistan now being made to gain possession of Siachen poses a threat to Ladakh along the Nubra valley, since the river Nubra rises at the "spout" of the Siachen glacier at its south-eastern end.

In the past, the glacier provided a route from Nubra to Yarkand as reported by H. Wood of the Survey of India, who was attached to the de Fillippi expedition. He wrote in April 1922 as follows: "It seems more than probable that in the past, an old track did run from Khapalu in Nubra to Khufelang in the Yarkand river and this followed the Saltoro valley via the Bilaphond La or the Kondus valley via the Sia La to the Siachen glacier at the head of which it crossed the Karakoram range by a pass-possibly the Turkistan La - to the Oprang valley, and thence by a pass across the Aghil range into a tributary of the Yarkand river and thence to Khufelang".

The pioneering journey of Younghusband from China to Sinkiang across the Karakoram into India in 1887 took him over the glaciers south of Karakoram-and he was the first European to negotiate the route. Later, he discovered the source of the Oprang river, which he located along with the Aghil range, during the journey from Shahidulla and Hunza in 1889. Subsequently, the de Fillippi expedition (of which Wood was a member) in 1914 exploring the Eastern Karakoram found that the valley running north-west to west, "which drains into the Oprang and is probably the source of that river". The expedition also discovered that the Shyok and the Yarkand rivers had a joint origin in the Remo glacier. The relics of previous travellers found by the Workmans on the Siachen glacier are not the only ones discovered.

Later, Wood sent a party, which also discovered such relies by an Indian assistant of his on a route from Khufelang along a long, undis-

used pass across the Karakoram to Nubra and Chorbut. Wood then checked and found "the saddle bag which still contained books. Several of these were copies of the Koran, in one of which were three opened letters written in Hindi. Near we found some metal cooking pots and the stock of a native gun. I had the letters translated and found they were dated some ten years ago (1904)".\* The uncle of Younghusband, R. Shaw, travelling earlier in this area was also "told of a route over a difficult pass by which Khapalu in Baltistan may be reached in ten days".\*\* This route, he said, would have to follow the Remo glacier to the Tarim-Shahr affluent of the Siachen and thence over the Sia La or the Bilaphond La. Shaw was writing on Mirza Haider's book, which is the earliest account of Kashmir in Persian, "As the chief declivity is of Sanju (in the ascent from Yarkand) so the chief declivity in descending towards Kashmir is that of Iskardoo", he wrote.

In 1909, Dr. Longstaff reached the head of the Soltoro river and crossed by the Bilaphond pass and discovered the upper portion of the Siachen glacier. Thus we can say that routes along the Siachen glacier and across the Karakoram have been used for going from Baltistan to the Yarkand river water-shed and thence to Yarkand.

The first Pakistan attempts to gain Siachen were made indirectly in the '80s. They did this by including it along with other areas in the permits issued to foreign mountain expeditions in the Hunza-Gilgit region. For three years thereafter, Pakistan forces have attacked Indian border posts in these difficult snowy areas and the Pakistan government has raised the question at the government level. Officials of the two countries have met to discuss the matter. Chinese helicopters have been reported to have flown over the areas presumably on a survey mission for the Pakistan authorities, regarding the location and strength of the border posts of India. It is difficult to say how far the Pakistanis are acting on their own and whether the Chinese allies are not at the back of the attempt to gain control of Siachen.

As indicated already, the occupation of the region would furnish a route to Leh, down the Nurba river. The USSR boundaries as well as

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\* Report of Capt. Wood, entitled "Exploration via the Eastern Karakoram & the Upper Yarkand Valley" published by the Survey of India at Dehra Dun in 1922. Capt. Wood was attached to the Fillippi Expedition, 1914.

\*\* Quoted by Capt. Wood - *ibid* - in Appendix to his Report.



the Wakhan area of Afghanistan adjoin Sinkiang here. The agreement of 1963 between Pakistan and China over the Sinkiang-Kashmir boundary, gave to China not only the Shaksgam valley south of the Aghil mountains, but also the Raksam Valley to the north of them as well as the Teghdumbash Pamir adjacent to the main Pamir regions in the Tadjikstan Republic of the USSR.

In the 19th century, China was too weak to enforce her designs to have a secure border in Sarikol region of West Sinkiang vis-a-vis Russia. It was the British who were keen as a colonial power to have a buffer-zone in the trans-Karakoram area adjoining the Pamirs. Now the Chinese appear to have the same aims. The 1963 agreement gives to Pakistan the Darwaza area in the Karakoram mountains north of Hunza so that the defence of Hunza is secured to the Pakistanis and becomes their responsibility. The new roads built by China to connect Havelian with Sinkiang and to the main road built to connect Sinkiang to western Tibet via Aksai Chin are a part of the Chinese defence system.

The claim to Siachen glacier by China's ally is likely to threaten the Indian position all along the Karakoram mountains as Siachen glacier abuts on the Nubra valley, as well as on the only others area on the Karakoram mountains left in possessions of India around the old route from Leh to Yarkand via the Karakoram pass. This is now lying unused, although it was the main caravan route from Sinkiang to Kashmir. The cease-fire line of 1949 in Jammu & Kashmir left in the occupation of Pakistan not only Baltistan, but the principalities of Gilgit, Hunza, Chitral, etc., which were part of the Kashmir State. The Mir of Hunza had claims on the Taghdumbash Pamirs and the Raksam valley on the trans-Karakoram side and these areas have been ceded to China under the 1963 Agreement between China and Pakistan.

The Shaksgam area is not the only area gained by China as a result of the agreement of 1963 with Pakistan. To the north of the Karakoram mountains also, China has been confirmed in the possession of the Taghdumbash Pamir and the Raksam valley, areas over which the Mir of Hunza had the right, which he successfully asserted. These areas which adjoin the Russian Pamir region of Tadjikstan have been given away by Pakistan now and in return China has allowed Pakistan to occupy the Darwaza area, north of the Karakoram mountains, which is reported to be 740 sq. miles in area.

The attempts being made by Pakistan to attack Indian positions on the Siachen glacier are on the old track from Kaphalu along the Saltoro valley and via the Siachen glacier to Sinkiang. These attempts can be only designed to benefit the Chinese position in the trans-Karakoram area that forms a buffer between China and Russia. In 19th century, the British policy was to attempt to involve Afghanistan to act as a buffer between their Indian empire and Russia. Now China is attempting to use Pakistan in a similar role.

## Tibet, India and China

Tibet has remained one of the most isolated and closed countries of the world. However, Tibetan chronicles supplemented by the records of China, Kashmir and Ladakh provide a good deal of information on its early history. Largely a high plateau of nearly half a million square miles, Tibet is bounded by the Kuen-Lun mountains in the north and by the Himalaya mountains in the south. From China access to Tibet was difficult. It lay through Tsinghai and Sikang regions in the north west and south west respectively of China. On the other hand, the routes from the south, i.e., from India, are relatively easier. The most important of these lie through the Chumbi Valley between Sikkim and Bhutan, and through Tawang, east of Bhutan, to the north-west of Tibet. There is a route from Sinkiang through Aksai Chin plateau which is a serviceable winter route. East of the Aksai Chin route is a route from Khotan in Sinkiang through Keriya to Rodok in Western Tibet.

Before the spread of Buddhism, Tibet's indigenous culture was based on the Bon religion with its belief in spirits and dragons that had to be controlled by magical rites. At the beginning of the 7th century AD., Buddhism was adopted by the Tibetan ruler Son-Tsan Gampo, who unified the country and under whom Tibet became a strong, expansionist State. He invaded China and married a daughter of the Chinese emperor; and extended his empire to Central Asia. He also extended his dominion southward, invaded Nepal and married Nepalese princess. A stone pillar in Lhasa records a Sino-Tibetan peace treaty concluded in the first half of the eighth century. Another stone pillar in Lhasa refers to Tibetan conquests in Western China in 763

A.D. Both the Chinese and Nepalese princesses were Buddhist in faith. Buddhism thus got introduced into Tibet. At the same time, Buddhism spread to Tibet from Kashmir and from Ladakh.

India's early contacts with Tibet were through Ladakh. The Chronicles of Ladakh, first translated by Francke furnish the available sources regarding the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh. In the tenth century A.D., King Skyeid Mgnon of the second Sakya Dynasty divided this Kingdom among his three sons, the eldest being given the area of western Tibet, and the third and youngest the regions of Zanskar, and Spiti and Lahaul, of present-day Himachal Pradesh. The kingdom of 'La-dvag' (as Ladakh was called) continued under the dynasty. In the middle of the seventeenth century A.D., there was a war between it and the Lhasa rulers of Bod (Tibet). Ladakh had at that time taken up the cause of the Head Lama of Bhutan against Lhasa and the latter sent an army against Ladakh. The king of Ladakh had to take the help of 'Nawab' of Kashmir to expel the Tibetans and the resulting treaty of 1687 affirmed the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet "as in the beginning", i.e., when king Skyeid Mgnon gave separate kingdoms to each of the three sons and defined their boundaries. This treaty held good till 1950 when China invaded Tibet and used the occasion to send an army through Aksai Chin and later took it and other areas of Ladakh.

Lamaism, the Tibetan form of Buddhism, had spread to Mongolia and when the Mongol Kubla Khan became the emperor of China, relations between him and the Dalai Lama were comparable to those between the then contemporary European rulers and the Pope of Rome. The Mongols later interfered in Tibetan political disputes and in 1640, Gusro Khan, the Quosot Mongol was instrumental in establishing the supreme political authority of the Dalai Lama. In the 18th century the Chinese were unable to suppress the Dsungar Mongols of the Ili region (N.W. Turkistan), while the Quosot Mongols of the eastern region of Mongolia sided with the Chinese. Lha-bzan Khan, the Quosot had set himself up at Lhasa and in 1717 the Dsungar Mongols invaded Tibet to oust him to counteract the growing Chinese influence exercised through Lha-bzan Khan and to restore the Dalai Lama to his position. This invasion took place in the early winter months from Khotan and the force passed through the Aksai Chin area of Ladakh. They passed from Western Tibet to Lhasa, took Lhasa, killed Lha-bzan Khan and became the new ruling power there.

It was to evict them that the Chinese for the first time sent a force to Tibet. The Dsungars were expelled in 1724 and the Chinese forces withdraw thereafter. In 1728 two Chinese ambans were posted at Lhasa, and the practice continued with interruptions till-1911.

The Chinese intervened in Tibetan affairs at the end of the 18th century to ward off Nepal's invasion of Tibet. The Gurkhali forces crossed the border in July 1788 and seized the adjacent border regions. Again in 1791, the Nepalese marched to Shigatse and captured the Tshi-lun-po monastery. The Chinese emperor sent an army which crossed into Nepal in July 1792 and concluded a treaty with Nepal in 1793 under which Nepal agreed to send a mission every five years to China.

Till the 18th century, Tibet, though difficult of access was not closed to the foreigners. Jesuit fathers and other Europeans had reached Lhasa and the Jesuits had been allowed to propagate their religion. The Jesuits cartographers located at Peking carried out in 1715-17 the first survey of Tibet through two Lamas whom they had trained in geometry and arithmetic. The result was embodied in the first map of Tibet in the 'great atlas' of China presented to the emperor in 1718. They made a fresh determination of coordinates and heights of mountains for the Jesuit Atlas of 1721. After the expulsion of the Mongols, however, the Tibetans followed a closed-door policy and the Jesuits had to leave Lhasa. The British rulers of India were keen to explore Tibet and to trade with it, and in 1774, Warren Hastings, the first Governor General got an opportunity to send George Bogle as his representative to visit the Panchan Lama at Shigatse. He went through Bhutan and reached Tashi-lun-po, the seat of the Pancham Lama. A second representative Turner by name was also sent to follow up this early success. The contact, however, lapsed with the retirement of Warren Hastings.

In the nineteenth century, Raja Gulab Singh, the Dogra ruler of Jammu first invaded Ladakh through his famous general Zorawar Singh and attached it to the dominions of Raja Ranjit Singh of Punjab. Next, he sent Zorawar Singh to invade Western Tibet in 1841. This may have been intended to establish the claim of Ladakh to Western Tibet. It was also designed to secure the uninterrupted flow of the pashmina wool trade from Western Tibet to Kashmir, which had begun to be diverted through Rampur Bhushair State (situated south of the Sutlej river to the east of Ladakh) with the encouragement of the

British rulers. Zorawar Singh's invasion of Tibet met with early success, but ended in his death and the annihilation of his army at the hands of the Lhasa troops near Mount Kailash. It was a daring feat to have carried the invasion deep into Tibet in winter. Next year, the Tibetans advanced into Ladakh and were defeated by the Dogra army. The treaty concluded in 1842 *reaffirmed* "the old established frontiers".

In the nineteenth century, China became weak and there were inroads on its authority in the coastal regions by the western powers who increasingly took over its sea trade and extorted extra-territorial rights there. When the British invaded Nepal in 1814, the Chinese sent an army into Tibet to safeguard their interests but they could not do anything when the British posted a Resident at Kathmandu after the war. Nepal invaded Tibet in 1855, but China was unable to come to the help of Tibet.

## II

Left to itself, Tibet became closed to the rest of the world more than even before, till Younghusband forced his way to Lhasa in 1904. During "the honeymoon period" of Indo-Chinese relations after 1950, we heard of the ancient ties between India and China. There is, however, little to suggest that these two sub-continent had much to do with each other in their long past. What relations there were, were due to the spread of Buddhism in the ancient times. Beyond that, they were two separate worlds. In 2 B.C., the first Buddhist text was brought to China by a Chinese ambassador returning from a mission to the Yueh-chi (Kushan) Court. In 65 A.D., two Buddhist scholars were persuaded to come to China from Khotan and the emperor built a monastery for them. Buddhism became firmly established in China and Chinese monks visited India through Central Asia. Fa Hien walked from Central China across the desert of Gobi, over the Hindukush to India in the Gupta period to collect Buddhist Canon and images of Buddhist deities. Fa Hien returned to China in 414 A.D.

The most famous Chinese pilgrim to India was Hieun Tsang from 629-45 A.D. who walked across Central Asia both for his outward and return journeys. He travelled extensively throughout India and in his journeys had ample time to form a judgement of the Indian peoples. He sums up their character as follows, "They are of hasty and irresolute temperaments, but of pure moral principles. They will not take

anything wrongfully and they will yield more than fairness requires. They fear retribution for sins in other lives and make light of what conduct produces in this life. They do not practise deceit and they keep their sworn obligation".\*

During the period of British rule in India took place the first direct contacts between India and China. The East India Company had a monopoly of trade with China in the 18th century and produced opium in India and exported it by sea to China. The Chinese banned the import in 1796 but trade in opium was carried on through smuggling. This led to war in 1840 which lasted for two years. China was forced to allow entry of European ships to her ports. In 1876, China had to sign the Chefo Conventions by which it was forced to give full extra territorial rights to British. This Convention also contained an article providing for the visit of a British Mission to Tibet. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Russian rivalry and advance into Central Asia had made Tibet also an area of contention between them. As Tibet was closed to the outside world, the only way to approach it was to send clandestine missions of explorers and adventurers. The other method open to them seemed to be to bolster up China's authority in respect of Tibet and to use the Chinese name and authority to gain access to Tibet. With the Chefo Convention of 1876 in their pocket, the British tried to open a trade route from India to Tibet. In 1890, they signed a treaty with China defining Sikkim's frontier with Tibet, and providing for trade across this frontier. They followed it up with signing in 1893 a set of Regulations with the Chinese for this trade and for opening a trading mart at Yatung. All these remained a dead letter as the Tibetans refused to accept either the Treaty or the Regulations to neither of which they were a party. China was in no position to enforce these as its writ did not run into Tibet, but that never deterred the Chinese from behaving as if they exercised full authority with regard to Tibet or sign treaties about its trade or other matters.

Matters were brought to a head when Curzon became Viceroy of India. The threat of Russian advance across Central Asia was, to Curzon, a matter of over-riding concern. In 1899, he sent a letter to the Dalai Lama requesting for permission to send a mission to Lhasa. Curzon got no reply, tried again, and was chagrined that the second letter was also not accepted much less acknowledged. Spurring him on

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\*Waters. "Travels of Yuan Chwang" 1904 Vol. I Page 171.

was the fear of rumours that Russians had made a secret deal with China permitting them access into Tibet. The British Government in London was not so perturbed by all this because it was trying to secure detente with France and Russia against the rising power of Germany, but nevertheless with the persistent raising of the alarm by Curzon, it was forced into agreeing to send a mission to the border of Sikkim and Tibet in 1903 for the limited purpose of opening negotiations for trade.

Russia was also impelled by fears similar to those of Curzon. In 1893, Dorjjeff, a Buriat Mongol and consequently a Russian citizen by birth, visited St. Petersburg as the envoy of the Dalai Lama and in 1900 he again visited Russia and was given an audience by the Tsar at Yalta. He was a teacher of Lhasa's Drepung Monastery when the young Thirteenth Dalai Lama was receiving his education and had become a favourite with him. In 1901, Dorjjeff again visited Russia and this was given audience by the Tsar and the Tsarina. Soliders of the Russian "forward school" were trying to reach Lhasa and thus forestal the British. In this they had been unsuccessful and the most they had been able to achieve was the expedition of Pyotr Kozlov from Mongolia into Tibet in 1901. Kozlov had, however, met a hostile reception and had to fight his way back from Chamdo, and had evidently been no more welcome there than were the British.

Curzon sent a mission under Younghusband to Khamba Jong on Sikkim-Tibet border in 1903. When he reached there, he was firmly told by the Tibetan representatives that he must go back. Protagonists of "the great game" for mastery of Central Asia that they were. Curzon and his chosen instrument Younghusband, saw this as a convenient excuse for forcing an entry into Tibet. They were able to persuade their Home Government to sanction an advance beyond the frontier to gyantse via the Chumbi Valley. A mixed Indo-British force under Brigadier Macdonald, armed with Lee Metford rifles and with mountain artillery, was to escort the mission. Mobility was provided by ponies and the baggage was carried by mules, yaks, etc. The Tibetans were armed only with swords and staffs and with a few antiquated matchlock muskets.

In January 1904, Younghusband moved forward from Phari in the Chumbi Valley to Tuna in Tibet. Less than ten miles away a Tibetan army was encamped at Guru. In April 1904, the British force advanced to Guru and found the Tibetan army blocking the way. The Tibetans neither took the initiative in starting a fight nor would they



budge. The British force was ordered to march forward and in the ensuing melee firing was started. It was a helpless, unequal fight. The Tibetans fell by the hundreds but they did not run. They lost between 600-700 dead. The expedition advanced to Gyantse and reached there on April 11. Hearing of a Tibetan army assembled at Karo La, Younghusband despatched a force on the plea that this was necessary to ensure that they did not pose a threat to the British position. Thus Younghusband now forced the hands of Government to agree to a march to Lhasa.

In the action to dislodge the Tibetans from Karo La, the Tibetans were no longer passive resisters as at Guru. They were, however, dislodged from their position by the superior fire power of the British and their casualties were as high as at Guru. This did nothing to weaken Tibetan resistance which now became more general. Spontaneously they poured into Gyantse determined to dislodge the British. But a British relief force arrived from Chumbi and the fort at Gyantse was stormed and taken by them on 6 July 1904, and the march to Lhasa was resumed. They reached Lhasa on 7th August and the Chinese *amban* who had no influence with the Tibetans, welcomed the British forces, in order to improve his own status and also to exploit the situation in the interest of China. The Dalai Lama had fled from Lhasa to avoid the prospects of negotiations and Younghusband had to negotiate with Tri Rimpoche with whom the Dalai Lama had left the seals of office. The British got Tibet's agreement to open trade marts at Gyantse and Gartok and have a resident British agent. When a Convention was signed on 7 September 1904, the Chinese *amban* took care to occupy a prominent position in all the ceremonies but was not associated with the signing of the Convention. The British entered into a separate Convention with China in 1906 confirming the Convention of 1904. Thus the results of Younghusband expedition were to give the Chinese authority a fresh lease of life in Tibet.

By the Convention of 1906, China agreed to Britain setting up telegraph lines connection the specific marketing centres-Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok - with India. In 1908, a fresh set of detailed trade negotiations were concluded in India with Chinese and Tibetan representatives.

As a result of the Anglo-Russian detente of 1907, China had a free hand in re-establishing her influence and consolidating her position in Tibet. China now stepped up her effort to absorb the eastern prov-

inces of Tibet into China proper. An energetic general and administrator, Chou-Erh-feng had been posted in 1905 as Warden of the Eastern Marches established Chinese authority in Sinkiang province during the years 1905-11. Not content with asserting Peking's authority in his own charge, he sent a young general Chung Ying to Lhasa with a 2000 strong force which reached there on the new year's day of 1910. China had for the first time in history sent a force to Tibet without the consent of Tibetans. A few months before, the Dalai Lama had returned to Lhasa after his long exile since 1904. On February 13, 1910 the Dalai Lama had to flee again and this time he took refuge in India.

### III

Side by side with sending an invading force into Lhasa, Chou-Erh-feng spread Chinese control over the Tibetan areas adjacent to India's north-eastern frontier. This was at the instance of the *amban* at Lhasa who wanted to assert Chinese authority in these remote areas of Tibet. Tibet consists of the wind-swept 16,000 feet high northern plain called Changtang, Western Tibet, the valley of the Tsang-po river and Amdo, Chemdo in the east. In addition, there are fertile, well-watered valleys with ranges of tree-covered mountains in between in the south east. The Chinese troops took Zayu in 1910 and marched upto Rima which is the last town on India's north-east border the Lohit Valley in Mishmi territory. The Chinese now also asserted that Bhutan and Nepal were vassals of China.

The achievements of Chou-Erh-feng were the last flowering of the Manchu empire. After the death of the Empress in 1908, rivalries between the provinces and the Centre had become the norm and the empire was disintegrating. Revolution broke out in China in 1911 and its effect was not long in reaching Tibet. Chou-Erh-feng and his work were also swept away. The Tibetan troops in Lhasa revolted and the *amban* fled. The Dalai Lama returned in triumph in June 1912 to Tibet. By January 1913, the last Chinese left Lhasa and were allowed to go home via India. The Dalai Lama declared the independence of Tibet. As the present Dalai Lama said in his communication to United Nations in 1960. "Whatever the position of Tibet may be prior to 1911-12, in any event from the day the 13th Dalai Lama proclaimed the independence of Tibet, after the invading Chinese armies had been driven out of Tibet, Tibet was not only independent de facto but de jure"\* . But China as a republic was no less insistent in trying to

maintain and even exceed the former claims over Tibet. In 1912, the President of the republic issued an order that Tibet was to be "regarded as on equal footing with the provinces of China proper". Britain now took the initiative in redefining the relationship between China and Tibet. The British Minister in Peking presented a memorandum dated 17th August 1912 to the Peking Foreign Office on the subject. The British increased their pressure on the reluctant Chinese to accept this as a basis for negotiations and to agree to a tripartite conference with Tibet and India to be held in India.

The negotiations were held at Simla and Delhi in 1913-14 and are called Simla Conference at which the "McMahon Line" was agreed to as defining the border between India and Tibet, east of Bhutan. The negotiations were to be about the boundary and its definition rather than about the status of Tibet. On the boundary question, there was disagreement on the part of the Chinese in respect of the boundary between 'Inner' and 'Outer' Tibet. This concept which was introduced by McMahon, the British delegate, on the analogy of the treaty between Russia and Mongolia in November 1912, which was also accepted by the Chinese Government. Even as the Simla Conference was going on, Tibet had to maintain a force of 10,000 in Eastern Tibet and the Chinese attacked the eastern province of Tibet. On 3rd July 1914, the British delegate and the Tibetan delegate signed the agreement regarding the boundary between Tibet and India, east of Bhutan, now known as the 'McMahon Line'. Thus the conference failed to reach agreement on the boundary between Tibet and China but an agreement between Tibet and India on the border was however signed on 3rd July 1914. Care had been taken by McMahon prior to the Conference to determine the alignment of the boundary between Tibet and N.E. India. Survey missions had been sent in 1913 to report on the actual position in this inaccessible area. The principle of the watershed and the crest of the Himalayan ranges had been followed in agreeing to the boundary and the Tibetan delegate Lonchan Shatra had received the consent of the Dalai Lama and Kashag before signing the agreement.

War between China and Tibet continued in the province of Sikang till 1918 when a ceasefire had been arranged by Teichman of the British Consular Service along a line roughly along the upper Yangtse river. Since then an armed peace continued till 1930 when the Tibetans again forced their way to Tachien Lu, the capital of Sikang. It was not

till 1933 that a ceasefire could again be arranged which restored the Yangtse river as the boundary. In view of the growing power of Tibet, the British sent a mission to Lhasa in 1920 under Sir Charles Bell. In 1921, an agreement was concluded between Tibet and Britain for the import of 10 mountain guns, 20 machine guns and 10,000 rifles with ammunition. By 1933 all of this material had been supplied\*. Since Tibet was free from any form of Chinese control, Britain decided that it was best to help Tibet to maintain her independence.

In 1933, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama died. Between 1912 and 1934, there were no Chinese officials in Tibet. The Chinese Government took advantage of the death of the Dalai Lama to send a general at the head of a mission to offer religious tributes and condolences of the Chinese Government. Having come for this purpose, he insisted on staying on as the permanent representative but was forced to leave. Two of his liaison officers however remained behind. This provoked a British request for a similar office to be established, and this was accepted. The British Mission at Lhasa dated from his time. For seventeen years after the death of the Thirteenth Lama, the Governance of Tibet was in the hands of an interim regime approved by the Kashag. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, having been born in 1935, was too young to govern. The British Mission headed by Sir Basail Gould was able to maintain cordial relations. When the 1939-45 World War was underway, Tibet refused to allow any facilities to the allied forces to survey a route through Tibet for a supply line from India to China. When India became independent in 1947, China inquired from the new Indian Government whether the treaty rights and obligations between British India and Tibet had been assumed by the new Government. On their part, the Tibetan Government resolved to send a delegation to China when the Communists took over China in 1949. Such was the position prior China's invasion of Tibet in 1950.

### **The Invasion of Tibet 1950**

On October 1, 1949, the Communists became the rulers of China and the People's Republic of China was proclaimed. Even before that, however, the Peking Radio had broadcast on September 10 that

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\* "Great Britain, China & Tibet, 1914-21" C. Christie in 'Modern Asian Studies', October 1976.

people's Liberation Army was ready to liberate Tibet. On September 26, the Communist occupied Sinkiang. On November 24, Peking Radio broadcast a message of Mao Tse-tung exhorting the people of Tibet to overthrow the Dalai Lama. An army of over two million toughened through long years of a civil war was available to the Communist rulers as an instrument of State Policy. The first task assigned to it was to march westward and to bring back to the motherland, the non-Han regions of Sinkiang and Tibet. In their periods of expansion, China had previously always spread west into Central Asia and so it was now under the Communists. On October 7, 1950, Chinese troops launched a large admixture of Khampa irregulars from outer Tibet along with Chinese troops. When they reached Chamdo in the Kham country, the local governor (Dsongpon) who had no army worth the name to oppose them, surrendered, and was utilised by the Chinese to open negotiations with Lhasa. It is claimed by the Chinese that they also sent troops from Khotan across the Kuen-Lun mountains into Western Tibet at the same time and that they traversed the Aksai Region enroute. The sudden invasion of Tibet ignoring Tibet's position of independence since 1913, and previously of suzerainty, as it had come to be termed by the British, was an unwelcome display of force against which India protested to China on October 26, 1950 conveying their deep regret that the frequent promises of the Chinese to employ peaceful methods should have been belied. The Chinese reply asserted that Tibet was an integral part of China and any intervention on its behalf was an interference in the internal affairs of China.

After the fall of Chamdo, the Dalai Lama took over full responsibility for the Government of Tibet on 17th November at the age of fifteen, and he shifted his Government to the border town of Yatung on the Indo-Tibetan border. The Tibetan governor of Chamdo had been taken to Peking and there he was made to sign a "17 Point Agreement" in May 1951. This purported to guarantee Tibetan autonomy. In reality, however, any such hope was belied by the appointment of a Chinese Commissioner and Administrator of Civil and Military Affairs of Tibet. The Dalai Lama had to return to Lhasa when this Chinese General who was allowed by India to travel overland from Calcutta proceeded in July 1951 to Lhasa and thereafter Chinese soliders, both men and women, reached Lhasa. News kept coming to Lhasa of the Chinese propoganda in Kham that "Buddhism is a

deceiver of the people". This and other attacks on Buddhism were disturbing to the Tibetans. Although the Chinese wished to use the name and authority of the Dalai Lama, they were at the same time determined to undermine the hold of religion and consequently of the Dalai Lama and the religious order. In 1952, the Dalai Lama was compelled to dismiss the two Lonchens (Prime Ministers). Motorable roads from Chamdo to Lhasa and from Sinkiang to Western Tibet via Aksai Chin were also started.

As time passed, Tibetans had begun to feel the severities of the occupation with the quartering of Chinese troops in and around Lhasa and the requisitioning of foodgrains for them. In 1953, there were open demonstrations against the Chinese and a large public meeting was held where a memorandum was drawn up asking the Chinese to withdraw from Tibet leaving only a few officials. In 1954, the Chinese persuaded the Dalai Lama to undertake a visit to Peking. Mao-tse-tung told the Dalai Lama that a 'Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet' would be set up with 51 members including 3 Chinese officials at Lhasa. The composition of the Committee was an attempt to divide Tibet into several parts and give an equal status to the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama. The Panchen Lama had also been brought to Peking and stayed on there while the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa.

The 'Preparatory Committee' was formally inaugurated in 1955 in a hall built for the occasion in front of the Potala, the ancient landmark of Lhasa and the residence of the Dalai Lama. The Foreign Minister Chen Yi came specially from Peking for the ceremony. The Preparatory Committee remained a facade. The real decisions were taken by the Chinese officials who stepped up the policy of sequestering the land of the monasteries in Kham province, of requisitioning Tibetans as forced labour for building roads, and of undertaking an indoctrination programme against the Tibetan rulers. In 1956, Lhasa began to get an influx of refugees from Kham province who brought tales of guerilla warfare there.

The Chinese had tried to introduce land reforms in Kham province and reduce the power of monasteries. The people had resisted these changes, having seen their operation in the neighbouring Chinese province of Sikang where which was also inhabited by people of Tibetan origin. Things came to a head in a meeting of 300 village leaders who were called to discuss land reforms and whom the

Chinese wanted to pressurise into accepting their policy. When the Kham leaders found that they were to be disarmed, they fled from the place of meeting overnight. To the Khams the arms they carried were inseparable from their person, and the attempt to disarm the village leaders was the decisive event in the start of the guerilla warfare, under the command of Asuksang. The Chinese asked the Dalai Lama's Government to let the Tibetan army join the Chinese army to put down the insurgents, but this was naturally evaded on some pretext or the other.

In November 1956, the Dalai Lama visited India in connection with the celebration of the Buddha Jayanti. The full extent of the Khampa revolt was not known to him when he left Lhasa. Nevertheless, the situation in Tibet was becoming insupportable and he consulted India's Prime Minister if he may take refuge in India. In the hope of resolving the matter peacefully, Nehru persuaded the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa after assurances by Chou-En-Lai who had also timed his visit to India to synchronise with that of the Dalai Lama. Afterwards, Mao-Tse-tung now made an announcement postponing for five years the work of the "Preparatory Committee" and keeping the land reforms in abeyance, and it appeared that the assurances of Chou-En-Lai would be honoured.

This was, however, only a stratagem to gain time. By the middle of 1958, the Chinese attitude towards Tibet had hardened. The revolt and guerilla warfare in Kham had shown no sign of abating. More refugees had kept flocking into Lhasa and the population of Lhasa had doubled itself by November. The Chinese started a house census of the refugees. This forced the refugees to leave Lhasa and they crossed the river Tsangpo and went south to swell the ranks of the fighters. The guerillas became better organised and controlled the areas south of the river right upto the border with India, and the Chinese had to bring in more troops to deal with the situation\*.

The situation in Lhasa was becoming restless with the vast influx of the refugees and the tales of the woe brought by them, and the scarcity of foodgrains. In March, the Dalai Lama was asked by the Chinese Commander to come to the Chinese army camp to a theatrical performance. The Lhasa people came to know it and they surrounded the

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\* Dalai Lama. "My Land and My People". Ibid., p. 159.

Norbu Lingka palace to prevent the Dalai Lama from leaving. The Dalai Lama has described the event in his autobiography, "My Land and My People". Persuaded by the Dalai Lama to raise the siege of Norbu Lingka, the people started having continuous mass public meetings outside the Potala on March 12, 1959. The shelling of the palace started on March 17 at 4.00 PM and the same night the Dalai Lama and a small party escaped south crossing into India at Khinze-mane on March 31, 1959.

### **The Status of Tibet**

The invasion of Tibet in 1950 raised the question of the status of Tibet for the Indian Government. The British Indian Government had entered into a boundary agreement with Tibet in 1914 and this was being acted upon by both sides in respect of the border between the two countries east of Bhutan, called the McMahon Line. Ever since the expulsion of the Chinese from Tibet in 1911, Tibet was an independent State conducting its own external and internal affairs without any interference from China. Thereafter, India had established diplomatic relations with Lhasa without consulting the Chinese. In 1921, Charles Bell had been posted at Lhasa and in 1936, he was followed by Gould. The British had moreover arranged a truce between Tibet and China in 1918 over the war in Szechwan. Prime Minister Nehru declared in Parliament on 6 December 1950 that China's suzerainty over Tibet notwithstanding, Tibet's autonomy should remain unblemished. This enunciation of Tibet's status was denounced by China and in the interest of Indo-Chinese relations, India decided to accept the position in 1954 that Tibet was a part of China. What had changed since 1911 was not Tibet's status vis-a-vis, China but its ability to impose its will over Tibet.

The Chinese also terminated the Indian political agency as well as the trading and communication facilities in Tibet soon after their arrival in Lhasa in 1952. India had trading and connected rights in Tibet which China had recognised by the Anglo-Chinese convention in 1906. In fact, India had border trade with Tibet over centuries, including the trade over the Uttar Pradesh passes for daily necessities, and the pashmina wool trade between Western Tibet and Kashmir. The Chinese objected to the despatch of replacements for the Indian guards at Gyantse and Yatung, seized the wireless sets of the Indian



trade agent at Gartok and prevented him from proceeding to Rudok and Taklakot. By these violent unilateral acts, the Chinese disowned the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 and the Trade Regulations of 1908 and 1914 that China had entered into with the British and under which these facilities had been provided. Again India did not make an issue of it and agreed to re-negotiate the trading and communication facilities. The Chinese Prime Minister Chou-En-Lai suggested to the Indian Ambassador Panikkar that the political Agency at Lhasa should be transformed into a Consulate General in exchange for a similar Chinese Office at Bombay. India fell in line and an announcement was made on September 15, 1952 making this change in the status of the Indian Representative at Lhasa, Formal talks were begun on 31 December 1953 in Peeking to work out a new agreement. It was known that certain Chinese maps showed large parts of India's northern areas as parts of China but during the talks, China avoided any discussion of the border question when it came up incidentally in connection with the naming of the six passes and routes for traders and pilgrims in the Utrakhand area. They stated that "they would not touch on the boundary question".

The agreement of 1954 was important both for what is stated and what it omitted to state. It omitted any reference to the fact that India's trading and other rights in Tibet since 1904 had been terminated. It was worded as if the rights in their modified form were being agreed to for the first time, and granted on a reciprocal basis in return for similar rights granted to the Chinese to establish trade marts in India at Kalimpong, Siliguri and Calcutta. India gave up all postal and telegraph services which had been provided to connect the trade marts at Yatung, Shigatse and Gynatse and 12 rest houses on the route from India to these marts. The Chinese on the other hand obtained facilities for entry into Calcutta port and movement through India to Tibet of such commercial goods as would not be obtained in Tibet. They were also given permission to open branches at Calcutta and at other places in India of the People's Bank of China. The aspects that were played up were however India's acceptance that Tibet was a part of China and the doctrine of Panch Sheel which was enunciated in the agreement as governing the relations between India and China. This doctrine however was to be honoured by the Chinese more in the breach than in the observance.

The Indian Government were guided by their desire to achieve

Indo-Chinese amity when it gave up India's special relations with Tibet, and did not stand up for Tibet's status which was that of an independent nation since 1913 when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had announced his country's independence. India also refrained from raising the question of India's border with Tibet at the negotiations during 1953-54 although there were signs like the Chinese maps showing Indian territory as part of China, that China may have different ideas on the subject.

### **Tibet's Access to the Outside World**

Tibet has easier access to the world through India than through Chinese main land. This may seem surprising at first, but an examination of the terrain of the neighbouring areas of Tibet and the roads leading through them will bear this out. The Chinese can go into Tibet along two routes - via Chengtu in Sichuan province in the south to Chamdo, and via Sining in Chinghai province in the north to Lhasa. Running from north to south in eastern Tibet are towering mountains ridges and torrential rivers raging through gorges which in some places reach a depth of 2,500 metres. When the Chinese occupied Tibet in 1951, they started at once to make these two roads motorable, using forced labour of Tibetans as well as their own military formation for the road building work, and completed the work in 1954. The Chinese authors of "Tibet Leaps Forward" (1977, Foreign Press, Peking) state that a round trip by bus took about twenty days.

A highway from Sinkiang into Tibet was built in 1957 because access along the two highways direct from China was difficult. Not only the terrain was difficult but the inhabitants were fierce tribesmen who resented the in-roads on their province. The difficulties involved in travelling on the two direct roads from China are highlighted by the authors of the above mentioned book as follows; (p.89)

"More than half of the Chinghai - Tibet road was constructed on an uninhabited plateau over 4,500 metres above sea level....the air is thin and rarefied. All the year round there are either floods, heavy snow fall glaciers, landslides, or cave-ins. On the Szechuan Tibet Highway in the Pome country (in the east of Tibet) there are dozens of mud-rock flows. Early summer is the season when the mud flows are most active in melting. The famous Kushiang glaciers are permanently characterised by mud and rock slides and cave-ins....To the east of

Chamdo is the 4,800 metre mount Kachi-la....In two or three hours as much as one or two metres (on snow) will accumulate....the maintenance workers responsible for the Kachi-la section fight a never-ending battle against the blizzards”.

The Tanguts (Tibetans) who inhabit the Chinghai route are quite unused to Chinese administration. From the rail-head, the southern route involves a distance of 1900 KM into Tibet near the border of Arunachal Pradesh. An article by Ross Terill in the National Geographic Magazine of September 1985 states, “this long winding road linking Sichuan and Tibet snakes along for more than 1400 miles - a two week drive”. The western part of Sichuan is inhabited by the Yi (Tibetans) and other non-Hun races.

The above description of the areas and routes between China proper and Tibet will show the difficulties of access from China to Tibet. The Chinese authors quoted already describe the journey by bus as a twenty-day round trip now. On the other hand, the access from India's North-Eastern frontier to Tibet is relatively easy. The port of Calcutta and the route via Nathu La in Sikkim has in fact been used by the Chinese in the past to send supplies and arms to their forces in Tibet. The main routes from India are via Jelep La and Nathu La into the Chumbi Valley. This route offers Lhasa the easiest access to the outside world via Gyantse and Yatung in Tibet.

The other routes in the north-east are in the Mishmi area of Arunachal Pradesh through Walong and Rima to Pemako and the route through Tawang. The route via Tawang area, east of Bhutan was used by the Dalai Lama when he arrived on 31 March 1959 at Khinzemane after the flight from Lhasa.

In the middle sector, the six main passes for inter-border trade are named in the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954. These are mentioned as Shipki, Mana, Nit, Kungri Bingri Darma and Lipu Lekh passes, and “the customary route along the valley of the (Indus) River may be traversed in accordance with custom”. The markets in western Tibet, Taklakot, Gartok and Rudok were attended by Indian Bhotia traders. The holy lands of Mansarovar lake and Mount Kalaish were visited by Indian pilgrims. Likewise in the area of Kashmir adjoining Tibet there are several customary routes, e.g., via Demchok, Chushul and Lanakla on the east of Ladakh. These are old and relatively easy. All these various routes have been used by the Tibetans in preference to those through China.

## Himalayan Border Lands

The Himalayan border lands of India, Nepal and Bhutan have had long and uninterrupted relations with, and access to the land locked regions of Tibet. From China, on the other hand, Tibet is approached by two long and difficult routes—through Tsinghai in the North, and through Sikang in the South. Both these routes passed through inhospitable country inhabited by hostile tribes. A brief account of the Himalayan border areas would show their long and intimate connection with Tibet. Spiti and Rampur Bashahr of Himachal Pradesh lie north and south of the Satluj River which has its source in Mount Kailash and passes into India near the Shipki Pass. Next come the regions of Garhwal and Kumaon in Uttar Pradesh. Here lie the sacred Hindu places of pilgrimage and the entry to mount Kailash and Mansorver Lake. This area called Uttarakhand provides numerous routes to Tibet. The traders of these areas called *Bholiyas* regularly attended markets in the Tibet at Gartok Taklakot and other places. The passes Shipki, Mana, Niti, Lipulekh, Darma, Kungri–Bingri passes are mentioned in the Indo-Chinese Agreement of 1954 for trade with Tibet. Apart from trade, grazing of cattle and sheep and yaks was carried on here according to the custom and recognised usage.

These border regions of India were the area where the Chinese army patrols intruded immediately after the Indo-Chinese Trade Agreement of 1954. A brief account of the past history of these areas is given below:

## **Spiti and Rampur**

South of Ladakh lies Spiti which is geographically a continuation of the plateau of Ladakh. Turning east along the Himalaya, the next border region is Kinnaur. The River Sutlej takes its rise from Mount Kaliash in the south-east corner of Western Tibet and flows eastward through Kinnaur. Both Spiti and Kinnaur figure in the old history of Ladakh. In the tenth century A.D., King Skyeid Mgnon gave Lahaul, Spiti and Upper Kinnaur to his youngest son. The people of Spiti followed Lama Buddhism whereas the people of Kinnaur followed Hinduism. In the early seventeenth century A.D., king Songe Namgyal of Ladakh conquered Upper Kinnaur and Spiti and also Guge and Purang (Gartok and Mount Kailash region respectively) in Western Tibet. The war between Ladakh and Tibet in 1681-3 mentioned in Chapter I ended in the cession of Guge and Purang to Tibet, and Upper Kinnaur came under the rule of Raja Kehri Singh of Bashahr. The ancestors of Bashahr Raja originally had their seat at Kamru in the valley of river Baspa, a tributary of the Sutlej. From now on the Bashahr rulers ruled Kinnaur from Rampur and the state came to be called Rampur Bashahr.

There is an important trade route from Rampur Bashahr to Gartok in Western Tibet via the Shipki pass. When the British moved into the Sutlej area after a treaty with Raja Ranjit Singh of Punjab early in the nineteenth century, they established political agencies at Ludhiana and at Sabathu in the Himalayan foot-hills. They were interested in the world trade of Tibet with Kashmir. As Gartok was connected with Bashahr via Shipki, they encouraged the Raja to divert the wool sold at Gartok to his kingdom and thence to Ludhiana, instead of it going to Kashmir. This was one of the reasons for the invasion of Western Tibet by Zorawar Singh in 1841.

## **Uttarakhand**

The Himalayan areas east of Rampur Bashahr comprise the Garhwal and Kumaon regions and in the northern parts of these lie the source of the Yamuna and Ganga rivers. These border lands are now called Uttarakhand. The Katyuri dynasty ruled the region since the Gupta period. Later Kumaon separated from Garhwal and came under the Chand dynasty. In Kumaon, King Balo Kalyan (1560-63) shifted the capital to Almora and extended his rule upto the Tibetan border. The Katyuri

Raja Raj Bahadur Chand (1638-78) marched into Western Tibet. He defeated the Huniyas (Tibetans), wrested the control of the passes, and virtually destroyed the fortress of Taklakot on Tibet's border. Later, Nepal annexed Kuamon and Garhwal in 1803-9 and eventually came into conflict with the East India Company. The British occupied Kumaon and E. Garhwal after a war with Nepal and restored Tehri Garhwal to Raja Sundarshan Shah in 1815.

The Uttarakhand border lands are also called Bhot and are inhabited by the Bhotiyas. There are several trading marts in the Kailash and Mansarowar region where trade was controlled by the Bhotiya merchants. The important passes from west to east are Nilang, Mana, Niti, Kungri Bingri, Unta Dhura Darma and Lipu Lekh. Between the rivers Sutlej (Shipki pass) and the river Kali (Nepal border) the border with Tibet was well defined and the Indian rulers, Katyuris and their successors the Chands and the Shahs, were well aware of the border with Tibet which existed along the high passes mentioned already. The people on both sides of the border had frequent contacts. After the British occupation of the area, occasional disputes arising out of such contacts, e.g., at Nilang (Jadhang) and Darma passes, were settled by the local border officers. In 1888, the Tibetans came to Bara Hoti near Niti pass and the British had to send troops at which the Tibetans ran away. About the same time, the Tibetan Jongpon barred Bhotiya traders coming into Taklakot, although Tibetans from Taklakot were freely allowed to come into Kumaon. To safeguard the local population, the British administration was extended by posting officials at Garbyang, Pithoragarh and Champavat.

## **Nepal**

For a length of 540 miles east of Uttarakhand lies the independent Kingdom of Nepal across the Himalayan region from the Terai on the foothills to the high passes leading to Tibet. Nepal is an independent territory since its early history. Although there have been migrations of Indians into Nepal particularly of Rajputs when they had to flee India due to foreign invasion, they were absorbed in the local population. Nepal's relations with Tibet have been a marked feature of its history since the time when Tibet became a unified State in the seventeenth century A.D. The Nepalese have been prominent in trade with Tibet and since the medieval period the Nepalese traders - the Newars - also

handled trade between India and Nepal. Till the late nineteenth century, Nepalese traders had been granted extra territorial status in Lhasa and were an important and influential community whose interests were jealously protected by the Nepalese ambassador in Lhasa. A brief description of Nepal's history and its relations with its neighbours will be helpful in the general context of the Indo-Tibetan border.

A Nepalese prince married the first king of unified Tibet Songtsen Gampo in the early seventh century A.D. and introduced Buddhism into Tibet. In the middle ages, the Kathmandu valley in Nepal became the centre of flourishing cultural and commercial contacts between India and Tibet. During the reign of the fifth Dalai Lama in Tibet in the 17th century, two Nepalese Kings, Rama Shah of Gorkha (1603-63) and Pratap Malla of Kathmandu (1624-77) seized the border passes through which most of the trans-border trade passed. The Newar merchants of the Kathmandu valley gained control of the Tibetan border towns of Kuth and Kerong and extended their activities right up to Lhasa.

In 1773, the Gurkha tribesmen of Rajput ancestry had conquered all the other similar kingdoms of Nepal to form a unified kingdom which became a major military power. Nepal invaded Tibet in 1788 and seized the border regions. Again in 1791, they marched to Shigatse and looted the Tashi lun-po monastery of the Panchem Lama. The Chinese took the opportunity to intervene and the Chinese emperor sent an army via Kokonor (Tsinghai) rather than Chamdo (Sikang-Szechuan) to ensure expeditious arrival in Tibet. The Chinese army marched across Tibet and crossed into Nepal in 1791. Due to malarial conditions in Nepal, the morale of the Chinese army was low and in September 1791 it incurred heavy losses in battle. A treaty was concluded under which Nepal agreed to send a mission every five years to China. Hereafter Nepal expanded her dominion south into India. During 1803-9 the neighbouring areas of Western Sikkim, Gorakhpur, Kumaon and Garhwal were taken. This brought them into conflict with the East India Company and the British troops under Occherloney invaded Nepal during 1814-15. However, the British army got bogged down in Nepal and had to make peace. But by the treaty of Sanjauli, the British gained the territory of Kumaon and Garhwal, as well as Gorakhpur.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, the control of the kingdom passed from the hands of the Shahs to the 'Muktiyar' appointed by the ruler, Jang Bahadur. He stopped sending the five yearly mission to China after 1854, made friends with the British and invaded

Tibet in 1855. The Nepalese merchants acquired special rights in Lhasa by this treaty. In 1883, however, there was a riot against Nepalese merchants in Lhasa. Their virtual monopoly of trade south of India and Nepal now came to an end and they were left mostly with trade to salt and rice between Tibet and Nepal. In 1950 the Shah dynasty reasserted itself and took over direct rule.

## **Sikkim**

East of Nepal lay the frontier areas of Sikkim through which pass the most important routes from India to Tibet. These routes cross into Tibet at Nathu La and Jelep-la respectively into the Chumbi Valley which forms a wedge between Sikkim and Bhutan.

Sikkim was inhabited originally by the Lepchas who were a different people from the Nepalese as well as from the people of Bhutan to the east of them. At the present day, the number of Lepchas has declined and the Sikkimese of Nepalese stock are the main element in the population. Bhutan and Nepal, both invaded Sikkim in the late 18th century and occupied Sikkim to the east and west respectively of the river Tista. In 1792, when China invaded Nepal the Chinese also took the opportunity to annex the Chumbi valley to Tibet. With the establishment of a strong expansionist Government in Nepal, Sikkim was threatened with absorption by the Nepalese in the nineteenth century. In 1803, Nepal annexed eastern Sikkim. After the Anglo-Nepalese war, however, the British restored this area to Sikkim. They reinstated the Raja of Sikkim but under British suzerainty. In 1830, the British took on lease from the Sikkim Raja a tract on the outer Sikkim hills as far as and including Darjeeling. This area was developed by the British for tea plantations. The Sikkimese resented this sequestration of their territory by the British and sought help from Tibet against them. Dr. Campbell and Dr. Hooker who were developing this area were captured by the Sikkimese in 1849 but they were released after a show of force by the British. The Sikkimese made another attempt to regain the area in 1872 and again the British suppressed the Sikkimese hostilities.

The British were interested in Sikkim on account of the routes it provided into Tibet. In their effort to open Tibet to trade, the British had made the Chinese agree in the Chefoo Convention of 1876 to the visit of a British mission from India to Tibet. A Bengal trade mission under Coleman Macaulay was assembled on the border, but the Tibetans



collected an armed force in the Chumbi Valley in 1885 to oppose it. They sent a detachment over the Himalaya and occupied Natong in Sikkim. Tibet and Sikkim now signed treaty declaring that Sikkim was subject only to Tibet. The British led an expedition against the Tibetans in 1888 over the Jelep La into the Chumbi Valley, and inflicted severe losses on them killing 200 Tibetans.

After expelling the Tibetans out of Sikkim, the British opened negotiations with the Chinese to define the border of Sikkim with Tibet. A treaty was signed on 17 March 1890 by the Chinese amban at Lhasa, by which China recognised the political position of the British in Sikkim and agreed to a delimitation of the border along the crest of the watershed in return for a waiver of Sikkim's claim on the Chumbi Valley. In December 1893, the Chinese amban signed a set of trade regulations under the treaty. The treaty and the regulations were, however, repudiated by the Tibetans. In 1902, Curzon sent J.C. White as his representative to Sikkim and since then a Political Officer was posted at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. A treaty was signed by independent India in 1949 confirming the existing position, and later Sikkim joined the Indian Union in 1975.

## **Bhutan**

In the seventh century A.D. a line of Indian Chiefs ruled Bhutan. They were under the tutelage of Kamarupa (Assam) rulers and belonged to the same race as the people of the adjoining plains to the south. During the ninth century A.D., Bhutan was infiltrated and colonised in its western and central parts by people of Tibetan stock. By the seventeenth century, the Drupkas, as the people of Tibetan stock were called after the Druk sect of Lamaism, became the dominant race of western and central Bhutan and Lamaism spread to Bhutan. The eastern part of the country, however, continued to be inhabited by people of the same race as their neighbours in Arunachal Pradesh. The Tibetans called them Monpas, i.e., people of the south.

Although, Tibet continued from time to time to intervene in Bhutan, the Drupkas have never accepted Tibetan control and preserved the integrity and sovereignty of Bhutan. In 1644, the Mongol ruler of Tibet, Gusri Khan, sent Mongol troops to subdue Bhutan but they had to retreat. Again in 1648-49, a Mongol Tibetan force invaded Bhutan and forced Bhutan to accept a subordinate position. But in 1657, the Mon-

gols and Tibetans suffered a crushing defeat. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Chief Lama of Bhutan was at war with Tibet. The ruler of Ladakh who accepted him as his religious preceptor, invaded western Tibet in retaliation. Tibet got another opportunity to intervene in Bhutan's affairs during 1728-30 when there was a dispute over the choice of Chief Lama. The Bhutanese had to make peace with Tibet and agree to maintain a representative at Lhasa, an agreement that continued till 1951.

The Bhutanese state was a theocracy till the end of the 18th century. Gradually, however, the political power passed to a 'Devaraja' line of rulers who were originally appointed by the Chief Lama who came to be called 'Dharamraja', i.e., the spiritual head. In the late 18th century, Bhutan annexed the area of the Duars - the foothills of the Himalaya to the south of their country. But Warren Hastings was able to intervene and ensure that the Bhutanese withdrew from the area, which remained with the Raja of Cooch-Bihar. In 1864-65, the Bhutanese again attempted to take the Duars and were defeated after a hard fought war. Thereafter the British annexed the Duars and in 1895 took the Kalimpong area from Bhutan.

The Chinese had laid claim to Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal in 1910. This was repudiated by the British and the occasion led to the signing of the treaty between Indian and Bhutan by which the external affairs and defence of Bhutan became the responsibility of the British Indian Government. This treaty was renewed by the Indian Government in 1949. Since then, Bhutan conducts its own external relations also.

### **Arunachal Pradesh**

The northern border of India east of Bhutan is demarcated by the treaty of 1914 between India and Tibet signed after the Simla Conference. This border is called the McMahon Line and is often mentioned in the dispute between India and China. The McMahon Line demarcated the high crest of the Himalayan ranges east of Bhutan and covered in its eastern portion the border between Burma and China. The Chinese have not stepped south of the border except for a visit to Rima in 1910. During the Thirtyone Days War of 1962, they withdrew north of the Line after the unilateral declaration of cease fire in November 1962. The Chinese Premier, however, laid claim to the area now known as Arunachal Pradesh in 1959.

Arunachal Pradesh lies between the Himalayan watershed and the river Brahmaputra and is inhabited by various hill tribes who belong to an ethnic stock different from the people of the Assam plains and from the Tibetans. Arunachal Pradesh formed part of ancient Kamarupa which is mentioned as a powerful kingdom at the time of King Harsha in the seventh century A.D. The people of Arunachal Pradesh are the Monpas, Akas, Daflas, Miris, Abors and Mishmi, running from west to east. The rivers that flow from Tibet into the Brahmaputra, after passing through this Pradesh are (from west to east), the Kameng, the Subansiri, the Siang or the Dihang, the Dibang, and the Lohit along which runs the main route to Zayul in Tibet. The last three form the Brahmaputra.

King Bhaskar Varman of Kamarupa ruled an area larger than present day Assam as reported by the Chinese traveller Hieun-Tsang. In 1228, Northern Burma conquered Upper Kamarupa and founded the Ahom dynasty. The Ahoms annexed the country around Sadiya in Arunachal Pradesh in 1523-24. In their dealings with the tribes of these areas, they recognised their right to receive tribute (posa) from households (Paiks).

Assam was conquered by the Burmese towards the end of the eighteenth century. The British annexed Assam as a result of the first Anglo-Burmese war in 1826. They appointed a Political Agency to control the affairs of Upper Assam, including the tribal areas north of the Brahmaputra. The British took away from the tribes the right to levy 'posa' and persuaded them to accept in lieu of it a lumpsum payment from the Government. This did not prevent the hostility of the tribes and in 1873 Government evolved the policy of avoiding contacts with these tribes and to leave them alone. They promulgated the East Bengal Frontier Regulations laying down administrative line called the 'inner line' beyond which no one from the plains was allowed to proceed without the permission of Government.

During 1876-77, the British sent survey parties in the Abor country which met with a hostile reception. In 1878-79, the Mishmis raided the plains. Government then established three advance posts in these areas including one at Nizamghat. In 1882, Government appointed Needham as Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya. Needham stayed at this post till 1905 and was succeeded by Noel Williamson who held the post till March 1911. Arunachal Pradesh was disturbed for the one and only time by the Chinese in 1910 when Chou-Erh-feng sent his troops into Zayl and thence along the Lohit to cross into India at Rima in the

Mishmi area. The Chinese troops placed a border stone south of Rima claiming it as Chinese/Tibetan border.

When Williamson explored the Abor country west of the Mishmi area, he was murdered in 1911 north of Pasighat. A punitive expedition was sent by the British under General Bower. Bower was also asked to explore the area to determine "the coordinates" of a frontier line between the tribal area and Tibet. A number of survey parties visited the area from 1911 to 1913 and the information collected was used by McMahon to draw up a correct border line between India and Tibet at the Simla Conference of 1913-14. In 1935, the Government of India Act placed the area directly under the control of the Central Government instead of being under the Government of Bengal. It was later named the "North East Frontier Agency". The British were, however, cautious in extending active administration in the area beyond the Brahmaputra. They continued the Political Agency at Sadiya which, existed already and created another at Balipara for the Tawang area adjoining Bhutan in the west. In 1938, it came to the notice of the administration that Tibetan officials had claimed the right to collect taxes from the Monpas who inhabited the Tawang area east of Bhutan. The Tibetans, with whom the matter was taken confirmed in 1944 that they accepted the 1914 line. Since independence, the area has become first a Union Territory, and now a full-fledged state of the Indian Union.

## 4

## The Aksai Chin

## I

The main disputed area under Chinese occupation on the Indo-Chinese border is Askai Chin area & Ladakh adjoining Tibet and Sinkiang. This is a wedge of territory, about 15000 square miles in area, occupied by the Chinese after 1949 in a series of advances culminating in the Indo-Chinese War of 1962. The Chinese Premier Chou-En-lai then claimed it as a part of Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan. It is relevant to see what the position was in regard to this area according to records available in the National Archives of India under the British rule. The first Englishman to visit Aksai Chin was Johnson, a Civil Assistant engaged in the Great Trigonometrical Survey started in the 1820s. In 1865, he was deputed to survey the area north of the Chang Chenmo Valley in Ladakh. While this was his assignment he actually managed to cross over into the territory of Chinese Turkestan at the invitation of the ruler of Khotan. Johnson, it was hoped "might succeed in obtaining a view of some of the towns in Khotan from the Trigonometrical stations on the summits of the Kuen-Lun range, the boundary between the territories of the Maharaja and the Province of Khotan".<sup>1</sup> Johnson managed to go to Khotan at the invitation of its ruler. A part of Chinese Turkestan, Khotan had revolted against the Chinese and overpowered the garrison. Soon after, the central part of Chinese Turkestan, Yarkand and Kashgar, also revolted against the Chinese, and Yakub Beg from Khokand became the ruler of that part of Chinese Turkestan. The ruler of Khotan felt insecure at the hands of Yakub Beg and was anxious to get British help. He dispatched an emissary, Juma Khan, for the purpose

to India. Next he invited Johnson as the only Englishman in the vicinity to come and visit him at his capital, Ilchi. Johnson brought back a great deal of geographical information “of regions which have hitherto been a blank on our maps”<sup>2</sup>. *Inter alia*, this information was about the route across Aksai Chin whereby Johnson reached Khotan as well as about another route which lay to the east and which connected Keriya in Khotan with Rudok in Tibet without going across the Maharaja of Kashmir’s territory. He was told about it by Yarkandi merchants as a much easier route which avoided both Askai Chin and the Kuen-Lun range. It was “said to be practicable for wheeled traffic and to possess a great advantage over all other routes in that wood, grass and water were available at every stage”<sup>3</sup>.

Johnson was censured by the Government of India for crossing the frontier into Khotan without permission, but his superior, Lt. Col. Walker, the Superintendent of Trigonometrical Survey, defended him by saying “no Englishman possessing a moderate amount of enterprise and zeal for public service could have allowed such an opportunity to slip through his hand”<sup>4</sup>. In the previous working season Johnson had been working on the Karakoram Pass route and had halted at Suket where a messenger from the “Khan Badshah” of Khotan had come to meet him to invite him to Khotan. But he had missed Johnson who had by then left for Leh. This year “a native of Central Asia” met him at Leh and presented a letter from the Khotan ruler inviting him to Ilchi, and Johnson was in any case going to the area north of the Chang Chenmo valley for his work. It took him a march of twenty stages from Leh to the passes over the Kuen Lun range. The route followed by him was the one traversed by Juma Khan the emissary of Khotan to the British. Juma Khan had taken this route, and was infact a pioneer, because the usual route from Sinkiang to Leh was under the control of Yakub Bag. Johnson reached Chang Chenmo Vally from Leh in ten stages and next crossed the range of hills running east to west and forming the northern boundary of the valley. Thereafter, in his words : “I marched on high extensive table lands.....that a horse might be galloped over them everywhere”. The first plain was about 17,300 feet above the sea level and, he says, “bears traces of having been the bed of a large lake, and at present contains two lakes which are probably much larger in April and May on the melting of snows. A second plain slopes for a distance of 30 miles in north-easterly direction from 16,700 (feet) down to 15,300 (feet) when it rises again to the watershed of the Kuen-Lun. I traversed

these two plains and a third lying to the north-west of the second".<sup>5</sup>

Johnson observed from the hills he ascended the panoramic view of the region, and saw that there were more plains of considerable extent to the east and south-east. To the west however were, not plains, but deep valleys providing the water for one of the principal affluents of the Karakash river. He struck this river at a point west of one of the Great Trigonometrical stations (lat. 35° 53' 36" and long 79° 28' 32", height 21,767 feet). From the route details given by Johnson we learn that the eleventh stage (and the first across the range forming the northern boundary of the Chang Chenmo Valley) was Lumkang at the foot of this range to the north. Stage 12 was Nischu on the other side of the Lumkang pass. Stages 13, 14 were Burcha-thang and Tso-thang, the latter being near a salt water lake. The road to it "lay over a plain which has the appearance of having been the bed of a large lake, the soil was covered with salt petre to the depth of about six inches". Stages 15, 16, 17 were Huzakhar, Mapo-thang and Yang-pa. He notes that the quantity of "salt petre which lays on the ground to the depth of about 9 inches which is so white that the whole plain has the appearance of being covered with snow".

At stage 18, he halted on the left bank of the Karakash river "at a distance of about 20 miles from its sources in the Kuen-Lun ranges which lies immediately to the north and east". He notes that a few stone huts had been built on the right bank by Juma Khan. Then he travelled up the Kuen-Lun and the route lay up a sandy ravine to the Khatai Diwan pass (17500 feet). "There is a good road from this place along the left bank to Shadulla, situated on the route between Karakoram Pass and Yarkand"<sup>6</sup>. At the next (19th) stage, called Tash, Johnson halted at a stone hut erected by Juma Khan on the left bank of the Yang-pa-river. The route now lay up a ravine to the Yangi Diwan Pass (19,092 feet). He notes, "It is reported that this route was discovered and used for the first time by Juma Khan". Stage 20 was Kush-lash Langar and Stage 21 Brinjga. The latter "is a famous grazing ground. The passes to it, viz., the Yangi Diwan and the Naia Khan Diwan are in the Kuen-Lun-mountains"<sup>7</sup>. Johnson crossed over into Khotan at Brinjga where the Wazir of Khotan received him. This was the "first encampment beyond the Ladak boundary"<sup>8</sup>. Johnson crossed the Kuen-Lun by passes which were first used by Juma Khan on his way to India. About the plains of Aksai Chin, Johnson states that they were "perfectly uninhabited and devoid of all vegetation with the exception of the lavender plant: fresh

water is also very scarce, that of the numerous lakes in these plains being very brackish”<sup>9</sup>

Johnson stayed in Khotan for 16 days during which time he visited Keriya and other towns. It was with great difficulty that he was able to persuade the ruler to let him go. The return route he took was via the Sanju Diwan Pass, then along the Karakash river for four days to Shadula and “the Maharajah’s guard house there”. He was accompanied “by the Roja Beg or Governor of Sanju, who had been ordered by the Khan of Khotan to accompany me as far as the Maharajah’s boundary.....I finally quitted Shadula for Leh on 8th November, first marching up the left bank of the Kara Kash river and then turning west up the broad and open valley called the Suket, at the head of which I crossed Sukit Diwan Pass”<sup>10</sup>. On this route also he found the Kuen Lun range to be the boundary. When Johnson crossed the Kalian Pass down to Kalian village he notes, the Chinese always kept a guard of 50 men to prevent strangers”<sup>11</sup>. After that he reached Shadula as already noted.

## II

While Johnson was visiting Khotan, the Maharaja of Kashmir’s agents were visiting the territories that had come under Yakub Beg. The reports sent by him were passed on to the British authorities by the Maharaja as the revolt in Sinkiang coincided with the advance of Russia in Central Asia. The Russians took Tashkend which was under the rulers of Khokand and next turned their attention to Bokhara and Khokand which latter is the area around Ferghana. These agents travelled from Leh to Yarkand and Yangi Hissar where the ancient fort was being used to hold 400 Chinese soldiers as prisoners. They next reached Kashgar and from thence proceeded to Khokand. They were however stopped from proceeding thither by a guard of 100 Bokhara soldiers. They learnt that the Bokhara forces had attacked the forces of Khokand who “fell to Yarkand in great disorder. The refugees finding Kashgar without an owner took possession of it and the Chinese garrisons of the fort of Kashgar were annihilated”<sup>12</sup>. Eventually, Yakub Beg, guardian of the Prince of Khokand established himself as the Ruler of Kashgaria which included the whole of Sinkiang except the northern It region which was taken by the Russians.

Another agent of the Maharaja who visited Khotan, he reported that the Russians had slain 500 Khokandees when they captured Tashkend



and “the only man of Khokand who escaped is the present Kosh Begi”<sup>13</sup>, i.e., Yakub Beg. He reported also the capture of Yarkand in March 1866. Thereafter, Yakub Beg took Khotan. Information was also being sent to the British by the Muslim news-letter writer at Leh. He reported the departure for winter of the Maharaja’s guard of ten soliders at Shadula. He also reported the arrival of a European, in his letter dated 31 July 1866, “from the direction of Tashi Kang in the Askai Chin”<sup>14</sup>. In his letter dated 26 August 1866 he reports that Yakub Beg has conferred a valuable Khillat on the ruler of Sarikol who came to see him at Yarkand and has sent him back and instructed him to warn Ghuznun Khan and other Kunjooti chiefs not to plunder on the Yarkand road that if they persisted in such conduct he would destroy them”<sup>15</sup>. Sarikol is the south western part of Sinkiang adjoining Russia and Hunza (Kunjoot). Yakub Beg was just in time when he extended his authority here because the Russians were pressuring the Khan of Bokhara to allow them passage to Sarikol. The letter-writer notes that the Russians were “demanding passage to Tash Koorgan in Sarikol from the King of Bokhara but were refused”. At the same time, Yakub Beg put the people of Hunza under notice to desist from their hereditary trade of plundering the caravans from Leh to Yarkand or those in the reverse direction. The letter writer further reported on October 1, 1866 that the king of Bokhara was encamped at Khokand when the Russian forces crossed the Sir Darya. “A battle was fought in which both sides suffered. Then in a night attack the king inflicted a great loss on the Russians”.

Under these conditions the British were relieved that Yakub Beg was proving a strong ruler. They wanted to strengthen his hands against the Russians and at the same time they wished to find opportunities for trading with Central Asia; if possible by avoiding the territories of the Maharaja of Kashmir because of the vexatious behaviour of his staff, and the heavy exactions levied by them. A leading proponent of the expansion of trade by avoiding the Kashmir territory was a Punjab civilian Forsyth. He wanted to explore routes by which Kulu and not Leh would be the market for exchange of goods between Yarkand and the South. Forsyth had learnt from Hayward and Shaw who had crossed the Aksai Chin subsequently to Johnson, that a trade route could be developed from Lahoul-Spiti to Sinkiang which would avoid Leh. Forsyth persuaded the Government of India to allow the exploration of this route. The Maharaja was forced to sign an agreement in 1870 for

the survey of the Chang Chenmo Valley and to its north. Under the treaty two Joint Commissioners were appointed, one by the Maharaja and one by the British. The latter was Dr. Cayley, the British agent at Leh. The same year Forsyth set forth on a mission to Yakub Beg by this route. Cayley reports on 28 July 1870 from his camp on the Kara Kash river that he had come on ahead of Forsyth from Lingzi-Thang, Cayley met messengers sent back by the Kashmir Government employees Shadulla that preparations were being made for Forsyth's reception.<sup>16</sup> The Forsyth party met with a serious mischance and the party lost a hundred horses. However, Forsyth forged ahead and reached near Shadulla and the envoys of Yakub Beg were waiting for him. Further journey was however given up. Cayley returned by a different route which he said "avoids many of the pitfalls of Lingzi-Thang and Soda Plains and lay more to the west, via Kizil Jilga, which was used by Hayward on his return journey from Yarkand". Forsyth also returned by this route.

Forsyth went to Yarkand in 1873. The advance party consisting of Henderson and Hume took the route across Lingzi-Thang and reached Shadulla. Forsyth found Yakub Beg agreeable to a commercial treaty but the Russian presence in his capital was over-powering. He allowed the Forsyth mission to carry out a survey of the routes leading to the Pamir mountains along which a Russian advance was apprehended. Lt. Colonel Gordon and party crossed the Little Pamir and were received by the ruler of Wakhan. There the party divided into two, one under Biddulph explored "the Burroghie and Durkot passes leading to Yassein"<sup>17</sup>, while the other took the road to the Great Pamir. Both met at Aktash and returned to Sarikol in 1874. After the return of the Forsyth mission, Robert Shaw was sent with the ratified treaty back to Kashgar. But he found procrastination on the part of Yakub Beg. Shaw reported that the Kunjoots were making incursions on the Kokyar road in Yarkand territory.<sup>18</sup> In the meanwhile one British trader, T. Russell travelled to Sinkiang. Russell came by the Chang Chenmo route and across Aksai Chin to Shadulla. He reported that the conditions for trade were encouraging. He returned by the Karakoram Pass and noted that Malikshah "would appear to define the boundary of His Highness the Amir of Kashgar's territory"<sup>19</sup>. Malikshah is three stages from Shadulla on the Karakoram route. With the sudden death of Yakub Beg in 1876, Shaw had to return and the proposed commercial treaty remained unsigned. The Chinese re-established their hold over Sinkiang.

### III

Younghusband was responsible for making the decision that the Chinese should be used to take possession of the territory between the Karakoram mountains and the Kuen-Lun Range so as to provide a buffer between Russian advance and the British empire in India. Younghusband had travelled in 1885 from China to Sinkiang and from Sarikol crossed into Baltistan along the Glaciers, a route that had never been attempted by the white man for crossing into India. Younghusband established his reputation by this feat and when he got the chance revisited the trans-Karakoram area in 1899— this time from the Indian side. As we have seen, the people of Hunza, the Kunjoots, found “the most profitable hunting ground - for they were professional robbers - between Leh and Yarkand over the Karakoram Pass, and many a rich caravan on its way from India to Central Asia and had been waylaid and forged in the neighbourhood of Shadullah”<sup>20</sup>. The Russians had advanced into the Pamirs and the British authorities in India were perplexed as to whether the Russians will advance via Chitral, Hunza or the Sarikol route. The no-man’s land between the Karakoram/Muztagh Range and the Kuen-Lun Range consisted of the Raksam Valley and the watershed of the Yarkand river on the west, and the Aksai Chin and the watershed of the Karakash river on the east.

In 1888 the key point of Shadulla which had been vacated by the Kashmir authorities at the insistence of the British, was subjected to Kunjooti raids and the Kirghiz nomads who were the only inhabitants, had sought protection from the Chinese Tao Tai at Kashgar. But they were told by him that the Chinese posts were at Killian and Sanju, the outlying passes to the south of the Kuen-Lun and since the Kirghiz were living south of these posts they could not expect protection from the Sinkiang authorities”<sup>21</sup>.

The Kirghiz then approached Captain Ramsay, the British High Commissioner at Leh. Ramsay sought instructions, recommending that the fort at Shadulla should be allowed to be occupied by the Kashmir authorities. Younghusband was deputed to go to Shadulla to study the situation on the spot, and also to go to Hunza from the north to find out more about the possible routes that the Russian might take. The British had information that a Russian agent had met the Thum of Hunza and had offered him Russian assistance. Younghusband travelled in 1889 to the Chang Chenmo valley and from there to Shadulla. He made friends

with Turdi Beg, the leader of the Kirghiz there, gave him some money to repair the fort, and sent a merchant Juma Khan whom Turdi recommended as suitable for the purpose, to convey Young-husband's greetings to the Chinese Amban at Yarkand. He was apprehensive that the Chinese might not take kindly to the British presence there and wanted to make sure that no exaggerated reports reached the Chinese about the British intentions.

From Shadulla Younghusband made haste to proceed to the west to explore the passes leading to Hunza, and to explore the Pamirs to find out what was militarily possible by way of a march from the Pamirs to the south by the Russians. He had sent a message to another officer, Bower, who was exploring the Pamirs that they should meet in the Taghdumbash Pamirs which lay on the route from the Great Pamirs to Hunza. To his surprise he met a Russian officer Gromchevsky on 24th October <sup>22</sup> and learning that he intended to go to Leh, sent a message to the Maharaja of Kashmir "I met a Russian near a river at Yarkand. His name is Gromchevsky. He has an application to go to Ladakh and then to Tibet via Tangsi. He has been detained at Shadulla Khoja. There are six sepoys in his company". Younghusband had into Gromchevsky near the Taghdumbash Pamirs. The latter was quite open with him and told him of his visit the previous year to Hunza after receipt of two letters of invitation from the Thum. But Younghusband coached the Kirghiz to mislead him with regard to the route to Leh so that the Russian reached Polu with difficulty after losing his pack horses.

Younghusband had managed to go across the Raksam Valley and the passes leading to Hunza. In his report to Durand the Foreign Secretary he wrote, "I have discovered a subsidiary range between the Karakoram and the Kuen-Lun running parallel to them in a north westerly direction. The name of the country Raskam (Rao-Kan) means a "real mine"<sup>23</sup> which he presumed to show that mining was done in this area. About his journey from Raksam Valley to the Passes leading to Hunza, Younghusband wrote to the British Resident at Srinagar "The (Shimshal) Pass I find to be an extremely easy one. Its value from a military point of view is completely lost on account of the very difficult nature of the country beyond on the Kanjut side".<sup>24</sup> The emissary sent to the Amban of Yarkand also returned and he reported to Durand, "The merchant from Shadulla whom I sent to Amban of Yarkand returned.....The Amban said it would be a very good thing if Shahidulla again became populated and prosperous". This relieved

Younghusband of the anxiety of how the Chinese would react to his visit.

After this, on 23rd October, he met Gromchevsky as already described. He showed Younghusband a map marking a sharp wedge of country in between the Afghan territory of Wakhan and the western boundary of China. This strengthened Younghusband in his resolve that something should be done to occupy this area. "The Taghdumbash was inhabited by the Kirghiz who could be snapped up as easily as the Shahidulla Kirghiz", he wrote. In conclusion, he wrote on 30th December to Lt. Col. Nisbet, the Resident at Kashmir "The two strategical points to be guarded are Gilgit and Leh of which the former is by far the more important and between the two points there is no possibility of a force penetrating from the north."<sup>25</sup> Giving thought to the question how the approaches to India could be insulated against Russian advance, he wrote, "As the Chinese invariably refuse to protect the Kirghiz if they live on the southern side of the Kuen-Lun range, it would be better perhaps to take them under our influence"<sup>26</sup> Later, he was to change his mind when the Chinese were persuaded by him to advance to Shahidulla, and the Karakoram Pass.

Back in India, Younghusband was lauded and came to be regarded as the authority on the question of defence in the north from the Russians. News was received from Captain Ramsay at Leh in 1890 that the Chinese had come to Shahidulla and it was noted that "at any rate it keeps the Russians out". "Shahidulla has never before been occupied by the Chinese. It is not improbable that the occupation of Shahidulla is due to Russian instigation in opposition to us, as until the arrival of Gromchevsky the Chinese had showed no signs of coming to that place."<sup>27</sup> This note was written on 27th January 1890. After two months on 28 March 1890, Younghusband noted that he had received a letter from his friend Turdi Kol as well as one from Gromchevsky. The latter had started from Shahidulla for Polu.

Younghusband was coming round to the view of his mentor Ney Elias who after his trip to the Pamirs in 1885 had noted that while China had withdrawn behind the right bank of the Aksu (Oxus), the Afghans had made not attempt to assume authority on the left bank".<sup>28</sup> While Elias had hoped that the vacuum would be filled by the Afghans coming up to the left bank of the Oxus river, Younghusband felt that the Chinese were more likely to fill the role of a buffer between the Russians and the Kashmir frontier. As for the Karakash water-shed to the east, Younghus-

band noted, "Captain Ramsay has frequently advised the taking of our frontier as far as north as Shahidulla, 79 miles beyond the crest of the Karakoram range.....Mr. Elias however considered that Shahidulla was too distant"<sup>29</sup>. On 12 May 1890 Younghusband formulated the policy which was to lead to the offer of the Macdonald Line in 1899. He stated, "The Chinese have occupied Shahidulla and have settled the question in a way which the Government of India will think the most advantageous to us. Our best policy would be to encourage the Chinese to effectively occupy all the country upto (1) the watershed of the Pamirs between the two branches of the Oxus, and (2) the main Karakoram or Muztagh Range which forms the Indus watershed"<sup>30</sup>.

The Russians had been making further advances in the Pamirs. The Chinese needed to be encouraged to come further into the area south of the Kuen-Lun Range. Once again Younghusband was deputed to visit the area. Before leaving he recorded a detailed memorandum on "the Russian Threat", as he called it. He wrote, "In their former occupation of Turkestan which ended in 1863 the Chinese considered the Kuen-Lun mountains (that is, the branch of them over which are the Killian and Sanju passes) as their frontier, and according to Mr. Elias, Shahidulla was occupied by the Kashmiris nearly ever since they had conquered Ladakh (1842). When Yakub Beg came into power, he advanced his frontier and the Kashmiris retired from Shahidulla in 1865. The Chinese have always had Karawals (frontier posts) on the northern side of the Killian and Sanju passes, though the Kirghiz who occupy Shahidulla and the valley of the Karakash river have paid taxes to the Chinese. In 1885, they were told that they must not expect protection (against Kanjoots) as they lived beyond the frontier posts"<sup>31</sup>.

Younghusband was accompanied by Macartnay on this visit to Kashgar in 1891. Macartnay was from now on to be the eyes and ears of the British, as regards Sinkiang, just as Petrovsky was for the Russians, and remained so till 1903. While Petrovsky exercised power and inspired fear, the position of Macartnay was fragile in the face of the opposition of Petrovsky. To the Tao Tai Younghusband expressed the views of the Viceroy that the Chinese should advance and occupy the Trans-Kuen-Lun territory. The Tao Tai was, however, mindful of the presence of Petrovsky. Nevertheless, he allowed Younghusband to proceed to Sarikol and the Pamir frontier. When Younghusband reached the Pamirs, the Russians who were watching stepped in and Ianov forced him to sign a paper that he was on their territory unauthorisedly

and that for his return he would not use any of the twenty-one passes named in the paper he was made to sign.

The British got their revenge in Hunza which they invaded in 1891. This checked the Russian advance. Both sides had reached stale made. An understanding was reached in 1893 leaving a tongue of territory of the Wakhan as a part of Afghanistan to act as a buffer between Russia and India. Thus the British were content to have eliminated the threat of Russian advance on the west.

In 1896, Macartnay who was on his way to Sinkiang crossed over by the Karakoram Pass route. His route diary written in his own hand is available in the National Archives. It shows that the Chinese had taken advantage of the advice of Younghusband and set up Chinese posts south of the Kuen-Lun. Apart from the Karakoram Pass where they had put up a stone marking it as their boundary, Macartnay notes that Suget Karaul south of the Suget Pass was the first place of human habitation on the north sides of the Karakoram Pass, and that a Chinese officer "resided there during the trading session but had no troops".<sup>32</sup> Next came\* Shadulla Fort and then the Sanju Pass and the Kilian Pass. The first Chinese official that Macartnay reported was posted at Kilian pass.

At Kashgar Macartnay was busy with the question of pressing the claim of Hunza to the Raksam Valley. The question seemed likely to be settled in favour of Hunza at the local level but though the Kunjoots were allowed to cultivate areas in the Raksam, the local authorities of Sinkiang suddenly received orders not to proceed with the transfer of the land in question formally. This change was due to Russian opposition and in 1899 Macartnay informed the Indian Government that "the Governor of the New Dominion had instructed the local authorities of defer the conveyance of Raksam to the Kanjutis".<sup>33</sup> It was learnt that this was due to the fear that the Russians might as a retaliation advance on Tashkurgan and Sarikol which adjoin the Russian Pamirs.

#### IV

Curzon, the new Viceroy in 1899 had first hand knowledge about the Oxus region. He had travelled by the Russian railway line to the Caspian sea and from there visited the Central Asian Khanates and the

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\* Where local place names are spelt differently, e.g., Shahidulla is spelt Shadulla - in contemporary records, the spelling has been left unchanged.

source region of the Oxus river. When he became Viceroy, he noted "It is rather a fine balance of consideration for while on the one hand it is desirable to get the Kunjootis into Raksam in order to keep the Russians out, one the other hand should the latter seize Kashgar, they can claim Hunza as a subject state".<sup>34</sup> He therefore decided that a settlement should be reached with China over Hunza by surrendering the valid claims of Hunza over Raksam. As the matter developed, the Chinese were also offered part of Askai Chin in the east in the line proposed in 1899.

The background to Hunza's claim was that China had a shadowy claim of overlordship over it which Hunza did not entirely denounce because it suited Hunza in order to "play the Chinese Card" against the British and the Maharaja of Kashmir, and partly because the claim of Hunza to Raksam valley and also to a part of the Taghdumbash Pamir was not opposed by China. In the interest of an overall settlement with China, Curzon decided to recommend to the Home Government a frontier line between India and China (in Sinkiang)., This line was proposed to Peking by Macdonald, the British Minister there on 18 March 1899 in a letter to the Chinese Foreign Office. This letter refers to the need to define the boundary between Hunza and China and suggested that "China should relinquish her shadowy claim over Kanjut. The Indian Government on the other hand would on behalf of Kanjut relinquish her claims to most of the Taghdumbash Pamir and Raksam districts"<sup>35</sup>.

The Foreign Office at London had written to Sir C Macdonald at Peking on December 14, 1898, "As a means of inducing China to renounce the claim to sovereignty over Hunza, the Government of India are ready to waive the claim of Hunza to the Taghdumbash (with the exception of a small portion) and also to Raksam. The line new proposed would form a good and well defined boundary and I have to request you to apprise the Tsungli Yamen (i.e., the Chinese Foreign Office) on the subject with a view to obtaining settlement of the question in the direction indicated by the Government of India".<sup>36</sup>

The letter that Macdonald wrote to the T-Sungli Yamen on 14 March 1899 is worth quoting in full, on the subject of the boundary between the Indian State of Kashmir and the New Dominion of Chinese Turkestan. It ran "It appears that the boundaries of the State of Kanjut with China have never been clearly defined. The Kanjutis claim an extensive tract of land in the Taghdumbash Pamir, extending as far



north as Tashkunghan, and they also claim the district known as Raksam to the South of Sarikol. The right of Kanjut over part of the Taghdumbash Pamir were admitted by the Tao Tai of Kashgar in a letter to the Mir of Hunza dated February 1896 and last year the question of Raksam district was the subject of negotiations between Kanjut and the official of the New Dominion in which the latter admitted that some of the Raksam land should be given to the Kanjutis.

“It is now proposed by the Indian Government that for the sake of avoiding any dispute or uncertainty in the future, a clear understanding should be come to as to the frontier between the two states - that China should relinquish her shadowy claim to suzerainty over Kanjut. The Indian Government on the other hand will on behalf of Kanjut relinquished her claims to most of the Taghdumbash Pamir and Raksam districts.

“It will not be necessary to mark out the frontier. The natural frontier is the crest of a range of mighty mountains, a great part of which is quite inaccessible. It will be sufficient if the two Governments enter into an agreement to recognize the frontier as laid down by its clearly marked geographical features. The line proposed by the Indian Governmentt is briefly as follows: It may be seen by reference to the map of the Russo-Chinese frontier brought by the late Minister Hung Chun from St. Petersburg and in possession of the Yamen.

“Commencing on the little Pamir from the point at which the Anglo-Russian boundary Commission on 1895 completed their work, it runs south-east crossing the Karachikar stream at Mintaka Aghazi, then proceeding in the same direction it joins at Karchenal Pass the crest of the main ridge of the Muztagh range. It follows this to this to the south, passing by the Khunjerab Pass and continues southward to the peek just north of the Shimshal Pass. At this point, the boundary leaves the crest and follows a spur running approximately parallel to the road from the Shimshal to the Hunza post at Darwaza. The line turning south through the post crosses the road at that point, and then ascends the nearest high spur and rejoins the main crests and follows them passing the Muztagh, Gusherbrun, Saltoro Passes by the Karakoram. From the Karakoram Pass the crests of the range run east for about half a degree (100 1) and then turn south to a little below the 35th parallel of north latitude.

“Rounding then what in our maps is shown as the source of the Karakash, the line of hills to be followed run north-east to a point east of Kizil Jilga and from there in a south easterly direction follows the Lak

Tsung range until that meets the spur running south from the Kuen-Lun range, which has hitherto been shown on our maps as the eastern boundary of Ladakh. This is a little east of 80°E longitude.”<sup>37</sup>

The letter made out a case for a bargain in the north west, but also gave away Aksai Chin in the north east where of Chinese Hunza was not involved. This is what baffled Sir Louis Dane when he came upon the matter in 1907 as Foreign Secretary. In the meanwhile, there was no response from the Chinese, and so the position remained as before.

## V

The Chinese presence in Tibet was bolstered by the British invasion of 1904 and the subsequent settlement. The Russian Government agreed to demarcate the respective spheres of influence of themselves and the British in Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet by the Anglo Russian Convention of 1907 which was conveyed post facto to the Chinese. This recognised the British presence in Tibet and the Suzerainty of China over Tibet. The Chinese felt that under this “umbrella”, they could now make inroads into Tibetan territory. The Government of India reported in July 1907 that “It is to the interest of China to reduce the area of Tibet and this they appear to be doing rather rapidly”.<sup>38</sup> They received reports “which supply strong evidence of the fact that the Chinese are ambitious of making Tibet into a Chinese province”. Their information was derived from the Nepalese representatives at Peking and at Lhasa which was passed on to them by the Prime Minister of Nepal. Captain O’Connor, an old Tibet hand had also received information from Tibet that “the Chinese troops had over run several districts of Eastern Tibet”. Explaining all this to the Viceroy, Sir Louis Dane the Foreign Secretary noted on 26 July 1907, “Before the restoration of Chinese authority after the Tibet mission (i.e., the Younghusband invasion) Tibet was almost entirely autonomous and may easily become so again. It is therefore to the interest of China to reduce the area of Tibet as much as possible, though such a course hardly seems consistent with our interests.”<sup>39</sup> As O’Connor had reported, as early as May 1905, the Chinese had appointed a new Commissioner of the Frontier, and in 1907, they passed an imperial order declaring Tibet to be a province of China.

Therefore, it was attempted to ascertain from China as to what they considered to be the boundaries between themselves and Tibet.

The reply from the British Minister at Peking in July 1907 was not forthcoming. Jordan, the Minister reported, "In a private conversation with Tang today, the question of the boundary of Tibet was touched upon and views of the Government of India mentioned. He (Tang) was ignorant of the boundaries of Tibet on the north and east, but said that the Board concerned would be consulted". In February, he added, "Tang applied to the President of the Board concerned who was unable to supply any information and said Chinese Government possessed no maps later than the 18th century."<sup>40</sup>

The Chinese attitude was similar to that displayed by them in 1846 when Cunnigham and other boundary commissioners tried to ascertain their views regarding the boundary with Ladakh, and again in 1899 when the Indian authorities proposed a boundary with Sinkiang. But the question of the boundary between India and China came up indirectly before Sir Louis Dane when he was asked to confirm the boundaries to be shown on the new map of India at the scale of 32 miles to an inch which the Survey of India had prepared.

In 1907, the Surveyor General prepared a new map of India on the scale 1" to 32 miles and sent it to the Foreign Department. It was noted in March 1907 in the Foreign Department that 'no definite boundary can be shown for the British districts of the Punjab and UP bordering on Tibet. The external limits of Kashmir, Rampur and Tehri are also underfined.<sup>41</sup> On 25 March, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Louis Dane looked at the proposed map and said, 'The colour wash in Kashmir is I think wrong. I am almost sure that Kashmir runs upto the Karakoram, leaving Shahidula as the first Kashgar post. Thence the boundary runs along to the Kun-Lun and Lingzi Thang is Kashmir and Aksai Chin is doubtful, but the western half might well be coloured yellow. Please see the Times Atlas map herewith (Map 83-4). Any account of the Leh-Kashgar route will show where the boundary is, and Deassey's journey may give further information".<sup>42</sup>

On this the department prepared a background note dated 30 March and quoted the boundary that was communicated to the Chinese in 1899. It was pointed out that it excluded Aksai Chin. "On the other hand, "the note went on, "the map of Turkestan prepared in 1893 shows the whole of western Aksai Chin as excluded from Chinese control". The situation in Aksai Chin is summarised in Mr. Stapleton's note of 8 January 1897. This shows that while Kashmir has some claim to part of the Aksai Chin, its claim has never been verified or defined. Colonel

Strahan however noting on 8 Feb 1897 mentioned the two Aksai Chins, as being one in China and one in Kashmir.

The note could not explain why Aksai Chin had been excluded from Kashmir when the 1899 line was offered. It went on, "Such being the position, it is not clear why only a year later, we deliberately fixed the boundary so as to exclude the Aksai Chin from Kashmir, although in 1899 in criticising the colouring of the map of India, it was decided that the colour had been carried too far to the north near the Kun-Lun range and should be made fainter for an inch or so south of the limit shown. This may have led to the total disappearance of colour from the area in question, while in the map prepared for Secretary, the colour has further shrunk so as to exclude even the Lingzi Tang plains from Kashmir".

The note goes on, "As there is a certain amount of evidence, though of ancient date of Kashmir's claim to the western Aksai Chin, we shall perhaps have some justification for extending the colour wash over all this area upto the Kun Lun Range on the north and as far to east as is shown on the old map of Turkestan, i.e., upto the range dipping first southeast and then southwest, then southeast again from the Kun-Lun."<sup>43</sup>

The hand of Younghusband again came into play to determine the map of Kashmir. He was at this time Resident in Kashmir and Sir Louis, daunted perhaps by the reputation of Younghusband, referred the matter to him. Younghusband drew his own line on the map and returned it in May 1907. The noting shows that Younghusband's suggestions accorded with the boundary indicated to China except in the neighbourhood of the Aksai Chin. "Here we have defined the boundary going northeast to a point east of Kizil Jilga and then southeast along the Lak Tsung Range, while Younghusband makes it run due east after rounding the source of the Karakash river."<sup>44</sup>

Younghusband was asked why. His reply made it clear that he made up his mind in 1890-91 to let the Chinese take up the defence of this area. He now replied, "I marked the boundary on the NE of Kashmir east of the Karakoram Pass accordance to what appeared to be the watershed. The whole country is absolute desert and not a single Kashmir subject there to have jurisdiction over". This was an echo of his earlier opinion that while Kashmir had a better claim over Shadulla, the Chinese had a better claim over the Kirghiz living there.

In June 1907, a further historical note was prepared by Mr. Kirpatrick who had prepared the background note already quoted.

According to this, "Prior to 1895, the boundary was entirely undefined but we advised the Kashmir Durbar against occupying Shadulla, as Chinese suzerainty on the Karakash Valley was an established fact. In 1886, Captain Ramsay, Joint Commissioner Ladakh drew attention to the vagueness of the boundary. He showed that the 6th edition of the Map of Turkistan showed Aktagh (midway between Shahidula and the Karakoram Pass) as the border while the British Mission to Yarkand was escorted as far as Shahidula where it was met by Yarkand officials". The note goes on, "The Proposal to fix the boundary at Shahidula was revived in 1888, when Sir Mortimer Durand express the opinion (which was confirmed by the Viceroy, Dufferin) that it would not be desirably to run the risk of a troublesome controversy with China to push a Kashmir post beyond the Karakoram with the object of forestalling Russia when she succeeds the Chinese in Yarkand".<sup>45</sup>

Dane was very disappointed. "It seems clear that in 1888, we renounced claims which we might have sustained, owing to the desire to placate China which existed then in connection with the Burma business", he noted. Dane seems to have been quite exasperated and noted on 18th October 1907, "What on earth induced Sir W. Cunningham to recommend this boundary. I cannot tell, but it was recommended by the Government of India and I agree with it". He also added, "We hope to be able to keep Aksai Chin in Tibet in order to adhere to the Kun Lun boundary for that country".

Dane was a "trier". He again asked Younghusband that as one of the officers was going to Yarkand he might look and see if there was evidence of the limits of Chinese jurisdiction. Fielding, the officer in question did so and Younghusband reported, "The first settled inhabitants (Kirghiz) he appears to have met were at Suget and you will see from the enclosed extract of his letter dated 5.8.1907 that the Beg of Suget considered himself under Chinese jurisdiction". That is near Shahidula. Here the writ of China ran in 1907. The last word was with Younghusband and it showed that Aksai Chin was in 1907 well outside the jurisdiction of China.

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## 4 (ii)

### Contemporary Evidence on Aksai Chin

Edgar Snow in his book "The Other side of the River" has given as an Appendix the verbatim report of an interview with the Chinese Prime Minister Chou-En-Lai on October 18, 1960. Regarding the western sector of the border between India and China, Chou complained against India going too far back into history in hoping her claim. We shall examine some twentieth century evidence that is available regarding the claim of the Prime Minister of China having been in possession of this area in so far as Aksai Chin and its adjoining areas are concerned.

We begin with the travels of Sir Aurel Stein, the distinguished archaeologist who worked in the Sinkiang area in the early twentieth century. He was able to cross over from Khotan into North West Tibet over the Kuen Lun range but was not successful when he made efforts "to supplement our survey of 1900 in the high Kuen Lun range south of Khotan by ampler topographical details"<sup>1</sup>. He was in "search for an old route across the main Kuen Lun range by which communication with Ladakh on the Indian side of the high Tibetan plateaux was once maintained in times of emergency"<sup>2</sup>. In an article "Archaeological Exploration in Central Asia", he states, "An expedition into the Kuen Lun range due south of Khotan enabled the mapping of the deep cut gorges holding the upper course of the river Yurung-Kash and the great glacier-clad mountain range which rises above it to peaks close on 22,000 feet, dividing the Terim basis from the Aksai Chin plateaux of north-west Tibet"<sup>3</sup>. There is no indication here of any connection between Aksai Chin and Sinkiang as claimed by the Chinese Prime Minister. Incidentally, Sir Aurel Stein mentions that Johnson crossed over from Kashmir into Khotan by Yangi Dawan route and identified this pass during his travels. Unfortunately, he could not proceed to Ladakh all the way across the Aksai Chin in 1908 as he got severe frost bite on one foot.

A later visitor to the area, a German geologist Emil Trinkler who travelled across Aksai Chin to Khotan in 1927 has made use of the information given by Sir Aurel Stein in his books. Crossing Lanak La

Pass he came to the Lingzitang plateau and saw here for the first time the double pyramid which, like two Matterhorns, overlooks this plateau.<sup>4</sup> Next the party came to Singli Jilganang lake. "The water was a little brackish, but drinkable nevertheless".<sup>5</sup> Now they were in a region "entirely devoid of all vegetation".<sup>6</sup> and from a high ridge "had a fine view of a large plain, the Aksai Chin, which was our next objective".<sup>7</sup> They completed the long march to Aksai Chin and came upon the Bitter Salt Lake "on the banks of which Sir Aurel Stein and Sven Hedin had halted".<sup>8</sup> "We were now in the wide long valley which borders the Kun Lun to the south".<sup>9</sup> The party was due to go to Sinkiang. Instead of going by the Polur route as earlier intended, they decided to cross into Chinese Turkistan via Shahidulla. They, therefore, pushed on in a westerly direction in the large valley which borders the Kun Lun to the south. They took a side valley leading to the Khital Dawan "which Johnson in 1865 and Sir Aurel Stein in 1908 had already followed".<sup>10</sup> Crossing this pass, they descended into the valley of the Karakash river next to "Haji Langar that is marked on Stein's map".<sup>11</sup> "We passed a side valley which leads upto the Yangi Dawan. It was here that in 1908 Sir Aurel Stein had one of his feet frost-bitten in an attempt to find this glacier pass".<sup>12</sup> Trinkler calls Suget Qaral as the frontier Sarai and he met some Kirghiz as he neared it. Here there was a Chinese customs official".<sup>13</sup> "Only one solitary soldier was stationed at this isolated frontier post of the Chinese Empire, and he spent his time wandering round most of the day smoking his opium pipe".<sup>14</sup> "On our arrival, the Amban had sent two messengers to Sanju, the first village in Chinese Turkestan".<sup>15</sup> It was only when they crossed the Sanju pass and reached the Sanju village that they came in Chinese controlled area. They remained in Chinese Turkistan till June 1928 and returned to India via Kilian Pass.

"The Amban of Suget Qaraul suggested that the Beg of Shahidulla should accompany us as far as the frontier, though the exact frontier between India and Chinese Turkistan has never yet been decided".<sup>16</sup> The account of Trinkler shows that there was no Chinese presence in Aksai Chin or adjoining areas, that he traversed south of the Kuen Lun and that the first Chinese they met was the customs officials of Suget Qaraul.

A few years earlier, in 1924, a Russian emigre from Tashkent, P.S. Nazaroff, who had escaped to Kashgar had to "move on" from Sinkiang when the Russians were allowed to re-establish their Consu-



late there. He had to flee at the time of the Russian Revolution which had meant the loss of his father's textile mills in Tashkent. He had actively organised resistance against the communists. Apprehending that he would not be safe, he decided to leave and go to India over the Karakoram Pass. He had described his journey in his book, "Moved On" published in 1935 in English translation from his Russian manuscript. "There are three routes to the table land of the Karakoram, by Sanju, Killian, and Kokyar (or Kugiar). The last is the best but is not always available. Fortunately, according to the information, it was now open".<sup>17</sup> In September he left Karghalik and "This meant good bye to the wide and fruitful oasis of Yarkand and the beginning of the mountain desert.....On both sides of the road, I could see through the dusty haze - the foothills of the massive mountain chain of Kuen Lun, the first ramparts of the great mountain wall which separates the plains of Central Asia from the plain of the Punjab".<sup>18</sup> Arriving next at Kok-Yar he notes, "This is the last village in Kashgaria on this route, the last populated place we should see till we reached the Nubra in Little Tibet".<sup>19</sup> Here at Kok-Yar, he notes, "In the narrowest part of the road, where the steep cliffs hardly leave room to pass along the bank of the stream, there is a wooden gate and a hut. This is the Chinese customs office, where they collect import and export duties from passing caravans.....This was the last of the territory actually administered by the Chinese authorities. Beyond this, upto the domains of the Maharaja of Kashmir, we saw neither soldier nor official".<sup>20</sup>

From the village to the Karakoram Pass, there were five other passes to be crossed. Nazaroff also notes, being a geologist, that the Kuen Lun range contains more gold than the Klondyke fields, and adds, "The gold fields extend as far as Southern Tibet.....This great source of wealth is one of the reasons for the jealous shielding of Eastern Tibet.....".<sup>21</sup> After crossing the Kuen Lun by the Yangi Dawan (the same pass which Johnson had used in 1865). "we passed a gloomy looking spot where two ravines meet, and at the junction there are remains of a tumbled down stone building, not exactly a house, nor yet quite a fort, to the right the track goes up the valley of the Raskem Darya, and to the left, up a dismal looking gully between immense rocks, a track branches off to the Chinese frontier post of Shahidulla, the route generally followed by caravans when the rivers are full. The Indo-Chinese frontiers properly speaking passes by the fort of Shahid-

ulla, but the actual working frontier line near the Karakoram".<sup>22</sup> Reaching the Karakoram Pass, he writes that it "divides two empires, the British and the Chinese, and on the crest there are two frontiers beacons. The British is a round stone pillar, and the Chinese a rough heap of stones".<sup>23</sup> Thus from Yangi Dawan Pass to the Karakoram Pass, Nazaroff travelled along the Indo-Chinese frontier whereas in the case of Trinkler Suget Qaraul and Sanju Pass on the journey to Sinkiang and the Killian Pass for the return journey were used. All these passes are on the Southern foothills of Kuen Lun mountains.

And now we come to 1956 when a British journalist Basil Davidson was the first allowed to visit Sinkiang after the Communist government took over in 1949. He visited Yarkand by road, having flown to Urumchi and to Kashgar. Beyond Yarkand, he was not allowed to go. He was informed however that beyond Khotan a new road from Kerrya was being constructed through the Kuen Loan to Gartok. A road from Keriya to Gartok would not cut across the territory of Ladakh, and we know that the Chinese have built another road from Yarkand to Gartok passing through Aksai Chin territory. If they have built, as Davidson was informed they had intended, the road from Keriya to Gartok there seems little justification even from the Chinese point of view for the road through Aksai Chin, which Chou-En-lai had defended as a vital line of communication between Sinkiang and Western Tibet.

Thus from the point of view of evidence of independent observers in the contemporary period, it would seem that Chou-En-lai was not correct when he stated that the Chinese had in 1960 been in possession of Aksai Chin and adjoining areas for "several years", or that they needed it as providing the only route for connecting Yarkand with Gartok.

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## 5

**The North Eastern Frontier**

China has laid claim to the area of Arunachal Pradesh north of the Brahmaputra river. While the Chinese admit that there is a natural, customary, traditional boundary between India and Tibet here as elsewhere on the long Indo-Chinese border, they assert that it lies, not along the main Himalayan range, but along the right bank of the Brahmaputra. In support of their claim, the Chinese officials who sat together with the Indian officials in 1960 to exchange information regarding their respective border claims cited the case of Nepal. If Nepal can lie south of the Himalaya, they said why not the same in case of Tibet further east? They rejected the Indian claim that the Arunachal Pradesh area had formed part of India not only under the British but also under the *Ahoms* since the thirteenth century and in fact from earlier historic times. The agreement between India and Tibet at Simla in 1914 regarding the Indo-Tibetan boundary east of Bhutan was fixed on the basis of the best evidence available to the two parties. The Indian Government had sent survey parties since 1911 all over this area to ascertain the line of demarcation. He describes the journey in detail in his book, "No Passport for Tibet". Tibet for its part had maintained in a careful and meticulous manner all the documents and evidence regarding their administration in the border region. It was this evidence which Tibet produced in 1913 and on the basis of which it agreed to what has come to be called the McMahon Line. Of the three parties at the Simla Conference, 1913-14, Tibet was the most well prepared for arguing their case for a boundary demarcation. And it was the boundary between China and Tibet and not the one between India and Tibet that the Chinese Government denounced, the day after their plenipotentiary had

agreed to a line demarcating the boundary of Tibet with India as well as China.

The evidence by which China sought later to prove their claim was none other than what was contained in the Tibetan records. It does not therefore make for plausibility of the Chinese case when on the same evidence which the Tibetans provided to the Chinese, they claimed that Tibet's boundary lay roughly a hundred miles to the south of what Tibet had agreed to in 1914. The claim to the Tawang area adjoining Bhutan to the east under the name Monyul was made by the Chinese. There is an ancient Lama monastery here which is accounted for the fact that when Bhutan to the west of it, came under the influence of Tibetan Buddhism this monastery was set up. Except for Tawang area, no other area south of the Himalaya had any religious connection with Tibet. Regarding the Tawang region, it was checked by Lt. Col. Bailey in 1913 that the Tibetan outpost for collecting taxes on goods passing to and from Tibet was situated to the north of the Tawang area at the pass to Tsona Dzong.

East of the Tawang area lies the Subansiri Basin which the Chinese claimed under the name of Loyul, was also visited by Lt. Col. Bailey on the way back from Tibet. He found that Migyitun on the Himalayan crest was the border point of entry where both sides, Tibet and India, collected taxes. Further eastwards in the Lohit valley (the territory of the Mishmis), the frontier town was Rima. Yet the Chinese laid claim to the area south of Rima, under the title Lower Tsayul. Maps of the Chinese themselves did not include Arunachal Pradesh as part of Tibet. These maps are enumerated at page 107-109 of the Report of the Indian officials, 1960. They date from 1737 to 1925. In addition to them, the Chinese Postal Atlas 1917 also shows Arunachal Pradesh as part of India.

We have to trace the history of Anglo-Chinese relations from 1907 to describe the background of the Simla Conference of 1913-14. In 1904, Lord Curzon made a successful attempt to open Tibet to a British "presence" as a means to British influence. Younghusband led a force through the Chumbi valley to Lhasa. Curzon's justification was that he wished to forestal Russia. But already the rise of Germany in Europe had necessitated a detente between Russia and England. An Anglo-Russian Convention was signed in 1907 about spheres of influence in Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. It made the following arrangements about Tibet:

“Arrangement concerning Tibet. Recognising the suzerain rights of China in Tibet and considering that Great Britain by reason of her geographical position, had a special interest in the maintenance of status quo in the external relation of Tibet.....not to enter into negotiations with Thibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government.....not to send Representatives to Lhasa.....not to obtain concession regarding roads and telegraphs and mines”.

This enabled China to take initiatives to alter the status quo, vis-a-vis, Tibet in her favour. China now made a determined attempt to absorb eastern Tibet into China proper. During the course of negotiations leading to the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention, the question of the boundaries of Tibet had arisen. The British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey wrote to Sir J. Jordan, Minister of Peking, that “Government of India consider Tibet is bounded on the north by Kuen-Lun and Tan Shan ranges, on east by districts in vicinity of Tsaidam which are under the direct control of the Chinese and by China proper”.<sup>1</sup> When Jordan asked the Chinese, their reply was wholly evasive and Jordan informed his government as follows:

“In a private conversation with Tang today, the question of the boundaries of Tibet was touched upon and views of Government of India mentioned. He was ignorant of the boundaries of Tibet in the North and East but said that the Board concerned would be consulted”; and to the Viceroy, Jordan telegraphed in February “Tang applied to the President of the Board concerned who were unable to supply any information and Chinese Government possessed no maps later than the 18th century”.

Already in May 1905, O'Connor who had been posted in Tibet as a result of the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904 after the withdrawal of the Younghusband expedition, had reported that the Chinese Government were making a determined attempt to reabsorb the province of Nyarang and that “with the conclusion of the disturbances of Batang, the Chinese had appointed a new Commissioner of the Frontier”.<sup>2</sup>

The Viceroy Lord Minto had therefore suggested that “we inquire if China accepts the boundaries of North and has no special claims to advance on East of Tibet beyond Tachien Lu or possibly Litang.....It is reported that China is trying to assert rights in E. Tibet which did not possibly exist”. He referred to Kham as “a large tract lying in South East of Tibet”. As we have seen, the Chinese professed a bland ignorance in the face of the inquiries that were then made from them, but this

was only a “cover-up” for the advance into Tibet which had already been launched. The British authorities in India could not watch this with equanimity. The then Foreign Secretary to the Government of India Sir Louis Dane noted on June 26, 1907.

“Before the restoration of Chinese authority after the Tibet Mission\*, Tibet was almost entirely autonomous and may easily become so again. It is therefore to the interest of China to reduce the area of Tibet as much as possible, though such a course hardly seems consistent with our interest”.<sup>3</sup>

Sir Louis referred to a report in the “North China Herald” of 25 June that Tibet is turned into the province of HSITSANG and the west part of SZECHUAN is to be called the province of CHU’UANHSI.

Chinese troop movements began to be reported near Eastern Tibet. The Government of India informed the Home Government that “it is to the interest of China to reduce the area of Tibet as much as possible and this they appear to be doing rather rapidly”. The report mentioned “strong evidence that the Chinese are ambitious of making Tibet into a Chinese province that they are pushing forward their frontier”.<sup>4</sup> Information regarding troop movements and the Chinese advance were received, among others, from the Nepalese Prime Minister their envoy at Peking had reported: -

“The Chief Chinese Military Officer whom he had met at Litang in Eastern Tibet possessed 2500 men under his command of whom 300 were in Litang. (The Chinese Officer) mentioned that he would be proceeding to Lhasa.....and the troops would proceed via Draya and Chiamdo, and after bringing them under Chinese control, they would advance further down to Lhasa”.<sup>5</sup>

Again on 2nd Sept 1907, the Government of India learnt from Nepalese sources that “Lhasa authorities had received information that Chinese troops had advanced as far as Sangchu Tsong in the Kham district giving out that the range of hills known as Sya JHOULA had been declared to be the boundary between Tibet and China”.<sup>6</sup>

The Convention of 1907 about which China had been informed (but not Tibet), calling for non-interference by Russia or Britain in Tibet was seen by China as an opportunity to absorb eastern Tibet into China proper and to convert Tibet into a province of China. The Chinese appointed a warden of the Eastern of Marches at Tachien Lu. The officer appointed, Chou Erh-Feng subjugated the tribes in the remote

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\* of Younghusband

areas through which passed the southern route to Tibet. Britain now informally told Russia that despite the Anglo-Russian Convention, India may have to intervene in Tibet to ensure that the Chinese did not alter the status of Tibet, or make in-roads into her territory. When the Chinese troops entered Pome in the Tibetan south-east, the local people resisted them. Ultimately, however, the Chinese were able to advance to Lhasa in February 1910. The Dalai Lama who had returned from his exile from 1904 to 1909, only a few months earlier had again to flee - this time to India.

Since the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642, it was only in the twentieth century that the Dalai Lama was able to assume direct power. In the previous one hundred and fifty years or so, each successive Dalai Lamas had died while still a minor. There was a change in the Sino-Tibetan relations after the Chinese republic was established in 1911 when the direct rule by a strong Dalai Lama was restored. The Dalai Lama had been in exile from 1904 to 1909 and again after only a few months' stay in 1910 when he had fled from the Chinese troops who had arrived in Lhasa in 1910. The revolution of 1911 led to the desertion of the Chinese Amban from Lhasa. The Dalai Lama after his return in 1913 to Lhasa declared the independence of Tibet. The Chinese republic had declared Tibet to be a part of China and border fighting continued intermittently in Szechwan where the Chinese wanted to incorporate parts of Chamdo province of Tibet into China proper. The control of the republic over the administration in Szechwan and Yunan provinces was non-existent as in fact they had broken away from the Centre under independent war lords. It was with these local war-lords that Tibet had to contend.

China's energetic policy for a brief period of 1907 to 1911 also brought their troops on to the border of India in the north-east region. On the suggestion of the Chinese Amban in Lhasa, Chou-Erh Feng's troops had tried to establish authority in those regions of Tibet which adjoined India's north-east frontier. The border was well defined by the main Himalayan axis, though there was spill over the tribes of India's north-east area into Tibet to Pema-koe, and of Tibetan Buddhism into the Indian frontier region in the case of the area of Tawang adjoining Bhutan. From Tsa Yul (Zayul) in Tibet, Chou-Erh-Feng's troops crossed over in 1910 at Rima for a few miles into the Mishmi territory in the north-east corner of India and then withdrew. This alerted the Indian authorities to build a road towards Rima. They also placed a memorial



plaque regarding their visit as the Chinese had done in 1910.

After this the British authorities in India sent a number of survey parties in 1911 to the north-east frontier area in order to survey the frontier line with Tibet. Col. Bower was in charge of three survey parties into Abor country and one of these was sent up the Dibang river to its east. Bailey, an officer attached to this last mission, penetrated into Tibet alongwith Morshead in 1913. Bailey had already tried to enter Tibet from Szechuan. In 1911, Bailey had returned to India via Tsayul. Now he decided to go into Tibet from the south. The two of them, Bailey and Morshead, marched from Mipi in the Dibang valley to Chimdro in Tibet. En route, they found a "spill over" of Abors from India at Kapu and other areas in the Tsang-po valley. Next they went to Pome where there had been a fight between the local tribes and the Chinese troops in 1910.

Pemakoe they found the population was of Abors. Pemakoe is situated in the bend of the Tsang-po as it takes a 'U'-turn into India. This is a kind of "Shangrila" of Tibetan tradition where they could take refuge when the country was threatened with foreign invasion. The Abors, called Lopas by the Tibetans, were the main inhabitants and to them were added the Monbas of Bhutan more than a hundred years ago, and later on were added the Kongbos, the Pobas from Pome and Kampas from Kham. From Pemakoe, Bailey went west to Kongbo and then to the south to Migyitin, which he found was the frontier of the Daflas with Tibet. He found that the people of Migyitin paid double taxes. Bailey wanted to explore the direct route to Tawang from Tibet. He was told that the direct route to over the mountains was blocked by snow and manned by an agent of the Tsona Zongpon.

The representatives of China, Tibet and India met in Simla in October 1913. MacMahon, the Indian representative was also awaiting reports from the missions sent and was just able to get them in time to use the information for the negotiations. In this background of the events leading up to the Simla conference of 1913, we shall next examine China's claim to Arunachal Pradesh.

### Notes and References

1. NAI Proceedings - March 1907, 31-76.
2. Ibid.
3. NAI 'Question of the Boundaries of Tibet' proceedings, Oct. 1907, Nos. 240-75.
4. NAI 'Anglo-Russian Convention'. Proceedings Dec. 1907 Nos. 343-95.
- 5 & 6. NAI. Ibid.

## 5 (ii)

### **China's claim to Arunachal Pradesh**

#### **China's claim of 1960**

The full extent of China's claim on the north-eastern frontier of India was made clear at the Conference of the officials of India and China agreed upon between the Prime Minister of India and China in 1960. Earlier, however, there were indications of respect for the existing boundary along the Himalayan watershed in the meetings between the Prime Minister in 1956 and 1960, coupled with a formal denunciation of the McMahon Line. The volte face at the meeting of the officials was unequivocal and to the effect that the Chinese claimed virtually the whole of the present Arunachal Pradesh. This stand has since been asserted from time to time, although it has been coupled with hints of mutual accommodation between the two countries on the border issue, including the area of Aksai Chin at the north western end of Tibet.

We have seen how China was attempting to extend her hold over Tibet before and after the declaration of independence by the Dalai Lama in 1913 and there was intermittent warfare between China and Tibet in the Szechwan province. In the meanwhile, Britain was continuing her efforts through diplomatic channels to define and stabilize the boundary of Tibet. In a memorandum of August 17, 1912 submitted by Sir. J. Jordan, the British Minister to Wai Chiow-Pu, it was stated that China had no right to interfere in Tibet's internal administration. On May 23, 1913, the British Foreign Office invited the Chinese Government to take part in a "Joint Conference in India with a view to settling the Tibetan question by means of a tripartite agreement". A similar invitation was sent to the Tibetan Government. The Simla Conference met in October 1913. The Chinese case on the outcome of the Simla Conference is discussed later, but they claim that neither the agreement between Tibet and India on the boundary between India and east of Bhutan, nor the one between the three parties, i.e., Tibet, India and China, on the boundary between Tibet and China were valid. The Chinese case against the McMahon Line (as the boundary between

India and Tibet east of Bhutan is called) did not however affect their acceptance of it as a line of actual control. In a Press Conference during his visit to India in 1960, the Chinese Prime Minister said, inter alia, "We have asked the Government of India to adopt an attitude towards this area (the Western Sector) similar to the attitude of the Chinese Government towards the area of the eastern sector, that is, it may keep to its own stand, while agreeing to conduct negotiations and not to cross the line of China's administrative jurisdiction as shown on Chinese maps". He also said that when agreement was reached, "we shall revise our respective maps in accordance with the agreement between both sides".

When we examine the evidence of the administrative jurisdiction in the eastern sector that was made available in the report of the Chinese officials to the Committee of officials set up after the above visit of the Chinese Prime Minister to India, we find that it was the evidence from Tibetan sources that they presented. This of course was only to be expected as the Chinese had no direct contact with this area. The Chinese report of officials in 1960 claims the boundary on the eastern sector, "roughly follows throughout the line where the southern foot of the Himalayas touches the plains on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River" (Chinese Report, p.3). After that, "from Nizamghat, the boundary line turns south eastwards into the mountains terrain.....where it sets the lower stretch of the Tsayul River.....and it leaves it.....and runs in south easterly direction upto the tri-junction of China, India and Burma".

The Chinese Officials stated that the area is "divided into three parts' Monyul, Loyul and Lower Tsayul." The Indian officials pointed out that the Chinese "did not state what they considered to be the area of these three localities and judging from the evidence these appeared to be only three small pockets of the large areas claimed (P. 122 of the Indian Report). In the Monyul area (east of Bhutan), it was stated by the Chinese the fifth Dalai Lama had by a mandate "establish the rule of the Lama" in 1680\* and in 1725 the seventh Dalai Lama had in a mandate

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\* The edict of the Dalai Lama of 1680 was given at a time when the 'King' of Tibet was Dalai Khan, grandson of Tursi. It mentions the 'Dual System', refers to royal and religious laws "as of old". The document shows that the Dalai Lama was anxious to assert the hold of the Gelugpa sect over this area (as in the rest of Tibet), vis-a-vis, the Bhutanese Brogpa who had been extending their hold here. See "Notes on the History" of the Monyul Corridor" by Michael Arts, in Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson, Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies Oxford 1979, pp. 9-20.

about the Tawang monastery, *inter alia*, stated: "This monastery is responsible for guarding our frontier and cannot be compared with other monasteries, therefore, this mandate is confirmed".\* When British rule was extended to Assam in the nineteenth century, comments the Chinese Report, "although the British at this time concluded with the Monbas an agreement of a mutual no on-aggression nature and understood the obligation of paying the Monbas 5,000 rupees a year"; nevertheless the "local" Tibetan authorities were assured in a letter handed over to them in 1853 pledged by "the Tawang monastery and the Babu and headmen" that "sovereignty over frontier territories would not be lost".

Coming to recent times, the Chinese officials claimed that in 1940, Monyul submitted records of house-holds as required by Tsona Dzong, including those of Taklung Dzong, Kalakatnag, etc. And in 1942, the Tsona Dzong officials toured the Monyul area.

The Indian officials pointed out in reply that the mandate of 1680 was in fact addressed to all the countries of the world. Far from establishing rule, the mandate referred to the collecting of voluntary contribution and indicated that the Dalai Lama was authorising the collection of such contributions.\*\* The mandate of 1725 enjoined the Monbas to guard the frontier and was "the exhortation by a religious pontiff to the adherence of his faith that they should guard against neighbouring tribes" not of the faith. The payment of Rs. 5,000/- by the British to Monbas was an "administrative arrangement similar to others entered into with the tribes of the region to keep the peace." As for the pledge of 1853 to Tibetan authorities, the Chinese later admitted that in fact no such pledge existed. The 1940 document cited by the Chinese dealt with donations by villagers for celebrating the enthronement of the Dalai Lama. The report of 1942 of the Tibetan official sent to Tawang showed that "neither the official nor his entourage visited any place south of Tawang".\*\*\*

Regarding Loyul to the east of Tawang the Chinese officials stated that it "was long ago a part of Tibet". The Chinese case is that Loyul was originally under the administration of Pome and then it was put under Pemakoe. The mandate of 1680 referred to above about Monyul

\* Vide pp. 45-6 of the Chinese Report (CR).

\*\* Vide pp. 122-3 of Indian Report.

\*\*\* See page 124 of the Indian Report

is also addressed *inter alia* to Lopa, as it begins thus:

“Have all the nations of the world, big and small areas of the snow abode of Tibet and Great Tibet, the sacred land of India, the places east and west, above and below, the Mow area in the south, Kagar, Kan of a land Kakra of Lopa.....”\*

The word “Lopa” is used by Tibetans for people living south of Tibet. The Tibetans sent a “living Buddha” Kuru to inspect the Loyul area in 1914, say the Chinese and he pointed out to “the British personnel who had intruded into the Loyal area”, that “Lokar, Lonag and Lokhra” were in Tibet. In 1921, the General Officers in charge of commerce in Pemakoe inspected the Loyul area, and in 1927 two Tibetan commanders were sent to quell the revolt of the prince of Pome, and they reached Padam not far from Pasighat. The Chinese claim continues, that an administrative unit (“tso”) was set up at Danfam in 1946-47 and that this was south of the “so called McMahon Line”.

The Indian officials pointed out that the reference to Loyul by the Buddha Kuru in 1914 was unsupported by any evidence as to the extent of Loyul. The document of 1921 that was furnished by the Chinese referred to the stages of some particular route and contained no reference to Pasighat as was claimed. The rebellion of the prince of Pome in 1927 and his pursuit cannot be evidence produced by the Chinese officials was of little value to lay either a claim to the Loyul area or to its extent when in fact the word just means “the land of the south”.

Regarding the lower Tsayul area, the Chinese stated as follows:

The Lower Tsayul area originally belonged to Sangngachos, a Dzong of China's Chamdo area.....In the mandate given by the Dalai Lama to (this) Dzong in 1896 it was clearly stated that there were places in upper and lower Tsayul in the area under the administration of the Dzong\*\*.

The Chinese report then refers to the despatch of officers by Chao Erh-Feng to this area in 1910 for an inspection “and guard against British intrusion.” The report Chao received from one of them was that “the dividing line between Tsayul and Lo-Lo is along a stream at Yapichulung at the third stage to the south-east”. The other report is of a survey of the Yapichulung and is quoted as mentioning “Waloan”, “a rather famous village on the lower Tsayul area which was invaded by

\* See page 44 of the Chinese Report

\*\* Vide p. 49 of the Chinese Report

British around 1944”, say the Chinese officials. Rima was the last town of Zayul on the border of the Mishmi territory. In 1910, soldiers of Chao Erh-feng marched a few miles to the south of the Rima and inscribed the fact (in Chinese) on a rock. This rock had also an inscription by the British sappers who constructed a road to this point from the south. In case of Tsayul also, the Chinese officials had no evidence to produce regarding the extent of the area claimed, or any evidence to substantiate their claim to the Mishmi area or the Lohit valley.

The areas claimed by China south of the Himalayan in 1960 is after all a large area. If we consider Arunachal Pradesh as a whole, its area is 83,743 square KM. It is inhabited by numerous tribes, e.g., the Monpas, Lopas, Akas, Daflas, Miris, Apa-Tanis, Mishmi and many others. Their present population is nearly 800,000. Differing from Tibet in climate and geography as in ethnicity, they were left by the British and by their predecessors - the Ahom rulers - to lead their own ways of life under the mistaken belief that they were opposed to any contact with settled life. It is only under independent India that they have become rapidly a part of the mainstream of the country's way of life and have taken to development.

When we examine the Chinese claim, we should note that at the western and of the north-eastern region, the boundary claimed by India for Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh is based on treaties. Article 1 of the Convention signed by Britain and China in March 1890 regarding the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet reads - “the boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Testa and its affluent from the waters flowing into the Tibet Mochu and northwards into other rivers in Tibet”. On this there has been no discrepancy or dispute since. The Indian officials pointed out that the Bhutan-Tibet boundary is also “a natural, traditional and customary one. It follows the crest of the Himalayan range which forms the main watershed”. Here also there is no dispute, and the Chinese have mentioned “only a certain discrepancy in the sector south of the so called McMahon Line”. After Bhutan the Indian stated that the boundary continued along the crest of the Great Himalayan range, “which is also the watershed between the Chayub Chu in Tibet and the Kameng Kamla and Khru rivers in India now proceeds east and north-east”. Thereafter, it crosses the Subansiri river just south of Migytin. From Migytin, it takes a north-easterly direction crosses the Tunga P (94° 10' E and Lat 28° 59' N)”. It then runs east and crosses

the Dishang and ascends the watershed between Chimdru-Chu and Ron to Chu in Tibet and the Dibang and its tributaries in India. It then crosses the Yonggyap Pass and the Kangri Karpo Pass and crosses the Luyit river, a few miles south of Rims. It then joins the tri-junction with Burma at Diph Pass.

The Ahoms became masters of Assam in about 1228 AD and held away in the area for nearly six centuries. A 17th century work "Political Geography of the Assam Valley" contains the names of tribes who were tributaries to Ahoms. The Daphlas, Akas and Bhuties are among those named as are the passes by which they descended to the plains. It describes certain villages of the Mikker and Miri tribes which were directly under Ahom rule. Ahom authority in these areas is also testified by the British who occupied Assam in 1826. Michell in his "Report of the N.E. Frontier of India" stated. 'In 1820, before we took possession of Assam, the Mishmis were obedient to the order of the Assam Government and paid tribute to the Saidiyu Khowa Gohain". Michell reports about the Abors "1825, Captain Neufville reported to the Quartermaster General that the Abors were giving assistance to the Gohain of Sadiya against the Singphos". Again he states, "A large body of them to the amount of 20,000 to 30,000 came down to assist the Bura Gohain in repelling the Maomarias, who were devastating all the country east of Jorhat"\* . About the territory near the Dihang bend and about the neighbours of Mishmis to the north. Michell reported "To their (Mishmic) north lies the country of Poba or Poyulan, independent people dwelling on a table land".\*\*

Early travellers in Tibet were rare but we have evidence to Desideri the Jesuit priest who lived in Lhasa to show that these tribes lived South of Tibet. Desideri was in Lhasa from 1716 to 1729 and travelled extensively in Tibet. He states, "The other places Tibetans venerate exceedingly is called Ceri on the extreme border of Takpo-Tru-lung (and going east) all the Cong-bo provinces lying to the south of the river march with the above mentioned people called Lhoba which means southern people.....Not even the Thibettans, who are close neighbours and have many dealings with them, are allowed to enter their country, but are obliged to stop on the frontier to barter goods ("An Account of Tibet", pages 143-45)". Thus Tibetan jurisdiction is seem to be upto

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\* Report of Indian Officials, op.cit., p. 104-5.

\*\* Report of Indian Officials, p. 106.

Tsari (Ceri) hills in the Subansiri and Cong-me to the north of Abor region, further east.

Another missionary who arrived at Lhasa a little later (1720), Horace Della Penna, wrote that Tibet “on the south of bounded by Bengal, Lho-ten ke, Altibari, Mon, Brukpa, Lhoba, Lho, K’haptra, Shapdo, Bha .....”<sup>\*</sup> A Capuchin monk, he lived in Tibet for 20 years and came for a second visit also. He explains that ‘Dho’ means ‘South’ and he refers to Mons, Lhoba, etc., as lying south of the boundary of Tibet.

These tribes were a part of India’s border land and were kept at peace by a judicious use of punishment and conciliation. This system was continued by the British rulers. They placed these areas under the jurisdiction either of political Agents or of the Deputy Commissioner of the adjoining districts. The introduction of the Inner Line in 1873 was a device to prevent traders from entering the areas beyond it for exploitation of the resources vide the Bengal Eastern Frontier Reg. I of 1873. As the report of the Indian Officials 1960 says (at p.202) “the very use of the term Inner Line was to distinguish it from the Outer Line, that is, the international boundary”. In 1880, the Frontier Tibet Regulations empowered political officers to exercise judicial and police functions in these areas. In Sept 1914, the areas North East Frontier Tract was divided into three divisions:

1. Central and Eastern comprised the hills inhabited by the Abors, Miris, Mishmis and others. It was named the Sadiya Tract.
2. Western, the hills inhabited by the Monbas, Akas, Daflas and parts of the Miri and Abor hills later named the Balipar Tract.
3. Lakhimpur Frontier Tract comprised the hills inhabited by the Singphos, Nagar and Khamtis.

Under the Government of India Act 1935, these areas were taken over for direct administration by the Government of India and in 1950 the Constitution of India also provided for their direct administration.

### **The McMahan Line**

The Chinese officials have in their report of 1960 attacked and re-

<sup>\*</sup> p-314-CR Markham “Mission of George Bogle to Tibet”. London. 1879.



pu diated the Simla Conference of 1913 and repudiated the Simla Convention to which it gave rise, as an attempt by Britain to separate Tibet entirely from China and turn Tibet into an "independent State". They pointed out that the memorandum of August 17, 1912 (vide CR p.20) which the Indian side referred to the 'basis' of the Conference did not mention the question of the Sino-Indian boundary at all. The letters exchanged between "the Tibet local representative and the British representative on March 24-5, 1914 and the map showing "the so-called McMahon Line" were not placed before the Conference. The Simla Convention did not have any validity as Chinese representative "formally declared as the Conference on July 3, 1914 that the Chinese Government would not recognise any treaty or similar document that might then or thereafter be signed between Britain and Tibet, state and the Chinese officials.

The Indian officials stated that the Chinese Government recognised the treaty making powers of Tibet and the plenipotentiary and equal status of the Tibetan representative. The Conference was to discuss all questions relating to Tibet *inter alia* the Indo-Tibetan boundary" (p. 114 of the Indian Report). The British representative informed the Chinese Government on 25 August 1913 "that HMG noted with satisfaction the Chinese Government's acceptance of the principle of the equality of status of the representatives and of the tripartite character of negotiations." On 24 April 1914, the Chinese representative initialled the convention and the map attached to it which demarcated the McMahon Line as well as the boundary between China and Tibet. "On 3 July 1914 when the Chinese representative failed to sign the Tibet Convention which had been earlier agreed and initiated by all three parties, the British Government concluded the agreement separately with Tibet". The McMahon Line was negotiated between the representative of the Dalai Lama and the British representative after the two sides had studied each other's case and found that there was an agreed basis of the boundary between Tibet and India. The Tibetans had produced well maintained documents to show extent of Tibet in the south and MacMahon had satisfied himself with the evidence of survey parties despatched during 1911 to 1913 to survey the north eastern border areas. The result was a boundary based on the best evidence available. The right of Tibet to make treaties was a matter of historical record. Tibet entered into a treaty in 1634 with Kashmir and again 1842. Tibet also entered into a treaty with Nepal in 1792.

The Chinese side argued that the Simla Conference was for the purpose of settling the boundary between Tibet and China but they assert that the British coerced China into attending this. As against this, neither Tibet nor China had ever claimed that Tibet was coerced into signing the convention of 1914 regarding the boundary between Tibet and India. When China occupied Tibet in 1951, it inherited the MacMahon Line, however much China may choose to denounce it. It goes without saying that the Tibetans had acted on the basis of the evidence which they had carefully recorded and that the Tibetans were autonomous in administration. It is claimed by China that Britain did not publish the McMahon Line and the treaty of March 1914 between Britain and Tibet till the 1930s. This was because Britain wanted to give China a chance to affirm their adherence to the Convention of 1914 among China, Britain and Tibet. Delay in publication of the Anglo-Tibetan treaty therefore cannot be held to invalidate the McMahon Line.

### **1914-1950**

Even as the Simla Conference was going on, there was desultory fighting between Tibetan and Chinese troops in the south-east of Tibet. The Governor of Szechwan Peng was particularly truculent and the British sent Teichman, an officer of the Consular Service to try and arrange a truce. The Tibetans had recaptured Chamdo and driven back the Chinese. The truce of Rongbasta was signed in August 1918. It was never ratified by the Chinese Central Government but continued in force for a number of years.

About 1928, Erh-Feng's project to make a province of Sikang was revived by the Chinese. War-fare continued between Liu Wen-Hui the war lord of Szechwan and Tibet from 1928 to 1932. In the north the Muslim Governor of Chinghai (Sining) also took part in a dispute between two Tibetan monasteries. In 1933, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama died. A period of Regency was sought to be taken advantage of by the Chinese. A Chinese mission was sent to Lhasa on the death of the Dalai Lama and it stayed on in Lhasa. War between China and Japan in 1937 however over-shadowed China. Tibet continued its independent status till 1950.

In the World War of 1939-45, Tibet adopted a neutral stand. It rejected a proposal of Chiang Kai Shek to make a road through Tibet to ensure supplies for India through the Lohit valley. From 1944-46, a

good will mission was sent to India by the Tibetan Government. It was welcomed by the Viceroy Lord Wavelin Delhi. Another good-will mission was sent to Peking by the Tibetans when the Communists took over but the mission was unable to get visa facilities to proceed from India to the mainland of China. It was still in India when the Chinese invaded Tibet in 1950.

## **Conclusion**

Whereas some of tribes of Arunachal Pradesh vis., Abors, Mishmis, Monbas and Drukpas have lived in the area within the bend of the Tsang-po river beyond the Himalayan range, there are no Tibetans living on the Indian side of the range. Nor are the people of Arunachal Pradesh followers of Tibetan Buddhism, except those in the Tawang area adjoining Bhutan. Like the Ahoms, the British preferred to leave the area unadministered and although the tribes were left to their own way of life, the area continued to be part of India. There was never any claim made to it by the Tibetans which the Chinese could have inherited when they occupied Tibet in 1950.

The British wanted to balance Tibet and China against each other so that they could safeguard their own interest in India, but free India decided to accept the Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Another change from British policy made by independent India was that whereas the British posted political officers to deal with the tribes and only sent survey parties and expeditions into the tribal area now called Arunachal Pradesh, free India treated these people like other citizens. All "development" activities like health services and scientific agriculture were extended to their area. This has ended the people's isolation and cleared mis-conceptions about their way of life. They are now as much part of the mainstream of India life as any other part of India. The Chinese claim to the area has no support in history nor have the Tibetans any racial affinity with the people of the area. When the Tibetans never claimed this area, how can China advance a claim on them?

## **Part II**

### **The Border Dispute with China**

## 6

**Border Incidents 1954-1962**

The Chinese contested the northern border of India both in respect of the Himalayan ranges and in respect of Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. In respect of the latter, the Chinese claim that they sent their armies for the occupation of Tibet in 1950 to Gartok in Western Tibet though the Aksai Chin route besides the main attack from Szechuan. The route through Aksai Chin is known to history as it was used in 1717 by the Zungar Mangols to march to Lhasa to save the Dalai Lama from the Chinese control. Border incidents started as a result of the Chinese attempt to test the ground, as it were, on the Himalayan border in the middle sector i.e. in the Himachal - Uttar Pradesh region. This part of the Himalayan border was referred to in the border trade agreement between India and China concluded in 1954. It is in this part of the border and immediately after the signing of this agreement that the Chinese made the first encroachments on the border between Tibet and India.

It was in the middle sector of the boundary (south and south-east of Ladakh) that the Chinese complained that on 29 June, thirty Indian troops "crossed the Niti pass into Wu Je of the Ali area of the Tibet region of China". The Indian Government replied that these men of the Border Security Force were encamped in the Hoti plan south-east of Niti pass in Indian territory. The first Chinese notes showed that they were not clear of the location of Wu Je and the two sides agreed to exchange information. The dispute lingered on and on 28 April 1956, Chinese soldiers were seen "half a mile east of Nilang within Indian territory".

On 1st September of that year, a Chinese party crossed the Shipki pass and "took up position about two furlongs from Hapsong Khud".

In this case as well as the Bara Hoti pastures, the Chinese intrusion was at place where there had been border differences between local authorities in the past.

The major encroachment however took place in Ladakh in the western sector where the Chinese constructed a road connecting Sinkiang with Western Tibet which crossed into Indian territory at Haji Langar and cut across the Aksai Chin area. The Chinese announced the completion of this road in 1957 claiming it as an engineering feat on which a large labour force of civilians was employed, after an extensive preliminary survey to determine the alignment. The ground surface of this region of Aksai Chin is generally a flat plain. As mentioned already, the Chinese asserted that the PLA troops had marched along this in 1950 when they "liberated" Tibet. The Indians pointed out that on the one hand this march across Aksai Chin had never taken place, and on the other that the construction of this road was a surreptitious occupation of Indian territory which they detected when their patrol parties in the area were interfered with in 1958. One of the patrol parties reported back on this intrusion but the other was captured by the Chinese. It has to be borne in mind that the Chinese claimed that this road as a vital supply line to send troops and materials to fight the revolt of the Tibetans and particularly of Kham-pas, which was flaring up at this time, and this might explain their act of forceful occupation. They seemed determined to hold on to this road regardless of the rights and wrongs of their claim that the area was part of Sinkiang.

The Chinese also started to probe into other areas Ladakh. On 2 July 1958, the Indians protested about the visit of Chinese troops to Khurnak Fort north of the Pangang Lake and pointed out that earlier in 1924, representatives of Kashmir and Tibet had met regarding the boundary in this area and the jurisdiction of India over the Khurnak Fort was never disputed.

On the Eastern sector, east of Bhutan, the first border incident took place in October 1957 when Chinese troops came into Dichu valley and as far down as Walong in that river basin. Again in September 1958, the Chinese troops crossed into Lohit frontier division in the same area and later entered Burma. All these incidents were kept back from the Indian public by the Government in the hope that avoidance of the public knowledge would help to solve the matter amicably. The public learned regarding Chinese advances across the

border only when they overtook the border outpost of Assam Rifles at Longju on the McMahon Line in August 1958. The Chinese surrounded and fired at the outpost killing one Indian on the spot and wounding another. The Chinese claimed that the Indian troops had crossed the McMahon Line and come into Miguytin. A year later in August 1959, the Chinese troops crossed the McMahon Line just east of Bhutan at Khinzemane.

Also in August 1959 they crossed the border in the Western sector in the Spanggur region south of Pongong Lake area. The incident that set aside all hope of a peaceful settlement however was the attack on the Indian patrol party near Kongka Pass in the area north of the Chang Chenmo valley on October 1, 1959, by Chinese troops from across the river killing nine Indian including the Leader Karam Singh. This incident aroused great indignation in India and also gave notice, as it were, of the Chinese determination to advance further to the east and south of Aksai Chin area.

When the Dalai Lama fled to India in March 1959, the Chinese attacked the Indian Government as being responsible for fomenting the revolt in Tibet, although this was not based on facts and rather intended as a threat. After the Kongka incident, the Indian Government handed over the responsibility of the defence of the northern border to the Indian army, instead of the border police like the Ladakh Scouts and the Assam Rifles. The continuing Chinese advance required the setting up of border posts and increased patrolling by India. The correspondence between the Indian and Chinese Prime Minister had revealed the full extent of the Chinese claims in eastern Ladakh.

The border incidents increased further in number and intensity after the exchange of letters between the two Prime Ministers in September 1959. In the letter of September 8, Chou En-Lai made claim to about 40,000 square miles of what in India's view was indisputably Indian territory. The Chinese Prime Minister had made the suggestion that both sides should withdraw 20 KM from the "line of actual control" as on that date. But the snag lay in the fact that this line was interpreted by the Chinese to suit their own claim and not as it actually was on the ground. The Chinese Prime Minister had referred to a map of 1956 as representing correctly the boundary line, but China started to set up new posts not only upto but even beyond this line. India also set up new posts to secure the area now claimed by China in Ladakh. The Chinese patrols from Khurnak Fort on the Pangong Lake visited Suriah inside Indian territory in April and again in June

1960. In the autumn of the year, a Chinese patrol intruded into Indian territory near Daulat Beg Oldi near the Karakoram Pass. In the second week of October 1960 some Chinese soldiers came near Hot Springs in the Chang Chenmo Valley. In May, 1961, they crossed into India near Chushul on the Tibetan border. In July they objected to Indian personnel visiting west of Spanggur. India pointed out that this was within Indian territory as the border line cuts across the eastern part of Spanggur Lake. In the Demchok area the Chinese similarly objected to Indian patrols to Guje, Rato, etc., India objected the setting up of new Chinese posts at Nyagzu north of the Pangong Lake, at Dambu Garu south of the Chang Chenmo valley, and at a point north of the Chip Chap valley (i.e., the Upper Shyok Valley), all in August-September 1961.

By October 1961, the armed personnel of the two sides confronted each other in Ladakh right from Daulat Beg Oldi to Demchok. The Chinese built a number of roads connecting the Sinkiang-Tibet road with new posts in interior. A new post in the north of the Chip Chap river was connected to Lanak La in the Chang Chenmo Valley, and also due east to the Aksai Chin road. From Lanak La a road also connected Kongka La and along the Chang Chenmo valley to the west, and the Khurnak Fort via Dambu Garu to the south. Another road connected Rudok in Tibet to Spanggur lake region.

While the above border incursions of the Chinese were in Ladakh, there were border incidents in the middle and eastern sectors also in 1960-61. The Bara Hoti pastures south of the Niti Pass continued to cause friction, also Nilang which the Chinese called Tsungsha and claimed. In the eastern sector, a Chinese patrol party came to Taksung Gompa in June 1960 and in July 1961 a Chinese intrusion took place in the Kameng division.

In addition to the map of 1956 to which Chou-En-Lai had referred as representing the boundary line, the Chinese officials had produced a map of 1960 which claimed more area in Ladakh. In November 1961, the Chinese accused India of invading Chinese area in Spanggur and Demchok in Ladakh, and Salan (near Nilang) and Wu Je (Bara Hoti) in the middle sector. They also asserted that there was no difference in the demarcation on the 1956 and 1960 maps referred to above, a statement which was manifestly wrong, and claimed that "the Sino-Indian traditional boundary in the western sector has always been most clear and definite". In February 1962, the Indian Government replied, "The territory west of Spanggur, the Demchok area,



Nilang and Bara Hoti have always been parts of India and been administered by Indian authorities. It is in fact the Government of China which has during recent years been guilty of a systematic and continuous aggression." Referring to the new Chinese outpost near Chip Chap river the note stated "The post of the point East 78-12 and North 35.19 is about 120 miles to the west of the traditional boundary alignment". The rival claims differed not only in respect of Aksai Chin but also in respect of points further south near Pangong Lake, Spanggur and Demchok. By now the Chinese were in occupation of 12,000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh.

In April 1962, the Chinese complained of "eighteen successive intrusions into China's Sinkiang, pressing towards the Chinese post at East 78.12 and North 25.19". As more and more posts were set up in close proximity, the confrontation and clashes became frequent in Ladakh. An Indian note of July 12 pointed out that the Chinese had set up seven new posts in the Chip Chap river region, and three and one each in the Chang Chenmo valley region and Spanggur region respectively. The Chinese protested July 13 and 16 that Indian troops were frequently intruding into the Galwan valley, and had "lately set up another three aggressive strong points in Ari, Tibet", one on the north bank of the Pangong Lake, one on its south bank, and the third north west of Nyagzu.

Violent incidents began to take place even more frequently. The Indian side reported that on 21 July, an Indian patrol in the Chang Chenmo region was attacked by Chinese troops and two members of the Indian patrol were wounded. On the other hand, the Chinese note given on 17 July alleged that this attack had been made by Indian troops and asserted that, "in the past two months more Indian troops had intruded into Chinese territory on the western sector on a number of occasions" and fired at Chinese frontier guards. Other confrontation took place near Pangong lake area and south of the Galwan sector. The notes exchanged also touched on the wider differences. The Indian note of 11 July pointed out that "In 1951 an expedition went out from Leh to Lingzi Tang and Aksai Chin; in 1952, 1954 and 1956 reconnaissance parties went up to Lanak La via and Hot Springs and the Kongka Pass; in 1957 a patrol reached the Qara tagh Pass; and in 1958 patrols went up to Sarigh Jilganang and the Amtogar Lake regions, to Haji Langar, and the Qara Tagh Pass. But it was only in 1958, they came across the Chinese in this area".

On August 4, the Chinese note alleged, "After the officials' meet-

ing of the two countries, Indian troops first stepped up their encroachment on the Demchok area in Tibet, and then, since last spring, they have successively intruded into such areas as the Chip Chap valley, the source of the Karakash river, and the Galwan river valley in Sinkiang, and the Pangong and Sparggur lakes in Tibet. They have sent up 27 military strong points on Chinese territory.....and unwarranted firing on 12 occasions upto now". At the same time as both sides pointed out, in August and September that a number of new posts being set up by the other party totalling as many as thirty to forty in all in the western sector.

The border tension came to a climax not in Ladakh, but in the area east of Bhutan in the eastern sector. On 16 September 1962, China alleged that "Indian troops had recently again crossed the called McMahon Line, intruded into Che Dong of the Le Village in China". India in its note next day pointed that the boundary here lay "along the crest of Tang La (Thag la) ridge" which the Indian side had not crossed. The Indian post at Dhola was south of this ridge and was fired upon by Chinese troops on September 20 and 21. The Chinese accused that the Indian side had attacked the Jao bridge from Sept 20 to 25 killing a Chinese frontier guard and wounding another, and on September 29-30, their casualties totalled 5 killed and 9 wounded. Further clashes were reported by the Chinese as having taken place on October 9-10 when the Indian troops "fled and left behind 6 corpses". Both sides claimed that the clashes had taken place on the wrong side of the McMahon Line. The Indian note of October 26 gave details of the Chinese attack along the Namka Chu river on October 20 at 5 AM. It stated that the Chinese overran Indian posts at Dhola and Tangdhar in a major battle offensive. In Ladakh, the Chinese attack began on the evening of October 19 and was supported by tanks, in addition to heavy mortar and mountain artillery fire. On October 20, the Chinese had already given its version of the attack that started the border war which lasted thirtyone days. They alleged that the Indian troops launched massive attacks all along the Kechilang river and in the Khinzemane area". Not only here, but in Ladakh also, according to the Chinese note, "the Indian troops.....entrenched in the Chip Chap valley and the Galwan valley launched general attack".

It is a matter of surprise that the Chinese were in a position to send their note regarding incidents of 20th October 1962 on the same day.

## India's Claim to Aksai Chin

India lost the border war with the China in 1962 because it took no action to prevent Chinese advance in Ladakh from 1956 to 1962. The Chinese advanced into Aksai Chin, a plateau of about 5000 metre height above sea level in the north east corner of Ladakh and by the end of the war of 1962, have occupied over 15,000 sq. miles of Ladakh.

The Aksai Chin plateau lies south of the Kuen Lun range and adjoins north west Tibet. The Chinese Prime Minister in his conversations with Nehru and also in written communications has claimed that a road passing through Aksai Chin was a vital link for China between Sinkiang and Tibet. Soon after the invasion of Tibet by China in October 1950, a report appeared in the 'Statesman' on November 7, 1950 that "the Indian Government had been informed of the movement of Chinese troops from Sinkiang to Western Tibet", by its agents at Gartok. What route the Chinese troops took is not clear, as there exists the Keriya route as well to the east of Aksai Chin. The Chinese however started levelling a caravan route across the uninhabited eastern extremity of Aksai Chin. In September 1957, the Chinese announced the completion of this road. Thereafter, the Chinese advance into Ladakh continued and was carried out during the war of 1962 as well.

Here, we are concerned with the evidence available of Indian possession, administrative control of the Aksai Chin area, and the rights under treaty, customs and traditions. The Indian officials produced this evidence in 1960. We may, begin with a more general background. The British rulers in India had begun what they called "a great trigonometrical survey" of the country which after the annexation of the Punjab, was extended to Kashmir by Montgomerie of the Survey of India. In 1857, Godwin Austin who joined Montgomerie, surveyed the Karakoram region, in 1862--63 he "sketched" the upper Chang Chenmo Valley (which furnishes the passage into Aksai Chin from Ladakh), and the northern border of the Pangong district upto the Tibetan border near Rudok (See "Abode of Snow", K. Mason OUP). A number of surveys were thereafter carried out by officers of the

Survey of India, and of the Jammu and Kashmir Darbar, and these records form a valuable and continuous evidence of the Indian occupation of these areas beginning with Johnson in 1865 who went to Khotan across the Aksai Chin. From the geological point of view, K. Mason had opined in a review of a pamphlet of Dr. Hamlnut de Terra who was a member of the Trinkler expedition of 1930 which visited Aksai Chin (This review is contained in 'Himalayan Journal Vol. IV April 1932) that Aksai Chin was one of the four plateau, (the other three being Lingzi Yang, Depsang and the Aghil plateau in the Shaksgam valley), which are older than the surrounding mountains. They are each possessed of separate drainage distinct from the drainage system of the mountains to the north of them, the Kuen-Lun and the Aghil mountains. The Aksai Chin has accumulated salt and soda deposits and the lakes into which the drainage ends are briny. There is little fresh water and fodder for pack animals to be had, the latter in the form of a plant called "burtse". Frederic Drew who joined the service of the Maharaja of Kashmir soon after the annexation of the Punjab visited the area in 1870 and wrote a book, "The Northern Barrior of India". At page 320, he writes, "Its elevation is 17300 feet on the southern side and 17100 feet on the northern side" and at page 322, "The area of the plain itself and of the inner slope of the surrounding mountains makes an isolated basin of drainage". About the Kuen Lun drainage, he says (page 325), "On the southern face of the highest ledge the eastern most branch of the Karakash river has its source, but the drainage of the Plains does not communicate with that river". By 'Plains' he means "that part of these uplands which between the Lokzhung & the Kuenlun mountains". (ibid., p. 324).

The Kashmir Darbar had set up a frontier post at Shahidulla north of the Lingzi - Tang and the Aksai Chin at the foot of the Kuen-Lun mountains. A guard was kept at the frontier post and we find the news-writer maintained by the British in Ladakh reporting on 24 July 1866 (vide NAI/1867 Foreign Department Pol.A (KW proceedings) March 1879), "There were ten soliders of the Maharaja stationed at Sadoolla on the border of Khotan and Ladakh. During the great fall of snow and the passage being closed, it was not practicable to keep them furnished with provisions or money; they were oblidged to go to Kashmir. They have reached Nubra".

The British learnt through the Kashmir Darbar about the route to Shahidulla across Lingzi-Tang and Aksai Chin. Robert Shaw who was

a tea planter in Kangra travelled on the Chang Chenmo route to Yarkand. He wanted to explore the possibility of opening a trade route to Turkestan which would avoid passing through Leh. In 1865, Johnson of the Trigonometrical Survey travelled to Khotan via the Aksai Chin and returned via Shahidulla. About his return route, he made the following entry: "11. Shahidulla 11500 feet Encamped near a guard house belonging to the Maharaja of Kashmir" (vide NAI Foreign/Pol.A of 1850 June 1866, Nos. 135-39). The British persuaded the Maharaja to agree to a joint survey of the possibility of establishing a trade through this region to Turkestan. Captain Grey was sent to Jammu for negotiating this agreement and he presented a memorandum regarding an engineering survey of the Chang Chenmo route, on 23 Nov 1869 as follows: "At present, the vast expense of Turkestan beyond him\* was filled with people who, now the Chinese oppression was removed\*\*, were quite prepared to become friendly to us and to himself" (vide NAI No.190 AFD/Pol.A-Nos.90-115, 1870). The Grey mission was followed up by Forsyth who in February 1870 negotiated the treaty for the survey and for the appointment of Joint Commissioners by the Maharaja and the British for the supervision of the survey, to be stationed at Leh. A number of survey parties explored the alternate routes along the Chang Chenmo, Lingzi-Tang and Aksai Chin to Turkestan. Forsyth also led a big mission in 1873-74 to Yakub Beg who had replaced the Chinese in Eastern Turkestan and a draft agreement was agreed upon with him. A number of trading parties visited Yarkand along the new routes. Amongst them was T. Russell of Central Asian Trading Company whose report (vide NAI No.235 dated 21.6.1875 in Foreign/Pol. A July 1875 Nos. 234-39) reads, "Last year I proceeded to Yarkand from Lahoul to Leh via Chang Chenmo and Shahidulla and onwards to Yarkand....."

Forsyth was "to ascertain political boundaries of the kingdom of Koshgar" with India and reported, "Commencing from the south east corner there is no question that the Kuen-Lun range has always been in Yarkand territory.....no claim is asserted south of the Karakash river; and on the Yarkand river they do not come higher up the Kufeclong" (National Archives of India report, Yarkand Mission August 1875 see No.68 - as quoted in "Central Asia in Modern

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\* i.e., the Maharaja

\*\* i.e., on Yakub Beg's coming to power

Times”, R. Kaushik, Progress Publishers Moscow - 1970).

Yakub Beg died in 1877 and the Chinese re-established themselves in Sinkiang. The Russian posted a Consul General and the British plans to extend trade or other influence, received a set back. But the exploration of various routes from Central Asia to India went on as the British wanted to protect the empire against any Russian advance. This applied equally to routes through the Aksai Chin. The Chinese made no attempt to come south of the Kuen-Lun mountains beyond setting up their custom posts at the passes of Sanju, Killian and Kugiyar at the foot of the Kuen-Lun mountains. The Kirghiz herdsmen who used the pastures near Shahidulla were in need of protection against the Kanjuts from Hunza. They appealed to the Chinese authorities in Sinkiang for protection but they were told that as they lived south of the passes they could not expect any protection from the Chinese. In a memorandum to the Foreign Secretary W.J. Cunningham regarding the Russian threat, Younghusband stated inter alia, “In 1888 they (the Kirghiz were told (by the Chinese) that they must not expect protection as they lived beyond the frontier posts.....”(NAI Proceedings July 1890 Nos 225-45’ Deputation of Younghusband to Yarkand these Turkestan in 1890”). Younghusband was deputed to proceed to the area and report further.

This was to be Younghusband’s second visit to the region. Earlier in 1889, he had visited Shahidulla and his report of the visit is available in NAI February 1890 Proceedings 59-84 about his first visit and the exploration he carried out beyond the Karakoram range. Here he had met the Russian explorer Gromchevsky and learnt of his plan to proceed to Leh. The British did not then know that it was Gromchevsky who had visited Hunza in 1888 and had met the Mir of Hunza. Younghusband wrote to Durand, the Foreign Secretary about his exploration “From the Karakoram Pass to the real Shimshal there is an immense glacier region.....I have no hesitation in saying that the region is practically impossible for all military purposes. I have discovered a subsidiary range between the Karakoram and the Kuen-Lun running parallel to them in a north-western direction (this was the Aghil Range). The name of the country Ras-Kan means “real mine”. The merchants from Shahidulla whom I sent to the Amban at Yarkand returned. The Amban said it would be a very good thing if Shahidulla again became populated and prosperous”. Younghusband wrote to the Resident in Kashmir, “This pass (ShimShal) I

found to be an extremely easy one. Its value from a military point of view is completely lost an account of the very difficult nature of the country beyond on the Kanjut side". He also reported to the Resident about Gromchevsky whom he had met on 23rd October 1889. Younghusband was then on his way to the Taghdumbash. The Russian showed him a map "marking a slip of country driving a wedge between the Afghan territory in Wakhan and the western boundary of China". Younghusband opined that "The Taghudumbash is inhabited by Kirghis who could be snapped up as easily as the Shahidulla Kirghis". Perhaps he was apprehending that the Russians would do just that! In conclusion, Younghusband wrote on 30 December 1889 to Nisbet the Resident at Kashmir about the general strategic picture, vis-a-vis, the Russian threat, as follows:

"The two strategical points to be guarded are Gilight and Leh, of which the former is by far the more important; and between the two points there is no possibility of a force penetrating from the north", Regarding the Kirghis, he added, "As the Chinese invariably refuse to protect the Kirghiz if they live on the Southern side of the Kuen-Lun range, it would perhaps be better to take these under our influence".

The British tried to persuade the Chinese authorities to take over the area south of the Kuen Lun, as it was the lesser evil compared with the threat from Russia, though in his report of the 1889 visit Younghusband had recommended taking over the Kirghiz of this area under the British protection. Ultimately, the Chinese felt encouraged to move into Shahidulla and the British were satisfied at the success of their policy. When the Maharaja of Kashmir protested and wanted to take action against this encroachment on his territory, the British dissuaded him from taking action. The National Archives (Proceedings July 1890 Nos. 225-45) again furnish a detailed analysis by Younghusband. He wrote, "When news was received that the Chinese have asserted their authority at Shahidulla, it was noted that 'at any rate it keeps the Russians out'. Shahidulla has never before been occupied by the Chinese.....It is not improbable that the occupation of Shahidulla is due to Russian instigation in opposition to us, as until the arrival of Gromchevsky the Chinese had shown no signs of coming to this place". He noted further on 28.3.1890, "I have just received letter from Gromchevsky and Turdikul\* at the Shahidulla. Gromchevsky had

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the leader of Kirghis in Shehidulla

started off from Shahidulla for Polu. Capt. Ramsay\*\* says that the Chinese also tried to build a fort on Karakoram". This obviously refers to the Chinese putting up a sign post at the Karakoram pass. On 12 May 1890, Younghusband noted, "Mr. Elias in 1885 had found that while the Chinese had withdrawn behind the right bank of the Aksu (Oxus), the Afghans had made to attempt to assume authority on the left bank. Capt. Ramsay had frequently advised the taking of our frontier as far north as Shahidulla. The Chinese have occupied Shahidulla and have settled the question in a way which the Government of India will probably think the most advantageous to us ..... Our best policy would be to encourage the Chinese to occupy all the country upto:-

(i) the watershed on the Pamirs between the two branches of Oxus; and (ii) the main Karakoram or Muziagh range which forms the Indian Watershed".

Younghusband was asked to proceed again to Yarkand and before proceeding Younghusband produced a detailed memorandum on the Russian threat which stated inter alia, "In their former occupation of Turkestan which ended in 1863, the Chinese considered the Kuen Lun mountains (i.e. the branch of them over which are the Kilian and Sanju passes) as their frontier, and according to Mr. Elias Shahidulla was occupied by Kashmiris nearly ever since they had conquered Ladakh (1842)". When Yakub Beg came into power, he advanced his frontier and the Kashmiris retired from Shahidulla in 1865. The Chinese have always had Karawals on the northern side of the Kilian and Sanju passes though the Kirghis who occupy Shahidulla and the valley of the Karakash river have paid taxes to the Chinese. In 1888, they were told that they must not expect protection (against Kanjuts) as they lived beyond the frontier forts". The report of the Indian Officials in 1960-61. page 155, mentions, "it was only a year later (1890) that the Chinese advanced southwards, pulled down the Shahidulla fort and built another fort close to the Suket pass, eight miles south of Shahidulla."

In 1892 Lord Dunmore, a traveller in the area, saw a notice board there stating, "Anyone crossing the Chinese boundary without reporting himself at this fort will be imprisoned. That year, however, the Chinese came further south. Two documents from the Kashmir Government records show that in 1892, the Amban of Suket and

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\*\* Joint. Commission at Leh



established a pillar 64 miles south of Suket and that Raja Amar Singh had reported against this to the British. It was on the latter's dissuasion that the Kashmir Darbar took no action to repel the Chinese. George Macartney who was posted to Kashgar as "Chinese officer to the Resident in Kashmir" reported about Aksai Chin (as stated in Dany letter to Younghusband of 1907 vide NAI App Notes to proceedings Feb. 1908. (Nos. 40-51) "In 1883 Mr. Macartney, the Assistant at Kasghar, forwarded a map by a Chinese ex-Minister which showed the Kashmir boundary as meeting the Yarkand river about the Aghil Pass, following the river upto Aktagh and then moving along the Kuen Lun range so as to leave the whole of west Aksai Chin in Kashmir territory. At the same, time he reported the presence of this Chinese surveyor and soon after he sent map drawn by the Surveyor which though by no means clear on the subject, was interpreted by Macartney as indicating that Kashgar boundary came down to the Karakoram" Macartney was able to confirm the presence of the Chinese at Suget Karaul in 1896 when he travelled that way from India (see NAI Proceedings Frontier B-nos. 288-92). He describes the portion of the Leh-Yarkand route between the Karakoram Pass and Yarkand via Killian. He reached Suget Karaul on Sept 1896 and notes. "Road down hill and the way, is the first place of human habitation on the north side of the Karakoram Pass. A Chinese officer resides there during the trading season but has no troops". On 18th, he reached Kilian and notes, "A Chinese official resides here".

Although, the British policy was responsible for persuading the Chinese to move down to Suget Karaul on the Karakoram Pass in the 1890, it is common ground between India and China that the boundary at Kashmir with Sinkiang and Tibet is a traditional one. According to the Chinese, it has never been demarcated but according to India, demarcating has taken place in accordance with treaties extending from centuries ago to more recent times. In the 10th century AD, Skyid Magnon was King of the areas that included western Tibet, Ladakh, Lahaul and Spiti, and on his death the Kingdom was divided among the three sons. The will under which the Kingdom was partitioned is rendered into English by Francke "as to the eldest MAR-YUL of Mnah-ris, the inhabitants using the black bows "RUTHOGS of the east nearer this way Lide Mehragdkarpi (i.e., Rudok east of the Pankin Lake) and Demchog at the frontier Ra-BA-DMARPO WANLE to the top of the pass of the Yincing rock (i.e. Hanle and Imis Pass) to

the west to the foot of the Kashmir Pass (i.e., Zoji in above Dras) to the north to the gold mine of HGOG all the places belonging to RGYA” (vide *Antiquities of India Tibet*” by Francke, Vol. 2 p.94 Calcutta 1921).

The significance of this document is enhanced since it is mentioned in the treaty of 1684 between Tibet and Ladakh. “A mixed force of Mongols and Tibetans invaded Ladakh, but it was driven out by the Ladakhis with the aid of the Moghul Governor of Kashmir”. (vide *Reportt of the Indian Officers 1960-61* p.51). This treaty states that “the boundaries fixed in the beginning, when Skyid-ide-ngoe Magnon gave a Kingdom to each of his three sons shall still be maintained”. Cunningham in his book “Ladakh”, 1853 gives a further detail in confirmation saying, “the boundary is well defined by piles of stones, which were set up after the last expulsion of the Sokpo (Mongol) hordes in A.D. 1687, when the Ladakhis received considerable assistance from Kashmir” vide “Ladakh” by Alexander Cunningham, Sagar Publications, New Delhi, 1977, p.261.

Another link in the chain of evidence is provided by the treaty of 1842 between Kashmir Darbar and Tibet, a treaty which was witnessed by the Chinese representative. This text of the treaty is given in Aitchison’s “*Collection of Treaties*:(1909) which reads, inter alia. “We shall neither at present nor in further have anything to do or interfere at all with the boundaries of Ladakh and its surroundings as fixed from ancient times”, and thus confirms the old boundaries without re-defining them. There is a continuing treaty basis of the boundaries of Ladakh as well as its demarcation since of old. Custom and tradition play a strong part in the way of life of our people and the above treaties did not feel called upon to re-define the boundary of Ladakh.

We have next to consider what evidence there is as proof by way of administration and tradition, right upto the boundary. The people of the Ladakh exercised their right of pasturage and collected salt from Aksai Chin area as a matter of long established custom. In their case as in the case of Tibetans on the other side of the boundary the rights of pasturage were clearly demarcated along the boundary. F. Drew who has been quoted earlier wrote in 1875 that the boundary line “divides pasture land frequented in summer by Maharaja’s subjects from those occupied by the subject of Lhasa”, (vide p. 496, “The Jummo and Kashmir Territories”). The *Gazetteer of Kashmir* and

Ladakh published in 1896 states at p. 256. "The Chang Chenmo Valley is the great autumn grounds for the flocks from Lukung, Phobrang and Tanktse districts; occasionally great loss is sustained by an unusually early fall of snow, for the grass, which though nourishing, is at all times scanty, and the animals die of starvation before they can be brought over the Masemik into milder regions". There were salt lakes in the Lingzi-Tang and Aksai Chin areas and the inhabitants from neighbouring villages in Ladakh regularly collected salt along the routes to the main salt lakes, the Amtogar and the Testolang which were well known. The area was also crossed by two caravan routes - the eastern and the western Chang Chenmo routes via Haji Langer and Ak-Tagh respectively. The Indian officials at the 1960 talks produced a detailed statement dated 1868 by Syed Akbar Ali Shah, the Wazir Wazarat of Ladakh containing information about the various stages and about the condition of the road along the route from Gogra to Nisehu, Lak-Tsung and Thaldot to the Qara river. Shahidulla was mentioned as on the northern boundary of the State and the tables 1 and 2 gave the stages of the summer route to Shahidulla. The Kirghiz who lived by migrating with their flocks in the Pamirs and the Kuen-Lun range never came south. In 1907, Younghusband who was posted in Kashmir and was asked by Dane to inquire once again into the question of Chinese jurisdiction, reported on 31 August 1907."Clarke asked me to get Fielding (who was going to Yarkand) to make inquiries regarding the limits of Chinese jurisdiction. The first settled inhabitants (Kirghis) he appears to have met were at Suget and you will see from the enclosed extracts of his letter dated 15 August 1907 that the Beg of Suget considers himself under Chinese jurisdiction" (vide App. Notes to Proceedings Nos. 40-51, February 1908).

Now we come to the question of the administration of these areas. The Indian official at the 1960 talks produced "a map of 1865 utilised by the Kashmir Government for showing the location of police check-posts established that they were to be found as far as north as in the vicinity of Yangi Dawan on the southern bank of the Qara Qash river". A regular settlement of revenue for the whole of Ladakh was made during the time of Mehta Mangal who was Wazir Wazarat (or Governor) between 1860-65; the settlement was revised by his successor, Johnson (1870-1) and Radha Krishan Kaul (1882). Both the Revenue Assessment report of 1902 and the Settlement report of 1908 mention 108 villages including Tanktse, Chushul, Minsar. The areas of the

Chang Chenmo valley and Lingzi-Tang and Aksai Chin where rights of pasture and of collecting salt were exercised, were included in the Tanktse ilaqa. The preliminary report of Ladakh settlement 1908, made clear that these areas were part of Ladakh, and gave a short revenue and political history of the area. The Assessment report of the Ladakh Tehsil published in Lahore in 1908 states at page 1.

“There have been no boundary disputes on the Lhasa frontier and the existing boundary is well understood by subjects of both the State and the Lhasa Governments”.

The Administration maintained the trade routes and derived income from levies on the goods carried by the caravans. The British Joint Commissioner appointed under the agreement of 1870 for the development of new routes across the Chang Chenmo valley were active in exploring the Aksai Chin region personally and through surveyors appointed to assist them. Dr. Cayley and the surveyors who assisted him, surveyed the Aksai Chin region and the sources of the Karakash river upto the Kuen-Lun foothills. In the Government of India FD 1870 (Nos 461-74, (I quote from No. 462), we read, “No.7 - Camp Karakosh river, 28 July 1870. After leaving the Pangong Lake, I accompanied Mr. Forsyth’s camp for three marches over the Masimik Pass as far as Pamzal in the Chang Chenmo Valley. A good road has been made the whole way and the pass itself, though nearly 19,000 feet high, is particularly easy. From Pamzal, I came on ahead of Mr. Forsyth and followed the route I took in 1868, through the Chang Chenmo Valley over the lowest of the passes leading across the mountains range to the north, reached the centre of the Lingzi-Thang plain on the 19th. From camp Lingzi-Thang I started on the 21st and leaving the well known route to the eastern branch of the Karakash which I followed in 1865. I took a direction north by west across the plain and reached the southern or main branch of that river in two marches, and following down its course arrived this morning at the junction of the two branches where the roads reunite”.

In No. 472, he writes on August 26, 1870, “Mr. Reynolds, the Assisant Surveyor reached Gogra in Chang Chenmo .....

He had been as far as Lukzung. He is now surveying the first four marches as far as the head of the Karakash river”.

Neither Dr. Cayley nor other British travellers and explorers mentioned that they met any Chinese in the Aksai Chin region.

When Curzon became Viceroy, he had already travelled in Cen-

tral Asia and Afghanistan, visited the source of the Oxus river, and had met Younghusband at Chitral. Curzon was more concerned than his predecessors about the Russian advance into Chinese Turkistan and Tibet. It was this which impelled to get the U.K. Government to approach the Chinese with a proposal to define the boundary between China and India in Kashmir. Steps were taken by the Indian Government under Lord Curzon in 1899 to get the Chinese to agree to a boundary between Kashmir and Sinkiang and Tibet. His interest was in defining the boundary, vis-a-vis Sinkiang so as to secure the empire against Russian advance. For the same reason, Curzon decided to move into Tibet in the face of opposition from the Dalai Lama. The boundary line offered to the Chinese by Curzon was a compromise, yielding to the Chinese some areas - Taghdumbash Pamir and Raksam valley - where the Amir of Hunza had rights, in exchange for the renunciation of Chinese sovereignty over Hunza. The question of the claims of Hunza however got mixed up with the border alignment generally, and vis-a-vis, Tibet Curzon proposed a boundary line with Ladakh which offered a part of Aksai Chin. As in 1847, so in 1899 the Chinese did not respond to the British offer of a boundary agreement. The Foreign Office wrote to the British Minister in Peking Sir C. Macdonald on December 14, 1898 (vide NAT Foreign Dept. Secret F. Proceedings May, 1899 Nos. 154-210 No.164(209), "As to means of inducing China to renounce her claim to sovereignty over Hunza, the Government of India are ready to waive claim of Hunza to the Taghdumbash and also to Russiam.....I have to request to approach the Tsungli Yemea on the subject". On 10 May 1899 (vide ibid - No. 205), Curzon sent a telgram to the Secretary of State, "The question between Hunza and China is not connected with tthe question of our frontier. In the early part of the century Hunza conquered the Kirgiz of Raksam and has ever since occupied or cultivated that valley, and has levied annual tribute from its inhabitants. These rights have never been contested by Chinese superior authorities".

The problem of Hunza had come to the fore with the action of the Chinese authorities agreeing to assign lands to Raksam to the Mir of Hunza. As stated in Attchison's *Treaties Vol.XII*, "The Hunza Chief, in view of his claim to the Raksam and Tughdumbash districts which are situated to the north of Hindukush watershed continue to keep up an exchange of presents with the Chinese authorities in Kashgar..... again since then continued to cultivate the land (in Raksam) without

interference. In Taghdumbash, the Hunza Chief collects certain dues with the consent of the Chinese". In 1897-98, Macartney had journeyed to Raksam and south west part of Raksam. He learnt that the Chinese had agreed to assign lands in Raksam to Hunza. Later, it seems the Russians came to know and protested against this presumably because they had an eye on the area. The Chinese authorities postponed the scheme. Macartney writes in his Kashgar Diary (vide NAI F.D. Secret F. Proceedings August 1889, 166-201) "17 August (1899) called on the Tao-Tai, the Governor of the New Dominions had instructed the local authorities to defer the conveyance of Raksam to the Kanjutis". Thus the Russian made their presence felt and Curzon wrote (vide NAI Secret F. Proceedings, May 1899, Nos 154-210) on 19 March 1899, "It is rather a fine balance of consideration, for which on the one hand it is desirable to get the Kanjutis into Raksam in order to keep the Russians out, on the other hand, should the latter seize Kashgar, they may claim Hunza as a subject State".

The result was that the Raksam lands were not assigned to Kajuits. The Government of India's proposal to the Chinese Government on the subject of the boundary between "the Indian State of Kashmir and the New Dominion of Chinese Turkstan" was conveyed by Macdonald in 1899 on the ground of avoiding any "dispute or uncertainty" over the claims of Hunza. The boundary proposed, however, covered the entire border in Ladakh including Aksai chin. While we have some explanation as we have seen above for the exclusion of trans-Hindukush areas of Hunza, we have none for the exclusion of a part of Aksai Chin except that the British were searching for a way to draw the Chinese south of the Kuen Lun into areas which they feared might otherwise fall into the hands of the Russian in case they took Sinkiang. The trouble with such offers seeking a political solution, and not conforming the actual traditional customary boundary, is that what may have suited foreign rulers may not suit the people of the area concerned. However, the Chinese did not respond to the offer.

The subsequent British thinking on the boundary to be fixed between Kashmir and its neighbours was again vacillating, reflecting the changing fortunes of their relations with Russia and China. We have an interesting view of how this affected the map making of the Government of India in so far as it related to this border. With the signing of the Anglo-Russian Entente relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet in 1907, a change of stance came about in the Anglo-Russian

rivalry in the region. This was also a time when the question of publication of the Fourth Edition of the map of India, scale 1" = 32 miles. It was noted in March 1907, "No definite boundary can be shown for the British districts of the Punjab and U.P. bordering on Tibet and there should simply be colour-washed as far as was done in the previous edition. The external limits of Kashmir, Rampur Bushahr and Tehri are also undefined, and a yellow wash should be employed in these areas terminating as heretofore. The Afghan boundary along the Oxus may be regarded as demarcated.....as should be the bountry along the Hari Rud between Zulfikar and the demarcated protion at Hashtadan....." (vide NAI Proceedings, Feb 1908 Nos 40-51).

Regarding Aksai Chin we find in the notes (ibid Appendix - Notes dated 30 March 1907), "On the other hand, the map of Turkestan prepared in 1893 shows the whole of western Aksai Chin as excluded from Chinese control". Colonel Strahan however noting on 8 February 1897 mentioned the two Aksai Chins as being 'one in China and one in Kashmir'. "As there is a certain amount of evidence, though of ancient date of Kashmir's claims to the Western Aksai Chin, we shall perhaps have some justification for extending the colour wash over all this area upto the Kuen-Lun range on the north and as far to the east as is shown on the old map of Turkestan, i.e., upto the range dipping first south east and then south west, then south east again from the Kuen-Lun.....".

A resume on the subject of Ladakh-Kashgar boundary was prepared on 8 June 1907 by the same person who prepared the note quoted earlier, one Mr. C. Kirkpatrick. This sums up the British approach of Aksai Chin at that time : (It is from the same source - ibid - Appendix Notes).

"Prior to 1895, the boundary was entirely undefined but we advised the Kashmir Darbar against occupying Shahidulla as Chinese suzerainty over the Karakush Valley was an established fact. Mr. Ney Elias, in reporting the desire of the Darbar to occupy the place, advocated the boundary being fixed at the Karakoram Pass, as 'there is nothing beyond the Pass that the Kashmiris can with advantage interfere with'

"In 1886, Captain Ramsay, British Joint Commissioner, Ladakh drew attention to the vagueness of the boundary. He showed that the sixth edition of the Map of Turkestan gave Aktagh (boundary between

Shahidulla and the Karakoram Pass) as on the border while the British Musown in Yarkand was escorted as far as Shahidulla where it was met by Yarkand officials .....

“The proposal to fix the boundary at Shahidulla was reviewed in 1889 when Sir Martimer Durand expressed the opinion (which was confirmed by Dufferin) that ‘it would not be desirable to run the risk of a troublesome controversy with China to push a Kashmir post beyond the Karakoram with the object of forestalling Russia when they succeeds the Chinese in Yarkand’.

“In the same year (1888) a report (on the authority of a memo found among the effects of Dagleish after the murder) was received recording the view that the Chinese were unwilling to extend their boundary southward and considering their boundary as lying from Tash-Kurgham in Sarikol to Kuguyar, Killian and Sanju (the two latter passes).

“In 1890, Younghusband learnt from the Amban that the Chinese considered that their territory extended south-ward upto the Indus watershed and the Karakoram range.

“In 1893, Mr. Macartnay, the Assistant at Kashgar, forwarded a map drawn by a Chinese ex-Minister which showed the Kashgar boundary as meeting the Yarkand river above the Aghil Pass, following the river upto Aktagh and then running along the Kuen Lun range so as to leave the whole of west Aksai Chin in Kashmir territory. At the same time he reported the presence in the locality of a Chinese surveyor, which though by no means clear on the subject, was interpreted by Macartnay as indicating that the Kashgar boundary came down to the Karakoram.....”

This note was put up to Sir Louis Dane the Foreign Secretary who noted “It seems clear that in 1888 we renounced claims which we might have sustained, owing to the desire to placate China.....in connection with the Burma business”.....We hope to be able to keep Aksai Chin in Tibet in order to adhere to the Kuen-Lun boundary for that country.....”

During his excavations in Central Asia in 1900 and in 1907-08, Sir Aurel Stein found time to go south from Khotan to trace the routes to and via Aksai Chin. This “enabled the mapping of the deep-cut gorges holding the upper course of the Yurung-kash and the great glacier-clad mountain range which rises above it to peaks close on 22,000 feet, dividing the Tarim basin from the Aksai Chin plateau of North-West Tibet” (from A. Stein article in “Revealing India’s Past, Sir, J. Cum-



ming-The India Society-London 1939).

The drainage basin of the plateau was distinct from those of the Karakosh and Yurungkash rivers flowing into Khotan. It is interesting that Stein confirms the evidence of Johnson's route of 1865 and the cairns and shelter huts constructed on it by the emissary of Khotan before Johnson's journey, were still there in 1908. The evidence of Nazaroff (1924) and Emil Trinkler (1930) also confirms the same. From Yangi Pass to the Karakoram Pass, Nazaroff travelled along the Indo-China frontier whereas in the case of Trinkler Suget Karual and Sanju Pass on the journey to Sinkiang and the Killian Pass from the return journey were used. All these passes are on the southern foothills of Kuen Lun mountains. Davidson in 1956 was not allowed to go beyond Yarkand but he was told that a road to Tibet was being built from Keriya in S.W. Tibet".

The furthest south the Chinese authority in Sinkiang extended was the Suget Kuraul and Shahidulla. They maintained customs posts at Killan, Kugiyar and Sanju pass in the southern foothills of the Kuen-Lun. Beyond these the Chinese advanced for the first time in 1950.

## China's claim to Aksai Chin

The Chinese have provided the evidence on which they base their claim to Aksai Chin in the Report of the Chinese officials<sup>1</sup> “ on their statements and comments made during the meetings of the officials of the two Governments”, i.e., of India and China submitted in December 1960. The group of officials was set up by the two Prime Ministers during the visit of Chou En-lai to New Delhi in April 1960. This is the only time that Chinese explained the basis of claiming Aksai Chin, the area that forms a vast tri-junction of nearly 15,000 square miles (that is if we include areas occupied by China in Eastern Ladakh). It is situated south of Khotan (called Hotien by China) in the Sinkiang Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region of China on the north and east, and by Ladakh region of the State of Jammu and Kashmir on the south and west.

The Chinese report makes some general observations on the basis of their claim to this area in particular and to their border claims vis-a-vis India in general. They reject categorically the assertion first made by Prime Minister Nehru that the border was based on treaties, in case of Ladakh, between Jammu and Kashmir on the one hand and Tibet and China on the other. They rejected also the principle of ‘water-shed’ as the decisive factor for the border alignment in Ladakh. They rejected finally that any value should be attached to the unofficial records and maps, even though they quoted British travellers, explorers, etc., when they felt that they supported China's case.

The Report of the Chinese begins with the axiomatic statement, repeated often, “The Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally

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Note: Report of the Chinese Officials (page CR:1 to 213) contained in the “Report of the officials of Government of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question” Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Feb. 1961

All quotations from the ‘Report of the Chinese Officials’ are cited as (CR), otherwise the above work is quoted as (Report of the officials)

delimited and there is only a traditional customary boundary line between the two countries" (CR:1). It may be useful to clarify here that they do not envisage any no-man's land between the areas ruled by India and by China in Aksai Chin or elsewhere. It is as well to clear up this point because some apologists of China have built up their case on basis of such a view. As we shall see the Chinese assert that the areas claimed by them have been under their jurisdiction and administration for centuries. In a modification of this statement, however, they state that the boundary line must change from time to time "owing to political, economic and other reasons" (CR:4).

In so far as it relates to the Ladakh-Sinkiang border, the Chinese have defined the Karakoram mountains as being the boundary (CR:1). East of them it crosses the Chip Chap river, the Galwan river and then follows in a south easternly direction to Kongka Pass "along the watershed between the Kurang-tsangpo river and its tributary the Changlung river" (CR:1). Regarding the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh, it is claimed to turn south-west "along the mountain ridge, crosses the junction of the Chang-chenmo river and the Silung-Barma river, ascends the mountain ridge again and passes through Mount Tamate (approximately 78° 35' E 34° 10' N), continues southward along the Chang-chenmo mountain" (CR:1). We need not pursue it further for our present purpose of defining the Chinese claims on Aksai Chin.

As mentioned already, the Chinese rejected India's "geographical" principle of the boundary in the "high mountainous regions" being the watershed as "running counter to the facts of history.....for people living in the mountainous regions, high mountains are not necessarily an absolute barrier to their activities, (particularly when there are rivers or passes cutting across the mountains ridges)" (CR:3-4). To drive home the point they add "suffice it to mention the fact of China's Tibetan nationality having spread to many places on the southern side of the Himalayas, and the administrative jurisdiction of the Tibet region of China having extended to these places" (CR:3-4). They pointed out that India's own alignment in the western sector does not follow the watershed principle and jumps from the Karakoram mountains to the Kuen-Lun mountains, cuts across the main river in the area, the Qara Qash river" (CR:4).

The Aksai Chin was claimed by China as part of Sinkiang, although earlier in history the Chinese authorities in Sinkiang had not

claimed it as such.\* The Chinese claimed out that it was through the area that units of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in the latter half of the 1950 entered the Ari district of Tibet from Sinkiang", (CR:31-32). "The fact that southern boundary of Hotien lies along the Karakoram mountains is of long historical standing. Authoritative Chinese official annals have recorded that jurisdiction upto the mountains, i.e., Karakoram mountains (also termed Tsung-Ling), around the sources of the Karakash river" (CR:33). Thus Tsung-Ling or alternately the Nimangyi given as the boundary in the 18th and 19th century annals and maps are in fact the Karakoram mountains which are the source of the Karakash river. As for maps the final proof are two Chinese military maps of 1918 and 1943. "These are two most precise maps printed before China's liberation from which the specific location of the traditional customary line maintained by China can be most clearly seen" (CR:34).

The Chinese next mention the peoples of Sinkiang, Uighurs and Khirghiz, who for centuries have "engaged in Salt mining and hunting in this entire area" (CR:35). This is borne out by Turkic Language names of geographical features such as Karakoram, Karakash, Aksai Chin and Sarig Jilganang Kol" (CR:35). The Chinese also cited early British maps and accounts of travellers to support the Chinese alignment, even though as stated earlier they attach no importance to their evidence.

Regarding the boundary between China's Tibet and Ladakh, the Chinese have provided the evidence separately. They quote an "authoritative Chinese official annal", the Huang-chao Hsu Wen-hsien Tung-Kao which in "volume 330 made it clear that this stretch of the traditional customary boundary touches the Karakoram mountains in the north" (CR:37). It states that Tibet "reaches up to the Karakoram mountains in the North-west, touching Hotien of Sinkiang" (CR:37).

The Chinese deal next with "Administration and Jurisdiction" saying that they have always held that a traditional customary line is "principally formed by the extent upto which each side has throughout history exercised its administration and jurisdiction" (CR:75). Sinkiang was made a component part of the Ching empire in 1759 formally and

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\* Earlier, when macartray presented an Atlas to the Tao Tai in Sinkiang in the '90s of the last century showing Aksai Chin as part of Jammu & Kashmir, the latter called it a part of Tibet.

thus “has been even more conclusively a part of China’s territory” (CR:75). In 1883, Sinkiang was formally made a province and the Hotien Special Division set up. As regards the boundary to the south, the Chinese have furnished evidence regarding Shahidulla as follows: “In 1928, the Chinese Government set up a bureau of administration of Shahidulla” (CR:75) on a proposal made the previous year by the Governor of Sinkiang which states, “with reference to Shahidulla which lies in southeast of the area under the jurisdiction of Ghuma Bazar country now belonging to Hotien Tao, it is a district which extends on the southern side to Kalahulum Tapan, borders on British Tiaopaiti (i.e., Ladakh). On the Eastern side it extends Changchili-man Tapan of Hotien where there is also a small route leading to India” (CR:76). The Chinese officials have explained that Changchili-man is the same as Changling Burma near the Kongka Pass. Earlier, in 1921, a proposal was also made that Shahidulla be made a defence post. “Early in the middle of the 18th century” say the Chinese, they “started to set up ‘Karens’ at Shahidulla, Kengshwar and other places in control of the border areas” (CR:77) and “Chinese troops patrolled Aksai Chin, Linghithang and other places within the Chinese traditional customary line, where traces of camping of the patrols can still be found upto the present time (CR:77). They quote the message of Pan Chen, Commissioner of Hotien to the local authorities of Sinkiang, on May 23, 1898, “To the south west of Polu mountain, there is a road leading to Tiaopaiti of Britain. This mountain road is rugged and has been severed and closed” (CR:77). The reference according to the Chinese is to the road through Aksai Chin.

In 1941, the Chinese lodged a complaint with the British Consul General of Kashgar that “in the area of Aksai Chin Lake which is under the border check-post of Kangshwar in Hotien, eleven Indians, upon crossing the border line without permission, were detained by the border check post” (CR: 79). They crossed “under the pretext of gazing sheep in order to steal salt and take it to India” (CR:79). They were allowed to go back although four of them were “sent by a special agency to cross the border line” (CR:79).

Finally, the Chinese furnished evidence of surveys carried out in the area. In 1891, Li Yuang-ping started from “the vicinity of the Kilik Pass in the west to the vicinity of the Kongka Pass in the east” (CR:81). He made an “extensive survey” “upon instructions received”. In brief this report of Li Yuang-ping deals with the fact that after crossing the

Kuen-Lun mountains he went from Haji Langar and Thaldat in a north-south direction, passing through “earth gobi” in the Lingzi-thang area, to conduct surveys personally up to Chang-chiliman Tapan. These places are all situated in the vicinity of the traditional customary line maintained by the Chinese side” (CR:81).

In 1940 and 1941, the Sinkiang authorities “organised surveying teams to conduct, with the assistance of Soviet experts.....including Aksai Chin, Lingzi-thang and the upper reaches of the Karakash river.....” (CR:81-82) and in 1941 surveys “from Shahidulla through Kengshwar, Khital, Tapan, Thaldat.....”(CR:81-82).

From the end of 1950 to the autumn of 1951, as already stated the Chinese forces entered Tibet from Sinkiang through Aksai Chin area, as claimed by the Chinese, and completed “the construction of the present Sinkiang -Tibet highway through the Aksai Chin area from March 1956 to October 1957” (CR:83).

We may now briefly recapitulate the comments of the Indian officials in their report on these Chinese claims. They pointed out that the identification of Tsung-ling mountains with the Karakoram mountains was incorrect and in fact Chinese maps showed that Tsung-ling mountains were the Kuen-Lun. It would appear that the early maps reflected the vague understanding of the mountain system in the south of Sinkiang and do not justify the accurate identification of them with the Karakoram mountains. Even the source of the Qara Quash river was shown in the Chinese maps as being in the Kuen-Lun mountains. The other term for Kuen-Lun mountains was ‘Nanshun’ and ‘Nimangyi’ as pointed out with reference to the various Chinese works and maps quoted by them (Report of the Officials : 64-66).

The two modern maps produced by the Chinese officials were not acceptable to the Indian officials as “These maps were maps of a military organisation which had never been published. Secret maps are no evidence of boundary alignments” (Report of the Officials : 163). They also pointed out that it was “only since the 20th century that official Chinese maps began to vary the traditional alignment and to show large parts of the Indian territory within China” (Report of the Officials:150). Analysing these maps and the various alignments in them, the Indian side noted “with such a bewildering variety of alignments published in the course of a decade....one could not be certain as to what was the alignment claimed by China” (Report of the Officials : 151).

Regarding Turkic names of places in the disputed area, the Indians pointed out that the name of Khotan was derived from Sanskrit 'Kushtane', "and in Aksai Chin all the major place names were in Ladakhi; for example, Shinglung Donglung reveal a place where firewood and Wild Yaks were found; Pangong was a nullah (valley) with grassy ground; Kongka la meant a low pass; Amtogue meant an encounter with a round object; Lanak la meant a black pass; Chang Chenmo meant the Great North and Lingzi-thang meant plains extending in all four directions" (Report of the Officials : 68).

With regard to Shahidulla, the Indian side pointed out, "all that the document of 1927 would have proved was that the new district would extend up to Changlung Barma pass which was not near the alignment claimed by China" (Report of the Officials:155) and "No description had been given of the hundreds of square miles lying between Shahidulla and Kongka pass.....Such a general statement that an area east of Shahidulla belonged to Khotan was no proof of the administration over a vast area south of it" (Report of the Officials : 154).

Shahidulla in fact is the place where the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir established an outpost in 1865 for protecting caravans between Leh and Yarkand. In 1892 when the Amban of Suket (Suket pass on the Kuen-lun mountains) established a pillar 64 miles south of Suket the Maharaja had reported it to the British. The establishment of an out-post at Shahidulla proved the inclusion of Aksai Chin within the Kashmir boundaries.

With regard to the surveys, the Indian side pointed out that the "description of the area surveyed by Lin Yuang-ping was in fact an ill-informed account of a traveller he could not have carried out a scientific, let alone an official survey.....the Chinese authorities had only reached the Kuen-lun mountains in 1892; it was over thirty years later, as the Chinese had themselves shown, that the Sinkiang authorities were even planning the establishment of an administrative centre at Shahidulla" (Report of the Officials : 156).

Regarding the 1940 and 1941 surveys, the documents provided by the Chinese side "dealt only with surveys carried out in 1940 on the Sino-Russian border. This was stated explicitly in the document itself.....the list of places .....mentioned no place in the Western Sector....and only the Russian Government were informed of these Organisations" (Report of Officials : 157). The Chinese produced " a

photostat of a map said to have been the result of this survey. This map however appeared to be only an enlargement of a small scale map.....in 1941 a Chinese Survey party had come to Kashmir and the Indian Government gave the Chinese party facilities to examine the Gilgit route" (Report of the Officials : 157).

The Indians also pointed out that no documentary evidence of Uighurs and Khirghiz of Sinkiang coming to Aksai Chin (as had been done by Indian side in respect of such use of Aksai Chin by Ladakhis) had been provided. As for the arrest of 11 Ladakhis in 1941, the Indians said this had occurred in an area east of the Indian alignment. The claim by China that their army had passed through Aksai Chin in 1950 and thereafter built the road in 1957 was countered by saying "Unlawful incursions could not create title to territory" (Report of the Officials : 161).

The existence of a route to Ladakh via the Polu mountains has been cited by China, as already reported, from a report of the Hotien Commissioner Pa-chen in 1898, as referring to the road through Aksai Chin. The Indian side pointed out that this was in fact an alternative route from Khotan to Rudok, and in an area which was to the east of the Indian alignment of boundary (Report of the Officials : 159). This is at variance with the Chinese claim of Aksai Chin providing the only viable route to China connecting Sinkiang with Tibet. The route to Tibet from Sinkiang (Khotan) to Rudok in western Tibet lies also through Keriya.

The first mention of the Aksai Chin route relates to an expedition of Dzungar Mongols from Northern Turkestan in 1717. In November 1717 they took Lhasa. This route was used only in emergency and more difficult than the Keriya route. In 1724 a Qosot prince took flight from Lhasa crossing the frontier of Tibet at Keriya-Kotal pass as the easier route. Later an Indian officer of the Survey Department Kishan Singh, a member of Foryth's Mission to Yakub Beg, had found his way back to Indian along this alternate route via Polu. In 1885, the officially backed Carey Mission used this route. Carey found Kishan Sing's observations regarding the route so accurate he could use them as an informed guide. He followed it along the eastern side of Aksai Chin and arrived at Keriya.

The case of China that the Aksai Chin route is a vital life line for them does not seem to be borne out. Nor is their assertion that the construction of this road was a mjaor engineering feat. In fact, the



surface here is hard and level and apart from placing signs and marks nothing much in the way of engineering skill would have been involved.

The Chinese case regarding possession or legal right over Aksai Chin and the regions to the west of it in Ladakh which they now claim by way of right has not been substantiated by any conclusive evidence. The meagre evidence they produced has been attacked as flawed and even 'manufactured' as in the case of the surveys jointly conducted with the Russians in 1940 in the disputed area. The Chinese case for claiming Aksai Chin can hardly convince any outside observer.

## Nehru and Aksai Chin

The beginning of the border dispute with the construction of the Sinkiang-Tibet road through Aksai Chin and how Nehru dealt with it, will furnish an insight into the attitude of the two countries to the border dispute. While Nehru based the claim of India on the Treaty of 1842 between Jammu and Kashmir in respect of Ladakh and the Indo-Tibetan Treaty of 1914 in respect of the alignment from Bhutan to Burma, the Chinese were looking for a new frontier which would suit their security heed as they saw it. Nevertheless, it was Nehru who was flexible and accommodating to the Chinese demands in Aksai Chin, while the Chinese steadily advanced west of Aksai Chin to the present line of actual control. This is at variance with the view that it was Nehru's intransigence that led to the border war of 1962.

At the negotiations for the India-Chinese trade agreement regarding Tibet in 1954, the Chinese were firm about keeping out of discussion the question of the alignment of boundary between Tibet and India, although, Chinese maps showed large areas of India as being part of China.

In the year 1956, the Chinese distributed in Sikkim and the other Himalayan regions thousands of copies of a map showing Tibet and China as the palm of a human hand and Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh as its five fingers.

However, the Chinese remained evasive about their claims on the border. Nehru asked Chou-en-lai about it during the latter's visit to India in 1956 but the latter evaded the issue and stated that they had had no time to examine the question. By May 1956, the Indian Government had reports that the Chinese were using the route from Western Tibet to Sinkiang through Aksai Chin and yet the Indian Government did not make a move against it.

In September 1957, the Chinese announced the completion of this road. The protest of the Indian Government to the Chinese regarding this road passing through Indian territory was late in coming and was in a conciliatory tone. In its note of November 8, 1958, it had stated, "The question whether the particular area is in Indian or Chinese

territory is a matter of dispute which has to be dealt separately". This was clearly an invitation to the Chinese to settle the matter by negotiation, but in January 1959, the Chinese Prime Minister for the first time revealed the Chinese claim to extend over 40,000 sq. miles of Indian territory in Ladakh and the North Eastern sector of the boundary. The claim was proclaimed after the Chinese had taken possession of Aksai Chin and Khurnak Fort on Pangong Lake south of it. This was their answer to the offer of negotiation over the disputed area through which the Chinese road passed.

The flight of the Dalai Lama to India in March 1959 was not the watershed in the India-China relations. That had been reached after the Chinese had occupied a substantial portion of the areas they claimed to Ladakh. They only used the flight of the Dalai Lama as an occasion to launch a propaganda war. The Chinese Embassy in New Delhi put out a version of the events in Lhasa that led to the flight of the Dalai Lama in which they alleged that Kalimpong was "the commanding centre of the rebellion". Nehru asserted in Lok Sabha on March 30, 1959 that this was false. The Dalai Lama actually crossed over the border the next day, that is, March 31. On April 27, Nehru reported again to Parliament: "Tragedy has been and is being enacted in Tibet". He voiced his distress at the tone of the comments and the charges made against India by "responsible people" in China. "They have used the language of the cold war regardless of truth and propriety" he said. He also revealed that the Dalai Lama had told him that "upto the last moment he did not wish to leave Lhasa. It was only on the afternoon of March 17, when some shells were fired at his palace, and fell in a pond nearby that the sudden decision was taken to leave Lhasa. (India's Foreign Policy, Selected Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru, September 1946 to April 1961, published by the Publication Division, Government of India, 1961, p.319: "Happenings in Tibet".)

Even though the Chinese had stepped up the pace of incursions on the Tibeto-Indian border earlier, Nehru revealed the same for the first time to Lok Sabha in August 1959; the matter could no longer be kept back from Parliament in the hope of being solved by diplomatic means. He revealed: "Some reports reached us between October 1957 and February 1958 that the Chinese detachment had crossed the international frontier and visited Khurnak Fort which is within Indian territory.....Thereafter at the end of July 1959, it appeared that the Chinese had established a camp at a place called Spanggur well within

Indian Territory". (ibid, p.328, "Incursion in Ladakh".)

It was after this statement that as a result of replies to questions Nehru revealed the fact that the Chinese had built a road from Yarkand to Gartok and that it passed through "a corner" of Aksai Chin in our territory. He still sought to underplay the matter. In Rajya Sabha on August 31, 1959, Nehru made a detailed statement on Aksai Chin, about the area: "The Aksai Chin area has a general elevation of over 17,000 feet. The entire Ladakh area including Aksai Chin became a part of the Jammu and Kashmir State as a result of a Treaty signed in 1842 on behalf of Maharaja Gulab Singh on the one side and the Lama Guru Sahib of Lhasa and the representative of the Emperor of China on the other". (ibid, p.332).

He however added : "Since the boundary of Aksai Chin region with China has not been marked on the ground, once or twice questions have been raised about the exact alignment of this boundary". Nehru also spoke about Chinese intrusion near Chushul in Ladakh: "There was a report this month, some 8/10 persons were apprehended by the Chinese and later released - they have established a small check-post a little within our side of the international border near a place called Chushul". He said that India had not only a checkpost there but an improvised airfield also where some four years earlier Nehru had himself happened to have gone.

In the earlier statement on August 28, 1959 in Lok Sabha, Nehru had given the information about intrusions by the Chinese also in the North East Frontier Agency: "In the course of the last two or three years, there have been cases - not very frequent - of some kind of petty intrusion on our border areas by the Chinese troops. We drew the attention of the Chinese Government in 1957-58 to this and they withdrew. There the matter ended. Now in June this year, the Chinese alleged that Indian troops had shelled and intruded into Chinese territory by occupying a place on the border of Migyitun and some other places along the frontier. On August 7, an armed Chinese patrol (approximately 200 strong) violated our border at Khinzemane. When requested to withdraw, they pushed back our greatly outnumbered patrol to a bridge at Drokung Samba. On August 25, a strong Chinese detachment crossed into our territory at a place south of Migyitun and opened fire. Longju out-post which is three/four miles from the frontier was surrounded and they withdrew". On being asked why Parliament was not taken into confidence earlier, Nehru

said: "We thought we might make progress by corresponding and when the time was ripe for it, we would inform Parliament". Nehru agreed to publish a White Paper on the border incidents.

A reply from the Chinese Prime Minister now received "denounced" the MacMahon Line, although the reply stated that as a matter of policy, the Chinese had not crossed it. Nehru recalled that in their conversation in 1956, Chou had informed him that they would accept the MacMahon Line. Reverting to Ladakh, Nehru said: "The Aksai Chin area is in our map undoubtedly. But it is a matter of argument as to what part of it belongs to us and what part of it belongs to somebody else. I have frankly to tell the House that the matter has been challenged for a hundred years. There has never been any delimitation there". (ibid, p.354, "Reply to debate in Lok Sabha, September 12, 1959").

On November 25, 1959, Nehru again spoke in Lok Sabha about the Chinese claim: "It was for the first time on September 8, 1959 that Premier Chou-En-Lai, in a letter addressed to me, claimed the areas in India which had been included in the Chinese map". He went on to speak upon the developments in Aksai Chin: "In September 1959, we learnt of an announcement by the Chinese Government that a road had been made from Yehcheng to Gartok in Tibet and that this would be open to traffic in October. As there were two alternative routes from Sinkiang to West Tibet, in view of this uncertainty about the exact alignment, two reconnaissance parties were sent to the areas in the summer of 1956, an army party towards the north and a police party towards the southern extremity of this road. It took some time for the police party to return. The army party did not return. In fact they had been arrested by the Chinese. From the police party, we learnt that a part of this road was in Indian territory". (ibid, p.361, "India-Chinese Relations").

An Indian police patrol party was fired on by Chinese forces in October 1959 near the Kong-Ka Pass in the Chang Chenmo Valley about 30 miles within Indian territory. Nine members of the patrol were killed by the Chinese and ten taken prisoner, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police, Karam Singh. This was the culmination of the Chinese offensive in 1959 to capture as much area in Ladakh as possible. On December 22, Nehru spoke about it in Lok Sabha: "The boundary was not demarcated on the ground in 1842 but was later laid down in maps by some British surveyors....the basic thing is not about

these border troubles, but this infiltration into Ladakh which has taken place, to the best of my knowledge, chiefly during the last summer, apart from the Aksai Chin Area". He ended his statement by saying : "The sovereignty of a country does not change because somebody comes and sits in a corner of it". (ibid, p.383, "Method of Negotiation").

In April 1960, the Chinese Prime Minister came to India. When the two Prime Ministers met, matters made no progress but on the other hand the positions hardened. As a matter of face-saving, they agreed to officials of the two sides meeting to exchange evidence regarding their rival claims on the border territories. (ibid, p.388, "Meeting of the Prime Minister"). Nehru reported to Lok Sabha on April 26, 1960, about the Chinese claim : "That from immemorial times, at any rate, for hundreds of years their border has been from the Karakoram range to the Kongka Pass"<sup>1</sup>.

The Chinese advance has taken place subsequently under the Communist regime. But the Chinese Prime Minister had claimed that the Chinese had used the route from Sinkinang to Gartok for sending the reinforcements simultaneously with their invasion of Tibet from Chamdo in the South East. It will be seen that the attitude of Prime Minister Nehru with regard to Aksai Chin had all along been flexible as to the demarcation of the actual boundary line in Aksai Chin. The Chinese ambitions however were not confined to Aksai Chin but reached well to the west of it along a line from the Karakoram to the Kongka Pass. The advance continued even further during the war of 1962 and the position now is that the Chinese occupation of Eastern Ladakh area now covers about 15,000 square miles including Aksai Chin. Nehru never spoke out fully against the Chinese advance on Indian territory, till after the full-scale Chinese invasion in October 1962. On November 8, 1962, Nehru for the first time spoke out : "For five years, we have been the victims of Chinese aggression across our frontiers. This aggression was, to begin with, rather furtive. Occasionally, there were some incidents and conflict. Today, we have seen a regular and massive invasion of our territory by very large forces.....The major issue is that an expansionist, imperialist country is deliberately invading our country". (ibid., p. 388).

## The Thirty One Days War

In January 1950, the Chinese Communist Government proclaimed the 'liberation' of Tibet during 1950 as one of the basic tasks of People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Peking Radio announced in June 1951 that Tibet had agreed to allow China to station troops on the frontiers of Burma, Pakistan and India.

Despite China's attitude to Tibet and to India as thus revealed, India pursued a conciliatory policy and signed an agreement with China in 1954 abrogating India's trading posts and the telegraphic lines set up in Tibet, and recognising Tibet as part of China. China refused to discuss the border question much less include it in the agreement. This deliberate exclusion of the border question during the negotiations should have warned India about China's intentions. India's hope was that China would respect Tibet's autonomy and that the border between China and India would be settled peacefully. Neither of the hopes were to be fulfilled. Tibet's autonomy was not respected and the claims of India regarding the border were honoured more in the breach than the observance. Having acquired China as a neighbour in Tibet, India reviewed the position in her border regions and their security. A Committee of officials was appointed in 1950 to report on the measures to be taken to safeguard their security. The Committee's report served as a basis for steps to be taken in these areas. The overall policy decided upon was to accelerate the opening up of border regions to develop them and for that purpose increase the administration in these areas. Secondly, stress was placed on communications in and to these hitherto inaccessible regions. It was also decided that the intelligence and security needs should be met by the border police, including the Assam Rifles and that border posts should be set up on the various routes from Tibet. In NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) where the Centre was directly responsible, the administration

was strengthened under the political officers of the four frontier divisions. In Uttar Pradesh, the Punjab and Kashmir, the State Government were responsible for accelerating the development of their border areas. Agricultural, educational and health services centres were to be set up. The people of the border areas were associated with these measures.

The Chinese first raised the border issue in a note of 17 July 1954. This was within a few weeks of signing the agreement with India. They complained that Indian troops had crossed the Niti Pass into Tibet at Wuje in the Hoti plain south east of the pass. Subsequent exchange of notes showed that the Chinese were not clear about the location of Wuje. Bara Hoti was a pasture ground south of the pass, and in 1890 there had been a dispute between local Tibetan and Indian officials about grazing rights. China had now revived this old dispute. In October 1954, Nehru made a good will visit to China and during his visit raised the question of Chinese maps which showed territories of India as part of China. Chou-En-lai parried the issue by stating that "current Chinese maps were based on old maps and that the Government of People's Republic of China had not time to correct them"\* . The Chinese version of this interview was given after the 1962 war. According to them, Nehru stated that "no boundary question existed between India and China" and the Chinese Premier "clearly expressed his disagreement to any unilateral revision of maps" and made it clear that "the Sino-Indian boundary was yet to be delimited."

In April 1955, China joined the non-aligned countries of Asia and Africa at the Bandung Conference. There Chou-En-lai established contact with the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Prime Minister of Pakistan was informed by Chou-En-lai that while India and China may not continue their current good relations, there was no reason for China and Pakistan should not come to develop relations as there were no points of dispute between them. Khrushchev and Bulganin visited India in the same year and the visit laid the foundation of Indo-Soviet friendship. Khrushchev made a public statement in favour of India's case in Kashmir and offered aid to setting up a million ton steel plant. As a counter to this visit, China invited the Prime Minister of Pakistan to visit Peking, a visit that took place in October 1956.

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\* Note given by the Ministry of External Affairs to the Counsellor of China in India on 21 August 1958 - para 2 of note at p.46 of Notes, Memoranda etc. Between India and China 1954-9 - White Paper of Government of India.



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In November 1956 during an "in transit" visit to India, Chou-En-lai informed Nehru that the Government of China had accepted the formalisation of the McMahon Line boundary in the case of Burma, and proposed to recognise it in the case of India also. According to a Chinese publication\* published after the war in 1962, the Chinese had "from March 1956 to October 1957" built a motor road from Yarkand to Gartok, "of which a section of 180 Kms runs through this areas", i.e., the Aksai Chin area in Ladakh. Chou-En-lai's offer of recognition in respect of the eastern sector of the border was being made keeping in view the Chinese road being constructed in the Aksai Chin area of Ladakh. In the north-eastern corner of Ladakh, this road entered Indian territory at Haji Langar from Sinkiang and cutting across Aksai Chin, crossed into Tibet at Sarigh Jilgnang. Although the construction of this road was known to Indian authorities from the intelligence reports, it was not till 1958 that two Indian patrol parties were sent to survey the road built by the Chinese. One of the two patrol parties sent to the Aksai Chin area was captured by the Chinese. Further, Chinese inroads were thereafter accelerated. In Ladakh, Chinese troops crossed into Indian territory along the Pangong Lake in July 1958 at Khurnak Fort. This was a place where there had been a local dispute in 1924 when the Tibetans had accepted that Khurnak Fort was outside their territory. In the middle sector, they occupied Bara Hoti (Wuje) mentioned earlier. Crossing the Balcha Dhura pass, they also occupied Laphthal and Sancia Malla as soon as the Indian personnel had vacated these places for the winter.

The Chinese intrusions in the border areas were reinforced by the first official publication by the Communist regime of a map showing 50,000 square miles of Indian territory as Chinese. This was in a magazine 'China Pictorial' in July 1958. Nehru wrote to Chou-En-lai protesting against this claim which Nehru firmly rejected. The reply of Chou-En-lai dated 23rd January 1959 hinted at the possibility of a political settlement of the boundary question stating that the Chinese

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\* "The Sino-Indian Boundary Question" - Peking Nov. 1962

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Government “on the one hand finds it necessary to take a more or less realistic attitude towards the McMahon Line and on the other hand, cannot but act with prudence and needs time to deal with the matter”. He then made a claim in Ladakh in respect of the “Sinkiang-Tibet-Highway” passing through Aksai Chin.

However, Indian patrol parties reported that the Chinese were extending their intrusions further west of Aksai Chin road. It became apparent that they were surveying a route from Haji Langar to Shamulungpa and joining Lankala. Despite the advancing Chinese occupation of territory further west in an active and vigorous way, India still thought of a political settlement and took no action to militarily hold back the Chinese advance.

In March 1959, the Dalai Lama took refuge in India and this led the Chinese to accuse India of inciting a revolt in Tibet. All chances of a political settlement faded in the face of violent Chinese propaganda against India for giving shelter to the Dalai Lama. Accusations were made that unrest in Tibet and the flight of the Dalai Lama had been organised and engineered in India and that Kalimpong where some Tibetan refugees had earlier taken shelter was the centre of anti-Chinese activities in Tibet. The guerilla warfare in the Kham province had been a spontaneous and widespread protest of a warlike part of Tibet. The revolt had spread to Lhasa and other parts of Tibet along with the fleeing refugees from Kham and Amdo. China's propaganda was presumably intended to deter India from giving shelter to the Dalai Lama. On the other hand, the Indian people were however in sympathy with and welcomed the Tibetan refugees.

The tempo of Chinese advance in Ladakh continued to gain momentum. In July 1959, the Chinese advanced near Pangong Lake where they had occupied Khurnak fort in the previous summer. They captured an Indian party near Spanggur and established a camp. In reply to the Indian protest, they asserted that both Khurnak fort and Spanggur were within Chinese territory. Further south, they established themselves on a hill overlooking an Indian check post at Chushul near an Indian supply airfield in August 1959.

The Chinese also probed the border in Arunachal Pradesh. On 7th August 1959, 200 armed Chinese violated the border at Khinzemane, but they were careful to claim that they had not violated the McMahon Line. An Indian post at Longju near Migyitun was attacked by a strong Chinese detachment on 25th August and killed three men of the Assam Rifles. They surrounded the Longju post claiming it to be north of the McMahon

Line. After a time, they withdrew to Migyitun. The Chinese action had for the first time resulted in casualties of Indian personnel. The Indian public received a rude shock when this incident became public. Earlier the public and the Parliament had not been informed of the Chinese advance of various points of the border. The Prime Minister now had to bring the facts about Aksai Chin road in Ladakh to the notice of Parliament and was bitterly attacked for withholding information even though he had kept back the information hitherto in the hope of a settlement.

Soon after the Longju incident in NEFA, another serious Chinese attack took place in Ladakh, where the Chinese road building activity had been intensified. A second road south-west of the one through Aksai Chin had been built. Along it China sent troops to Chang Chenmo valley which leads to Aksai Chin. South of the Chang Chenmo range, at Kongka pass an Indian patrol from the newly opened posts at Tsogatsalu and at Hot Springs were ambushed near the banks of the Chang Chenmo river on October 21 and nine of them were killed, including their leader Karam Singh, and ten were captured. The place of incident was 40-50 miles west of the traditional boundary claimed by India but the Chinese asserted that the Indians had "unlawfully intruded into Sinkiang territory south of Kongka pass". This incident aroused the Indian public to the reality of the Chinese threat.

The Chinese Premier proposed on 7th November 1959 that armed forces of both sides withdraw from the line of actual control as on that date but the Indian side objected that this would be to accept the Chinese encroachments not only in respect of the road through Aksai Chin but further advances west and south into Ladakh at Khurnak, Spanggur, Kongka pass, etc. Moreover, the line of actual control that was claimed by them was not defined and later it was found to be flexible enough to cover even their substantial advance into Ladakh from 1959-62. According to Prime Minister Nehru, within three years they had "constructed a large network of military roads and posts west of Aksai Chin road. Beginning with posts opposite Daulat Beg Oldi near Karakoram pass, along the Chip Chap river and across the Galwan river, these posts and roads descended south to Pongong Lake and Spanggur Lake area. At certain points the network of military posts were more than 100 miles west of the Chinese positions in 1959"\*.

Simultaneously, with confrontation on the border, the letters

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\* Vide Annexure to a letter from Prime Minister Nehru to Prime Minister Chou-En-lai dated 14th November, 1962.

exchanged between the two Prime Ministers amounted to a confrontation. In March 1959, Nehru had given a detailed historical account of the treaties, etc., on which the border was based but Chou-En lai gave no reply till September by which time the situation on the ground had been settled to his satisfaction. His reply of 8 September 1959 talked of a fundamental difference between the positions of the two Governments. He laid claim to about 40,000 square miles of territory and for the first time claimed that the map of 1956 represented the Chinese position. Chou-En-lai followed this up with a proposal on November 7, 1956 that both sides should withdraw from the line of actual control, thus seeking to legitimise all Chinese advance upto that date. China later claimed that it had unilaterally honoured this withdrawal but in fact continued its advance in Ladakh in subsequent two years also.

The Chinese Prime Minister visited India in April, 1960. He offered that China was prepared to accommodate the Indian point of view in the eastern sector and asked that India should accommodate China in the western sector. He laid down in a press conference six points as basis for agreement on the border dispute. The significant point was the claim made by the Chinese to the Karakoram mountains. The Chinese Premier said that a settlement should take into account the natural feelings of the two people towards the Himalaya and the Karakoram mountains. In private conversations with Indian leaders, he repeated the offer to accommodate the Indian point of view on the eastern sector if India should accommodate China on the western sector. Taken together, it could only mean that India should recede to the Karakoram mountains. As stated by China in their Note dated 26th December 1959 to Government of India regarding Aksai Chin. "This area is the only traffic artery linking Sinkiang and Western Tibet because to its north east lies the great Gobi desert through which direct traffic is practically impossible". This was the reason why China wanted to retain this area.

Nehru proposed that officials from the two sides should meet to exchange evidence regarding their respective claims. While this was agreed to by Chou-En-lai, he also made a show of isolating India when he went on to Nepal and signed an agreement of friendship with her. In the same year, Chou-En-lai also concluded a boundary treaty with Burma based on the McMahon Line. At the same time, China made further incursions into Ladakh. New check posts were established by them in 1961 and 1962 west of Sumdo in Karakash region, in Chip Chap river region, Chang Chenmo valley and Spanggur region. The Indian army had been asked to take over the defence of the border in October 1959 and

they had also embarked on a plan of increasing the number of advance positions to prevent further Chinese advance. The result was "encircling" each other. The Indian side had not however, been able to build up adequate military support for their advance posts both in regard to communications and with regard to supplies, and it had to keep them supplied in a number of cases by parachute drops from helicopters.

The internal position of China had been developing adversely since 1958. The "great leap forward" movement launched by Mao Tse-tung had ended in failure. The Russians had not supported the Chinese case in the border dispute with India. They, in fact, had withdrawn all Russian technicians from China following ideological differences over the boundary between China and Russia. In 1961, a serious famine had occurred in China. These difficulties notwithstanding, the Chinese leaders wished to "teach a lesson to India" (as they were to put it later) and to defy Russia into the bargain. In the Chinese view, India's regime had become arrival. The causes of the conflict between India and China were not wholly related to the dispute about the border.

In November 1960, the officers of the two Governments concluded in Rangoon the task of exchanging evidence regarding their border claims. The Chinese submitted for the first time a map showing the boundary alignment which went further west of the line in the map of 1956 which Chou-En-lai had earlier said was the correct one. The two sides made progress only in further widening the gap between their positions, and perhaps it was naive to expect that the exercise would lead to better understanding. On the contrary, it only succeeded in widening the area of differences.

A foretaste of the coming conflict was provided on July 10, 1962 in Ladakh when some 400 Chinese troops encircled an Indian post established a few days before and which lay astride the supply line to a forward Chinese post in the Galwan valley. They withdrew when the Indian personnel stood their ground. In the Chip Chap river valley, however, the Chinese advance on an Indian post in September led to firing by the latter.

The scene shifted to the eastern sector where on 4 June the Assam Rifles had set up a post at Dhola near the tri-junction of India, Bhutan and Tibet. The Chinese objected in September that the Indians had constructed "barracks and defence works" at Che Dong north of McMahon Line. On Sept., 8, 1962 the Chinese force crossed the Thagla Ridge. The Chinese quickly built up their positions and the Indian side also made preparations to stick to theirs. It became increasingly evident that a show down was building up and neither side offered to climb down. The build

up of forces on the Chinese side was accompanied by a propaganda war along to the Northern-eastern border. The Indians decided to wait before they could take action against the Chinese who had laid siege to Dhola post. On October 9, the Indian troops took up a position across the river Namka Chu and on October 10, the Chinese attacked the position. The Chinese had been moving further reinforcements across the Thagla ridge. The Indian Government decided nevertheless that there should be no withdrawal. On October 12, when the Prime Minister was leaving for Colombo, he said, "Our instructions are to free our territory". While the Chinese were building up for a massive attack, the Indian Chief of Army Staff reached Tezpur, the headquarters of Lt. General Kaul as the latter was hospitalised and evacuated on the 18th afternoon. On 20th early morning, the Chinese struck with their full force at the weak Indian position on Dhola Ridge.

There was a gap between the Indian objective and the preparation made for achieving it. The Indian Government had as of 1953 an army of 35,000 from the circumstances of the departure of the British and the resultant partition of the country and left a legacy of bitter dispute between India and Pakistan. The army was kept directed to face the task of a military threat from Pakistan of which the invasion of Kashmir in 1947 was the proof. The Chinese threat across the northern borders of the Himalaya was not visualised as a possibility till it became too late to plan and prepare adequately for it. The Indian army did not have a directive to prepare for a threat from across Tibet. The border regions consisted of a bleak upland plateau in Ladakh in the west to which access was difficult. The Zoji La pass was snow bound for a large part of the year and a motorable road from Srinagar had yet to be completed. In the east, the Himalayan foothills of Assam receive the full force of the monsoons and were covered with thick jungles through which roads were built with difficulty. The difficulty was enhanced by the fact that due to its geological formation, the Himalaya was easily eroded by the heavy rains. Landslides were all too liable to block and damage the roads being constructed. On the other hand, the Chinese army of 2.5 million soldiers were toughened by years of civil war since the "long march" of 1934 and had fought and won wars in mountainous regions of western China. The People's Liberation Army, as it was called, was given as its first task after the Communists came into power the 'liberation' of Tibet in 1949 and since then had been engaged actively in gaining control over Tibet and had familiarised itself with its border regions adjoining India. The Chinese army was engaged moreover in building a network of roads in



Tibet and to connect Tibet with mainland China viz Szechwan (Sikang) and Chamdo in the south and from the north east via Tsinghai. These latter were difficult and took time to build, and therefore the road from Sinkiang via Aksai Chin to Gartok was built in 1957. Within Tibet, the local population was put on road construction programme connecting Lhasa with Gartok in the west and with Shigatse and Yatung in the south towards India via the Chumbi valley. Roads along the other main routes to India, to Rima, to Tawang border and to Taklakot, were also completed.

The reaction of the Government of India to the occupation of Tibet by China was to improve the condition of the inhabitants of the border regions. The development of these border areas was taken up in right earnest and the people were associated with these efforts. Agricultural, educational and health services centres were opened. It was not till 1960 when the Border Road Organisation was set up to devote itself exclusively to this task. The building of roads however presented special difficulties as already mentioned. Exposed to the full fury of the monsoons in the five summer months, thick with tropical vegetation in their lower ranges, as well as the crumbling nature of the Himalayan geology, the roads built were subject to frequent landslides. In Ladakh on the north west, the only road which was from Kashmir to Leh over the Zoji La pass was improved and an alternative route from Kulu to Ladakh was built. The concept of lateral roads in the border region was helpful in making a more durable communications system.

Despite the increase in the tempo and scale of Chinese occupation of the border area from 1954 to 1960, it was only towards the end of 1959 that the Indian armed forces were made responsible for the defence of the border. For the sake of security, checkpoints had been opened since 1950 along the main routes from Tibet to India, and till 1960 only the State Police were in charge of the border areas, though in the NEFA the Assam Rifles were entrusted with police duties. The average height at which the checkpoints were situated, was 12000-14000 feet. The task of building roads was found to have lagged behind, and only in 1960 the Border Roads Organisation was created to pursue it vigorously. By 1962 the Organisation had completed the road over the Zoji to pass from Srinagar to Leh and taken up another road to Leh from Kulu. In the eastern sector, it constructed a jeep road from Bomdi La to the eastern slope of the Se La ridge. It had also completed the road system running just south of Himalaya mountains.

The Indian army was given the task of defending the border in 1959

after the Kongka incident of 20 October 1959. If there was a proper definition of the task allotted to the army at that time it was not reflected in the manpower that would be required for the carrying out the task or in their training and their deployment. The defence of the border involved the possibility of a clash in view of the continued Chinese advance into Indian territory. In 1960, however, the army formation earmarked for defence of the northern border, were inadequate even for the task of defending the border posts that were established. The force in Ladakh consisted of one infantry brigade at Daulat Beg Oldi to Demchok, and in no position to stem the Chinese advance. The military directive of opening new posts to stop Chinese advance was also complied with but without a network of communications to back up these posts *in case of a clash*. The supply arrangements were exiguous and supplies had to be flown to the new posts and dropped from the air.

In the north east, the defence of the border was entrusted to the 4th Infantry Division with Headquarters at Tezpur. The Division was not more than a skeleton formation and was brought up to strength hastily only in 1962 when the Chinese attacked the post at Dhola in July. Till then, the Assam Rifles carried on the duties of manning the posts at the border when the army opened additional posts.

In 1961, the Chinese had been building up their strength along the border and it was facilitated by the road system: which they had built. On the Indian side, the 4th Infantry Division in Arunachal Pradesh was built up in 1962 with three battalions of the 7th Brigade for defence of Tawang. In Ladakh NO.114 Brigade at Leh was dispersed in small detachments at the border posts from Daulat Beg Oldi to Demchok. Till 1962, it had just one army battalion of the J&K Militia. In the summer of 1962 the Jat Battalion was added to it.

The disparity in the strength of the two sides was accentuated by the superiority of equipment that the Chinese possessed. The Chinese had good roads and were bringing supplies in trucks whereas the Indians had no roads leading to the front and had to trek on foot. The Chinese soldiers had full support of artillery, mortar and MMG fire and was equipped with the automatic rifle. The Indian supporting fire power was limited to 3" mortars and the soldier had the .303 Enfield rifles. The Chinese command had a monolithic control and had a task for which it had been preparing and training.

When the Chinese took over Thag La ridge opposite Dhola post at the tri-junction of Tibet Bhutan and India, it was clear that the Chinese were prepared to a full scale onslaught. The Indian army had been asked

to defend the border, a task which it was not appreciated meant repelling a heavy Chinese attack. For this task it was not equipped or prepared nor had its man power been adequately deployed. Nevertheless the army formation was ordered to eject the Chinese from Thagla ridge.

## II

### **Military Operations**

The Chinese attack on October 20, 1962 near the tri-junction of India, Bhutan and Tibet was not a matter of contesting the location of a post on the border. It was part of a full scale operation on India's northern border both in the North East, as well as in Ladakh in the western sector and involved seven divisions of the Chinese army. China had secured the territory she claimed in Ladakh and had been announced that she would not cross the MacMahon Line. She had therefore no unsatisfied territorial claims and could have narrowed down the conflict by sitting tight on Thagla Ridge. Instead, she launched massive attacks not only at this point but also in the north-east corner near Burma and Ladakh. Clearly, China had prepared for a major offensive for achieving objectives other than holding on the border territories she had occupied. The attack of 1962 was an attempt to discredit India by a decisive military victory. The threatening Soviet build-up in Cuba, as it happened, was proceeding parallel with the final stages of Chinese build up on India's frontier and both events came to a crisis point simultaneously. Whereas China went ahead with its attack on India, Russia chose the path of conciliation with USA. China thus proclaimed herself as the leader of a more militant Communism.

At 5 p.m. on October 20, the Chinese launched an attack after a heavy bombardment. The Indian battalions fought bravely, but without higher direction. On 23rd October, the Chinese forces, arrived near Tawang, which had been designed as the 'vital defence ground' for the 4th Indian Division. But the plan to defend Tawang was given up the Chinese forces coming, further south it was not concerned suitable for defence. Se La, the natural configuration offered a suitable defence position had, the Indian division had a breathing space for preparation since the Chinese did not launch the attack till November 15. There were many changes of the army commanders; and the units being moved up for defence, had to be sent up without any previous knowledge of the terrain or training in the difficult high altitude area. On 17th November, it was decided to withdraw the 62nd brigade from Se La. The order to withdraw

was given at short notice and the withdrawal took place at night. All this led to confusion as a result and of this sudden change of plans, the brigade suffered badly, and its commander, Brigadier Hoshiar Singh was among those killed in the retreat. Se La fell to the Chinese on 18th November.

The headquarters of 4th Indian Division was at Dirang Dzong. The Chinese moved from Se La in more than Division strength. Isolated detachments of the 62nd Indian brigade had reached Dirang Dzong, but they had been demoralised by the ill-planned withdrawal. At Dirang Dzong again, the Indian units fought bravely but as isolated formations. No higher direction made its impact, for the Divisional Commander had left on the morning of 18th November. The retreating Indian formations were followed to Bomdi La which the Chinese reached on November 21 when the 'ceasefire' was announced.

In the north east corner of NEFA, the Chinese had attacked the Indian positions south of Rima on October 21. The Indian forces defended Walong. On November 15, the Chinese again attacked Walong and the Indian troops were outnumbered and withdrew. The Chinese had also launched attacks on two other points in NEFA at Kibitoo and Longju and advanced along the Siang river and near Longju.

Simultaneously, with the attacks in NEFA, the Chinese had launched their offensive in Ladakh on October 20, 1962. They followed different tactics here because unlike in NEFA where they had to march through thick jungles over steep hills and valleys, in Ladakh they had to march across a bare wind-swept plateau. They attacked individual border posts to the north of Pangong lake and they over-ran several of them after severe fighting. The Chinese superiority in ammunition and their continuous bombardment of Indian positions prior to attack went in their favour. The J&K Militia and the Gurkha troops who held these positions fought till most of them were killed and the rest escaped south. On 27th October, the Chinese attacked Indian posts in the southern sector around Demchok and over-ran Demchok. The Indian defence was organised around Chushul in the central sector. Here when the Chinese attacked on November 18 the Indians defended the positions at Renzang La, Gurung, etc. These positions were defended stubbornly despite use of tanks, and heavy guns against them. Personnel of the Thirteenth Field Regiment (Artillery) showed greater gallantry during the battle of Chushul from November 18 to 20. Major Goswamy despite being wounded kept on directing the artillery fire on the Chinese. Five soliders of the Indian artillery were killed but the Chinese left 500 dead. Unlike in the NEFA when there were too many quick changes in higher command, in Ladakh the army command had been allowed freedom of

action and had built up its strength by withdrawing formations from along the Pakistan ceasefire line and concentrated on defence of Chushul which blocked the road to Leh.

The war ended by the unilateral declaration of ceasefire by the Chinese on November 21, the losses on the Indian side were 7048 including 1383 killed, 1969 missing and the rest taken prisoners according to the Indian Ministry of Defence. The Chinese losses were not declared but from the estimate made of their casualties as reported by the Indian units involved in the fighting, their casualties may have been higher. The Chinese, however, took particular care that none of their soldiers should be taken prisoners, and to retrieve the dead bodies and the wounded among their troops.

### III

The Chinese attack of 1962 shattered the complacent feeling of an invulnerable frontier north of the Himalaya mountains. Chinese troops had begun patrolling along the 2500 miles of the northern frontier at various points for the first time in 1954. This was immediately after the signing of the Indo-Chinese Agreement of that year. The Chinese threat was not over even after acquisition of 12000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh to which they added another 3000 sq. miles in the war. China continued to present a threat in conjunction with Pakistan, and India's defence problem had acquired another dimension to the threat from the north west. The route from Tibet that pass through the Chumbi Valley, and through Nepal and Bhutan are more feasible for an attack than the ones that China used in the attack of 1962. The setting up of nuclear missile bases in Tibet shows the vulnerability of India to this ultimate threat. China has not been content with the building of roads in and of rail connections to Tibet in securing a firm hold of that autonomous region of her empire. Although the formal position is one of Tibetan autonomy, but in fact Tibet is ruled through ethnic Chinese. Realisation that Tibet will resist and uphold her distinct personality seems however to be dawning.

As a counter measure to the refuge given by India to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans who fled from the Chinese occupation, the Chinese have been giving arms and training to the Nagas and other inhabitants of India's north-eastern frontier and create a state of unrest in that part of our country 'which is linked geographically with the rest of the country by only a "corridor" passing south of Bhutan and north of Bangla Desh. To

the north-west, the defence problem arises from the Sinkiang autonomous republic which has been strengthened militarily as a buffer between China and Russia. The Karakoram Highway from Sinkiang via the Khunjerab pass in occupied Kashmir provides access to China which can threaten India's north-west frontier and the route has been recently used in providing arms and assistance to the Afghan rebels in Pakistan.

We have also to remind ourselves of the Chinese attitude of claiming as part of the "Celestial" empire all neighbouring countries that China had had contacts with through the ancient past. "A brief History of Modern China", published in Beijing in 1954 states, "The territories claimed by China include, besides Tibet and the Mongolian People's Republic large portions of the Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tadzhikistan, the Pamir area, most of all of Ladakh; the whole of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, not only the mountains and foothills south of McMahon Line but also Assam, all of South East Asia, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam, the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, the Andaman Island (India), the Sulu Archipelago (Philippines), Taiwan and the Offshore Islands, the Ryuku Islands, North and South Korea, Sakhalin and Kureile Islands; and finally large parts of the Soviet mainland.....". The reiteration of this claim by the Chinese Republic may be an empty threat, or may not as was borne out of their attack on Vietnam in 1979.

Despite Nehru's goodwill towards Communist China, the relations between India and Communist China had begun in an unpropitious setting so far as China was concerned. The Communist rulers of China (as of USSR) had adopted the standard approach of Communist parties that the Indian National Congress were puppets of the former colonial power, were, as Mao-Tse-Tung said, "the running dogs of imperialism" and had to be eliminated in favour of genuine proletarian leadership. Nehru, on the other hand, had greeted China's new rulers with enthusiasm, and India was one of the first countries to recognise the Communist Government of China. India sponsored their case for membership of the United Nations and recognised China's special relationship with Tibet. India, however, expressed the hope that the question of China-Tibet relations will be settled peacefully. China gave a sharp rebuff to India's view and declared it as interference in the internal affairs of China and went ahead with the invasion of Tibet.

#### IV

The Communist Government of China came upon the international stage in October 1950 with her "liberation" of Tibet when the People's Liberation Army marched into Chamdo province of Tibet. Great Britain which had established bilateral relations with Tibet in the twentieth century was out of the scene and India was faced with the consequences of the change of Tibet's status. China now became India's direct neighbour for the first time in history. Neither Great Britain nor USA took a stand in favour of Tibetan independence, and India which was the only power directly affected also did not take up Tibet's case of being a sovereign state. Only the small State of El Salvador took a stand in favour of Tibet when she sponsored her complaint before the General Assembly of the United Nations but Communist China was not a member of the body and the issue was allowed to be laid down.

China next figured in the international stage when USA set her armies into Korea in 1950. It was India that acted as China's messenger to USA that if the latter crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea, China would come into the war and this is what happened. India was appointed Chairman of the Neutral National Repatriation Commission in 1953. India continued her policy of making up to China when the Sino-Indian Agreement regarding Tibet was signed in 1954, by which India agreed to forego her special position in Tibet under the Indo-Chinese agreement of 1906 and gave up the control of the telegraph communications and rest houses along the routes to the trading centres that had been set up by Britain.

China was invited to the Bandung Conference of Non-aligned nations in 1955 at the instance of India. Chou-En-lai made an impressive debut and was able to disarm the suspicious and hostility of those nations which had feared China's expansionist aims in South East Asia, as much as her use of the weapons of infiltration and subversion. This was also the occasion when China was to begin the process of winning over Pakistan dispute, Pakistan's relations with USA and by the apparent friendliness of Indo-Chinese relation. At Bandung, Chou-En-lai took pains to assure Pakistan that there was no ground for any differences between them.

As differences with India came out into the open, China accelerated her friendly relations with India's neighbours. Chou-En-lai concluded a border agreement with Burma in 1960 on his way to New Delhi in April 1960 regarding the Indo-Chinese border dispute and he signed a friendship agreement with Nepal on his way from New Delhi. She also engaged in an exercise of creating a favourable image of herself by giving aid to

Nepal, Shri Lanka, other Asian and African countries, and thus tried to gain the goodwill of the third world countries. China's relations with the USSR were however undergoing a "U-Turn" signalled by the recall of Russian aid teams from China in 1959. At the time of the Kongka incident of October 1959, Khrushchev had privately counselled the Chinese against provoking India. China was not at all pleased at the USSR stand over the dispute. China's opposition to the Khrushchev doctrine of co-existence with USA came out into the open when Khrushchev visited China in 1960. India had received hostile publicity in the western world just before the India-China war, over the annexation of Goa. On behalf of USA, Adlai Stenson spoke against India's action in the United Nations.

The revolt in Tibet and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in March 1959 first "internationalised" the India-China differences. On the one hand, China accused India and USA of organising the revolt of the Khampas, and on the other hand, there was world-wide sympathy for the Tibetan refugees who fled into India by the thousands. Not all the virulence of Chinese propaganda could negate the stark evidence of nearly 100,000 Tibetans that had fled their home land rather than suffer under Chinese occupation.

Simultaneously with the Chinese attack on the Indian border in October 1962, they launched a "war of words" to place their case before the other countries in the most favourable light and to enlist their support. A statement put out by the Chinese Government on 24 October stated "Although India occupies more than 90000 square kilometres of Chinese territory in the eastern sector, provoked two border clashes in 1959 and made claim to large tracts of Chinese territory, the Chinese Government has always looked for a peaceful settlement.....and pending a peaceful settlement, the extent of actual control by each side should be respected...."

The Chinese proposed that in pursuance of their proposal of October 24, both sides should withdraw armed force 20 kilometers from the line of actual control, and not to cross the traditional customary line in the middle and western sectors. They were aware that the proposal would be unacceptable to India because it meant that the Chinese occupation in Ladakh would be a fait accompli, as the line of actual control covered about 15000 square miles in Ladakh. The wording of the offer was (1) Both parties affirmed that the Sino-Indian boundary must be settled peacefully, and pending that withdraw armed force 20 Km from the line of actual control; (2) The Chinese Government is willing to withdraw its frontier guards north of the line of actual control and both sides undertake



not to cross the traditional customary line in the middle and western sectors of the border.

It will be seen that there was a hint (in point 2 of the offer) though not an offer, that the Chinese Government would stay in north of the McMahon Line on the eastern sector. In fact since 1956, the Chinese Prime Minister had indicated that China would accept the Indian occupation of the area upto the McMahon line if India accepted the Chinese occupation in Ladakh. The Indian Prime Minister dealt with the offer in his reply to the Chinese Prime Minister on October 27. Nehru rejected the offer as being less than straight forward. He proposed that both sides reverted to the status quo before 8 September 1962 as a preliminary to talks between the two sides. Chou-En-lai replied on 4 November 1962. He confirmed that line of actual control would mean the McMahon line in the eastern sector, and claimed that the Chinese control line in the western middle sectors "coincides in the main with the traditional customary line which has been consistently pointed out by China". On 14 November, Nehru pointed out that the 7 November 1959 line of actual control advocated by China "is projected three years ahead to be identical with the line since the massive attack of 1962", thus retaining also the fruits of the 1962 attack the Chinese had advanced to the claim line in the Chip Chap river, the Galwan valley and in the Chang Chenmo area. Having achieved this, the Chinese declared ceasefire on November 21, 1962.

## V

### **World Reactions to the War**

The international community was unable to make out the rights and wrongs of this remote conflict. The United Nations did not take cognisance of it as China was not a member of the body. The United States of America had declared through its Ambassador in India that it recognised the McMahon line as the international boundary, and agreed to provide air cover and mountain warfare equipment, but that could be of no immediate utility. The USSSR made no public comment which was taken to be significant, and it is possible to argue that the attitude of the two super powers influenced the Chinese to declare the cease-fire. It should also be borne in mind that USA and USSR were at this time locked in a fierce confrontation which had come about from the Cuban incident which had threatened a nuclear war. The result was that the Sino-India conflict did not receive their full attention, and China was free to deal

with the matter without USSR or USA looking over its shoulder.

Despite its hostility to Communist China, the USA refrained from comment on the India-China border dispute till the outbreak of war. Then on October 21, Lincoln White, the Press Officer of the State Department issued a statement that the U.S. was shocked at the violent and aggressive action of the Chinese Communists against India" (vide NYT 22 October 1962). It became also apparent that the U.S. was willing to give military aid to India despite Pakistan's declared opposition. On 27 October, Galbraith, the US Ambassador to India issued a statement in New Delhi that USA recognised the McMahon Line as the boundary between India and China in NEFA. Britain's Prime Minister, however, acted earlier and on October 27 had already despatched military equipment to India. The American arms supply started on November 10. President Kennedy also restrained Pakistan from going to China's help by sending a letter to President Ayub on October 30, declaring that the Chinese attack against India was a threat to the whole sub-continent" (NYT Oct, 31, 1962).

China had not won international sympathy over its invasion of Tibet in 1950 and the way it handled the Revolt in Tibet in 1959. In fact on 21 October 1959, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution calling for respect for the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people, and for their distinctive religious and cultural life. In 1961 and 1968 also the General Assembly affirmed the Tibetan people's rights to self-determination. In respect of the attack on India, China defied non-aligned opinion by refusing to agree to the proposals of the Colombo Powers. But it had also gained prestige among them by its demonstration of military over India. Subsequently, China won support from USA because of the super power rivalry in which USA has aligned China on its side since 1971. Pakistan aligned itself with this Sino-US axis and China and Pakistan supported each other in anti-Indian policies as will be seen when we deal with the developments since 1962. Apart from help to Pakistan, China kept up pressure on India through training and supplying equipment to Naga insurgents on the Indo-Burmese border. The Naxalite insurgents in the Sub-Himalayan region were also in receipt of such clandestine assistance from the Chinese.

## VI

### **Peace Proposals**

The Heads of State in Asia and Africa who were in the vanguard of the non-aligned movements had formed a group from amongst themselves

that came to be called the Colombo Powers since they met at Colombo in Sri Lanka to study the situation and help to bring about a settlement. They made a set of proposals which the Chinese refused to implement in so far as they related to a withdrawal of the Chinese forces in the western sector to the line of advance before the thirty-one days war.

The New China News Agency had published the text of the statement of the Chinese Government of November 21, 1962 declaring cease-fire and announcing withdrawal beginning from December 1, to positions 20 Kms behind the line of actual control which existed on 7th November 1959. It clarified that they would withdraw 20 Kms. north of the McMahon Line in the east. The proposals were a repetition of the Chinese position that they had a line of actual control in Ladakh which corresponded to their claim as revealed by the Chinese first in 1959 and later by the presentation of more westward version by the Chinese officials in 1960. The Chinese claimed as within the line of actual control of November 1959 not only the 7000 square miles occupied prior to 1959 but also about 5000 square miles occupied from 1959 to 1962.

The representatives of UAR, China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Burma on behalf of the non-aligned nations who met at Colombo from December 10 to 12, 1962, prepared a plan for reconciliation of the sides.

Their views were stated by the Colombo powers as follows:

1. Whether the McMahon Line is considered an illegal imposition or not, it has in fact become a line of actual control except in the Dong and Longju which are disputed. Arrangements similar to Longju could be made in respect of the Dong pending a final settlement.
2. In the middle sector there has been no military action and the line of actual control is not in dispute except at one place Wuje-Barahoti.
3. On the western sector, China and India were not agreed as to what was the line of actual as on November 7, 1959. India exercised executive administrative control to the west of what the Chinese claimed to be the traditional customary boundary and prior to 1959 may have sent out patrol to the east of that line from time to time. From 1959 to 1962, India had set up 43 military checkposts in the east of that line. The Chinese held prior to 1959 some-where to the east of the traditional, custom-

ary line claimed by them and between 1959-62 established some military outposts westward. The Chinese reached what they claimed to be the traditional, customary line in 1962 as a result of their recent military actions. They proposed that while the Chinese force would carry out the withdrawal proposed by them on November 21, the Indian forces should remain where they were and the area in between should be demilitarised and administered by civilian posts to be agreed upon by both sides.

The Colombo Powers had thus suggested that in Ladakh a demilitarised zone be created by the Chinese withdrawing 20 Kms. from the ceasefire line as they had proposed to do, while the Indian side should keep their existing military position. With regard to the eastern sector, as 'the line of actual control' was not in dispute and would, they suggested, be the ceasefire line. In the middle sector the Colombo Powers recommended that if there were any differences, those could be pursued by the parties by peaceful means.

The proposals of the Colombo Powers were not accepted by China who in 1963 set up seven civilian posts unilaterally in the demilitarised area of Ladakh. On October 9, 1964 at the time of the Cairo Conference of non-aligned nations, the Chinese Government officially declared that they would not change their position in regard to the proposals of the Colombo Powers or regarding the withdrawal of these seven posts in the demilitarised zone in Ladakh. Towards the end of December 1964, Chou-En-lai speaking to the National People's Congress in Peking, rejected the idea of holding bilateral talks on the basis of withdrawal of the posts in the demilitarised zone in Ladakh.

## VII

### Developments Since 1962

Communist China had always advocated that both countries should respect the line of actual control as Chou-En-lai reiterated in a letter of 24th October 1962 to Nehru while claiming 90000 sq. km. of Arunachal Pradesh. Chou-En-lai's letter stated that the line of actual control upto 1959 was along the boundary (except of individual places) but since 1959, India had, "deep into Chinese territory". Nehru replied pointing out that the two sides should revert to the position of 8 September 1962, Chou-En-lai, however, rejected this saying that would enable India "to

remain Kechilong river area north of the so-called MaMahon Line”, and secondly because “the Indian side from 1961 onward, occupied larger parts of Chinese territory east of the actual line of control and established over 40 posts” in the western sector. On 14 November, Nehru replied that “it was on 8th September that your force crossed the portion and threatened the Dhola post of India”. Regarding western sector, a note enclosed by Nehru explained, “the line of actual control in November 1959 was no line but a series of positions of Chinese forces on Indian territory.....within three years a large network of military roads and posts were built beginning with posts opposite Daulat Beg Oldi in the north, along the Chip Chap river valley and across the Galwan river to the Pangong and Spanggur Lake areas”. The border area remained ‘active’ after the ceasefire and a cold war of border tension continued between India and China. The Chinese Government proceeded unilaterally to strengthen their hold on the areas where the Indian forces had withstood the Chinese onslaught in 1962. In the west this was in Spanggur lake area and at Demehok. They fortified their position near Longju in the eastern sector and complained about the Indian presence in Bara Hoti in the middle sector.

Chinese ill-will found its vent also over the issue of prisoner of war. The Chinese had refused to cooperate with the Red Cross of India in the matter of release of prisoners of war and spread their release over a period of a year or so, without allowing verification of the number of prisoners of war, and the way they had been treated. In October 1963, they stated that they had captured 3900 Indian military personnel whom they had released except some “captured Indian officials of and above field grade” who had expressed a “desire to visit the interior of China”. Chinese nibbling at Indian territory had continued since 1962. On May 30, 1964, “seven armed Chinese military personnel were observed 8 miles north of Fukcha in Ladakh in the 20 Km. demilitarised zone. Similar military activity was also observed in Kongka la, Jara La and Chang La areas”.

The Chinese, accused the Indian troops of crossing the line of control in Ladakh at Karakoram pass, Spanggur, Demchok and at other places in the west. The Indian Government rejected these allegations and pointed out that the Chinese had established 7 civilian posts in the 20 km. demilitarised zone which was also being patrolled by their military personnel. This was against the Colombo proposals and also contrary to the declarations that the Chinese Government had made that they had evacuated this zone. Now at the Cairo Conference of non-aligned nations, the Chinese Government announced on October 9, 1964 that they had rejected the Colombo proposals regarding withdrawal of these

posts. Towards the end of the year, Chou-En-lai, speaking to the National People's Congress in Peking, finally rejected the idea of holding bilateral talks on the basis of neither side maintaining posts in the demilitarised zone.

## VIII

In January 1963, China accused Indian troops of crossing the Natu La Pass on the China-Sikkim border and of constructing military structures which they demanded, should be demolished. On July 5, 1963, the Indian Government protested that a Chinese patrol had intruded into Sebu La "which is on the frontier about a miles south of Natu La". The boundary between Sikkim and Tibet had been defined by the Treaty of 1890 between Sikkim and China and it was not easy to account for these border incidents except as a result of strengthening of local defence by both sides.

In January 1965, the Chinese Government alleged that Indian troops were building structures across the border of Sikkim on the Chinese side of the Jelepla Pass and that these troops had seized by the Indian Government. They complained that on the other hand the Chinese had crossed the line of actual control in Ladakh in the Chap Chap river area in April and had crossed into India over the Mana pass in the middle sector. At the time of the Indo-Pak war of 1965, the Chinese Government renewed their allegations with regard to Sikkim. In a note of September 8, they stated that "Indian troops crossed the China-Sikkim boundary on four successive occasions in July 1965". They listed several other such violations in August also not only from Sikkim but also in the western sector of the boundary, linking the latter incidents with "armed suppression against the people in Kashmir, and unleashing and expanding its armed aggression against "Pakistan". They made fresh allegations on September 16, and again on September 19.

The Indian Government accused China of "creating" incidents both in the Western Sector and on the Sikkim border to coincide with the India-Pakistan war. The Chinese captured three Indian soldiers on the Sikkim-Tibet border. Their dead bodies were handed over to the Indian Embassy at Peking on September 28. The Indo-Pak war had been halted by a ceasefire but the Tibet-Sikkim border remained disturbed. An Indian note of 21 September 1965 stated "The Chinese forces have moved up all along India's northern border and started firing at Indian border posts in Sikkim and Ladakh", as well in the middle sector Wuje

and Lipu Lekh pass. The Chinese note of 24th September declared - "China will not cease to support Pakistan against Indian aggression. Aggressive Chinese intrusions continued in October and November. On December 12, the fighting on Sikkim border resulted in six Indians dead. Incidents took place in Ladakh at Daulat Beg Oldi and also east of Bhutan at the Dong or Thag La ridge which the Chinese had claimed earlier (in March 1963) to have vacated. During 1966-67, China was plunged in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, but Sikkim continued to be the focus of disturbance. On 11 April, China warned India "in all seriousness, you must draw lessons from your past experience, stop provocative activities along the Chinese-Sikkim border and cease all your calumnies against China, otherwise you are bound to eat the bitter fruits of your making". In September 1967, they alleged "the unbridled intrusions by the Indian troops are a component part of the world-wide anti-Chinese chorus struck by the US imperialism and Soviet revisionism". India protested against intrusion into Sikkim by strong detachments of Chinese troops who attacked Indian troops with automatic weapons and heavy artillery and proposed a ceasefire and a meeting between sector commanders.

In 1968, China and Pakistan entered into an agreement for construction of a land route between Sinkiang and Gilgit and Baltistan in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Government of India protested against this "illegal interference with regard to the territory of Jammu and Kashmir which is an inalienable part of India".

China had kept up pressure on India also through training and supplying arms to Naga insurgents on the Indo-Burmese border and to Naxalites in the Sub-Himalayan region. Such clandestine assistance to anti-government elements was part of China's policy of weakening neighbouring countries where the Communist parties and the Chinese ethnic stock were also utilised for the same purpose. In 1969, China modified this policy as part of a selective approach to third world nations. Towards India, however, it continued its severe pressure.

The continuous hostility between India and China was linked up with international developments. In 1971, USA opened a new chapter in relations with China. In the revolt which broke out in 1971 in East Pakistan against West Pakistan, China intervened on the side of Pakistan, as it had done in 1965. On 13 April 1971, the "Pakistan Times" quoted a message for Chou-En-lai to Yahya Khan which said "Your Excellency should rest assured that should be Indian expansionists dare to launch aggression against Pakistan the Chinese Government and people will, as always, give full support to the Pakistan Government and people in their

just struggle". The arms supplied by China to Pakistan were used against East Pakistan. The Sinkiang Gilgit highway was used to send military and other supplies. China also gave a loan of 100 million dollars to Pakistan and the USA intervened by announcing the despatch of Seventh Fleet from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean as a demonstration in favour of Pakistan. President Nixon directed his advisers to "till against India" in the war that resulted in the creation of Bangla Desh latter in the year. Possibly, China and USA were restrained by the Indo-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance 1971 in their demonstration against India. The creation of Bangla Desh ultimately brought about a reassessment of India's position in the Sub-continent.

The seventies were a period of rapprochement between the USSR and the USA. India also launched a process of rapprochement towards her neighbour Pakistan when it signed the Simla Agreement in 1972. It was not till 1976, that India succeeded in making a dent in China's stance of hostility. Mrs. Gandhi had declared an emergency in 1975 due to internal developments. In 1976, Mrs. Gandhi decided to restore diplomatic relation with China at the level of Ambassadors. In that year there was an exchange of ambassadors between the two countries. But the thaw was limited. In 1977, Vietnam was accused by China of provoking exodus of the Chinese nationals who had been living in that country. The bitterness over the wholesale exodus revealed a deep-seated but hitherto suppressed enmity between the two countries. The Chinese irredentist ambitions from her past were revealed with regard to Indo-China. The Janata Government came into power in India in 1977 and continued the policy of rapprochement with China. The Foreign Minister A.B. Vajpayee visited China. While the Indian Foreign Minister was in China on this visit of goodwill, China suddenly attacked Vietnam in January 1979. The Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Deng Xiapoing declared that they would teach Vietnam a lesson as they had done to India in 1962. This terminated the visit of the Indian Foreign Minister and gave a setback to the relations with India. In December 1979, USSR sent a large military force of 80000 into Afghanistan by a spectacular airlift operation, to support the Communist Government of Tarakki. This put a stop to the improvement of relations between the Super Powers and reinforced the Chinese axis with Pakistan. Raiders from among Pakistan-based refugees across the border were supplied with arms from China and so were the insurgents in Wakhan and other border areas of Afghanistan adjoining China. Subsequent to the Republican Party's success in the Presidential election of USA, there was a perceptible "line-up" of China and Pakistan with USA against the USSR.



Further differences between China and India were manifested over Indo-China where Vietnam had intervened militarily in Cambodia soon after the cessation of war with China, in support of the Hang Samarin regime. This regime was opposed by China but India had recognised it, showing that India and China were divided not only by the border dispute but also by their different perceptions and stances in the larger context of South East and South Asia.

According to an analysis by the Institute of Armament Studies of the United Kingdom published in Sept, 1981, China was going in for more modern weapons replacing its one-time Soviet-made arsenal. China's regular armed forces count about 11.7 million enlisted from periods of 3 to 5 years as well as another 12 million men and women of the age between 16 and 40 who came to comprise the militia. Ground troops number another 4,90,000. Its air fleet is 5500 military planes, and its navy has 105 submarines. China had also taken further steps to militarise Tibet. There are nuclear missile testing and launching sites at Kokonor and other Tibetan locations, the road system along the Indo-Tibetan border has been developed, and the number of troops located in Tibet has been increased. The policy of introducing Han population in Tibet has alienated the Tibetans, and unrest erupts in Tibet from time to time against the Chinese rule. This unrest had become vehement as time has passed and the most serious uprisings have been in October 1987 and early 1988.

There was a welcome response from the Chinese Government when they agreed to a proposal that officials of the two governments should meet and discuss the question of a border agreement. A number of meetings of officials have been held from time to time from 1979 to 1987. But there was a fresh outbreak of hostilities in June 1986 over Sumdorong in the vicinity of the same area where the invasion of October 1962 had taken place.

The area of Sumdo-rong is south of the McMahon Line but the Chinese claim that there was a realignment of Indian forces at this point leading to a change in the status quo. The Chinese flew in their troops and occupied Sumdorong. In 1987, the Chinese Ambassador to India accused India of disturbing the *status quo*. The border talks at the level of officials were terminated without achieving anything.

## Prospects of Settlement

The relations between India and China and the effect on these relations of the border dispute between them has never really been out of a public view ever since 1962, if not earlier. Neither country likes such an issue to remain unsettled, between two great neighbours. But border disputes do not arise unless there are substantive issues involved affecting the policies of the two countries. In this case an area of about 15,000 sq. miles in Ladakh was occupied by China, beginning after 1950. In the context of the development of the Pakistan-China-US axis, particularly since the visit of Mr. Kissinger in 1971 from Pakistan to China, it cannot be stated that the border dispute between China and India is the only issue affecting their relations. No doubt we should put the dispute behind us as a step towards better mutual relations. In order to do so, we have to take a closer look at the complexities of the border settlement.

Border disagreements are seldom the cause of war between countries. When such a war takes place as it did between India and China in 1962, causes deeper than the border alignment are usually responsible for the conflict. Whatever the reasons for the coming about of the China-Pakistan-US axis, it subsequently, dictated China's policy towards India rather than the unsettled border. The Indo-China border remained a 'live' one from 1954-1962 and has not since then been a line of peace, though the situation has at present seen a welcome change. China did not reveal her precise border claims till 1960 and was busy moving into the areas which she was to claim and by 1962 she finally achieved her purpose. Ever since then, ranging from non-acceptance of the proposals of the "Colombo Powers" by China, several attempts have

been made by the two countries to agree to a border line, and the lack of progress in doing so, is a measure of the differences that exist. What are these differences and how they can be reconciled is the purpose of this paper.

2. We have a declared proposal of the British Indian rulers with regard to Kashmir's border with Sinkiang. In 1899, they proposed it to China, stating "It will not be necessary to mark out the frontier. The natural frontier is the crest of a range of mighty mountains, a great part of which is quite inaccessible. It will be sufficient if the two Governments enter into an agreement to recognise the frontier as laid down by its clearly marked geographical features". The line of boundary proposed (It is contained in C. Macdonald's letter of 1899 (vide NAI Foreign Department Secret F. Proceedings, August 1899 (168-201 and) is as follows;

"Commencing on the Little Pamir from the peak at which Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission of 1895 ended their work, it runs South East crossing the Karachikar stream at Mintaks Aghazi, then proceeding in the same direction it forms at the Karachenai the crest of the main ridge of the Muztagh range. It follows this to the South, passing by the Khunjerab Pass and continues Southward to the peak just north of the Shamshal Pass. At this point, the boundary leaves the crest and follows a spur running approximately east, parallel to the road from Shamshal pass to the Hunza post at Darwaza. The line turning South through the post crosses the road at that point, and then ascends the nearest high spur, and regains the main rests, and follows them, passing the Gusherbrun, Saltore pass by the Karakoram".

We may pause at this point to note that the above line relates to the area of Kashmir in occupation of Pakistan and is the subject of an agreement of 1963 between China and Pakistan under the Shaksgam Valley West of Siachen glacier has been occupied by China. Currently, China is reported to be carrying out a survey of this area. The first issue that arises is whether the alignment of the boundary from the Little Pamir to Siachen glacier is to be Left over for later negotiation. The Chinese occupation West of Siachen and Karakoram Pass is to be seen in the context of Chinese occupation East of the Pass after the War of 1962.

3. To proceed with the 1899 proposal, "From the Karakoram Pass the crests of the range run east for about half a degree (100 li), and then turns south to a little below the 35th parallel of north latitude.

Rounding then what in our maps is shown as the source of the Karakash, the line of hills to be followed run north a point east of Kizil Jilga and from there in south-easterly direction follows the Lak Tsung Range until that meets the spur running south from the Kuen-Lun range, which has been hitherto shown on our maps as the eastern boundary of Ladakh. This is a little east of 80° Longitude.”

It may be noted that here the offer involves a part of Aksai Chin area. The Chinese made no response to this proposal, as they had not done previously when in 1846 the British had invited them to participate in demarcating the boundary of Kashmir. The 1899 proposal sought to include Aksai Chin to Sinkiang, as distinct from Tibet although China had at that time not done so. This was because at that time, the British aim was that in the event of Russia occupying Kashmir, i.e., Sinkiang, China should still serve as a buffer between Russia and Kashmir here.

4. Subsequent to the Anglo-Russian detente of 1907, the position was reviewed by the British Indian Government. The detente involved non-interference in Tibet by Russia and British. The Foreign Secretary Sir Louis Dane noted however, “We hope to be able to keep Aksai Chin in Tibet in order to adhere to the Kuen-Lun boundary for that country” (i.e. for China) (vide NAI, Appendix Notes Proceedings February 1908, Nos. 40-51). Thus, the fate of Aksai Chin depended on the current perceptions of the British regarding the defence needs of the empire.

5. The demarcation of the northern border and colour washing of the boundary areas on maps of the Survey of India before 1954 was carried out to serve the internal administrative needs. The international boundary line shown by the Indian Government in their Survey of India maps of 1954 and subsequently was described in the official level border talks of 1960. This is based on the customary, traditional alignment, principally adhering to the crests of the ranges and the watersheds as the supporting geographical basis. In Aksai Chin the drainage system is distinct from the watershed of the Karakash and Yurungkash rivers which flow north to Khotan in Sinkiang. Aksai Chin, like Lingzi Tang and Depsang Plains, is one of the older geological formations that had existed before the Karakoram and Kuen-Lun ranges rose in a later epoch and developed their own river watersheds. The question that the Chinese have raised from time to time is that notwithstanding these unexceptionable principles of border definition which they accept, they need the area of Aksai Chin in order to have within their jurisdiction the

most convenient route from Sinkiang to West Tibet. It is not enough for India to point out that such a route via Keriya and Polu from Khotan is available to them already. The Chinese insist that it is the route passing through Aksai Chin that they needed. Consequently, at the border talks of officials in 1960, the Chinese drew a line from near the Karakoram Pass to Lanka La as the customary, traditional boundary, thus excluding from Ladakh not only Aksai Chin but a larger tract of about 15,000 square miles, roughly the same area of which they completed their occupation by the war of 1962. They can argue now from a position of vantage in so far as their claim is concerned since the area is already in their possession.

The points of dispute on the Kashmir Sinkiang border, the main issues are:

- (i) China's entry on the Southern Slopes of the Aghil range into Shaksgam valley, west of Siachen glacier as agreed to between Pakistan and China in 1963.
- (ii) China's occupation of watersheds of the Karakash and Yurung Kash rivers and depriving India of Aksai Chin which has its own drainage basin.

6. As regards its boundary with Tibet there are fewer points of dispute. From Lanaka La to Pangong lake, the pastures on the two sides of the border were used by two sides according to long usage and are well-defined. The areas of Chang Chenmo Valley, Lingzi Tang and Aksai Chin where rights of pasture and salt collection were exercised were included in Tanktse area of Ladakh. The corresponding pasture areas of Tibet are thus defined also. The British Boundary Commissions appointed in 1846 found that there was no dispute with Tibet. This boundary was personally surveyed from the Chang Chenmo Southward by Strachey. Cunningham reported that cairns marking the boundary put up as long ago as 1684 after the Mongol-Tibetan invasion has been repelled, were intact. The Pangong Lake is partly in Tibet and partly in Ladakh. Khurnak fort on it and Chushul and Demchok further south in Ladakh are the landmarks. The boundary then proceeds Bushahr, which is dealt with in the middle sector.

7. Regarding Tibet, it may be pointed out that the question of status of Tibet seems to have been settled in disregard of the fact of history and to the detriment not only in Tibet but also of China and

India. Tibet has remained isolated from the conflicts of the super powers of the past. To keep the area free from militarisation as is the border between USA and Canada is desirable and necessary. Tibet is an autonomous region of the Republic of China and the Tibetans should have the attributes of autonomy, i.e., be allowed to live and develop in their own way. With Tibet, the border disputes on the western sector south of Aksai Chin are not intractable. In this sector, as a whole, any solution that we find can be seen to be linked, on the one hand with the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir, and on the other, with the demand of Tibet for a genuine autonomous status as had been enjoyed by it ever since the creation of Tibet. Any concession that India may make to China should not be at the expense of Pak occupied Kashmir or Tibet.

### **The Middle Sector**

The middle sector covers the boundary from Ladakh to Nepal. Here also there is no major dispute and the boundary runs, broadly, along the crests of the Himalaya. The major passes have been named in the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954. However, the British map makers were careful not to commit themselves to a definite boundary here as elsewhere. We find them saying in the context of map-making, 'No definite boundary can be shown for the British districts of the Punjab & UP boundary on Tibet and these should simply be colour washed red as it was done in the previous edition. The external limits of Kashmir, Rampur Bushahr and Tehri are also undefined, and a yellow wash should be employed in the areas terminating as here to fine'. This was noted in March 1907 in regard to publications of the Fourth Edition of the map of India (vide NAI, proceedings Feb. 1908 Nos. 40-51). But the question was indirectly settled by the Indo-China Trade Agreement of 1954, which named the six passes as the routes by which trade was to be conducted. Article IV reads:

“Traders and pilgrims of both the countries may travel by the following passes and routes; 1. Shipki Pass 2. Mana Pass, 3. Niti Pass, 4. Kungri Bingri Pass 5. Darma Pass and 6. Lipu Lekh Pass”.

“Also, the customary route leading to Tashigong along the valley of the Shangatsangpu (Indus) River may continue to be traversed in accordance with custom”.

The 1954 agreement does not say that these passes constitute the boundary but they do constitute a basis for the boundary along a line of

crests connecting these passes. The few minor disputes here since 1954 like Bara Hoti can be decided accordingly as they fall on the Indian or Tibetan side of this line. There are, more over, earlier records of such local disputes which can be a useful guide. In the middle sector, therefore, neither side has stated that there exist any points of dispute which are difficult to resolve.

### **The Eastern Sector**

The Tribal area of Assam north of the Brahmaputra which form the State of Arunachal Pradesh, were directly administered by the Centre as North East Frontier Agency when the Chinese invaded Tibet in 1950. These tribes were isolated under the British rule as there was little road building activity in the thick Monsoon forests which covered these Southern Himalayan slopes. After 1951, the administration of these areas has been development-oriented and not roads have been constructed but welfare and development policies have been successful. The result has been that they have gradually become part of the mainstream of life in Assam and India.

The boundary here with Tibet was fixed at the Simla Conference of 1913-14 attended by the representatives of India, China and Tibet. The guiding principle of the crests of the main Himalayan range was followed in deciding the boundary between Tibet and the North East Frontier. McMahon had made efforts through despatch of special exploratory missions to determine the line of the main Himalayan range before offering the same to Lanchen Shatra, the Tibetan plenipotentiary, for his consideration. In a few cases like Migyutin, Namka Chu, the line may have to be corrected. Such correction does not invalidate the main line or the principle on which it is based. There are Abors of Arunachal Pradesh tribes in Pemakoe and other areas north of the crest line. India is not making out a claim for those areas on that account because such "pockets" of people on one side or the other are only to be expected. One cannot, on that account propose to meddle with the boundary.

Article 9 of the Simla Convention signed by the Tibetan and Chinese representatives indicated the frontiers of Tibet (outer Tibet and inner Tibet) with India and with China. This was signed on 27th April 1914, but on April 29, the Chinese representative announced that his Government had disavowed his actions in initiating the Convention.

The so-called McMahon Line defining the border of Tibet with India was, however, signed in March 1914. It was agreed to by the Tibetan representative after consulting Lhasa, and the map attached to the Simla Convention was signed on July 3, 1914 by Great Britain and Tibet. The delimitation of 850 miles of boundary between Tibet and India arranged through talks between McMahon and Lonchen Shatra was a victory for good sense and good will. It was denounced by China after initial ratification by its plenipotentiary. The Chinese now claim the whole of Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of China. The only time a Chinese entry was at all made in this area was when in 1914 Erh-Feng the general who was “guardian of the eastern marches” sent his troops to Rima. After marking their presence there, however, the troops withdrew. This stray intrusion cannot be called a valid plea for claiming the whole of Arunachal Pradesh.

There is keenness for peaceful settlement of the border dispute. These issues which have been raised are pertinent to a settlement. The fact that there may be differences over these issues which have to be resolved indicates that we should in the meanwhile live with the status quo. India has been the loser by allowing Aksai Chin and other areas to be occupied by China since 1950, but we are committed to the principle of settlement by negotiations.



## 9 (ii)

### Parameters of a Border Settlement with China

India's northern frontier with China runs a distance of about 2,390 miles. In addition, to the north, are the countries of Nepal and Bhutan whose frontiers run with China. To deal with the question of settling the border problems with China, therefore, one must think of this enormous length specially as the border runs through some of the most difficult mountain areas of the world. Usually, a sector-wise approach is adopted in analysing the border differences and this is unavoidable because the nature of the problems is different in each of the three sectors: the western sector with the additional complication of Pakistan having occupied a part of Jammu and Kashmir State; the middle sector with the six main passes enumerated in the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954; and the eastern sector where we have to deal with McMahon Line.

In the western sector 200-250 mile length of border of a total length of about 1,100 miles upto the Shipki Pass is in the extreme west occupied by Pakistan from Gilgit and Hunza to the Shaksgam valley. The Shaksgam valley, however, has been occupied by China under the Sino-Pak Agreement of March 1963. Geography, history and recent events have all combined to play their part in raising different problems in different sections of our long northern frontier. Before we can suggest how these can be resolved, we have to make a sector-wise examination. For this purpose, we may begin with the western sector where Pakistan is also involved and where also lies the main area occupied by China since 1950, namely the Aksai Chin plateau and its environs.

#### Western Sector

##### *(i) Pak-occupied Kashmir*

In 1947 Pakistan occupied the Baltistan area of Ladakh, as well as the principalities of Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza etc., to the west of Baltistan which were a part of state of Jammu and Kashmir. These areas adjoining the Trijunction of Russia, Afghanistan and China (Sinkiang)

were the nob of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the nineteenth century. Part of the Indian border with Sinkiang, 200-250 miles of it, is now occupied by Pakistan, and the settlement of March 1963 between China and Pakistan is only a working arrangement. The working arrangement assigns the responsibility of defence of this area to Pakistan not only upto the Shaksgam valley but also the east of it, i.e., of the Siachen glacier the Rimo glacier, and upto the Karakoram Pass— areas which are not even occupied by Pakistan. The agreement of 1963 thus seeks to link up the Pak-occupied area to the area occupied by China in Aksai Chin. These areas are vital to Ladakh because the Nubra river takes its origin from the “spout” of Siachen, and the Shyok river from the Rimo glacier. They are the water life-lines of Ladakh along with the river Indus which they join. The assumption of the Sino-Pak agreement that Pakistan is in possession of the border with Sinkiang right upto the Karakoram Pass is wrong. In any settlement, this agreement will have to be re-negotiated and in any case will not be valid for the length of the border east of Shaksgam which is not in the possession of Pakistan.

Secondly, the area of the Shaksgam-Muztagh valley west of Siachen has been assigned to China by the agreement with Pakistan. The Indian Prime Minister made a statement in Parliament on March 5, 1963, that the Sino-Pak border agreement was not acceptable as it concerned the border of the area of Jammu and Kashmir illegally occupied by Pakistan. He further stated, *inter alia*:

“The Pakistan line of actual control, according to the map, which the Government of Pakistan has supplied to our High Commission, lay across the Kilik, Mintaka, Khunjerab Passes; but thereafter the line left the watershed and followed neither the Aghil range, which is the traditional boundary, nor the Karakoram range, along which the alignment claimed by the Government of China lay...Running south of the traditional alignment the Pakistan line of actual control surrendered about 1,600 square miles to China.”<sup>1</sup>

Further, by ceding Shaksgam valley to China, China became the neighbour of Siachen glacier to the west of it. The ceded area is part of the claim of Hunza north of the Karakoram range. The British were keen to cede areas of the Taghdumbash, Pamir and Raksam in order to persuade China to give up her connection with Hunza. In his desire to put an end to the relations of China with the Hunza chieftain, Curzon

had offered in 1899 to surrender the grazing rights of Hunza in Raksam valley and the Taghdumbash Pamir north of the Karakoram range. On April 17, 1899, Macartney, the British Agent in Sinkiang called on the Chinese *Tao-Tai* and learnt that the Governor of the New Dominion (i.e. Sinkiang) had instructed the local authorities to defer the conveyance of Raksam to Kanjutis,<sup>2</sup> as the people of Hunza were called. Curzon had decided to offer a border alignment which while ceding the grazing rights of Hunza north of the Karakoram range, would have secured an unambiguous frontier with Sinkiang. At Curzon's suggestion, therefore, the Foreign Office in London wrote to the British Minister at Peking that he should propose the boundary line suggested by the Indian Government to the Chinese Foreign Office for acceptance. This is the line of 1899 which was conveyed by Macdonald to the Chinese Tsungli-Yamen in his letter of March 14, 1899, on the subject of the boundary between "the Indian state of Kashmir and the New Dominion of Chinese Turkistan." The proposal was prefaced as follows:

"It appears that the boundaries of the State of Kanjut with China have never been clearly defined. The Kanjuits claim an extensive tract of land on the Taghdumbash Pamir extending as far north as Tashkurgan, and they also claim the district known as Raksam to the south of Sarikol. The rights of Kanjut over part of the Taghdumbash Pamir were admitted by *Tao-Tai* of Kashgar in a letter to Mir of Hunza dated February 1896, and last year the question of the Raksam district was the subject of negotiations between Kanjut and the official of the New Dominion in which the latter admitted that some of the Raksam land should be given to the Kanjutis."<sup>3</sup>

Though the line proposed in 1899 was not accepted by China who gave no response to it, the line of 1963 has surrendered areas further than the earlier offer. While the agreement of 1963 will have to be renegotiated with regard to the areas east of Shaksgam, the second issue, namely, the alignment west of Siachen, will be linked up with the settlement of the Kashmir issue with Pakistan.

#### (ii) *From Karakoram Pass to Lanak La*

The chief obstacle to the settlement of the border question with China is the occupation of Aksai Chin plateau and its environs after 1950. This is an area of about 15,000 square miles and China has

occupied it because, as stated by the Chinese, the road they have built across it from Khatan in Sinkiang to Gartok in western Tibet is considered vital for communication between these outlying parts of their dominions. The road enters India at Haji Langar and leaves it after traversing diagonally at Lanak La Pass. The road did not require much construction as it is a flat plain where nothing grows but burtse grass; but it is difficult to maintain because the fierce winds that blow cover it thickly with soda dust. The Aksai Chin is one of the four plateaus which are in older geographical formation than the surrounding mountain ranges and it has its own drainage system flowing into lakes that form the receptacles. However, the rivers Qara Qash and Yurung Kash flow north to Khotan; and the Chip Chap and the Chang Chenmo rivers from the Indus system to the north and south of the Aksai Chin plateau.

From the Karakoram Pass east, the boundary lies along the watershed between the Shyok and the Yarkand rivers, then through Qara Tagh Pass, across the eastern bed of the Qara Qash river north-west of Haji Langar. It then ascends the Kuen Lun mountains through the Yangi Pass along the east of the mountains separating the Yurung Kash basin from those of Aksai Chin lakes, down to Lanak La Pass. China, however, claims the area surrounding the road from Haji Langar across Aksai Chin to Lanak La Pass and also the area to the west where radial roads were built from this trunk road to the west during 1959-62.

When the Colombo Powers proposed a ceasefire line in 1962 they advised that the Chinese should withdraw to a line which they held before the war of October, 1962, i.e. that they should withdraw from an area of about 2,500 miles acquired during the 1962 war. The Chinese advance had taken place in three phases. In the first phase, up to November 7, 1959, the Chinese had established posts at Haji Langar, Kongka Pass, Khurnak and Spanggur. They thus, staked a claim to an area of about 6,000 square miles west of the Aksai Chin road. The border incidents that took place from 1959 to 1962 were result of the Chinese advance.

China asserts that the border lies along a line Haji Langar to Lanak La Pass and has, in the maps published since 1962, shown all the area occupied upto the advance in the war of that year, as Chinese territory. The Chinese call this advance "the line of November 7, 1959", but the actual position was that on that date they were in the first phase of their advance, as already narrated. Before that, the Chinese checkposts were at the foothills of the Kuen Lun mountains at Sanju Killan and Kokyar

Passes. In fact, our own last Consul General in Sinkiang, R.D. Sathe, travelled by this route and met the Chinese, first at one of these passes.<sup>5</sup> So did his first predecessor, G. Macartney, who wrote in his Route Notes of 1896 of the journey from the Karakoram Pass to Yarkand. The Notes read, *inter alia*, regarding the route between Karakoram Pass and the Yarkand. The ascent of the Suget Pass is by a very easy gradation.

“No.4-Suget Kar and the Road downhill all the ways the first place of human habitation on the north side of the Karakoram Pass. A Chinese Officer resides there during the trading season but has no troops.”<sup>6</sup> This is 73 miles from Karakoram Pass according to Macartney.

At 124 miles, the Notes mention “No.8 Road ascends by a zig-zag to Kilhan Pass.....At 7 miles is Khitai Taru, so called because there used to be a wall built by the ‘old chinese’ (i.e. before Yakub Beg) who went from Kilion to Khitai Taru on inspection.”<sup>6</sup> There is ample other evidence that the Chinese control extended only up to the Kuen Lun mountains.

We have already mentioned the line proposed in 1899. In regard to the area east of the Karakoram Pass, this line was proposed as follows:

From the Karakoram Pass, the crests of the range run east for about half a degree (1001i) and then turn south to a little below the 35th parallel of N. latitude. Rounding then what in our maps is shown as the source of the Kara-Kash, the line of hills to be followed run north-east to a point east of Kizil Jilga and from there follows in south-easterly direction the Lak Tsung range until that meets the spur running south from the Kuen Lun range which has been hitherto shown on our maps as the eastern boundary of Ladakh. This is a little east of 80°E longitude.”<sup>7</sup>

Curzon had offered to settle the boundary line right up to the point where the Sinkiang border touched Tibet and in so doing, offered a portion of the Aksai Chin as well. The considerations that weighed with him were to keep the Russians out of Sinkiang and to exclude any claim over Hunza. He was keen that both Afghanistan and China should be offered territory to thereby act as a buffer between Russia and the India empire. It was, thus, that Wakhan was offered to, and accepted by, Afghanistan, but China did not oblige by accepting the bait of Taghdumbash Pamir, Raksam and a portion of Aksai Chin that was made for a similar reason.

In any future border settlement, the Indian side will have to consider giving up the area through which the road from Sinkiang to western Tibet passes through the plateau of Aksai Chin, to which the Chinese have no claim except that of advance into the area since 1950.

*(iii) From Lanak La to Shipki Pass*

The Lanak La route leads to north Tibet and the next landmark on the Ladakh border is the Pangong Lake, an elongated lake spreading east and west—the western portion being in Ladakh. Khurnak Fort is on the Indian side of the lake but the Chinese have contested this. To its south are Spanggur and Chushul on the Indian side of the border, and where the Indus enters Ladakh, are Tashigong in Tibet and Demchok in India. The Chinese have advanced a claim to Demchok which they call Parigas, and to Chuva and Chuje (as they call the places) at the junction of the Spiti and Pare rivers. The frontier in this region between Ladakh and western Tibet is defined by watersheds. To begin. In the north, there is a watershed between the Chang Chenmo and Cnumerang river in Ladakh and the streams flowing into the Dyaptsso in Tibet. The two main routes south of Lanak La lie along the Indus at Demchok/Tashigong and at the crossing of the Satluj river into India near Shipki Pass.

The Chinese alleged that at Parigas is “a very small era (which) has been invaded and occupied by Indian in recent years”<sup>8</sup> Chuva and Chuje” are also claimed by the Chinese to have been occupied by India in 1958. They claim that here the boundary lies at the junction of the Spiti and Pare rivers of the Satluj watershed.

## **Middle Sector**

The borders runs here from Shipki Pass in Himachal Pradesh to the border with Nepal, through Uttar Pradesh, a distance of 340 miles. Immediately after the Sino-Indian agreement of 1954, the Chinese made intrusions here at Wuje, i.e., Bare Hoti, and at Shipki Pass. The agreement of 1954 had mentioned the six main passes, Shipki, Mana, Niti, Kungri-Bingri, Darma and Lipu Lekh Passes over which the trade routes could be used. The boundary follows the main watershed divided by the Himalayas, of the Satluj in Tibet and of the Ganga in India.

Apart from the intrusions at Wuje, south of Niti Pass and near Shipki Pass, the Chinese have claims regarding Sang and Tsungsha, east of Nilang Pass which the Chinese state that the British occupied in

1919. There is one other small claim south of the six passes mentioned in the agreement of 1954. This is Puling sumdo, a traditional market which the Chinese allege India occupied only in 1955. Its located north of Gaumukh, and was once part of Tehri Garhwal State. The boundary line follows, after crossing the Satluj at its bend, the Zaskar range and lies through the Shipki Pass. Thereafter, it follows the main watershed through the Ghaga Pass, Mana Pass, Niti Pass, Kungri-Bingri Pass, Darma Pass and Lipu Lekh Pass. The six passes mentioned in the 1954 agreement should be the basis in demarcating the boundary accordingly.

### **Eastern Sector**

This is a distance of 950 miles. According to the Chinese claim advanced in 1960, the border is from the south-eastern tip of Bhutan eastward to 94°E longitude and then north-eastward to Nizamghat along” where the southern foot of the Himalayas touches the plains on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the Chinese claim a major portion of Arunachal Pradesh, north of the river. This claim is, however, tempered by the fact that China vacated the small pockets in this area near Bhutan and in the extreme east which they occupied during the war of 1962. The dispute about Thag-la ridge and Migyutin is not against the McMahon Line but the correct delineation of it at these two points.

There has never been a Chinese or Tibetan presence in the areas south of the Himalayas, east of Bhutan. The Chinese in respect of the Tibetan provinces of Monyul, Loyul and Tsayul is applicable to areas north of the Himalayas. In 1913-14, at the Simla Conference, there were two agreements, one in March, 1914 between Tibet and India; and the other later between all three, including China. This latter agreement was in respect of the boundary between Tibet and China and was initialled by all three plenipotentiaries, and later denounced by China. However, the so-called McMahon Line was the boundary agreed to between India and Tibet east of Bhutan. The Chinese signed the agreement with Burma on the basis of the McMahon Line. The Tibetans or the Chinese never penetrated south of this line which is an ethnic geographical and historical line. In the talks between Indian and Chinese leaders, there has never been any claim to the areas south of this line. On the contrary, the Chinese having indicated from time to time that they would accept this line though they denounce the Simla Conference

of 1913-14. The British government kept undeveloped the area north of the Brahmaputra as they feared the people living there, and left them alone. After independence, this area and its people have been treated as no different from other parts of the country. Development has been rapid and the people have shown themselves to be quick to adopt changes. Arunachal Pradesh is a state of the Indian Union with a legislature, and the people are an integral part of the country.

The atmosphere of goodwill that has been generated by the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to China in 1988 has rendered a settlement possible. The Indian government will have to take the consent of the Parliament, so it will no doubt associate the Opposition parties with it as to the settlement proposed.

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## Epilogue

One of the first acts of the present Chinese ruling party on coming into power in China was to announce their determination to liberate Sinkiang and Tibet. The People's Liberation Army marched into Sinkiang in 1949, and into Tibet in Oct 1950. India was concerned equally with Sinkiang because both Tibet and Sinkiang border on Kashmir. India has had a long association with Tibet and expressed the hope to the Chinese that India was in favour of Tibetan autonomy as in the past. In fact Tibet had been independent since 1913. Secondly, India wanted to safeguard her border with Tibet now that China had for the first time in history become India's neighbour. Ultimately, India has failed in achieving either of her two aims. How has this come about?

India entered into an agreement with China in 1954 regarding border trade with Tibet. This agreement named routes passing through Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (called the middle sector of the border). But right after the signing of the agreement, Chinese forces intruded into Indian areas south of the Nilang, Niti and Shipki passes in the sector. India had raised the question of defining the border at the negotiation with China regarding trade with Tibet, but the Chinese had firmly kept the question out of purview. When Prime Minister Nehru visited China in October, 1954 and called on Mao Tse-Tung he treated Nehru like a liege paying court to be overlord. Nehru was upset but kept this peace.

There had been fewer border incidents on the eastern sector of the border, east of Bhutan till 1959. Here the area of the North East Frontier agency north of the Brahmaputra (later named Arunachal Pradesh) was brought into the mainstream of Indian Administration contrary to the

policy of the British who had isolated the tribes as savages and unmanageable. These tribes, Monpass, Abors, Mishmis (from west to east) and several others, were of a distinct ethnic stock and were quite separate from the Tibetans. It was remarkable how soon under the influence of new roads, schools, agricultural inputs and dispensaries the people of this hitherto unadministered area had responded enthusiastically. On the western sector, in the area bordering Sinkiang and the western border of Tibet, the Chinese started building a road from Khotan in Sinkiang to Gantok in Western Tibet and this road passed through the Aksai Chin salt plains and plateau which was a part of Ladakh. Later on China started to build more posts and roads connecting this area and even to the west of in Ladakh they intruded purposefully, as will be brought out later.

India continued to follow a policy of goodwill to China and was instrumental in inviting China to the conference of non-aligned countries held in 1955 at Bandung, Indonesia. India did not come to know that on this occasion Premier Chou En-Lai had at a meeting with Maohammad Ali Bogra, the Prime Minister of Pakistan stated to the later that all was not well in the relations between India and China, whereas he, Chou, saw no reason or issue which need cause any difference between China and Pakistan. In 1956 Premier Chou halted at Delhi on his way back from Geneva and Nehru took up with him the question of defining the boundary, pointing out again that the Chinese maps showed large parts of India as being within Tibet, including the area north of the river Brahmaputra. Nehru made a record of the conversation immediately after it took place and noted that Chou assured him that while the McMohan line was not recognised by China, China would be prepared to accept the boundary as shown by India. He added however that China would like India to accept the boundary claimed by China in Ladakh right up to the Karakoram mountains.

India was aware that ever since the occupation of Tibet, China had been building the road passing through Aksai Chin. This road was completed in 1959 and China was anxious to legitimise it as well as to occupy the part of Ladakh adjoining it. Not only did China extend encroachment up to this road alignment, China even resisted the Indian border patrols. India patrol parties were captured by Chinese troops in Aksai Chin. Subsequently they encroached further west to Lanak La and to the fort at Khurnak on the Pangong lake to the south-east of Aksai Chin. Even in the middle sector the Chinese probed the Indian border at

Balcha Dhura Pass and in Laphal and Sancha Malla areas.

But the Chinese faced opposition in Tibet itself. The revolt by the Khambas of south-eastern Tibet had been in the process of coming to a head for some time and there was strong resistance to the sequestration of the monasteries and desecration of the relics of Buddhism in them. The Khambas gradually filtered into Lhasa when the Chinese tried to arrest or capture their leaders. The Chinese reinforced the garrison in Lhasa. On the one hand the Chinese were apprehensive of Tibetan resistance and on the other they sought to put the blame for the same on outside powers, particularly India. The Chinese increased their pressure on the Dalai Lama and the garrison commander of Lhasa requested him to appear at a dramatic performance within the cantonment areas. Fearing capture the Dalai Lama escaped from Lhasa on March, 10, 1959 and on March 31 reached Khinzempe on the Indian border and sought shelter in India.

In July 1958 an official Chinese publication, 'Chinese Pictorial' published a map of China which showed about 50,000 square miles of Indian territory as part of China. This was the first time that a new Chinese map made this claim. When India had drawn attention to similar maps of China earlier, the Chinese had passed the issue by stating that these were old maps and the new regime had not had time to look into the matter. Nehru now protested in a letter to China about this claim and in 1959 Chou sent a reply for the first time laying claim to these areas, but skilfully he added that the Chinese Government.

“On the one hand find it necessary to take more or less realistic attitude towards the McMohan Line and on the other hand, cannot but act with prudence and needs time to deal with the matter”.

Simultaneously the Chinese stepped up their activities on the border. The Chinese surveyed a route from Haji Langar to Lanak La which would cut off nearly 12,000 square miles of Ladakh. The Chinese also for the first time probed the Eastern sector and in Sept 1959 attacked the Indian border post at Longju on the McMohan Line. In Oct. 1959 in Ladakh they attacked a patrol party at Hot Springs near Lanak La and killed the Commander Karan Singh and eight of his men.

This brought the dispute out into the open which had hitherto not been given publicity in the hope of a peaceful settlement. The Indian Parliament discussed the situation. Nehru had to concede that the Chinese had occupied a large part of Ladakh where they had no presence before 1950. Chou En-Lai proposed to Nehru that the two

sides should withdraw their forces behind "the line of actual control" as it was in 1956. Nehru replied that the Chinese had in fact advanced deep into areas since 1956 but which they now called their line of actual control in 1956. Continuing with his diplomatic initiative, Chou visited New Delhi in April 1960. He made proposals at a press conference which quated the Himalaya with the Karakoram, implying that if India wanted the boundary of the Himalaya to be accepted, she should accept the Chinese proposal of the Karakoram mountain being the boundary in Ladakh. As the Indian Government were being asked to acquiesce in the Chinese occupation of the Aksai Chin, the proposal was rejected by it.

## II

Hitherto India had not involved her regular army in defence of the border with China. After the Hot Springs (Kongka) incident of October 20, 1959, the regular army had been given the task of defending it. The army set up advance border posts in areas where the civilian defence personnel had not been posted because there was no ingress or trade in these areas. In view of the Chinese advance however the situation was altered and the new border posts were set up in Ladakh and these were in close proximity in many cases to those of the Chinese. A situation of potential conflict was clearly developing. Yet, little was done to ensure that the Indian armed forces deployed would be adequate to meet a full-scale Chinese attack. Border incidents continued. In the Galwan valley in northern Ladakh an Indian Post was encircled by the Chinese in 1962. Later the Chinese withdrew, but further north, in the Chip Chap Valley they attacked another Indian Post. Several Chinese were killed. The war of exchange of notes continued with renewed energy with each side blaming the other. According to one Indian note, within the three years 1959 to 1962, the Chinese had

"Constructed a large network of military roads and posts west of the Aksai Chip road. Beginning with posts opposite Daulat Beg Oldi, along the Chip Chap river and across the Galwan, these descended south to Pangong Lake and Spanggu Lake area, at points *more than one hundred miles to the west of the position in 1959*".

Along with the swift deterioration of the situation in Ladakh, in June 1962 the Assam Rifles, a civil defence force, had set up a post at Dhola the McMohan Line. The Chinese objected to it as being to the

north of the line and threatened to attack it. This was near the trijunction of Bhutan, Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese moved forward along the Thagla ridge and confronted the Indian Post. In fact the Indian army were now faced with a full-scales military operation. On Oct 20, 1962 the Chinese advanced in three-division strength and the Indian forces were unable to contain them despite a determined defence. They were badly outnumbered and the Chinese advanced towards the foothills. At the other end, in Ladakh, the Chinese attacked simultaneously on the Indian positions in north Ladakh. The isolated Indian posts fought bravely and most of them lost their lives, but were over-run. At Chushul, further in the south along the Tibetan border the Chinese attacked included tanks, which is a record of some kind, for use of tanks at such heights, but the Indian forces repelled the attack. After a short lull, the Chinese made a second attack in Tawang area. This time they reached Sela. They also advanced near the Burmese border in Mishmi area from Rima to Walong. On 20th November the Chinese announced a cease fire and retired north of the McMohan Line. Whatever the reasons impelling the halt of operations, the Chinese managed to gain further territory in the Ladakh region which they retained.

During this thirty-one day war, the Chinese had stepped up their propaganda offensive. They kept the heads of non-aligned countries informed through personal letters from Premier Chou. Nevertheless when these powers took an initiative at the end of the war to arrange a settlement, leading non-aligned powers including Egypt, Indonesia, Sri Lanka made their proposals for such a settlement (called the Colombo Proposals), China refused to accept them. The proposals suggested that China vacate the territory that it had occupied in Ladakh during the war, which was an area of about 3,000 square miles.

The relations between India and China remained strained but over the years the two Governments have had to face up to the problems of mending their fences over the border dispute. In the western sector, there is the further problem of 200 miles of the Kashmir border with Sinkiang being in the occupation of Pakistan. China and Pakistan concluded an agreement in March 1963 by which they agreed to a border line with Pakistan giving up the claim to the Raksam Valley and the Taghdumbash Pamirs north of the Karakoram mountains.

In 1899 Curzon had made proposals to China through Mascdonald, the British representative at Peking. The border line proposed ran through the Aksai Chin plateau. This was not acknowledged or

accepted by China. No rationale is forthcoming for this line bisecting Aksai Chin, unless it was part of a design of installing China as buffer against Russian advance to Tibet or Ladakh. Now China wants to retain not only the Aksai Chin but areas further to the west, in all about 15,000 square miles. They claim that the road built across Aksai Chin serves as link between Sinkiang and Tibet. The direct Chinese access to Tibet is along two roads, one through Tsinghal in the north, and the other through Szechwan of the Chinese main land. Both these roads are long, tortuous and hazardous and pass through difficult mountain terrain.

In the middle and the eastern sectors, China has never been in occupation of the areas claimed since 1959. If the Simla Conference of 1913 Tibet, China and India defined the border of China and Tibet as well as the border between Tibet and India east of Bhutan, (called the McMahon Line). But now the Chinese lay claim to the area of Arunachal Pradesh south of the line agreed to in 1914 and south of the Himalayan crest line.

An unsettled border is a running sore in the otherwise improving of Indo-Chinese relations. If India and China want to settle this dispute they will have to consider these three issues.

- (1) How to deal with the Kashmir portion occupied by Pakistan and its border with Sinkiang.
- (2) Settling the 15,000 miles area of Aksai Chin and areas of Ladakh to the west of Aksai Chin, occupied by China from 1959 to 1962.
- (3) Adjustments of the border in the Middle and Eastern Sector along the Himalayan crest line.

### III

The settlement of the border alignment between China and India by negotiations had baulked the two countries for a whole generation since 1962 when the Colombo Powers suggested and the Chinese refused to withdraw to the line of 20th Oct 1962 as a preliminary step. To the east of the Siachen glacier, the boundary between Sinkiang and Kashmir is under the occupation of Pakistan, and China had concluded a treaty providing that it will be renegotiated when the future of this area has been settled. We have also to consider the question of the rest of boundary with Sinkiang. China claims that Aksai Chin plateau is a part

of the Sinkiang autonomous region, and that its boundary with Ladakh runs to the east of the Shyok river upto Kongkala. This is a considerable advance from the claim made in 1956. The road through Aksai Chin which the Chinese built at Sanju, Kilian and Kugiyar at the foothills of the Kun Lun mountains. The Aksai Chin plateau is covered with salt pans, these are a result of the dessication of the lakes. No road is needed or practicable across these hard pans of soda, and any road built would be covered with drifts of salt as the fierce winds blow across the plateau. A British traveller who went across it recently, says that the road is used and passes through Shahidulla & Kokyar (Kugiar). The waters of the Chip Chap river in the north, the Galwan river and the Chang Chenmo river in the south flow into the Shyok river from the east. These tributaries and catchment are clearly part of the Indus river system. The Karakash river flows north to Khotan. The route earlier ran from Haji Langar to the south-east and now it seems the route being used runs further Shahidulla.

At present China is in occupation of areas to the west of Aksai Chin covering the Indus watershed which occupied 3000 square miles in area as a result of the conflict in 1962. This was in addition to the areas of about 12,000 square miles occupied since the 1950s. The Chinese have in their recent settlement stated that they would be willing to accommodate the Indian claim on the western portion of the border. If this means that China will adjust the Aksai Chin occupation it will have to be clarified how they view the continuance of the road through Aksai Chin.

The boundary between Ladakh and Tibet is relatively free from disputes and only the status quo needs to be preserved. The Pangong lake stretches across the border south of the Lanak La and the fort at Khurnak situated on it has been accepted, in the previous negotiations between Kashmir and Tibetan officials, as lying on the Indian side. Chushul to the south of the lake which has an airfield where in fact Nehru landed on one of his visits to Ladakh, is beyond dispute. Further south, Tashingong is on the Tibetan side, near the point where the Indus enters Ladakh. Further south the boundary embraces Spiti in Arunachal Pradesh where Kaurik is the Indian town on the border. The Satluj river enters India further south along the Shipki Pass.

Between the Shipki Pass and the Nepal the border is demarcated by the six passes enumerated in the Indo Chinese agreement of 1954 regarding trade between Tibet and India. Some incursions took place and the Chinese troops entered the Bar Hoti plains south of Niti pass and

later claimed the Hopsun Khud of the Shipki Pass. These incursions can be regarded as probing missions, and have not since been pressed by the Chinese. We can be confident that there are no difficulties in accepting the status quo on the border between Tibet and Uttar Pradesh State of India. On the other hand, this part of the border has a potential for greater contact between India and Tibet both on account of Mansarover lake and Mount Kailas which lie across the border.

East of Bhutan, the Bum La provided the first entry point for Tibet to Arunachal Pradesh. Here the Dalai Lama entered India at Khinzamane in March, 1959, and here the Chinese launched their offensive on Oct 20, 1962, south of the river Namke Chu. The 1986 incursion of the Chinese in the Sumdorang valley was also related to this point near the area where the Butan-India-Tibet area adjacement. The difficulty may be resolved if the McMohan line can be marginally corrected to observe the principle of the Himalayan crest line. This may be attained if we check the geographical features and the ground jointly. In fact the Chinese have already occupied the areas they claim here. We have noted that the Chinese have recently spoken of accommodating India in the western sector and asked India to do the same in the eastern sector. Earlier, the Chinese used to say that India should accommodate China on the western side and China would accommodate India on the eastern side. This was obviously a reference to the Indian case regarding the McMohan line on the eastern sector and the Chinese occupation of the Aksai Chin plateau in Ladakh. If the new Chinese formulation means that, both India and China can settle the border alignment with the Aksai Chin road and the McMohan line accepted as the broad basis of a settlement, India should respond positively. In the meanwhile it is possible to work for a demilitarisation of the border and to take steps to resume trade in the interest of the border people and to meet Tibetan needs. In the past we have been exporting Tibets essential requirements to Tibet. This is because Tibet is easier of access from India than from China, China should welcome this normalisation of the border through trade contributing to greater contacts between the two neighbours in that region. The border issues will be seen in their proper prespective when China and India ease the border restrictions and allow freaer movement of goods and people.



# **Appendix - I**

## **Agreement**

between

**THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
ON TRADE AND INTERCOURSE**

**Between  
TIBET REGION OF CHINA AND INDIA**

The Government of the Republic of India and the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China.

Being desirous of promoting trade and cultural intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India and of facilitating pilgrimage and travel by the peoples of China and India.

Have resolved to enter into the present Agreement based on the following principles:

- 1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
- 2) mutual non-aggression,
- 3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs,
- 4) equality and mutual benefit, and
- 5) peaceful co-existence.

And for this purpose have appointed as their respective Plenipotentiaries:

The Government of the Republic of India, H.E. Nedyam Raghavan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India accredited to the People's Republic of China; the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Chang Han-fu, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government, who, having examined each other's credentials and finding them in good and due form, have agreed upon the following;

**Article I**

The High Contracting Parties mutually agree to established Trade Agencies:

- 1) The Government of India agrees that the Government of China may establish Trade Agencies at New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong.
- 2) The Government of China agrees that the Government of India may establish Trade Agencies at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok:

The Trade Agencies of both the Parties shall be accorded the same status and same treatment. The Trade Agents of both Parties shall enjoy freedom from arrest while exercising their functions, and shall enjoy in respect of themselves, their wives and children who are dependent on them for livelihood freedom from search. The Trade Agencies of both the Parties shall enjoy the privileges and immunities for couriers, mail-bags and communication in code.

**Article II**

The High Contracting Parties agree that traders of both the countries known to be customarily and specifically engaged in trade between Tibet Region of China and India may trade at the following places;

- 1) The Government of China agrees to specify (1) Yatung, (2) Gyantse and (3) Phari as markets for trade. The Government of India agrees that trade may be carried on in India, including places like (1) Kalimpong, (2) Siliguri and (3) Calcutta, according to customary practice.
- 2) The Government of China agrees to specify (1) Gartok, (2) Pulachung (Taklakot), (3) Gyanimakhargo, (4) Gyanima-Chakra, (5) Rampura, (6) Dongbra, (7) Puling-Sumdo, (8) Nebra, (9) Shangtes, and (10) Tashigong as markets for trade; the Government of India agrees that in future, when in accordance with the development and need of trade between the Ari District of Tibet Region of China and India, it has become necessary to

specify markets for trade in the corresponding district to India adjacent to the Ari District of Tibet Region of China, it will be prepared to consider on the basis of equality and reciprocity to do so.

### **Article III**

The High Contracting Parties agree that pilgrimage by religious believers of the two countries shall be carried on in accordance with the following provisions:-

- 1) Pilgrims from India and Lamaists, Hindu and Buddhist faiths may visit Kang Rimpoche (Kailsa) and Mavem Tao (Mansarovar) in Tibet Region of China in accordance with custom.
- 2) Pilgrims from Tibet Region of China of Lamist and Buddhist faiths may visit Banaras, Sarnath, Gaya and Sanchi in India in accordance with custom.
- 3) Pilgrims customarily visiting Lhasa may continue to do so in accordance with custom.

### **Article IV**

Traders and pilgrims of both the countries may travel by the following passes and route;

- (1) Shipki La Pass, (2) Mana pass (3) Niti Pass, (4) Kungri Bingri pass, (5) Darma pass, and (6) Lipu Lekh pass.

Also the customary route leading to Tashigong along the valley of the Shangatsengpu (Indus) River may continue to be traversed in accordance with custom.

### **Article V**

For travelling across the border, the High Contracting Parties agree that diplomatic personnel, officials and nationals of the two countries shall hold passports issued by their own respective countries and visaed by the other Party except as provided in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this Article.

- 1) Traders of both countries known to be customarily and specifi-

cally engaged in trade between Tibet Region of China and India, their wives and children who are dependent on them for livelihood and their attendants will be allowed entry for purposes of trade, into India or Tibet Region of China, as the case may be, in accordance with custom on the production of certificates duly issued by the local government of their own country or by its duly authorised agents and examined by the border checkposts of the other Party.

- 2) Inhabitants of the border district of the two countries who cross the border to carry on petty trade or to visit friends and relatives may proceed to the border districts of the other Party as they have customarily done heretofore and need not be restricted to the passes and route specified in Article IV above shall not be required to hold passports, visa or permits.
- 3) Porters and mule-team drivers of the two countries who cross the border to perform necessary transportation services need not hold passports issued by their own country, but shall only hold certificates good for a definite period of time (three months, half a year or one year) duly issued by the local government of their own country or by its duly authorised agents and produce them for registration at the border checkposts of the other Party.
- 4) Pilgrims of both the countries need not carry documents of certification but shall register at the border checkposts of the other Party and receive a permit for pilgrimage.
- 5) Notwithstanding the provisions of the foregoing paragraphs of this Article, either Government may refuse entry to any particular person.
- 6) Persons who enter the territory of the other party in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs of this Article may stay within its territory only after complying with the procedures specified by the other Party.

## **Article VI**

The present Agreement shall come into effect upon ratification by both Governments and shall remain in force for eight(8) years. Extension of the present Agreement may be negotiated by the two Parties if either Party requests for it six (6) months prior to the expiry of the Agreement and the request it agreed to by the other Party.

Done in duplicate in Peking on the twenty ninth day of April, 1954, in the Hindi, Chinese and English languages, all texts being equally valid.

(Sd) NEDYAM RAGHAVAN,  
Plenipotentiary of the  
Government of the  
Republic of India

(Sd.) CHANG HAN-FU  
Plenipotentiary of the  
Central people's  
Government, of People's  
Republic of China.

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8.	15.	Sheep	Sheep	69.	15.	Add 'At' before	'Pemakoe'
	33.	Kilisan	Kilian	<b>CHAPTER 5 (ii)</b>			
10.	28.	Shakesgam	Shakagam	79.	2.	Wawelin	Wavell in
12.	3.	We	Were	<b>CHAPTER 6</b>			
13.	20.	Others	other	82.	2.	Place	Places
14.	*6.	British	British	79.		Feet	Feat
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>				17.		Pareties	Parties
16.	27.	Interfried	Interfered	26.		Add 'of' before	"Ladakh"
17.	6.	Ward of	Ward off	83.	13.	Indiau	Indians
18.	3.	Feal	Feet	84.	9.	After "etc"	(.) inversed of(.)
19.	Footnote	Waters	Watters	<b>CHAPTER 7</b>			
22.	3.	Sinkiang	Sikang	88.	19.	Barrior	Barrier
		Add footnote to "My land, My people"		93.	6.	Danys	Dane's
		Quotation in last line		97.	25.	Ruslam	Raksam
			byDalai -	100	2.	Musown	Mission
			Lama p240.	p 110		For CHAPTER 7 (ii)	CHAPTER 7 (iii)
28.	22.	Notwithstanding	Not with- standing	<b>CHAPTER 8</b>			
29.	12.	(.) after Lhasa	(.)full stop	121.	16.	"arrival"	a rival
30.	11.	Terram	Terrain	122.	17.	35,000	3,25,000
31.	30.	Nit	Niti	125.	31.	Had	and
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>				131.	30.	USSSR	USSR
35.	7.	Princees	Princess	138.	6.	Til!	tilt
	28.	Lhina	China	12.		raporochmel	rapprochement
	32.	Occtherloney	Ochterloney	<b>EPOLOGUE</b>			
37.	23.	Infliterated	Infiltrated	161.	16.	Add after "	further "West Via"
39.	Last line.	Zyyl	Zayul	162.		Last line freer	freer
40.	Last line	Slite	State	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>				1. For "Major N Prasad" Head" Major General N. Prasad"			
41.	2.	&	Of	11. The Publishers of "Himalayan Frontiers" are			
	8.	Add 'At' before	"Shadulla"	Barrie and Ruckliff.			
	37.	1876	1877				
<b>CHAPTER 4 (ii)</b>							
59.	10.	Begain	Begin				

