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China's Policy of Conciliation and Reduction (Sanhe Yishao) and its Impact on Boundary Negotiations and Settlements in the Early 1960s

By Eric Hyer, December 2017



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Christian F. Ostermann and Charles Kraus, Series Editors

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China's Policy of Conciliation and Reduction (*Sanhe Yishao*) and its Impact on Boundary Negotiations and Settlements in the Early 1960s

Eric Hyer

As China's strategic environment deteriorated in the wake of the Great Leap Forward, many top leaders advocated a policy known as the "Three Accommodations and one Reduction" (*Sanhe Yishao*). The policy advocated accommodation with the "bourgeois nationalist" states along China's southern tier as a way to rectify adverse developments in the balance of power. This paper analyzes the dynamics of China's relations with its South Asian neighbors leading up to and in the immediate aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian border war to situate these boundary settlements within its larger strategic context and examines the influence the *Sanhe Yishao* policy on China's policy toward boundary settlements.

China concluded a boundary treaty with Burma in January 1960, the first in a series of boundary agreements between China and its southern neighbors. Two months after concluding the boundary treaty with Burma, China reached a boundary agreement with Nepal in March 1960. In April 1960, China engaged India in negotiations but the two sides failed to reach a compromise settlement and war ensued in October 1962. Following the Sino-Indian border war, in December 1962 China and Pakistan reached an agreement settling their mutual boundary, and a boundary agreement with Afghanistan in March 1963 was the last in this series of settlements China concluded with its South Asian neighbors in the early 1960s.

Despite the passage of time, the 1962 Sino-Indian border war remains of practical as well as of academic interest because of its watershed impact on relations between China and India. Years of seemingly smooth sailing in Sino-Indian relations crashed on the rocky shoals of the unsettled boundary after Beijing and Delhi failed to negotiate a compromise boundary settlement. More than 50 years after the war, the unsettled boundary remains a source of tension and the major obstacle to better relations between India and China.

*A shorter version of this paper was published as a chapter in Amit R. Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi, eds., *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

This paper seeks to deepen our understanding of the 1962 war by embedding the boundary negotiations between China and India within China's broader strategic concerns in the early 1960s and by comparing the negotiations to Beijing's efforts to achieve boundary settlements with other neighbors in South Asia. The first part of the paper considers the foreign policy debate in China in the wake of the Great Leap Forward (GLF) when top foreign policy leaders pushed for an alternative to Mao's eventual "left turn" in foreign policy. Although Mao ultimately rejected this moderate line in foreign policy, the policy proposal of *Sanhe Yishao* (three conciliations and one reduction) did influence China's approach to boundary negotiations in the early 1960s with India and its boundary settlements with Burma, Nepal, and Pakistan.

The "Three Conciliations and One Reduction" was a pragmatic foreign policy of moderation formulated in the post-GLF period in response to the adverse shift in the regional balance of power and the domestic challenges facing China. Beijing adopted the policy in order to ameliorate tension between China and the "modern revisionists" (the Soviet Union), "imperialists" (the United States), and "reactionaries" (India, Pakistan, Burma, etc.), and, in an attempt to improve relations with China's neighbors, to reduce China's support for national liberation movements in neighboring countries.¹ Despite the radical inclinations of many Chinese leaders at the time, Beijing adopted a policy of conciliation because the strategic imperatives of China's international environment overwhelmed its domestic or ideological objectives and pragmatic policies seeking accommodation were necessary.²

The second part of the paper focuses on China's boundary negotiations during this period. These negotiations were part of Beijing's larger foreign policy strategy responding to the simultaneous and precipitous decline in China's relations with the Soviet Union and India, and the growing concern over escalating US involvement in Southeast Asia. This general deterioration in China's domestic and international situation motivated a shift in the "general guidelines the leadership adopted for foreign policy."³ China's negotiations with India, and the

¹ Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 212-13 & 222, 224.

² Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 63.

³ Niu Jun, "1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper* 48 (October 2005): 1.

other boundary settlements in the early 1960s, shows that Beijing did adopt a new direction in its foreign policy in response to the adverse shift in China's strategic environment.

Beijing viewed its boundary problems as "left over by history" and sought to improve its relations with its neighbors through diplomacy in an effort to enhance the country's national security.⁴ Although China and India failed to resolve their boundary differences, China successfully concluded boundary settlements with Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan prior to and following the war with India. This, in turn, facilitated closer relations with these neighbors and balanced against the threat presented by the USSR and the United States.

Domestic Challenges and Foreign Threat

China's domestic situation became increasingly desperate in the wake of the GLF as relations with India and the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate and the presence of the United States in Southeast Asia increased; a situation characterized by one Chinese scholar as "confronting a storm."⁵ Mao himself in 1959 concluded that "the international anti-China tide is swelling badly" and in early 1960 he again raised concern over the "so-called great anti-China tide."⁶ By the late 1950s, a time of domestic economic collapse, Chinese leaders were alarmed by the increasing international tensions and the deterioration in China's strategic situation.⁷ Wang Jiaxiang, the director of the CCP Central Committee International Liaison Department at the time, according to his memoir,

saw the economic hardship of the previous three years and with regard to the foreign struggle, a building momentum of antagonism on all sides also existed. He felt that to focus on the struggle with the primary enemy and enable China to concentrate more of its efforts on improving the domestic economic situation as well, it was necessary to relax and restrain the struggle on several fronts according

⁴ "90% of Land Boundaries Settled," May 5, 2005, http://www.china.org.cn/archive/2005-05/05/content_1127780.htm (accessed 18 May 2015); Eric Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon: China's Grand Strategy and Boundary Settlements* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014); Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 25-26.

⁵ Yang Gongsu, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo waijiao lilun yu shijian* [The theory and practice of PRC foreign policy] (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Guoji Guanxi Xueyuan, 1997), 16.

⁶ Quoted in Niu Jun, "1962: The Eve of the Left-turn in China's Foreign Policy," 18.

⁷ Lorenz M. Lüthi, "Chinese Foreign Policy, 1960-1979," in *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945-1991*, ed. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

to Comrade Mao Zedong's consistent call to "win over the majority, isolate the minority and take advantage of contradictions to defeat them one by one."⁸

Other top foreign policy leaders embraced a similar assessment. China's ambassador to Poland during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Wang Bingnan, wrote in his memoirs that after the collapse of the GLF and the Sino-Soviet split, the "international environment around China was being aggravated day by day."⁹ Given the deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union and the continuing confrontation with the United States, Beijing was increasingly concerned about its deteriorating strategic situation.¹⁰ Mao cautioned that China did not want relations with India to deteriorate to the point that China "becomes caught in the middle of a desperate situation with enemies on all sides."¹¹

In a 1959 diplomatic note to India, Beijing expressed alarm over the increasingly hostile international environment (without explicitly mentioning the Soviet Union) and sought conciliation with New Delhi: "China will not be so foolish as to antagonize the United States in the east and again antagonize India in the west...We cannot have two centers of attention, nor can we take friend for foe."¹² Reiterating the same point, in April 1960, Foreign Minister Chen Yi told his interlocutor, Sardar Swaran Singh, a confidant of Prime Minister Nehru's:

It is clear to us that our most important enemy is the United States which may attack us at any time. In this situation it is more important for us to improve our relations with the South-East Asian nations...It is most important for us to have most friendly relations with India...Our relations with the United States and Japan

⁸ Wang Jiaxiang xuanji bianjizu, ed., *Huiyi Wang Jiaxiang* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1985), 189; Xu Zehao, *Wang Jiaxiang zhuan* (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1996), 555-63.

⁹ *Shijie zhishi* no. 7 (April 1, 1985):18 20, no. 8 (April 16):17 19, translated in FBIS, *Daily Report: China* (May 2, 1986): B3, B9.

¹⁰ Liao Xinwen, "Laoyibei gemingjia chuli ZhongYin bianjie wenti de duice fangfa," [The older revolutionary generation's methods for dealing with the Sino-Indian boundary dispute] *Dangde wenxian* no. 6 (2013), 73.

¹¹ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigao tongshuaibu dang canmo: Lei Yingfu jiangjun huiyilu* [A staff officer in the supreme command: the memoir of General Lei Yingfu] (Nanchang: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1997), 204.

¹² Li Lianqing, *Da waijiaoia Zhou Enlai* [The great diplomat Zhou Enlai] vol. 4 (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu youxiangongsi, 1999), 273-74; Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements Signed between the Governments of India and China 1954-1959: White Paper I* (New Delhi: External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, 1959), 76, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175950>.

in the east are tense. It would be stupid if we created a tense situation with India in the west also...We are in a serious situation and need your friendship.¹³

Sanhe Yishao: Three Conciliations and One Reduction

Historian Niu Jun concludes, “it is evident that the policies of Chinese leaders adopted before the summer of 1962 were in accordance with the strategic principles laid out by Wang Jiaxiang.”¹⁴ China’s conciliatory foreign policy “emerged as part of an overall policy derived from a sense of weakness and vulnerability, rather than being particularly fashioned for Sino-Indian relations.”¹⁵ The 1962 New Year’s Day editorial in *Renmin Ribao* reflected the new tack in China’s foreign policy: “coexist peacefully with countries having different social systems and oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war.”¹⁶ The new foreign policy of “Three Conciliations and One Reduction” articulated this change in China’s perceptions and grand strategy.

The International Liaison Department took the lead in advocating *sanhe yishao* but did so with the oversight, guidance, and support of top leaders.¹⁷ Zhou Enlai endorsed a review of foreign policy because of the new domestic and international circumstances, and Mao agreed to consider a new strategy and discussions of the policy proposal among the party’s central elite.¹⁸ Wang directed the formulation of the new policy and passed it on to higher-level state and party officials for their consideration. Wang wrote several memoranda to central party leaders outlining his views on the international situation and the need to formulate a flexible strategy and policy to mitigate China’s deteriorating strategic situation. He recommended

¹³ “Notes on conversation held between Sardar Swaran Singh and Marshal Chen Yi on 23rd April, 1960, at Agra,” no date, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, P.N. Haksar Papers (I-II Installments), Subject Files, File #26, 131-150 (hereafter NMML, PNHP), accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121123>.

¹⁴ Niu Jun, “1962: The Eve of the Left-turn in China’s Foreign Policy,” 29.

¹⁵ Allen S. Whiting, “Chinese Behavior Toward India: 1962,” *First Sino-American Conference on Mainland China*, no. 22 (Taipei, Republic of China: Institute of International Relations, 1971), 15.

¹⁶ *Peking Review*, no. 1 (January 5, 1962):9.

¹⁷ Zhang Tuosheng, “Nanneng tansuo, kegui de nuli: shilun Wang Jiaxiang dui dang de guoji zhanlue sixiang de gongxian” [Difficult study, admirable effort: examining Wang Jiaxiang’s contribution to the party’s international strategic thinking] in China Foundation for International Strategic Studies ed., *Huanqiu tongci liangre* (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1993), 182-83; Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Vol. 3 The Coming of the Cataclysm, 1961-1966* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 270, 376.

¹⁸ FBIS, *Daily Report: PRC* (May 4, 1979):L14; *Forty Years of Communist Rule* (Beijing: CCP Party History Documents Press, 1962), 213; Lüthi, “Chinese Foreign Policy, 1960-1979,” 157.

specific policies to deal with Sino-Soviet relations, the situation on the Sino-Indian border, the escalating involvement of the United States in Southeast Asia, and how to balance aid to nationalist liberation movements around the world. Wang argued that China's foreign policy was "constrained" by the realities of China's domestic and international situation, and Beijing must "seek truth from facts and act according to its ability."¹⁹

The radical domestic and foreign policies of the late 1950s isolated China and alarmed Wang Jiaxiang, who characterized it as a foreign policy of adventurism that had precipitated international tensions and turmoil and alienated the Soviet bloc, leaving Beijing without an ally to assist China in its economic development. Wang advocated *sanhe yishao* as an alternative foreign policy that would allow China to ease tensions with both superpowers, as well as India, and reduce foreign aid in accordance with China's economic abilities at the time.²⁰ He expressed his concerns to Central Committee (CC) leaders, arguing that China should adopt a strategic foreign policy that distinguished between waging revolution and governing a country—he argued that if China only championed revolution, it would obscure the peaceful character of China's foreign policy and hamper economic development. His concern was that the revolutionary tone of China's foreign policy was undermining Beijing's support for a peaceful international environment necessary for national development.²¹

Even Mao supported the idea that "new initiatives should be adopted vigorously in order to create a new situation in diplomacy" and during this period, China's foreign policy exhibited a turn toward pragmatism."²² Despite the growing tensions in Sino-Soviet relations and the imminent withdrawal of Soviet assistance, nevertheless, at a July–August 1960 work conference at Beidaihe, Zhou Enlai stressed, "Our goal is to strive for unity, to try to put off and delay a split, which is beneficial for China."²³ During the January 1962 "7,000 Cadre Conference," convened to consider the domestic and international situation in the post-Great

¹⁹ Zhang, "Nanneng tansuo, kegui de nuli," 176-78.

²⁰ Zhang Xiangshan, "Yici fang 'zuo' jiu 'zuo' de changshi—du Wang Jiaxiang de jipian youguan guoji wenti de wenxian," (An attempt to oppose and correct leftism: reading several of Wang Jiaxiang's manuscripts on international problems) *Dangde wenxian*, no. 5 (September 15, 1988): 43-46.

²¹ Zhang, "Nanneng tansuo, kegui de nuli," 171-72.

²² Quoted in Niu Jun, "1962: The Eve of the Left-turn in China's Foreign Policy," 9.

²³ Quoted in Dong Wang, "The Quarrelling Brothers: New Chinese Archives and a Reappraisal of the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959-1962," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper* 49 (February 2006): 40.

Leap period, Mao supported moderation in China's foreign policy. Mao, however, later disavowed this moderate line in foreign policy and advocated a renewed emphasis on class struggle in international relations in the late summer of 1962.²⁴ At the 10th Plenum of the 8th CC in September 1962, Mao's tone changed and he began embracing a more radical tack: "sit tight in the fishing boat despite the rising wind and waves."²⁵ Sharper criticism of *sanhe yishao* started during the plenum as leading cadre, aware of the shift in the political winds, embraced Mao's changing views on foreign policy.²⁶

However, in his detailed study of the period, Chinese scholar Dong Wang concludes that despite the criticism of *sanhe yishao*, while the ideological tone of Chinese foreign policy changed, nevertheless, China's "left turn" in foreign policy was not as significant as many scholars have argued. He argues that despite the criticism of *sanhe yishao*, this did not "necessarily entail a radicalization of Chinese foreign policy," and top Chinese leaders actually endorsed the proposals originating in *sanhe yishao*.²⁷ It is clear that while China engaged in ideologically tainted rhetoric, a rational calculation of strategic interests and the balance of power informed Beijing's foreign policy.²⁸ Thus, *sanhe yishao* was in play, despite Mao's renewed emphasis on class struggle in international relations.²⁹ Roderick MacFarquhar concludes that if Mao had not steered a left-turn in domestic and foreign policy, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai would "probably not" have chosen to "teach Mr. Nehru a lesson" in "light of their support for *sanhe yishao*."³⁰

Following the recommendations of *sanhe yishao*, to improve China's strategic environment, Beijing pursued reconciliation with the Soviet Union, the United States, and India.³¹ Following the October 1959 Mao-Khrushchev summit, Mao concluded that differences were "one finger out of ten" and "the accord of nine fingers between China and the Soviet

²⁴ Lüthi, "Chinese Foreign Policy, 1960-1979," 157; Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 220.

²⁵ Quoted in Dong Wang, "From Enmity of Rapprochement: Grand Strategy, Power Politics, and U.S.-China Relations, 1961-1974," (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 2007), 209.

²⁶ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, 271.

²⁷ Dong Wang, "From Enmity of Rapprochement, 214.

²⁸ Niu Jun, "1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy," 28-30; Dong Wang, "The Quarrelling Brothers," 69.

²⁹ Huiyi Wang *Jiaxiang*, 189-191; Lüthi, "Chinese Foreign Policy, 1960-1979," 157; Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 220.

³⁰ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, 312.

³¹ Zhang, "Nanneng tansuo, kegui de nuli," 181-82.

Union should not be influenced by the differences of one finger.”³² Liu Shaoqi, too, understood the importance of conciliation with the Soviet Union.³³ He concluded, “we have no option but to improve our relationship with the Soviet Union” and “it is of strategic importance to...improve and strengthen such a relationship.”³⁴ Dong Wang concludes, “Chinese leaders genuinely believed that Sino-Soviet unity was indispensable to the improvement of China’s strategic situation.”³⁵ Beijing attempted a similar policy of conciliation with the United States in the post-GLF period. Wang Bingnan, China’s interlocutor with US officials during the Warsaw talks, stated that the “original creation” of the initiative was driven by “specific conditions” that required a different approach by Beijing. According to Wang, China was even willing to compromise on the Taiwan issue and suggested that it was the only cause of Sino-American tensions.³⁶

China’s perceptions of its deteriorating strategic environment motivated a new grand strategy and the adoption of a conciliatory foreign policy. This new orientation in China’s foreign policy in the wake of the GLF motivated Beijing’s attempts to resolve the Sino-Indian boundary dispute and the boundary settlements with other neighboring states. At a state banquet honoring Prince Sihanouk in February 1963, Liu Shaoqi stated, “it has always been the sincere desire of the Chinese Government to...settle complicated questions left over by history through negotiations with its Asian neighbors and strive for a peaceful international environment favorable to socialist construction.”³⁷ China’s efforts to resolve the boundary issues with India and the successful boundary settlements with other neighbors, especially Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, demonstrate the implementation of a conciliatory policy. These settlements were an effort by Beijing to reassure China’s neighbors, who were apprehensive about Chinese irredentism, by signing treaties to determine internationally recognized boundaries. The boundary settlements during this period show that a conciliatory

³² Quoted in Dong Wang, “The Quarrelling Brothers,” 27.

³³ *Chinese Law and Government* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1969/70):78-79; Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 236-37.

³⁴ Quoted in Dong Wang, “The Quarrelling Brothers,” 52.

³⁵ Dong Wang, “The Quarrelling Brothers,” 16.

³⁶ *Shijie zhishi* no. 7 (April 1, 1985):18 20, no. 8 (April 16):17 19, translated in FBIS, *Daily Report: China* (May 2, 1986):B3, B9; Niu Jun, “1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China’s Foreign Policy,” 15-16.

³⁷ *Collected Works of Liu Shao-ch’i, 1958-1967* (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968), 153.

foreign policy prevailed before the return to the more radical confrontationist policies adopted on the eve of the Cultural Revolution.

Implementing a Policy of Conciliation

Larger strategic concerns drove Beijing's efforts to restore the strained relations with China's southern neighbors.³⁸ The international strategic environment necessitated that China attempt conciliation and avoid confrontation. This was a significant change from China's more radical tack on the eve of the GLF.³⁹ The formulation of this alternative foreign policy suggests that in the wake of the GLF, a "different foreign policy perspective [was] at work" that had policy implications.⁴⁰ Foreign policy leaders decided to safeguard national security at the expense of promoting national liberation movements abroad and attempting to reduce tension between China and imperialist, revisionist, and reactionary states. The new orientation in foreign policy was designed to eliminate the growing US and Soviet influence in the region, especially in neighboring states, and to reduce tensions in Sino-Indian relations. The objective was to maximize China's security by developing a friendly belt of nations around the periphery of China.

China adopted a policy of accommodation with its neighbors on boundary dispute settlements, a cause of festering concern over Chinese irredentism. In April 1959, Zhou Enlai, in his "Report on the Work of the Government," reconfirmed China's respect for India's non-alignment policy and expressed the desire for peaceful negotiations to settle the boundary dispute.⁴¹ While in India in April 1960 and during a conversation with India's former ambassador to China (1955–1958), R. K. Nehru, Zhou linked China's deteriorating domestic and international situation to its effort to settle the boundary dispute. Zhou said, "we do not stress [this] in public but I want to tell you all the facts. Only in the past two years things have become

³⁸ A.M. Halpern, "The Chinese Communist Line on Neutralism," *China Quarterly*, no. 5 (January-March 1961); V.P. Dutt, *China and the World: An Analysis of Communist China's Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 166-69; David P. Mozingo, "Communist China: Its Southern Border Lands," *SAIS Review* 12, no. 2 (Winter 1968): 43-54.

³⁹ Melvin Gurtov and Byong-moo Hwang, *China Under Threat: the Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 106-107.

⁴⁰ Gurtov and Hwang, *China Under Threat*, 244.

⁴¹ *Renmin Ribao* (April 19, 1959), 4.

very complicated and we know that non-settlement of this problem will harm us both. This is why we have come to Delhi to try and reach some sort of settlement.”⁴² Evidence shows that China did give negotiations a chance to succeed and end continuing conflict given the domestic situation in China and the perception of growing international threat.⁴³ PLA and other documents attest to the fact that China adopted a conciliatory policy toward India regarding the growing tension along the border.⁴⁴ During the April negotiations, Zhou Enlai told Govind Ballabh Pant, the Union Home Minister, “we must not forget the most basic thing; we have no fundamental conflict of interest.”⁴⁵ Even earlier in February 1962, China told India that, “the door to negotiations is always open.”⁴⁶ Moreover, a 21 July note to the Indian embassy in Beijing pointed out “The Chinese Government has repeatedly stated that China is not willing to fight with India and the Sino-Indian boundary question can be settled only through routine negotiations.”⁴⁷

It is clear that China also was concerned about achieving conciliation with neighboring states to prevent them from being influenced or dominated by hostile powers. One of many concerns was the situation in Laos. Chinese leaders, at the time, were more concerned over the Laotian crisis than the situation in Vietnam because they perceived Laos as a more direct threat given the level of US involvement at the time.⁴⁸ The possibility that Washington would pull Laos into SEATO was a major concern.⁴⁹ China also was concerned that if the Laotian issue was not resolved, it would eventually put growing pressure on Burma to relinquish its neutralist policy,

⁴² Untitled record of conversation between R.K. Nehru and Zhou Enlai, 21 April, 1960, NMML, PNHP File #26, 110-121, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175923>.

⁴³ Whiting, “Chinese Behavior Toward India: 1962,” 112-13.

⁴⁴ Niu Jun, “1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China’s Foreign Policy,” 26; Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 38-39, 48, 75-77.

⁴⁵ Li, *Da waijiao jia Zhou Enlai*, 297.

⁴⁶ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged between the Governments of India and China, November 1961-July 1962: White Paper VI* (New Delhi: External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, 1962), 16, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175949>.

⁴⁷ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged Between the Governments of India and China, July 1962-October 1962, White Paper VII* (Government of India Press, 1962), 1, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175948>.

⁴⁸ Niu Jun, “1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China’s Foreign Policy,” 12-14, 25.

⁴⁹ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 93-94.

something China was actively discouraging by engaging Burma in boundary negotiations.⁵⁰ The PRC began to support Laotian neutrality actively and even established relations with the noncommunist government in April 1961 and pressed the communist Pathet Lao to conclude a ceasefire and form a government of national union.⁵¹

At the United States-China Warsaw talks, the PRC informed the United States that it favored reconvening the Geneva talks to settle the Laotian question.⁵² Beijing's goal was to achieve a "conditional compromise for a period of time" and relieve the threat along China's southern border. Zhou Enlai's instructions to the Chinese delegation at Geneva were to "adopt flexible tactics, and strive to reach agreement."⁵³ Historian Qiang Zhai concludes that China's "serious economic problems caused by the Great Leap Forward constrained the Chinese leaders, who found it prudent to negotiate rather than escalate their commitments to the Laotian civil war."⁵⁴ The July 1962 Geneva agreement that established Laos as a neutral country exemplified the influence of *sanhe yishao* on Beijing's foreign policy and brought "the PRC to come in from the cold."⁵⁵

Attempted Conciliation with India

The Sino-Indian 1954 Tibet agreement and the embrace of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, followed by the 1955 Bandung Conference of non-aligned nations was the high watermark of *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai* (India and China are brothers). The 1954 negotiation over Tibet, however, sowed the seeds of the deterioration in relations. At the time, China and India clearly realized that there were differences over the boundary. Leading up the 1954 negotiation, Nehru said India "would naturally prefer a general and comprehensive settlement which includes the Frontier" but Beijing expressed reluctance, and Nehru relented telling Ambassador Panikkar, "it will be desirable not to raise the question of our Frontier at this

⁵⁰ Chester Cheng, ed., *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, 585; Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence*, 38, fn. 97.

⁵¹ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 98-105.

⁵² Kenneth T. Young, "American Dealings with Peking," *Foreign Affairs* 45, no. 1 (October 1966):81-82.

⁵³ Quoted in Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 97, 99.

⁵⁴ Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 111.

⁵⁵ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, 273.

stage.”⁵⁶ Zhou Enlai argued, “big countries like India and China with long frontiers were bound to have many questions at issue.” However, Beijing believed that conditions were not yet “ripe for settlement” and Beijing did not face the same strategic challenges that it did a decade later on the eve of the Sino-Indian war. Moreover, the new regime in Beijing had had no time to “study the question” and was unwilling to discuss the issue at the time or make any adjustments without a joint survey.⁵⁷ The Indian public was unhappy with what they perceived as Nehru’s surrender to Chinese demands in Tibet and India’s tepid support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan resistance. The perception that India continued meddling in Tibetan affairs and attempted to influence the Dalai Lama during his 1956 sojourn in India angered China.⁵⁸ In the shadow of these tensions, boundary incidents, even unrelated to the unrest in Tibet, became increasingly nettlesome. Boundary incidents left Indians with a sense of betrayal while Chinese believed the cause of these incidents was directly related to India’s effort to meddle in Tibetan affairs.⁵⁹ Beijing believed that since the boundary was unsettled, some incidents were inevitable, but pending a boundary settlement, both sides should make every effort to avoid actions that increased their likelihood.⁶⁰

Zhou Enlai followed his 1954 trip to India with his second trip from November 1956 to January 1957.⁶¹ During Zhou’s meetings with Nehru, they discussed the boundary issue and the McMahon Line drawn by the British in 1914. According to Indian documents, Zhou professed he personally “knew nothing of the McMahon Line until recently when we came to study the border problem after the liberation of China.” Nehru responded that the Simla Conference

⁵⁶ S. Gopal, ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* second series, vol. 18 (1 April-15 July 1952) (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1996), 475. This was an exchange of cables between Nehru and Panikkar June 16-18, 1952.

⁵⁷ Han Nianlong, ed., *Diplomacy of Contemporary China* (Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1990), 218.

⁵⁸ Zhang Tong, “DuiYin ziwei fanjizhan qianho de huiyi” [Recollections of the pre and post counter attack in self-defense against India] in Pei Jianzhang, ed. *Xin Zhongguo waijiao fengyun: Zhongguo waijiaoguan huiyilu* [New China’s Diplomatic Challenges: Recollections of Chinese Diplomats] Vol. 1 (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1990), 67-69. Zhang Tong was the military attaché in the Chinese embassy in New Delhi prior to 1962 and then deputy director of the Asia Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁹ Li, *Da waijiaoia Zhou Enlai*, 274.

⁶⁰ Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*, 42-44.

⁶¹ Zhou’s first trip was June 1954 when the Tibet agreement was signed and *Panchsheel* agreed upon. The second trip was part of Zhou’s eight-nation Asian tour when he traveled to Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Burma, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, with a mid-January visit to Moscow and Poland. He returned to India to hold a second round of discussion with Nehru on 24 January before he left for Nepal. During Zhou’s disjointed visit to India, Nehru visited the US and met with President Eisenhower 17–18 December 1956.

(October 1913–April 1914) established the boundary and “surely the Chinese Government always knew about it.”⁶² Zhou pointed out, however, that the Chinese government never recognized the McMahon Line, but “now that it is an accomplished fact, we should accept it.” Zhou also pointed out that the Tibetans rejected the line, but that Beijing would “try to persuade and convince Tibetans to accept it.” Zhou opined, “although the question is still undecided and it is unfair to us, still we feel that there is no better way than to recognize this line” and indicated, “we think it should be settled early.”⁶³ Nehru concluded from this conversation with Zhou that “so far as we are concerned, this frontier...is not a matter in dispute at all and Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai] accepted it.”⁶⁴ In a 23 January 1959 letter to Nehru, Zhou reiterated the view that China “finds it necessary to take a more or less realistic attitude toward the McMahon line” indicating Beijing’s willingness to use the line as the basis for the border with necessary minor technical adjustments.⁶⁵

Several boundary incidents forced New Delhi and Beijing to engage in negotiations and talks started in April 1958. However, the first attempt to resolve Sino-Indian boundary differences, according to Yang Gongsu, the head of the Chinese delegation, left the Chinese with the impression that India’s boundary claims were based primarily on the notes and documentation of British explorers. Beijing rejected these claims and was unwilling to commit to a specific boundary line without a survey of the border.⁶⁶ Despite the spike in tensions, Mao Zedong discounted its seriousness commenting, “this dispute between our two countries over

⁶² Mushirul Hasan, ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* second series, vol. 36 (1 December 1956–21 February 1957) (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2005), 598–99. Nehru summarizes this conversation in a note to Ambassador R.K. Nehru, p. 614–15.

⁶³ Hasan, ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* second series, vol. 36, 600–601.

⁶⁴ Mushirul Hasan, ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* second series, vol. 37 (22 February–30 April 1957) (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2006), 508.

⁶⁵ Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements Signed between the Governments of India and China 1954–1959*, 53, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175951>.

⁶⁶ Yang Gongsu, *Lunsang zhoushinian—yige wajiao teshi de huiyi* [Waning days at 90 years: the memoirs of a special ambassador] (Haikou: Hainan chubanshe, 1999), 245–47; Steven A. Hoffman, *Indian and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 34–35.

the past few years...is only one episode in the thousands of years of friendship between our two countries. It doesn't warrant the people and government officials becoming alarmed."⁶⁷

On 8 September 1959, Zhou sent Nehru a letter with "a systematic explanation," from Beijing's perspective, "of the whole picture of the Sino-Indian boundary." Zhou stated China's view that British imperialist expansion "constitutes the fundamental reason for the long-term disputes over and non-settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question." He expressed disappointment that the imperialist experience the two countries shared did not "naturally cause China and India to hold an identical view of the...historical background and to adopt an attitude of mutual sympathy, mutual understanding and fairness and reasonableness in dealing with the boundary question." Beijing believed that "an overall settlement of the boundary question should be sought by both sides taking into account the historical background and existing actualities."⁶⁸ This conceptualization of the historical customary boundary motivated Beijing's approach of "mutual understanding and mutual accommodation," hoping to resolve the dispute and facilitate the conclusion of a legitimate boundary treaty.⁶⁹

China confirmed its decision to seek a negotiated settlement at a 2 October 1959 meeting with Khrushchev and several other top Chinese leaders, including Wang Jiaxiang. Zhou Enlai told Khrushchev that Beijing was "taking measures to solve the problem peacefully by negotiations," and Mao assured Khrushchev "that the McMahon line with India will be maintained" and that China "will solve the border question with India through negotiations." Mao expressed optimism about finding a negotiated resolution when he told Khrushchev that the Tibetan issue and "the border conflict are passing matters."⁷⁰ Two weeks later, in a

⁶⁷ "India is Not China's Enemy, but Rather China's Friend (13 May 1959)," PRC Foreign Ministry and CCP Central Document Research Office, eds., *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan* [Selected foreign policy documents of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe/Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1994), 377.

⁶⁸ *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1960), 2, 12, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175958>.

⁶⁹ Zhang Wenjin, director the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asian Affairs Department Number One defined this as "understand the other's predicament; at the same time, each also needs to put themselves in the other's shoes and make allowances for them." See Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenjin and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (1), 17 July 1961, PRC FMA 105-01056-03, 51-59, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121625>.

⁷⁰ Record of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with CC CCP Chairman Mao Zedong, Deputy Chairman Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Lin Biao, Politburo Members Peng Zhen and Chen Yi, and Secretariat member Wang Jiaxiang, 2 October 1959, APRF, copy on Reel 17, Volkogonov Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118883>.

conversation with Soviet Ambassador S. F. Antonov, Mao stated, “we never, under any circumstances, will move beyond the Himalayas. This is completely ruled out. This is an argument over inconsequential pieces of territory.”⁷¹

One week later the Kongka Pass incident occurred, severely straining Sino-India relations and lending further urgency to negotiations. At an early November 1959 meeting in Hangzhou of top-level party and military leaders, and despite some objections from some military leaders, Mao made the decision to reduce tensions along the border by proposing to India that troops withdraw twenty kilometers from the boundary and if India did not agree, China would unilaterally withdraw.⁷² In a 7 November 1959 letter to Nehru, Zhou proposed that armed forces pull back from the border “to create a favorable atmosphere for a friendly settlement of the boundary question” and sought “talks in the immediate future.”⁷³ On 5 February 1960, Nehru responded arguing that “although any negotiations on the basis you have suggested [that “our entire boundary never having been delimited”] are not possible, I still think it might be helpful for us to meet.”⁷⁴

Prior to Nehru’s invitation, the Standing Committee adopted guidelines for negotiating boundary settlements with all of China’s neighbors based on “mutual understanding and mutual accommodation.”⁷⁵ Zhou Enlai set down four principles to guide negotiations: First, recognize that boundary disputes are the result of imperialism and unequal treaties. Second, do not assert claims to traditional tributary areas, nor assert older historical claims. Third, negotiate new boundaries based upon earlier boundary agreements (despite the fact that imperialist-era agreements were forced upon a weak China). Fourth, maintain China’s “national stand,” but avoid “big nation chauvinism.”⁷⁶ Essentially Beijing was willing to delimit its borders

⁷¹ “From the Journal of Ambassador S.F. Antonov, Summary of a Conversation with the Chairman of the CC CPC Mao Zedong,” 14 October 1959, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114788>.

⁷² Lei, *Zai zuigao tongshuaibu dang canmo*, 202-203.

⁷³ *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, 16-17, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175959>.

⁷⁴ *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, 143, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175960>.

⁷⁵ Niu Jun, “1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China’s Foreign Policy,” 10-12; M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China’s Territorial Dispute* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 83.

⁷⁶ Pei Jianzhang, ed., *Yanjiu Zhou Enlai—waijiao sixiang yu shijian* [Research on Zhou Enlai: diplomatic thought and practice] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1989). 101-03. These basic principles are elaborated in Pei Monong,

based on “historical customary boundaries” but insisted on adopting modern techniques to determine the boundaries more precisely in order to establish “distinct and stable” boundary lines. Chinese leaders believed that this would demonstrate “China’s consistent policy of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual equality, mutual understanding and mutual compromise, and solving boundary disputes peacefully through friendly consultations.”⁷⁷ Beijing was already engaging Burma in negotiations and assumed it could pursue a similar approach with India by accepting the historical customary boundary (even this was disputed) in practice but rejecting the imperialist-era boundary negotiations in principle.

Before departing for New Delhi, Zhou Enlai set two objectives for the talks: strive to establish principles and create the conditions for the continuation of negotiations and the equitable settlement of the boundary dispute. The primary issue of principle for China was that the entire boundary was unsettled—only defined by a “traditional and customary boundary”—and must be delimited through negotiations.⁷⁸ Zhou was confident that “principle favored China” (*daoli zai women de fangmian*) but he did not anticipate resolving the boundary during these talks. A 5 April 1960 document drafted in preparation for negotiations concluded that Nehru still had a “wait-and-see attitude,” and he believed that delaying a settlement was advantageous to India. China’s position was “we are not afraid of delay, we are prepared to delay, and moreover, there is advantage in delaying.”⁷⁹ The document spelled out responses to three contingencies: First, if no agreement was reached, Zhou would seek to continue the prime ministers’ talks and issue a simple joint press release, or issue a separate press release expressing China’s willingness to adhere to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, preserve Sino-Indian friendship, maintain the status quo along the boundary, and avoid conflict along the boundary. Second, if they achieved no agreement but India was willing to preserve a friendly atmosphere, then Zhou would suggest issuing a positive communiqué including the reiteration of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the Bandung spirit, Sino-Indian friendship,

Zhou Enlai wajijiao xue [Study of Zhou Enlai’s diplomacy] (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1997), 189-195.

⁷⁷ Tian Zengpei, ed., *Gaige kaifang yilai de Zhongguo wajijiao* [Chinese foreign policy since opening up and reform] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1993), 628.

⁷⁸ Li, *Da wajijiaojia Zhou Enlai*, 292.

⁷⁹ Li, *Da wajijiaojia Zhou Enlai*, 280-81.

and the continuation of boundary talks and the adoption of measures to avoid military conflict along the border. Third, if no comprehensive resolution of the boundary was possible, but it was not completely unresolved either, in addition to a joint communiqué, Zhou would seek agreement to establish a joint boundary commission, or similar organization, to resolve specific issues to relieve tensions, such as withdrawal of military forces twenty kilometers from the line of actual control and recommend not deploying troops to disputed areas to prevent conflict and facilitate continuing prime minister-level talks.⁸⁰

The Zhou-Nehru Negotiations

Premier Zhou, along with Foreign Minister Chen Yi and a high-ranking team of negotiators, traveled to Delhi arriving on 19 April 1960. Upon arrival, the Chinese were chagrined by the very low-key welcome they received at the airport. The size of the welcoming delegation and Nehru's remarks at the airport left the Chinese with the impression that Nehru wanted to "meticulously cold shoulder" Zhou Enlai. In his own remarks, Zhou said that the "Chinese government has consistently advocated that we hold talks at the prime minister-level to seek a way to reasonably resolve the boundary problem and other problems. I have come with the sincere desire to resolve the problems. I sincerely hope our joint efforts during the talks are able to produce positive and beneficial results."⁸¹ Zhou's primary objective was to reach agreement on principles and not discuss details so he did not bring a raft of documents and maps to India.⁸² Seven days of intense negotiations during which Nehru and Zhou met seven times followed.⁸³

⁸⁰ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, ed. *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976* [Zhou Enlai chronicle, 1949-1976] vol. 2, (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), 302; Liao, "Laoyibei gemingjia chuli ZhongYin bianjie wenti de duice fangfa," 70-71.

⁸¹ "Zhou Enlai yu 1960 ZhongYin bianjie tanpan: Xindeli shezhan chunru," [Zhou Enlai and the 1960 Sino-Indian boundary negotiation: verbal battle in New Delhi] *Dangshi wenhui* (January 2014); Li, *Da waijiao jia Zhou Enlai*, 282.

⁸² Li, *Da waijiao jia Zhou Enlai*, 294.

⁸³ Li, *Da waijiao jia Zhou Enlai*, 282-306 offers a detailed account of the Zhou-Nehru talks, and Zhou's meetings with other Indian officials, but it does not reference the archival or other sources that are the basis for this account. Liao, "Laoyibei gemingjia chuli ZhongYin bianjie wenti de duice fangfa," 66-77 offers scant details of the negotiations, but references a document titled "Zhou Enlai yu Nihelu huitan jilu" but does not give the provenance.

Nehru persistently asserted India's historical claims buttressed by British-era documentation and insisted that China simply needed to change its maps—"Our claim all along has been that although the boundary is not marked on the ground, it has all along been well defined through various ways." Therefore, "the question is mainly factual."⁸⁴ Zhou clearly hoped for a pragmatic compromise settlement by taking into account the "traditional customary boundary" and by formally delimiting the actual boundary line by a survey—"I have come here to seek a solution and not to repeat arguments." I "came here with the hope of seeking avenues for a reasonable settlement of the boundary question."⁸⁵ "It is not desirable that we continue like this. We must find out some solution."⁸⁶ Nehru countered that a simple survey of the boundary would not resolve the dispute, arguing that, "the facts are not ascertained by going to these places.....for they give us no history," but by examining the documents, "at least we will have some facts."⁸⁷

The conundrum for India and China is the fact that the disputed territories were "complicated questions left over by history," at the peripheries of former empires that were not well mapped and lacked clearly delimited boundary agreements. The fact that Zhou Enlai did not bring a catalogue of maps with him to the negotiations indicated, not that China was not confident in its claims, but rather, and mistakenly, that China believed that India would accept in principle the traditional customary nature of the boundaries, and be willing to negotiate a compromise settlement and delimit a mutually acceptable boundary based on "mutual understanding and mutual compromise."⁸⁸ Zhou's objective was to convince Nehru to

⁸⁴ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>; "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 22nd April, 1960 from 10 A.M. to 1.10 P.M.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 40-53, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175916>.

⁸⁵ Untitled record of conversation between Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou Enlai, April 20, 1960, NMML, PNHP File #24, 7-16, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175917>; "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou held on 20th April, 1960, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Prime Minister's Residence," NMML, PNHP File #24, 17-26, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175918>.

⁸⁶ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 21st April, 1960, from 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 27-39, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175919>.

⁸⁷ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>.

⁸⁸ *Premier Chou En-lai's Letter to the Leaders of Asian and African Countries on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question (November 15, 1962)* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1973), 3, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175946>.

accept the Chinese view that the “border is not delimited or determined but throughout history there must have been points of contact.” Therefore, “it is necessary for us to find common ground so that we can reasonably settle it.”⁸⁹ Nehru’s objective, however, was to push Zhou to accept as “fact” that the boundary was established by history and British-era documents. Zhou expressed his frustration with what he viewed as Nehru’s inflexible position (and likely did not appreciate the domestic constraints that limited his room to maneuver) by saying that “this kind of argument should be stopped and we should talk something which will be helpful to a settlement.....The situation is quite clear and time does not allow us to argue like this.”⁹⁰

In the course of the negotiations, Zhou pushed for a “package deal” based on “mutual understanding and mutual accommodation.” Zhou told Pandit Sunderlal, the president of the India-China Friendship Association: “You keep what you hold, you take too anything that is in dispute and occupied by neither, and we keep what we hold.”⁹¹ China was willing to recognize India’s claim in the eastern sector (Arunachal Pradesh), 84,000 square kilometers, despite China’s belief that this area was historically connected with Tibet, in exchange for India accepting China’s claim to Aksai Chin (the western sector), 38,000 square kilometers. Zhou believed this was a practical solution to a historically complex and politically intractable dispute, arguing that “there are disputes about the boundary because it was never delimited and therefore we must conduct negotiation but neither side should ask the other side to withdraw [from the sector it actually occupies]” with some necessary minor adjustments (as was done in the Burma case) in each sector based on a survey. Zhou argued, “this is the starting point. If we argue about it.....it would only lead to endless argument and it would be impossible to solve the question and will only lead to more disputes.”⁹² However, even this “package deal” compromise settlement was not acceptable to India. Nehru was reluctant even to commit to

⁸⁹ “Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 23rd April, 1960, from 4.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.,” NMML, PNHP File #24, 54-68, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175920>.

⁹⁰ “Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.,” NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>.

⁹¹ Quoted in Neville Maxwell, *India’s China War* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1971), 160.

⁹² “Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.,” NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>.

recognizing a line of actual control, fearing this would, "for all practical purposes.....accept the border claimed by China," and militarily disadvantage India.⁹³

When Zhou realized that negotiations with Nehru were deadlocked, he made it clear that China "would still very much like to see that favourable conditions are created for future talks."⁹⁴ Zhou pushed to have troops pull back from the line of actual control to avoid further incidents, arguing, "disengagement of the armed forces.....would not prejudice the stand of either side on the boundary question" but would avoid future clashes.⁹⁵ He desperately wanted to keep the door open for a settlement and proposed establishing a commission to study the boundary with the hope of finding a compromise solution. Nehru would not agree to a commission asserting, "if we two ourselves disagree how a joint committee can agree?"⁹⁶ Nehru's counter-proposal was to have official-level meetings to "jointly consider what the differences are from the material available.....At least that will make the facts clear."⁹⁷ Zhou expressed reservations and reasserted China's unwillingness to accept as legitimate British documents, such as the Simla Convention (which established the McMahon Line), and argued that "if both sides take into account not only the historical background but the actual situation, a reasonable settlement is possible." Nehru responded, exhibiting newfound confidence in the British/Indian documentation, by arguing, "the question is mainly factual.....Since a great deal depends upon facts, if we can reduce our differences as regards facts, it might help."⁹⁸

Except for the agreement to hold meetings of officials to examine the relevant documents and produce a report (actually a ploy to give the appearance that the Zhou-Nehru

⁹³ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>.

⁹⁴ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>.

⁹⁵ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 23rd April, 1960, from 4.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 54-68, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175920>; Editorial Department of Renmin Ribao, "More on Nehru's Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Boundary Question," October 27, 1962, in *The Sino-Indian Boundary Question* enlarged edition (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1962), 102, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175947>.

⁹⁶ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 24th April, 1960, from 10.30 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 69-85, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121124>.

⁹⁷ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 21st April, 1960, from 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 27-39, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175919>.

⁹⁸ "Record of talks between PM and Premier Chou En Lai held on 22nd April, 1960, from [?] to 1.10 p.m.," NMML, PNHP File #24, 40-53, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175916>.

negotiations had not completely failed to make any progress toward a settlement), the Chinese were exasperated with what they perceived to be Indian intransigence. Foreign Minister Chen Yi expressed Beijing's frustration when talking with Indian Vice President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and commented that China always resisted imperialist pressure, but when "our Indian friends want to bully us, then we do not know what to do."⁹⁹ India insisted, "certain obligations flow from previous agreements and they have to be honoured."¹⁰⁰ China rejected the legitimacy of these earlier boundary agreements. Chen Yi expressed frustration with India's insistence on the legitimacy of these documents, telling Sardar Swaran Singh that to settle the boundary requires "shaking off the influences left over by the imperialists and create a new friendly border" which "is not possible.....if we depend on archives and quote a letter here and there."¹⁰¹ Zhou misjudged India's views of the boundary, assuming that because of their common objection to "imperialist aggression," both countries would adopt "an attitude of mutual sympathy, mutual understanding and fairness and reasonableness in dealing with the boundary question."¹⁰² However, India asserted the validity of historical agreements and this made it virtually impossible for India to embrace China's proposal for a compromise settlement.

India's unwillingness to embrace a compromise settlement left China deeply exasperated. In a collection of diplomatic memoirs published by the foreign ministry's office of diplomatic history, one high-level foreign ministry official expressed this frustration, writing that, "we repeatedly asked India to observe the spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation that is the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in order to resolve the boundary issues, but they wouldn't listen and in fact intensified their [pressure along the border]."¹⁰³ During the Zhou-Nehru talks, the failure to set the stage for a resolution of the dispute left China convinced that India was unwilling to put aside the complicated

⁹⁹ Untitled record of conversation between Zhou Enlai and Vice-President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, 21 April 1960, NMML, PNHP File #26, 86-92, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175921>.

¹⁰⁰ "Notes on the conversation held between Sardar Swaran Singh and Marshal Chen Yi," NMML, PNHP File #26, 93-109, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/175922>.

¹⁰¹ "Notes on conversation held between Sardar Swaran Singh and Marshal Chen Yi on 23rd April, 1960, at Agra," NMML, PNHP File #26, 131-150, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121123>.

¹⁰² *Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, 2; "More on Nehru's Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Boundary Question," 100.

¹⁰³ Zhang Tong, "DuiYin ziwei fanjizhan qianho de huiyi," 71.

historical legacy in order to delimit a legitimate boundary. During their final meeting, Zhou and Nehru even had difficulty agreeing on a joint communiqué and both put forward very different drafts. Zhou Enlai pushed hard for a more positive communiqué but Nehru resisted making any commitment that indicated that the talks achieved progress toward a settlement.¹⁰⁴ But, despite the disappointing outcome for the Chinese of the Zhou-Nehru talks, after he returned to China, reflecting on the situation, Zhou told the People's Congress, "we isolated him [Nehru] and proved that while we are willing to resolve the boundary issue, he is unwilling to solve the boundary problem; we have gained the initiative" (*qudele zhudong*).¹⁰⁵

Official-level meetings ensued from June to December 1960 and although the forty-seven meetings held accomplished little more than a report of the two sides' conflicting views, from China's perspective it did keep the door open and was therefore not insignificant.¹⁰⁶ Following the report, the first high-level meeting took place in July 1961 when R. K. Nehru, now in his capacity as India's foreign secretary, returned to China to meet with Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. It was clear that the report provided no avenue for a compromise resolution "given the impossibility of reaching a consensus on the facts" and the "sharp differences of opinion."¹⁰⁷ They agreed to consider alternative paths to a settlement through "unofficial talks."

Ambassador Gopalaswami Parthasarathy and Zhang Wenjin, the director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asian Affairs Department, conducted three sessions (17–19 July). During the talks, Zhang sought to place the boundary dispute in a larger strategic context arguing, "one cannot get tangled up in the details. The relationship between our two countries is too important; we should view it from a greater distance, from an elevated height, considering the big picture, and seek resolution. The two sides will not necessarily agree on specific views, but should understand the overall spirit.....The key does not lie with presenting a vast amount of information, but with whether one can, to a greater degree, consider the main issue from a

¹⁰⁴ Li, *Da waijiao* Zhou Enlai, 302-306.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Liao, "Laoyibei gemingjia chuli ZhongYin bianjie wenti de duice fangfa," 71.

¹⁰⁶ Xiaonong Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors: The Rise of Diplomatic Professionalism since 1949* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 133; *Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question* (New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, 1962).

¹⁰⁷ "Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenjin and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (2)," 17 July 1961, PRC FMA 105-01056-03, 60-66, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121626>.

position of foresight and come closer together.” Parthasarathy seemed to embrace this perspective and responded that our “two sides have sharp differences of opinion; one method is to place the reports to one side and ignore them, while both sides proceed from a political angle to reconsider [the issues].....But the difficulty lies in swaying popular opinion.....I cannot think of another way to overcome this political obstacle other than making a big gesture, expressing sincerity.....Can [we] think of it as, no one has to abandon their position, but just make concessions in a broader political sense?”¹⁰⁸ Zhang followed up suggesting that: “Based on the practical experience of Sino-Burmese and Sino-Nepalese discussions and negotiations, when two sides disagree on the facts,.....the two sides’ views differ greatly and it is impossible to bring them into line, each can keep to its own position and consider, from a political standpoint, what kind of resolution would be more beneficial.” Parthasarathy agreed, saying that “we will [have to] make some compromises and resolve the issues. But the difficulty lies in swaying popular opinion.”¹⁰⁹ These talks did not lead to a breakthrough and prime minister-level, or even high-level official, talks did not ensue.

China’s efforts to achieve a compromise settlement with India followed the pattern China adopted of seeking “mutual understanding and mutual accommodation.” From China’s perspective, Zhou Enlai’s April 1960 proposal was an “earnest [effort] to reach a preliminary agreement that would help settle the boundary question.” However, China, frustrated by the failure of its “sincere efforts” concluded, “if Nehru really wanted to settle the boundary question, it should have not been difficult to do so.”¹¹⁰

The Boundary Settlements with Other Neighboring States

In order to place the Sino-Indian dispute in a broader context, it is helpful to understand the larger strategic concerns that motivated Beijing to seek boundary settlements with its South Asian neighbors. Chinese scholarship supports this perspective, exemplified by Liao

¹⁰⁸ “Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenjin and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (1),” 17 July 1961, PRC FMA 105-01056-03, 51-59, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121625>.

¹⁰⁹ “Memorandum of Three Conversations Between Director Zhang Wenjin and the Indian Ambassador Regarding Sino-Indian Border Issues and the Two Countries’ Relations,” 17 July 1961, PRC FMA 105-01056-03, 47-50. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111724>.

¹¹⁰ “More on Nehru’s Philosophy in the Light of the Sino-Indian Boundary Question,” 100, 107.

Xinwen's analysis of China's efforts to resolve its boundary dispute with India, asserting that China's boundary issues "must be considered within the context of the international strategic framework" and arguing that a policy of conciliation with China's neighbors "was an obvious necessity."¹¹¹ While Beijing failed to resolve its boundary dispute with India, the boundary treaty with Burma and subsequent treaties with Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan show that China did seek conciliation with its neighbors. China decided to pursue boundary settlements in January 1959 and the CCP CC ratified a policy to "remedy" the border issues with its neighbors by "ultimately erecting a distinct, strict border.....as well as constructing normal relations between our sides."¹¹²

However, many scholars, especially Indian scholars, view China's boundary settlements with other neighbors through the narrow context of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute and argue that China "had incentives to avoid confrontation with some states and thereby convince those states to support [its] claims in a dispute with another adversary" —India. Therefore China "pursued accommodative policies in disputes with some other states in order to foster an image of reasonableness and peaceful intentions, so as to build greater international support for [its] territorial claims" against India.¹¹³ This hypothesis reflects the perceptions of Indian officials that China was engaged in a "sinister" plan to "isolate India, preparatory to forcing on India a boundary settlement."¹¹⁴ R. K. Nehru, India's ambassador to China from 1955 to 1958 reflected this Indian conceptualization of China's objectives when he opined: "I am absolutely convinced that.....this is part of a general strategy of [the] Chinese.....Thus the issue is not this or that border or territory.....[but] an attempt to cross over to the offensive on the ideological front."¹¹⁵ Sarvepalli Gopal argued that Beijing "pushed" its neighbors "into a position which was

¹¹¹ Liao, "Laoyibei gemingjia chuli ZhongYin bianjie wenti de duice fangfa," 73-74.

¹¹² "Policy Documents for Expatriate Affairs related to the CCP Central Committee, Expatriate Committee, and District Committees (1956, 1957, 1959)," 4 January 1959, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Archives X42-1-72, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118258>.

¹¹³ Quoted in Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*, 17.

¹¹⁴ Hoffman, *Indian and the China Crisis*, 85-86.

¹¹⁵ "Entry from the Journal of Soviet Ambassador to India Benediktov, Conversation with Indian Foreign Ministry General-Secretary R.K. Nehru," 2 November 1962, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVPRF), f. 90, op. 24, d. 5, p. 44, ll. 120-12, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113003>.

manifestly aimed at India.....The chief objectives was obviously.....to suggest that Indian was intransigent.....and intended to strengthen China's diplomatic position."¹¹⁶

Burma

On 28 January 1960, China concluded a boundary settlement with Burma on terms generally corresponding to Burma's position. Given the timing of the settlement, the anti-India hypothesis assumes that Beijing made concessions to Burma in order to pressure Delhi into making concessions and concluding a compromise boundary settlement.¹¹⁷ The Sino-Burmese settlement did send a clear signal indicating Beijing's willingness to cede territory to a neighbor that was more valuable to it in strategic or logistical terms. The Namwan Assigned Tract was Chinese territory but provided a vital road linking the Shan and Kachin states and was therefore valuable to Burma. The boundary agreement with Burma generally followed the McMahon Line, indicating China's willingness to compromise while in principle not accepting the legitimacy of the McMahon Line. The message to India was that the "existing reality" (i.e., the Xinjiang-Tibet road that traverses the Aksai Chin) was vital to China and Beijing was willing to transfer territory in the eastern sector near strategically important areas to India (i.e., the "Chicken's Neck") and New Delhi should respond in the same magnanimous manner.¹¹⁸

The second hypothesis is more general, placing the Sino-Burma settlement in the context of China's competition with India for leadership in South and Southeast Asia. According to this hypothesis, China's boundary settlement with Burma cost little in terms of security for China but had a high return in terms of public relations. To appear magnanimous, China used the Burma settlement as an example of China's willingness to make accommodations. By being flexible, China was attempting to increase its prestige and promote its image as the great power in East Asia while also being a champion of "peaceful coexistence." One scholar concluded:

Only a fool could have thought that it was the territory or the frontiers which concerned China. After all, what threat does Burma pose to any of its neighbors? Obviously, therefore the Chinese intervention was to assert its informal suzerainty

¹¹⁶ Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* vol. 3, 1956-1964 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), 134.

¹¹⁷ Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, 133-34.

¹¹⁸ The Chicken's Neck is the narrow corridor connecting India with Arunachal Pradesh near the Chumbi Valley between Sikkim and Bhutan. See Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*, 53-55.

over Burma.....India stood silent during the Burma crisis awaiting its punishment at the hands of China.¹¹⁹

The Chinese calculus was “thus.....not this or that border or territory,” but the larger strategic objective to take “the offensive” against India.¹²⁰ The Sino-Burmese treaty unquestionably placed India in an unfavorable light, but China would not have compromised as it did for only cosmetic reasons and a possible short-term propaganda advantage over India. Broader concerns than just the border dispute with India motivated Beijing, and a better explanation of the boundary agreement with Burma requires it be placed in the broader context of China’s larger strategic concerns at the time.¹²¹

Nepal

The India factor is the basis of one hypothesis used to explain China’s conclusion of a boundary treaty with Nepal. This hypothesis turns on the timing of the settlement. Negotiations began in February 1960, two months before the Zhou-Nehru negotiations. In an 18 March meeting with Prime Minister Koirala, Mao personally agreed to divide Mount Everest and on 21 March agreed to respect the “traditional customary boundary” until concluding a formal treaty.¹²² Zhou publically confirmed this Chinese concession during his 26–29 April 1960 visit to Kathmandu to sign a peace and friendship treaty.¹²³

According to this hypothesis, a 28 June incident in Mustang—when China fired on a Nepalese patrol, killing one Nepalese soldier and taking several prisoners—was a calculated act by China to pressure Nepal to compromise and conclude a boundary treaty. However, if China’s objective for a settlement with Nepal was to pressure India to agree to a compromise settlement, this not only risked scuttling the boundary settlement with Nepal, undermining China’s tactic of making India appear uncompromising while Beijing was willing to conclude compromise boundary agreements, it also risked making China appear aggressive.

¹¹⁹ Wayne Wilcox, *India, Pakistan and the Rise of China* (New York: Walker and Co., 1964), 61.

¹²⁰ “Entry from the Journal of Soviet Ambassador to India Benediktov, Conversation with Indian Foreign Ministry General-Secretary R.K. Nehru,” 2 November 1962.

¹²¹ Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*, Ch. 3.

¹²² *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan*, 395-97; Han, ed., *Diplomacy of Contemporary China*, 184.

¹²³ China sought a non-aggression treaty but Nepal was unwilling to go that far. S.D. Muni, *Foreign Policy of Nepal* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1973), 105-6, 112.

A second hypothesis considers the broader aspects of Sino-Indian competition in South Asia and the Third World. MacFarquhar highlights this hypothesis stating, “Both Beijing and New Delhi were quite conscious of the importance of influencing opinion throughout Asia.”¹²⁴ Accordingly, the settlement with Nepal was an attempt to gain influence at India’s expense. Beijing limited friction over Mount Everest and did not claim the entire mountain, but “according to Nepal’s maps, [drew] the boundary along the middle of the peak.”¹²⁵ The message was clear: China could cause problems along the border with Nepal should it continue to pursue a “special relationship” with India at China’s expense. But, the compromise settlement made China appear magnanimous, first establishing a position of domination, and then accepting Nepal’s claims.¹²⁶

That this was Beijing’s calculation is unlikely; the Mount Everest dispute and especially the Mustang incident, if intentional, risked much more than China could hope to gain. From the outset, China made it clear it would not press its claim to complete control of Mount Everest. Pressing Nepal for concessions based on a debatable historical claim would have increased Sino-Nepalese friction. The Mustang incident alarmed King Mahendra and Prime Minister Koirala who then consulted with Nehru and the Indian defense minister. India pledged to defend Nepal.¹²⁷ China quickly accepted responsibility for the incident and renewed its request that each country establish embassies to facilitate better communication.

These two hypotheses do not consider China’s overall foreign policy objectives at the time. Larger strategic concerns in the early 1960s determined China’s eagerness to improve relations with Nepal. This settlement is better explained in the broader context of Beijing’s concerns over its deteriorating strategic environment—concerns that prompted China’s foreign policy of accommodation.

Pakistan

¹²⁴ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, 306.

¹²⁵ Xie Yixian, ed., *Zhongguo waijiao shi: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo shiqi 1949-1979* [A diplomatic history of China: the period of the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1979] (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1988), 251.

¹²⁶ Leo E. Rose, *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 228-229; Dutt, *China and the World: An Analysis of Communist China’s Foreign Policy*, 181.

¹²⁷ Muni, *Foreign Policy of Nepal*, 83-85, 110-11.

In late 1959, Pakistan broached the issue of boundary differences with China, but Beijing was reluctant to engage Pakistan. Eventually, China responded to Pakistan's initiative in February 1962, and on 3 May they announced negotiations that started on 12 October 1962, just eight days before China attacked India. They reached a boundary agreement with little difficulty, announced on 27 December, just hours before scheduled negotiations between Pakistan and India over Kashmir began. Many scholars assume that after negotiations with India were deadlocked, China sought to settle its border with Pakistan in an attempt to embarrass India and pressure New Delhi to break the impasse. There is even speculation that Zhou Enlai offered to "avoid commitments to Pakistan in return for border concessions from India."¹²⁸

However, this hypothesis does not consider other important factors. Beijing delayed responding to Pakistan's initiative and even then pushed off any discussions so as not to risk derailing the possibility of a Sino-India agreement. Beijing did not yet anticipate an armed confrontation with India and was holding out hope that a boundary settlement would be reached. A settlement with Pakistan would have undercut the possibility of an agreement with India.¹²⁹ During the July 1961 talks between Zhang Wenjin and Ambassador Parthasarathy, Parthasarathy made it clear to Zhang that if China sought a settlement with Pakistan, it would be "impossible not to consider this hostile."¹³⁰ China did not hastily conclude the boundary agreement with Pakistan and "wanted to move slowly so as not to get into greater difficulties with India" and "wanted to explore all possibilities of a peaceful settlement of its border dispute with India before undertaking any negotiations with Pakistan."¹³¹ Only after a compromise settlement with India appeared impossible, did China engage Pakistan.¹³² China justified engaging Pakistan, arguing, "there are practical problems that must be handled.....We

¹²⁸ W.M. Dobell, "Ramifications of the China-Pakistan Border Treaty," *Pacific Affairs* 37, no. 3 (Fall 1964):285; Alastair Lamb, "The Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 2 March 1963," *Australian Outlook* 18, 3 (December 1964):311-312; Anwar Hussain Syed, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), 89-93.

¹²⁹ Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*, 111; Mohammed Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 196), 162-63.

¹³⁰ "Memorandum of Three Conversations Between Director Zhang Wenjin and the Indian Ambassador Regarding Sino-Indian Border Issues and the Two Countries' Relations," 17 July 1961.

¹³¹ Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Ruler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 137; Syed, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale*, 91.

¹³² Xie, *Zhongguo waijiao shi: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo shiqi 1949-1979*, 253.

could not wait until after bloodshed occurs to talk.....This will only cause the imperialist elements intent on destroying China's relations with neighboring countries to clap their hands for joy."¹³³

When negotiations started, China insisted that the agreement be provisional, pending the outcome of the Kashmir dispute, thus leaving the door open for an eventual agreement with India. Liu Shaoqi told Pakistan's ambassador to China, (Major-General) N. A. M. Raza, "China and Pakistan will...sign a temporary agreement. This is for the sake of safeguarding a stable border and good neighborly relations...We are not intervening in Pakistan and India's dispute over Kashmir; this has consistently been our position."¹³⁴ China's ambassador told Ayub Khan that China did not want Pakistan to use the boundary settlement "merely as a lever to gain advantage over India."¹³⁵ The communiqué issued in March 1963, when the treaty was formally signed, expressed hope that the Sino-Indian boundary dispute would be settled by mutual accommodation and goodwill. Foreign Minister Chen Yi said, "China hopes to see friendship between Pakistan and India as much as China wants to maintain friendly relations with Pakistan."¹³⁶

A second hypothesis considers Sino-Indian rivalry for leadership among Afro-Asian states. Proponents of this hypothesis argue that Pakistan served China's interests in South Asia to eclipse Indian preeminence both in the region and among Afro-Asian states. Despite Pakistan's alliance with the West, Zhou Enlai received an enthusiastic welcome to Pakistan in October 1956 and closer ties ensued. The Sino-Pakistani boundary settlement did increase China's prestige among Third World states. Beijing highlighted its efforts to seek a settlement with India and underlined China's magnanimity toward its smaller neighbors.¹³⁷ Zhou stated, "Since the boundary questions left over by history are settled through friendly negotiations,

¹³³ "Memorandum of Conversation between Director Zhang Wenjin and Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy (1)," 17 July 1961.

¹³⁴ "Record of Conversation following Pakistani Ambassador to the PRC Raza's Presentation of Credentials to Liu Shaoqi," 1 September 1962, PRC FMA 105-01801-02, 28-34, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121571>.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Ruler*, 141.

¹³⁶ Han, ed., *Diplomacy of Contemporary China*, 188.

¹³⁷ Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 175.

and since China is bigger than these neighboring countries, China always made more concessions than the opposite party in the process of mutual accommodation in order to seek a settlement of the question.”¹³⁸ The larger objective of the settlement, some argue, was to diminish India’s status as a leader in Asia and to portray India as not dedicated to the principles of peaceful coexistence.¹³⁹

These two hypotheses, based on the centrality of the Sino-Indian conflict in determining China’s behavior, do not explain China’s motivation for rapprochement with Pakistan or the boundary settlement in the larger strategic context. There is evidence of a secret understanding for mutual support if either was involved in a military conflict.¹⁴⁰ It is helpful to keep in mind Beijing’s larger strategic concerns in order to fully explain China’s willingness to negotiate a boundary settlement with Pakistan.

Conclusion

In the early 1960s, China also settled boundary disputes with Afghanistan and Mongolia. Following the Sino-Mongolian settlement, Zhou pointed out that China had now solved “complicated boundary questions with other countries.” Clearly referring to India, he said this “reasonable settlement of the border question[s].....will be an example and an encouragement for border negotiations with other countries” and “it has been repeatedly proved by facts that, given sincerity on both sides, the differences in social systems does not in any way hinder the peaceful settlement of issues.”¹⁴¹ The message to India was clear; China wanted a compromise settlement that would resolve an issue that hampered conciliation in Sino-Indian relations.

Placing China’s boundary disputes and settlements within a larger strategic context helps to understand China’s aims in seeking such settlements. China’s larger strategic concerns in the wake of the GLF, the unfolding Sino-Soviet dispute, the escalating involvement of the United States in South and Southeast Asia, and deteriorating relations with India, all concerned

¹³⁸ Quoted in S.M. Burke, “Sino-Pakistani Relations,” *Orbis* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1964):391-404.

¹³⁹ B.N. Goswami, *Pakistan and China: A Study of their Relations* (New York: Allied Publishers, 1971), 89, 92-93.

¹⁴⁰ Hyer, *The Pragmatic Dragon*, 115-16.

¹⁴¹ “Record of Conversation between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Mongolian Leader J. Zedenbal,” 26 December 1962, SAPMO-BArch, JIV 2/202-283, B1.0, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/112072>.

Beijing. These larger strategic concerns motivated Beijing to take a new tack in its foreign policy. While not formally adopting the policy of “Three Conciliations and One Reduction,” China’s behavior in the early 1960s shows that China did pursue a policy of reducing tensions with its neighbors, and boundary settlements were a major way to facilitate this conciliation. To treat China’s settlements with other countries as a function of the Sino-India boundary dispute obscures the larger strategic concerns that were at play and how these motivated China to seek an early settlement of its boundaries, especially with its South Asian neighbors.

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