

India versus China: A review of the Aksai Chin border dispute

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Abstract

China and India have a border dispute over the Aksai Chin region which is situated between the Chinese self-governing regions of Xinjiang and Tibet. It has been claimed by India as part of Ladakh section of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The high-altitude barren plateau of Aksai Chin is almost unpopulated and has a small number of natural resources. Both countries fought a brief war in 1962 over the disputed land culminating in the Chinese victory. After long stalemate, on 7 September 1993, China and India signed an agreement to decrease stress along with their borders. Meanwhile, on 2 March 1963, Pakistan conceded its northern claim line in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir to China in favor of a more southerly boundary along the Karakoram Range. The extinction of this boundary at the Karakoram Pass on the Chinese line of control suggests that Pakistan recognizes Chinese sovereignty over Aksai Chin.

Key Words: Pakistan, Kashmir, Askai Chin, India, China

“China and India are the earth’s most populous states and fastest growing markets which have enormously enhanced their global, diplomatic and economic powers. However, the relationship between these two giants have been marked by border disputes, resulting in three major armed conflicts — the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the Chola incident in 1967, and the 1987 Sino-Indian skirmish”. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations). Although, “since late 1980s, both nations have effectively tried to reignite diplomatic and economic relations, they have still failed to resolve their old border disagreements and Indian media keeps on talking about the Chinese armed incursions into the Indian areas. Consequently both nations

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have maintained their military network along the border regions” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations).

“India shares a lengthy boundary with China at its eastern side, divided into three stretches by Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan and several undecided areas lie along this boundary” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations). “The farthest east north of the eastern border consists of the present Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh (formerly the North East Frontier Agency)” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations). “The Aksai Chin region lies at its western side which is about the area of the size of Switzerland, situated between the Chinese self-governing regions of Xinjiang and Tibet” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations). This “barren plateau has been claimed by India as part of situated in Ladakh section of the state of Jammu and Kashmir” (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/11769/Aksai-Chin>). “The high-altitude wasteland of Aksai Chin is almost unpopulated and has a small number of natural resources” (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/amapple/4201799047/>).

Aksai Chin in the past was travelled only by the residents of neighbouring territories in search of salt and by infrequent hunters. In “1717, however, it was crossed by the Tsungar invaders of Tibet and 233 years later it was used for the same intention by the Chinese” (R.A. Huttenback, 1964:201-207). At present, Aksai Chin is administered by China as part of Hotan County in the Hotan Prefecture of Xinjiang Autonomous Region. “The line that divides the Indian occupied areas of Jammu and Kashmir from Aksai Chin is known as the Line of Actual Control (LoAC) and is synchronized with the Chinese Aksai Chin claim line” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

“Topographically, Aksai Chin is a high altitude desert. In the southwest, the Karakoram Range makes the *de facto* border (LoAC) between Aksai Chin and Indian occupied Kashmir. Glaciated peaks in the middle part of this boundary reach heights of 6,950 meters. In the north, the Kunlun Range splits Aksai Chin from the Tarim Basin, where the rest of Hotan County is located. The northern piece of Aksai Chin is known as the Soda Plain and contains Aksai Chin's main river, the Karakosh”. The river, which “gets melted water from several glaciers, crosses the Kunlun farther northwest, in Pishan County and penetrates in to the Tarim Basin, where it acts as one of the chief sources of water

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for Karakax and Hotan Counties” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

“The eastern branch of the area contains a number of small endorheic basins. The biggest of them is that of the Aksai Chin Lake, which is fed by the Aksai Chin River. The region is more or less uninhabited” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations), has “no stable settlement, and receives modest precipitation as the Himalayas and the Karakoram obstruct the rains from the Indian monsoon. At 17,000 feet elevation, Aksai Chin has no human significance other than an early trade route that crossed over it, providing a short pass during summer for convoys of yaks between Xinjiang and Tibet”. At present, “China National Highway 219 runs through Aksai Chin linking Xinjiang and Lazi in Tibet”. Despite this “region being virtually not fit to live in and having little resources, it remains strategically significant for China as it links Tibet and Xinjiang” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

One of the “initial treaties regarding the boundaries of Aksai Chin was made in 1842. The Sikh Confederacy of the Punjab region in India had seized Ladakh and merged into the state of Jammu in 1834. In 1841, the Sikh army marched into Tibet, but the Chinese forces defeated them and in turn invaded Ladakh and besieged Leh. After being stopped by the Sikh forces, the Chinese and the Sikhs signed a peace treaty in September 1842, which stressed no offense or intervention in the other country's borders” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). The “British defeat of the Sikhs in 1846 led to reassigning of sovereignty over Ladakh to the British, and British commissioners tried to get together with Chinese administrators to thrash out the boundary they now shared”. However, “it appears that the both sides were adequately pleased that a customary border was defined by natural elements, and therefore, border was not formally demarcated”. Thus, “the boundaries at the two fringes, Pangong Lake and Karakoram Pass, were distinct, but the Aksai Chin region in between lay undetermined” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

“W. H. Johnson, an employee of the Survey of India, suggested the ‘Johnson Line’ in 1865, which put Aksai Chin in Kashmir” (W.H. Johnson, 1867: 39-47). “Johnson presented this boundary to the Maharaja of Kashmir, who then claimed the 18,000 square kilometers contained within that region, and by some accounts even area further north as far as the Sanju Pass in the Kun Lun Mountains”. Since

“China did not control Xinjiang at that time, therefore, this line was never forwarded to the Chinese” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). Later, “Johnson's proposal was harshly censured for gross mistakenness, terming his boundary as ‘patently absurd’. In fact, Johnson was scolded by the British Government and consequently, he quitted his job” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). The Maharajah of Kashmir sent some soldiers to remain in the deserted fort at Shahidulla, which was within the Xinjiang region, but no permanent forces were maintained there. According to “Francis Younghusband, who traveled around the region in the late 1880s, there was only an deserted fort and not one settled house at Shahidulla when he was there (Younghusband, 1896). In 1878, the Chinese had reoccupied Xinjiang, and by 1890 they captured Shahidulla before the matter was decided. By 1892, China had constructed boundary markers at Karakoram Pass” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

In “1897 a British military officer, Sir John Ardagh, suggested another boundary line along the top of the Kun Lun Mountains north of the Yarkand River. At that time Britain was worried about the threat of Russian growth as China was destabilized, and Ardagh maintained that his line was more secure. The Ardagh line was in effect an alteration of the Johnson line, and became known as the ‘Johnson-Ardagh Line’. In the 1890s Britain and China were associates and Britain was mainly disturbed that Aksai Chin might not be captured by the Russian forces. In 1899, when China showed an interest in Aksai Chin, Britain suggested an amended boundary, at first suggested by George Macartney, which placed most of Aksai Chin in Chinese control” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). This border, along the Karakoram Mountains, was suggested and backed by British officials on several grounds. Firstly, “the Karakoram Mountains produced a natural boundary, which would extend the British borders up to the Indus River watershed while leaving the Tarim River watershed in Chinese command , and Chinese management of this territory would present a further obstruction to Russian progress in Central Asia. Therefore, the British forwarded this boundary to the Chinese in a Note by Sir Claude MacDonald. The Chinese did not reply to the Note, and the British took that as Chinese consent”. This “line, known as the Macartney-MacDonald line, is more or less the same as the existing LoAC” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

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Upon liberty in 1947, the “Government of India used the Johnson Line as the base for its official boundary in the west, which included the Aksai Chin. From the Karakoram Pass (which is not under dispute), the Indian claim line extends northeast of the Karakoram Mountains through the salt flats of the Aksai Chin, to set a border at the Kunlun Mountains, and including part of the Karakash River and Yarkand River watersheds. From there, it extends east along the Kunlun Mountains, before moving southwest all the way through the Aksai Chin salt flats, throughout the Karakoram Mountains, and then to Panggong Lake” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). Meanwhile, “during the 1950s, China built a 1,200 km road linking Xinjiang and western Tibet, of which 179 km ran south of the Johnson Line in the Aksai Chin area claimed by India” (Chopra, 2000:34). As a matter of fact, Aksai Chin was effortlessly reachable to the Chinese, but was harder for the Indians on the other side of the Karakorams to get in touch with. The “Indians did not know about the existence of the road until 1957, which was confirmed when the road was revealed in Chinese maps published in 1958” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

On “July 1, 1954 Indian Prime Minister Nehru wrote a memo ordering that the maps of India be redrawn to show exact boundaries on all borders. Up till then, the border in the Aksai Chin sector, based on the Johnson Line, had been shown as ‘un-demarcated’. The Indian point, as stated by Nehru, was that the Aksai Chin was ‘part of the Ladakh region of India for centuries’ and that this northern limit was a ‘firm and definite one which was not open to discussion with anybody’. On the other hand, the Chinese Prime Minister, Zhou Enlai maintained that the western border had never been delimited, that the Macartney-MacDonald Line, which left the Aksai Chin within Chinese borders was the only line ever proposed to a Chinese government, and that the Aksai Chin was already under Chinese control, and that dialogue should take into account the status quo” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). In “1954, India printed new maps that included the Aksai Chin region within the boundaries of India. Previously, maps published at the time of India's freedom did not evidently show whether the region was in India or Tibet” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin).

Famous Indian scholar, A G Noorani argues that the disagreement over Aksai Chin was mainly due to India's unilateral explanation of a

previously undefined border. For the whole western sector, right from the Sino-Indo-Afghan tri-junction to the Sino-Indo-Nepalese tri-junction, the legend shows: 'Boundary Undefined'. Noorani points out that this legend was used for this area in all the three maps attached to the two white papers on Indian States published by Patel's ministry in 1948 and 1950 also. Therefore, the Aksai Chin belonged to nobody. This was the position when the Panchsheel Agreement was signed on April 29, 1954. But on July 1, 1954, Nehru ordered: "All old maps dealing with the frontier should be... withdrawn... new maps should also not state there is any undemarcated territory... this frontier should be considered a firm and definite one which is not open to discussion with anybody." Noorani, therefore, concludes that "Unilateral changes are legally ineffective" (<http://acorn.nationalinterest.in/2004/05/20/mcmahons-line-and-aksai-chin/>).

The bilateral relations between China and India were further distressed when the "Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal head of the Tibetan people, sought asylum in Dharmasala, Himachal Pradesh, in March 1959, and thousands of Tibetan refugees got settled in northwestern India, particularly in Himachal Pradesh" (Patterson, 1963:165). China accused India of 'expansionism and imperialism in Tibet and throughout the Himalayan region'. China claimed 104,000 km² of territory over which India's maps showed clear sovereignty, and insisted on 'rectification' of the whole border. Zhou suggested that China could give up its claim to most of India's northeast in exchange for India's leaving behind of its claim to Aksai Chin. The Indian government, forced by internal public opinion, discarded the idea of a resolution based on uncompensated loss of territory as being "humiliating and unequal" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations)).

In 1959, India started launching its troops and border patrols into disputed areas. This plan led both to clashes and worsening relations among India and China. The purpose of this strategy was to construct outposts in the rear of advancing Chinese troops to 'interdict their supplies, forcing them north of the disputed line'. At total, there were ultimately 60 such outposts, including 43 north of the McMahon Line, to which India claimed control. China took act as further substantiation of Indian expansionist designs aimed towards Tibet. However, according to the Indian sources, "implementation of the Forward Policy was intended to provide evidence of Indian occupation in the

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previously unoccupied region through which Chinese troops had been patrolling” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War).

The Indian mood can best be assessed by the President of India, Rajendra Prasad's address to the Indian Parliament on 8 February 1960 in which he said that “The incursions into parts of the territory of the Union of India, across our traditional and well understood borders, by elements of Chinese forces have, ...deeply distressed our people and evoked legitimate and widespread resentment. They impose a great strain on our resources and our nation building endeavors. We regret and deplore these developments on our border. They' have resulted from the disregard by China of the application of the principles, which it had been mutually agreed to between us, should govern our relations” (President address to Parliament, 1960). He further announced that, “My Government have taken prompt and calculated measures, both defensive and diplomatic, to meet the threat to our sovereignty. My Government particularly deplores the unilateral use of force by our neighbor on our common frontier, where no military units of the Union were functioning. This is a breach of faith; but we may not lose faith in the principles which we regard as basic in the relations between nations” (President address to Parliament, 1960).

Continuing his address to the Members of Parliament, he maintained that “you have been kept informed by the release, from time to time, of the correspondence between my Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of China, of the respective positions of our two countries in this matter. “My Government has made it clear, beyond doubt, that they seek a peaceful approach in the settlement of outstanding matters. They have also stated and reiterated, equally clearly, that they will not accept the course, or the results of unilateral action or decision, taken by China. My Government therefore pursues a policy, both of a peaceful approach, by negotiation under appropriate conditions, and of being determined and ready to defend our country” (President address to Parliament, 1960). He hoped that “This and the weight of world public opinion which is adverse to her action should, we hope, persuade China, sooner than later to come to agreement in regard to the common frontiers which for long have been well established by treaties, custom and usage. Thus, and thus alone, can friendly relations with .our great neighbor which my Government and our people desire, become a reality and endure for our common good. The .actions taken and the policy pursued by my Government, it may be

hoped, will be adequate to convince China of both our policy and our determination” (President address to Parliament, 1960).

Likewise in a Foreword written by a prominent Indian Minister G.B. Pant on 4 March 1960 to Congress Party’s publication entitled *India-China Border Problem*, he argued that “The boundary between India and China along its entire length has been well known for centuries and is defined by treaty or international agreements or recognized by custom and tradition. It follows unchanging natural features and is in the main marked out by the Himalayas which are inseparably bound up with our frontiers as, since the dawn of our history, they are interwoven with the fabric of Indian civilization” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6003Pant_Forword.pdf). He further maintained that “The historic northern frontiers of India are so well established that there could be no doubt, except to a mind pre-possessed otherwise, as to where the customary boundary lay. No Chinese Government called it in question in the past. Even the present Chinese Government which came into power in 1949, did not dispute the location or the alignment of the boundary until recently when it encroached on Indian territory designedly, advancing step by step from equivocation to aggrandizement. Claims on vast areas of our territory have been made in utter disregard of well-established facts. The very acts of encroachment and aggression have been quoted as if they lent support to these claims and constituted their justification. It is a type of argument made familiar to history by those who have pursued the path of aggression” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6003Pant_Forword.pdf).

G.B. Pant was of the view that “The people and the Government of India have all along befriended China and endeavored to strengthen the bonds of friendship with it in many ways. So, it is all the more disappointing that the sentiments of friendship should have been requited with an arrogant challenge to the territorial integrity of India. India is wedded to the policy of peace and good neighborliness. But the aggressive attitude of the Chinese Government and its unwarranted claims have been taken by the Indian people for what they are—a challenge to the territorial integrity of the country. The Indian people and the Government are firm in their determination to defend the integrity of India with their united strength” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6003Pant_Forword.pdf).

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In response, Nehru made a policy statement in Lok Sabha, on 26 April 1960, stating that “Our whole argument was based on the Chinese forces having come into our territory. Their [Chinese] argument was that they had always been there-not those particular forces, but the Chinese authorities either of Sinkiang in the north or of Tibet had been in constructive or actual possession of these areas for two hundred years. That was such a variance in the factual state that there was no meeting ground. We repeat, again after all these talks that their forces came into this area within quite recent times, in the course of the last year and a half or so. That is our case, to which we hold...” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6004Nehru_LS.pdf). He further said that “In the prolonged talks that took place, this basic disagreement about historical and actual facts came up again and again. We are quite clear in our minds about our facts and we have stated them, and we are prepared to establish them with such material as we have. The Chinese position was basically .different, historically, actually, practically. Also, an attempt was made to equate the eastern sector with the western sector. That is, according to the Chinese, we had no right to be there in the eastern sector but we had advanced gradually, in the course of the last eight to ten years, to the present boundary line which we call the McMahon Line. They equated it to the western sector, although the conditions are quite different and the facts are quite different. Thus the actual discussion came up against a rock of entirely different sets of data. If data differ, if inferences differ arguments differ, if the basic facts are different, then there is no meeting ground at all. Therefore, it was suggested, and ultimately agreed to, that these facts should be explored from the material available with us and with the Chinese Government...” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6004Nehru_LS.pdf).

Nehru further said that “It is obvious that the officials who might do it have no -authority or competence to deal with the political aspect of the problem in the sense of suggesting a solution or recommending anything. That is not their function. All they can do is to examine facts, and, as stated in the communiqué, to list, more or less, the facts that are agreed to, the facts on which there is a difference of opinion and those on which perhaps some further enquiry may be necessary. I do not imagine that this process will clarify the situation and make it easy of solution. But it might make some basic facts somewhat clearer...”

Their case is that from immemorial times, at any rate for hundreds of years, their border has been from the Karakoram range to the Kongka Pass. Unless you have maps, you will not be able to understand it. If you accept that border, a large area of Ladakh is cut off. They say that the northern part of this area pertained to Sinkiang, not to Tibet at all, and the lower part to Tibet. That is their case, broadly. They say that it is not the present Government but the previous Chinese -Government that came there” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6004Nehru_LS.pdf).

Different “border clashes and ‘military incidents’ between India and China occurred throughout the summer and autumn of 1962. In May, the Indian Air Force was asked not to prepare for close air support, although it was agreed ‘as being a feasible way to counter the hostile ratio of Chinese to Indian troops’. In June 1962, a clash led to the demise of several Chinese soldiers. During June–July 1962, Indian armed forces strategists started promoting idea of ‘probing actions’ against the China, and as a result, encouraged mountain troops to cut off Chinese delivery lines. According to Patterson, the Indian moves were aimed at testing Chinese determination and plans about India and to assert whether India would have the benefit of Soviet support in the incident of a Sino-Indian war”. Moreover, “Indians also wanted to generate empathy for India within the U.S., with whom relationship had worsen after the Indian occupation of Goa” (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6004Nehru_LS.pdf).

On 22 July 1962, India further enlarged its Forward Policy ‘to allow Indian troops to push back Chinese troops already established in disputed territory’. Until that time, the Indian forces were ordered to shoot only in self-protection, but now all post commanders were given choice to open fire upon the Chinese troops, if they felt threatened. In August 1962, the Chinese forces enhanced their fighting speediness along the McMahon Line and started accumulating ammo, armaments and petrol. In June 1962, Indian forces set up a station at Dhola, on the southern slopes of the Thag La Ridge. In August, China issued ambassadorial protests and began to take up locations at the top of Thag La. On 8 September, a 60-strong PLA unit came down to the south side of the ridge and taken positions that subjugated one of the Indian posts at Dhola. Shooting was not exchanged, but Nehru told the media that the Indian forces had orders to ‘free our territory’ and the

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troops had been given choice to use force when required. On 11 September, it was decided that "all forward posts and patrols were given permission to fire on any armed Chinese who entered Indian territory". However, by the time the "Indian battalion reached the point of conflict, Chinese units controlled both banks of the Namka Chu River. On 20 September, a firefight developed, initiating a lengthy sequence of skirmishes for the rest of September" (http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/6004Nehru_LS.pdf).

The "Chinese launched concurrent offensives in Ladakh and across the McMahon Line on 20 October 1962, coinciding with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Chinese forces advanced over Indian troops in both theatres, taking Rezang la in Chushul in the western front, as well as Tawang in the eastern sector" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War). On the "Aksai Chin border, China already administered most of the un-demarcated areas. Chinese troops rapidly swept the region of any residual Indian forces. On 20 October, the Chinese effortlessly took the Chip Chap Valley, Galwan Valley, and Pangong Lake. By 22 October, all posts north of Chushul had been cleared. Most Indian troops positioned in these posts offered some fight but were either killed or taken prisoner. After realizing the scale of assault, the Indian Western Command pulled out many of the lonely outposts to the south-east" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War). Later, the "Chinese declared cessation of hostilities, thus ending the conflict in Aksai Chin as China had reached their claim line" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War). According to the "China's official military history, the combat achieved China's policy goals of safeguarding borders in its western sector, as China preserved *de facto* control of the Aksai Chin. After the war, India discarded the Forward Policy, and the *de facto* borders became constant along the LoAC" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War).

After long stalemate, on 7 September 1993, China and India signed an agreement to decrease stress along with their borders and to respect the LoAC. During November 1996, China and India agreed to draw up the boundaries of the LoAC and establish confidence-building measures along the border. The accord vowed "non-aggression, prior notification of large troop movements, a 10-km no-fly zone for combat aircraft, and exchange of maps to resolve disagreements about the

precise location of the LoAC” (<http://www.boundaries.com/India.htm>). In “1996, the two countries signed the Sino-Indian Bilateral Peace and Tranquility Accord promising to uphold peace and harmony along the LoAC. Since then, ten meetings of the Sino-Indian Joint Working Group and five meetings of an expert group have taken place to decide where the LoAC lies, but little development has occurred. On 6 July 2006, the famous Silk Road passing through this region via the Nathu La pass was reopened” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War). In “Oct 2011, it was stated that India and China will devise a border apparatus to handle different perceptions as to the LoAC and restart the joint army exercises between Indian and Chinese army from early 2012” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War).

“Pakistan improved its dealings with China after the Sino-India war of 1962. China and Pakistan took measures to quietly discuss their shared boundaries, beginning on 13 October 1962, and concluding in December of that year” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War). On “2 March 1963, Pakistan conceded its northern claim line in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir to China in favor of a more southerly boundary along the Karakoram Range. The border agreement mainly set the boundary along the MacCartney-Macdonald Line” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War). The “treaty left the Trans Karakoram Tract in China, although the concord provided for renegotiation in the event of a resolution of the Kashmir dispute” (Hasan, 1966). India does not admit that Pakistan and China have a universal border, and claims the tract as part of the domains of the pre-1947 state of Kashmir and Jammu. However, “India’s claim line in that area does not extend as far north of the Karakoram Mountains as the Johnson Line” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin). In “1987 a Sino-Pakistani protocol formalized demarcation of their border line. The extinction of this boundary at the Karakoram Pass on the Chinese line of control suggests that Pakistan recognizes Chinese sovereignty over Aksai Chin” (<http://www.boundaries.com/India.htm>).

To conclude, one can say that at present Aksai Chin border dispute has no immediate impact on emerging security scenario of Asia. Although both India and China have placed heavy armed contingents at the border, but there is no likelihood of sudden out break of violence due to growing relations between China and India. Both countries intend to maintain a balanced and serious posture in the international community and because of continued normalization process, they

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have almost agreed to treat the ALoC as *de facto* border and have ensured to respect its sanctity. Nevertheless, still there is a need to settle this issue on permanent basis in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation so that both the states can devote their resources to the cherished cause of nation-building.

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- “Aksai Chin” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksai_Chin (accessed on 24-10-2011). In 1959, during his speech in the Parliament on the 'Aksai Chin issue', Nehru while justifying that his government had taken more than two years to know that China had been constructing a road in the Aksai Chin, by saying: 'Nobody has been present there. It is a territory where not even a blade of grass grows. ('Train to Lhasa' <http://www.friendsoftibet.org/articles/train.html> [accessed on 24-10-2011]). However, Dr. Subhash Kapila maintains that Nehru, 'oblivious to the crucial strategic significance of Aksai Chin gifted it away to China' and 'hid the fact of the Chinese annexation of Indian territory for nearly eight years. Quoted in "India: Government Set To Repeat Strategic Blunder Of Aksai Chin In Siachen?" <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers18%5Cpaper1778.html> (accessed on 24-10-2011).
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“Sino-Indian relations” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations (accessed on 24-10-2011).

“Sino-Indian War” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War (accessed on 24-10-2011). According to some observers, Indian decisions taken at that time were not based on ‘adequate, up-to-date, knowledge of what was transpiring within China or the motivations of China’s then key decision-

makers'. In fact, India failed to understand the 'Chinese calculus of deterrence' and thus 'suffered disproportionately'. Quoted in "Indo-China War of 1962" <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/indo-prc1962.htm> (accessed on 24-10-2011).

"Sino-Indian War" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War (accessed on 24-10-2011).

"Sino-Indian War" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War (accessed on 24-10-2011). For details, see Ministry of External Affairs of India, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged between the Governments of India and China, October 1962-January 1963*, White Paper No. VII (New Delhi, 1963).

"Sino-Indian War" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War (accessed on 24-10-2011). In 2009, a Hong Kong based newspaper, the *Ming Pao*, reported that the Chinese government was ready to give up Arunachal Pradesh in return for Aksai Chin. The paper further claimed that 'China wants just 28 per cent of the 120,000 square kms of disputed area and New Delhi may concede 2,000 sq kms of territory that it now holds in the middle part of the disputed zone, which China regards as part of the Tibetan plateau besides allowing it to hold on to 33,000 sq kms of Aksai Chin'. However, the report was strongly rejected by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, which called it as 'groundless' and stated that China was willing to make mutual efforts with India in the spirit of understanding and accommodation to 'seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the issue'.

"Sino-Indian War" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War (accessed on 24-10-2011). While Pakistan and China were negotiating border settlement, the Government of India announced on 6th February, 1961 that "in point of law, no part of Pakistan had a common frontier with China and therefore, Pakistan had no right to discuss the boundary question between China and any part of Jammu and Kashmir state". Quoted in Ayanjit Sen, ed., *India's Neighbours: Problems and Prospects* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2001), p.82.

According to an estimate more than sixty thousands Tibetans took refuges in India and most of them got settled in the strategic border areas. Quoted in George N. Patterson, *Peking versus Delhi* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 165.

According to an observer' the war was fought over by India and China at a time 'when both were desperately poor and were

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trying to claim greatness through the ideological prism of military prowess'. "Aksai Chin - Why No One talks of it" http://www.airliners.net/aviation-forums/non_aviation/read.main/975192/ (accessed on 24-10-2011).

For a review of the Kashmir Dispute, see K. Sarwar Hasan, ed., *The Kashmir Question* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966); Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846-1990* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992); and ———; *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute, 1947-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

For details of Johnson's map, see W.H. Johnson, 'Report on His Journey to Ilchi, the Capital of Khotan, in Chinese Tartary', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, XXXVII (1867), pp.39-47.

For details of Younghusband's travels, see Younghusband, *The Heart of Continent* (London, 1896).

However, according to some researchers, Aksai Chin is inhabited by few Pamiris, Uyghurs, Kashmiris and Purik Tibetan. Quoted in ——— in "Sino-Indian relations" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_relations (accessed on 24-10-2011).

In September 1957, the Chinese media had published news of the completion of the Aksai Chin Road connecting Tibet with Xinjiang. Quoted in Pran Chopra, ed., *India and China: the Way Ahead After 'Mao's India War'* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2000), p.34.

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