

**SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE :  
THE QUEST FOR SETTLEMENT (1980 ONWARDS)**

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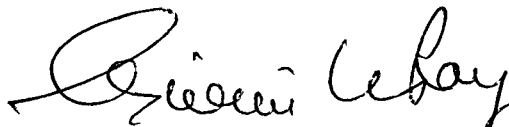
## CERTIFICATE

Certified that this dissertation entitled "Sino-Indian Border Dispute : The Quest for Settlement (1980 Onwards)" submitted by Kishore Chandra Swain in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is his own work and has not been submitted to any other University for the award of any Degree.

We recommend that it should be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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**TO**

***My BAPA and BOU***

***who gave me***

***more love than I deserved***

***more care than I required***

***and more blessings than I desired***

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## PREFACE

While I was writing this preface, Chinese Vice-premier and Foreign Minister Mr. Qian Qichen was holding official talks with his Indian hosts on a wide ranging area. An agreement on the avoidance of double taxation had already been signed by this time. The Chinese dignitary's agenda also included an agreement on opening of another trading post in Himachal Pradesh; Calling on the President and Prime Minister; and holding talks with the commerce and foreign ministers.

This is in fact another instance of the positive trend towards a thaw in Sino-Indian relations, which has been on a distinct up-swing since last one decade or so. The thrust of my work stems from such a trend. In a modest effort I have tried to analyse and explain the factors and environment contributing to such a development. It is an analytical study with prescriptive implications, setting aside the story telling approach, although the help of history is conspicuous in explaining the past. This is more an empirical than theoretical work. However in no way this is belittling the theoretical exercise. While writing this work, I felt that the past was more in terms of neo-realism that emphasized on anarchy, balance of power and stability of the bipolar nuclearised world while the futurist cooperations may still continue in the framework

of national security with a pinch of combined survivalist idealism. If one deeply scrutinises the present Sino-Indian relations, it seems, as if it is a Unique combination of neo-realist and neo-liberal norms !

The work is mainly based on three tentative propositions. First, there is a correlation between the changing international environment and the so called thaw in Sino-Indian relations; second, there has been a perceptual and attitudinal change in both India and China ; and last, a bit speculative one, the Sino-Indian border with all probability will remain calm and peaceful for few years from now, at least till the implementation of the LAC agreement.

The sources of my data and material are largely secondary, although primary sources like interviews, Government Reports, Notes etc. have been resorted to. Although the title of the work confines itself to the Border problem, the gamut of my work is much broader as the border dispute is attempted to be seen in the larger context of Sino-Indian relations. However, the work is not an end in itself. There is obviously considerable scope for further research.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks and indebtedness to those, who have contributed more or less, directly or indirectly for the preparation of this work. The first and foremost among them all is my supervisor Dr. Rakesh Gupta. To me, he is more than a guide, more than friend and more than a philosopher. Without his valuable

guidance and insightful suggestions this work would not have seen light. My most sincere gratitude goes to him.

I also convey my gratitude and thanks to Prof. Aswini K. Ray , Prof. C.P. Bhambri, Prof. G.P. Deshpande, Prof. V.P. Dutt, Dr. Sudha Pai, Dr. Vivekanandan, Dr. Nancy Jetly and Mr. Sujit Dutta who enlightened me with their knowledge and guidance and spent their valuable time and energy for me. Their suggestions and advices were of immense help.

My BAPA and BOU, and BHAI and BHAUJA who shared their blood and bread with me, have made me what I am. I can never compensate them, I only owe myself to them. I convey my love to my niece MEGA, whose sweet smile has become a unique inspiration for my life and work. I owe a special gratitude to both my sisters and their spouses who still consider me a child and put some money in my pocket whenever I meet them.

I also convey my thanks to my friends especially, Sanjay, Amulya, Manoj, Manoranjan, Rama, Satya, Prabeer, Jayant, Deva, Alok, Santosh, Keshav, Ashok, Lakhi, Smita, Ruby and Susu, who shared their love and affection, knowledge and experience and sorrow and celebration with me, besides extending a helping hand when ever I needed.

Last but not the least, my thanks are to Sharma Computers for typing the manuscript with great care and commitment. I take the responsibility for the errors and drawbacks if any.

July 1994

*Kishore Chandra Swain*  
KISHORE CHANDRA SWAIN

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE BACKDROP

Every state has a boundary or border,<sup>1</sup> as it is inextricably linked with the state system. Boundary separates the areas subject to different political control or sovereignty. The relations between two neighbouring states are largely dependent on this boundary system. The relations "reach their most critical stage in the form of problems relating to territory. Boundary disputes, conflicting claim to newly discovered land and invasions by expanding nations into the territory of weaker neighbours have been conspicuous among the causes of war."<sup>2</sup> The seventy odd boundary disputes at present, throughout the world have always been threats to a peaceful world order. Territorial disputes are the most irritating aspects of relations among nations besides ideology. Thousands of wars have been fought on this account since the inception of the state system. The India-China conflict of 1962, Sino-Soviet

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<sup>1</sup>There is of course a technical difference between boundary and border, although both are often used interchangeably. While boundary refers to the lines separating two state systems, the adjacent areas which fringe the boundary are called border. Again, when we talk of boundary we refer to land, maritime and air boundaries, although it is land boundary which is often used to mean what we generally understand by boundary. J.R.V. Prescott, Political Frontiers and Boundaries(London, 1987).

<sup>2</sup>N.L. Hill, Claims to Territory in international law and relations (New York, 1976), p.3.



clash of 1969, eight year long Iraq-Iran war in eighties, British-Argentine conflict of 1981, Libya-Chad war in late eighties, long pending Arab-Israel conflict and more recently the Gulf war between Iraq and the US led multinational forces--all were based on territorial disputes. Ratzel, the prominent German geographer, believes that the state system is like a living organism which grows and decays. The boundary and the adjacent territory called border forms, the epidermis of this organism and provides protection and allows exchanges to occur.<sup>3</sup> States have grown with the aggrandisement of territories. Britain, France, Belgium and Germany were therefore hell bent on acquiring colonies wherever they could. Ratzel asserts, political balance between countries is to a large extent dependent on the characteristic of borders between them.<sup>4</sup> Spykman, an American political scientist also supports Ratzel's notion when he says, boundary changes will be indications of a shift in the balance of forces caused either by an increase in driving force on one side of the frontier or by a decrease in resistance on the other.<sup>5</sup>

From this point of view boundary can be summed up,  
(a) as the area within which the growth and decline of state is organised;

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<sup>3</sup>J.R.V. Presscott, p.9

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p.10

- (b) as a dynamic feature when fixed it witness a temporary halt in political expansion;
- (c) as a temporary line where opposed power of neighbouring states is neutralised ; and
- (d) as a lines of power equilibrium.

Although, one may argue that since 1945 most of the changes in the balance of power between adjoining states have not been accompanied by any changes in the position of international boundaries, rather have been affected by ideological economic and military factors, it is not worth denying that Great Britain lost most of its colonies with relative decline in its power and more recently Soviet Union disintegrated into pieces with the loss of its super power status.

Boundaries often being the cause of conflict can also act as a basis for cooperation. Lord Curzon once said "frontiers are indeed the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issue of war and peace".<sup>6</sup> On 23 October 1950 Belgium and the Netherlands defined an underground mining boundary in the vicinity of the Meuse which was independent of their boundary on the surface. This was done to reduce to a minimum the amount of exploitable coal which had to be left in the ground. Austria and Yugoslavia agreed on 19th March 1993 to create frontier strips on each side of their common boundary.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p.5

Citizens living within these boundaries were entitled to cross the boundary without the usual frontiers, if they owned property which straddled the boundary or if they were concerned with herding livestock or forestry on the opposite side of the line. On 17 May 1963 Burma and Thailand set up a joint committee to confer and agree on measures to strengthen border security, to solve specific boundary problems, and to devise measures to promote economic and cultural cooperation.

The Sino-Indian border, the area of our interest is however more conspicuous for conflict than cooperation. No other border has thus been so an area of academic interest and curiosity as the Sino-Indian border. No other border has been so intensely explained, discussed and documented. The amount of talks and thoughts thrown on this particular area is so vast it gives a paradoxical picture and a general student is often confused to know the actualities. The Sino-Indian Border as commonly understood is thus a misunderstood border.

#### **I. A BRIEF SURVEY OF LITERATURE**

The available discourse on Sino-Indian border dispute can broadly be put under two schools of thought--the Sino-centric school comprising the people holding a view sympathetic to Chinese stand and the Indo-centric school consisting of the protagonists of the Indian views.

effort is high but the rate of success is suspect. Pure personification of their exercise seriously erodes the value of these works. However as 'sources' of historical and chronological information they are of immense use.

The Sino centric school is mainly represented by Neville Maxwell, Alastair Lamb, A.P. Rubin, Karunakar Gupta and others. The main contentions of this school are three fold :

- (1) It believes the Northern Boundary of India which India claims as legitimate was a British imperial legacy and India is not entitled to reap the benefit of British 'Aggression' ;
- (2) It questions the legality of Simla convention and rejects the validity of McMohan line ;
- (3) It emphasises the necessity of considering the dispute from Chinese point of view.

The British thrust of aggrandisement was no doubt imperialistic. But carrying their conquests upto the Himalayan crest they were not quenching their imperial thrust rather they were consolidating their hold over India for both strategical and administrative reasons. The area well upto the Himalayan watershed was once the seat of the famous Indian Kingdoms of Kamrupa, Garhwal, Bashalir. Spiti and Ladakh in ancient and medieval periods. By the time of British departure they had brought about the political union of diverse and hitherto separate regions of 564

princely states and a number of provinces which they had occupied and brought under their hold through 'aggression.' Had not India inherited this British legacy, India would not have been india any longer. It would have fallen apart into territories not less than a thousand. Consolidation of territory and establishment of a nation state is not imperialism in any sense. The successor state under international law is well entitled to inherit such legacy of consolidation of the predecessor.

This school further contends that India's boundary in the western sector was never defined. Neither Ladakh was a part of Kashmir nor Aksaichin was a part of Ladakh. Maxwell writes, "demarcation has never taken place in Asiatic countries except under European pressure and by the intervention of European agents. But a distrustful China was for the most part able to resist or evade British pressure and so at both ends of Himalayas no man's lands still separated China and India."<sup>8</sup>

Maxwell writes, "by 19th century Ladakh was best regarded as part of Tibet... and was thus unquestionably under the Chinese control."<sup>9</sup> This is however, distortions of history. "It is clearly established by Ladakhi chroniclers, by western writers like A.H. Francke, Karl Marx, Luciano Petech and others and by Chinese documents

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<sup>8</sup> Maxwell, India's China war (Bombay, 1970), p.21

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.24

that Ladakh was never a part of Tibet."<sup>10</sup> The monumental work on the history and strategic importance of Ladakh by Fisher, Roe and Huttenback based on an extensive study of Indian, Tibetan and Chinese documents make it clear that while culturally linked up with Tibet, Ladakh has always had close political relations with some Indian state or others.

Maxwell does not also approve of the Johnson alignment, which demarcated the Indo-Chinese border in Aksaichin in 1865. He sees a correlation between this alignment and the appointment of Johnson as Kashmir commissioner in Ladakh. This is probably the outcome of Maxwell's extra investigative journalistic mind.

The Johnson alignment of 1865 was also further confirmed by Major General Sir John Ardagh's (then Director of Military Intelligence on the British General Staff) 1897 proposal in which he considered the Johnson alignment as appropriate from British India's security point of view. Sir Claude McDonald, the British Minister in Peking, proposed the Johnson-Ardagh boundary alignment to China (with significant modifications as it gave some portion of Aksaichin area on the north side to China) in 1899. China did not reply to this proposal. It is because China was either disinterested in boundary demarcation or did not

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<sup>10</sup>S.P. Verma, Struggle for Himalayas (New Delhi, 1971), pp. 115-16.

want to afford the risk of taking care of an inaccessible, inhospitable, mountainous area where not a 'blade of grass' grows and which was already under the British Indian occupation.

Aksaichin area was used by the Ladakhis for centuries for salt and wood collection is a well known fact. Carey, a British traveller who visited the area in 1886 wrote that Pengong Lake area within Ladakh and Aksaichin area were used for salt collection by Ladakhis. He observed that Tibetan border began from Lankla Pass.<sup>11</sup>

Maxwell has selectively referred to Johnson-Ardagh alignment only. A number of similar surveys had also been conducted in this area under the auspices of the government of India in the 19th and 20th Century under the leadership of Godwin Austin (1862), Ryall (1862-63), Cayley (1870), Montagerie (1871) and Trotter (1873) followed by Stein (1908) and De Phillip (1913-14). British-Indian survey patrols visited this area frequently between 1911-1949.<sup>12</sup>

A number of official Indian maps such as those attached to the gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh published in 1890 and the imperial gazetteer of India (1887 and 1907 editions) showed Lingzitan plains and Aksaichin as parts of Kashmir territory. Similarly in the first edition of the

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<sup>11</sup> S.P. Sen, Sino-Indian Border Question: A Historical Review (Calcutta, 1971) p. 162.

<sup>12</sup> S.P. Verma, n.10, p. 121

maps of Turkestan, Kashmir border was shown "as extending to the Kuenlun including Lingzitan plains and Aksaichin."<sup>13</sup> The map prepared by Hung Tachen, the Chinese minister at the court of St. Petersburg in the early 1890s, represented the real Chinese boundary. In this map no portion of the Yarkand and river valley, Karakash river valley or Sahidulla was claimed as Chinese Territory.<sup>14</sup>

Alastair Lamb writes "throughout the British period as a part of strategic policies, the border was distorted this way or that way and by shifts and changes in the course of British relations with China and Russia."<sup>15</sup> But the fact is, the British could change or shift the boundary as it was a 'no man's land' (both Lamb and Maxwell believed so), if not directly under the British Indian control. If Aksaichin were really a no man's land, "the assertion of Kashmir right through effective occupation would by itself suffice to prove Indian title to the territory."<sup>16</sup>

The second contention of this school raising doubts on the legality of Simla convention is also equally untenable. This school argues that China attended Simla convention on

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<sup>13</sup>S.C. Bajpai, Northern Frontiers of India: Western and Central Sector, (Bombay, 1970) p.82

<sup>14</sup>S.P. Sen, N.11, p. 104.

<sup>15</sup> Alastair Lamb, China-India Border: The origins of the disputed boundaries (London, 1964), p. 39.

<sup>16</sup>M.W. Fisher and L.E. Rose, "Ladakh and the Sino Indian crisis" Asian survey, 2, 1962, p.32.



equal footing with Tibet under direct British threat. Maxwell writes, "weakness had brought an unwilling China to the conference, weakness and the coercive diplomatic methods of Britain and of McMahon himself kept her there."<sup>17</sup> Karunakar Gupta quoting Chinese sources writes that the Chinese attended the convention as the British threatened to refuse official recognition to China, and threatened to withdraw the promised loans. Again the Chinese provisional president, who was himself an Anglo-Phille had secret imperial ambitions for which he harboured with the British.<sup>18</sup> But the question is, if the Chinese could attend the convention under threat, they could well have been threatened to put their signature on the draft convention. How could they dare to refuse to sign even after they had initialled it? Similarly, they could have well refused to attend it at all.

If the Chinese government were so weak how did the weakness not prevent them from protesting against the British settlement of Burma-China boundary in 1906, 1911-13 and 1937?

Another contention of this school is that definition<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Maxwell, n. 8, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> See Karunakar Gupta, Spot light on Sino-Indian frontier (Calcutta, 1982), p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> The terms like allocation, definition, delimitation, delineation and demarcation are often used to explain the boundary system. Allocation means the initial political division of territory between the two states. Delimitation

of India's north-eastern boundary was not among the functions of the conference. But "in so far as the convention sought to place a limit on the extent to which China could interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet, it was certainly of some importance to the Indo-Tibetan border.<sup>20</sup> 'When our neighbour's wall catches fire it automatically becomes our business too.' Again if it was exclusively on the question of Sino-Tibetan border what was the role of British-India then?

Even China did not object to the inclusion of Indo-Tibetan border as an item in the convention. The convention was initialled by the Chinese plenipotentiary along with Tibet and the British-India representatives. China repudiated the convention objecting to the proposed Sino-Tibetan border, it had no objection with regard to the proposed Indo-Tibetan border. Maxwell's contention that the agreement was concluded behind the back of the Chinese representative who was "not told what was being signed and the declaration was not published for many years,"<sup>21</sup> does not have force, as the negotiation, with Tibetan

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means the selection of a boundary site and its definition, definition is a description of boundary in words, delineation is a marking of the boundary on the maps. Demarcation refers to the construction of the boundary in the landscape.

<sup>20</sup> G.N. Rao, India China Border: A Reappraisal (Bombay, 1968), p. 85.

<sup>21</sup> Maxwell, M.8, p. 49.

representative were conducted simultaneously with the Chinese representative and at the same place. So there is no question of secrecy or foul play.

Maxwell believes that the conference broke down the moment China repudiated the initials of its representative. "McMohan had all along been under instructions from London not to sign bilaterally with the Tibetan if the Chinese refused...But London's confirmation did not reach him in time."<sup>22</sup> He further writes..."The Simla conference thus ended in diplomatic hugger-mugger with two participants, in what was meant to be a tripartite conference openly signing a secret declaration with one text of a draft convention initialled by all three parties, another initialled by two and a map initialled by all three, but the Central conclusion remains wholly clear and was accepted as such by British government at that time that the Simla Conference produced no agreement to which government of China was a party."<sup>23</sup> Alastair Lamb even goes a step further when he says "McMohan line was to some extent provisional and experimental."<sup>24</sup>

This school also questions the legitimacy of Tibet to reach an agreement with a foreign country. Neither Tibet was a sovereign power nor it had required international

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 48-49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>24</sup> Lamb, n. 15, p. 548.

legal personality to do so, this school claims.

China and Tibet participated in the Simla convention on equal footing. It was a tripartite conference all the participants having equal legal status. By not objecting to the given status of Tibet, China tacitly recognised Tibet's independence. In fact "the events of 1911-12 marked the re-emergence of Tibet as a fully sovereign state independent in fact and in law of Chinese control."<sup>25</sup> Britain also categorically told the Chinese representative in the Simla conference that it recognised Tibet as an independent nation having no allegiance to China. Before the Simla conference in 1913, Tibet had already entered into treaty relation with Mongolia in 1913. Tibet was an independent state (from 1912-1951) is evident from the seven point agreement of 1951 between China and Tibet, where point one reads.

"The Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the motherland - the people's Republic of china". The provisions of the agreement of 1951 especially articles 1 and 14 clearly show that Tibet had been handling its external affairs independently until 1951. Interestingly, China under the Sino-Burmese Agreement of 1960 has already recognised the Tibet-Burmese side of the McMohan agreement delineated in the same Simla Convention of 1914.

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<sup>25</sup> A. Appadorai, India's Foreign Policy and Relations (New Delhi 1985), p. 133.

The above instances are enough to establish the legitimacy of Tibet as a treaty making international legal entity, thereby validating the legality of Simla convention and consequent McMohan line.

Maxwell supports the demand for de novo negotiation, for the delimitation of the whole boundary. He believes the non-inclusion of boundary question in the Sino-Indian negotiation of 1954 was a mistake on the part of India. "The decision not to submit the McMohan line for re-negotiations had closed off possibilities of formal agreement between India and China."<sup>26</sup> He does not accept the Indian stand that "McMohan line was firm and legitimate boundary and thus not open to discussion" on the ground that India very well knows that China did not recognise the line. He even raises the question, if McMohan line was the definite boundary then why did not India negotiate western sector? Maxwell's question does not seem pertinent as neither India nor China was interested in discussing boundary question. While India felt there was no 'dispute' with China as such, China was of the opinion that 'time was not ripe for it' just to resort to aggression eight years later.

Even if China does not recognise McMohan line, there

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<sup>26</sup> Maxwell, n.8, p.81.

is no binding obligation under international law that every international boundary should be delimited by a formal treaty. Taylor in his treatise on International Public Law opines, where there is real doubt or ignorance as to a frontier and no express agreement concerning it, "if the states are separated by ranges or mountains or hills the water divide marks the boundary line or frontier."<sup>27</sup>

In India's case "the boundary is a traditional and historical one determined along majestic natural features, i.e. the watershed (often ranging in height from 14,000 to 25,000 feet) sanctified by treaties and reinforced by exercise of administrative jurisdiction."<sup>28</sup>

All the required features - natural boundary, traditional and customary practices and centuries old occupation validate Indian claim. There is no necessity of having a formal treaty as it is a widely accepted rule in the international law that where demarcation is not possible the customary line substantiated by custom and tradition is legally accepted.

The third contention of this school is -- the issue needs the consideration of the Chinese point of view also. Lamb writes "it is difficult to convince anyone from India that there is a Chinese point of view which deserves

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<sup>27</sup>Harris Taylor, A Treatise in International Public Law (Chicago, 1901), pp. 298-99.

<sup>28</sup>Appadorai and Rajan, n.25, p. 130.

consideration." Someone's point of view does not automatically become valid only because of the fact that he has a point of view. Views ought to be adjudged by their merit, not by their mere existence. Again, Indian scholars are not so partial or lopsided as both Maxwell and Lamb think them to be. They are well capable of examining issues on their merit taking all the aspects into account. There are a number of scholars who have taken their independent stand in contrast to the official Indian stand.

The main protagonists of this school claim that they have never been unfair to the evidences they have gathered. But this is true that they have been unfair to Indian claims. They make no secrets of the fact that their "intention is to do justice to the Chinese case and to view history through Chinese spectacles."<sup>29</sup> They have tried to seek, select and analyse their material in a manner which suits to their theorization. In the name of objective enquiry they sometimes make purposeful analysis, try to relate events and findings with particular situations to substantiate their argument.

Maxwell's work carries a very provocative title-- 'India's China war.' What prompted the author to believe that it was India's China war (rather than China's India aggression) is neither clear nor substantiated. Lamb claims (in the preface of 'Sino-Indian Border in Ladakh') that an

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<sup>29</sup> G.N. Rao, n. 20, p.3.

extremely hostile review of his book "The China-India Border " by Sir Olaf Caroe was reproduced and circulated by Indian High Commission in Canberra. As Mr. Lamb is entitled to his own views, so also Indian scholars and officials. It is the duty of the embassy of a nation to protect its national interest in the country it is stationed to its best level. From that point of view Indian High Commission's act is not questionable.

Karunakar Gupta, it appears, has been more true to his ideology than his country. His greatest contribution is, he has been 'honest' to his conscience setting aside his nationalism, patriotism and the prevalent anti-Chinese fervor throughout India.

The Indo-centric school is led by scholars like Dr. S. Gopal, M.W. Fisher, L.E. Rose, Sir Olaf Caroe and a host of Indian scholars.<sup>30</sup>

This school<sup>31</sup> has not only been successful in questioning the Chinese stand, they have also effectively eliminated the points raised by the Sino-centric scholars. However, the major drawback of the school is that they have probably failed to convince the world that India's stand is not only genuine but also legally valid. As a result of which Sino-centric views have gained currency and certain

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<sup>30</sup> See the Bibliography for their works.

<sup>31</sup> The arguments of this school have already been represented by the present author to counter the Chinese contentions.



western scholars have become sympathetic to Chinese point of view. This school has also contributed to the emergence of a widespread anti-Chinese fever in India which works against a negotiated settlement on the principle of 'give and take.'

## II. A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The boundary between India and China extends over 4060 kms. from north west Kashmir to the tripartite junction of India, Burma and China near Talu Pass in the east, separating the Indian territories of Kashmir, H.P., U.P., Sikkim, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh from the Sinkiang and Tibet regions of China. From geographical point of view this 4060 km long frontiers have been divided into three sectors, the western sector, the middle sector and the eastern sector.

The whole northern frontier, the government of India claims, has been either defined by treaty or recognised by custom or by both. "The demarcation further follows the geographical principle of watershed which in most cases but not in all, is the crest of the Himalayan boundary."<sup>32</sup> K. Gopalchari writes, "Determined by geography confirmed by traditional and custom, sanctified by treaties and reinforced by continuous exercise through the centuries of

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<sup>32</sup> S.P. Verma, n.10, p. 125.

administrative jurisdiction appropriate to the areas concerned, it runs along the majestic watershed ranges such as the Aghil, Mustagh, the Kuenlun, the Kailash, the Zaskar and the crest of the Himalayas which constitute a geological and geographical unity."<sup>33</sup>

#### **THE WESTERN SECTOR**

The boundary between Ladakh in the north east Kashmir and Chinese territory in Sinkiang and Tibet is known as western sector. Since centuries, Ladakh was either part of India or was independent, but never a part of Tibet or China. "The frontier between Ladakh and Tibet has been covered by treaty provisions since 1684, i.e. the peace treaty signed at Tingmosgang after a war between Ladakh and Tibet."<sup>34</sup> Further this frontier was more or less unchanged in the 17th century. After the Dogra war with Tibet a treaty was concluded in 1842 under which the traditional boundary was reaffirmed (the parties to this treaty were Sh. Khalsaji and Sh. Maharaj Saha Bahadur Raja Gulab Singh on the one hand and the emperor of China and the Lama Guru of Lhasa on the other). The boundary was however, not explicitly defined. It was stated to be in accordance with old customs. When the modern state of Jammu and Kashmir was

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<sup>33</sup> See Appadorai and Rajan, n 25, p. 130.

<sup>34</sup> K. Krishna Rao, Sino-Indian Boundary Question and International Law (New Delhi, 1962), p.12.

created by the treaty of Amritsar in 1846 (signed between Gulab Singh Maharaja of J & K and the British), it was decided by the British to demarcate the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh. The British informed the Tibetan and Chinese governments of the proposed boundary demarcation and invited them to participate. As neither the Chinese nor the Tibetan could cooperate, the British acted unilaterally and sent a survey party. The survey commissioners drew a boundary from little north of the Pongong lake to the Spite rive and stopped there creating a gap between the Pangong lake and Karakoram pass. The gap was provided by an officer of the Survey of India, W.H. Johnson in 1865. The Johnson alignment of 1865 was also further confirmed by Major General Sir John Ardagh's proposal. Sir Cloude MacDonald the British Minister in Peking proposed the Johnson-Ardagh boundary alignment to China in 1899, China did not respond to this proposal. The Chinese silence led some British officials to favour advanced boundary alignment on the ground of containing Russia threat from the north, while some others were in favour of moderate ones. The 1899 Johnson alignment was in fact a compromise between the advanced and moderate extremes.

The Johnson map became the foundation of all the survey of India maps constructed thereafter. The Chinese for the first time raised objections to the British maps showing Aksaichin within Kashmir in 1895 or early 1896 on

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the instigation of Russia.<sup>35</sup> This led to a prolonged discussion in the foreign affairs department of government of India where the consensus was, Aksaichin is a general name for an ill defined and very elevated even at the north east of Ladakh and that while the western part of it belonged to Kashmir, the eastern part (beyond Johnson alignment) belonged to China. Johnlall quoting from a note of 8th February 1897 says "our maps show two Aksaichins - one in China and other in Kashmir."<sup>36</sup>

Due to internal complications and disorder China stopped interfering with people in the south off the Kuenlun mountains and never raised the boundary question again. The British government as it was concerned with the internal freedom struggle could not pay further attention to the borders.

By 1947, when the British left India they had not made up their minds which line to select, though they had kept their options open either by omitting external boundaries from their maps or indicating rather advanced ones. In 1950s, the Indian government published maps showing a Sinkiang-Kashmir boundary which was in effect a compromise between the British extremes.

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<sup>35</sup> Parshotam Mehra, "Tibet and Russia Intrigue," Royal Central Asia Journal, 1958, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> John Lall,, Aksaichin and Sino-Indian Conflict, (New Delhi, 1989), p. 160.

### **The Central Sector**

In the central sector the frontier extends from the trijunction of Nepal, Tibet and India to south eastern corner of Jammu and Kashmir. The Sikkim-Tibet part of the Border also comes under the sector. Along its entire length the boundary follows the geographical principles and is considered as traditionally fixed. The boundary of this area runs through Lepu, Dharma, Kungri Bingri, Niti, Mana and Shipki passes and has a easier access to Tibet. The Sikkim Tibet part of this sector had been defined in the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1890 following a specified watershed.

### **The Eastern Sector and the McMohan Line**

The boundary in the eastern sector extends from the trijunction of India, Burma and Tibet to that between Bhutan India and Tibet. The boundary in this sector characterised by natural, traditional, administrative and ethnic features, has also been confirmed by a tripartite treaty agreement between British India, Tibet and China (China later repudiated the agreement) in the Simla convention of 1913-14.

The Simla convention was convened by the British with the following objectives:

- a) To decide the question of Tibetan autonomy and the nature of Chinese rights in Tibet;
- b) To determine the boundary line between Tibet and China

and the degree of Chinese control over Tibetan territory;

- c) For the alignment of Indo-Tibetan Border in the north eastern sector.

The convention was held in eight formal sessions attended by the plenipotentiaries of China (Ivan Chen) Tibet (Lonchen Satra) and British-India (Arther McMohan who was the foreign secretary of government of India) with equal status. The first two sessions took place at Simla respectively on 13th October and 18th November 1913 and the next three were held in Delhi on 12th January, 17th January and 11th March 1914, and the last three were again held in Simla on 7th and 22nd April (reconvened on 2nd April) and 3rd July respectively in 1914. The meeting was presided over by Sir Henery McMohan. The meeting was characterised by high claims and counter claims and there was hardly any meeting point. The Tibetan representative claimed complete independence and sovereignty and insisted on the return of all Tibetan territories under Chinese occupation. He also demanded compensation for all the exactions of money and other properties from the Tibetan government and people.

The Chinese representative Ivan Chen put his country's claim even higher than those of Tibet. He pleaded that Tibet formed an integral part of China and China had the right to guide Tibet in her foreign and military affairs.

As the differences between the two sides remained

irreconcilable and a breakdown seemed inevitable, both the Chinese and Tibetan representatives requested Sir McMahon to support some definite solution of the frontier problem, which they would refer to their government without delay. "McMahon had possibly anticipated such an impasse and had already worked out in consultation with London a solution which was likely to afford satisfaction to the contending parties."<sup>37</sup>

Simultaneously with the tripartite negotiations between British-India, Tibet and China, McMahon was also holding two other sets of bi-partite negotiations with Tibet, one related to the boundary alignment between India and Tibet in the north eastern sector of India and the other was relating to a new trade agreement between the two countries.

From January 1st to June 31st 1914, the representatives of both the countries considered the proposed alignment of the Indo-Tibetan frontier with meticulous care and in a spirit of 'give and take.' The broad principle adopted in the delineation of the frontiers was the principles of watershed generally followed in demarcating frontiers in the inaccessible mountainous regions. On March 21, 1914, Tibetan government consented to the agreement reached by Indian and Tibetan

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<sup>37</sup>Parshotam Mehra, North-eastern frontier: A documentary study of the internecine rivalry between India, Tibet and China, (Delhi, 1979), p. 200.

representatives. On March 24th and 25th the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries exchanged notes on the alignment with maps attached to it drawing the boundary line in red. This mutually agreed Indo-Tibetan boundary was popularly known a McMohan line.

Taking both the tripartite convention attended by China, Tibet and British-India and the bipartite negotiations held between British-India and Tibet, McMohan put forward the following solutions.<sup>38</sup>

- a) Tibet would be divided into two zones. The eastern zone closer to China was called inner Tibet and the western zone with Lhasa as the capital as outer Tibet. The frontiers of both the zones were clearly defined.
- b) Chinese suzerainty over the whole of Tibet was recognised. But outer Tibet was made fully autonomous under the Dalai Lama's government. The Dalai Lama's government was further to retain existing rights particularly ecclesiastical rights in inner Tibet, which was put under Chinese control.
- c) The frontier between Tibet and India along a line negotiated by Sir Henery McMohan was clearly defined, which was popularly called McMohan line.

McMohan spelt out this solution in the form of a draft convention and the outlines of outer Tibet and inner Tibet

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<sup>38</sup> H.C. Heda, India China Border Problem (Bureau of parliament, New Delhi, 1960), p. 20.



were shown on the accompanying map by a blue line and the outer frontier of Tibet in the direction of north-eastern India was shown by a red line. The convention was then initialled by all the three parties on 29th April, 1914 however, the Chinese government dishonoured the act of its plenipotentiary and declined to ratify the convention. They repudiated the convention on the ground that they could not accept the proposed boundary between outer and inner Tibet. However, they did not object to the proposed Indo-Tibetan Border or the McMohan line.

The British were however, prepared for such a contingency. On 25th June 1914, they informed the Chinese government that unless the convention was signed by the end of this month, British government would hold themselves free to sign if separately with Tibet and China would lose all privileges and advantages which the tripartite convention secured to them. Subsequently the Chinese came forward with a fresh proposal with an explanatory map. In this map the red line dividing Indo-Tibetan border or the McMohan line remained unaltered and the Chinese made changes only in the blue line-the boundary between outer and inner Tibet. The Tibetan government, however, rejected this proposal.

Sir Henery McMohan according to the anticipated plans signed the bilateral treaty with Tibetan representative Lonchen Satra on 4th July 1914 keeping China away from the

convention. As a result the Simla convention which was originally designed to be a tripartite convention, became an Anglo-Tibetan bi-partite convention, the validity of which was not questioned by any one at that time including China.

### III. THE WAR AND AFTERMATH

The people's republic of China was established on 1st October, 1949, after the communists threw the nationalist Kuomintang out of power. India was the second country after Burma to recognise communist China, with the hope that it would strengthen the immemorial friendship between the two great countries bringing peace and stability to Asia and world. However, the aggressive instance of Chinese foreign policy was displayed in 1950 when China occupied Tibet ignoring India's advice not to take resort to military action, and proved itself to be a potential enemy.

Chinese maps published in 1950 showed its boundaries with India right upto the Brahmaputra foothills. In a reply to India's protests in 1951, the Chinese assured the Indian government that those maps were not official maps but old Kuomintang maps. In October, 1954, when Nehru visited China he drew the attention of Chao-en-lai about certain Chinese maps which had shown incorrect boundary alignment between

the two countries and the later repeated the explanation given in 1951. However in 1958, a magazine 'China Pictorial' published maps which incorporated about 50,000 sq. miles of Indian territories, with China claiming four divisions of NEFA (Kamang, Subansiri, Siang and Lohit), some areas in the northern UP, large areas in Ladakh and a big slice of Bhutan and Sikkim. India's protest of 24th August 1958 brought a reply on 3rd November, 1958 that these maps were old reproduction and China had "not yet undertaken a survey of its boundary nor consulted with the countries concerned and pending such survey and consultation, it would not make changes in the boundary on its own".<sup>39</sup>

In 1954 (29th April) when an agreement between India and China on Trade and intercourse between the Tibet region and India was signed (marking the Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai era) it was laid down that traders and pilgrims of both the countries were to travel through six passes - Shipkila pass, Manapass, Niti pass, Kungri Bingri pass, Dharma pass and Lipulakh pass. However, in the agreement no mention was made about the location of the passes or to which country they belonged, albeit the emerging disagreement on the Border question. The preamble of the agreement on the otherhand emphasised on five principles popularly known as

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<sup>39</sup>Search for China Policy (Proceedings of a Seminar SIS, JNU, 1989), p. 20.

'Panchasheel'-mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non aggression; mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, virtually defying the existence of any dispute on border.

In 1959, for the first time China raised questions on the validity of McMohan line in 'totality' although there had been several border incidents during the period between 1954 and 1959 including the Barohati (August 1954) and Longju (August 1959) incidents; and China had built a moterable road connecting Tibet and Sinkiang on Indian territories during this period. China maintained that the Sino-Indian border was not formally delineated. This came as a bolt from the blue to India, because in 1950, following the Chinese occupation of Tibet the government of India informed the Chinese that the recognised boundary between India and Tibet should remain inviolate and the Chinese did not raise any objection to the demands. During 1951 and 1954 the government of India discussed various matters with regard to Tibet but the Chinese authorities neither suggested that they had any doubt regarding the border nor they disputed the Indian claims. Similarly in 1956, while discussing with Nehru, Chao-en-Lai held the view that McMohan line established by the British imperialists was not fair. Nevertheless because it was an accomplished fact and because of the friendly relations

which existed between China and countries concerned, namely India and Burma the Chinese government was of the opinion that they should give recognition to the McMohan line."

During 1959-60 a number of letters and notes were exchanged between the two governments on the boundary question. The correspondence of course helped both parties to know each other's claims but did not help to settle the dispute. A meeting of Prime Ministers took place in Delhi in April 1960. Subsequently, three rounds of talks were held among officials of India and China but no progress was made. The outcome of the summit conference was that China made a proposal for a reciprocal acceptance of present actualities in both sectors and constituting a boundary commission,<sup>40</sup> which India rejected. Nehru made it quite clear in Lok Sabha that there could be no question of barter in this matter.

The only result of this summit conference was that both the Prime Ministers in a joint communique agreed that "the officials of the governments should meet and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts, maps and other materials relevant to the boundary question on which each relied to support its stand and draw up a report for the submission to the two governments."

The report of the officials was published in 1961, in which Indian side put forward 630 types of evidences while

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<sup>40</sup> Appadorai and Rajan n. 25, p. 127.

the chinese side gave 255 items of evidence.

### **The Forward Policy**

After the failure of the Prime Ministerial level talks China continued its policy of advancing to Indian territory especially in western sector. In 1960, Indian government took a decision to set up a large number of forward posts in Ladakh to safeguard India's frontiers and move into forward areas which had remained unoccupied earlier. This move began in 1960, was crystalised into a 'forward policy'. One objective of this policy was to validate India's claim by establishing India's presence; prohibit China to have a free run over Indian territory; and assuage Indian public opinion which was deeply hurt by Chinese aggression and India's inactivity. By 1962, India had established some 43 new posts in Ladakh and had reoccupied some 2,500 sq. miles of Indian territory.<sup>41</sup>

In a note to Indian government on 30th November, 1961, the Chinese government threatened to cross the so called McMohan line and entre the vast area between the crest of the Himalayas and their southern parts,<sup>42</sup> if India did not withdraw from the forward areas. On 4th May 1962 in a note given by the External Affairs Ministry to China embassy Indian government urged the Chinese to consider the 10th

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid, p. 137.

<sup>42</sup> Notes, memoranda and letters exchanged and the agreement signed between the government of India and China, vi, pp.3-4.

November 1959 proposal of Nehru, which envisaged as an interim measure that in the Ladakh region the government of India should withdraw their personnel to the west of the line shown in the 1959 Chinese map and the government of China should withdraw their personnel to the east of the international border shown in official Ladakh maps. On 2nd June 1962, the Chinese government rejected the proposal describing it to be 'unfair'.

### **The War**

From early 1962, Chinese troops had been stepping up the forward patrolling in the western sector. In July, 1962, the Chinese troops encircled an Indian post and the Gulwar valley. There were also other clashes on 26th July 1962. Government of India conveyed its readiness to hold negotiations on the basis of the official reports. While notes on preliminary discussion to ease out the tension were being exchanged suddenly on 8th September 1962, Chinese troops marched across the McMahon line in the eastern sector. This was followed by a massive attack by the Chinese on 20th October 1962 in both eastern and western sector and the Chinese army reached well inside the Indian territory. The attacks continued for a month. On 21st November, 1962, the Chinese announced unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal declaration. Correspondence followed there after regarding the termination of conflict and creating a proper atmosphere for the settlement of the

dispute through negotiations. Differences however persisted.

From 10-12 December 1962, a conference of Six Afro-Asian Countries, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylone, Egypt, Ghana and Indonesia met in Colombo and put forward a set of proposals for the settlement of the dispute. Among other things the proposals envisaged that, in the western sector Chinese should withdraw 20 kms. from the military posts in the eastern sector line of actual control could serve as a ceasefire line till the dispute could be settled by peaceful negotiations. The government of India accepted the proposal in toto while the Chinese government accepted the proposal only in principle saying the Colombo conference was to mediate not to arbitrate and continued to occupy 14,500 sq. miles of Indian territory in Ladakh. Neither China agreed to the Indian proposal to hold negotiations on the basis of Colombo proposal nor it agreed to accept international arbitration. It reiterated that it will not withdraw from a single post, while India only hoped that good sense would prevail and China would revert to the path of peace.

Till 1976, a stalemate continued not only on the boundary question, but on Sino-Indian relations in totality. Ambassadors of the two countries were recalled from each other's capitals, diplomatic relation however, continued and diplomatic notes were exchanged on several



matters. The atmosphere further deteriorated by the Chinese attack on the Sikkim border across the Nathula on 11th September, 1967. The attack was the most serious one since 1962 war. However, the tension cooled down soon. A tense situation again developed when on 20th October 1975, about 90 Chinese soldiers crossed Indian border in the eastern sector and fired on Indian personnel killing four Indian soldiers. This was the first major physical incursion into Indian territory by the Chinese since 1967. "With India displaying great restraint in handling the situation in low key, a possible crisis was averted."<sup>43</sup>

In short, the general trend of relations during this period was somewhat 'no war no peace type'. The factors which contributed to such stalemate are many, the Indo-Soviet treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation (China dubbed it as a treaty of military alliance); Bangladesh war (which China described as a barefaced aggression against Pakistan); the merger of Sikkim with India; the Pokhran explosion, Sino-US reapproachment; Sino-Pakistan understanding and so on which do not require detail elaboration.

However, the ice of stalemate showed the sign of melting, when Sino-Indian diplomatic relations were raised to ambassadorial level in 1976 (Indian ambassador Mr. K.R.

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<sup>43</sup> Nancy Jatley, India - China Relations: 1967-77, (New Delhi, 1979), p. 292.

Narayanan took up his assignment on 7th July 1976 and China named its ambassador on 12 July). This marked the beginning of a new era and mutually shared desire on both sides to expand and improve relations.

## CHAPTER - TWO

### THE CHANGING PERCEPTIONS : 1980 ONWARDS

Domestically 1976-77 marked the end of an era in both India and China. With the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, his reign of the 'Gang of Four' came to an end and subsequently a more moderate and pragmatic leadership under Deng Ziaoping got ascendancy. In 1977 a dramatic political change took place in India, when Janata Party came to power ending the 30 year old Congress monopoly. China welcomed the victory of Janta Party notwithstanding the fact that Janata Party comprised of a number of China Baitors. The visit of Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpai to China in 1979 and Chinese leader Deng Ziaoping's 'package proposal'<sup>1</sup> for the settlement of the Border dispute in 1980 on the eve of Indian Foreign Secretary Eric Gonsalvez's visit to China were the signs of perceptual changes in both the countries.

Since the late seventies it was marked that there has been a break up of elite consensus in India on foreign policy goals unlike the Nehruvian era, when there was a broad consensus among the elites on what India's foreign policy ought to be. There was not even a marked difference

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<sup>1</sup>The Chinese leader spelt out his package proposal to Mr. Krishan Kumar, editor of a defence periodical 'Vikrant'. The Proposal intended to legitimise the status quo.

between ruling party and the opposition groups on foreign policy issues. But today the perception of foreign policy in India is influenced not only by external environment but also by internal differences. Secondly, the prevailing anti-Chinese fervor of the sixties and seventies had died down to a great extent. Now the ruling elite as well as the people appeared more pragmatic in their approach vis-a-vis our China policy than the emotional fervor of the preceding period.

Similar situation prevails in China where foreign policy has undergone several changes. During the cultural revolution period and in the early seventies China portrayed itself as an international and revolutionary power which could change the world balance of forces to its own advantage. During the subsequent period however, those activities and that confidence declined. China began to act as a part of the Third World. The Chinese perception of India also underwent changes during this period. According to G.P. Deshpande,<sup>2</sup> Chinese characterisation of Indian state underwent changes in four stages. The first was a very short period when the Chinese treated India as "a Pseudo-Independent state, a running dog of imperialism." In the second stage no attempt was made to characterise the Indian state per se though political leaders were so

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<sup>2</sup>Search for China Policy (Proceedings of a Seminar, SIS, JNU, 1989), p.20.

treated. In the third stage, especially in the seventies, China termed India as a puppet in the hands of Soviet imperialists. Subsequently, Deng Xiaoping reportedly told a team of American South Asia experts that India was an independent capitalist state and was not dependent on any big power. The Chinese as such differentiated India from the dependent capitalist third world. This perceptual changes and realisation that India is an autonomous decision-making centre have a tremendous bearing on Sino-Indian dialogue.

Indian perception of China had however been either a 'friend' or a 'foe'. In the fifties there was euphoria of China as a friend. In the sixties and seventies it was seen as a dead enemy and part of the hostile US-Pak-China axis. After the 1962 debacle there was an exaggerated view of Chinese power which fed fear in Indian mind and enhanced apprehensions vis-a-vis that country. Such unrealistic view does not persist any longer. China now-a-days occupies a place in between a 'friend' and 'enemy' in the Indian mind. The Chinese fear has declined with the realistic assessment of China as a developing and third world state. In the sixties and seventies, Sino-Indian relations were often seen in the context of the 'Balance of Power' system, less as an 'Independent bi-lateral relations, more as related to an international distribution of power. Such a perception kept changing in eighties and got reversed with the end of

cold war and demise of communism.

The Chinese 'anti-Sovietistic' foreign policy of seventies and a quest for a 'united front' of US led western bloc, Japan and the third world countries including China against the 'Soviet hegemonism' and 'social imperialism' started dying down by early eighties. China's growing friction over trade with US, US arms supplies to Taiwan, restrictions on technology transfer etc. led to a rethinking in the Chinese foreign policy and military strategy. Extreme anti-Sovietism was seen in China as a risky stand that not only raised the prospects of war, but heightened China's insecurity and threatened its economic programme. China realised that if it is to develop, peace was essential and the strategy of rapid anti-Sovietism and pro US stance has to be given up. Moreover, total dependence on the west hardly suited to China's developmental needs, nor did it enhance its bargaining clout. Such an understanding of world politics led China to lay emphasis on 'independence' as the basis of its new foreign policy strategy. China became more even handed in its political pronouncements and withdrew its support from the militarisation of Japan, US strategy in the middle-east, South Africa and Central America. This helped China for the resumption of dialogue with Soviet Union. This attitudinal changes of China created a more positive and convenient climate for India. The Chinese Foreign Minister

and vice Premier Huang Hua's visit to India in June 1981 and the observation of the 40th death anniversary of Dr. Kotnis in 1982 and recollection of his work with PLA were major signals in this direction.

#### **I. THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ; ITS IMPACT ON SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS**

Change is an inevitable and indispensable factor in international environment. In an interacting environment of more than two hundred sovereign nations, it is unrealistic to expect statism. The gradual and inevitable changes in international order since 1980s and a more radical and sweeping changes since the second half of 1989 have altered the basic assumptions and premises of the international relations and established a set of new alternative paradigms. The Soviet withdrawal from eastern Europe, German unification, the end of cold war, disintegration of Soviet Union, the closure of Warsaw Pact, abandonment of communism as an alternative paradigm to capitalism and so on constitute the central events of such wide ranging changes.

However, for our limited purpose, we would confine ourselves to the changes which threw some impact on Sino-Indian relations. In this context, the Sino-USA relations, Sino-Russian relations and Sino-Indian relations in the post-coldwar era appear relevant.

**The Changing Sino-American Relations and its Impact on Sino-Indian ties:**

China's foreign policy since its liberation according to D. Banerjee,<sup>3</sup> has essentially passed through five distinct periods.

- (i) 1949-58: Close alliance with USSR;
- (ii) 1959-65: Struggle for communist leadership;
- (iii) 1966-69: Period of Red Guard diplomacy;
- (iv) 1970-81: The Anti-Soviet United Front;
- (v) 1982 onwards : Independent foreign policy.

China's current independent and peaceful foreign policy was adopted at the 12th CPP Congress in 1982 and was elaborated in subsequent years. Extreme anti-Sovietism and open pro-US stance were give up. The need for a united front against Soviet Hegemonism was no longer considered relevant. It became more even handed and balanced in its approach while dealing with the super powers.

The United States therefore, perceived China not as an ally rather a friend. It was considered as a friend whose policy in south east asia, in Afghanistan and Soviet Union runs parallel to that of the United States. Historically it has been an important objective of American foreign policy not to let a hostile power or a group of powers to grow as much stronger as to dominate the Euro-Asian landmass.

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<sup>3</sup>D. Banerjee, "China's Post Cold War Foreign Policy" Strategic Analysis, April 1991.



During the years of cold war it opposed the USSR and the Warsaw Pact nations tooth and nail. As long as the Chinese foreign policy moved in the same direction of containment of soviet influence, friendship between the USA and China was bound to grow.

China opposed the expansion of Soviet power, fought war in Vietnam, opposed Soviet military presence in Afghanistan and proved its importance of sharing American strategic objectives. USA extended to China all possible assistance in its economic and military development. It favoured the policy of direct investment, expansion of trade and transfer of technology in key areas. According to the assessment of Pentagon, China is too weak to threaten the vital American interests but strong enough to serve as a counter weight to the Soviet Union. And as long as China either alone or in combination with another powers is not in a position to threaten vital American interests, the USA would continue to extend all possible assistance to China's development.

China also became dependent on Washington for capital technology and trade to a great extent. Sino-US military cooperation began to develop in eighties with the visit to China by the defence secretary Harold Brown. This relationship extended to sharing military information in all fields, numerous visits by military commanders at multiple levels, mutual naval visits and a wide variety of

training activities. From the US perspective, a friendly China would play a constructive role in realising American objectives.

China opened up its economy, liberalised trade practices encouraged private investment at the USA insistence which helped to cement friendly relations between USA and China. The close relations between the two got further attested by regular exchange of visits of top officials, military personnels, businessmen and a large number of individuals besides 30000 Chinese students who are studying in USA.

What was of special significance from India's point of view is the extension of cooperation for modernisation of the Chinese defence forces and military related technology transfer etc.

According to B.K. Srivastava,<sup>4</sup> three developments however, partially modified the American assessment of China. First was the realisation that China's pursuit of its national interest may sometimes run counter to its own. It was proved true when it was discovered that Iranians were in possession of Chinese Silkworm missiles during the Iraq-Iran war. China also supplied intermediate range missiles to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It provided nuclear technology to Pakistan. China openly asserted its right to sale arms to any party of its choice. Frank Carlucci on a

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<sup>4</sup>Search for China Policy, n.2, p.80.

visit to China, conveyed to the Chinese defence minister Quin Jiwei the American concern over the sale of these missiles.

The second development that affected the Sino-American relations was the difficulties American business establishments experienced in their bid to enter the Chinese market. The USA also used both super and special 301 against China accusing it of being an unfair trade partner. The third was the substantial improvement of Chinese relations with USSR much to the American worry. This lowered the strategic importance of China to a great extent and China lost its capability to play the great power game. With a lower strategic importance, it was expected that China would now be able to concentrate on normal bi-lateral difficulties with Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia and above all India without examining them in a global context.

After the end of cold war, USA viewed China as a 'potential USSR'. For USA, China lost its strategic importance for the containment of USSR but the containment of Chinese emergence became a part of the USA policy towards China.

The USA launched its polemic on China mainly on three fronts--Human rights, trade related practices, and nuclear non-proliferation and defence related technology transfer.

Human rights has been a bone of contention between USA and China since long. China's Tibet policy has been often condemned in USA. Although USA like India considers Tibet as an integral part of China, USA was one of the first countries to issue a statement condemning Chinese action against Tibetan demonstrators. USA also condemned Chinese action in Tiananmen Square. China resented the American stand both the times.

On all the above mentioned issues, Human rights, aid and trade and technology transfer, India and China hold identical views. Both have been the victims of US high handedness on these questions and have raised their voices unitedly in several international fora. This aspect of Sino-US relations has therefore helped India and China to come closer at least on issues.

However, India has never been a factor in Sino-US relations. China has a landmass that touches three important regions of Asia, while India is only regarded as a major south asian power. As northern pacific increasingly becomes more important for the USA, the later would pay more attention to China.

At present, however, USA sees no linkages between its China policy and the policy towards India. USA now realises that a close and healthy Sino-Indian tie is an inevitable requirement for peace and order.

**Changing Sino-Soviet (Russian) relations and its impact on Sino-Indian ties:**

Sino-Indian relations has been traditional in post second world war Soviet foreign policy. During the early phase of cold war, Soviet leadership hopefully speculated that revolution in China would trigger off a series of revolutions in south and south east asia engulfing India as well. But Nehru's successful China policy which ushered in the 'Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai' era and resulted in the containment of the Chinese revolution eroded the whole set of Soviet hopes.

In the mid fifties with the end of stalinist era the new Soviet leadership started restructuring the cold war order. Soon the international environment took a turn and consequently its impact was felt in closer ties between India and China. G.P. Deshpande believes that "the changing international environment also contributed to the Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai phase."<sup>5</sup> Soviet Union had also encouraged and supported friendship between India and China describing it as a natural friendship between two great nations of Asia.

Soviet reaction to the 1962 border conflict was some what mild considering its interest in and ties with both the countries. In the sixties India China relations emerged as a constant factor in the operationalisation of Soviet

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p.83.

foreign policy in Asia. Sino-Soviet ideological difference and consequent border conflict certainly contributed to the traditional Soviet interest in the India-China relations. One of the logical results was the preferential treatment to India over communist China by the Soviet Union, thereby contributing to closer Indo-Soviet ties. Such a trend developed further in the greater part of the seventies. During this period both Sino Soviet and Sino-Indian relations deteriorated while Indo-Soviet ties were on constant upswing. It would not be an exaggeration to see a correlation between the two.

China termed India as a 'Soviet Puppet' and the 1971 peace and friendship treaty between them as a 'military alliance.' China condemned Indian stand on Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Vietnam and described Indian actions as being dictated from Moscow.

However, inspite of repeated Chinese allegation it is not true that India and China were ever overtly influenced by USSR in their bi-lateral relations. Various changes in international environment to which successive Soviet leadership had contributed, naturally exercised considerable twists and turns in India China relations during the last four decades or so.

With the emergence of Gorbachev and his 'new thinking' in international relations, things inevitably started changing. The important features of thinking are balance

not clash of interests of all the states big or small as the basic determinant of contemporary international politics, the creation of a nuclear free world by the turn of the century and giving up military confrontation, emphasis on development of state to state relations on peaceful coexistence based on the principle of free choice and equality not expediency.

The totality of the new thinking no doubt drew the Soviet Union and China closer. The famous three conditions set by China for the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations viz Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and dismantling of Soviet nuclear installations and Soviet troops from Soviet Chinese border areas were unconditionally met by Gorbachev. One of the main objectives of Soviet foreign policy was how to improve relations with china. USSR's Asia pacific policy was broadly characterised by a close and friendly multi-level relations with China.

The process of normalisation of Sino-Soviet relations was accelerated though joint efforts of the two sides. Both the countries tried to relax the tense atmosphere in their bi-lateral relations, enhanced natural understanding, developed economic and trade relations and brought a sea change in their perceptions and attitudes within a short span of period. The cold war between China and the Soviet Union which sometimes verged on something hot in sixties

and seventies reached formal end in mid May 1989 when Gorbachev landed in Beijing.

As state to state bilateral relations without the influence of a third state was the major feature of Gorbachev's new thinking Soviet India bilateral relations appeared to be autonomous of the turn of events in Soviet Chinese bilateral relations. Likewise India China relations seemed autonomous of Soviet relations with China. In such a scenario it was interesting to note that the emerging signs of a thaw in Sino-Indian relations, was a welcome development for the Soviet Union. Soviet media not only gave wide coverage to Rajiv Gandhi's China visit in 1988 they also commented favourably on the visit.

With the disintegration of Soviet Union and emergence of Boris Yeltsin, Russian foreign policy took a radical turn. However Yeltsin continued to pursue the Gorbachevian legacy vis-a-vis Moscow's relations with China. The Russian President paid an official visit to China and stressed the need for closer ties between the two countries.

However, Yeltsin's love for the west and repeated hobnobbing with the G-7 leaders distanced Russia from its traditional friends, the third world particularly India. India, it seemed was no longer vital for Russia interests. This was covertly a welcome development for the Chinese. In the changed scenario, both USA and China became comparatively free of their obsession with the erstwhile



Soviet Power. The Sino-Indian and Indo-US relations became independent of the ever irritant Soviet factor at least to the Chinese and American perceptions.

The Sino-Russian relations, however grew gradually inspite of Yeltsin's pro-west initiatives. Scholars and analysts viewed this development against the background of the world trend of turning away from confrontations and towards dialogues. This tendency is towards solving international disputes by peaceful means. And it is expected to throw a positive impact on the Sino-Indian bilateral talks currently going on.

#### **Sino-Indian relations in the post cold war period**

"The cold war began with the Soviet recalcitrance over the eastern europe so logically, that is where it ended".<sup>6</sup> This is how Rajaram Ponda describes the end of cold war. The Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, progressive dilution from the traditional soviet doctrines by Gorbachev, success in nuclear arms negotiations, Gorbachev's efforts to reduce offensive conventional weapons and Soviet insistence that their military posture is solely a defensive one, are cited as the reasons of the end of coldwar.

For our purpose, we will however confine ourselves with the consequences of the end of cold war and the corresponding closing of the systemic conflict between

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<sup>6</sup>Rajaram Panda, "The end of Cold War", Strategic Analysis, July 1990, p.370.

capitalism and socialism and its impact on Sino-Indian relations. The end of cold war has already put a profound impact on the international system and thinking about global order. Far reaching structural shifts in the global correlation of forces are underway. According to Sujit Dutta the post cold war world order is characterised by three major antimonies<sup>7</sup>.

- (1) A unipolar hegemonic structure that seeks to maintain stability, security and prosperity in international system by perpetuating American and allies dominance, yet the economic weakness of American power and its over dependence on its allies, the emergence of Japanese, European and some third world powers, undermine the very unipolar structure.
- (2) The belief that the security and prosperity of the American and G-7 powers is central to the stability and security of the world and must be protected at any cost, creates new insecurities among the rest of the world. The belief ignores the realities that development, security and stability of the south is as critical to global security as those of the north.
- (3) Acute uncertainty about the security, stability and prosperity of a system which is still based on states, but in which 'a contrary pulls of rapid globalisation

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<sup>7</sup>Sujit Dutta, "India-China Relations in the Post Cold War Era", Strategic Analysis, Feb. 1994, p.1417.

on the one hand and the rising demands for independence and autonomy and the disparities in wealth and power between and within states on the other undermine its very basis.

Mr. Dutta believes if the global system is to be truly global it has to protect the interests of all states and people. "The concept of mutual and equal security' evolved by India and China in their september 1993 accord needs to be govern the global security relations."<sup>8</sup>

The post cold war unipolar order is characterised by a number of inherent strains - disagreement among nations on GATT; continuous disturbances in Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Gorgia, Armenia and the failure of UN peace enforcements; financial crisis and political strains within the UN system; lack of consensus over the democratisation of UN and other important bodies; growing trade war amongst Japan, USA and EU states; attempts by some nations to contain nuclear and missile proliferation in a discriminating fashion and so on. There is no unanimity on issues like self determination human rights, NPT, democracy and security. Writers have rightly termed the post cold war order as 'world disorder.'

The need of the hour is greater consultations and consensus among nations to resolve the wide contradictions inherent in the global system. The hegemony of a few must

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p.1418.

finish; the attempt to preserve the security and civilisational superiority of a few must be foiled; and the political and ideological strategies that discriminate against the majority must end.

In such a scenario, the role of India and China becomes inevitably relevant to make constructive efforts to shape an alternative order, more appropriate and suitable for the twenty first century, the order based on peace and security universal non-proliferation and disarmament, peaceful settlement of disputes, non use of force, dismantling of offensive military pacts, sustainable development and environmental protection, democratisation of world bodies and above all protection of civil, economic and cultural rights of all.

On majority of these issues India and China share identical views although there is no absolute unanimity between them. Both the countries separately and in United Nations have declared time and again their acceptance of several of these principles. Their commitment for such an order has no doubt brought them closer despite all their ideological and political differences. Further, the end of conflict in Cambodia, Gulf and Afghanistan, the normalisation of US-Russia, Russia-China, India-China. China-Vietnam, Indo- Chinese states and Russo-Japanese relations have also created a positive and healthy atmosphere for India and China to act together for global,

regional and bilateral peace and prosperity.

Bilaterally the two countries have well responded the global changes. Both the countries have taken important steps towards strengthening the ties through dialogue and contacts at the highest level as well as through the mechanism of joint working group.<sup>9</sup> They have reached agreements on confidence building, maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border region, opening border trade and expanding the areas of cooperation. All this has prepared the required ground for the final settlement of the contentions border issue in a friendly, tension free and cooperative environment.

## **II. THE DOMESTIC CHANGES IN CHINA AND ITS IMPACT ON SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS**

The Chinese foreign policy in most of the times, has been the extension of its domestic policies. Domestic changes in China have, therefore, always put some conspicuous impact on its foreign policy decisions. The days of cultural revolution saw an extreme anti-Sovietistic foreign policy pursued by China. The three world theory was propagated by Mao during this period. With the adoption of four modernisations for which American capital, knowhow and equipments were inexceptionally important, China became more anti-USSR and called for a United front against the

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<sup>9</sup>The joint working group was formed during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988 to findout the ways and means for the settlement of the Border issue.

Soviet imperialism. With the introduction of a new constitution in 1982, China tried to maintain equi-distance from the super-powers and made efforts to benefit from both with keeping close and cordial relations with them. The bloody suppression of the Tiananmen movement resulted in sweeping structural changes at both economic and foreign policy levels. It is not therefore unrealistic to see a correlation between domestic changes in China and Chinese foreign policy.

#### **China and four modernisations**

During days of cultural revolution (1966-76) the Chinese economy remained in a turbulent phase of stagnation. The economic reforms were launched in 1979 to accelerate China's modernisation drive. At the 3rd plenary session of the eleventh party central committee in December 1978, the ambitious project for four modernisations (Science and Technology, defence, industry and agriculture) was decided upon. It was announced that the focus of China's policy would shift away from the ideological emphasis upon class struggle to economic growth and socialist modernisation. It was decided that in the light of historical conditions and practical experience a number of major economic measures must be taken to thoroughly transform the system and methods of economic management. The general target of such a large and ambitious project was to quadrupling the national output and raising the

percapita income from \$253 in 1978 to \$800 by the year 2000 and again quadrupling it by 2050 A.D.<sup>10</sup> This required significant structural changes and policy decision both at domestic and foreign policy level which the Chinese leadership were ready to persue. The opening up of the Chinese economy to the outside world was the key requirement which China readily undertook. Since 1978, China's foreign economic relations have been based on the principle of 'opendoor' to promote foreign trade and investment.

By 1978, China had been politically exploiting the international contradictions, especially between the two super powers by siding with the USA and floating the idea of a united front of USA, Japan and China against the Soviet Union. Now with the adoption of four modernisations, China wanted to exploit the situation purely for economic purposes. China did not discard the moist foreign policy altogether. Deng Ziaoping who emerged as the leader of new reformist era not only embraced the three world theory propagated by Mao, but also actively propagated the concept of united front against Soviet hegemonism. The support of the advanced west was essential for China to secure capital technology, equipment, expertise and markets without which the four modernisations could not succeed. Western support

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<sup>10</sup>R.D. Bhardwaj, "China's Economic Reforms", Strategic Analysis, Feb. 1993, p.1091.

was also essential for the unification of Taiwan, Hongkong and Macao with China. The reformists led by Deng also tried to overcome the ultra leftists with the western support of aid, equipment and technology. China sought US support on its Kampuchea policy, its attack on Vietnam and opposed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan along with USA. In short, adoption of four modernisations did not result in notable changes in Chinese foreign policy. The only shift in its policy was it became more aggressively pro-west and played the Soviet card very vigorously.

The 'four modernisations' was infact an extension of what Liu Shao Chi had enunciated in sixties, the policy of three reconciliations and one reduction - the reactionaries with imperialism, revisionism and reactionarings and reduction of support to revolutionary movements.<sup>11</sup> As economic considerations were given primacy over political ones, China concentrated on its economic programmes and policies without meddling much in international affairs and most importantly it wanted to keep its borders peaceful and tension free.

What was important from Indian point of view China changed its traditional military strategy and adopted a new military doctrine under its defence modernisation programme. The new, doctrine replaced the concept of peoples war' with 'people, war under modern conditions. The

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<sup>11</sup>G.S. Mishra, n.2., p.45.



three most notable manifestations of this new strategy which were vital from Indian point of view were: the reversal of the gradual increase in the strength of PLA (Chinese army) by bringing it down from four millions to three millions; Reduction of military regions from eleven to seven and increasing engagement of defence forces in civilian activities and finally substantial cut in the defence expenditure. These measures created a positive environment for bilateral talks and acted as a confidence building measure between China and its neighbours especially India.

#### **China's Independent foreign policy**

China adopted the independent foreign policy line at the twelfth party congress in 1982, which was affected with the adoption of a new constitution. It was a turning point in Chinese foreign policy. It meant a readjustment in relations with the super powers. It amounted to a renunciation of the confrontationist policy of united front against the Soviet Union. Struggle for peace was declared to be important task and economic development the central goal. Chinese leadership opted for a policy of peace and development.

China's independent foreign policy was infact the outcome of its realistic and pragmatic assessment of the international environment. China's overwhelming support to the west was based on a covert condition that west should

reciprocate it with increasing supplies of economic and technological assistance. China expected United States to actively back China on its effort to pursue its modernisation programme. But growing friction over trade. US arms supplies to Taiwan, US reluctance to provide high technology and military supplies to China and Reagan's reported suspicion to China resulted in major rethinking in chinese strategy. China realised extreme pro-westness is as harmful as extreme anti-Sovietism. China's modernisation programme needed a peaceful environment to concentrate fully on its set objectives. Neither China could afford a full scale war or the cost of high militarisation. The vietnam war had taught China a lesson-if China was to develop peace was indispensable.

Under the new independent foreign policy trade and economic channels with USSR were opened up. Bilateral talks with USSR was resumed. All out efforts were made to create relaxation in the tensions with Moscow. The notable shifts that occurred as a result of the adoption of independent foreign policy were:

- 1) The policy of total dependence on the west was discarded;
- 2) Extreme anti-Sovietism was given up;
- 3) Bilateral talks to improve economic and trade relations with USSR were resumed;
- 4) China's support for the militarisation of Japan and US

policy in the middle east, south Africa, Central America was withdrawn; and

- 5) Peaceful and cordial bilateral relations with all neighbours were emphasised.

The change in Chinese Strategy with the adoption of independent foreign policy line which led to the resumption of Sino-Soviet talks created a more positive and healthy environment for India. It marked a more pronounced effort by China to build bridges with India. China expressed its desire for a political dialogue with India and reiterated its invitation to Mrs. Gandhi to visit China. Although Mrs. Gandhi's visit did not materialise due to domestic reasons, India's ongoing dialogue with China were held in a more positive and cordial atmosphere, after China became even handed in its approach with the adoption of independent foreign policy. In short, changed international environment, foreign policy changes in China, the desire of both the countries to revamp their security environment, concentration on development and resolve problems peacefully opened up the possibility of a thaw in Sino Indian relations.

#### **Tiananmen and after**

The June 1989 democracy movement in China and its bloody suppression by the Chinese government, popularly known as Tiananmen massacre threw a considerable impact on Chinese society and polity. China entered into a period of

domestic instability and policy uncertainty. Never before in the history of China (except during the period of cultural revolution) Beijing had felt so isolated itself from its own people as well as the people of the world. China's legitimacy was never before put to such a test. International sanctions of all kinds and from many sources came instantly and in scores in the wake of the incident. Most of the foreign aids and loans to China were suddenly stopped. The \$5.9 billion package of Japanese soft loan was placed on hold. The world bank and the Asian development bank's fully negotiated loans to China were withheld.<sup>12</sup> A worldwide anti-chinese fervour moulded the world opinion against Chinese fundamentalism. Chinese confidence was shattered with the international reaction.

China was faced with a crisis of confidence that reflected the fragmentation of its own empire and its shrinking influence world wide. With a single stroke, China lost the international support, confidence and credibility that it had generated during a decade of liberalisation and reforms. China realised that those days are gone when it successfully popularised the perception that 'a stronger China is a safer China for the world at large'. It also realised the assertion of Deng that 'China can getaway with murder at home without paying an international price' was

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<sup>12</sup>Samuel S. Kim, "Chinese Foreign Policy after Tiananmen", Current History, Sept. 1990, p.246.

more unreal than real.

The Chinese leadership declared that the counter revolution was a conspiracy of the internal and external forces joining hands with reactionary forces every where to destabilise China.<sup>13</sup>

The Tiananmen incident made China realise that 'the imperialists will never 'lay down their knives and at once become a Buddha'. China acknowledged the hard truth that west can play several tricks with China which fall short of a direct military invasion but their consequences one as catastrophic as a direct war. Economic means like tariff concessions, technology transfer and economic aid are used to force China to make political and ideological concessions. The western communication media - broadcasts, newspapers, magazines and books are being manipulated to spread rumours and confuse people to undermine socialist under and to peddle bourgeois concepts and values.<sup>14</sup> 'Human rights' and 'Democratisation' serve as another set of weapons with which west interferes with the internal affairs of China and aid and abet the dissident groups. The peace crops, the fulbright programme and other non-governmental academic and cultural exchange programmes also functions as carriers of western ideology into Chinese main land. The covert operations in many disguises and

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p.247.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

channels continue to take on the only major socialist giant.

The only available weapon China had to overcome the crisis was to continue the reforms and opendoor policy. In a typically Chinese way, "Deng's four cardinal principles- continuing on the socialist road; upholding the dictatorship of the proletariat; upholding the leadership of the communist party and upholding Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thoughts; and the reform and open door policies have become two methods of carrying out the post Tiananmen foreign policy.<sup>15</sup> The four principles of Deng and the opendoor reforms are described as mutually interdependent and together constitute a new Paradigm - different from pure socialism and fall well short of pure capitalism, but typical with Chinese characteristics. Such structural changes both domestic and foreign policies were the outcome of China's pragmatic assessment of the reality, that closing China's door to outside world and to international cooperation is no longer feasible. Only through reforms and opening to the outside world can China's self reliance be strengthened its social system perfected and its March to great power status accelerated.<sup>16</sup>

As the continuation of its liberal and opendoor policy China released some political prisoners, resumed the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

fulbright programme and accepted American Corps volunteers to influence American policy makers. In May 1990, China announced that it could invite 12,000 foreign experts in the next two years to promote professional exchanges in economics, technology, culture and education.<sup>17</sup>

Besides the increased pace of reforms, another shift that took place in Chinese foreign policy after the Tianamen bloodshed, which is important from Indian point of view, was China's return to third worldism. China realised that end of cold war has brought China to the centre stage of world politics. A new manifestation of class struggle in international relation is underway where China would face the west and allies. It is impossible to take on the mighty west alone, China could sense it well. To make it 'west vs the rest' China intensified its third world diplomacy with a flurries of well published state visits, e.g. quian Qichen's visit to Cuba, Jiang Zemin's visit to north Korea; Lipeng's visit to Pakistan Bangladesh and Nepal, Yang Shankun's visit to Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, Argentina and Chile and soon diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Marshal islands were established and ties with Indonesia were resorted. A numerous agreements on economic ties trade, science and technology packages, cultural and educational agreements and also negotiations on arms sales were undertaken.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.248.

As China acknowledges India's leadership of and importance in third world it was obvious on its part to accord as much importance to its relations with India. Li Peng's visit to India was the outcome of such a perception. China's rediscovery of third world as such created a cordial and positive atmosphere where both India and China tried to understand each other's problems and concerns and reiterated their willingness to sort out their bilateral problems peacefully and through friendly negotiations and consultations.



## CHAPTER - THREE

### THE QUEST FOR NORMALISATION

The normalisation process infact started in 1976 itself when India raised its diplomatic relations to ambassadorial level with China after a gap of fifteen years. Sumit Ganguli cites three possible explanations,<sup>1</sup> to find out the factors that prompted India to restore the ambassadorial relations. First, the strategic environment in South Asia was taking an adverse turn for India which was evident from the overthrow of Sheikh Muzibur Rehman in August 1975. India had helped Bangladesh attain independence and played an important role in installing Muzibur Rehman Government there keeping the political opponents at bay. Muzibur's assassination was seen as a major set back for Indian foreign policy in the region. "In a changing and possibly adverse subcontinental environment Mrs. Gandhi might have deemed it prudent to improve relations with a long standing regional adversary".<sup>2</sup> The second and more important explanation can be found in Sikkim's change of status in 1975 from a protectorate to a full fledged state within Indian Union. The Chinese not only vigorously protested but beefed up troops a strategic

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<sup>1</sup>Sumit Ganguli, "The Sino-Indian Border talks (1981-89)", Asian Survey, December 1989, p. 1125.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

points. Sensing the obvious Chinese displeasure India felt the importance to initiate border talks and to do this it was necessary to upgrade the level of diplomatic representation. The third factor which might have encouraged the restoration of relations was that by 1976 there had been a change in Chinese leadership. Both the hardline protagonists of 1962 aggression Chao-En-Lai and Mao Zedong had died. The emergence of a moderate leadership probably eased the possibility of holding discussions on the border question.

The prospects of 'talks' however remained dormant until the second coming of Mrs. Gandhi in 1980, barring the Vajpai mission of 1979. Vajpai's visit was however cutshort due to Chinese attack on Vietnam. Chinese premier Hua-Guo-Feng raised the issue with Mrs. Gandhi at a meeting in Belgrade in May 1980 and the usual platitudes about the need for Sino-Indian friendship and the necessity for avoiding border clashes were stressed in the joint communique. It appeared from the communique despite its ambiguous wordings that both sides were interested in a solution.

In June the same year Deng-Xiaoping reiterated his interest in improving relations with India in his interview with an Indian journalist and offered his famous 'package

deal'.<sup>3</sup>

The beginning of the process of course got an initial set back when foreign minister Huang Hua's scheduled visit to India was delayed because of Indian recognition of the Vietnamese supported Heng Samrin regime in Kampuchea. Indian foreign minister Narasimha Rao was however very careful in his reaction and described the delay as a routine one. He reiterated India's desire to improve Sino-Indian relations. Hua visited New Delhi in June 1981 and stated that the Border issue was central to the relations between the two nations. It was a departure from the earlier Chinese stand that if the Deng Proposal was not acceptable the issue be shelved and steps be taken to improve the relations in other areas. The Indian Government in turn moved from its original position that it would not hold substantive discussion with China unless and until China vacated every inch of Indian territory. Huan Hua, as a friendship gesture announced that the Chinese would open two ancient Hindu pilgrimage sites in Tibet - Mansarover and Kailash for Indian pilgrims. This no doubt influenced the Indian public opinion to a great extent.

The Chinese offer to normalise relations with India had its own compulsions too. The bitter experiences of 'Great leap forward' and the Great Proletarian cultural

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<sup>3</sup>The proposal was first given to Krishan Kumar, editor of Vikrant and later reiterated to G.K. Reddy in the same year.

revolution had undermined China's economy. To give a fillip to its ailing economy China undertook its four modernisations under the pragmatic leadership of Deng Xiaoping. In the process of 'modernisation' China wanted to keep away from the border disturbances. A war at this stage would have been disastrous for China. Again India had by that time become much stronger both militarily and economically. Military win over it, China realised was quite impossible. Deng declared that modernisation means economic construction without sound economic foundations it will be impossible to modernise our national defence, and science and technology should primarily serve economic construction.<sup>4</sup> China adopted an open door policy in which it invited the foreign investment to China's soil and it looked forward to the developed countries for advanced technology. As a part of their changing policy China wanted to normalise relations with India, with whom it shares a 2400 miles long border. Deng the iron man of China showed the green signal in 1980 by saying that both China and India are populous countries in Asia and we both need to develop our relations.<sup>5</sup>

Another factor leading to China's shift in favour of normalisation was the threat of military confrontation with

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<sup>4</sup>Deng Xiaoping, "Selected works of Deng Xiaoping", (Beijing, 1989), p. 225.

<sup>5</sup>Beijing Review, June 30, 1980.

the Soviet Union. The heavy casualties on the Chinese side in 1969 clash with the Super power scared China. China also interpreted Brezhnev's call for Asian collective security system as a way of making a united front against China. Obviously therefore China wanted to neutralise India and to prevent the growing Soviet influence over the third world countries especially India - the leader of third world.

The third reason is that Chinese leadership had lost credibility with the third world because of its pro-US stance. "Chinese leadership would like to relinquish their image in -the third world countries and there is no better instrument for this than friendship with India."<sup>6</sup> The Vietnam war in 1979 had already tarnished the image of China. China could neither teach a lesson to Vietnam nor win the war. To regain the lost prestige became a prime concern of China. China wanted to convince the third world especially India about her peaceful intentions.

## **I. THE ONGOING DIALOGUE**

### **The Eight Rounds of Talks**

Some scholars divide the eight round of talks held between 1981 and 1988 into two phases.<sup>7</sup> The first four dealt with the basic principles and last four with the situation on the ground.

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<sup>6</sup>V.P. Seth, Negotiating with China, Tribune, Chandigarh, 7th Dec. 1981.

<sup>7</sup>See Sumit Ganguli, n.1.

**The First Round:** The first round of official level talks began in Dec. 1981 and China offered the so called package proposal first mooted by Cho-en-lai in 1960 and then put forth by Deng Xiapoing via two visiting Indian journalists. The package proposal centred around the idea of freezing the status-quo on the ground with minor concessions by both the sides. Indian side was not enthusiastic about the package proposal, because India had already rejected it in 1960. And now it is at a greater loss because China had occupied more territories during the war.

India's contention was that

- I. the proposal equated the aggressor with the victim;
- II. it denied the legality of the Mc Mohan line;
- III. if intended to legitimise the Chinese gains made through the use of force;
- IV. it did not in any way assuaged India's 1962 humiliation.

India on the other hand proposed the acceptance of the Colombo proposal as a starting point for a negotiated settlement. China rejected this proposal by saying that it was outdated and had no relevance with the existing relations. China struck to its comprehensive settlement package based on the Deng proposal but when pressed by the Indian side China refused any autographic examination.

Besides border issue the context of the talk included other things also was evident from the composition of the

Indian delegation. Besides Eric Gonsalves, the Indian foreign secretary who headed the delegation, among others it included Mrs. Manorama Bhalla, the secretary of Indian Council for Cultural Relations and a Commerce Ministry official.

Both countries held discussions relating to cultural exchange programmes and cooperations in the field of science and technology. However, "at the Beijing talk the most important issue between the two countries was deliberately down played. While trade and cultural matters were highlighted, the Border question was neither excluded nor allowed to dominate them."<sup>8</sup>

The first round of talks ended on 14th Dec. 1981, "with both sides agreeing to continue contacts and pursue efforts to resolve their differences on the boundary question."<sup>9</sup> The only tangible accomplishment of the first round was their pledge to meet again.

**The Second Round:** The Second Round of official level talk of the two countries was held in New Delhi between 17th and 21st May 1982. The Chinese delegation was led by Mr Fu Hao while Indian delegation was headed by Eric Gonsalves. Both leaders in the opening speech reaffirmed that the border question was central and most important issue for the normalisation of Sino-Indian relations and both countries

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<sup>8</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi 18th Dec., 1981.

<sup>9</sup>Indian Express, New Delhi, 15th Dec., 1981.

should work towards resolving this with sincerity, goodwill and determination.<sup>10</sup>

For convenience and concentration, the delegations as well as the agenda were divided into four sub-divisions:

- I. The cultural & tourism ;
- II. Trade and economic issue ;
- III. Science and technology ; and
- IV. The border issue.

The border question in this talk remained as a barren area for both as the talk did not make any headway on border question. Both the sides failed to reach at a common formula on this issue. But both the parties did not convey their disappointment as neither side expected any thing dramatic. Both the parties agreed to come to the table once again.

However some outstanding achievements were achieved in other spheres of the talk. China agreed to post a commercial councillor in its embassy in New Delhi, after a gap of two decades. Some exchanges in the technical field done were also decided upon.

#### **The Third Round:**

The 3rd round of talk was held in Beijing in January 1983 and Mr Bajpai headed the Indian delegation while Mr Fu Hao led the Chinese team. Virtually no progress was made in

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<sup>10</sup>D.K. Banerjee, Sino-Indian border dispute, (New Delhi, 1985), p.24.



this talk and it ended without reaching any agreement on the border issue. "India's position was that it would not discuss the legality of the case as the legal position of the two sides had been fairly well documented in the officials report of 1960. The one tangible concession that the Indian side was willing to make was that it would seek some common ground without abandoning its legal position."<sup>11</sup>

However, significant progress was made in terms of exchange of people trade and other matters. Both the countries reached an agreement on expanding scientific and cultural exchange.

On border issue both the countries decided to continue to work for a peaceful settlement and expressed optimism by saying that "the frequent contacts and exchange of views between them and Indian officials, are conducive to the development of bilateral relations."<sup>12</sup>

#### **The Fourth Round:**

The fourth round of talks started in New Delhi on October 24, 1983. During this round China put forward five general principles and India six working propositions as the basis of discussion. The five principles<sup>13</sup> suggested by China were i. Equality, ii. friendly consultations, iii.

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<sup>11</sup>Summit Ganguli, n.1, p-1127.

<sup>12</sup>China daily, Feb. 5, 1983.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. Nov. 3, 1983.

mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, iv. a fair and reasonable settlement, v. a comprehensive solution.

The Indian working propositions<sup>14</sup> were:

- (i) A solution must be found as early as possible;
- (ii) It should be a just solution taking into account the legitimate interests of both the sides;
- (iii) Both the sides should find a commonly agreed approach and basis of discussion;
- (iv) The proposal advanced by one side as constituting an approach to the problem should be considered by the other;
- (v) It is necessary to consider various steps to create a propitious atmosphere;
- (vi) Efforts should be made to settle the border issue sector by sector taking into account the different aspects and suggestions.

This round of talk discussed various suggestions made during the negotiations and both the parties agreed to find out a set of principles that could be evolved to guide further discussions.

The most important achievements of this round were, the Indian side agreed to the Chinese suggestion that normalisation should proceed in other spheres without necessarily linking them to the border talks and the Chinese side agreed to the Indian suggestion that talks

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<sup>14</sup>The Tribune, news item, Nov. 8, 1983.

should be held on the sector by sector basis. The Chinese side showed much cordiality and flexibility during this talk. The round led to a substantial expansion of exchanges in a range of areas including science, culture and trade. "The success of this round may have had something to do with the gradual improvements in the bilateral Sino-Soviet relations."<sup>15</sup>

**The Fifth Round:**

The fifth round of talk was held in Beijing in September 1984. In this round, it appeared as if there was a real likelihood of a breakthrough. The Chinese position had softened somewhat and the Chinese appeared amenable to settling the dispute along the McMahon line with minor Indian concessions in the eastern sector. They also wanted certain pieces of Indian land in the Aksaichin area. This proposal was discussed at length, but Mrs. Gandhi being carried away by domestic compulsions, as 1985 election was forthcoming and she did not take the risk of being accused of selling the country to China, thought it prudent to abandon the proposal.<sup>16</sup>

However, both the sides at the end of the talk said that the talks were held in a frank friendly and cooperative atmosphere and they exchanged their views on current international situation.

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<sup>15</sup>Summit Ganguli, n.1, p-1128.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

The two sides also agreed to exchange cultural troops exhibitions academicians and scholars. The scope of the cultural exchange programme was also enlarged by including research oriented projects between the two countries. They agreed upon a programme about scientific and technological exchanges during the period of 1984-85.<sup>17</sup>

**The Sixth Round:**

Between 5th and 6th rounds considerable contacts took place between the two sides. Just prior to the talk Indian foreign affairs minister Baliram Bhagat met his Chinese counterpart Wu Xuequin in New York and both of them expressed optimism about the forthcoming talks. We did not hesitate to confess that border question was only outstanding problem and the dispute could be settled with a spirit of 'mutual accommodation and mutual understanding'. Wu conveyed Chinese prime minister Jhao Ziyang's desire to hold talks with Rajiv Gandhi and in course these talks were held in October 1985 in New York. Jhao renewed his government's invitation to the Indian Prime Minister, but Gandhi stressed on proper preparatory work for such a tour.

Besides in 1985 both China and India celebrated the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations. Through greetings to each other, both countries expressed optimism to find out a mutually agreed solution

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<sup>17</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, Sept. 25, 1984.

to the border problem. Zhao Ziyang in his message to Rajiv Gandhi said... "the Chinese government and the people attach great importance to friendly relations and cooperations with India and would like to work together with your country towards the Sino-Indian relations to the level comparable to that of 1950s. I am deeply convinced that in the days to come Sino-Indian relations in the political, economic, cultural and scientific and technological fields will grow in strength continuously and the outstanding issues between the two countries are sure to be solved."<sup>18</sup>

The optimism was very high, was evident from the opening note of the talk which said "with patience and preservance mutual understanding and accommodation India and China should be able to resolve the border dispute peacefully taking into account the legitimate interests of both the Sides."<sup>19</sup>

The Indian delegation in this talk as led by Foreign Secretary M.P. Venkateswaran and the Chinese delegation was led by Mr. Liu Shuguig, a vice minister of foreign affairs. Shuguig described the border conflict as "a short, unhappy phase in the long history of Sino-Indian friendship and a legacy of colonialism."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Deccan Herald, April 1, 1985.

<sup>19</sup>The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Nov. 15, 1985.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

The initial optimism got blunted when the Chinese returned to the package proposal in this round. They reiterated their long standing claim that the traditional boundary line in the east ran well south of the McMahon line, that is the Himalayan crest. Instead of a breakthrough, the Indians perceived that the Chinese stand had toughened. One of the tangible results of the talks was that the Chinese authority agreed to compensate India for its embassy property seized in 1967.<sup>21</sup> and Beijing agreed to provide a hectre of land to India at a 'special friendship rate' for the construction of Indian embassy premises. Agreements were also reached on areas like science and technology and cultural exchange. It was decided to hold out exhibitions, encourage visit by scholars in philosophy and religion, exchange of information on computer industry, agriculture, education, plasma physics, laser technology, biotechnology and such other areas of mutual interest.<sup>22</sup>

The outcome of the 6th round was not quite encouraging especially on Border conflict. The bad taste India had tasted during the sixth round of talks further got soured in 1986. There was substantial evidences on Chinese involvement in Pakistan's nuclear programme - the annual

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<sup>21</sup>During the cultural revolution, the Red Guards had seized the Indian embassy property as a part of their aggressive policy towards foreign powers.

<sup>22</sup>The Hindu, Nov. 5, 1985.

report of the Indian Defence Ministry stated in a discussion on the possible security threat to India from China. But hopes for an improvement in relations were once again raised when an article published in Xinhua in May 1986 indicated about the softening of the Chinese stand on the Mcmohan line. Indian government promptly responded to this indication with a statement that grounds had finally been found for an acceptable settlement and the foreign minister might visit Beijing at the end of the year. <sup>23</sup>

The Chinese vice foreign minister the leader of the delegation to the Border talks in an interview with visiting Indian journalists in mid June 1986 once again reiterated their old traditional claim that India had occupied about 90,000 sq. miles of Chinese territory and no settlement could be reached unless India made concessions in the east. This new stand was a surprising shift from the earlier stand and removed possibilities of a breakthrough in the talks. "In effect the Chinese appeared to convey the message that they would raise the cost of negotiations if the Indians adopted what was perceived as an uncompromising attitude."<sup>24</sup>

The matter was further complicated with the Sumdurong Chu incident. Sumdurong Chu is an area that forms the trijunction of India, Bhutan and China, where the Chinese

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<sup>23</sup>Summit Ganguli, n.1, p-1129.

<sup>24</sup>ibid. pp. 1929-30.

made sudden and unprovoked incursions shortly before the start of the seventh round of talks. This unexpected intrusion was a great shock and it was a great blow to the normalisation process. This was the most serious border incident since 1962 conflict. It added further tensions and vitiated the atmosphere, when China rejected the Indian protest and claimed that it had always been under Chinese occupation.

#### **The Seventh Round:**

In spite of the Sundurong Chu incident the seventh round of talks commenced as "planned in July 1986 and the incident' was actively discussed. The incident had made the Indian side so circumspect and the Chinese side so intransigent that the package proposal was not even mentioned. The talks concluded without resolving the Somdurong Chu intrusion or the irritant border issue. Both the countries strictly struck to their own traditional line and no marked progress was made on border issue.

Following the round, the Indian foreign minister P. Shiv Shankar met with Wu Xuequian in New York where both agreed on the need to prevent incidents of this kind. Shiv Shankar reportedly proposed that the Chinese should withdraw from Wangdong in the Sumdurong Chu valley in winter and by the same token Indian patrols would no return to the area until snow melted.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid. p. 1130.



After the seventh round and before the eighth round the relations between India and China deteriorated again with Indian Parliament Conferring full statehood on Arunachal Pradesh in December 1986. From the Indian stand point it was simply a logical evolution of the administrative process. The Chinese however saw it as a possible legal erosion of their claim in the eastern sector. China in her typical style lodged a strong protest only to be rejected by India.

**The Eighth Round:**

The eighth round of talks was held as planned in November 1987. The Chinese delegation was headed by the vice foreign minister Liu Shuqing while Indian side was headed by KPS Menon (Jr.) Besides discussing the bi-lateral relations, the two parties also reviewed the progress of the earlier talks that took place from 1981 to 1987. The delegation set up working groups to go into the border in detail.

The need to avoid military confrontation was apparently stressed by both sides in this talk. However nothing tangible could be achieved. It was agreed by both the sides that conscious efforts need to be made for stepping up trade and economic cooperation. Need to step up cultural ties was also emphasised, to create better understanding at the popular mass level. Exchange of ministerial visits were also agreed upon. The greatest

achievement of this round was however the realisation by both the parties that the border issue could not be settled at the bureaucratic level and a political initiative was necessary.

The series of talks undertaken between 1981 and 1988 no doubt addressed to the issue but not redressed them. The major bone of contention - the Border issue still stood unresolved. Neither a solution was found nor the basis on which a solution could be attained was agreed upon. However what were achieved although not tangible, completed the ground work for a just and reasonable solution to the border dispute. A cordial atmosphere was created to accelerate the process. The anti-euphoria prevailing against each other was substantially reduced. Both the parties perceived each other's perceptions. Both knew each others stand. Both understood each other, sentiment, and became sensitive towards each other. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, much awaited Beijing visit was the outcome of such groundwork.

#### **Rajiv Gandhi's Visit:**

Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid an official visit to China from 19th to 23rd December 1988. His decision to visit China stemmed from a variety of concerns. First, the talks had ended in a diplomatic hugger mugger. Without political intervention little more could have been accomplished.

Second, the specific timing of the visit might have been influenced by domestic political considerations. The Prime Minister had lost a great deal of popularity due to two persisting domestic issues - failure to quell the rising tide of violence in Punjab, Assam and elsewhere; and the barrage of accusations from the opposition charging his government with receiving large kickbacks on defence contracts, especially the Bofors guns. In this weakened domestic policy the prime minister needed a major foreign policy success to boost his sagging political fortunes. The time was ripe to use Sino-Indian border issue both to seek success and to strengthen Gandhi's political position.<sup>26</sup>

Gandhi's move to go ahead on the Sino-Indian border question was probably also reinforced by the shifting character of Sino-Soviet relations. The long standing hostility that had worked to the benefit of India in the past showed significance signs of change. With the Deng-Gorbachev summit looming in not so distant future, it behooved India to take steps to improve relations with the Chinese. In the context of a Sino-Soviet reapproachment India could no longer count on unstinted Soviet support on Sino-Indian differences.

Rajiv Gandhi's China trip appears to have achieved three objectives. First, it addressed a long standing Chinese complaint that no Indian Prime Minister had

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 1130-31.

reciprocated Prime Minister Chao-En-Lai 1960 visit. Though mere a diplomatic complaint it finds paramount significance to the Chinese. Second, the visit led to the creation of joint working group to deal exclusively with the Border question. Third, it contributed to a more relaxed climate in Sino-Indian relations.

Despite these accomplishments Rajiv Gandhi's trip was criticised by both newspaper columnists and members of the opposition. They zeroed in on his statement that Tibet is an internal affair of China. In the view of the critics it amounted not only to a betrayal of the Tibetan cause but also a failure to extract similar concessions from the Chinese on the disputed territories. They argued that Gandhi should have sought similar statements from China on Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

Such types of criticisms are however outrightly rejected by the officials associated with the trip on the ground that Prime Minister's statement was a mere reiteration of a longstanding Indian position that dates back to 1954 when India formally acknowledged Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. Again they contend that it would have been foolish to seek similar endorsement on disputed Indian territories, because a sovereign state does not need outside parties to affirm its national boundaries. The Chinese compulsion to obtain Indian affirmation on Tibet was an indication of Chinese weakness not strength. There

was not also much optimism on the formation of the joint working group. A similar organisation had been created in 1960 after Chao En Lai's visit to India. It produced a document known as officials' report which went into all the legal, historical and customary evidence that the two sides could muster on their respective claims to the disputed border. As the political deadlock persisted the officials report amounted to little more than an academic exercise. The joint working group may also meet a similar fate.

However there has been a sea change in situations since 1960. The necessary political will exists now on both the sides to reach a settlement. Again the task of the joint working group is quite different which will not present the available evidence in favour or against rather actively seek a political settlement.

#### **Seven Rounds of JWG meetings:**

The first round of talks by the Joint working group on Sino-Indian question was held in Beijing from 30 June to 4 July, 1989. The Chinese delegation was led by vice foreign minister, Liu Shuqing; India's by S.K. Singh the foreign secretary. The two sides discussed bilateral results as well as regional and international issues. As it was the first meeting of the new organisation much was not expected from the meeting. But the countries however expressed satisfaction over the deliberations at the meeting.

However soon after the first JWG meeting an awkward situation arose when the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman on August 16th 1989 condemned the New Delhi international convention on tibet and peace in South east Asia as a gross interference in China's internal affairs and warned that such activities were prejudicial to the development of bilateral relations. China expressed its displeasure as to why did not India prevent the meeting from taking place.<sup>27</sup>

From October 11th 1989 Chinese vice premier Wu Xueqian paid a two day official visit to New Delhi. In course of talks between him and the Indian president, prime minister and external affairs minister both sides expressed satisfaction at the improvement and development of bilateral relations in recent years and gave their support to joint efforts to establish new international political and economic order.

The second meeting of the JWG was held in last week of August 1990 which was attended by Chinese vice-foreign minister Qihuaiyuan and Indian foreign secretary. The joint working group meeting was also coincided with the annual foreign ministerial level consultations. After three days of talks, the two sides agreed to seek to establish a mechanism for the maintenance of peace in the border areas based on regular meetings between officers from both sides

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<sup>27</sup>China Quarterly, "Quarterly Chronicle and Document", Dec. 1989, p. 914.

at predetermined places either in eastern or western sector.<sup>28</sup>

The Indian external affairs minister V.C. Shukla began a six day good will visit to China on 1 Feb. 1991. Both he and Quin Qichen spoke of their countries' determination to expand cooperation in various fields including trade economic development science and technology and culture. They also agreed that the third meeting of the Sino-Indian JWG on the border issue be held by June and the consulate general in Sanghai and Bombay should be restored. Shukla also met Li Peng in the course of which the Chinese Premier referred to the improvement in bilateral relations which had taken place since the prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit.

The third session of the Sino-Indian joint working group on boundary issue was held in May 1991. The Indian foreign secretary Muchkund Dubey led the Indian team while Xu Dunxin headed the Chinese side. The talks were reported to have enhanced mutual understanding and Li Peng later expressed his confidence that joint effort would enable a solution to be found to the boundary issue.<sup>29</sup>

From December 11th to 16th, 1991 Li peng paid a six day official good will visit to India - the first visit by a Chinese premier to India since 1960. He was accompanied

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid. March 1990, pp.182-83.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., September 1991, p.676.

by ministers of foreign affairs and foreign economic relations and trade.

Li held two rounds of talks with prime minister Narasimha Rao on 12th and 13th December. On 13th December the two sides signed three agreements relating to the establishment of consulates in Sanghai and Bombay; trade and economic relations and cooperation in science and technology.

The joint communique issued at the end of the talks spoke of wide ranging discussions on bi-lateral, regional and international issues. Both parties showed a positive attitude towards an expansion of trade and further cultural, scientific and technical cooperation. They also agreed on the urgency of finding a settlement of the border issue and to this end, they resolved that the JWG would meet in early 1992. An outline of agreed principles governing a new international order was also agreed.<sup>30</sup>

Although neither the border question nor the status of Tibet - the issues which continue to haunt Sino-Indian relations, was placed high on the agenda for Prime Ministerial talks, the two sides have moved far away from their earlier rigid unproductive positions was evident from the speeches of both the leaders. Mr. Li Peng in an interview with Mr. H.K. Dua, editor of the Hindustan Times

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<sup>30</sup>See the Sino Indian joint communique issued on 16th December 1991 (New Delhi).



left it to his Indian host to make an initiative since China had withdrawn the Deng package. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in his banquet spelt out the criteria for finding a fair reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the border issue on the basis of 'historical data, tradition and custom' within the framework of 'national interests and sentiments of both the sides. Li Peng repeated the Chinese commitment to the MUMA (Mutual understanding and Mutual accommodation) principle which he defined as respect for history and for the status quo. It is evident that both Parties now agree on the principle of history, but difference appears on the Indian understanding of present realities and the Chinese perception of 'status-quo'.

Notwithstanding such perceptual differences, it is obvious that both the parties are gradually coming closer on the contentious issue.

During his visit to New York in early 1992 to attend the UN Security Council debate, Li Peng met his Indian Counterpart P.V. Narasimha Rao. The two men agreed to intensify their search for a solution to the border issue and try to narrow their differences. Both took the view that peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control should be maintained. Rao accepted in principle an invitation to visit China.

The following month Chinese and Indian delegates

attended the fourth meeting of the China-India joint working group on the boundary question. There was an exchange of views on confidence building measures and agreement was reached that military personnel from both sides would hold regular meetings during June and October every year. China and Indian delegates both expressed confidence that they would find a solution to the outstanding boundary issues.<sup>31</sup>

The fifth session of JWG meeting was held towards the end of October 1992 in Beijing. Indian foreign secretary J.N. Dixit headed the Indian delegation. Reports suggested that some progress was made in enhancing mutual understanding and the two sides expressed some satisfaction with the development of bi-lateral relations.<sup>32</sup>

The sixth meeting of the JWG on the Sino-Indian border question ended in August 1993, a month prior to Narasimha Rao's visit to Beijing in September 1993. Agreement was reached to adopt additional confidence building measures and to open an extra trade point along the border. The two sides also undertook to hold more frequent meetings.<sup>33</sup>

An important event was the visit to China of the Indian Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. In advance of

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<sup>31</sup>China Quarterly, Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation, March, 1993, p.706.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Dec. 1993, p.1053.

his arrival in the Chinese capital on sixth September, Rao expressed his hope that trade, scientific and technological exchanges would lead to further cooperation. He noted that the forthcoming visit would serve to maintain the momentum of high level political exchanges.

On September 7th the Indian Prime Minister held separate talks with Jiang Zemin and Li Peng. His discussion with his Chinese counterpart afforded an opportunity for a full exchange of views and were followed by the signing of three agreements one important being on maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC, others included environmental cooperation, Radio and TV cooperation as well as a protocol for expanded border trade.

The seventh session of the JWG meeting was held in Beijing on July 6th and 7th, 1994. The Indian delegation at the talks was led by foreign secretary K. Srinivasan while the Chinese delegation was headed by Vice foreign minister Tang Jiazuan. In the meeting the implementation of the agreement on the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the LAC was discussed. It was agreed to establish additional points for meeting between their personnel and also open another point for border trade through Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh. However both the teams deferred the question of determining the note in those segments where differences persist. It was also agreed to conduct joint study to increase the existing facilities for pilgrims to

Kailash and Manosarover and open additional routes for pilgrimage. Both the parties expressed satisfaction over the situation along the LAC where there is complete peace and the confidence building measures were working well. Both the parties also exchanged views on further such measures. They reviewed with satisfaction the considerable progress made at the first two meetings of the expert group formed under the auspices of JGW and mandated to assist the JWG in clarification of LAC, redeployment of military forces along the LAC, other confidence building measures and verification methods. Noting that the expert group had already reached agreement on its work regulations, Mr. Jiakuan and Mr. Srinivasan directed the group to continue and adopt a constructive and positive approach in its future work.<sup>34</sup>

An exchange of views on all aspects of India-China relations also took place. Both sides felt happy at the steady and perceptible improvement in bilateral ties and reiterated a commitment to maintain this positive trend in the relationship. They noted with satisfaction that the two countries had finalised the texts of the agreement on the avoidance of double taxation, the memorandum of understanding on the establishment of Banking relations ; and the agreement on cooperation into the area of health medicine are also being finalised. These issues are also

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<sup>34</sup>Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 9th July, 1994.

liked to be discussed during the visit of Chinese foreign minister Mr. Qian Qiehen from July 17 to 19th 1994.<sup>35</sup>

## II. THE LAC AGREEMENT

During Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Beijing in Sept. 1994, an important agreement on maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Border Areas, popularly known as the LAC agreement was signed between India and China.

The LAC agreement was signed on 7th September, 1993 by India's minister of state for external affairs Mr. R.L. Bhatia and the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan in the presence of two Prime Ministers Mr. Rao and Mr. Peng. The agreement lays down the framework for maintaining peace and tranquillity on the Line of Actual Control. Under the agreement the two sides reiterated their commitment to resolving the boundary question with consultations. They also undertook that they should not use or threaten to use force against the other and pending a final settlement, the two countries agreed to respect and observe the LAC. Where there are differences on the alignment of the LAC, experts from the two sides will jointly check and determine it.

The agreement further provides that the two countries will undertake a series of confidence building measures in conformity with the principle of mutual and equal security. The agreement also provides for prior intimation of

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<sup>35</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, 9th July, 1994.

military exercises above thresholds to be mutually identified zones. The two countries also agreed to ensure that no air intrusions take place.

Significantly, the accord explicitly states that the references to the LAC do not prejudice the respective positions of the two countries on the boundary question. They will continue their search for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question. The details about the implementation of the agreement are to be divided by diplomatic and military experts under the JWG.

The agreement has nine articles in toto and the texts of the agreement were written in three languages - Hindi, Chinese and English, all the three texts having equal validity.

The text of the agreement reads as follows:<sup>36</sup>

Agreement between the government of the Republic of India and the government of the People's Republic of China on the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas.

The government of the Republic of India and the government of the People's Republic of China (here in after referred to as the two sides), have entered into the present agreement in accordance with the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity,

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<sup>36</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, 9th Sept., 1993.

mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and tranquillity along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas.

**ARTICLE ONE:** The two sides are of the view that the India-China boundary question shall be resolved through peaceful and friendly consultations. Neither side shall use or threaten to use force against the other by any means. Pending an ultimate solution to the boundary question between the two countries, the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the line of actual control between the two sides. No activities of either side shall overstep the line of actual control. In case personnel of one side cross the line of actual control, upon being cautioned by the other side, they shall immediately pull back to their own side of the line of actual control. When necessary, the two sides shall jointly check and determine the segments of the line of actual control where they have different views as to its alignment.

**ARTICLE TWO:** Each side will keep its military forces in the areas along the line of actual control to a minimum level compatible with the friendly and good neighbourly relations between the two countries. The two sides agree to reduce their military forces along the line of actual control in conformity with the requirements of the principle of mutual and equal security to ceilings to be

mutually agreed. The extent, depth, timing and nature of reduction of military forces along the line of actual control shall be determined through mutual consultations between the two countries. The reduction of military forces shall be carried out by stages in mutually agreed geographical locations sector-wise within the areas along the line of actual control.

**ARTICLE THREE:** Both sides shall work out through consultations effective confidence building measures in the areas along the line of actual control. Neither side will undertake specified levels of military exercises in mutually identified zones. Each side shall give the other prior notification of military exercises of specified levels near the line of actual control permitted under this agreement.

**ARTICLE FOUR:** In case of contingencies or other problems arising in the areas along the line of actual control, the two sides shall deal with them through meetings and friendly consultations between border personnel of the two countries. The form of such meetings and channels of communications between the border personnel shall be mutually agreed upon by the two sides.

**ARTICLE FIVE:** The two sides agree to take adequate measures to ensue that air intrusions across the line of actual control do not take place and shall undertake mutual consultations should intrusions occur. Both sides shall



also consult on possible restrictions on air exercises in areas to be mutually agreed near the line of actual control.

**ARTICLE SIX:** The two sides agreed that references to the line of actual control in this agreement do not prejudice their respective positions on the boundary question.

**ARTICLE SEVEN:** The two sides shall agree through consultations on the form, method, scale and content of effective verification measures and supervision required for the reduction of military forces and maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the areas along the line of actual control under this agreement.

**ARTICLE EIGHT:** Each side of the India-China joint working group on the boundary question shall appoint diplomatic and military experts to formulate, through mutual consultations, implementation measures for the present agreement. The experts shall advise the joint working group on the resolution of differences between the two sides on the alignment of the line of actual control and address issues relating to the redeployment with a view to reduction of military forces in the areas along the line of actual control. The experts shall also assist the joint working group in supervision of the implementation of the agreement, and settlement of differences that may arise in that process, based on the principle of good faith and

mutual confidence.

**ARTICLE NINE:** The present agreement shall come into effect as of the date of signature and is subject to amendment and addition by agreement of the two sides.

Before going into a detailed analysis of the agreement it is necessary to conceptually clarify the line of actual control. The Sino-India LAC was created as result of the confrontations of the 1959-1962 period between the two countries.

Line of actual control is in fact the defacto Border. It generally means the line where the control of each side sharply ends. This line divides the territories and frontiers actually under the control of the two belligerent parties and more precisely it separates the armed forces of the two sides. It is a notional line neither demarcated on the ground nor delineated on the map. Nor is there agreement between the two sides where exactly the line runs. The line of actual control (LAC) in this sense differs from the Line of Control (LOC).<sup>37</sup> In case of LOC the separating line between the two parties are known to both countries and there may be delineation of the boundary on a map or demarcation on the ground except formal recognition as the international border. Both LAC and LOC

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<sup>37</sup>The separating line between India and China is called LAC, while in case of Pakistan this is called LOC as it is defined in a mosaic of 25 maps initialled by military officials in 1972.

are thus different from border. Border connotes a sense of permanence (although not ever permanent) characterised by formalisation, mutual acceptance and recognition either by virtue of traditional customary distinctive natural features or by mutually agreed artificial agreement. LAC and LOC on the other hand connote a sense of transition which may get altered at any moment as they are neither recognised nor formalised. In short, LAC when delineated on map and demarcated on the ground becomes LOC and when LOC gets the seal of formalisation on the basis of mutual acceptance and settlement, it becomes border.

In case of India and China there is no agreement between the two countries as to where does the line actually lie. Both countries use different names for the same features and frontiers along the border. The desolate region devoid of inhabitants makes it difficult to know each other's actual control. More interestingly, there were three different LACs between the two countries - one that existed in November 1959, one before 8th September 1962 and one where the Chinese reached after the massive invasion on 20th October 1962. The agreement signed on 7th September 1993 does not define the LAC. "The Chinese official sources maintain that there is an LAC well known to both sides while Indian officials claim there is an LAC which exists objectively and is known to both sides."<sup>38</sup> Most probably,

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<sup>38</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, 4/9/1993.

both the parties refer to the LAC where each side is right now.

Defining LAC is not quite a simple task. There are physical difficulties of the terrain as well as those related to differing versions of where the notional line lies and above all the complicated political issues involved. According to the plan envisaged by the two sides, the local commanders of both sides will work on defining their respective locations on the ground through joint surveys. The work will be undertaken first on areas where there is little contention and then having gained experience and trust in working together, more difficult ones will be undertaken. The most contentious issues, as reported, will however be referred to higher bodies like the expert committee in the Joint Working Group (JWG).

The Indian official sources have however clarified two things.<sup>39</sup> First, the delineation of the LAC will not be the final basis for the settlement of the disputes. This is just an attempt to maintain peace and tranquillity along the LAC as it exists on the ground today. It is the consolidation of the existing position on the ground, not final settlement. Second, the agreement will no way weaken the Indian stand and its original claim over the Chinese occupied territories still stand intact, subject to further negotiations.

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<sup>39</sup>Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 7/9/1993.

The agreement according to diplomatic sources in both the countries is a major step towards eventually resolving the tangled border dispute. The agreement has been termed by the press not only "as a key to the confidence building measures but the corner stone of the solution to the dispute."<sup>40</sup> The major achievement of a mutually accepted LAC will be to prevent inadvertent confrontations which will destabilise the Sino-Indian relations and detract from the process of negotiating the final settlement.

The epoch making agreement effects many profound changes in the existing situation and is beneficial to both countries in many ways. First, it would settle the confusion with regard to the actual existence of the LAC. Second, it will create a long desired ground for the final settlement of the conflict. Third, by initiating confidence building measures like reduction of military forces on both sides, prior notification of military exercises and halting of air intrusions, it would enhance the security of both the countries. Fourth, such measures also ease the financial burden of maintaining a sizable military presence in the mountain areas. Both the countries can now use their armed forces for more positive and urgent causes. Fifth, the atmosphere created by the agreement could lead to greater economic cooperation, and enhance border trade.

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<sup>40</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, 4/9/1993.

Sixth, the agreement sends a signal to the world that the two Asian giants are capable of resolving their problems without the involvement of other countries. It conveys a message to Pakistan about the futility of internationalising a bilateral issue.

The agreement was therefore extensively welcomed in both India and China. The Chinese official news agency Xinhua described the agreement as a landmark in the bilateral relations. The Indian press termed it as an impressive 'triumph of Indian diplomacy'. The Times of India wrote, "it will mark the beginning of a new phase in bilateral relations based on mutual confidence and better political understanding."<sup>41</sup> The Hindustan Times in its editorial wrote, "the agreement confirms that the two Asian giants have decided to stay on a positive course."<sup>42</sup> Sujit Dutta, eminent defence analyst in an article described the agreement as "a product of a new context of post cold war thinking and conditions, of post war reforms, of a liberalising and increasingly open India. The agreement... reiterates the faith of both nations to the Panchsheel or the five principles and buttresses it with other security enhancing and conflict avoidance measures."<sup>43</sup> G.P.

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<sup>41</sup>The Times of India, New Delhi, 8/9/1993.

<sup>42</sup>The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 8/9/1993.

<sup>43</sup>Sujit Dutta, "Sino-Indian Relations in Post Cold War", Strategic Analysis, New Delhi, Feb. 1994, p-1426.

Deshpande also describes the LAC agreement as a post cold war development, as such agreement could not be signed during the days of super power rivalry. Deshpande further adds, this is an outcome of the present world trend of turning to the table and the widespread realisation about the futility of confrontation.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Prof. Deshpande expressed such a view while discussing the issue with the present researcher.

## CHAPTER - FOUR

### SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS: THE POINTS OF DISCORD

In spite of the perceptual changes, positive developments, upbeat moods and increasing optimism, Sino-Indian relations are not all well. On several points of course the interests of India and China converge and a commonality of approach is emerging slowly but surely. But still the unpleasant reality is, on several key questions there are serious segments of discord and divergence. Several irritants still persist in the overall relationship between the two. The Pakistan factor is there, the Tibet factor is there, Chinese imperialism is there and above all the Chinese insensitiveness to Indian sensitiveness is also there. An early and realistic recognition of these potential threats to their relationship is required to overcome them.

#### **The Chinese power thrust**

No nation can rest in peace if its neighbour is constantly pursuing aggressive militarisation; acquiring more and more sophisticated arms and weapons; and modernising its defense forces. The situation is more critical, if that neighbour is a nuclear power, a member of the ICBM club, a permanent member of the security council, a leading space power and above all most populous and large in size as China. The Indian fear of China stems



from these reasons.

Since 1950s China has been making efforts to emerge as a big military power. It has been designing and redesigning its military strategy; making timely and regular changes in its military doctrine; and restructuring and reorganising the field formation of its army. Chinese army's training pattern has been restructured; new defense institutions have been established and civil military relations has undergone several changes; and large scale internal reforms have been brought about in Chinese army.

During the Maoist era China's military doctrine was 'People's war' which has been changed into 'People's war under modern conditions'. The Maoist 'People's war' was based on Mao's conception of 'luring the enemy deep into the mainland and then surround it with a sea of people'. It used certain tactical methods like 'avoid strength and strike at weakness' 'appear when enemy does not expect' and 'cause uproar in east and strike at west'. The people's war was basically a strategically defensive doctrine which gave importance on men over machines and its application was possible in an environment of a revolutionary civil war, which had least application in modern operational warfare.

The military doctrine was changed with the addition of a suffix to it People's war under modern condition, the essential modifications were, the Chinese now wage a positional warfare and go on the offensive. It does not

rely on infantry alone. Operation is to be increasingly conducted by combined arms and methods of war has also changed accordingly. The entire concept of logistics has undergone change. Fighting is now the main task of Chinese army, all other civilian works are secondary and optional. The army is now exclusively subordinated to the needs of battle not to political and ideological concerns.<sup>1</sup> The People's war under modern conditions after getting final shape resembles to the offensive strategies of any other superior power. The change in military doctrine has thus made Chinese army a powerful offensive military force whose intension is bound to be suspicious and unpredictable.

What is significant from Indian point of view, India comes third in Chinese 'Hit lists' after Russia and Vietnam. The changed Chinese strategy thus obviously creates fears and suspicion India. India has already tasted the unpredictable Chinese action in 1962.

China had also been pursuing a very aggressive weaponisation since 1950s. China decided to acquire nuclear weapon capability in mid January 1955. At that time China had faced one of the most serious food shortages of all time which later estimates say caused the death of millions of its citizens. Yet Mao justified his decision to go nuclear saying that if they were not to be bullied by any one they cannot go without a bomb. That is why China's

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<sup>1</sup>Red flag, No.-16, August, 1981.

military programme was only geared for weaponry purposes without using it for civilian causes till 1980s. China's thrust to acquire a bomb was thus not only a weapon of war but a currency of power.<sup>2</sup>

China's power thrust got furthered when it took decision to produce a hydrogen bomb in 1957. The first fission explosion was carried out in 1966. Two and half years later a thermo nuclear device was exploded, which is shortest time taken by any nuclear weapon power.<sup>3</sup> Till 1993 end China had carried out roughly 40 tests varying in yield from low kilotons to four megatons. Presently it has nuclear weapons of atleast five different designs and yields.

Initially China relied on air craft delivery system. But in 1963, it decided to manufacture missiles. By 1980 China had built four different types of missiles - DF-1, DF-2, DF-3, DF-4. The submarine launched ballistic missile programme was commenced in 1967 and ground testing was carried out in Jan-April 1982. On October 1982, a missile was launched from a Gulf Class Conventionally Powered Submarine to a target at 1200 km. range. In 1978 China started the construction of Xia-class nuclear powered submarine and the first ship was launched in 1982. China

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<sup>2</sup>D. Banerjee, "Search for China Policy", Proceedings of a Seminar, SIS, JNU, 1989, ;p.125.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

now plans to acquire twelve such submarines.<sup>4</sup> These submarines can each carry twelve CSS-N-3 missiles with range upto 3300 kms. Another nuclear powered submarine the HAN class carries cruise missiles with a range upto 1600 kms. The most suitable deployment area of these submarine is the north west quadrant of the Indian ocean. China's navy has been as such converted from a coast guard navy to a blue ocean going navy.

Today Chinese navy ranks third in the world. Its basic capabilities have improved significantly. Chinese frigates and destroyers are not only equipped with reasonably sophisticated and effective surface missiles they are also equipped with surface to air missiles, giving them protection against air and missile attacks at sea. The radar and fire control system on the Chinese ships are also more sophisticated. Chinese navy, electronic counter measure capabilities have also improved significantly and major surface combatants are protected by electronic jamming devices and craft launchers. China has more surface combatant submarines and amphibious ships than all of the ASEAN countries combined.<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese navy's operational area is mainly pacific and Indian oceans. Its thrust to be an influential player

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Larry M. Wortzel, "China Pursues Traditional Great Power Status", Orbis, Vol. 38, No. 2, Spring, 1994.

in the Asia Pacific region is thus a threat to India and a challenge to India's effort to make Indian ocean a demilitarised zone of peace.

China has also made significant advances in its air force with some 7,000 aircraft of various types which include about 5,000 combat air craft, the Chinese people's army's air force has the distinction of being the third largest in the world. The Chinese air force has the distinction of being the third largest in the world. The Chinese air force with some 4,90,000 personnel is the only independent air force in the world which has a virtual army under its command in the shape of four air borne divisions and over 24 anti-air craft artillery divisions.<sup>6</sup>

China is also trying to modernise its air force and acquire top line sophisticated air craft technology for which it has reached agreements with various western countries including USA, UK and France. The Chinese air command of the western region is specifically aimed at India.

With twenty four group armies comprised of some eighty-four infantry divisions, ten armoured divisions, fifty independent engineers regiments and thirty five independent combat regiments and roughly twenty eight garrison divisions or the divisions the people's police,

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<sup>6</sup>D. Banerjee, "Modernisation of China's military doctrine", Strategic Analysis, Dec. 1989, p. 988.

the Chinese army is said to be the second largest standing army in the world. With more than three million personnel, it is thus a threat to all its neighbours.

The massive modernisation of army and the large scale military spending have been a constant cause of concern for India. Although China claims to have reduced its defence budget in real terms it is going up year by year as Chinese arms sale is earning valuable 'hard currencies and Chinese army is also earning by undertaking a number of civilian functions.

#### **Chinese involvement in Indian sub-continent**

Another area which has been continuously creating misgivings in India is Chinese involvement in India's neighbourhood. China signed a boundary protocol with Pakistan in 1965 involving territory in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, inspite of the fact that Pakistan does not share a common border with it. In 1982 China signed another protocol with Pakistan to open the Khanjerab Pass on the Karakoram highway for border trade. The road is reported to be meant for military purposes. India sent a protest note to China which was rejected by the later on the ground that the road is meant for border trade and it is a normal effort between the two neighbouring countries and do not involve the question of ownership of Kashmir.

The most disturbing fact is however relate to the Chinese transfers of destabilising categories of arms such

as missiles and nuclear weapon related technology into India's security zone which is acting as a 'threat factor' to India's security perceptions. During the period of 1965 to 1985, China supplied military hardware to 'Pakistan worth \$ billion; much of it as outright grant. China has sold Pakistan M-9. and M-11 missiles which are meant to deliver nuclear war heads. It has also transferred M-9 manufacturing technology to Pakistan. The Karakoram highway is providing the access route between the two countries for the supply of military hardwares. This road also gives China access to the very heart of South Asian sub-Continent. China's supply of military hardware and technology to Pakistan, despite its knowledge that Indo-Pak relations have not been normal and tension free since partition; and Pakistan has not only occupied a part of Jammu and Kashmir but also exporting terrorism to India creating disturbances in Indian territories, is feeding fear in Indian mind and Chinese intension is being often questioned. China under such a situation should act with caution and prudence. It will be more prudent on China's part as Pakistan's closest friend to influence Islamabad to give up its dangerous confrontationist course against India. India does not object to the sale of conventional weapons to Pakistan. But the destabilising weapons that aggravate regional tensions, which constitute a direct security threat and promote arms race in the region must be

stopped. Large scale arms supplies to Pakistan by China infact sends a wrong signals to Pakistan and encourages its hostile actions and fuels regional tensions.

China's disengagement from Pakistan would certainly act as a confidence building measure to improve relations with India.

China's linkage with Nepal are no less important. The construction of 'Kathmandu-Koderi' highway clearly shows the strategic dimensions of Chinese interests in Nepal. China has also been supplying military aid to Nepal to the displeasure of India. China's support to Nepal's 'zone of peace' proposal and its repeated reaffirmation of support to Nepal's so called struggle for protection of its national independence and sovereignty is essentially an anti-India design.

China's insistence that it would only enter into negotiations with Bhutan without Indian involvement also creates embarrassment for India, as Bhutan has a special treaty under which India decides Bhutan's foreign policy. India's northern border which includes Bhutan's frontiers with China cannot be decided without India's involvement.

Throughout eighties, inspite of repeated protests by India, China continued its support to Naga and Mizo insurgents. These were enough evidences indicating Chinese involvement in the insurgency operations in the north eastern part of India. It is also believed that China is



encouraging ULFA activists in Assam. China has been helping these militants from Bangladeshi soil.

It is also a well known fact that China is working on road and rail construction in Myanmar (Burma) with a view towards opening better lines of communication with Rangoon and Myanmar ports. It is also a common knowledge that China has established navigation facilities on Myanmar controlled Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The Chinese military strategists have described the Sino-Myanmar relations as 'of great significance to the national security of China'. As 'China's sea lines of communication are subject to military blockades or interruption in the east or south China seas, a route from Yunnan to Rangoon could become an important line for goods and materials.'<sup>7</sup> Myanmar's ports on the Bay of Bengal would open new routes to the Indian ocean. By seeking access to the sea at Rangoon, Beijing puts Myanmar and its ports into its sphere of influence in the area through arms transfers to that country. Such action is a direct challenge to India, as it would lead to a regional arms race for naval supremacy. China's 'neo colonialism' in Myanmar has put India in a difficult situation, as China's operation from Myanmar is a threat to India's security. Chinese influence in Myanmar is obviously directed against India.

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<sup>7</sup>Garry M. Wortzel, n.5., p.626.

### **Chinese insensitiveness to Indian sensitivities**

China's behaviour vis-a-vis India has, sometimes been quite irresponsible and insensible. The visit of Indian foreign minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpai in 1979 was an important development. It was the first high level visit since the border conflict and provided the opportunity for an exchange of views between political leaders of the two countries. But China willy-nilly undermined the visit by attacking Vietnam 'to teach it a lesson as India was taught in 1962', knowing it well that India shared a very good relations with that country. Again, such type of diplomatic volteface of treating one neighbour with bouquets while attacking other undermine the very norm of peaceful coexistence. Neither China could teach it a lesson nor could inflict a defeat on it but only thing it did was it displayed its arrogant, aggressive and unbecoming behaviour towards the neighbours and demonstrated once again its traditional policy of projecting power by means of force.

In 1982 when India hosted the 9th Asian games China not only participated but topped the medal list. Its players returned to their country with flying colours. But China made an unnecessary and uncalled for diplomatic faux pass by objecting to the participation of a dance troop from Arunachal Pradesh in the closing ceremony of the games. It is well known that Arunachal Pradesh is under the physical occupation of India. By bringing bi-lateral

politics to an international sports event China gave evidence of its reactionary foreign policy.

In 1986, China created an unnecessary furore by protesting against the grant of statehood to Arunachal Pradesh. It makes no difference to China whether that 'territory is a state or a union territory as long as it is physically under Indian occupation.'

Although India has time and again reaffirmed that Tibet is an 'autonomous region of China', China is evading from doing the same' in case of Sikkim, Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. It seems, as if China is still willing to play the Kashmir card, Sikkim card and Arunachal card, after obtaining the necessary concession from India on Tibet. China's denial of recognition to these states as parts of India is denial of history and rejection of reality.

Besides the above areas of discord there are perceptual differences also. China has signed NPT while India declines calling it to be 'discriminatory'. China supports Pakistan's proposal of declaring South Asia a 'nuclear free zone' which India opposes tooth and nail. India argues for granting Tibetans 'autonomy' which they had been promised to but China has been ignoring it time and again. Further, China's self assertion as a nuclear power, permanent member of the security council, member of the ICBM club, a leading space power and an emerging

economic giant, very much undermine the status of India. Again, the ideological differences between the two polities also act as a deterrent against cordial relations between the two. The competitive aspects of their relationship are also quite conspicuous. Many specific causes of conflict remain including desires for greater prestige, eco-rivalries hostile nationalisms, divergent perspectives on and incompatible standards of legitimacy, religious hostilities and territorial ambitions. In such a situation, it is the duty of both the countries to identify and minimise the areas of potential obstacles to their relationship, if not wipe them out in one stroke. Both should be sensitive to each other's sensitivities. Otherwise the so called normalisation process would create more shadow and heat than light.

## CHAPTER - FIVE

### CONCLUSION

Border dispute is Central to Sino-Indian relations. Efforts for a solution to this vexed issue have to be the fulcrum of any Sino-Indian relationship in the long term. An unsettled border will mean that the relations between India and China can use a mathematical analogy, tend towards normalisation but never quite attain it.<sup>1</sup>

Both the countries have understood this and therefore discussing it across the table with all sincerity and seriousness since 1981. This is however a very sticky issue which can not be solved overnight. No territorial problem any where has been tackled so easily and quickly. It is a very delicate and sensitive issue, not only between the two governments but also between two peoples. It is not only a matter of territory but also the sentiments of 40 per cent of world's populace. Any solution to this problem has thus to take the national feelings of both the countries as well as be acceptable if not satisfactory to both of them. This is also not real politik to close off the possibilities of other areas and avenues of cooperation in the name of an unsettled border. The talks to sort out this irritant issue has comprised of eight rounds of border talks and seven

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<sup>1</sup>Manoj Joshi, "The Sino-Indian Border Problem", Strategic Analysis, Vol. XV, No.-7, Oct. 1992, p. 683.

sessions of joint working group meetings. No one knows how long it will continue. The earlier set of talks from 1981 to 1987 broadly revolved round the Deng proposal of legitimisation of status quo and the Indian insistence on a 'sector by sector' approach. Again while the Chinese insisted on setting aside the border issue and improving relations in other areas, India was more sticky to the contention that any positive and fruitful relations could be possible only at the cost of the Border problem. There has been marked perceptual changes since then. China has withdrawn its Deng proposal and India is understood to have agreed on improving relations in other areas pending the final settlement of the border. Indian and Chinese negotiating positions on the border issue seem to be converging. It is evident from the recently concluded LAC agreement between the two countries. Now both the countries agree that:

- (i) There is a dispute on the border between the two countries;
- (ii) There is a Line of Actual Control upto which both the sides exercise jurisdiction;
- (iii) In determining the boundaries, historical facts, geographical principles, administrative and logistical considerations and ground realities are to be taken into account;

- (iv) Settlement of the boundary ought to take into account the national feelings of the people of both the countries;
- (v) Pending the settlement both should recognise and observe the LAC, peace and tranquillity should be maintained along the LAC;
- (vi) While continuing their efforts to find out a reasonable solution to the border problem both should improve their friendship and cooperation in other areas, beneficial to both.

Such a rational understanding of reality has led to a significant transformation and revitalisation of their relationship. "The two governments have indicated their desire to enhance their cooperative aspects of relationship, settle their existing disputes peacefully, implement a series of confidence and security building measures so as to avoid accidental conflicts or tensions as in the 1986-87 Somdorong Chu incident and strive to eliminate the sources and scope for conflict".<sup>2</sup> All the joint communique since 1988 the Press Statements issued after each of the seven rounds of JWG meetings the text of the agreement on LAC signed in September 1993, and the numerous statements made at the highest level in both the countries display such a desire. Both the countries have

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<sup>2</sup>Sujit Dutta, "India-China relations in the post cold war era", Strategic Analysis, Vol. xvi no. 11, Feb. 1992, p. 1411.

come out of the 'Prison of the Past' and realised the necessity for improving the security climate which will facilitate the tasks of nation building and modernisation. A qualitatively new Sino-Indian relationship is also crucial for meeting the challenges of the evolving post-cold war global system. The unipolar global structure of the world is too a complicated one. At the nuclear level it is bi-polar; at the level of military strength, it is unipolar, at the economic level it is multipolar, at the level of potential it is still multipolar. In such an anarchic environment there are several strains and anti-monies which haunt the norms of global peace and stability. There is a concerted effort by some hegemonic powers to maintain their civilisational superiority; regional and bilateral conflicts still persist, ethnic conflict and violence have become the hallmark of the order; the failure of peace enforcement efforts in Somalia, Bosnia, Yemen, Angola, Georgia and Rwanda undermine the legitimate capabilities the international bodies. With their large continental sizes, huge populations, their military, agro-economic and techno-industrial capabilities, India and China can play a significant role in shaping such an order in the right direction. The improvement in the relationship between this two Asian giants has a wide and positive implications not only for their two billion people but for the third world and the whole globe. Both the countries



belong to the same genre of states with their complex social structures, their potential to become powers to reckon with and their identical history of being victims of western imperialism. "In the coming years, the economic and political well being of much of the world would depend on the rapid growth, improvement of living standards, stability and security of India and China."<sup>3</sup> Their cooperative relations would improve the security and political environment throughout Asia and help shape a more secure, stable and prosperous world order. On many international issues like aid and trade human rights development, environmental issues both India and China share identical views. Both together can put a formidable force against the western pressure. Both the countries can evolve a joint position on areas like non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and missiles and expansion of the security council. The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) have been devised by the advanced countries and are hegemonic, restrictive and discriminatory. They are not aimed at controlling weapons proliferation per se but more at securing the sole possession of these weapons for the countries that already manufacture and proliferate them. They do not take into account the security and political interests of non-weapon developing countries. Although China has joined the NPT and

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p.1412.

declared itself an adherent to the MTCR, still serious differences between Beijing and West persist. China to certain extent concurs India's stance on these issues. Both can very much put a United Stand against all western pressure.

The five member permanent membership of the United Nation's Security Council is heavily weighed in favour of the North and this weight can be further enhanced many fold with the proposed expansion of the council to accommodate Germany and Japan. The South's interest can only be protected by the inclusion of a developing country like India. India's size and population entitle it to such a place. India's role was instrumental in the inclusion of main land China in the security Council notwithstanding the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. Now it is China's turn to reciprocate with the efforts to include India in the Security Council. India can acknowledge by helping China join the GATT and NAM.

The ability of India and China to cooperate on international issues rest on their bilateral relations. Since last five years both the countries have taken significant steps to strengthen their bilateral relations. The key agreements and areas of progress so far have been;<sup>4</sup>

- Accord on the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the LAC at the Rao-Li summit in September 1993

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 1425.

and the setting up in December of the expert group comprising experts from the military and foreign ministry under the aegis of the JWG to delineate the LAC;

- Agreement to settle the territorial problems peacefully and not to change the status quo in the LAC;
- Regular meetings between military commanders near Bumla in eastern sector and Spangur in the western sector in June and September;
- Talks to draw up principles under which troops cut backs could be made along the border areas;
- Talks on the agreement to inform each other on all significant military exercises in the two sectors;
- An India-China sub-committee on science and technology cooperation set up in December 1988, engaged in expanding scientific and economic exchanges. It will aid joint ventures, trade and cooperation in space research and other sectors;
- The agreement to open border trade between the two countries;

The high level visits and a string of political, economic, cultural and military exchanges.

These are the certain hopeful signs of a possible 'thaw' in Sino-Indian relations. Because, as V.P. Dutt believes "both India and China are following a maturer and

realistic policy towards each other."<sup>5</sup> India's policy towards China is both friendly and unemotional. Its approach to the Tibetan issue is also more sophisticated and realistic, adds Dutt. There are positive signs from China too. The Chinese are no longer busying themselves with setting up our neighbours against us. They are not promoting Pakistan any more to adopt a confrontationalist attitude towards India, he emphasises.

Does this mean that the areas of concern have already been eliminated? The answer is a sure 'no' but it can be said with certainty that they are minimised to a large extent. Sujit Dutta believes that the competitive aspects of relationship will still be there. "Competition without cooperation leads to confrontation and cooperation without competition results in military alliance. But India and China can afford neither, says Dutta."<sup>6</sup> With both competition and cooperation India and China can lead a balanced, realistic and sensitive relationship mutually beneficial and unhostile.

So far as the border question is concerned, both countries emphasise on a reasonable and mutually acceptable solution and both the countries are striving for it too. What they need to do is, to adopt a mature, unemotional,

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<sup>5</sup>As told to the present researcher in an interview held at international centre on 9th July, 1994.

<sup>6</sup>As told to the present researcher in an interview held at IDSA on 4th July 1994.

realistic, unambiguous and sophisticated approach. The historical facts, geographical principles, ground realities and the principles of mutual accommodation and understanding of 'give and take' can act as a guiding principle in this respect. However, before that, both the countries must clarify the ambiguities with regard to the status of Tibet, Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, being sensitive to each others sensitivities. They have to work on a three fold objective now: maintaining the status-quo for the time being, attempting to abolish the status quo, and replacing the status quo with an explicit agreement.

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