

**EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN  
INDOCHINA: A GEOSTRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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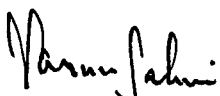
**DECLARATION**


I declare that the dissertation entitled “EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN INDOCHINA: A GEOSTRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE”, submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

  
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**CERTIFICATE**

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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*I would be responsible for the errors remaining in this work.*

*Rajeshwar Singh*  
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RVN	Republic of Vietnam
DRVN	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
SRVN	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
LPDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
USA	United States of America
IBRU	International Boundary Research Unit
ICJ	International Court of Justice
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
ICSC	International Commission for Supervision and Control

## LIST OF FIGURES

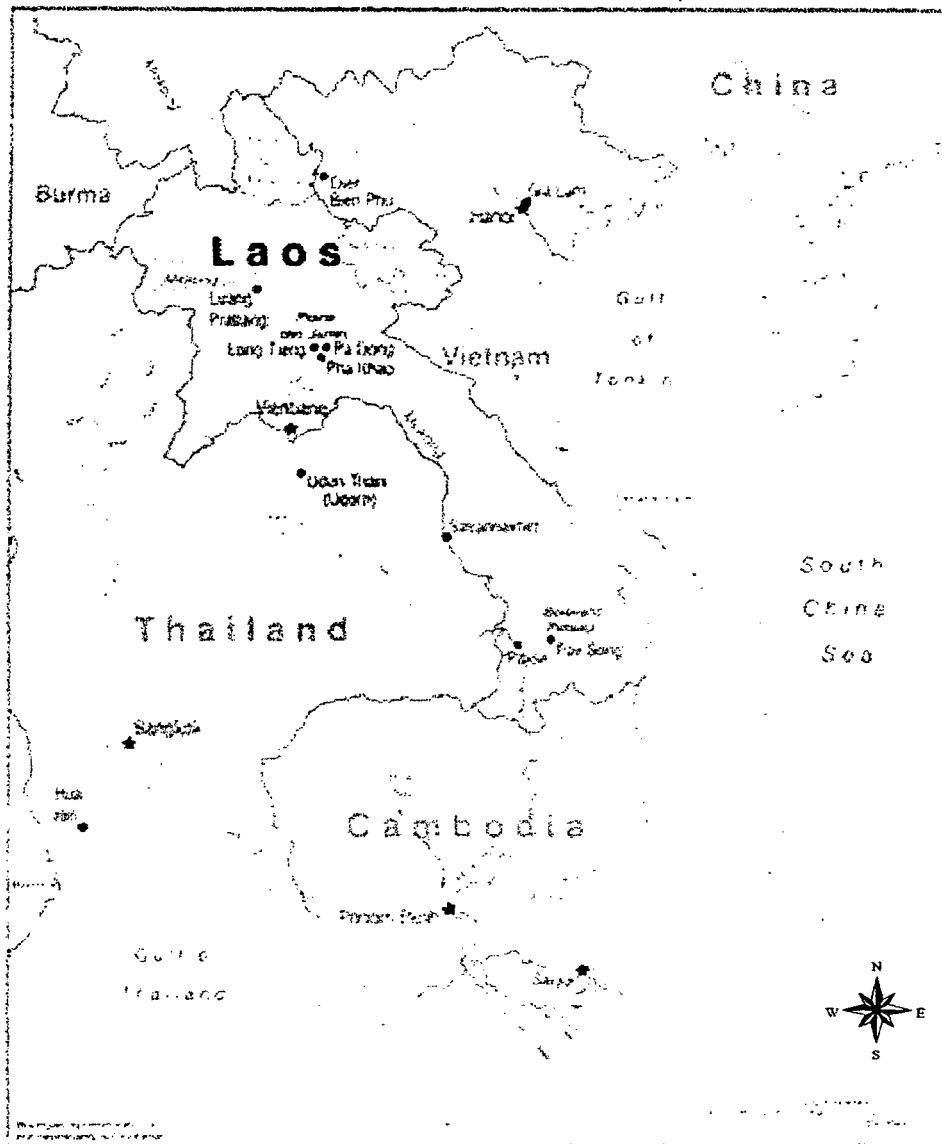
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*To*  
*Neha*

***CHAPTER I***





Source: <http://www.Worldatlas.com>

Figure 1: Present day Indochina

## CHAPTER-I

### INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In the recent past, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos formed part of a wider political union that was known as French Indochina. "The 'Indochina' is located on the eastern edge of the Asian peninsular mainland jutting south of China and eastwards of India (Figure 1). Both these great neighbors had exercised strong influence and made notable contribution towards earlier development of the countries in the region of Indochina."<sup>1</sup>

The French Indochinese Union consisted of five states - Tonkin, Annam, (Annam, the coastal region along the east side of the Annamite Cordillera),<sup>2</sup> Cochin China, Laos and Cambodge or, Cambodia (now Kampuchea). Two Vietnams, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) and the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), succeeded Tonkin, Annam and Cochin china in 1954, with the 17th parallel as the dividing line. The two Vietnam became one in July 1976 under the name of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRVN).

During the pre-Christian era, three strong racial groups had started establishing themselves in Indochina. "They were the Sinicised Viets in Tonkin and northern Annam and the Khmer and Champanese (Cham), later on Hinduised, in other parts. The Khmers basically belonging to a segment of the wide-ranging ethnic 'Malay', but intermixed with Indian Hindus, mainly from South India, asserted with an early start in western Cochin china and then into the rest of Mekong delta, present Kampuchea, lower Laos and parts of present Thailand. The Chams, also belonging to the 'Malay' variety, inhabited the central and southern Annam areas of the present SRVN and founded their kingdom of Champa. Much later, the Thais came and established their chieftaincies in areas that was to cover most of Laos and Thailand. The aboriginal *Moi* and many hill tribes came under direct and indirect domination of the Khmer,

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<sup>1</sup> Chakrabartty, H.R. (1988), *Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos: Bound in Comradeship. Panoramic Study of the Indochinese people from Ancient to Modern Times*, New Delhi: Patriot Publishers. p. 3

<sup>2</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed. (1995). *Eastern Asia: An Introductory History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Melbourne: Longman. p. 36

gives the south a very rich agricultural area.”<sup>6</sup> The Cambodian highlands in the west, which include the forbidding Cardamom Mountains and the-Elephant Range, in their isolation, provide a partial variation to the lane pattern.

**Geological Data:** The predominant figure in this region is the granites Annam Cordillera, which emerged from the sea during the mountain building period from the late Devonian age to the early Carboniferous. Inundations again took place from the late Carboniferous to the early Triassic causing erosions of the Cordillera and the spread of its sediments, which built massive limestone beds in the northern heights but dispersed more evenly in the lower areas of the south.

Further mountain building activities marked the end of the Triassic period, which created the great northern arch. These caused erosions to the earlier sedimentations that account for the abrupt bluffs in the highland region. Indochina now fully emerged from the sea during the final folding, generally termed as the Himalayan folding, which while raising the northern regions lowered the areas in the south and west. “These mountains are not high; the maximum elevation is 10,313 feet and peaks of 6,000 feet are exceptional. The mountains, dissected by rapid stream erosion in the tropical monsoon climate, are rugged and uninviting to human occupance.”<sup>7</sup> Fractures were caused in the ancient folds, which were to become the courses of rivers. The Song Koi or the Red River flowing in one of these fractures carried with it quantities of basalt which, in its decomposed form, has turned the river ‘red’. This “Song Koi delta of the north together with the narrowing strip of coastal lowland stretching southwards to the Porte d’ Annam, formed the original core of Annamite empire.”<sup>8</sup> Heavy rainfall caused further erosions, which created the deep ravines, narrow valleys and defiles and built the delta regions.

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<sup>6</sup> Vandenbosch, Amry and Butwell. Richard (1966). *The Changing Face of Southeast Asia*.  
Lexington: University of Kentucky Press. p. 162

<sup>7</sup> McCune, Shannon (1947), *ibid.* p. 336

<sup>8</sup> Zellinsky, Wilbur (1950). “The Indochinese Peninsula: a demographic anomaly”, *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 9. p.116

**Regional Divisions:** The erstwhile Union of Indochina covers an area of 738,160 square kilometers.”<sup>9</sup> Nearly highlands and mountains cover 80 percent of the area. These mountains are not high; the maximum elevation is 10,313 ft and peaks of 6,000 ft are exceptional. The mountains dissected by rapid stream erosion in the tropical monsoon climate, are rugged and uninviting to human occupation.<sup>10</sup> But only 10 percent of the people live in these uplands. The remaining 90 percent inhabit the plains. The lowlands produce about 90 per cent of the staple food, which is rice and yet, only a small portion of the lowlands can be put under full cultivation. Most of the people live in these small areas, which are 25 per cent of the lowlands. Thus, one would find many places densely populated with intense cultivation and other places sparsely inhabited with little or no cultivation. These physiographic imbalances have made the people sturdy and resolute since they had to get the best out of the available land fit for cultivation.

The upland and lowland areas can be easily divided into the following regions.

### **Upland Areas**

**The Highlands of Northern Tonkin and Laos:** The mountains and plateaus are generally contrived in northwest and southeast direction with rivers such as the Red and its tributaries following the same pattern. The trend changes into northeast southwest in the western area where the drainage is made into the Mekong. There is an opposite trend in the minor drainage system of the Si Kiang, which rises in Indochina and flows northeastwards into China. The general abruptness of the mountain ranges is accountable to the limestone deposits of the earlier ages, and also, in a lesser degree due to the crystalline rocks generally found in the areas between the Red River from Yunnan up to its meeting place with the Black River (Song Go). The area is sparsely populated with isolated hill tribes. The age-long deforestation by the tribal has turned the mountainous areas bleak but in the present regimes is trying to arrest the process.

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<sup>9</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *French Policy and Developments in Indochina*. New York: Russell & Russell. p. 1

<sup>10</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p. 5

Highlands between the Red River and the Mekong situated on the north of the Cordillera, this plateau region, formed of limestone and granite rocks and generally higher than the northern uplands, has a northwest-southeast mountainous pattern. The trend develops into northeast-southeast direction towards the Mekong. The area is not generally fit for cultivation and is sparsely populated. The Black River (Song Go), although interspersed with many rapids, provides an important system of transportation in the Vietnamese area. The mountains have deep gorges and are densely forested. Small groups of hill tribes inhabit this region.

**The Annam Cordillera:** “The Annamite Chain (Truong Son Range to the Vietnamese) covers considerable region. Extending between the Mekong and Col de Dong Trai Mit in the north it reaches very near to Vung Tau (previously Cape St. Jacques) the south. Its high spurs reaching almost to the east coast have created numerous alluvial encloses where earliest settlements took place. The massif rises sharply from the east coast but it slopes more gently towards the west. As it moves south, the Cordillera widens up and passes at many places, which provide access from the coastal regions to the Mekong valley break it. Ancient crystalline rocks, partially covered by lava, are also found in these areas. The soil on the basalt lava, creating the ‘red earth’ areas, is very fertile as compared with the surrounding regions. The mighty range, particularly its width, has made it a true geographical barrier that has prevented intermixture of people, controlled climatic conditions and affected vegetation. By accepting the burning, dry ‘winds of Laos’, i.e. the fohn or the *loo*, it saves the coastal agriculture and vegetation from desiccation. The great wall modifies the tempests arising out of the Pacific. It also provides a barrier to the very heavy continental rains.”<sup>11</sup> The steep mountains store much of the mineral wealth and the dense forests apart from housing a natural zoo provide an endless reservoir of useful timber. The range has many beauty spots, hill stations like Dalat and several health resorts, and waterfalls having great scented beauty. It had not only provided refuge to the people retreating before the onslaught of newer arrivals but also formed the main backbone of all patriotic and resistance movements.

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<sup>11</sup> Chakrabartty. H.R. (1988). *ibid.* p. 6

**The Highlands of Kampuchea:** The Kampuchean highlands, the Cardamom and the Elephant mountains, are mainly composed of sandstone plateaus and crystalline rocks. The interesting aspect of these uplands lies in their isolation in the southwest point of Indochina. Like the Cordilleras, they rise steeply from the sea, the Gulf of Siam, and slope gently towards the interior, but unlike the Truong Son, the Cambodian mountains do not possess extending arms to enclose fertile coastal areas. They play a negative role by blocking approaches to and from the sea. The zone is generally repelling, thinly populated but densely forested and receives very heavy rainfall.

### **Lowland Areas**

**The Tonkin Delta:** “Along the Gulf of Tonkin, the Red and some other smaller rivers flowing in the northern part of Annam have formed deltas. The terrain, starting with mild limestone undulations in the foothill regions, becomes deadly flat in wide alluvial plains till it closes to the sea where it is lined with numerous sand dunes. The Red River generally carrying with it a heavy weight of alluvium is constantly creating newer areas in the delta region with its sedimentation which in turn causes a general southward drift of the tributaries. The newly built areas have always been brought under good rice cultivation. The Tonkin delta is one of the most heavily populated, also intensely cultivated, areas of the world.”<sup>12</sup>

**The Annam Coastal Plain:** The extending arms of the Annamite Chain enclose the plain of eastern Annam, with its numerous deltas. Nowhere in this region large deltas form though delta-building activities by short, rapid rivers are in constant progress for centuries. These deltas are well cultivated and thickly populated. The river valleys have also been providing a passageway between the coast and the Mekong areas through the formidable Truong Son range.

**The Mekong and Tonle Sap Plains:** “Cambodia proper as it once existed covered this entire region that has three physical divisions, namely, (a) the Tonle Sap plains

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<sup>12</sup> Chakrabartty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 8

(b) the plains of the Mekong east of it, and (c) the Mekong delta. The historic Tonle Sap plains, composed of alluvial soil, are essentially based around the Great Lake. Tonle Sap Lake had been a gulf once upon a time. It got cut off from the sea due to heavy sedimentation of the Mekong. It still abounds with many types of sea fish, which have gradually adopted their new existence in the lake. During high water (June-October) Tonle Sap covers an area approximately 4,000 square miles and is about 65 miles wide. At this time, the Mekong drains itself into the lake inundating it with floodwater. During low water, (November-June), the process is reversed. The lake into the lower Mekong discharges the outflow from the central plains and the encircling hills. The Great Lake then gets reduced to about 1000 sq. miles with a width of about 22 miles and having a depth of not more than six feet at any place. The opposite process in the high water flood season could be explained from the fact of the Mekong blocking its distributaries with sedimentation to such an extent that they find difficulty in draining themselves into the sea. The Tonle Sap therefore exemplifies a case of a magnificent care of nature to provide for a near perfect anti-flood device for the region. The Mekong plain constitutes an area southwards of the Lake, along the Mekong River and its branches. Most of the area is composed of clay deposits. Beyond Khone, a basalt belt causes obstructions to the great river. Rapids, as the one near Kratie, are thus created which cause a variation in the quiet flow of the river system in this area."<sup>13</sup>

The Mekong Delta is built by alluvial deposits of the river of its name as well as by other shorter rivers draining themselves into the sea. Technically, the delta region starts from the outskirts of Phnom Penh where the outflow of the Great Lake, after meeting the Mekong, divides into two major distributaries, the Fleuve Anterieur and the Fleuve Posterieur or the Bussac. The Fleuve Anterieur further subdivides into four major branches which merge with the Vaico-Saigon alluvial deltaic lowlands from the north forming a wide area of uniformly sticky mud plains. The Bussac, however, flows from Chau Doc into the sea as a single stream widening to the extent of about 20 km at its mouth but due to silting it is still unfit for navigation except by country boats.

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<sup>13</sup> Chakrabartty, H.R. (1988). *ibid.* p. 8-9

In the absence of a proper drainage system this entire region is marshy, interposed with sand deposits and vast accumulations of brackish water, which are unfavorable for rice cultivation and habitation. The coast does not provide access to major shipping with the exception of the mouths of the Saigon River through which a very great volume of maritime traffic passes to and from the river port Saigon.

Cochin china in Vietnam is situated in the delta region and the present day Kampuchea is located in the Tonle Sap and Mekong Plains, which have high population density and are intensely cultivated

### **Climate and Vegetation**

**Climate:** "The whole of Indochina falls in the great monsoon belt of Asia."<sup>14</sup> The southwesterly summer monsoons are generally heavy from May to July-August and the northeasterly winter monsoon rains start from early November and end in February-March. The winter rains often take the form of a slow drizzle and are nowhere as heavy as the summer downpour. Wind directions however vary due to unequal air pressures. The summer rainfall concludes its session by bursts of typhoons from the South China Sea, which move in westerly directions during June-October. The average rainfall is about 80 inches a year in most parts though there are some comparatively dry places and a few very wet regions. Some of the mountainous areas receive torrential rain with an average rainfall of over 150 inches in a year.<sup>15</sup>

The period between the monsoons, April-May, is the warmest. The long coastline of Vietnam, as well as the altitudes of many places, exerts a general moderating influence on the climate of Vietnam which does not rise over 27 degrees Centigrade though in the Mekong valley the mercury sometimes touches 30 degrees. The coastline area of lower Annam, where the winter rainfall is more pronounced, becomes very hot in the month of July. The moist and warm temperatures help in

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<sup>14</sup> Fisher, Charles (1969), *South East Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography*, London: Methuen. p. 21-22

<sup>15</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 9-11



extensive rice cultivation and the cool winters in the northern parts have beneficial effects on the people there in the form of conservation of human energy.

**Vegetation:** More than 40 per cent area of the erstwhile Union is forested covering an area over 120,000 square miles but a good proportion of the virgin forests have disappeared under the impact of shifting cultivation, carried on for centuries, indiscriminate cutting of trees for fuel and due to industrial encroachments. The *ray*, or shifting cultivation, has disturbed the forest wealth more than anything else. Burning down a wide patch cleared areas and as soon as the fertility of the patch was exhausted, newer areas were burnt for fresh cultivation.<sup>16</sup> The present regimes however are taking most stringent measures in order to arrest further deterioration of the forest wealth of their countries.

In certain inaccessible areas of Laos and in Cardamom mountains there are traces of the original forests; otherwise, in other places the secondary rain forests have replaced the original. Depending upon the hardness of the soil the tropical rain forests are found where the rainfall is over 80 inches with tall trees up to 28 meters, many of them belonging to the *dipterocarpaceae* family (tall trees with winged fruits), some of the legume family, as well as palms and climbing Rotan. In suitable areas where the annual rainfall is between 60 and 80 inches monsoon forests had grown but much of the original monsoon forests also got burnt down. Herbaceous plants grew in such places to be followed by thick banana and bamboo vegetation under whose canopy the saplings and seedlings of the original forests grew which created the secondary monsoon forests.

But in many burnt out places the secondary rain forests could not come up, as the soil was poor. A grassland or parkland vegetation known as the 'savanna' came to succeed the original rain forests. Pine forests are found in sandy coastal-areas and at altitudes over 600 meters. In the estuaries and muddy coastal areas a useless type of mixed vegetation, classed under the general term of the 'mangrove', has grown extensively.

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<sup>16</sup> Chakrabartty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p.10-11

In spite of human depredations for ages, the upland regions are still very rich in forest wealth, which provides many valuable types of wood such as mahogany, ebony, sandalwood and rosewood. The teak forests of Laos's are noted for the quality of the timber. The teak (*Tectona grandis*) is however generally rare in Indochina. It belongs to a species of the monsoon forests and has got much greater power of resistance to fire. Other varieties include the *Sao*, *lim*, *trao*, *mun*, *kien-kien*, stick-lac, rattan, cinnamon, *cimon*, etc.<sup>17</sup>

The mountains and forests also maintain a huge, natural zoo, which abounds with tigers, leopards, elephants, rhinoceros, varieties of antelopes, gaurs, the python and all types of snakes and countless and rare varieties of birds.

## VIETNAM

“The eastern margin of peninsular Southeast Asia is occupied by Vietnam.”<sup>18</sup> Vietnam, covering an area of 338,392 square kilometers, is bounded by China in the north, the Gulf of Tonkin and South China Sea in the east and Kampuchea (Cambodia) and Laos in the west. The inhabitants of the Vietnam are the descendents of migrants from southern China, due to the pressures of the ‘Hans’ of Chinese Origin and they called themselves the ‘Viets’.<sup>19</sup> They were became the part of the Chinese culture. The Chinese imperial forces conquered their places of dwelling. After that they tend to move from there. “Those who moved southward created a new state in the delta of the Song Hai (Red River). They named it ‘Nam Viet’ or Southern Viet State. Their capital was at the site of modern Hanoi.”<sup>20</sup> It shares 1,150 km of common border with China, 930 km with Kampuchea and Laos. The boundary is located between the longitudinal co-ordinates 102° 10’-109° 30’ east and 8° 30’-23° 22’ north latitudes. Mountains and plateaus cover nearly three quarters of Vietnam. It has a coastline, which measures about 3,260 km. The sausage shaped country with a squeeze in the center stretches over 1,650 km north south as a crow flies from Chinese

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<sup>17</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p. 11

<sup>18</sup> Poulsen, Thomas and Dimitry. Sharkov (1995). *Nations and States: A Geographic Background to World Affairs*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. p. 263

<sup>19</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p. 20

<sup>20</sup> Poulsen, Thomas and Dimitry. Sharkov (1995), *ibid.* p. 263

border in the north to the southern most tip at Cape Ca Mau from where it winds northwards. Lung Cu in Ha Tuyen province (23° 22'N/105° 20'E) occupies the northern most point and the southern most tip is Rach Lau in Minh Hai province (8° 30'N/104° 50'E). The broadest part is about 600 km in the north and the narrowest portion, is in central Vietnam, measures about 50 km.<sup>21</sup>

“Some patterns, developed in the north, were difficult to replicate further south, and as the realm and the people expanded there, they were modified. What worked in the relatively densely populated Red River delta was not entirely appropriate for the more tropical frontier lands of the Mekong. These challenges Vietnamese political genius, too. The realm came to seem like basket on a pole, represented by the thin strip of coastal territory that makes up central Vietnam”.<sup>22</sup> Located somewhat centrally in Southeast Asia, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRVN) is an important bridgehead from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific. Hanoi is 1,120 km from the Rangoon and 1,770 km from Manila. Saigon to Singapore is 1,100 km and Djakarta is, 890 km from it.

### **Regional Divisions**

**Northern:** The northern part of Vietnam can be divided into two main regions; the mountainous region extending from Yunnan cover about 102,000 sq km and the deltaic area cover 14,500 sq km. The Red River, emanating from Yunnan, runs over 1,130 km in northern Vietnam discharges 122 billion cubic meters of water per year. The Red (Yung Koi) and its tributaries carry enormous masses of alluvial deposits, which have formed the fertile delta region. The annual carriage is about 80 million cubic meters of silt and if one-fifth of it can be fully exploited the yield will be equivalent to 20 million tons of compost. Rivers Black (Song Da) and Clear (Song Lo) are the important tributaries of the Song Koi. Other tributaries of the Red are the Gam (210 km), Chay (306 km) and Day (241 km).

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<sup>21</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988). *ibid.* p. 20

<sup>22</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *Nations and States in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 33

Hanoi, the capital of SRVN, is situated in the northern region. The next important city is Haiphong, which as port is second only to Saigon. It is lodged on the Song Koi-Thai Binh river delta, which is of 1,500,000 hectares.<sup>23</sup>

**Central:** Central Vietnam is distinguishable by its narrowness, the earlier mentioned “squeeze” in the sausage and its long coastline of alluvial plains much of which are enclosed in the extending arms of the Annam Cordillera. The well-known plains of this region are of Thanh Hoa and Vinh in the north, Hue in the middle and Qui Nhon in the south. The height of its mountain peaks keep on rising higher as one travels towards the south. The highest one is popularly known as Child and Mother Peak (2,020 meters) near Cape Varella. The most important town in this region is Hue, the old imperial capital.

**Southern:** The southern region, which is basically Cochin China, consists of the alluvial delta of the Mekong, and in the east, the deltaic area of Saigon River and its tributaries. “The French established themselves in Cochin china, as they called the Delta region.”<sup>24</sup> The 4,220 km long Mekong originating at Hai Tang in China passes through Laos and Kampuchea and in its last leg of 220 km through southern Vietnam branches off in several directions before it enters the South China Sea. The Vietnamese call the great river Cuu Long (Nine Dragons) from its nine mouths. The Mekong annually discharges 1,400 billion cubic meters of water carrying with it 1,000 cubic meters of silt which causes expansion of the delta into the sea by 60 to 80 meters a year.

The coastline is generally flat and muddy; full of mangroves swamps, but much of Mekong delta is under good cultivation and well populated. The river mouths are not for navigation by larger vessels with the exception of that of Saigon River through which a heavy volume of external trade is conducted. Saigon is the biggest town of the SRVN and its most important port.

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<sup>23</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p. 21

<sup>24</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed. *Ibid.* p. 36

Administratively, the SRVN is divided into 35 provinces. In size, the Vietnamese province is near about equal to that of an Indian district. The province often bears the name of the provincial capitals.

## **CAMBODIA**

The Peoples Republic of Kampuchea, generally known as Cambodia, covers an area of 181.035 sq km. Laos's borders it in the northeast, Thailand in the west and northwest and Vietnam in the east and southeast. The country is nearly landlocked with just an opening to the Gulf of Siam in the southwest. Its capital, Phnom Penh, is an ancient river port on the great Mekong, which enters the country from the north.

**Physical Setting:** The central part, which covers three-fourths of Kampuchea, is an extensive, low lying alluvial plain bordering the Great Lake (Tonle Sap) and the Mekong River. "Khmer civilization which reached its height in the twelfth century of Angkor, has long occupied the lower Mekong Basin in Cambodia, which is noteworthy for natural flood control system that annually fills and then drains the Great Lake in its centre as the Tonle Sap River, which links it with the Mekong, reverses its flow when the season changes from wet to dry and back again."<sup>25</sup> The Great Lake is a natural flood reservoir of the Mekong and its distributaries. The lake also receives the drainage water of the central plain and the mountains encircling it. The plain is encompassed to the south and west by a high plateau, including the Elephant Range that runs to the Gulf of Siam. In the southwest, the granite, densely forested and inhospitable Cardamom Mountains rise to 1.600 meters. In the north is the Dangrek Range (Phnom Dang Raek) whose sandstone terraces fall abruptly to the plain. To the east are the extensions of the Annam Cordillera, usually called the Moi Hills, whose heights reach 1,000 meters in some places. The 4,220 km long Mekong originates in the Szechwan province of South China and after rapidly crossing Laos passes through the depressions between the Dangrek Range and the Moi Hills. It drains eastern Kampuchea and forms the deltaic region in the south.

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<sup>25</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed. Ibid. p. 37

## LAOS

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) replaced the Kingdom of Laos on December 2, 1975. Located in the heart of peninsular Asia, this land-locked country covers an area of 36,800 square kilometers and shares 425 kilometers of common border with China in the north, 589 km with Kampuchea in the south, 1,755 km with Thailand in the south and west (including 805 km along the Mekong), 237 km with Burma in the northwest and 2,124 km with Vietnam in the east. Before the reunification of Vietnam, the Laotian border with North Vietnam measured 1,639 km and South Vietnam 485 km. "Due to its very location, Laos has been a buffer state between its neighbours and a place for conflicting interests. Being on the route to China from the Annamite ranges gives Laos a geo-political significance."<sup>26</sup>

"The Laotians are closely related in language, culture and religion to the northeastern Thais and the country today as it is today came into being when French detached a portion of the northeastern Thai-speaking region in the late nineteenth century."<sup>27</sup>

**Physiography:** The country, shaped like a hatchet on the map, stretches in a northwesterly–southwesterly direction for about 1,150 km and its width ranges between 485 and 96 km. "Except the Mekong river valley, most of the Laos is characterized by rugged land and mountainous terrains. The Annam Cordillera making the boundary of eastern Laos is a formidable and historic barrier to movement."<sup>28</sup> "Most of the Laos is mountainous, the northern bulge consisting of an extension of the Yunnan plateau and the southern leg extending along the western slopes of the Annamitic Cordillera. There is a small area of alluvial soil suitable for rice growing around the old royal capital of Luang Prabang on the Mekong in the central north, and another near the present capital, Vientiane, but most agricultural land in Laos is found in small pockets in the upper Mekong basin..."<sup>29</sup> Cultivated land and savannah grassy areas would appear as mere patches in the landscape of Laos. The northern part of the republic, the hatchet head, is composed of sandstone

<sup>26</sup> Mishra, Patit Praban (1999). *The Contemporary History of Laos*. New Delhi: National Book Organization Publishers-Distributors. p. 1

<sup>27</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed., *ibid.* p. 38

<sup>28</sup> Le Bar, Frank M. and Suddard, Adrienne (1960). *Laos: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*, New Haven: Hraf Press. p. 26

<sup>29</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed, *ibid.* p. 38

and limestone plateaus with crystalline ranges rising to over 275 meters. With fast-flowing rivers, rapids, deep gorges and dense jungles, many parts of the northern region present an awe-inspiring spectacle.

“Upper Laos along with the Shan state of Burma and North-Western provinces of Thailand forms a vast upland.”<sup>30</sup> “This wide highland is an extension to the Yunnan Plateau of south-western China. The fragmented nature of terrain and forest forming higher ridges make the communication difficult. The control over these areas by the government forces was minimal due to inaccessibility of the area.”<sup>31</sup> The region known as the Mekong Plateau occupies northwest of Laos, west of Nam Hou River, forming roughly the blade-end of the hatchet, and then in the south, as a part of the hatchet handle. The plateaus of the north, such as Tran Ninh (Xieng Khouang in World atlases) plateau, north of Vientiane, are mostly composed of sandstone beds. The plateau character has been maintained by the resistant nature of the bed itself. The plateaus in hatchet handle region, or ‘panhandle’ as some authors prefer to call it, which slopes from east to west, has been formed by level beds of extruded basalt, as the Bolovens Plateau situated north of the Se Khong River.

“The Mekong River enters Laos from Muong Sing village and forms the western boundary of Laos. Mekong is navigable between Vietnam and Savanakheth. This river carries out the trade with Thailand. In the middle and lower courses of the river, the regions are populated.”<sup>32</sup> The 4,220 km long Mekong, crashing through a deep valley in its upper reaches, flows into Laos from the north in comparative peace. This great river of Asia dominates the Laotian scenario and the country was usually referred in the past of the ‘Mekong Kingdom’. In its southward course, tributaries from the Annamite Chain, such as the Se Bong Fe, the Se bong and Se Khong, swell the Mekong. These rivers move gently in the highland regions and swamp these areas. As they leave plateaus, they start cascading but become gentle while joining the Mekong.

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<sup>30</sup> Fisher, Charles (1969). *ibid.* p. 412-13

<sup>31</sup> Mishra, Patit Praban (1999), *ibid.* p. 1

<sup>32</sup> Fisher, Charles (1969), *ibid.* p. 414

## FRENCH INDOCHINA

French Indochina, a former dependency of France in Southeast Asia, made up of Vietnam (including the protectorates<sup>33</sup> of Annam and Tonkin and the colony of Cochin China), Laos, and Cambodia. The three territories of French Indochina became independent in 1954; at the same time Vietnam was divided at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel. Tonkin and northern Annam became the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north, and Cochin china and southern Annam became the Republic of Vietnam in the south.

## HISTORY

**Before the Period of French Rule.** Prior to 1770 the territory known today as Vietnam was divided into two hostile halves at the town of Dong Hoi on the narrow coastal plain in the central part of the country. The powers of the Le Dynasty emperor at Hanoi, which theoretically extended over the whole territory, had been gradually diminished over the centuries until he was little more than the religious leader of his people. Temporary power resided in the two *chua*, or hereditary governors. The Trinh family held title to this office in the northern territory (northern Annam and Tonkin), while the Nguyen family ruled in the southern territory (southern Annam and Cochin china). These territories are often considered as 'Sinicized' as the "Sinicization of Vietnam (with the exception of its southern 'Cochin china' part, a late colonization territory) which occurred during the first millennium of the Christian era was structurally so profound that it survived the end of Chinese political control in 939 A.D. by several centuries."<sup>34</sup>

To the west of Vietnam lies the kingdom of Laos, a jungle-covered land of mountains and valleys along the Mekong River. In race, language, and religion the Laotians are akin to the Thai. Because of the physical character of the territory, Laos was not a

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<sup>33</sup> The protectorates were the territories in which native institutions and rules have been preserved and guaranteed against interference from outside.

<sup>34</sup> Benda, Harry J. (1965). "Political Elites in Colonial Southeast Asia: An Historical Analysis". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 7, no. 3, p. 239



single state ruled by a central government but consisted of several small kingdoms. Many parts of the country had only village administration.

To the south was Cambodia, the kingdom of the darker-skinned Cambodians, descendants of the Khmers. The Khmers had developed an impressive civilization, the evidence of which remains in the magnificent ruins at Angkor. This civilization, however, had reached its zenith in the 12th century A.D. and had declined under attacks and incursions by the Siamese and the Vietnamese. "The French 'pacified' the north of Vietnam and brought Laos and Cambodia under their effective (but limited) sway, as well turning their attention to controlling the swiddening inhabitants of the upland spine of Indochina."<sup>35</sup>

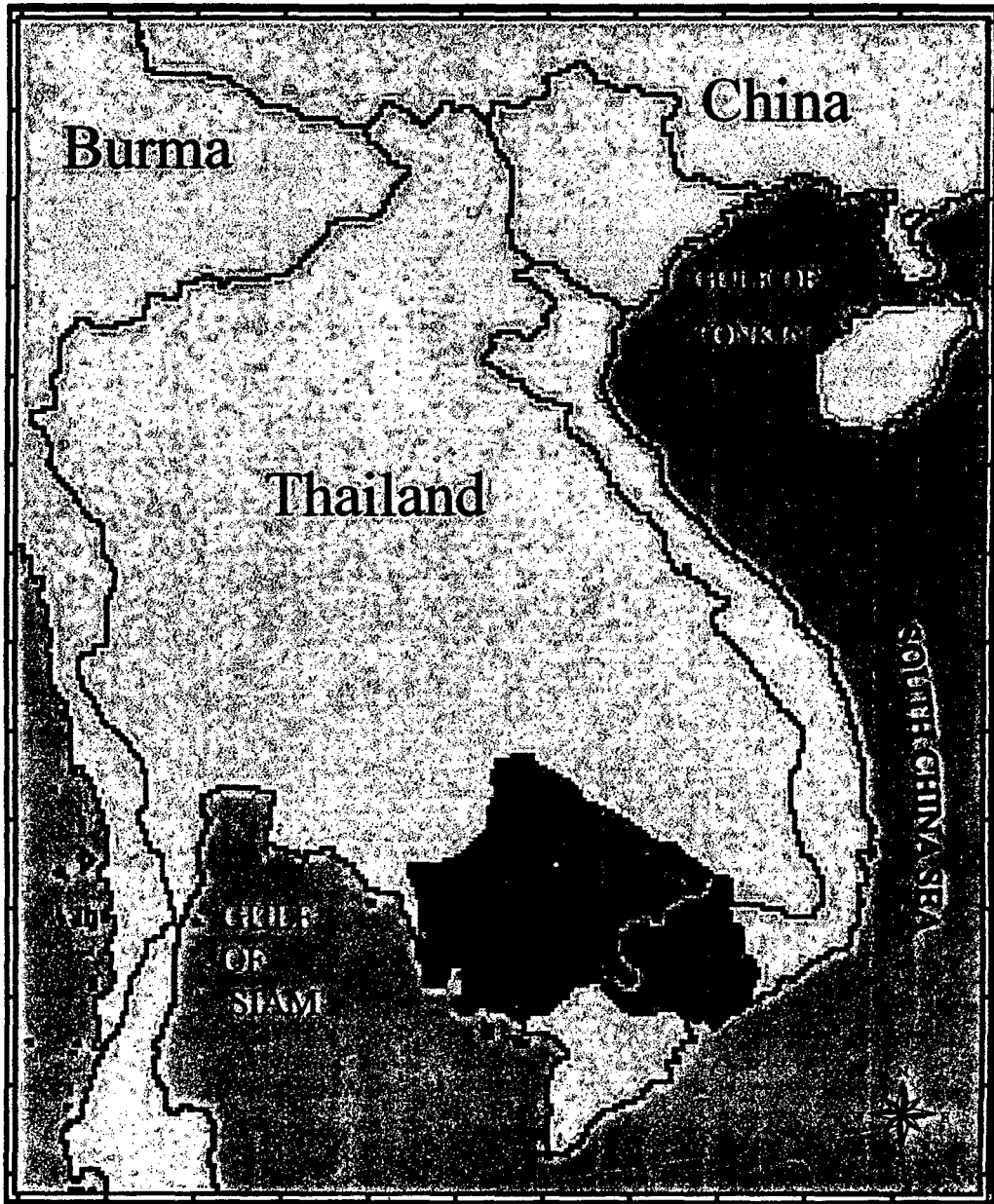
**First Contacts with the French.** In 1771 a rebellion in Vietnam (the Tay-son Rebellion) deposed the emperor and the two *chua*. This rebellion was indirectly responsible for the beginning of French influence. The heir to the *chua* office in the south, Nguyen Anh, was assisted in his effort to unseat the rebels by a French Roman Catholic bishop, Pigneau de Behaine. It was in large measure due to the aid afforded by a group of European mercenaries recruited by the bishop that Nguyen Anh defeated the rebels, unified Vietnam, and proclaimed himself emperor under the title Gia Long (1802-1820). Grateful for this assistance, Gia Long permitted Christian missionaries to carry on their work unmolested in his country. His successors, however, resented what they regarded as an intrusion by foreigners into Vietnamese affairs and began systematic of Christians. "The French were more likely to act in Vietnam just because the British were so successful in China."<sup>36</sup> The Nguyen rulers provided the opportunity. "It so happened that the Vietnamese were stubborn and determined to hold on their old policy. They did not know the real strength of maritime powers and there was nobody to tell them of the might and custom of these distant lands."<sup>37</sup> "Even in the 1840's French naval vessels, in the area as a result of china war, were intervening in Vietnam in support of the missionaries whom the

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<sup>35</sup> Elson, Robert (2004), "Reinventing a Region: Southeast Asia and the Colonial Experience", p. 15-31, in Mark Beeson, ed, *Contemporary Southeast Asia: Regional Dynamics*. National Difference. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>36</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid*, p. 35

<sup>37</sup> Cited in Tarling, Nicholas (1998). p. 35



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 2: Indochina in 1863

regime sought to drive out.”<sup>38</sup> It was the murder of a number of and Spanish missionaries, which led to the dispatch joint French-Spanish expedition against Vietnam in 1858.

**Expansion of French Control.** “In 1858 a Franco-Spanish expedition attacked Danang”<sup>39</sup> and the French-Spanish expedition of very same year, attacked and captured the Vietnamese city of Tourane but was unable to reach to the capital, Hue because the river was too shallow for its ships. A disagreement between the commanders arose over the next step to be taken, and the Spanish withdrew and left the French to proceed alone. They attacked and captured Saigon in 1859. “Saigon was captured by French in 1861. In June 1862, the French got three provinces of Cochin china and the right to penetrate into the interiors by way of the Mekong River.”<sup>40</sup> “The war continued until June 1862, when the emperor ceded the three provinces of Cochin china.”<sup>41</sup> The treaty of 1862 was also signed and “the most important provision of the 1862 treaty was France’s right to navigate the Mekong...”<sup>42</sup> “The French annexed the three western provinces in 1867, when the colony of Cochin china was established and “the Siam was forced to recognize the French as the overlords of Cambodia.”<sup>43</sup> (Fig. 2)

“The king of Cambodia meanwhile, caught expansionist activities of France and Siam (Thailand), placed his country under French protection in 1863, By August 1883 the French completed their conquest of Tonkin delta, it was not until 1884 that administrative power was transferred to French officials.”<sup>44</sup>

In 1873 France found a pretext for a second intervention in Vietnam in the Vietnamese emperor's plea to the governor of Cochin china for help in evicting a French merchant Jean Dupuis, from Hanoi in Tonkin. The so-called mission of inquiry of Francis Garnier took Hanoi in November 1873, and a treaty with the

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<sup>38</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid*, p. 35

<sup>39</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid*, p. 35

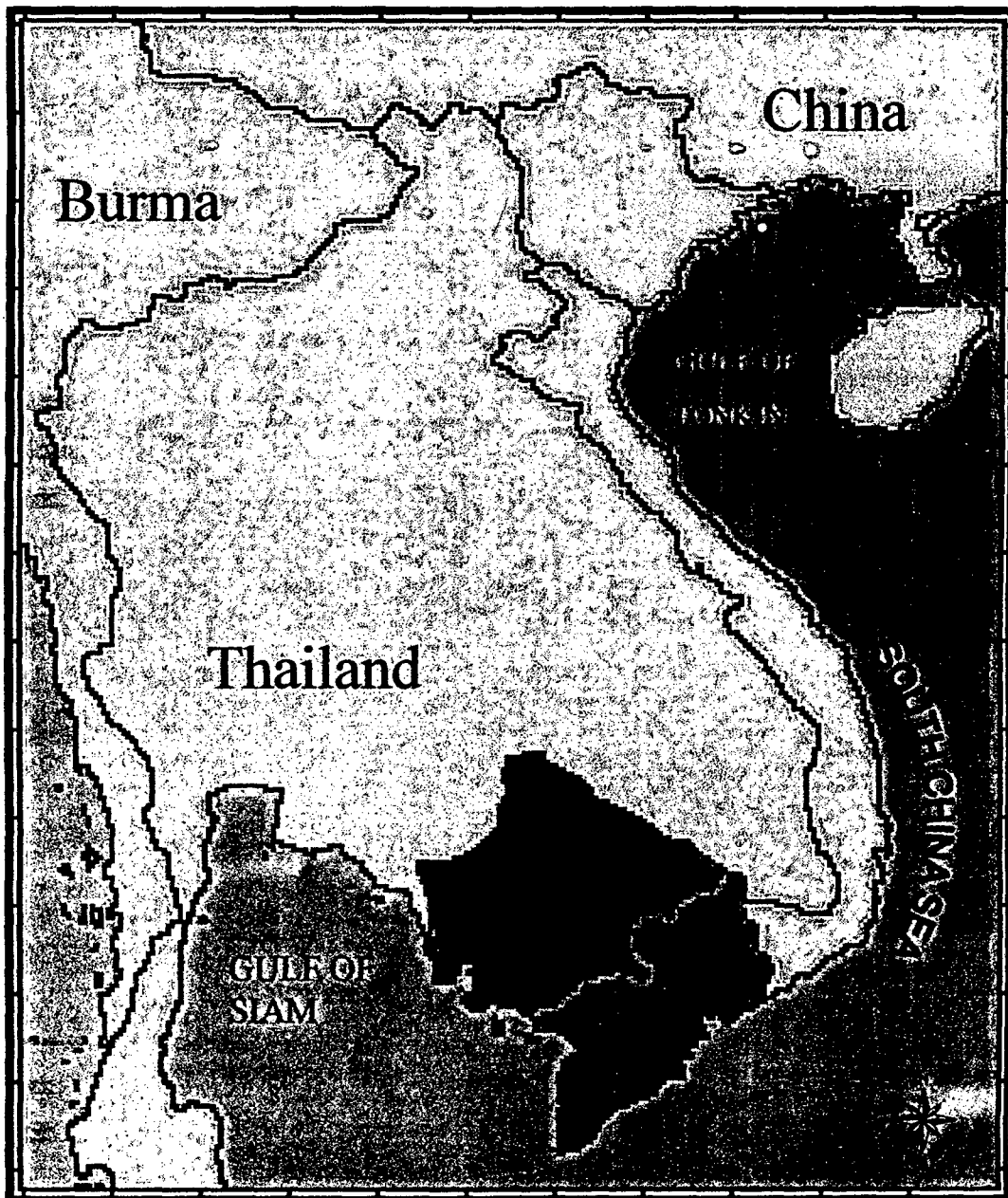
<sup>40</sup> Macnair, Harley F. and Lach, Donald F. (1954), *Modern Far Eastern International Relations*. New York: Van Nostrand. p. 35

<sup>41</sup> Sardesai, D.R. (1981), *Southeast Asia: Past and Present*. Colorado: Westview Press. p. 127

<sup>42</sup> Sardesai, D.R. (1981), *ibid*. p. 128

<sup>43</sup> Christian, John L. (1941), “Anglo-French Rivalry in Southeast Asia: Its Historical Geography and Diplomatic Climate”, *Geographical Review*. Vol. 31. no. 2, p. 275

<sup>44</sup> Mishra, Patit Praban (1999). *ibid*. p. 6



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 3: Indochina in 1867

emperor was signed in 1874, opening the Red River to foreign shipping and granting France vague rights of protection over all Vietnamese territory. The treaty provided France with a territory from which she could penetrate China, a scheme that had become one of her major preoccupations.

But the situation in Tonkin remained very confused. Bands of brigands known as the Black Flags and the Yellow Flags, who had fled from China after the failure of a rebellion there, were ravaging the countryside; a Chinese army which had been invited in by the emperor to deal with these brigands, was present; and a Vietnamese movement known as the 'Scholars' was engaged in a large-scale massacre of Christians. The French dispatched another to Tonkin under Henri Riviere in 1882. "The weakness of the Nguyen regime, coupled with the hostility that the French had aroused, meant that there were plenty of opportunities for combative Frenchmen to seize. In 1883 the French established a protectorate over Vietnam and after a conflict with the Chinese asserted their control over Tongkin."<sup>45</sup> After taking Hanoi, the French went on to capture the whole of Tonkin by force of arms, driving out the Chinese. "By the treaty of June 6, 1884 both Tonkin and Annam became French protectorates."<sup>46</sup> Also in 1884 the French protectorate over Cambodia was confirmed and administrative power turned over to France. (Fig. 3)

"The beginning of French involvement in Cambodia is to be found in the eighteenth century, when missionaries from time to time took up residence in the kingdom, especially in the vicinity of the Udong. Involvement did not become political before the late 1850's, coincidentally with French involvement in Vietnam. In the mid-1850's King Duang had sought French support in an attempt to play off the Thai against the Vietnamese, but a French diplomatic mission to Cambodia in 1856, armed with a treaty of cooperation, failed to reach the Cambodian court, which was frightened away from welcoming it by Thai political advisers."<sup>47</sup> The draft treaty, contained several clauses that passed into the operative one concluded in 1863. The French wanted to seek for ship building, for example, freedom to move about country, and freedom to proselytize for the Roman Catholic faith. French interest in Cambodia was

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<sup>45</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998). *ibid.* p. 35

<sup>46</sup> Anh, Nguyen (1985). "The Vietnamese Monarchy under French Colonial Rule 1884-1945", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 19, no. 1, p. 147

<sup>47</sup> Chandler, David P (1983). *A History of Cambodia*. Colorado: Westview Press. p. 139



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 4: Indochina in 1885

started since from the time of their interest in Vietnam. A Frenchman Henri Mouhot also visited the region of Cambodia and visited the Duang's court. "The openness to Mouhot and to other European visitors in this period stemmed in part from his friendship with a French missionary, Monseigneur Jean Claude Miche, whose mission headquarters was located near Udong and who had actively supported the 1856 diplomatic mission. Miche convinced the king that there could be advantages in being from Thai controls and Vietnamese threats. In the last two years of his reign, Duang saw French expansion into Vietnam as an opportunity for him to regain territory that Cambodia had lost to the Vietnamese over the preceding two hundred years."<sup>48</sup> But the French administration in Saigon had delayed in providing help to her and "the matter was lapsed when Duang died in 1860."<sup>49</sup>

Negotiations were started once again in 1861. The French admiral in charge of southern Vietnam having no immediate war to fight, looked for a peaceful conquest, and began dreaming about Cambodia. The colonial era began without a shot and in a very tentative way. A delegation of French naval officers concluded a treaty with Norodom in Udong in August 1863, offering him protection at the hands of a French resident in exchange for timber concessions and mineral exploration rights. Sino-French Treaty of Teintsin established the Vietnamese-Chinese frontier in 1885, which also recognized the French rights in the protectorates.<sup>50</sup> Owen (2005)<sup>51</sup> presents a brief account as, "The French navy seized the six provinces of Vietnam's far south and converted them into the colony of 'Cochin china' between 1859 and 1867. The Vietnamese court under the far less competent leadership of the emperor Tu-duc (r.1848-1885) was then forced to agree to the transformation of north and central Vietnam into French 'protectorates' between 1873 and 1885, after appealing to China for help against the French." (Fig. 4)

"In 1904 the political geo-body we call Laos was confined for the first time in its history almost entirely to the eastern bank of the Mekong River, united for the first time since 1693, and had three of its four principalities ruled by the French. The

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<sup>48</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid.* p. 32-33

<sup>49</sup> Chandler, David P (1983), *ibid.* p. 140

<sup>50</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs (1956). *Collective Defence in South East Asia*. London.: Royal Institute of International Affairs. p. 42

<sup>51</sup> Owen, Norman G. (2005). *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. p. 115

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concoction formed a new entity in Southeast Asia by virtue of the lines that France, with Siam's reluctant approval, had drawn around it. Until the end of World War II, Laos was, for the French, a congenial backwater governed under relatively casual ad hoc arrangements. In the north was the principality of Luang Prabang.<sup>52</sup> "Till the time, except the visit of a Dutch trader, Gerrit van Wuysthoff in 1641 and a Jesuit, Giovanni-Maria Leria, Laos had no contact with the Europeans. Under Napoleon III, there was a spurt in colonial activities of the France and it adopted a policy which led it to French occupation of Indochina."<sup>53</sup> "French possessed a long tradition of colonial passions."<sup>54</sup> "The great possibilities of Chinese market prompted the French to have colonies in Indochina"<sup>55</sup> "The national pride was also an important factor in establishment of French imperialism in Indochina."<sup>56</sup> "The activities of Roman Catholic Missionaries and their desires to compensate the loss in India were also contributing factors in the colonisation of Indochina by French."<sup>57</sup> Laos became a French protectorate in 1893 when Siam in a treaty negotiated under duress of French military and naval pressure, renounced all claims to territory on the left bank of the Mekong River. Later, in 1904, Siam renounced sovereignty over some parts of northern Cambodia and that part of southern Laos on the right bank of the Mekong. "The French ruled the three other Lao principalities-Xieng Khouang, Vientiane, and Champasak-more directly. A French resident in Vientiane monitored both forms of governance and Laos as a whole."<sup>58</sup> "It was the efforts of Auguste Pavie, an employee of Cochin chinese postal and telegraph service, who brings the Laos under French control. Laos was a Pavie's gift for France."<sup>59</sup>

"Meanwhile, as the French consolidated their control over southern Vietnam, where they had intervened in the late 1850's, they began to take an interest in Cambodia. Travelers convinced them that Cambodia's economic potential was enormous and that the unmapped Mekong River would lead straight to central China."<sup>60</sup> "In 1885,

<sup>52</sup> Owen, Norman G. (2005), *ibid.*, p. 371

<sup>53</sup> Lancaster, Donald (1961). *The Emancipation of French Indochina*. London: Octagon Books. p. 35

<sup>54</sup> Roberts, Stephen H. (1963). *The History of French Colonial Policy*. London: P.S. King & Son. p. 4

<sup>55</sup> Walsh, W.B. (1943). "The Yunnan Myth". *Far Eastern Quarterly*. Vol. 11, no.3, p. 273

<sup>56</sup> Cady, John. F (1954). *The Roots of French Imperialism in East Asia*. New York: Cornell University Press. p. 294

<sup>57</sup> Mishra, Patit Praban (1999), *ibid.* p. 6

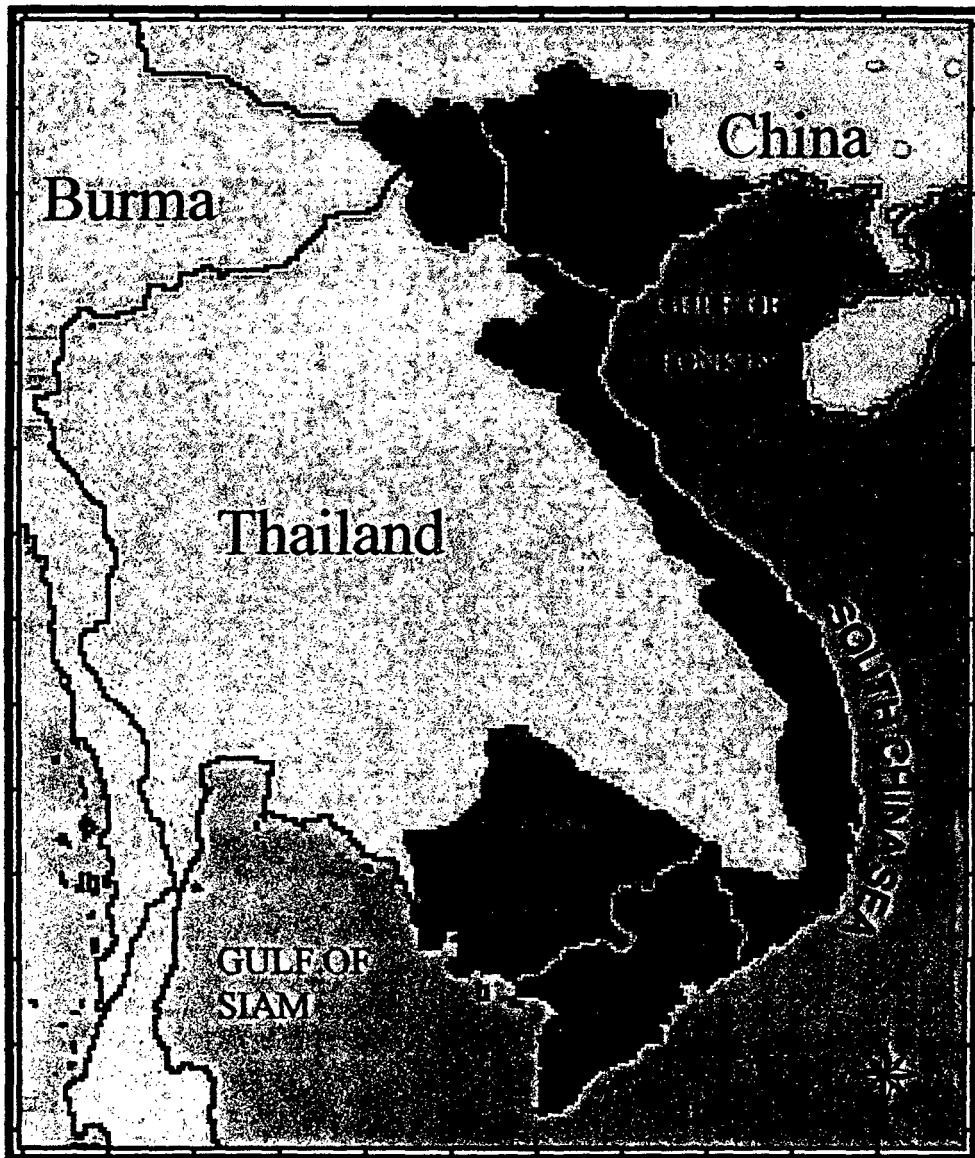
<sup>58</sup> Owen, Norman G. (2005), *ibid.* p. 371

<sup>59</sup> Thompson, Virginia (1937). *French Indo-China*. New York: MacMillan. p. 269

<sup>60</sup> Owen, Norman G. (2005), p. 121







Source: [http://www. indochinamaps/maps](http://www.indochinamaps/maps)

Figure 5: Indochina in 1888

Thailand after the French advance reduced the King Oun Kham of Luang Prabang to a governor's status. Later on, it sent a military expedition under the pretext of protecting the principality from the Ho tribes and took the Royal viceroy as a hostage. By the agreement of May 7, 1876 between the Thais and the French, the former sanctioned the post of Vice-Consul to French in Luang Prabang."<sup>61</sup> "In 1885, to cope up with the threat of Black Flags, Oun Kham, called Siamese troops to his rescue. The French government seized the opportunity to increase its intervention. To spare the British; at first it only required the foundation of a joint Franco-Siamese mission to determine the frontiers of the kingdom of Luang Prabang."<sup>62</sup> (Fig. 5) "The period of 1886-1893 was of fierce rivalries between French, British and Thailand regarding the Mekong Valley. Because the aims of British was to keep French at a safe distance by keeping the buffer between them and the French in northern Burma and Laos."<sup>63</sup> "Because the French wants to expand and were hopeful of gaining access to China through the Mekong that would boost their commercial interests. The British were aware of the fact. A British represented in Bangkok mentions that, 'it is probable that they (the French) will claim as the proper boundary the watershed between the Mekong river and the streams which face into the Gulf of Tonkin."<sup>64</sup> "Meanwhile, crisis in Luang Prabang had become acute when Deo Van Tri, the leader of the Tai foundation began to sack the city to avenge the kidnapping of his brother by the Thais. The king was saved by Pavie himself and he also persuaded the king to give up useless Thai protectorate in favour of a French protectorate."<sup>65</sup> And it was decided that the border agreements should be made on the spot bringing Thailand gradually to recognize the boundary as it was there."<sup>66</sup> Thailand was given an ultimatum on July 20, 1883:

- (1) Recognize the sovereignty of Vietnam and Cambodia (in fact of France), on Lao territory east of Mekong.
- (2) Withdraw all Siamese posts on the left bank of the Mekong within one month.

<sup>61</sup> Dommen, Arthur J. (1971). *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization*, New York: Praeger, p. 9

<sup>62</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982). *Laos: An Outline of Ancient and Contemporary History*. Hanoi: Foreign Language Publishing House, p. 35-36

<sup>63</sup> Hirschfield, Claire (1968). "Struggle for the Mekong Banks." *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 9, no. 1, p. 49

<sup>64</sup> Cited in Mishra, Palit Praban (1999). *ibid.* p. 6-7

<sup>65</sup> Dommen, Arthur J. (1971). *ibid.* p. 10

<sup>66</sup> Cited in Mishra, Palit Praban (1999). *ibid.* p. 7



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 6: Indochina in 1893

- (3) Recognize its responsibility fore the incidents, which had occurred.
- (4) Punish the culprits and pay damages to families of the French victims, etc.<sup>67</sup>

After the incidents between them and French in July 1893, a “Franco-Siamese treaty was signed on October 3, 1893 which established French protectorate over Laos.”<sup>68</sup> (Fig. 6) “At the time the French empire was extended from the coast of Vietnam to Mekong throughout the whole of Laos. When the British gave up the idea of buffer zone in Laos, the French got control of the east bank of Mekong in exchange for guaranteeing the security of the Mekong valley.”<sup>69</sup> “While the western half of the territories, which make up Sam Neua province are a part of the Mekong river basin, the eastern half is drained by rivers that flow into the Gulf of Tonkin. Accordingly, in 1896 the French Governor of northern Laos announced that the eastern half of the Sam Neua province would be transferred to Vietnam.”<sup>70</sup> “In 1904, a treaty between the European Empires-France and Britain-refined in explicit terms their respective spheres of influence; the French sphere was recognized to have advanced westward from the Mekong to the Chao Phraya and south to the Gulf of Thailand, that of British was to the west of Chao Phraya and the Gulf. Later on, in exchange for the twenty five kilometer neutral zone along the Mekong’s west bank, Thailand gave provinces of Champassak and Sayaboury to the French in 1904.”<sup>71</sup> “The colonization of Cambodia was remarkable for the partial restoration of the vast complex at Angkor, a monument to the lost grandeur of the Khmer kingdom which had lasted from the eighth to the fourteenth century.”<sup>72</sup> In 1907 Thailand ceded the two western Cambodian provinces Siem Reap and Battambang to France. “In Laos, after shoring up the kingdom of Luang Prabang and in 1907 annexing several provinces which had previously come under Siamese rule, the French settlers did little to change the course of events. Laos was also the colony of France to run a deficit.”<sup>73</sup> Thus through a long span of fifty years, France completed the conquest of Indochina.

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<sup>67</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982), *ibid.*, p. 36-39

<sup>68</sup> Mishra, Patit Praban (1999), *ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>69</sup> McCoy, Alfred W. (1970), “French Colonialism in Laos, 1893-1945”, in Nina S. Adams and Alfred McCoy, eds. *Laos: War and Revolution*. New York: Harper & Row, p. 75

<sup>70</sup> McCoy, Alfred W. (1970), *ibid.*, p. 76-77

<sup>71</sup> Hirschfield, Claire (1968), *ibid.*, p. 40

<sup>72</sup> Godement, Francois (1997), *The New Asian Renaissance: From Colonialism to the Post Cold War*, London: Routledge, p. 32

<sup>73</sup> Godement, Francois (1997), *ibid.*, p. 32

**The Indochinese Union.** The protectorates of Tonkin, Annam and Cambodia, the colony of Cochin china and Laos<sup>74</sup> became a political unit known as the Indochinese union under a constitution enacted by French decree in 1887 and “the creation of an Indochinese union represented a further step in the dispossession of the Vietnamese king’s political authority.”<sup>75</sup> When the protectorate over Laos was established a few years later, it too became a member of the Union Government was a governor general who was responsible to the minister of colonies in Paris. “The treaty on the protectorate was officially signed for the first time on September 28, 1941 between the representatives of France and the Luang Prabang.”<sup>76</sup>

The Indochinese union was divided into five parts, Annam, Tongking, Cochin china, Cambodia and Laos, all under the supreme control of the of the Governor-General. Annam was a protectorate and its Emperor and his officials were supervised by a French Resident-General; Tongking, though still nominally a protectorate and part of the Empire of Annam, was more directly controlled by the French; the colony of Cochin china, formerly part of the Annam, was a direct French possession: the kingdom of Cambodia was a protectorate supervised by a Resident-General; while in Laos a French Resident-General ruled a part of the country directly and supervised the kingdom of Luang Prabang which formed a protectorate. Hanoi, Haiphong, and Tourane formed special enclaves within Tongking and Annam.

Of the territories incorporated into the Indochinese union much the most important was the Vietnamese. Its population is estimated to be more than four-fifths of the total, its people are the most energetic, and it contains almost all the mining and manufacturing industry, which has been developed by the French. Moreover, though Cambodia does have a stretch of seacoast and it along with Laos has a common frontier with Siam, they have hitherto been dependent and Vietnamese ports for their imports and exports.

This administrative framework remained effectively in being, despite the collapse of France in 1940, until March 1945. Thus, in 1954 the French Indochina ceased to exist

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<sup>74</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs (1956). *Collective Defence in South East Asia*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs. p. 43

<sup>75</sup> Anh. Nguyen (1985). *ibid.* p. 148

<sup>76</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982). *ibid.* p. 41-42

as a political unit and the territory, which it comprised, was split into four states. These were the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), Cambodia and Laos.

*CHAPTER II*

## CHAPTER-II

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY: BOUNDARIES

#### Introduction

Boundaries delineate the extent of the areas. They define regions as having characteristics that differ from their neighbours. They divide an area from another. "Geography was defined as the demarcation of the earth's surface by processes of world-wide pervasiveness."<sup>1</sup> Political frontiers and boundaries separate areas subject to different political control and sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> The frontiers of the world have been collapsed into boundaries over the past centuries. The location of borders has become an increasingly critical element in relations among states over the past century.<sup>3</sup>

Actually, frontiers are the zone of change from one national core to another and sometimes no change is visible-similar across the boundary, but the similarity of the zone does not eliminate the presence of boundaries and its effects. In criticism of boundary as a bond, Holdich (1916)<sup>4</sup> states, "I need not again insist that boundaries are not set up in this world of human ambitions and land hunger for the purpose of assimilating the people on either side or of providing them with suitable accommodation for meeting one another." Instead, they are allocated for the purpose of separating sovereign states politically, culturally and economically to avoid confrontations-wars.

Political boundaries are deemed to mark the separation of inside from outside, self from other, identity from difference, safety from danger, community from anarchy, home from world, and so on.<sup>5</sup> Borders are always domains of contested power, in which local, national and international groups negotiate relations of subordination and

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<sup>1</sup> Lukermann, F. (1961), "The Concept of Location in Classical Geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol.51, No.2. p. 194-210

<sup>2</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *Political Frontiers and Boundaries*. London: Allen & Unwin. p. 1

<sup>3</sup> Poulsen, Thomas M. and Sharkov, Dimitry. (1995), *Nations and States: A Geographical Background to World Affairs*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p 19

<sup>4</sup> Holdich, Colonel Sir T.H. (1916), *Political Frontiers and Boundary Making*, London: Macmillan. p. 7

<sup>5</sup> Krishna. Sankaran (2003). 'Boundaries in Question' in John Agnew et al. *A Companion to Political Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell. p 303



control.<sup>6</sup> Boundaries separate the sovereignty of one state from that of its neighbours. No state has rights of tax collecting, of conscription, of law enforcement, or of military occupation outside its boundaries except in those few instances where such a right is conferred by international law. A state may not allow its aircraft to fly over the territory of neighbouring states unless some agreement on this has been reached with its neighbours.<sup>7</sup> Boundaries are invisible lines but are the most visible features on the political maps and they appear on maps as thin lines that mark the limits of sovereignty. In other words, boundaries are invisible lines, but their effects are often visible on the landscape.

### **Origin and Evolution of the Terms**

Generally, the words 'frontier' and 'boundary' are used interchangeably though they have well defined meaning.

### **Frontier**

Etymologically, the word 'frontier' suggests that which is "in front". It has been derived from a Latin word 'Frons' meaning "foreland" that which is forehead of anything, be it material or spiritual. Since, it was not an abstract term or line, but on the contrary designated as an area which was part of a whole specifically that part which comes ahead of the hinterland. Hence, termed as 'foreland', or 'borderland' or 'march'. A frontier is something that is crossed, characteristically from state to state, a line often dividing security from danger, neutrality from war. They are also something that is moved or advanced.<sup>8</sup> According to Lord Curzon (1907), "Frontiers are indeed the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace or life or death to nations".<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Wilson, T. and Donnan, H. eds, (1998), *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. P. 10

<sup>7</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972), *Political Geography*. New York: McGraw Hill. p. 66

<sup>8</sup> Tarling, N. (1998), *Nations And States In Southeast Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 47

<sup>9</sup> Curzon of Kedleston, Lord. (1907), *Frontiers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 7

Frontier has been perceived as the 'forerunner of the advancing state', able to integrate territory and its population. Thus, seen as a "manifestation of the ecumene".<sup>10</sup> In this zone populations may mix freely, external relations are not subject to state monopoly.

According to the British Association Geographical Glossary Committee (BAGGC), frontiers can be defined as, "A border region, zone, or tract, which forms a belt of separation, contact or transition between political units". Hence, it is not a legal, political or intellectual concept. It does not mark a definite limit or end of a political unit because, 'the frontier is by tradition a zone, where as the political boundary is a delimited and usually demarcated line within that zone....'<sup>11</sup> The frontiers were not same every time from past to the present world system. "Frontiers have varied in history. There are frontiers of an ethnic character, of a strategic character."<sup>12</sup> Side by side the pattern also has changed. "The frontiers of world have virtually all been collapsed into boundaries over the past two centuries."<sup>13</sup> Curzon presented the process by which a frontier may become a demarcated and delineated boundary line.<sup>14</sup>

"It would be futile to assert that an exact science of frontiers has been or is likely to be evolved for no one law can possibly apply to all nations or peoples, to all governments, all territories, or all climates.... But the general tendency is forward, not backward; neither arrogance nor ignorance is any supreme; precedence is given to scientific knowledge; ethnological and topographical considerations are fairly weighed; jurisprudence plays an increasing part: the conscience of nations is more and more involved. Thus Frontiers, which have so frequently and recently been the cause of war, are capable of being converted into the instruments and evidences of peace."

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<sup>10</sup> Sinha, Manorama. (1995). *Political Geography*. Allahabad: Horizon Publishers. p. 125

<sup>11</sup> House, J.W. (1968). "A Local Perspective on Boundaries and Frontier Zones: Two Examples from the European Economic Community", in Charles A. Fisher ed. *Essays in Political Geography*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd. p. 332

<sup>12</sup> Hagan, Charles B, (1942), "Geopolitics", *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 4, No. 4. p. 485

<sup>13</sup> Poulsen, Thomas M. and Dimitry Sharkov (1995). *ibid.* p.19

<sup>14</sup> Curzon of Kedleston. Lord. (1907). *ibid.* p. 53-54

## Boundary

“Etymologically, the word ‘boundary’ immediately points to the primary function of the boundary: the boundary indicates well established limits of a given political unit, and all that which is within the boundary is bound together, that is, fastened by an internal bond.”<sup>15</sup> The ancient empires delimited their state not by boundaries but by zones. “Boundaries are lines which separate areas of different political authority.”<sup>16</sup>

“Boundaries appear on maps as thin lines, but in fact a vertical plane that cuts through the airspace, the soil, and the subsoil of adjacent States. This plane appears on the surface of the earth as a line because it intersects the surface and is marked where it does so. But the boundaries can be effective underground, where they mark the limit of adjacent States mining operations in an ore deposit they may share, and they can be effective above the ground, for most countries jealously guard their airspace.”<sup>17</sup>

“Boundaries are not only static, unchanging, features of landscape, they also have their own internal dynamics, creating new realities and affecting the lives of people and groups who reside within close proximity to the boundary or are obliged to transverse the boundary at one stage or another in their lives.”<sup>18</sup> Prescott (1972), also have similar views, ‘The influence of geographical and other factors on the position and the character of any boundary must be exerted through individuals of both countries concerned; similarly, the boundary can only influence the landscape by influencing the thoughts and actions individuals concerned with administering or living in the borderland’.<sup>19</sup>

It simply indicates that boundary exists some where in an area. “A boundary is a line between two political areas, but it is also a line in a region.”<sup>20</sup> On the other hand

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<sup>15</sup> Hartshorne, Richard. (1933), “Geographic and political boundaries in Upper Silesia”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol.23, no. 4, p.199

<sup>16</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1972). *Political Geography*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd. p. 54-74

<sup>17</sup> Glassener, Martin Ira and Fahrer, Chuck. (2004). *Political Geography*. Third Edition, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, p. 72-95.

<sup>18</sup> David, Newman. (2003). “Boundaries”. in John Agnew et al. *A Companion to Political Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 123

<sup>19</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1972), *ibid.* p. 55

<sup>20</sup> Jones, S.B. (1954). “A Unified Field Theory of Political Geography”. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 44, no. 2, p.199

some boundaries appear as lines on a map but in practice it is ignored. According to Kristof (1959), "Boundaries bind together an area and people which lie under one sovereign government and law and integrated only administratively and economically but by means of a state idea or creed".<sup>21</sup> The boundary can prove itself as a meeting place of two socio-political bodies, each having its particular interests, structure, and ideology.<sup>22</sup> Boundaries have been described as being linear, hence can be defined in the following way, "...boundaries are as interfaces between adjacent state sovereignties, intersecting the surface of the earth as radial plains from its centre."<sup>23</sup>

S. Whittemore Boggs (1940),<sup>24</sup> recognizes the fundamental function of international boundary lines as "the limits of the region within which the State can exercise its own sovereign Right," the fact the location of the boundary may "determine for millions of peoples the language and the ideas which children shall be taught at school.... the national culture with which they shall be identified, the army in which they may be compelled to serve a term...." The boundaries performs in so many ways as they perceived by the nations of the world. "The boundaries are the essential feature of the present world system."<sup>25</sup> But they may be controversial and problematic as, "...the goodness or badness of a boundary depends as much upon the general political situation as upon the virtues or defects of the line itself. A boundary like human skin, may have disease of its own or may reflect the illnesses of the body. The same line may be a good boundary at one time, a bad at another."<sup>26</sup> According to Minghi (1963), "...the nature of boundary in terms of their being 'good' or 'bad' from the military point of view."<sup>27</sup> By the best geographical boundary is

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<sup>21</sup> Kristof, L.K.D. (1959). "The Nature of Frontiers and Boundaries". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 49, no. 3. p. 270-277

<sup>22</sup> Kristof, L.K.D. (1959). *ibid.* p. 277

<sup>23</sup> Muir, R. (1997). *Political Geography: A New Introduction*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd. p. 164

<sup>24</sup> Boggs, S. Whittemore. (1940). *International Boundaries: A Study of Boundary Functions and Problems*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 7

<sup>25</sup> Adhikari, Sudeepta. (2002). *Political Geography*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications. p. 188

<sup>26</sup> Jones, S.B. (1943), "The Description of International Boundaries". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. vol.33, no.2. p. 99-117

<sup>27</sup> Minghi, Julian V. (1963). "Boundary Studies in Political Geography". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. vol.53, no.3. p. 408-420

meant the one which secures the most advantageous adjustment between the activities of men and natural conditions.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Difference between Frontiers and Boundaries**

The distinction between the frontiers and boundaries<sup>29</sup> as well as the analysis of how boundaries and frontiers function under various situations and political formations.

#### **(1) Difference in meaning**

One can easily chalk out the difference e.g. in French the word frontier means 'frontiere' and the word boundary means 'limite'.

In Italian language, the former means 'frontiera' and the latter means 'confined'. Thus, the word boundary indicates the legal limits of the state.

#### **(2) Spatial difference**

"Frontiers are zonal components as they contains various geographical features, including populations, etc. whereas boundary are loosely described as linear because, in fact, they occur where the vertical interfaces between state sovereignty intersect the surface of the earth".<sup>30</sup> As vertical interfaces, boundaries have no horizontal extent but frontiers contain various geographical features and may be marked even if the concerned frontier has advanced, receded or contracted.

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<sup>28</sup> Russell, Israel C. (1903). "Geography and International Boundaries". *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, vol. 35, no.2, p.151

<sup>29</sup> Kratochwil, Friedrich. (1986). "Of Systems, Boundaries, and Territoriality: An Inquiry into the Formation of the State System", *World Politics*, vol. 39, no. 1, p.27-52

<sup>30</sup> Amaral, Ilidio do (1994). "New Reflections On The Theme Of International Boundaries", in Clive H. Schofield (eds), *Global Boundaries: World Boundaries*, vol. 1. London: Routledge. p. 16-22

### **(3) In terms of orientation**

The frontier is outer-oriented because its main attention is directed towards the outlying areas, which are both a source of danger and coveted prize.<sup>31</sup> Contrarily the boundary is inner oriented. It is created and maintained by the will of the central government. It has no life of its own, not even a material existence. Boundary stones are not the boundary itself.<sup>32</sup>

### **(4) In terms of force**

The Frontier is a manifestation of centrifugal force whereas boundaries are subject to centripetal force.

### **(5) The frontier is an integrating factor**

The frontier is an integrating factor. It is a zone of transition from the sphere of one way of life to another. It provides an excellent opportunity for mutual interpenetration and sway.

The boundary is on the contrary, a separating factor. “[It is the] boundary [that] impinges on life.... Few natural obstacles restrict the movement of persons, things and even ideas as do the boundaries of some states.”<sup>33</sup> The boundary separates the sovereign political units from one another.

### **(6) Frontiers are transition between geographical regions**

Frontiers are transition between geographical regions, while boundaries are purely political in origin and function. Hence, frontiers are natural and boundaries are artificial. All demarcating lines are artificial because they are man made.

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<sup>31</sup> Lattimore, O. (1940). *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*. New York: American Geographical Society. p. 244

<sup>32</sup> Kristof, L.K.D. (1959), *ibid*, p. 272

<sup>33</sup> Jones, S.B. (1945). *Boundary Making: A Handbook for Statesmen, Treaty Editors and Boundary Commissioners*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. p, 11

**(7) Frontiers are representatives of politically unstable states**

Frontiers are representatives of politically unstable state. They are a characteristic of rudimentary socio-political relations marked by lawlessness. The boundary is in fact the outer line of effective control exercised by central government. "The boundaries of the state are determined according to the principle of effectiveness, which plays an important part in international law."<sup>34</sup>

**(8) Both frontiers and boundaries are manifestations of socio-economic forces**

Both of them are manifestations of socio-economic forces and are subjective. The frontiers are the result of ad hoc solutions and movements, while the boundaries are fixed and enforced through a more rational and centrally coordinated effort after a popular choice.

**(9) The frontier is a phenomenon of history**

The Frontier is a phenomenon of history, and boundary is a phenomenon of present times.

**(10) A frontier is immovable**

Finally, a frontier is immovable but may lose its importance and change its character with time. On the other hand, the boundaries are by no means immovable. During the first and second world wars with the shift of balance of powers the location of boundaries also shifted.

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<sup>34</sup> Hanskelson. (1952). *Principles of International Law*. New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., p. 213

## Boundary Making<sup>35</sup>

The ideal sequence of events in establishing a boundary is as follows. The first stage involves the description of the boundary and the terrain through which it runs. This description identifies, as exactly as possible, the location of the boundary being established. "With our inadequate knowledge an isarithmic, morphological or political boundary is a much simpler and safer line to draw."<sup>36</sup> It may refer to hilltops, crest lines, rivers, and even to cultural features, such as farm fences and roads. The more detailed the description, the less likely it is that subsequent friction will occur. As will be seen later, even the most prominent physical features in the landscape have given rise to serious disputes when used as political boundary lines. This first stage, often formalized in treaties, is referred to as the definition of the boundary.

When the treaty makers have completed their definition of the boundary in question, their work is placed before cartographers who, using large scale maps and aerial or satellite imagery, plot the boundary as exactly as possible. The period of time separating this stage of delimitation from the initial stage of definition may account to decades; for example, several African countries were defined towards the end of the nineteenth century and are only now in the process of exactly delimiting their borders.

Then there is the task of marking the boundary on the ground. For this purpose, both the actual treaty and cartographic material are employed. Boundary demarcation, as this process is called, has by no means taken place along every boundary defined and delimited. When a boundary is demarcated, a wide variety of methods may be employed. A mere line variety of poles or stones may suffice. Cement markers may be set up, so that from any one of them the adjacent ones on either side will be visible. Fences have been built in certain delicate areas where exact demarcation is required, and on rare occasions walls have been built. Boundary demarcation is an expensive process, and when states do not face problems along their boundaries that absolutely require demarcation, they often delay this stage indefinitely.

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<sup>35</sup> Glassener, Martin Ira and Fahrner, Chuck. (2004), *ibid.* p. 75-80.

<sup>36</sup> Hall, Robert Burnett. (1935). "The Geographic Region: A Resume", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol.25, no.3, p. 130



The final stage in boundary making is administration; that is, establishing some times special commissions are established to perform these functions. For many boundary segments, however, there is no regular administration; special ad hoc commissions are appointed as needed.

### **Classification of Frontiers**

Many attempts have been made to classify frontiers. Some of the most important classifications are given. According to R. Muir (1997)<sup>37</sup> there are four types of criteria for classification of frontiers.

#### **A. In relation to the sovereign territory of the state**

##### **(a) Political Frontiers**

These exist when “the state lacks ‘*de jure*’ boundaries and ‘*de facto*’ limit of state advances with advance of its frontiers” e.g. the expansion of Russian state into Kazakhstan and Soviet Central Asia was associated with political frontiers.<sup>38</sup>

##### **(b) Settlement Frontiers**

The Frontier, which mark stages in the expansion of the state ecumene within pre-existing ‘*de jure*’ boundaries e.g., the colonisation of the interior of Australia involved the advancement of settlement frontier within territory already claimed. Settlement frontiers are of three types viz,

(i) *Primary settlement frontiers*: They mark the forehead of advancing colonization and immediately disappear when the legal limits of the state are reached. According to Prescott, “they occurred when a government and people gradually extended their influence and occupation over an area to which they had some form of legal title.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Muir, R. (1997). *ibid.* p. 167

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* p. 169-70

<sup>39</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1972). *ibid.* p. 56.

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<sup>37</sup> Muir, R. (1997). *ibid.* p. 167

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* p. 169-70

<sup>39</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1972). *ibid.* p. 56.

(ii) *Secondary settlement frontiers*: Just like the above, these frontiers also expand but the unattractive areas are ignored and by passed. In these secondary settled frontier areas the stage of subsequent colonization is marked.

(iii) *Hollow settlement frontier*: This type of frontier was seen in Latin America, where a consolidation of settlement did not always occur in the wake of frontier advance. Rather, the crude and speculative exhaustion of frontier resources led to the exhaustion of soils and minerals and the result was the retreat of settlement from colonized area to new frontier.

## **B. In relation to the indigenous population of the frontier zone**

Two major sub-divisions are (a) Inclusive frontiers (b) Exclusive frontiers

### **(a) Inclusive frontiers**

‘These are associated with the assimilation of indigenous populations in areas over which the frontier passes.’<sup>40</sup>

### **(b) Exclusive frontiers**

These are also associated with the assimilation of indigenous population in areas over which they pass. The former type includes the Roman, Arab and Spanish American frontiers, while the resistance to assimilation was evident in North American, Australian and Boer frontiers.

## **C. In relation to the degree of frontier advance**

It can be subdivided into two categories viz.,

### **(a) Dynamic frontiers:**

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<sup>40</sup> Muir, R. (1997). *ibid.* p. 167-68

As the word suggests that they are in motion and involve the continuous colonization of a new territory.

**(b) Static frontiers:**

When the advancement is obstructed; be it physical or human, it becomes a static frontier.

**D In relation to the degree of trans-frontier contact**

The frontiers can be divided into two categories, viz.,

**(a) Contact frontiers**

These frontiers act as a zone of contact. For example, the British settlers in South Africa were unaware of the formation of an aggressive Zulu state in the north. The stabilization of a frontier may be in areas, which facilitate interactions, which may be political or cultural.

**(b) Separation frontiers**

These include zones of difficult terrain and areas of scarce population. In these zones the risk of war by potential enemies is minimum.

According to Hartshorne (1936), such zones of separation had a static aspect because it is an area of difficulty and low population.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Hartshorne, Richard. (1936). "Suggestions on the Terminology of political Boundaries. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. vol. 26. no.3. p. 56-7

## **Classification of Boundaries**

The problem regarding boundaries is that, there are about as many classifications as there are boundaries and most of them are based on physical and cultural features hence categorization is difficult. There are four stages in the development of boundaries, viz,

- (a) allocation or definition
- (b) delimitation
- (c) demarcation, and
- (d) administration.

Boundary classification is of many types. "Though political geographers seem to have had a preoccupation with boundary studies, the morphological, genetic and generic aspects of boundaries have virtually monopolized attention at the expense of more significant functional studies."<sup>42</sup> A number of schemes for boundary classification have been suggested. Generally boundaries have been classified in respect of their locational relationship to physical or cultural landscape.

According to de Blij (1967)<sup>43</sup> the classification of boundaries, "can be grouped from the point of view of their static characteristics for instance, their correspondence to physiographic features, their separation of ethnic regions, their straightness and so forth. This type of classification is basically descriptive one. It utilizes the morphological approach." Boundaries can be classified on the basis of culture also. Such type of classification is known as the genetic classification of boundaries.

## **Classification of Boundaries**

### **(1) Morphological Classification**

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<sup>42</sup> Muir, R. (1997), *ibid.* p. 163-4

<sup>43</sup> de Blij, Harm J. (1967), *Systematic Political Geography*. New York: John Wiley. p. 160-89

### **A. Physiographic boundaries**

- (i) Rivers, lakes and oceans (Water boundaries)
- (ii) Desert, marshes, swamps and forests
- (iii) Mountains and hills

### **B. Anthropogeographical boundaries**

- (i) Cultural
- (ii) Ethnic
- (iii) Linguistic.
- (iv) Religious

### **C. Geometrical boundaries**

- (i) Straight type
- (ii) Arc type
- (iii) Superimposed type

## **II. Genetic Classification**

- (i) Antecedent boundaries
- (ii) Subsequent boundaries
- (iii) Superimposed boundaries
  - (a) Colonial
  - (b) Truce line
- (iv) Relict boundaries

## **Morphogenetic Classification**

### **A. Physiographic boundaries**

The old political boundaries of the political world are not straight. They zigzagly followed the physiographic features like the boundary between Spain and France in Europe; the US-Mexican boundary in America; the Zambia-south Rhodesian boundary in Africa; Indochina, India and Pakistan, China and Mongolia in Asia. Physiographic boundaries exist along mountain ranges, lines of hills, rivers, swamps, and other prominent features in the landscape. Cushing (1920)<sup>44</sup> considers these types of boundaries as topography based.

### **(i) Water Boundaries**

Under this category, comes-the rivers, lakes and oceans. These are used as basis for national boundaries because they are clearly visible on a map and are relatively permanent features. They facilitate transportations as well as offer protection from enemies.

#### **(a) Rivers**

It may be advantageous to select a river as a boundary, which follows:

- (i) A river is a clearly marked feature on the map. As obvious, it is a continuous and permanent feature in the landscape.
- (ii) In comparison to mountains, it has less width on ground (almost linear feature on the land surface).
- (iii) A river tends to act as divider between two states. They perform this function of separation well ill flood plains are wide, because it is difficult to cross them ( in older times).
- (iv) During wars, it protects the state from the invasion of enemies (in the older times).

#### **Disadvantages:**

Besides being a basis for international boundaries rivers are useful in navigation, waste disposal and consumption. It is also a potential source of flooding. All these

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<sup>44</sup> Cushing, Summer W. (1920). "The boundaries of New England States". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. vol.10. p. 17

factors are potential source of conflict between nations having common river boundary. "The disadvantages of the river boundary probably the greatest results from the inconstancy of rivers. The part specified in a treaty is liable to change, be it the middle of the river, the main channel, the deepest channel, one of the banks, or highest or lowest water mark, and with a change may come controversies and inconveniences. This is especially true of river meandering in broad flood plains, for such are likely to change their course and transfer much land possibly people from one jurisdiction to another."<sup>45</sup> Similar culture flourishes on both sides of the river. Thus, the divisive function is artificial. Ancient core-areas were located in river basins. With increased movement of men and goods, the area near the mouth of the river became prosperous and the whole surrounding region benefited. Hence, the obstructive effect of such a river boundary is not possible. When a river flows in a veritable canyon different types of problem may arise. To mention some-along river Tagus between Portugal and Spain and the river Zambezi between Zambia and Rhodesia. Here, hydroelectric power development created difficulties. An international boundary drawn along or across a river flowing through the plains creates many problems viz., sharing river water, its management etc. (e.g. along India-Pakistan boundary through the Indus basin, and the Indo-Bangladesh boundary through the Ganga basin). When the river flows through a broad flood plain, the river constantly shifts its course. In other words, it follows a zigzag course and some areas of one country become included in the other.

#### **Demarcation of River boundaries:**

The actual delineation of a water boundary is difficult because it is difficult to maintain markers upon the water surface. Still there are three possibilities viz,

**Along the banks:** It is an unfair division because one state will benefit from it while; the other will not be able to use river water for irrigation, transportation and for other purposes. Since the rivers have regimes so, the question of maintenance of the boundary bank is not possible. According to the first possibility the boundary will run

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<sup>45</sup> Cushing, Summer W. (1920). *ibid.* p. 124-25



along contact between land and water say on the right bank, and with the change in volume of water the boundary would shift. Suppose if the boundary is fixed, and part of the state, which is not able to use river water, is flooded (non riparian state) then it meant that the state had right to have water, but by definition, it cannot share. Hence, this demarcation is not appropriate.

**Along the centerline of the navigable channel:** This is the most frequently adopted method. An example of this method is along Rhine and Danube. This definition too is not without problems. Navigable channels are the deepest parts of the rivers, but it is often seen that the navigable channel is rarely in the mid-stream. It is subject to constant change hence, it is difficult to maintain buoys line.

**Along the median line of the navigable channel:** The word median means in the middle and therefore the median line is a line equidistant from the riverbanks. The navigable channel often swings from one side of the river to the other and if the median line is the boundary then the navigable channel will repeatedly cross the international boundary. For the demarcation of the median line, the exact location of the banks is necessary. Though the actual delineation of a river boundary is difficult. Yet, river boundaries generally follow the median of the stream on non-navigable rivers, and the Thalweg or the deepest channel on navigable rivers.

#### **(b) Lakes**

In the case of Lakes the international boundaries normally follow the median line e.g. as in the case of US-Canada, the boundary line passes through lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario. In case of large water bodies, it is not so important to have boundaries; only the recognition of general zone for the boundary is enough. But in view of navigation, sharing water, fishing, disposal of waste and other emergencies it is necessary. In East Africa, individual treaties were drawn up to satisfy the various countries bordering the great lakes therein seeing the map, one finds an uneven division of Lake Victoria between Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika. Instead of median line longitudes and latitudes have been used to draw the international boundaries.

The boundary in a lake is supposed to be more stable in comparison to a river boundary. Though, there is some change in water volume, which alters the configuration of the shore, but unlike rivers they do not shift their course. Even boundaries on lakes are not free from disputes. For instance, "in North America, Canada objected to the practice of pumping excessive amounts of Lake Michigan water."<sup>46</sup> It was done to flush waste from Chicago into the headwaters of the river Illinois. Obviously, this practice lowered the water level of Lake Michigan, which caused severe economic loss to main shoreline communities.

### (iii) Mountains and Hills

Traditionally, they have been the most favoured natural boundaries because they are supposed to be highly stable barriers.

For a non-geographer, they may be a single feature. Actually, they are complex features and often a boundary line along a mountain range have proved to be the source of bitter controversy e.g., the boundary between the New England States and Canada; and between Alaska and Canada from the United States. The Andean boundary between Chile and Argentina in South America.

To locate a boundary line along a mountain range is not an easy task because of the following reasons: Firstly, most often mountain ranges do not have a well-defined crest line. Rarely one finds a clearly defined crest line without being interrupted by a transverse valley.

Secondly, mountain ranges consist of several sub-parallel ranges and each having its own crest line. Hence, "a coincidence between the crest and the natural divide between rivers flowing in one direction and those in the other cannot be assumed and

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<sup>46</sup> Norris, R.E. and Harring, L.L. (1980). *Political Geography*. London: Charles E Merrill Publishing Company, p. 136

in fact, is likely to be rare.<sup>47</sup> For example, both sides of the Himalayas are drained ultimately by the combined river system of the Brahmaputra and the Ganga.

Thirdly, all the mountain ranges have length and breadth and in their valleys dwell human societies. Often, the dwellers utilize the pastures of both the sides of a crest and, a new cultural region emerges in the mountain environment. Any boundary chosen to follow the mountain crest must be demarcated before the development of transhumance, tourism and hydro electricity because; they are supposed to be important sources of wealth for the mountain. Therefore, before delimiting the boundary line along the mountain ranges, the concerned area must be properly surveyed by geographers, politicians and cartographers. On the basis of the detailed investigations of the area, maps should be drawn and then, the boundary should be delimited.

### **B. Anthropogeographical boundaries**

Those boundaries are anthropogeographic in nature, which follows ethnic, linguistic, and religious, or other cultural elements as dividing lines. To find out such boundaries, a political map should be placed as an overlay over the cultural maps. In some cases political boundaries are seen to coincide with the cultural elements viz, language, religion race etc. Such boundaries are a feature of the post-First World War period. During that period a number of boundaries in central and Eastern Europe were readjusted on the basis of language. Evidence of religious contrasts is witnessed across the Indo-Pak and the Indo-Bangladesh boundaries. A number of African states were established on the basis of ethnic factors. The US-Mexico boundary also belongs to this category.

In some cases, anthropogeographic boundaries coincide with physical boundaries e.g. the boundary along Spain and France along the Pyrenees. One finds several cultural contrasts across this border. In this case history played an important role.

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<sup>47</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972). *ibid.*, p. 87

### C. Geometrical boundaries

“In the absence of clearly determined natural features, boundaries are drawn in geometric terms i.e. straight lines,” which follow the parallels or lines of longitudes. “Pope in the Papal Bull of 1481 made earliest use of such boundaries. The Pope divided the still undivided parts of the world between Spain and Portugal. The Pope's line was subsequently amended by another Papal Bull in 1493, and accepted by the two parties in the treaty of Tordesillas (1494). This time, it was defined as the meridian running 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands”.<sup>48</sup> According to Jones (1959),<sup>49</sup>

#### Types of Geometrical Boundaries:

Broadly, geometric boundaries can be classified under two categories, viz,

##### (a) *Straight-line Type*

- (i) Latitudes as boundaries
- (ii) Meridians as boundaries
- (iii) Oblique straight lines

##### (b) *Arc of Circle*

##### (c) *Geometric Superimposed*

(a) *Straight-line type*: These boundaries appear on the map as straight lines drawn along parallels or meridians, such boundaries are seen in New World Countries. These boundaries were fixed at that time when.

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<sup>48</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972), *ibid.*, p. 92

<sup>49</sup> Jones, S.B. (1959). “Boundary Concepts in the setting of Place and Time”. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 49, no. 3, p. 252.

- (i) The colonial powers had no detailed knowledge of the terrain of the newly colonized areas.
- (ii) The area was sparsely populated, and in most of the cases, the areas were uninhabited and
- (iii) Lack of competition and nationalism tendency.

Under such circumstances, straight-line boundaries acted as dividing lines between the rival colonial powers. Later on, cultural features developed within its own limits as set by the boundaries. As a result of this, these boundaries function as ideal, stable and peaceful boundaries. Examples of the straight type viz, latitudes and meridians can be found in North America, Africa, Australia and many countries belonging to the Middle East.

The boundary between Canada and USA, west of the Great lakes is a typical example of geometric boundary based on latitudes. From Pacific coast up to Woods Lake, (a total distance of about 2100 km) the boundary follows 49° N latitude as set by the Oregon Treaty of 1818. The remaining part is formed by great lakes and river St. Lawrence. The boundary between Uganda and Tanzania is along 10° S latitude. In certain areas, boundaries are drawn along the lines of longitudes e.g. between Alaska and Canada the boundary runs along 141° W longitude, the 141° E longitude act as a divide between Indonesia and Australia. In Australia, the boundaries are mainly based on longitudes and latitudes.

Another sub-type of straight-line boundary is the oblique type. Many boundaries in Africa are oblique viz. between Libya and Chad; between Algeria and Niger; between Mali and Algeria, between Mauritania and Algeria, between Kenya and Tanzania between Botswana and Rhodesia. In USA, it is seen along the southwest boundary of Nevada, between Arkansas and Oklahoma and several short lengths of boundary between the eastern states. Along US-Mexico, the international boundary is of oblique type. Initially, the boundary runs straight from the coast of Atlantic Ocean up to the confluence of river Colorado with Gila, later, it is oblique. The river Rio-Grande forms the eastern part of the boundary. In the Middle East, past Soviet Union and Australia, we find examples of oblique type also.

(b) *Arc of Circle*: Another category of geometric boundaries consists of arcs of circles, drawn with prescribed centres and radii. In 1871 an arc of a circle was used to delimit a part of the Franco-German boundary near Belford. Between Gambia and Senegal, this type of boundary is seen. The boundary of Gambia as “defined by treaty as running parallel to the river Gambia, has become, owing to the meanders of the river, a series of arcs of circles with their centres on the stream itself.”<sup>50</sup>

(c) *Geometric Superimposed*: A final category of Geometric boundary is geometric superimposed type. These boundaries are generally accepted at the conference table through compromise between two states or groups of states e.g. in 1945, the 38°N latitude was established as a boundary between North and South Korea by negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union (up to 1991). Similarly, Vietnam was partitioned in 1954. The 17°N latitude was accepted as the boundary between North and South Vietnam. This boundary “reflected the balance of forces between the Chinese and the French- when the Indo-Chinese war ended in 1954.”<sup>51</sup>

Actually, these boundary lines are ‘Truce Lines’ which were agreed upon after war through mutual compromise. They did not take into account cultural features.

#### **Merits and Demerits of Geometric Boundaries:**

- (i) Geometric boundaries are easier to be drawn on a map as well as on the ground.
- (ii) There are little possibilities of boundary disputes arising out of misinterpretation of boundaries.
- (iii) They are peaceful, stable and produce little political tensions.
- (iv) They have been very successful in the countries of the new world, which have been colonized in two or three decades.
- (v) In the countries of the old world these are not successful because they are demarcated after the full development of cultural landscape of the

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<sup>50</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972). *ibid.* p. 93-94

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* p. 94

area. So, cultural, factors are disintegrated which causes difficulties to the inhabitants.

## II. Genetic Classification.

Under this category we discuss a boundary of a state in reference to its cultural landscape whose sovereignty they define, delimit and separate. All credit goes to Richard Hartshorne, who suggested this classification almost seven decades ago. The nomenclature formulated in a paper ... '*Suggestions on the Terminology of Political Boundaries*.'<sup>52</sup> Although, some of the terms originally proposed by Hartshorne (1936), are still in use, and others have been replaced. His use of the terms as 'primary', 'antecedent' and 'subsequent' boundaries, were designed to distinguish between boundaries, which were delimited in unsettled territories.

Other exponents of this classification are D. Wittlesey<sup>53</sup>, S.B.Jones<sup>54</sup> and N.J.G. Pounds.<sup>55</sup>

(i) **Antecedent Boundaries:** Those Boundaries that were defined, delimited and drawn before the development of cultural landscape are referred as Antecedent. With the development of societies, the people adjusted themselves to the boundary, which thus acquired a historical and pragmatic sanction. These boundaries are seen in the states belonging to the new world, which generally demarcate the zone of influence of different colonial powers. The demarcation of such boundaries is settled through mutual agreement before the colonization of the area of the state. From the very beginning, such boundaries act as physical barriers and the states on either side more or less adjust their sociopolitical developments to the international boundary. Hence,

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<sup>52</sup> Hartshorne, Richard. (1936), "Suggestions on the Terminology of Political Boundaries". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 26, no. p. 56-57.

<sup>53</sup> Whittlesey, D. (1945). "The Horizon of Geography". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 35, no. 1, p. 1-36

<sup>54</sup> Jones, S.B. (1943). "The Description of International Boundaries". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 33, no. 2, p. 99-117

<sup>55</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972). *ibid*, p. 71-99

these boundaries are very stable, peaceful and successful. The Canada-United States boundary established and modified by treaty agreements between 1782 and 1846 belongs to this category. The boundary between Canada and Alaska also belongs to this category. The Anglo-Russian Treaties of 1825 and 1827 decided the boundary, which ran through entirely unsettled and undeveloped territory.<sup>56</sup>

(ii) **Subsequent Boundaries:** “Subsequent boundaries are the converse of antecedent boundaries.”<sup>57</sup> It is often seen that some international boundaries display a certain degree of conformity with the main and secondary cultural elements through which they run. In other words, such boundaries are demarcated after the development of cultural landscape. Cultural elements include language, religion etc. The boundary between Chile and Argentina and the religiously based boundaries of Pakistan-India; Bangladesh-India, belongs to this group. Many examples can also be cited from east Europe viz., Romania and Hungary.

(iii) **Superimposed Boundaries:** They are special type of subsequent boundaries, which came into existence after full development of cultural landscape. As “Superimposed boundaries were established, like subsequent boundaries, after the territory to be divided and settled and developed, but...they ignore completely the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the area divided.”<sup>58</sup> Like subsequent boundaries, they do not differentiate socio-cultural groups nor, they are demarcated by mutual agreement or compromise. In fact, these boundaries are forcefully superimposed on both the states by third country. These boundaries separate many cultural features like-fields, houses, canals etc.

*Truce lines* also belong to this category, because they are defined, delimited and demarcated after the patterns of settlement have fully developed. Many of the colonial boundaries in Asia, Africa and America belonged to this category because the colonial powers often divided among themselves the lands and peoples and established boundaries that split a single tribe into two, three or more ‘political entities’ without the slightest concern for the socio-economic and cultural conditions

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* p. 71

<sup>57</sup> Hagget, Peter (1975). *Geography: A Modern Synthesis*. New York: Harper & Row. p. 445

<sup>58</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972), *ibid.* p. 72



prevailing among the indigenous peoples. Superimposed boundaries specially those, which are derived from truce lines also belong to this group. The boundary between East and West Germany, (before 1991); the 1953 cease fire in Korea; the 1954 partition of Vietnam the boundary around Gaza strip also belongs to this category.

(iv) **Consequent Boundaries:** "In some cases the boundary may be considered as consequent because it is derived as a consequence of settlement by peoples with different languages, religions, ethnicity and so on."<sup>59</sup> These are physical boundaries, which are determined on the basis of physical and cultural features. Due to the presence of these physical barriers, free mixing of cultural groups is not possible. Physical barriers include mountains, lakes, rivers etc.

(v) **Relict Boundaries:** Boundaries, which have lost much of the political significance, but their traces, are still visible on the cultural landscape of the area belongs to this category. Pounds (1972)<sup>60</sup> analyzed that the "Relict boundaries are boundary lines which have been abandoned for political purposes but which, nevertheless, remain discernible in the cultural landscape". "Age alone does not insure the continued use of a boundary. Many long established boundaries have been changed. Even in such cases, however, we can observe how traces of boundary remain in the human landscape after their formal status has disappeared."<sup>61</sup> Such boundaries come into existence when a small state is merged into a big state or old boundary is left out and a new boundary is drawn on the basis of cultural characteristics between two states. Old boundary between Germany and Russia through the industrial region of Upper Silesia<sup>62</sup> belongs to this category. The former boundary between Poland and Germany also belongs to this category the difference is marked due to (a change in the pattern of field as one crosses the former boundary). The boundary between Spanish, America and United States in the Southwest region of the U.S.A. is also an example of relict boundary.

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<sup>59</sup> Glassener, Martin Ira and Fahrer, Chuck (2004), *ibid.* p. 80

<sup>60</sup> Pounds, N.J.G. (1972), *ibid.* p. 72

<sup>61</sup> Fisher, Eric. (1949). "On Boundaries". *World Politics*, vol.1, no. 2, p. 204

<sup>62</sup> Hartshorne, Richard. (1933). "Geographic and political boundaries in Upper Silesia". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol.23, no. 4, p. 195-228

Once they are abolished these boundaries are of no political importance. They only act as an evidence of the former political areas, which have been left as a result of political feeling.

### **Boundaries and Geostrategy**

Geopolitics is the analysis of interaction between political processes and structures on the one hand and geographical settings and the perspectives on the other hand. These geographic settings and perspectives, combined with the location of a place constitute the 'geostrategy' of that place. The location of a nation plays an important role in formulating national policies and interests, vis a vis, other 'nation states'.

"By 'geostrategy' one means the application of geographical reasoning to the conduct of war or to the setting-up of a defence scheme. The assessment of external threats and the balance of power, taken into consideration in as far as they can be mapped, is carried out according to the interests of the state and the nation concerned. Geostrategy relates to concrete practices in places that are analyzed as theatres of operation, actual and potential."<sup>63</sup>

Boundaries delimit the location as well as the sovereignty and the extent of government control of nations and their adjacent nation-states.<sup>64</sup> If these boundaries are disputed then there is a change in the perspective among the nation states. Hence, the change is the 'geostrategy'.

According to Blake, Gerald H. (1994),<sup>65</sup> 'international boundaries are global geopolitical phenomenon, which affect the lives of millions of people, they are among the top preoccupations of the governments and the military. As the land boundaries are the point of contact, they are indeed the focus of political strains and stresses.

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<sup>63</sup> Foucher, Michel (2001). "The Geopolitics of Front Lines and Borderlines". in Levy, Jacques. ed. *From Geopolitics to Global Politics: A French Connection*. London: Frank Cass. p. 163

<sup>64</sup> Anderson, Ewan W. (1999). "Geopolitics: International Boundaries as Fighting Places". in Gray, Colin S. and Sloan, Geoffrey. *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy*. London and Oregon: Frank Cass. p. 125

<sup>65</sup> Blake, Gerald H. (1994) in Preface of Schofield, Clive H. *Global Boundaries: World Boundaries*. Vol. 1. London: Routledge. p. xii

Boundaries also creates landscapes and fundamentally affects communications, settlement patterns and access to the resources, which in turn gives rise to the change in Geostrategic considerations of a country’.

‘Geostrategy is the interaction between the lines and the organization of the two adjacent national spaces, the distance and time between a border and the opposing ‘strategic places’.<sup>66</sup> At this point conflicts or disputes occur on the scene, aimed at affecting the geostrategy of the nations in regard to the extent and possession of a particular location.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, there are no border problems; there are only problems with regard to relations between states and peoples around borders.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Foucher, Michel (2001), *ibid*, p. 163

<sup>67</sup> Kak, Kapil (2001). “Geostrategic Realities of Southeast Asia”. *World Focus*. Vol. 22, no. 9. p. 5

<sup>68</sup> Foucher, Michel (2001), *ibid*, p. 162

***CHAPTER III***

## Before the Period of French Rule

### Vietnam

Prior to 1770 the territory known today as Vietnam was divided into two hostile halves at the town of Dong Hoi on the narrow coastal plain in the central part of the country. The powers of the Le Dynasty emperor at Hanoi, which theoretically extended over the whole territory, had been gradually diminished over the centuries until he was little more than the religious leader of his people. Temporal power resided in the two *chua*, or hereditary governors. The Trinh family held title to this office in the northern territory (northern Annam and Tonkin), while the Nguyen family ruled in the southern territory (southern Annam and Cochinchina).

In 1771, a rebellion broke out that would eventually overthrow both the Nguyen and the Trinh and lead to the founding of a new dynasty. The leaders were the three brothers from the village of Tay Son in Binh Dinh province in central Vietnam, due to which it was known as the Tay Son rebellion. Initially the revolt was limited to the provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, but in 1776, the Trinh took advantage of the chaotic condition and invaded the Nguyen domain. The Tay Son seized Saigon mistakenly, where a lot of Nguyen lords were killed, but Prince Nguyen Anh managed to flee to an island in the South China Sea.<sup>4</sup>

After this they attacked the north and overthrew the Trinh rule. Nguyen Hue, the most capable and the eldest, married the daughter of the emperor and announced his loyalty to the old dynasty. The emperor however distrusted the intentions of the Tay Son rebels and requested assistance from the Chinese emperor. In 1788, a Chinese invasion force crossed the border and seized Hanoi, but Nguyen Hue deposed the Le ruler and declared himself the founding emperor of a new dynasty. The Vietnamese achieved a decisive victory near Hanoi. Quang Trung died on 16 September, 1792 at the age of thirty-nine and after his death the empire began to disintegrate.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Duiker, William J. (1983), *Vietnam: Nation in Revolution*, Colorado: Westview Press. p. 22

<sup>5</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas (1981), *Vietnam: The Revolutionary Path*. London and Basingstoke: MacMillan. p. 91-92.

It was a blessing for the survivors of the Nguyen family in the south. After fleeing to Phuc Quoc Island to escape Tay Son, Nguyen Anh went to Thailand for assistance to regain his patrimony, but his first attempt was a failure. Then he was befriended by Pigneau de Behaine, a French bishop stationed at Ha Tien on the Gulf of Thailand, after being convinced that French help to Nguyen Anh for restoring the power could create an opening for the revival of Catholic missionary activity in Vietnam. A trip by Pigneau to Paris in 1787 elicited a promise from the French government to support a naval expedition against the Tay Son in return for a promise of trade privileges and the cession of Poulo Condore Island and Da Nang harbour to France. Nguyen Anh seized Hanoi in 1802 and declared the founding of a new dynasty with its capital at Hue and acquired a new title Gia Long.<sup>6</sup> 'And by this time Vietnam was united for the first time allowed one court to control both the Red River delta and the Mekong River delta in the far south.'<sup>7</sup> He was tolerant and permitted French missionaries to operate in Vietnam during his lifetime. After his death in 1820, Minh Mang who also followed the restricted policy toward contact with the west succeeded him. He was a devout follower of Confucian ideology, feared about the effects of European ideas. Resultantly, the propagation of Christianity during his reign was sternly forbidden and missionaries and their converts were prosecuted.<sup>8</sup>

During the first half of the nineteenth century, French had attempted a more active policy toward Vietnam. These conditions became more vulnerable by the mid-century, when periodic executions of French missionaries in Vietnam took place. Religious organizations had angered over Hue's persecution of Catholic missionary activity. In 1857, the government ordered a French fleet to attack and seize the central Vietnamese port city of Da Nang and to force the Vietnam to accept the French demands. But their attempt was not successful as it took place in 1858, because disease ravaged the French troops and then the French commander, Admiral Charles Rigault de Genouilly, decided to attack at Saigon in north and it was seized on the 17 February 1859.<sup>9</sup> In the following months French troops extended their control in the neighbouring areas. The defeat of Vietnam in the south and revolt led by Le

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<sup>6</sup> Duiker, William J. (1983), *ibid*, p. 97-98

<sup>7</sup> Owen, Norman G. ed, (2005), *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. p. 112

<sup>8</sup> Duiker, William J. (1983), *ibid*, p. 97-98

<sup>9</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas, (1981), *ibid*, p. 131-132

pretenders, in the north led the court to seek peace and in 1862, French and the Vietnam reached agreement on a treaty that cede three provinces in the south and the island of Poulo Condore to France. Three ports were opened to France for the purpose of trade and commerce and Christian missionaries were granted freedom to propagate their religion in Vietnam. The seizure of these three provinces in the south was the first stage of a process of conquering of the remaining of the country and the formation of Indochinese Union, comprising Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

## **Laos**

To the west of Vietnam lay the kingdom of Laos, a jungle-covered land of mountains and valleys along the Mekong River. In race, language, and religion the Laotians are akin to the Thai. Because of the physical character of the territory, Laos was not a single state ruled by a central government but consisted of several small kingdoms. Many parts of the country had only village administration. 'Laos possesses a position of strategic significance, as it lies between Chinese and North Vietnamese territories and Siam and South Vietnam. Its territory borders with two Communist states, China and North Vietnam; two neutralist states-Burma and Cambodia; and two anti-Communist states-Siam and South Vietnam'.<sup>10</sup>

Laos had been united only occasionally and for small durations during subsequent centuries. It occurred only when the ruler of Laos was strong and enjoyed less interference from the outside. Laos had been less developed politically than the other surrounding states.

From the latter half of the sixteenth century to 1885, till the French came on the scene, there were only three occasions when Laos was almost united under one ruler. The first case was in 1563, when Sai Setthathirat, ruler of Luang Prabang, shifted his capital to Vientiane. At this time the Laos' power was on its peak and it was concentrated on the central Mekong river basin. Sai laid claims to large areas in what is today northern and northeastern Thailand, the province of Xieng-Khuang and

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<sup>10</sup> Ratnam, Perala (1980). *Laos and the Super Powers*, New Delhi: Tulsi Publishing House. p. 12

central Laos. In the seventeenth century it was united once again and this time to the zenith of its power under the ruler, Solingna Vongsa. The Laotians regard this period as the 'Golden Age'. It was during the reign of Solingna Vongsa, when the first Europeans (Van Wusthoff, a Dutch) visited the site of Laos. He stayed for sometime at Vientiane. After his coming the next was Father Jean Marie Leria, an Italian Jesuit. Both of them were very much impressed by the wealth and splendour of the Lao Kingdom, which comprises Luang Prabang in the north, Xien-Khuang and Central and South Laos to Khong near the present day Cambodian border.<sup>11</sup>

Third time Laos was unified under Chao Anou. In 1804, Chau Anou mounted the throne and entitled himself as King Seygna Setththirat III. He soon began consolidating his kingdom by amending regulations on taxes, building bridges and especially citadels. In 1824, he succeeded in obtaining the designation of his son to the crown of Champassak by the king of Ayuthia, with the intention of creating an outpost there against this kingdom.<sup>12</sup>

He tried a lot more to construct palaces and pagodas to entice the enemy. In 1825, Chau Anou went to Bangkok to attend the cremation of the king of Ayuthia, where he raised the problem of repatriating the subjects of Lan Xang taken prisoner at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bangkok's rejection of his request spurred his determination to reconquer his sovereignty over Lan Xang. In the next year, an English fleet threatened Bangkok and at the same time the king of Ayuthia had to face Dai Viet in Cambodia. Chau Anou convoked the Royal Family Council to discuss a plan for insurrection. He took the command of his troops, which, advancing in three columns was to attack by surprise the capital of Ayuthia. Chau Anou sent a message and gifts to the king of Luang Prabang, inviting the latter to unite with him to save the country, but the king of Luang Prabang hastened to inform the king of Ayuthia about Chau's offer.<sup>13</sup>

Early in 1827, Chau Anou crossed the Mekong to enter in the territory of Ayuthia. Two other armies, led by Ratsavong (Chau's son), and Titsarat, the viceroy, set out. The three columns occupied Korat and other localities on their way to Bangkok. Just

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<sup>11</sup> Ratnam, Perala (1980), *ibid*, p. 13-14

<sup>12</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982), *Laos: An Outline of Ancient and Contemporary History*, Hanoi: Foreign Language Publishing House. p. 31

<sup>13</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982). *ibid*. p. 32



after three days Titsarat turned as traitor and leaked the plan. The king of Ayuthia beefed up his defence of Bangkok and mobilized the armed forces of all the muongs of the country.

The counter-offensive from the side of Siam took place in the month of March of that year. Chau Anou outnumbered by the enemy who were better armed and had great facilities, had to retreat. One year later after receiving reinforcements from Dai Viet and strengthening his army Chau launched a counter offense. In 1831, he drove the enemy from Vientiane and sent his son in pursuit to Ayuthia. But he faced a counter attack from the enemy troops and fierce battle took place. Chau Anou fled away for the enemy sacked the second time towards Dai Viet. Vientiane and the whole of its population was deported to the Bangkok. Chau Anou was died due to the torture after the enemy captured him.<sup>14</sup>

The kingdom of Vientiane was now a province of Ayuthia and the kingdom of Champasak was granted formal independence. It paid tribute to the court of Bangkok, which decides all the affairs of Champasak. By the end of the nineteenth century, the kingdom of Luang Prabang itself, in spite of its sell out to Ayuthia, became a dependent territory of Siam. The situation was changed radically on the Indochinese peninsula as the French conquered Vietnam and turned Cambodia into a protectorate, sought to lay hands on.<sup>15</sup>

## **Cambodia**

To the south was Cambodia, the kingdom of the darker-skinned Cambodians, descendants of the Khmers. The Khmers had developed an impressive civilization, the evidence of which remains in the magnificent ruins at Angkor. This civilization, however, had reached its zenith in the 12th century A.D. and had declined under attacks and incursions by the Siamese and the Vietnamese. 'By the middle of the nineteenth century the territory of Cambodia had been greatly reduced as a result of

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<sup>14</sup> Dommen, Arthur J. (1971) a., *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization*. New York: Praeger. p. 20-22

<sup>15</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982), *ibid*, p. 33

losses to both the Vietnamese and the Siamese and it seemed only a matter of time before one or another would absorb the rest.’<sup>16</sup>

There were periods in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during which Cambodia’s neighbours were preoccupied with internal or external strife that afforded the beleaguered country a breathing spell. The Vietnamese was engaged in a civil war with Cambodia and at the end of war they promptly proceeded to annex some large areas of Cambodians territory in the deltaic region. Siam, which might have been courted, as an ally against Vietnam’s incursions in the eighteenth century was also involved in a major conflict with Burma, during which the Thai capital of Ayudhya was besieged and destroyed in the year 1767. The Siamese quickly came out of this and soon reasserted their dominion over Cambodia. The youthful king Ang Eng, a refugee in the Siamese court, was installed in 1795 in the Cambodian capital at Odongk with the help of Siamese troops. Contemporarily, Siam quietly annexed Cambodia’s three northernmost provinces.<sup>17</sup>

The negligence of The Khmer monarch brought the country to the brink of ultimate catastrophe of Disappearance of Cambodia as a political and territorial entity. Cambodia remained unable to protect its borders appropriately because of the wars of the succession, over the centuries. The Khmers, Siamese and Vietnamese attempted several times for the encroachment of Cambodian territories, which was responsible for the rivalries amongst them.<sup>18</sup> Thus the sovereign looked now to Siam and Vietnam as a means of anchoring the legitimacy of his power. In the nineteenth century the two invaders wanted to seize Phnom Penh: “Each of them wanted to have Phnom Penh and the Four-Arms region, the heart of the kingdom and its most strategic point. Without the Four-Arms, peace would have been signed with Cambodia divided up between Siam and Cochin China, and that would have been the end of the Khmer people.”<sup>19</sup> “The Khmer rebelled in 1837-1839 and succeeded in hampering the Vietnamese plans for imposing their laws and customs. The revolt became a general

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<sup>16</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs (1956), *Collective Defence in South East Asia*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs. p. 42

<sup>17</sup> Whitaker, Donald P. ed, (1973). *Area handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*. Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office. p. 29-30

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Martin, Marie Alexandrine (1994), *Cambodia: A Shattered Society*. Trans by, Mark W. McLeod, London: University of California Press, Ltd. p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Martin, Marie Alexandrine (1994), p. 29.

one in 1840-1841.<sup>20</sup> “To defeat the invaders, King Ang Duong decides to accept the help of Siam in a war of five year long. In 1845, he was unable to escape from double tutelage but did succeed in avoiding the partition of his country by its own protectors. Cambodia then experienced a period of internal peace, which allowed the king to reorganize the country.<sup>21</sup>

But the truce was apparently a short one. In 1853 Ang Duong called upon a foreign power to stave off the Vietnamese menace. He, at that time chose France, a country unrepresentative in the region except for large catholic missions led by Mogsignor Miche.<sup>22</sup> However, the first attempt to arrange a Franco-Khmer meeting was failed, for the Siamese, informed by the French envoy, and he opposed it. In November 1856 Ang Duong addressed a letter to Napoleon III. In the letter Ang Duong asserted his claim to the Cambodian provinces occupied by the Vietnamese. The Khmer monarch died in 1860, his request was unfilled. When Norodom I accede the throne in 1860, the political map was changed, as France had established itself in the Mekong delta and wanted a Cambodia freed of all foreign interference. The French presence removed the danger from the Vietnamese side, but the menace from the north remained as it was before. Norodom caught up in palace quarrels and absorbed in his harem, which proved him incapable of reconquering the land occupied by the Siam, the territories of Sisophohn, Battambang, Siem Reap, Mlou Prey and Tonle Rpou.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, when the French arrived on the Cambodian scene in 1863, the country was disintegrated and given over to anarchy and rent by individual ambitions, paying tribute to both Vietnam and Siam. France had to throttle insurrections led by the Acha Sva and then by Pou Kombo, who supported by the Vietnamese, were preoccupied above all also with usurping power by passing themselves off as princes. France also faced the animosity of Sivotha, Norodom I's rebellious half brother; who fought the French when they began supporting Norodom. The establishment of France caused no spontaneous popular reaction among Cambodians.<sup>24</sup> ‘In 1863, the French offered to transform the right of suzerainty acquired from Vietnam into a protectorate over

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<sup>20</sup> Cited in Martin, Marie Alexandrine (1994), p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Martin, Marie Alexandrine (1994). *ibid.* p. 29-30

<sup>22</sup> Martin, Marie Alexandrine (1994). *ibid.* p. 30

<sup>23</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *French Policy and Developments in Indochina*. New York: Russell & Russell. p. 42

<sup>24</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973), *ibid.* p. 54

Cambodia. Norodom accepted that but when the French were ratifying in Paris, Siam threatened to invade Cambodia and to retain its royal insignia. The French moved to block Siam from asserting further claims to dominion over the provinces of Battambang and Siem Reap. At last, they compelled Siam to return the royal regalia, and it was delivered to the Cambodian capital at Udong; the French resident himself crowned Norodom king there on 3 July 1864.<sup>25</sup> The king of Cambodia had signed a treaty placing his country under French protection in 1863, and by 1887 the Vietnamese and Cambodian territories were firmly enough in French hands for the Indochinese Union to be established under a French Governor-General.<sup>26</sup>

### **First Contacts with the French.**

‘The Sinicization of Vietnam (with the exception of its Southern i.e., Cochin Chinese part, a late colonization territory) which occurred during the first millennium of the Christian era was structurally so profound that it survived the end of the Chinese political control in 939 A.D. by several centuries’.<sup>27</sup>

In 1748, Pierre Poivre, a well-known Parisian promoter was preparing for a journey to Indochina. It was the time when the relations of French with Indochina were going to begin. ‘In June 1748, while Poivre was in Paris, he persuaded the French officials of the French East India Company to fit out an expedition for the purpose of establishing commercial relations with Indochina. He left France in October of the same year and reached Tourane on 20 August 1749. At that time the Chinese and Portuguese had control on the trade. Despite this, he set out for Hue and presented gifts to Vo Vuong, which he brought from France.’<sup>28</sup> The gifts pleased the natives of Indochina. But afterwards the officials stole some articles while purchasing other things and when they were complained, they were asked for returning of the items, but none of them were relinquished and the French attempt was nothing more than a failure this time.

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<sup>25</sup> Whitaker, Donald P. ed, (1973). *ibid.* p. 31

<sup>26</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs (1956). *ibid.* p.42

<sup>27</sup> Benda, Harry J. (1965). “Political Elites in Colonial Southeast Asia: An Historical Analysis”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 7. no. 3. p. 239

<sup>28</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid.* p. 22-23

In 1755, a merchant provided the information about the advantageous location of Poulo Condore Island, off the eastern coast of Indochina, to the French. After which a discussion took place in the Ministries of Foreign and Marine Affairs and it was agreed to establish a post in Indochina.

‘In order to secure their commercial pursuits, the French planning for an armed expedition to Cochin china in 1775 but their plan were failed. A missionary bishop, Pigneau de Behaine, reawakened the French ardor to conquer Indochina when he was appointed apostolic vicar to Cochin china, Tonkin and Cambodia.’<sup>29</sup> But in 1771 a rebellion in Vietnam (the Tay-son Rebellion) deposed the emperor and the two *chua*. This rebellion was indirectly responsible for the beginning of French influence. The heir to the *chua* office in the south, Nguyen Anh, was assisted in his effort to unseat the rebels by, Pigneau de Behaine. For this he asked that his country be compensated by the cession of a harbour and some territory.

‘In 1799, Behaine found that the king of Cochin china had profited by difficulties in the camp of Taysons and so recovered a portion of lower Cochin china. He was further strengthened by the rumors that his armed vessel was but the advance guard of a strong French contingent advancing to punish the enemies of the legitimate sovereign. After reaching he began to reorganize the incapable Cochin china government. He formed a new army, equipped the fleet, founded a military school, established a mint and built fortifications. With the help of his tactics, the royal forces banned the fleet of Taysons in the bay of Quinhon. He was died in the year 1799, while fighting at the head of the troops.’<sup>30</sup>

It was in large measure due to the aid afforded by a group of European mercenaries recruited by the bishop that Nguyen Anh defeated the rebels, unified Vietnam, and proclaimed himself emperor under the title Gia Long (1802-1820). ‘France turned attention to the Vietnam after losing out in India to the United Kingdom at the end of the eighteenth century. The French saw Southeast Asia as a gateway to markets and products of China. The Roman Catholic clergy also forced them to increase persecution of Christians in Vietnam, which was started in 1830s. The French were

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<sup>29</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid.* p. 26

<sup>30</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid.* p. 28

also concerned that if they would not take steps to extend their control over the region then the British will definitely do'.<sup>31</sup> Grateful for this assistance, Gia Long permitted Christian missionaries to carry on their work unmolested in his country. His successors, however, resented what they regarded as an intrusion by foreigners into Vietnamese affairs and began systematic of Christians. They did not like the French missionary people and even they refused to enter into their kingdom several times.

In 1830, Eugene-Louis Chaigneau attempted to determine the status of French commerce in Indochina, but the native officials were not interested and they didn't respond to him. In 1836, when some trade negotiations were going to take place it was declared that if any priest were found on board Cochinchinese junks, they would be killed. 'Under the guise of protecting missionaries, the French government sent an armed vessel to Cochin china 1845. Their purpose of the visit was to save the lives of five prelates, which were imprisoned at Hue. They were released after a long time and the decrees were modified because the native officials feared an attack upon Tourane. The natives of Indochina once again showed the animosity against the foreigners and some missionaries were menaced with persecution and death. After that the French government sent vessels to Tourane under Captains Lapierre and Rigault de Genouilly, in 1847, who demanded that Thien-Tri, emperor proclaim the religious liberty for the Christians since the death of his father the Annamites were fully determined to resist the invasion and reinforced their garrisons and sent eight junks to the harbour. But the intention was not fulfilled as the French bombarded the coast. The forts and junks responded with a lively fire and in a few hours time, the native strongholds were destroyed. The emperor after being undaunted by his losses issued an edict condemning all of the resident Europeans to death. The officials were so demoralized that this measure was not executed; and the French, despite their initial victory, were not prepared to gain suzerainty over the country by military force.'<sup>32</sup>

It was the murder of a number of French and Spanish missionaries, which led to the dispatch joint French-Spanish expedition against Vietnam in 1858.<sup>33</sup> In 1862 French seized the entire southern half of the country (Cochin china) and establish a French

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<sup>31</sup> Poulsen, Thomas and Dimitry. Sharkov (1995). *Nations and States: A Geographic Background to World Affairs*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. p. 264

<sup>32</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid*, p. 32-33

<sup>33</sup> Poulsen, Thomas and Dimitry. Sharkov (1995). *ibid*, p. 264-265

colony there.<sup>34</sup> In 1864 this base enabled France to impose its suzerainty on king Norodom of Cambodia, which had been torn apart over several decades by Vietnamese and Siamese rivalry. Vietnam, which showed itself more willing than the other cultures of the region to adopt modern western ways, foundered on the reef of the Christianity, which was promoted by the French but proved incompatible with the country's traditional bureaucracy. A number of military expedition ensued, the last of which took place in 1884-85, triggering a war with China and bringing the entire country under French control.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> McAlister Jr, John T. (1969), *Vietnam: The Origins of revolution*, New York: Penguin Press. p. 40

<sup>35</sup> Godement, Francois (1997). *The New Asian Renaissance: From Colonialism to the Post Cold War*, London: Routledge. p. 30

***CHAPTER IV***



## CHAPTER-IV

### BOUNDARIES OF INDOCHINA DURING THE FRENCH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

#### French Indochina

French Indochina, which embraces the whole of the eastern, and a large portion of the northern and southern sections of the peninsula,<sup>1</sup> is bound by the north and north-east by the Chinese provinces of Yu-Nan and Kwang-Si; on the east and southeast by the Gulf of Tong-king<sup>2</sup> and the Sea of China; on the west by a conventional line drawn between Siam and Cambodia and then by the right bank of the Mekong, which separates it from Siam and Burma.<sup>3</sup> Its area has been estimated at 262,000 square miles, but this does not include (a) the provinces of Battambang and Siem-reap restored to Cambodia in accordance with the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1907;<sup>4</sup> (b) the neutral zone 25 kilometers wide (roughly 15.5 miles) on the right bank of the Mekong, which is placed under French control; (c) the new region between the basins of the Mekong and the Menam, estimated approximately at 77,000 square miles, lately conceded to French influence. The Annamite range extends from the extreme north, where it branches out into numerous steep and ragged ranges, to Cape St. Jacques in the south.<sup>5</sup> It is covered for the most part with thick forests and towards the centre and the south approaches so close to the sea that it seems at times to rise abruptly from the waters. This range separates the basin of the Mekong from the river systems of Tong-king and Annam. French Indochina has a coastline of about 1500 miles. Beginning in the north, the first 375 miles of the shore are washed by the gulf of Tong-king. For about 100 miles the sea is studded with islands- Ka-bao, Kak-ba,

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, Virginia (1937), *French Indo-China*. New York: MacMillan. p. 1

<sup>2</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988). *Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos: Bound in Comradeship. Panoramic Study of the Indochinese people from Ancient to Modern Times*. New Delhi: Patriot Publishers. p. 2-3

<sup>3</sup> Duiker, William J. (1983), *Vietnam: Nation in Revolution*. Colorado: Westview Press. p. 1

<sup>4</sup> Bowman, John S. ed, (2000), *Columbia Chronologies of Asian History and Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press. p. 427

<sup>5</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 3

and the Pirate Islands, long the haunt of Chinese corsairs, being the most notable. To the south of Kak-ba, the coast is low-lying and marshy, and characterized by the numerous mouths of the rivers Thai-bing, Song-koi, Song-ma, Song-ka, whose alluvium has formed the delta of Tong-king, as well as the fertile plains of Thanh-hoa and Nghe-an. From Cape Bung-kwiua to Cape St. Jacques, steep promontories-the termination of minor chains thrown off by the Annamite range<sup>6</sup>-alternate with low sandy plains formed by the numberless short rivers, which run down from the mountains into the Sea of China. The principal harbors are that formed by the River of Hue (at Thuan-an), the Bay of Turan, the Ports of Kwi-hnon and Song-kau, the Bays of Van-fong, Nah-trang, Kam-rang, and Fan-thiet.

From Cape St. Jacques to Ha-tien, the coasts are again low and intersected by the numerous embouchures of the Me-kong, to the alluvial deposits of which this fertile section of Indochina owes its existence.<sup>7</sup> From Ha-tien to the conventional Siamese frontier cliffs and sandy plains again alternate. The Mekong, the great river to which so much of Indochina owes its fertility and territory, rises in the central plateau of Asia and on entering the peninsula is already a mighty river. Owing to its numerous rapids, the river can be used for purposes of navigation only on restricted stretches, until below the rapids of Khone.<sup>8</sup> Even later there are some minor rapids which are not, however, an insurmountable obstacle to traffic. From Phnom Penh, where the river divides into two branches, the navigation is easy. These branches, known to the French colonists as the *Fleuve antérieur* and the *Fleuve postérieur*<sup>9</sup>-subdivide in turn, and form the network of streams which are the chief means of communication between the various commercial centres of Cochin china and Cambodia. Other rivers of importance will be referred to later in treating of the separate political division.

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<sup>6</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988). *ibid*, p. 6-7

<sup>7</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 8

<sup>8</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 9

<sup>9</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 9

## Climatic Conditions

Although the climate of Indochina is, in general, like those of other inter tropical countries, characterized by great heat and dampness, there exists a great difference in the climatic conditions of the various districts. In Cochin china, the wet and dry seasons succeed each other with the utmost regularity, and correspond with the monsoons. The period of the northeasterly monsoon, which blows from October to April, is the dry season, during which the thermometer registers between 78.8°F and 80.6°F by day and 68°F by night.<sup>10</sup> About the middle of April, the monsoon changes to the southwest, the temperatures rise to 98°F, and the season of daily rains begins. The climate of Cambodia resembles in general that of Cochin china, except that, deprived in the north of the sea breezes, the heat is much more rigorous. In Annam the climate is less regular. The heavy rains do not coincide with the southwest monsoon, which is intercepted by the Annamite Range, but fall usually during the season of the northeast. In Hue, they begin in December and last until September; the temperature falling below 60°F, and so consistent and heavy is the downpour that it is often impossible to leave the house for several successive days.<sup>11</sup> The other seasons are by no means rainless; there is however no regularity in the intervals between the showers, which are very heavy but last only a few hours. Tong-king has two very clearly defined seasons corresponding with the monsoons: a winter from October to April, and a summer during the remaining period of the year. April and October are themselves months of transition, and resemble somewhat our spring and autumn. During the winter, the temperature is comparatively low, the thermometer falls to 42°F or 40°F, and instances of white frost have been recorded. During this season the wind blows from the northeast, but when it chances to veer to the south, the thermometer suddenly rises 10, 12, or even 20 degrees. The weather is most changeable, being now bright and clear, and now foggy and rainy. Heavy rains are, however, rare, and the length of the winter allows one to recuperate one's strength after the exhausting summer. A fine rain falls almost unceasingly from January to April. In the latter month the wind changes to the southeast, and the temperature rises to 75°F. In July and August, the hottest months, the temperature varies between 80

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<sup>10</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1969). *South East Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. p. 22

<sup>11</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1969), *ibid*, p. 422-24

and 86, although not infrequently the thermometer rises to 95°F, 100°F, and even 104°F, and remains there for several days. During the summer the rains are rare and usually very heavy and accompanied by violent storms. The heaviest showers fall between May and August, and a rainfall of four inches within twenty-four hours has been recorded in the latter month.<sup>12</sup>

Between the climatic conditions of Northern and Southern Laos there is a marked difference. In general there are two clearly defined seasons: the dry from October to March, with very occasional rain-storms, and the wet from April to October,<sup>13</sup> during which period there are abundant and almost daily rains. In Northern Laos the temperature during the former season is relatively low-43°F (even in the most elevated districts) in December and January. During the summer especially in April and May the heat is overwhelming: the temperature often rises to 100°F and 104°F, and there is little difference between the day and the night readings.<sup>14</sup> The climate of Southern Laos is much more tolerable, and is free from the rapid variations in temperature common in the north. The northern territories of Indochina, particularly Tong-king, are frequently visited by typhoons, the southern sections very rarely. Two kinds are distinguished: (1) the continental cyclones, which originate in Siberia and Eastern China and advance towards the sea; (2) the typhoons, which originate in the Pacific Ocean. Though frequent during both seasons, the typhoons are much more violent in winter. When the barometer falls to 28.5°F a typhoon may be confidently predicted. Notwithstanding the terrific rapidity of its rotary motion, the typhoon advances with comparative slowness, and warning is generally received by telegraph from observatories along the southern coast of China in ample time to permit shipping and inhabitants to seek shelter before its approach. The typhoons of 1851 and 1882,<sup>15</sup> when the sea invaded the northern coasts of Tong-king, are the most violent recorded.

The climate of Indochina was very unhealthy for Europeans, who can never become acclimatized.<sup>16</sup> As a rule the mountainous and wooded regions are most insalubrious-a

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<sup>12</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1969). *ibid*, p. 34-36

<sup>13</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1969), *ibid*, p. 37

<sup>14</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid*, p. 59

<sup>15</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1969). *ibid*, p. 36

<sup>16</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed. (1995). *Eastern Asia: A Introductory History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Melbourne: Longman. p. 36

phenomenon attributable partially to the accumulation of animal and vegetable detritus in the dense brushwood, undisturbed for centuries, and partly to the dampness caused by the nocturnal mists and the excessive density of the vegetation. Here intermittent fevers (e.g., the terrible wood fever) and dysentery menace the inhabitants at every season, and spare neither colonist nor native. Reasonable exploitation of the timber, for which however proper modes of conveyance are still wanting, or the clearing away of the vast sections of forests which cover the land, should have a beneficial effect on the hygienic conditions of these regions.<sup>17</sup> The low, cultivated plains are the least unhealthy for, though even here the intermittent fevers are by no means rare, they have not the severity one witnesses in other localities. In no district can the European escape dysentery and anemia, but by avoiding heavy exercise and every excess, and by guarding against the extreme heat of the day and the dampness of the night, he can evade all the more serious attacks of the maladies. Periodic sojourns into less rigorous countries to recuperate his strength are of course indispensable. The maritime districts are the most tolerable for Europeans; the regular breezes from the sea counteract to a great extent the injurious effects of the climate, and facilitate sleep. The winters in Tong-king, which necessitate warmer clothing and even the artificial heating of the houses, allows the settler to recover his strength after the exhausting summer. The hot season is, however, terrible, and intermittent fevers, affections of the liver and cholera make for great ravages among the French troops. To engage in industrial or agricultural labour is always fatal for Europeans. Thanks for its favourable situation along the coast, the summer heat in Annam is less extreme, and the maladies are neither so frequent nor as serious as in Tong-king. Of all the divisions of Indochina, the heat of Cochin china is the severest test for foreigners, in consequence of the unvarying elevation of the temperature, especially in the districts remote from the sea. Only the most careful avoidance of mid-day heat and all unusual exertion can safeguard the European. He must also take great care to guard against changes in temperature, for even the slightest variation at night often suffices to occasion attacks of dysentery almost impossible to cure. Wooded and mountainous, Laos is in general very unhealthy, and the climate is rendered the more intolerable for foreigners by the privations necessitated by the absence of proper or regular communication with Tong-king and Annam.

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<sup>17</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed. (1995), *ibid*, p. 32-33

## **Pattern of Government in French Indochina**

‘The French used a dual system in Indochina. Cochin china, the southern most part of Vietnam and the area of greatest economic potential, was the first, which lie under French control as a colony of French. The remaining of Indochina; the regions of Annam and Tonkin, the kingdom of Cambodia and the principalities of Laos, were taken over by French on the basis of protectorate agreements concluded with the local monarchies. In the protectorate, the traditional indigenous administration was remained intact, but the French exerted real control through a parallel administrative structure, i.e., the resident system, that penetrated to the provincial level. Despite the apparent diversity of political structures, the French Government-General in Hanoi in fact dominated the whole Indochina system.’<sup>18</sup>

‘The French administration of Indochina, which had an area approximately the size of France itself, was both complex and simple. Tonkin, Annam, Cambodia and Laos were protectorates, while Cochin china (south Vietnam) was a colony and as such sent a deputy to the French parliament. The difference between colony and protectorate was largely a theoretical one, for a powerful governor-general, appointed by Paris and rigidly subject to its control. ruled over a highly centralized administration which possesses all of the five territories’.<sup>19</sup>

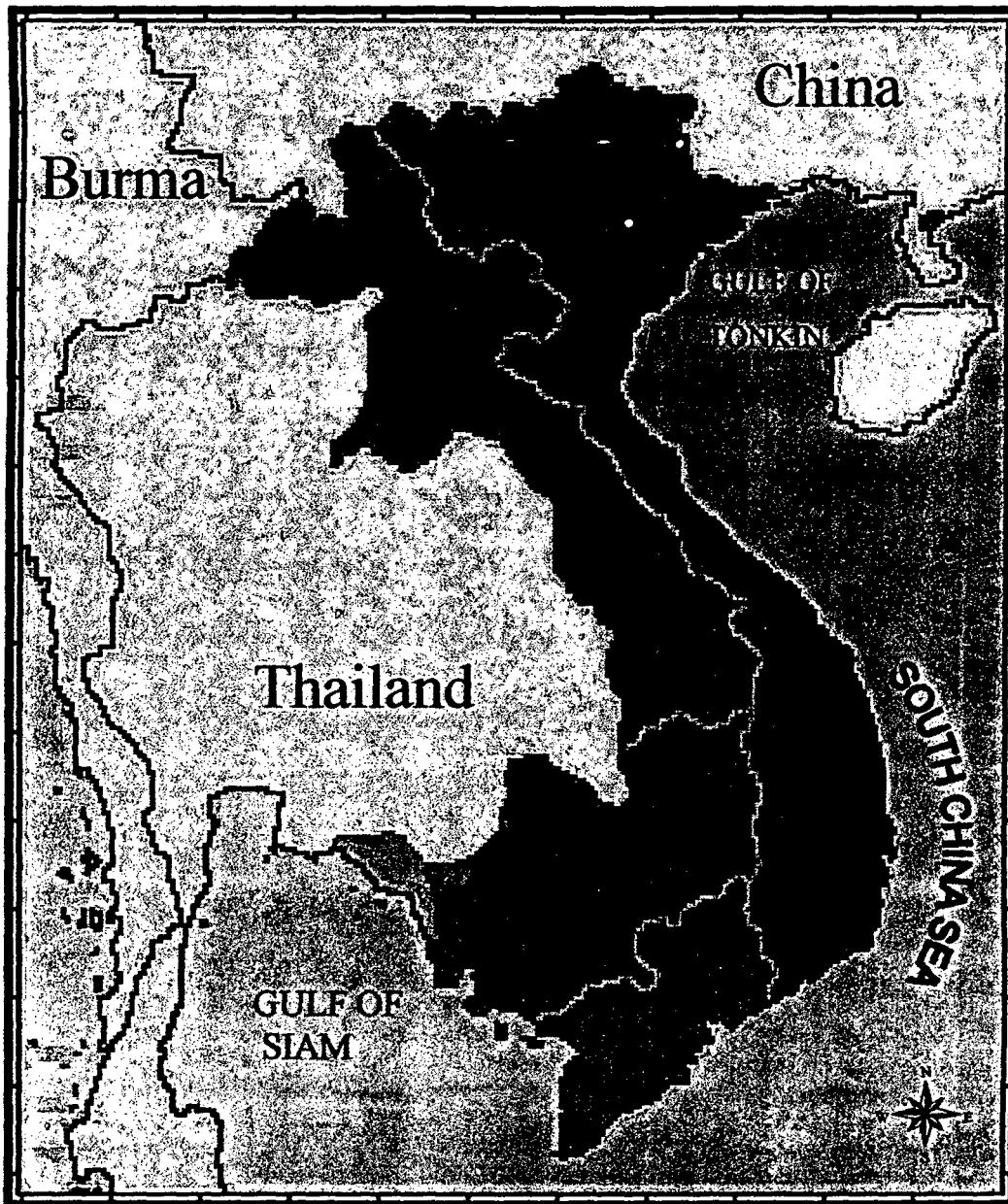
The Governor-General, whose powers have been defined by a decree of 21 April 1891,<sup>20</sup> represents the authority of the French Republic. Having the sole right to correspond with the French Government, he is in direct communication not alone with the ministers in France. but also with the French diplomatic representative in the Far East. He has complete control of the land and sea forces in Indochina, and only in the case of an emergency, which demands immediate action, can any military or naval operation take place without his authorization. He is also in trusted with the organization and administration of the native police and public services. All or any of

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<sup>18</sup> Christie, Clive J. (1996). *A modern History of Southeast Asia: decolonisation, national and separatism*, London: I.B. Tauras Publishers. p. 9

<sup>19</sup> Vandenbosch, Amry and Butwell, Richard (1966). *The Changing Face of Southeast Asia*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press. p. 163

<sup>20</sup> Pluvier, Jan (1974). *South-East Asia from Colonialism to Independence*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford. p. 16-17



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 7: Indochina in 1898

his powers may be delegated to the Lieutenant-General of Cochin china, or to the Resident Superior<sup>21</sup> of any of the other political divisions. The Residents Superior, in addition to their political and diplomatic relations with the sovereigns of the vassal territories, has charge of the local budgets and the general administration of the political divisions to which they are appointed. Two councils, the Conseil Supérieur of Indochina, and the Conseil de défense assist the Governor-General.<sup>22</sup> To the former belongs the Governor-general (president), the commanders-in-chief of the French naval and military forces, the Lieutenant-General of Cochin china, the Residents Superior of the other divisions, the heads of various councils, and two indigenous members appointed annually by the Governor-General. This council sits each year to consider the general budget for Indochina (including Kwan-chau-won since 1900), and the local budgets for the five constituent territories, to make the necessary naval and military appropriations, and to discuss in general matters of public interest. 'In addition, French *residents* were placed at the provincial level in the protectorates to provide advice to native administrators. In the central provinces of Annam, the emperor and his bureaucracy were permitted to retain a modicum of their quondam administrative authority. But in the north, the authority of the emperor was emasculated by making the resident superieur the official representative of the court'.<sup>23</sup> The place of assembly lies in the discretion of the Governor-General. The *Conseil de défense*, which also sits under the presidency of the Governor-General, is attended by the chiefs of all the important divisions of the land and sea forces, its deliberations being mainly concerned with measures for the preservation of peace within the territories.<sup>24</sup> Though all effective authority is thus vested in French representatives, the native sovereigns exercise certain local powers in matters of purely native interest.(Fig. 7) 'The French established their colonial administration over that country with then idea of turning it into a permanent base for future hegemony in Asia'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Whitaker, Donald P. ed. (1973). *Area handbook for the Khmer Republic (Cambodia)*. Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office. p. 31

<sup>22</sup> Mackerras, Collin. ed. (1995). *ibid.* p. 257-58

<sup>23</sup> Duiker, William J. (1995). *Vietnam: Revolution in Transition*, Oxford: Westview Press. p. 30-31

<sup>24</sup> Hall, D.G.E. (1955), *A History of Southeast Asia*, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. p. 577

<sup>25</sup> Chavan, R.S. (1987), *Vietnam: Trial and Triumph*. New Delhi: Patriot Publishers. p. 31



## **Judicial Administration**

On taking possession of its Indochinese territories, France found itself confronted with a very serious judicial problem. The natives had of course to be judged in conformity to their own laws, which were not merely completely unknown to the Europeans, but were either written and not translated, or customary and not formulated. The appearance in French of many excellent treatises on native law having made its study possible for Europeans, a decree of 25 January, 1854, declared that henceforth the Annamite Law should regulate all civil and commercial conventions and litigations between natives and Asiatics in general, while all other causes were to be decided by French law. The chief law officer for the French possessions is the *Procureur Général* at Saigon.<sup>26</sup> At present there is one Supreme Court of Appeal for Indochina, with three chambers, two at Saigon and one at Hanoi. To decide civil disputes, three mixed tribunals have been instituted at Saigon, Hanoi, and Haiphong. There is one general court of first instance at Saigon; tribunals of first instance (first class) at Mytho, Vinh-long, Hanoi, and Haiphong and (second class) at Bentre, Chaudoc, Travinh, Long-xuyen, Cantho, and Pnom-penh. In Cochin china the French tribunals are competent to decide even purely native disputes, and here remains no trace of the ancient indigenous justice.<sup>27</sup> Of the native courts some mention will be made in treating of Annam.

## **Political Divisions of French Indochina**

### ***(1) Cochin china***

This term, which formerly applied to the territories of the Annamite Empire (Tongking, Annam, and Cochin china), is confined to the French colony in the southeast of the peninsula. Cochin china proper is bounded on the north and northeast by Cambodia and the province of Binh-thuan (Annam), on the east and south by the Sea

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<sup>26</sup> Owen, Norman G. ed. (2005). *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. p. 335

<sup>27</sup> Smith, R.B. (1969). "Bui Quang Chieu and the Constitutionalist Party in French Cochin china. 1917-30", *Modern Asian Studies*. Vol. 3. no. 2. p. 133-34

of China, and on the west by the Gulf of Siam.<sup>28</sup> Its area is estimated at 23,000 square miles, its population at 2,973,128 inhabitants (1909). For the purposes of administration the colony is divided into 21 *arrondissements* (districts),<sup>29</sup> comprising 207 *cantons*, and 2,425 communes. A French functionary known as the *administrateur des affaires indigenes* and through its *conseil d'arrondissement* voters a special budget, called the budget regional, administers each *arrondissement*. The islands of Poulo Condore<sup>30</sup> are included in Cochin china; the largest being used as a penitentiary for criminals whose sentence is at least ten years.<sup>31</sup> One deputy represents Cochin china in parliament. Situated on the route of Europe and India to Japan and China, Cochin china seems destined by nature to play a leading part in the development of the Far East. Its plains, watered by the various arms of the Mekong, and numberless canals and arroyos (natural channels which connect them) must be reckoned among the most fertile in the world. More than one-fourth of the whole surface is devoted to the cultivation of rice, of which 2,000,000 tons are produced annually. After rice the chief crops are areca nuts, earthnuts, peppers (the cultivation of which has greatly increased in recent years), betel nuts, pineapple, mulberry, maize, cotton and indigo. River and sea fishing provides occupation for a great number of natives, over 75,000 boats being engaged in this industry. Cochin china being one of the greatest rice-producing countries in the world, its principal export is naturally rice (\$30,000,000 in 1907). Rice is shipped principally to China, Manila, Japan, France, and other European countries. The other important exports are fish and fish oil (\$2,000,000), pepper (\$1,385,000), live animals, cotton, gamboge, indigo, hides, silks, and woods (bamboos, iron-wood, rotang, tamarind, etc.). There are some important salt mines at Bien-hoa and Chau-doc; to the last-mentioned Cochin china is indebted for the stone necessary for the construction of roads.

Saigon, the former capital of French Indochina, is situated on the Saigon River about forty miles from the coast. Owing to the great depth of the river, ships of the largest

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<sup>28</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *French Policy and Developments in Indochina*. New York: Russell & Russell. p. 1

<sup>29</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973), *ibid.* p. 54

<sup>30</sup> Tate, D.J.M. (1971), *The Making of Modern Southeast Asia: The European Conquest, Vol. 1*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. p. 448

<sup>31</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988). *ibid.* p. 24

tonnage can sail upstream to the port of Saigon,<sup>32</sup> from which 824 ships of 1,290,430 tons cleared in 1907. Under the French Saigon has assumed the aspect of a European city. Its streets are wide, well planned, and decorated with gardens and monuments. It possesses a celebrated collection of the flora and fauna of Indochina in its botanical and zoological gardens, while its government palace has an architectural fame throughout the Far East. Saigon is one of the seven-chartered cities of French Indochina. The mayor is elected according to a restricted franchise: its *Conseil municipal* also includes ten French members and four native councillors. Cholon, the chief commercial center (163,000 inhabitants) is situated about four miles to the southwest of Saigon.<sup>33</sup> Mainly the Chinese who, here as elsewhere throughout the peninsula, almost monopolize the commerce inhabits it. It is the centre of the rice trade; the rice being here prepared and put in sacks. Cholon is connected to the capital by a steam railroad and by an arroyo. The former passes through the celebrated 'plain of the Tombs', a vast deserted wilderness of imposing mausoleums and modest tombs. This is the Annamite cemetery, and the treeless and almost verdure less character of the landscape increases the mournful appearance of the scene. The Mayor of Cholon, nominated by the Governor-General, is assisted by three deputies; one French, one Annamite, one Chinese and nine councillors, three being from each of the representative races. The French are nominated by the Lieutenant General, the Annamite and Chinese by the notables<sup>34</sup> among the inhabitants. Mytho (226,000), the chief town of the homonymous *arrondissement*, was the ancient capital of the Annamite province of Dinh-Toung.<sup>35</sup> It is situated on the left bank of the northern arm of the Mekong, at a distance of about 23 miles from the sea and 44 miles from Saigon, with which it is connected by railway and by the boats of the *Service des Messageries fluviales*. The centre of a rich rice-producing district, it is an important port of call for trading vessels.

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<sup>32</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1971), "Southeast Asia", in East, W. Gordon, eds. *The Changing Map of Asia*, Suffolk: Methuen & Co. Ltd. p. 305

<sup>33</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1971). *ibid.* p. 306

<sup>34</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid.* p. 77

<sup>35</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid.* p. 41

## *(2) Annam*

Annam, which formerly contained nine of the thirty-one provinces constituting the Annamite Empire-Tong-king being composed of sixteen and Cochin china of six-embraces today twelve provinces, Thanh-hoa, Nghe-an, and Ha-tinh having been added to its territory by the Treaty of 6 June, 1884. 'France's occupation in Annam and Tonkin was in theory a 'protection' of Vietnam's traditional government. In principle, the continuation of mandarinat was sanctioned by treaty. But despite its treaty commitments, France actively interfered with the administration of these 'protectorates' in order to ensure the perpetuation of its colonial rule. Instead of abolishing mandarinat outright, the French sought to decrease its continuity with traditional politics and to increase its bureaucratic capacities to fulfill colonial programs'.<sup>36</sup> Its coastline extends from Cape Bake in the south to Tong-king frontier about twenty-six miles northeast of Thanh-hoa,<sup>37</sup> that is about 810 miles. It is bounded on the north by Tong-king, on the west by Laos from which the Annamite Range separates it and Cochin china, while on the south and east the Sea of China washes it. Of its numberless rivers only the Song-ma and Song-ka, which water the rich alluvial plain in the extreme north of the territory, are of importance. The mountainous region between Annam<sup>38</sup> and Laos known, as the territories of the Mois, Pou-euns, and Phou-tays were direct dependencies of Annam. Although the people of the Annamite dependencies are receiving increased attention in recent years, even an approximate estimate of their numbers is impossible; the area of their territories is about 27,000 square miles. Hue, the capital of Annam, is situated on the left bank of the river of the same name. It has two distinct divisions: the citadel fortified according to plans supplied by French engineers, and occupied by the French and Annamite administrations and French troops, and the districts occupied by the natives. The principal ports in Annam are Turan, Kwi-nhon, and Xuan Day.

While the soil of Annam is most fertile, and admirably adapted to the cultivation of the most varied of crops, its advantages are marred on the one hand by the terrible

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<sup>36</sup> McAlister Jr. John T. (1969). *Vietnam: The Origins of revolution*. New York: Penguin Press. p. 42-43

<sup>37</sup> Coedes, G. (1968). *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Trans. By, Susan Brown Cowing. Honolulu: East West Center Press. p. 160

<sup>38</sup> Duiker. William J. (1995). *ibid.* p. 23

droughts of the dry season which, as distinct from the climate of Cochin china, is also its summer and on the other by the devastating inundations of the rivers which rise in the mountains and hurl themselves after a short course into the sea. Tea and coffee, the planting of which is a comparatively recent experiment of the Europeans, are now extensively grown, and the excellence of the former leads one to believe that Annam will rapidly develop into a serious rival of India and China in the production of this commodity. The other agricultural products include maize, sugar, potatoes, cotton, earthnuts, mulberry, *ricinus communis* (castor-oil plant), indigo, coca, areca nut, tobacco, and cinnamon. Apart from agriculture the chief industries of Annam are the threshing and winnowing of rice and the extraction of the oil, the shelling of cotton, and the preparation of jute, indigo, and tobacco. Silk is manufactured everywhere, but little pains are taken to produce a high quality. Of more importance is crepon, in the manufacture of which the Annamite excels the Chinese. The river and the sea fishing are both of great importance, dried fish forming an important article of diet here as well as elsewhere in Indochina. The Chinese monopolizes the sugar industry. The salt-mines of Kwi-nhon, Phu-yen, Binhuan, and Ha-tinh supply a sufficient surplus over local needs to permit the export of more than 1,000,000 tons of salt yearly. Pure anthracite coal is mined at Nong-son in the province of Turan; the mine is situated about forty miles from the coast on the banks of a river whose mouth is unfortunately obstructed by a bar. Copper mines are found at Duc-bo and gold at Bong-nieu.<sup>39</sup> The latter, which were worked for centuries by the natives, are being at present exploited by a French company. The domestic animals are the buffalo, ox, horse, and pig. In the unpopulated districts of the interior, the tiger, leopard, elephant, stag, peafowl, and numerous species of reptiles abound. The wild game includes teal, snipe, wild goose, and quail.

A little space may be devoted to a description of the domestic organization of Annam, which formerly extended (and still extends with modifications, more or less serious) also to the Tong-king and Cochin china. The whole constitution is patriarchal, i.e., the sovereign the 'son of heaven', the 'infallible one', is regarded also as the father and high priest of the community.<sup>40</sup> The emperor thus enjoys at least theoretically absolute authority; his acts may no more be questioned by his subjects, than the actions of

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<sup>39</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973), *ibid.* p. 118

<sup>40</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973). *ibid.* p. 55

parents by their children. A Co-mat, or secret council, without whose advice he gives no important decision, assists him. Apart from this idea of absolute authority, rather sentimental than really operative, there is complete equality among registered citizens; all are eligible for public office, and the only social distinctions are the adventitious ones of fortune or office. The inhabitants are divided into two classes: the registered (*inscrits, Dzan-bo*) and the non-registered (*non-inscrits, Dzan-lan*). By the latter are meant the citizens who are considered too poor to be placed upon the role of taxpayers. The registered citizens alone enjoy civil rights, and only of their number does the government keep a record. It is on this list of taxpayers that every estimate of the population is based, the ratio between assessable and the non-assessable citizens being accepted as one to fifteen. Only the registered citizens can become 'notables' (i.e., hold office). According to the importance of their office, the *notables* are divided into two classes, *major* and *minor*. The *notables*, who are appointed by their predecessors for a fixed period (though varying in different localities), constitute the *Conseil de commune*, in which the *minor notables* may advise but have no vote. In addition to his duties as councillor, each *major notable* fulfils some special function in the community. The mayor, who is nominated by the *major notables*,<sup>41</sup> is the only official whose election must be submitted for the sanction of the government. He is neither the head nor president of the council, but merely its agent. It is his duty to execute all the orders of the Government respecting his commune, to collect taxes, and, as chief of the communal police, to bring to justice all delinquents. The constitution of the higher councils is analogous to that of the communal, and law and custom strictly define their powers.

In Annam legislative and judicial powers were never separated. Every legal action, criminal and civil, begins in the commune and is first investigated by the communal administration, which, having heard the evidence, either pronounces sentence, or if the matter be grave, refers the case to the tribunal of the sub-prefecture or of the prefecture. Annamite Law carefully defines the competence of every court. Very grave matters must be referred to the governor of the province, and every penalty of death must receive the emperor's sanction before being put into execution. In civil

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<sup>41</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973), *ibid.* p. 77

matters the head of the family, against whose decision there is rarely an appeal, usually decides disputes between members of the same family.

There are very few countries in which education is held in higher esteem than in Annam, and very few in which the instruction is less scientific and less practical. Almost every village possesses its school, and illiteracy is very rare among the natives.<sup>42</sup> Although all state functions are open to public competition, the instruction is confined to the history, customs, and laws of the country, and to the tenets of Confucianism. Even among the most accomplished there is absolute and universal ignorance of our physical, mathematical, and natural sciences. Although attendance is not compulsory, few children absent themselves from the communal schools kept by private teachers dependent upon the contributions of the parents. Upon leaving the private schools, those who wish to continue their studies attend the district schools, the principals of which are appointed by the state. Provincial examinations (*Khoa*) are held periodically, and successful students are exempted from portion of the military service.

The Annamite is of low stature; his limbs are short, his body well made but ungraceful, his hair black and coarse, his mouth big, his lips thick, his nose flat, and his nostrils dilated. His skull is short and rather wide, his cheekbones protrude, his eyes are lozenge-shaped, and his complexion varies from brown to yellow. In Annam both men and women wear their hair rolled up in a chignon, but in Tong-king the women wear their hair in coils around their head. The great blot on the Annamite character is an overpowering tendency towards deceit and dishonesty, which Christianity as attested by hostile French officials, has done much to remove. In general sober and industrious, the Annamite is greatly attached to his family and his home, and, though naturally of a gentle and timid disposition, exhibits on occasion a courageous scorn of death. Devoted to song, poetry, the theatre, and feasts, his literature is composed mainly of ballads, dramas, romance, and legends almost all of which are borrowed from the religious traditions of the Khmers and countless philosophical treatises. Although theoretically Annamites, as Buddhists, should not believe in god (at least in the Western acceptance of the term) they pray to *Ong-phat*

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<sup>42</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas (1981), *Vietnam: The Revolutionary Path*. London and Basingstoke: MacMillan. p. 185-186

(the Supreme Being), the Governor of the World, whose image one remarks on the altar at the hearth in almost every home. Nor are they free from superstition, maleficent genii dominating even the most highly educated. Today, indeed, the absolute idea of the Buddhist nirvana exercises as little influence among the masses of the people as Confucianism does among the rich. The real religion of the Annamite is ancestor-worship.<sup>43</sup> Every house has its altar consecrated to the ancestors, before which on fixed occasions (e.g., the beginning of the new year, on the anniversaries of the deaths of his paternal ancestors for four generations) the head of the family prostrates himself in the presence of all his kinsmen, and on which he burns offerings of wine, rice, and odiferous twigs. These ceremonies are performed in the morning, when the manes are supposed to arrive, and again in the evening, when they take their departure. At the beginning of the year they are performed on three consecutive days. In rich families, a certain portion of their property is reserved for the necessities of this worship, and the greatest concern of the Annamite is to leave a son since females are ineligible to officiate to discharge his obsequies honours.

Annamite law recognized polygamy, but the first wife alone is married officially and with all the formal rites. Should the first wife die, the husband may take another official wife, even though he has wives of second rank still living. On the death of the husband, the whole management of the family devolves upon the official wife, except in the matter of the sacrifices, which are performed by the eldest son. Even on his marriage the son seldom leaves the house of his parents; to leave home without his father's permission is contrary at once to the laws consecrated by custom and those enacted by the State. It is this very principal which constitutes the sharp distinction between Annamite and Western legislation. To the Annamite legislator, individuals and their interests are no concern the defence and preservation of these he leaves to the family and the commune. The office of the laws of Annam is to watch over the family and society, to secure obedience to the parental and royal authority.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973), *ibid.*, p. 164

<sup>44</sup> Ennis, Thomas E. (1973), *ibid.*, p. 56



### *(3) Tong-king*

Tong-king is bounded on the north and northeast by China, on the east by the Gulf of Tong-king, on the south by Annam, and on the west by Laos. Its area is about 43,600 square miles. Its surface may be divided into three distinct sections: (1) the flat alluvial plain (the Delta) to the south and east, which constitutes about one-seventh of the total surface; (2) an intermediate plateau of about 15,000 square miles, and (3) the mountainous and mineral region bordering China. The Delta, which alone contains about 10,000,000 inhabitants, is the great centre of industry, and, both in the fertility of its soil and in the number of its waterways, bears a striking resemblance to Cochin china. The principal rivers are the Song-koi (Red River), which rises in Yu-Nan, and its two great tributaries, the Song-lo and the Song-bo (the Clear and the Black River respectively). Linked by a myriad of canals and *arroyos*, these afford an easy, if slow means of communication between the various commercial centres, but their utility is greatly impaired by the violence of their currents during the wet season, and by the bars, shelving ridges, and shallows, which obstruct their courses. The remarkable absence of large trees in the Delta is attributable to the typhoons: the great forests of the interior are practically unexploited owing to the lack of proper means of transport. It is a noteworthy fact, for which no scientific explanation seems yet forthcoming, that along the coast of Tong-king there is but one tide daily for the greater portion of the year. This is believed to be the only part of the world where this phenomenon occurs.<sup>45</sup>

As elsewhere in Indochina, rice is the principal crop. It gives two harvests annually, but periodical failures, here as in Annam, contrast unfavourably with the constancy of the harvests in Cochin china. Maize, sugar cane, buckwheat, millet, sorghum, and tea are also extensively cultivated. All the European vegetables thrive in the country, and experimental plantations of coffee have met with a most gratifying success. The gardens surrounding the villages are filled with banana, orange, papaw, tamarind, cinnamon, and pineapple trees. Cotton and mulberry trees are cultivated everywhere along the banks of the rivers, while the cultivation of jute has greatly increased of recent years. Some of the mines of Tong-king are of great importance, although the

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<sup>45</sup> Dutt, Ashok K. (1985). *Southeast Asia: Realm of Contrasts*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boulder: Westview Press. p. 165-167

disturbed history of the country has prevented their development. Along the coast is a large base of anthracite of excellent quality, which is at present being worked at Hongay and on the island of Ke-bao. The mountainous regions contain almost every variety of minerals, but little attempt has yet been made to exploit them. Lead, copper, sulfur, tin, cinnabar and nitre have received attention; the gold mines, however, are almost abandoned, and on the silver and iron mines work has ceased.

Although the administration of Tong-king bears a great resemblance to that of Annam, there are some marked differences, all tending to inflate the influence of France. In Tong-king the office of France is not confined to a general direction of the central government and public services as in Annam: the Treaty of 1884 entitles her to appoint,<sup>46</sup> side by side with Annamite functionaries, *residents* in all important centres where their presence should be deemed desirable. Although these officials take no part in the details of the local administration, they control the acts of the district mandarins, and thus have virtual direction of the political, judicial, and financial administration of the interior. Hanoi, the chief town of Tong-king, replaced Saigon as capital of French Indochina on 1 January 1902.<sup>47</sup> It is situated on the right bank of the Song-koi, about eighty miles from the coast. Founded during the early centuries of our era, it was until recently little more than a collection of native villages. Rid today of the marshes which disfigured it, it is rapidly becoming a charming town. Its green lawns, luxuriant shrubberies, and quaint intermixture of native and European building form a pleasing frame to the celebrated Pagoda of Vong-dinh. The railroad from Hanoi to Haiphong passes over the huge bridge across the Song-koi. In view of the extreme fierceness of the river during the period of the floods, this bridge (about 1.25 miles in length) must be regarded as a triumph of engineering skill.<sup>48</sup> Haiphong, the principal commercial port of Tong-king, is situated at the confluence of the Cua-cam and Song-tam-bac, about twenty miles from the coast. Vessels of more than twenty feet draught can cross the bar only at high tide. When Haiphong was conceded to France by Annam in 1874, the town was only a small native market; today it is a prosperous city of over 20,000 inhabitants. Hanoi and Haiphong are both incorporated cities administered by a mayor and municipal council. Besides the mayor, who is

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<sup>46</sup> McAlister Jr. John T. (1969). *ibid.* p. 40

<sup>47</sup> Dutt, Ashok K. (1985). p. 174

<sup>48</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas (1981). *ibid.* p. 182-184

appointed by the Governor-General. each council contains fourteen members ten elected by French residents and naturalized citizen of France and four by notables. At Hanoi the four native councillors must be Annamite; at Haiphong, two are Annamite and two Chinese.

#### **(4) Cambodia**

Cambodia, the centre of the ancient Khmer empire, is bounded on the north and northwest by Siam and the Laos territories; on the east by Annam; on the south by Cochin china; on the southwest by the Gulf of Siam. To celebrate the restoration of the provinces of Battambang and Siem-reap in which territory stand the famous ruins of Angkor, the capital of the Khmer Empire the *Conseil Supérieur* met at Pnom-penh in December, 1907, on which occasion King Sisowath declared the deep debt of gratitude which Cambodia owed to France. The area of Cambodia is about 37,500 square miles. The population of Cambodia is almost entirely confined to the vicinity of the ports and the banks of the rivers. The country is covered with immense forests yielding gamboge, gumlake, and cinnamon, and frequented by elephants, tigers, and countless other species of wild game.<sup>49</sup> From the elevated regions of the western territory rush down impetuous torrents, which on reaching the plain, develop into great rivers, and after a short course enter the sea or the Mekong. The chief agricultural products are rice, cotton, areca nut, indigo, mulberry, cardamoms, and pepper. Successful experiments within late years have been made in tea and coffee plantation. Fishing is an important industry in the country not alone for the fish ascending the Mekong and along the coasts, but also for mother-of-pearl and holothures. The little port of Ha-tien has become the central market of the mother-of-pearl industry, which is practically monopolized by the Annamites. The silks woven by the Cambodia women according to a method inherited from a long-past civilization are much sought after. Cambodia possesses iron, gold, and sapphire mines, still in general waiting development. Being a maritime country, it has a brisk commerce. This is almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese, who import European produce, and export rice, pepper, mother-of-pearl, shells, and silk. Jet is found on the island of

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<sup>49</sup> Cleary, Mark (2005), "Managing the Forests in Colonial Indochina c. 1900-1940", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 39, no. 2, p. 260-261

Fu-kwok; of this the natives make charming trinkets mounted on gold, which have a brisk demand.

Cambodia was divided into fifty-seven provinces, and the administration differs little from that of Tong-king. Phnom Penh on the right bank of the Mekong is the capital of the country and the seat of the royal residence. Its mayor is always chosen by the Governor-General from the ranks of the higher civil servants of Indochina. The municipal council also includes five French and three Asiatic (Cambodian, Annamite, and Chinese) councillors, all of who are appointed by the Resident Superior on the recommendation of the mayor. Kampot, situated opposite the island of Fu-kwok, is an important port-of-call for coast-traders. Situated near the northern shore of Tonle Sap in the midst of dense forests are the ruins of Angkor Thom (great Angkor) once the capital of the Khmer empire. Its former extent can be traced from the remains of the fortification, fifty feet broad and thirty feet high, and from the ditch 380 feet wide, which surround the ruins.<sup>50</sup> There were once four entrances to the town, across bridges supported by gigantic statues. Within the walls still remain superb palaces, bastions, terraces, a glorious temple of three stories with concentric galleries, above which rise forty-two turrets (covered like the walls with delicate carvings, and a central tower 130 feet high, looming above the central colonnades. Between these ruins and the lake stands the temple of Angkor Vat, perhaps the vastest and most glorious monument raised by the hand of man in the Far East. It is constructed with massive blocks of sandstone, many weighing more than eight tons and fitted together with the greatest accuracy although no cement was used. The surrounding galleries, the towers, the gigantic and seemingly endless staircases, the square and round columns are covered with carvings rivalling the most beautiful remains of Hindu art.<sup>51</sup> It is impossible to fix definitely the date at which this temple was built, but we may assume that its erection must have occurred during the golden period of the Khmer power and civilization. Whether the temple was consecrated to Buddha, or whether the sanctuary in the central tower, ornamented with gigantic statues looking towards the cardinal points contained an enormous lingam is also disputed, but in view of the numerous lingams found in various parts of Cambodia, the latter opinion is more probable.

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<sup>50</sup> Dutt, Ashok K. (1985), p. 192, 194

<sup>51</sup> Coedes, G. (1968), p. 121-122

The Cambodians or Khmers, although their type is in general greatly modified by intermarriage with other races, still preserve the Aryan characteristics. Taller than the Annamite or Thai, their eyes are rarely oblique, their nose is straight and, though their complexion is now yellow, they preserve their agglutinative or polysyllabic language intact in the midst of races speaking isolating or monosyllabic tongues. Though lazy, given to opium smoking, and unfit for almost any employment, they have, apart from their mysterious and glorious past, a great attraction for the sociological student, owing to their gentleness, courtesy. Loyalty, and their native pride, which makes them, prefers to submit to any misery rather than labour for another. They practice Buddhism slightly tinged with Brahmanism.<sup>52</sup> Very superstitious, they believe that the noise of trumpets drives away evil genii, and that a man seen in an open country silhouetted against the sky above the horizon is doomed to an early death. Attached to each pagoda is a college of bonzes,<sup>53</sup> who are highly esteemed by every class. The bonzes are easily distinguished from the rest of the people by their shaven heads and yellow robes; they are bound to celibacy, live in community, and depend for their sustenance on the rice they receive each day ready-cooked in the villages. At definite periods they assemble the men in the pagoda and read from the sacred books, written in a language seldom unintelligible to both reader and audience.<sup>54</sup> Besides the religious books and romances concerning the past existences of the Buddha, the libraries connected to the pagodas contain ancient works dealing with astrology, chiromancy, the vulgar Cambodian tongue, and Pali, together with works on education and historical treatises unfortunately relating only to recent times. The bonzes are also the teachers of the Cambodian youth, and the only teaching body in the kingdom, excepting of course the Catholic orders. The Khmer are monogamous and greatly attached to their families. Marriages, religious ceremonies, the celebration of the first day of the year, the ceremony of the first cutting of the hair, which occupies an important place in the social life, are all occasions of great rejoicing. The theatre is the great national amusement, from the Royal Theatre at Phnom Penh to the little travelling shows, which play under the palm or fruit-tree. Little girls of about

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<sup>52</sup> Andric, John (1972). *Angkor and The Khmer Empire*. London: Robert Hale. p. 107-110.

<sup>53</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas (1981). *ibid.* p. 27

<sup>54</sup> Hodgkin, Thomas (1981). *ibid.* p. 228-229

fourteen enact the parts, dressed in costumes exactly like those seen on the bas-reliefs of the ancient ruins.

### **(5) Laos**

The principalities of the Laos<sup>55</sup> nation included at the most flourishing period of its history the whole valley of the Mekong from China to Cambodia, the upper basin of the Menam, and portion of the basin of the Salwin. Today its extent is confined to the valley of the Menam (Western Laos),<sup>56</sup> which is subject to Siam, and the valley of the Mekong (Eastern Laos), which, being under the protection of France, alone concerns us in the present article. French Laos is bordered by China on the north, by Tong-king and the Annamite Range on the east, by Cambodia on the south, while on the west it is separated from the Siamese and British territories by the Mekong, except that a narrow strip of country on the right bank of the Mekong and to the west of Luang Prabang, averaging about fifty miles in breadth, is included in French Laos. 'For the French, Laos was defined by the eastern half of the Mekong River basin, and boundaries were carefully drawn to conform with the exact limits of the Mekong watershed. When the colonial government demarcated Laos common borders with Burma, China and Vietnam, the survey teams simply demarcated the limits of Mekong's watershed and adopted these as the borders of Laos.'<sup>57</sup> Within these limits Laos has an area of 97,000 square miles.<sup>58</sup> and a population of perhaps 1,000,000. The whole north of the country is occupied by a lofty and compact group of mountains, between ridges of which the Mekong has hollowed out a narrow and rocky course.<sup>59</sup> About 18° north latitude, the basin widens and the river thenceforth pursues its course through undulating plains, which keep on enlarging until the delta is reached. The whole country is covered by an immense forest, which covers the sides of the mountains, crowns their summits, descends into the deep gorges, and stretches over

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<sup>55</sup> Dobby, E.H.G. (1950), *Southeast Asia*. New York: John Wiley. p. 317

<sup>56</sup> Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996). *Buddhist Kingdom. Marxist State: The Making of Modern Laos*, Bangkok: White Lotus. p. 20

<sup>57</sup> McCoy, Alfred W. (1970). "French Colonialism in Laos, 1893-1945". in Nina S. Adams and Alfred McCoy, eds. *Laos: War and Revolution*, New York: Harper & Row. p. 75

<sup>58</sup> Mishra, Palit Praban (1999). *The Contemporary History of Laos*. New Delhi: National Book Organization Publishers-Distributors. p. 1

<sup>59</sup> Fisher, Charles A. (1969). *ibid.* p. 414

the plains. Almost every genus of trees grows on this wonderfully fertile soil. The plains furnish teak, benzoic, cinnamon, gamboges and cardamom, while the higher altitudes supply varieties of oak, chestnut, elms, and other trees, usually associated with countries in more northern latitude.<sup>60</sup>

The Laotians have established themselves in little villages<sup>61</sup> along the banks of the rivers.<sup>62</sup> Their plantations of cabbage palm, bananas, and cocoa-trees stand out in welcome relief from the gloomy background of the forest. In these little settlements, rescued from the forests, the cultivation of rice occupies the foremost place. Buckwheat, potatoes, peaches, pears, prunes, and various other fruits are also grown. Tea is produced in considerable quantities and, as an indication of its unrivalled quality, it may be mentioned that here are grown the famous teas reserved for the Emperor of China. Laos possesses no coastline, but its river-fishing is of great importance. The Mekong yields a gigantic fish, called by the natives the *pla-beuk*, which, when dried, forms an important element of the native dietary. Another industry of the Laotians is the raising of cattle and buffaloes for the Cambodian and Siamese markets. Laos contains some important iron mines exploited by the natives; deposits of sapphire, copper, and gold are very numerous—gold being also found in the beds of various streams.<sup>63</sup> Sulphurous thermal springs abound in the country, and there are several notable salt-mines. Many concessions have been recently given to French mining-companies, but progress at present is greatly retarded due to the almost inaccessible position of the country for commercial purposes. The construction of the long-covanted railroad to connect Laos with the coast would afford the country an opportunity for competing in the outer markets,<sup>64</sup> but a tremendous development of the country would have to be effected before a line, presenting so many engineering difficulties, could be a financial success. A French administrator in the name of the king directs the government of Laos; six-thirteenths of the administration is borne by Cochin china, five-thirteenths by Annam-Tonkin, and two-thirteenths by Cambodia.

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<sup>60</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p. 10-11

<sup>61</sup> Owen, Norman G. ed. (2005), *ibid.* p. 372

<sup>62</sup> McCoy, Alfred W. (1970), *ibid.* p. 67

<sup>63</sup> Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996), *ibid.* p. 24-31

<sup>64</sup> Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996), *ibid.* p. 27-29

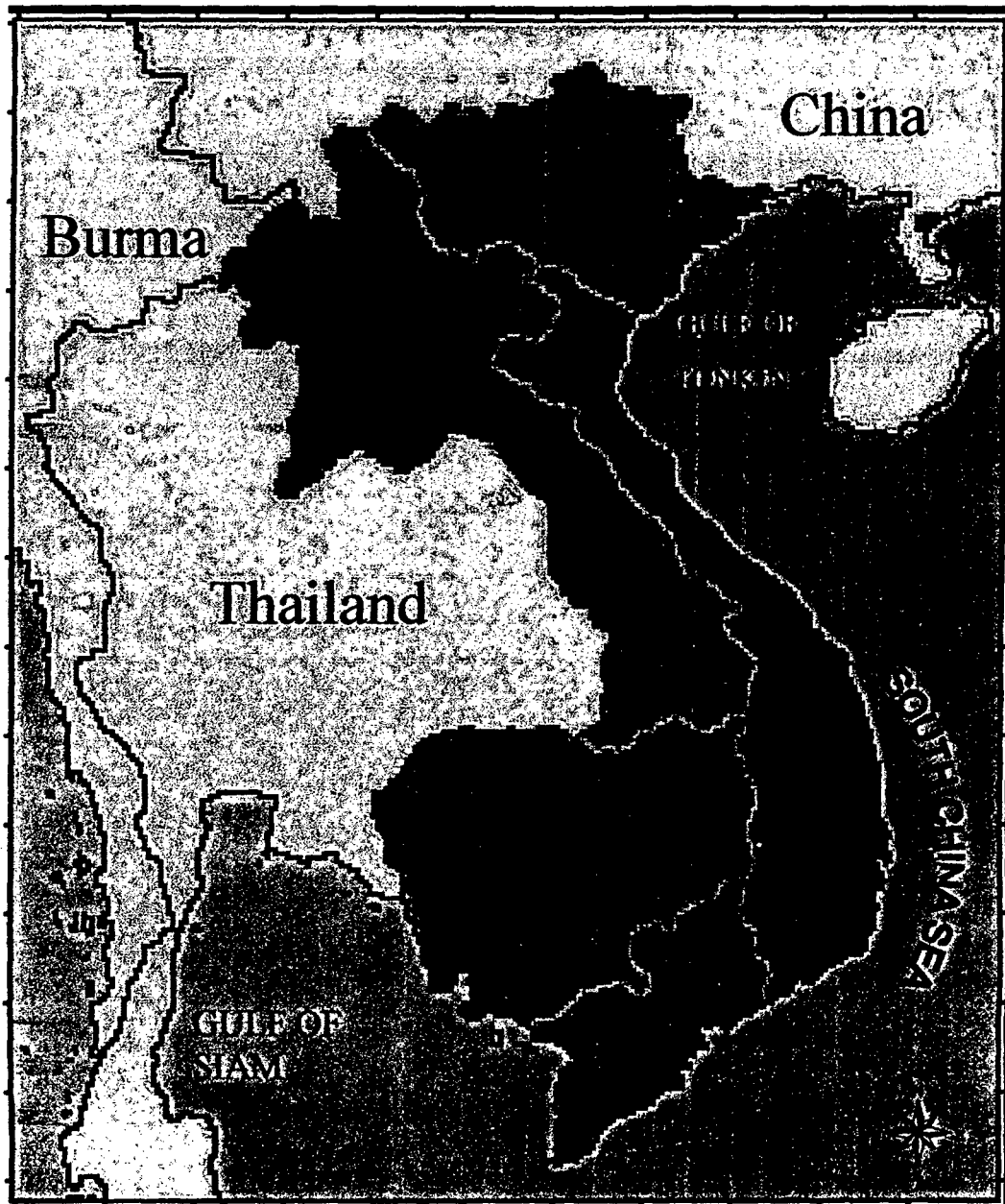
In the Laotian home a word of anger, a dispute is unknown: the gravest misfortunes are accepted in a spirit of quiet resignation, the outcome equally of the attractive disposition and the religious beliefs of the people. It is at Luang Prabang, the residence of the king and the French administrator, that Laotian life may be seen under the most favorable conditions. Situated in the midst of lofty mountains clad with primeval forests, life in this town is one endless succession of promenades, choral entertainments in the cool of the evening, dances, theatres, regattas, etc. The old capital, Vien-tien, destroyed by the Siamese in 1828,<sup>65</sup> is already overgrown with jungle. Apart from its historical associations it contains today nothing to attract the visitor saves the remains of the palace and a pagoda, which for beauty of architecture and originality of ornamentation are still unrivalled in Laos. For the Catholic Vien-tien possesses a further interest as the scene of the first attempt to preach Christianity in the then-extensive Kingdom of Laos. The Portuguese Jesuit, Giovanni Maria Leria, preached the Gospel here for five years, until, in consequence of the violent opposition of the bonzes, he was compelled to leave in December 1647.

In Laos as in Annam, Buddhism, though its tenets have somewhat tinged popular beliefs, can no longer be regarded as the popular religion. Its philosophy, scarcely understood by a few bonzes and educated laity, is a mystery to the mass of the population. The Laotian of the present day is a nature-worshipper and a fatalist. *Pha ya gnom phi ban*, the great chief of the *Phi-ba* (or genii), watches over all beings on this earth, and each day sends his emissaries to distribute illness and health to men in accordance with the decrees fixed from all eternity. With a curious disregard for consistency in his fatalism, the Laotian believes that these *phis*, the immediate cause of all good and evil, are accessible to prayer. The supposed intervention of these occult powers is sufficient explanation for every natural phenomenon. If a native falls ill and ordinary medicines fail, the *phis* are the cause and the sorcerer alone can save the invalid. The sorcerer consulted proceeds, after certain proscribed prayers, to half-bury an egg in a bowl of rice. Some additional grains are then let fall on the egg, and the even or odd number remaining thereon is conclusive proof of the presence or otherwise of the *phi* in the invalid's body. If present, the *phi* is questioned in the same manner as to his wishes. According to Laotian belief, spirits are everywhere, and one

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<sup>65</sup> Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996). *ibid.* p. 7-8





Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 8: Indochina in 1907

must exercise the greatest care to preserve health and life. The Nguoc lies in wait for boatmen who fail to discharge their debt of prayers and offerings; the *Phi-pet* and the *Phi-loc* infest the villages; the *Phi-huen* can be prevented from entering the house and insinuating themselves into the bodies of the owners only by daily offerings of water and rice placed on the little altars built for the purpose near the huts. In Laos there are certain men the *Phi-pop* who are supposed to communicate with the demons and have marvelous powers of making themselves invisible, introducing evil genii into the bodies of men to consume their vitals, etc. Once suspected of belonging to this class, a native is no longer tolerated in the village, but is banished to one of the numerous hamlets especially reserved for the *Phi-pop* and avoided by all travellers. Although amulets are common in Laos. There are seldom worn on the person. The retailing of the teeth of a boar, horns of a stag, and religious verses as amulets, is an important prerequisite of the bonzes.

### **Boundaries of French Indochina**

French colonialism divided Vietnam into three parts: Cochin china (the southern most), Annam (the central region), and Tonkin (the north)<sup>66</sup> and sixty provinces.<sup>67</sup> The French's motive behind it was to discourage the Vietnamese from unifying their potential resources against the French.<sup>68</sup> (Fig. 8)

Cochin china was a formal colony, which was ruled by French laws. It was the principal base of French capitalism in Vietnam. Annam and Tonkin were known as 'protectorates', separated from each other in 1898.<sup>69</sup> Even before the final pacification of Tonkin, France was seeking to expand its territories of Indochinese Empire. The protectorate over Cambodia gave the French access to the Mekong River and raised hopes for the trade route into southern China'.<sup>70</sup> The Mekong expedition of 1866-67 proved this to be impossible, but excited ambitions to bring the Mekong basin, and perhaps even Siam itself, under French jurisdiction. 'Four years after

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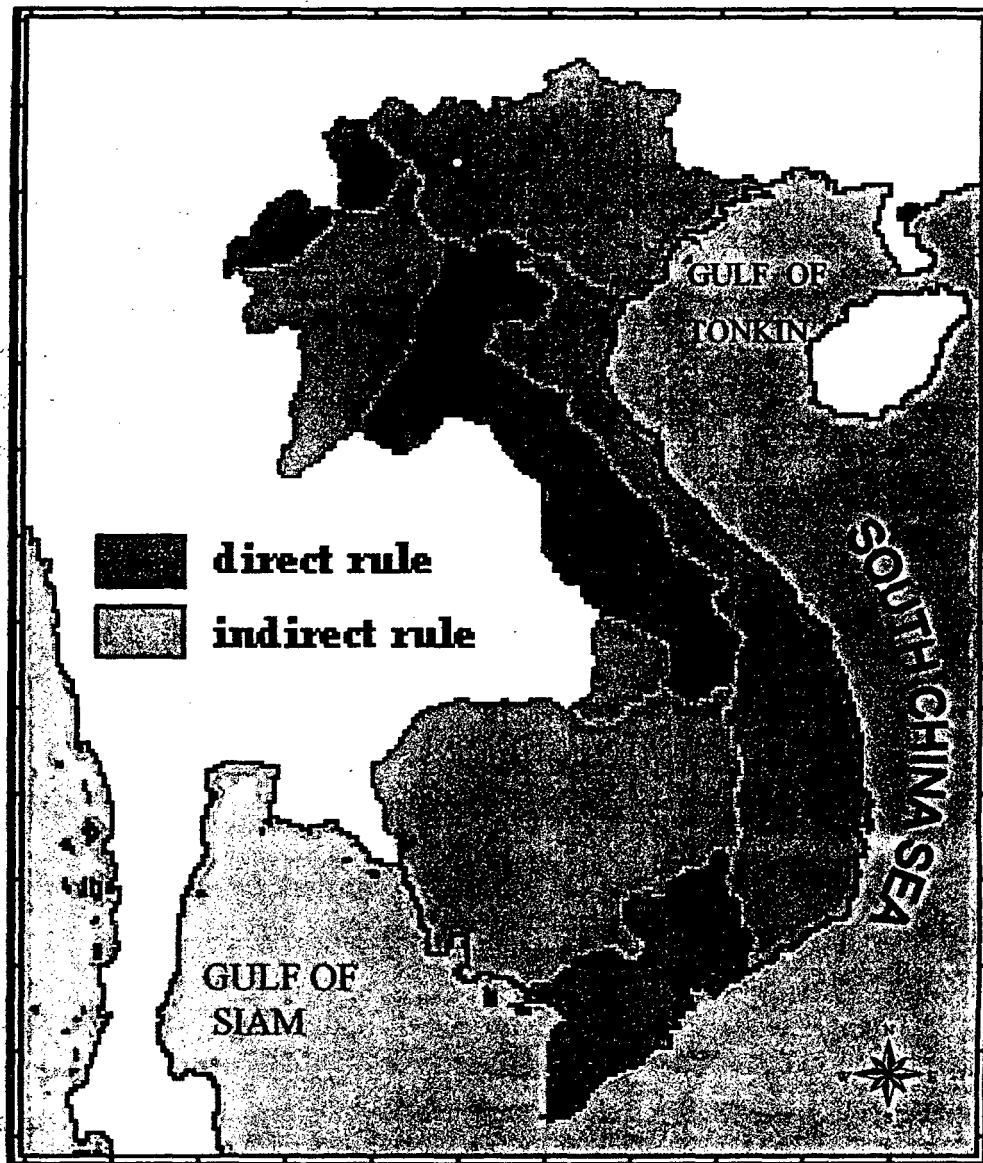
<sup>66</sup> Owen, Norman G. ed, (2005). *ibid.* p. 335

<sup>67</sup> Godement, Francois (1997). *The New Asian Renaissance: From Colonialism to the Post Cold War*, London: Routledge. p. 31

<sup>68</sup> McAlister Jr, John T. (1969). *ibid.* p. 40

<sup>69</sup> Owen, Norman G. ed, (2005). *ibid.* p. 335

<sup>70</sup> Mackerras. Collin. ed. (1995). *ibid.* p. 257



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 9: Indochina in 1930

having occupied Cochin china and Cambodia, the French government founded a mission for the exploration of the Mekong (with its head, a naval officer, Doudart de Lagree, charged with conducting studies of the natural resources of Laos. of its internal situation and the ways of linking on the commercial plane, the upper basin of the Mekong to Cambodia and southern Vietnam. Arriving in Luang Prabang in April 1867, the mission explored not only the Mekong basin, but also those of the Sekong and Sebanghien rivers and other regions such as Bolovens plateau, Attopeu, Saravane.<sup>71</sup> Resultantly after the French occupation, Siam was forced to return the territories to Cambodia which was occupied by him, more especially the northern and western provinces of Sisophon, Battambang, Siem Reap, Kah Kong and Mlou Prey. The French Arbitrarily incorporated to the Bassac (lower Laos), a part of the newly restored Tonle Rpou province; Stung Treng province underwent several modifications. Contrary to all ethnic and geographical logics, France administratively united Stung Treng province restored in 1883, to Cochin china and then to lower Laos, and finally returned it to the kingdom of Cambodia on 6 December 1904. In the meantime Darlac had been separated from Stung Treng and attributed to Annam on 22 November 1904. On 12 April 1932, the French president ratified the treaty 'restoring' to Annamese territory Darlac province, which belonged to the Cambodia'.<sup>72</sup> (Fig. 9) However, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Siam was itself extending its control over the Lao principalities of the Mekong basin and the Tai highlands covering what is now the border regions between the northeastern Laos and northwestern Vietnam. In the power struggle, France held the upper hand. 'In October 1887, a joint Franco-Siamese commission was formed to settle the border problems of between Siam and the areas under French control'.<sup>73</sup> A first concern for the French was to define the territorial limits of their new possessions. There were various ways in which it could be done, i.e., by defining the extent of actual Vietnamese settlement; by endorsing the administrative claims of the Vietnamese imperium; or by incorporating all tributary states. To establish the border with China was relatively straightforward. It did not take the French long to realize that the very ambiguity of the concept of frontiers of the Vietnamese imperium provided opportunities to extend

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<sup>71</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982). *Laos: An Outline of Ancient and Contemporary History*, Hanoi: Foreign Language Publishing House, p. 34-35

<sup>72</sup> Martin, Marie Alexandrine (1994). *Cambodia: A Shattered Society*, London: University of California Press, p. 33-34

<sup>73</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982). *ibid.*, p. 36



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 10: Indochina in 1946

French control, opportunities that were all the greater given the notion of even more fluid frontiers'.<sup>74</sup> In 1893, Siam was forced to cede all territories east of the Mekong to France, and to neutralize a strip of a territory of 25 kilometers wide the length of the west bank. And it was decided that the border agreements should be made on the spot bringing Thailand gradually to recognize the boundary as it was there.<sup>75</sup> When France was given the territories, Laos became the French protectorate, though all of the territories except the small kingdom of Luang Prabang were under direct rule by France. For the French, the eastern half of the Mekong River basin defined Laos, and boundaries were carefully drawn to confirm with the exact limits of the Mekong watershed. When the colonial government demarcated Laos' common borders with Burma, China and Vietnam, the survey teams simply determined the limits of the Mekong's watershed and adopted these as the borders of Laos.<sup>76</sup> In 1904 Siam ceded some territory west of the Mekong to Laos. Latterly, under Japanese mediation this territory was receded to Thailand in 1941. Thailand returned this territory to Laos with great reluctance in 1947, just because French threatened to veto Thailand's application for membership in the United Nations unless the Thai government recognized the nullity of transfer agreement of 1941.<sup>77</sup> (Fig. 10)

'Two events occurred in 1885 which set the scene for the contest that lay ahead over where the frontier should lie between French Indochina and Siam. The treaty between France and China which formally acknowledged the French protectorate over Tonkin and Annam effectively put an end to almost a millennium of tributary relations between China and Vietnam and left France free to press whatever Vietnamese claims she might consider it to be in her interests to pursue. In Siam, it took king Chulalongkorn the best part of two decades to complete the transfer of power from the ministers of his father's generation to his own appointees: many of them were his own brothers'.<sup>78</sup> The contest was fought on the terms of French because they were the superior military power. 'Siam's claims were quieted by the Treaty of Chantabun, which transferred all Siamese rights east of the Mekong to the France'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996). *ibid.* p. 9-10

<sup>75</sup> Mishra, Patil Praban (1999). *ibid.* p. 7

<sup>76</sup> McCoy, Alfred W. (1970). *ibid.* p. 75

<sup>77</sup> Vandenbosch, Amry and Butwell, Richard (1966). *ibid.* p. 201

<sup>78</sup> Cited in Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996). *ibid.* p. 10

<sup>79</sup> Christian, John L. (1941). "Anglo-French Rivalry in Southeast Asia: Its Historical Geography and Diplomatic Change", *Geographical Review*. Vol. 31, no. 2. p. 280



Source: <http://www.indochinamaps/maps>

Figure 11: Indochina in 1950

‘From this point on, for both sides, it became a race against time. The French were intent on extending their territory to the west; the Siamese desperate to maintain their hold on as much of their empire as possible. At the centre of this struggle were the Loa territories: no longer the powerful mandal of the seventeenth century, but a congeries of larger and smaller meuang all paying tribute to neighbouring powers’.<sup>80</sup> Subsequent treaties culminating in 1907, France gained control of the provinces of western Cambodia and two territories west of the Mekong in Laos in exchange for the recognition of Siamese suzerainty over the rest of west bank.<sup>81</sup> The organization of French Indochina in its final form was the work of Governor-general Paul Doumer (1897-1902). ‘Thus, by 1907, French Indochina had achieved its final form, consisting of five separate entities grouped into a single union; the French colony of Cochinchina (whose French citizens elected deputies to the French parliament), and the protectorates of Annam (where the Vietnamese emperor still nominally ruled from Hue), Tonkin (directly administered by French officials, Cambodia (where the monarchy was still in practice) and Laos (the northern part constituting the kingdom of Luang Prabang and the southern French administered part).’<sup>82</sup> ‘The north and center were colonies. A single French overlord, the governor-general of French Indochina dominated all of the three conquered parts of Vietnam, along with the Cambodia and Laos, from his palace which lie at Hanoi.’<sup>83</sup> (Fig. 11)

‘The French took their defence of Vietnamese interests seriously because it was in their own interests and because British interests in Siam forced them to adopt a legalistic approach in spite of the overtly military approach, which they had adopted in the case of Tonkin instructions were given to search the Vietnamese archives for any possible evidence to serve as a basis for French claims to the territories of west of Annam Cordillera.’<sup>84</sup> Negotiations were made for recognizing a ‘Vietnamese government’ within the French Union, although the boundaries of its jurisdiction were unclear.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gunn, Geoffrey C. (1990). *Rebellion in Laos: Peasant and Politics in a colonial Backwater*. Boulder: Westview. p. 22

<sup>81</sup> Mackerras. Collin. ed. (1995), *ibid.* p. 257

<sup>82</sup> Mackerras. Collin. ed. (1995), *ibid.* p. 257-58

<sup>83</sup> Owen, Norman G. ed. (2005). *ibid.* p. 335

<sup>84</sup> Stuart-Fox, Martin (1996). *ibid.* p. 10-11

<sup>85</sup> Godement. Francois (1997), *ibid.* p. 97



The French adopted the policy of divide and rule here also. 'With the French, however, the three 'pays' or 'countries' appeared as manifestations of the well-worn technique of divide and rule'.<sup>86</sup> And other important bases for disunity were created through separate French policies and programs for each administrative region. The sharpest distinctions were between Cochinchina and other two 'pays'.<sup>87</sup>

R.S. Milne (1993),<sup>88</sup> on the general pattern of the boundaries of Indochina was; (1) At the time of independence the new states of Indochina inherited all the administrative territories of French colony; (2) where adjacent territories were divided, this usually reflected status/administrative divisions already existing under the colonial power; and (3) subsequent additions to independents consisted of nearby territories belonging to the same colonial power.

### **The Geneva Conference on Indochina**

'Indochina occupies a crossroads location where the Chinese and Indian cultural traditions have clasped head on giving impetus to a new Indo-Chinese culture. As the political unit, it was the result of French colonialism. The cultural and political separation within this unit has remained so strong that the imposed French unification, which was in existence for almost hundred years, has fallen apart into separate and independent political units. This separation took place in 1954, as a result of the Geneva Agreements. At the time Indochina was divided into four countries namely, Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The two Vietnams were united into one country in the year 1976.'<sup>89</sup>

The defeat of the French forces at Dien Bien Phu on May 7, 1954 by the People's Army of Vietnam was the main cause, which compelled the French to enter into negotiations to end the war.

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<sup>86</sup> Van Chi, Hoang (1964). *From Colonialism to Communism: A Case history of North Vietnam*. New York and London: Praeger. p. 10-12

<sup>87</sup> McAlister, Jr. John T. (1969). *ibid.* p. 41

<sup>88</sup> Milne, R.S. (1993). "South East Asia" in Jackson, Robert H. and Jamil, Alan eds. *States in a Changing World: A Contemporary Analysis*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 178-79

<sup>89</sup> Dutt, Ashok ed. (1985). *Southeast Asia: Realm of Contrasts*. Boulder: Westview Press. p. 165

‘The Geneva Conference on Indochina started on May 8, 1954, between severe strains and disunity in the western camp, just after it had received the shattering news of the Dien Bien Phu debacle.’<sup>90</sup> ‘Vietnam seeks the presence of the delegates at the conference and demanded that zones for regroupment of resistance troops be established in these countries: two in Laos: one in Northern Laos, at the Chinese border and the other one along Central and Southern Laos; and two in Kampuchea: one in the east and northeast and another at the southwest of Mekong. Vietnam also demanded the holding of free general elections in both these countries, within duration of six months, with the aim of reunifying them. But China, betraying the interests of three Indochinese countries, convinced with the French with the aim of ‘safeguarding its southern borders and placing the northern part of the Indochinese peninsula in its orbit, and abandoning the southern part to the French.’<sup>91</sup>

The Geneva Conference took place in two separate sets of negotiations from May 8, to June 23, 1954 and from June 23, to July 1954. ‘During the second week of June, the Conference was getting deadlocked on many intricate issues. A wave of despondency hung over the conference hall. At this stage Premier Laniel tendered the resignation of the French Government to make way for the flamboyant Mendes-France who assumed office on June 18. The new Premier announced immediately that he would resign if he failed to reach a settlement at Geneva by July 20.’<sup>92</sup> After the announcement, the settlement was aimed to be solved by the deadline in any case. ‘As the guillotine date approached there was a great deal of hectic activities: hurry and scurry, hopes, fear and expectations. Somehow, a general consensus was achieved by the deadline. Ceasefire agreements on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were signed on July 20. Two sets of declarations were made and it was understood that a Final Declaration would be signed on the following day, i.e. on July 21. This day was set for the final declaration. Suddenly news was spread that the US delegate would not sign the document. As soon as the news got confirmed, all other participants also made it clear that too would not sign the Final Declaration. To meet this serious situation a

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<sup>90</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988). *Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos: Bound in Comradeship, Panoramic Study of the Indochinese people from Ancient to Modern Times*, New Delhi: Patriot Publishers. p. 205

<sup>91</sup> Foreign Language Publishing House (1982). *Laos: An Outline of Ancient and Contemporary History*, Hanoi: Foreign Language Publishing House. p. 80

<sup>92</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988). *ibid.* p. 210

certain method was adopted in order to make this important an official one. The unsigned Declaration embodied the signed aspects of the Conference. It expressed satisfaction over the signing of the three-ceasefire agreements and noted the unilateral declarations made by France, Laos and Cambodia. A unilateral declaration was also made on behalf of the USA, which became an important part of the Geneva accords. The verbatim record of the proceedings of July 21, therefore became the official basis of the Final Declaration.<sup>93</sup>

### **Salient Features of the Final Declaration**

- (1) The Agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam approved a 'provisional demarcation line' along the 17<sup>th</sup> latitude, which, coincidentally was similar to the unofficial Tring-Nguyen partition line of the seventeenth century. A Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) of 10 km on both of the sides was to be set up and ceasefire was to take effect from July 27, August 1 and August 11, 1954 respectively. The forces of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and France were to be withdrawn into their respective zones in three installments from 80 to 300 days. The territory north of the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel was to be known as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) and south of it was to be the Republic of Vietnam (RVN). It was a provisional agreement till national election was held in July 1956 for the unification of the country.
- (2) A Joint Commission with the joint groups of Franco-Vietnamese and Viet-Minh representatives for implementing the ceasefire provisions was set up by the convention i.e. International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC).
- (3) The Agreements banned the two Vietnams, Laos and Cambodia 'of any reinforcements in the form of all types of arms, ammunitions and other war material, any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel as aircraft, naval craft, pieces of ordinance, jet engines and armoured vehicles'

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<sup>93</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.*, p. 211-212

except some stipulated points of entry but it should be with the approval of ICSC.

- (4) The accords strictly prohibited the concerned governments of North and South Vietnams, Laos and Cambodia, joining any military bloc, or aligning them to it and establishing any military bases in their territories.
- (5) In the case of Laos and Cambodia, the similar ICSC and Joint Commissions were to be set up.
- (6) The Conference takes note of the declaration French government to the effect that for the settlement of all problems connected with the establishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- (7) In their relations with Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity and the territorial integrity of the Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs.

The Republic of Vietnam (RVN) i.e. was not dealt directly in the Geneva talks. The France represented it though a powerful South Vietnamese delegation counseled the French. Behind the scenes American support stiffened the attitude of the South Vietnamese representatives who went on disagreeing with most of the clauses of the Agreement, and later on the RVN government challenged the accord with particular dislike of the provisions relating to the proposed nationwide election.<sup>94</sup>

As a whole, the Geneva Agreements brought to an end a long drawn out war and ensured peace to the people of Indochina.

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<sup>94</sup> Chakrabarty, H.R. (1988), *ibid.* p. 214

***CHAPTER V***

## CHAPTER-V

### INDOCHINESE BOUNDARY DISPUTES: A COLONIAL LEGACY

“A survey of world boundaries today confirms that the vast majorities are uncontested and mostly have prime economic and social functions, few are controversial and on even fewer is there direct military confrontation or is active revisionism being canvassed.”<sup>1</sup> “The relations between modern states reach their most critical stage in the form of problems relating to territory. Boundary disputes, conflicting claims to newly discovered lands, and invasions by expanding nations into the territory of their weaker neighbours have been conspicuous among the causes of war.”<sup>2</sup> “The extent of the authority of these various states was not always defined; the consequences was an almost permanent condition of dynastic competition and conflicting claims of sovereignty.”<sup>3</sup> “The development of Western colonialism from the sixteenth to the mid-twentieth century coincides with the rise and fall of the nation-state.”<sup>4</sup> There are problems always relating to the actual meaning of the international boundaries.

“It appears to be a truism that wars almost begin at borders. Claims over territory and the locational status of boundary may not be solved peacefully and may involve the use of force. Some of these instances concern claims based on the factors identified, but many are the products of historical, cultural and economic factors. Even more are a mixture of several factors.”<sup>5</sup> The analysis of any boundary dispute should provide information on the following aspects. First, it is necessary to uncover the cause of the dispute. In most cases the cause will be found in the boundary’s history, which will reveal that the evolution of the boundary is complete. “The international boundary disputes, just referred to, as is well known, are but recent examples from a long

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<sup>1</sup> House, J.W. (1968), “A Local Perspective on Boundaries and Frontier Zone: Two examples from the European Community”, in Fisher, Charles A. ed, (1968), *Essays in Political Geography*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. p. 330

<sup>2</sup> Hill, N.L. (1976), *Claims to Territory in International Law and Relations*, New York: Greenwood Press. p. 3

<sup>3</sup> Christie, Clive J. (1996), *A modern History of Southeast Asia: decolonisation, national and separatism*, London: I.B.Tauras Publishers. p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Miyoshi, Masao (1993), “A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State,” *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 19, no. 4, p. 732

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, Ewan W. (1999), “Geopolitics: International Boundaries as Fighting Places”, in Gray, Colin S. and Sloan, Geoffery, *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy*, London and Oregon: Frank Cass. p. 134

category of similar misfortunes, embracing all historic time, and not infrequently including disastrous wars, as well as heated discussions and lengthy arbitrations. The study of the history of this group of international troubles should show what the germ of the disease is, and how similar disorders may be avoided in the future.”<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, it is important to identify the *trigger action*, which created a situation where one side judged it necessary to argue in favour of rectification of the boundary. Clearly, many of these disputes, which are rooted in history, have periods of quiescence and periods of sometimes-intense activity.

The third, important aspect, which concerns the aims of governments initiating boundary, disputes. In many cases the government will be seeking additional territory or relief from some unacceptable administrative irritation connected with the boundary. ‘The delimitation of an international boundary is the business of treaty makers who decide on trustworthy evidence the line of boundary limitation which will be acceptable to both the nations concerned, with all due regard to local conditions of topography and the will of the peoples who are thus to have a barrier placed between them.’<sup>7</sup> The *arguments* used by governments to justify the position adopted in any dispute are the important aspect to be considered. Arguments based on history and geography are common in the scholarly and official publications dealing with boundary disputes, but there is also recourse to issues to strategy, economics, and anthropology in some cases. Regardless of whether a dispute is settled quickly or allowed to drag on for many years, there will usually be some consequences. The *results* may be confined to the borderland if the dispute is settled quickly and the changes are minor. For example, the realignment of a boundary to take account of changes in the course of a river may mean that some farmers now own land on both sides of the boundary and travel documents to conduct their operations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Russell, Israel C. (1903), “Geography and International Boundaries”, *Bulletin of American Geographical Society*. Vol. 35, no. 2, p. 147

<sup>7</sup> Holdich, Thomas H. (1916), “Geographical Problems in Boundary Making,” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 47, no. 6, p. 422

<sup>8</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *Political Frontiers and Boundaries*, London: Allen & Unwin. P. 94

## **Types of Boundary Disputes**

The general term 'boundary dispute' includes four quite different types of disagreements between countries.

The first type of dispute may be described as a territorial boundary dispute and these results from some quality of the neighboring borderland, which makes it attractive to the country initiating the dispute. The second type of boundary dispute concerns the actual location of the boundary and usually involves a controversy over the interpretation of terms used in defining the boundary at the stage of allocation, delimitation or demarcation. This type may be called a *positional* boundary dispute. Both territorial and positional disputes can only be solved in favour of the claimant state by altering the position of the boundary; the two remaining types can be solved without altering the boundary's location. The third type arises over state functions applied at the boundary, and they may be described as *functional* boundary disputes. Such disputes might arise because states are unreasonably diligent in applying regulations or because they are negligent in enforcing rules. The last type of dispute concerns the use of some Transboundary resources such as a river or a coalfield. Disputes of this kind usually have as their aim the creation of some organization, which will govern use of the particular resource, and they may be called disputes over *resource development*.

### **Territorial boundary disputes**

The boundary drawn to separate linguistic groups probably did not coincide with the line separating religious factions; neither of these limits might have coincided with boundaries, which distinguished areas with particular economic interests, "the location of the new boundaries would be quite different from the currently existing ones and there would be hundreds of new political units."<sup>9</sup> The boundaries of former political units might have provided another set of unique lines, and unfortunately

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<sup>9</sup> Knight, D.B. (1983), "The Dilemma of Nations in a rigid State Structured World", in Kliot, N and Waterman, S. ed. *Pluralism and Political Geography: People, Territory and State*, London: Croom Helm. p. 95



## **Types of Boundary Disputes**

The general term 'boundary dispute' includes four quite different types of disagreements between countries.

The first type of dispute may be described as a territorial boundary dispute and these results from some quality of the neighboring borderland, which makes it attractive to the country initiating the dispute. The second type of boundary dispute concerns the actual location of the boundary and usually involves a controversy over the interpretation of terms used in defining the boundary at the stage of allocation, delimitation or demarcation. This type may be called a *positional* boundary dispute. Both territorial and positional disputes can only be solved in favour of the claimant state by altering the position of the boundary; the two remaining types can be solved without altering the boundary's location. The third type arises over state functions applied at the boundary, and they may be described as *functional* boundary disputes. Such disputes might arise because states are unreasonably diligent in applying regulations or because they are negligent in enforcing rules. The last type of dispute concerns the use of some Transboundary resources such as a river or a coalfield. Disputes of this kind usually have as their aim the creation of some organization, which will govern use of the particular resource, and they may be called disputes over *resource development*.

### **Territorial boundary disputes**

The boundary drawn to separate linguistic groups probably did not coincide with the line separating religious factions; neither of these limits might have coincided with boundaries, which distinguished areas with particular economic interests, "the location of the new boundaries would be quite different from the currently existing ones and there would be hundreds of new political units."<sup>9</sup> The boundaries of former political units might have provided another set of unique lines, and unfortunately

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<sup>9</sup> Knight, D.B. (1983), "The Dilemma of Nations in a rigid State Structured World", in Kliot, N and Waterman, S. ed. *Pluralism and Political Geography: People, Territory and State*, London: Croom Helm. p. 95

these cultural divides could have followed a different alignment to boundaries which separated the physical regions of borderland based on morphology, drainage, and vegetation. The boundary, which was finally selected after a process of political negotiations, might have corresponded with none of the lines mentioned or with different sections of the various lines. In the latter case the boundary would lack any uniform basis. It will therefore always be possible for a government to make a territorial claim by emphasizing some pattern in the borderland, which was discounted during the boundary's construction.

It can therefore be expected that most boundaries were drawn as a compromise between the strategic, economic, and ethnic requirements of the two states and will therefore have some degree of unconformity with features in the borderland. In those cases where territorial boundary disputes develop, it is possible to identify three processes by which the boundary's unconformity might have arisen. Even "the wisest settlement of a territorial dispute may lead to friction if the description of the boundary in a treaty or award does not correspond to geographical realities. Words that seem simple and straight forward may prove stumbling-blocks when surveyors endeavor to demarcate the line upon the ground."<sup>10</sup>

### **The origin of territorial disputes**

First, the boundary might have been drawn without full knowledge of the distribution of people or topographical features. "These are the lines drawn by European powers around their colonial dependencies."<sup>11</sup> Many of the boundaries in Africa, Asia, and South America, some boundary decisions were based on inaccurate information. "The legacy of the superimposed boundaries in colonial Asia and Africa remains with us today as these regions, particularly Africa, has still not managed to find a means of bringing these alternatives patterns and conceptions of territorial behavior into harmony with each other."<sup>12</sup> "That postcolonial boundaries have their genesis in historically recent colonial conquests, and the balance of power politics of the nineteenth century, explains the enormous energy and intensity with which

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<sup>10</sup> Jones, Stephen B. (1943), "The Description of International Boundaries", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 33, no. 2, p. 99

nationalists, if these societies have sought to endow them with timeless sanctity and forms of geographic sacrality.”<sup>13</sup>

It was precisely because the colonial authorities were aware of the problems created by boundaries which divided tribes that they made considerable efforts to obtain reliable information. Unfortunately, the task was sometimes beyond them and in other cases overriding strategic interests caused them to disregard reliable information about tribal distributions. In other cases it proved impossible to reconcile the data regarding tribal distributions, which were acquired by both sides. “Conflicts whose origins stem from the multi-ethnic compositions of the state are the most difficult with which governments have to contend, and their severity can be great enough to threaten the territorial integrity of the state.”<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, at the conclusion of a war, new boundaries were forced on the defeated country, which did not correspond with established patterns. “The boundaries of the new nation-states were dictated to coincide with the boundaries of the erstwhile colonial administrative units.”<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, it is possible for new distributions of populations to develop after the boundary is drawn and to give rise to territorial claims. This is especially possible following the establishment of an antecedent boundary.<sup>16</sup>

The two most common circumstances, which have promoted the occurrence of boundary disputes, are the conclusion of wars and decolonisation. At the conclusion of the war it often happens that there is a change in the relative strengths of states, which allows territorial claims to be advanced by the country, which has been strengthened. “States have regarded control over certain land areas as critical to their

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<sup>11</sup> Pounds, Norman J.G. (1972), *Political Geography*, New York: McGraw Hill. p. 70.

<sup>12</sup> Lemon, A (2001), “South Africa’s internal Boundaries: The Spatial Engineering of Land and Power in the Twentieth Century”, in Schofield, Clive H. et al, *The Razor’s Edge: International Boundaries and Political Geography*, London: Kluwer Law Academic. p. 305

<sup>13</sup> Krishna, Shankaran, “Boundaries In Question”, in Agnew, John et al (2003), *A Companion to Political Geography*, Oxford: Blackwell. p. 302

<sup>14</sup> Amral, Ilidio do (1994), “New Reflections on the Theme of International Boundaries”, in Schofield, Clive H. eds, (1994), *Global Boundaries: World Boundaries*, Vol. 1, London: Routledge. p. 17

<sup>15</sup> Krishna, Shankaran, (2003), *ibid*, p. 304

<sup>16</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 100

national security. Control a piece of territory may be essential to inhibit attacks by enemies.”<sup>17</sup>

Civil wars may promote territorial disputes in two ways. First, when a country is involved in a civil war it is unlikely to engage in territorial claims, which might invite attack. However, once that civil war is concluded the country's strength renewed it may begin actively to prosecute claims to external territory.

‘As the Cambodian Revolution was completed in 1975, it began to press claims against Thailand, in the same fashion the emergence of a communist government in Laos in may 1975, which mark the end of internal strife, was quickly followed by militant policies towards the boundary with Thailand along the Mekong River. These involved artillery duels and the sinking of a Thai patrol vessel. Secondly, when a country is engaged in a civil war its capacity to resist external aggression is reduced and territorial claims may be pressed against The Somali government obviously decided that the serious fighting in Eritrea Province of Ethiopia in June 1975 provided an excellent opportunity to try to settle the Somali claim to the Haud and Ogaden by force. Libya annexed the northern areas of Chad in 1975 when that government was beset by internal revolt.’<sup>18</sup>

The transfer of power to indigenous governments during the process of Decolonisation has caused a number of territorial disputes to flare. The new governments have often undertaken a much more diligent surveillance of their boundaries than the colonial administrations. In some cases this has led to a recognition that the boundary does not coincide with tribal distributions or prominent physical features, and boundary issues which were debated and settled by the colonial powers have been revived by the new authorities Lesotho's claim to much of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, Uganda's claim to western Kenya, and Tanzania's claim to part of Lake Tanganyika are typical of such territorial disputes. (Decolonisation is sometimes the signal for neighbouring states to take advantage of the withdrawal of colonial armies). In November 1971, when Britain withdrew from

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<sup>17</sup> Diehl, Paul F. and Goertz, Gary (1988), “Territorial Changes and Militarized Conflict,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 32, no. 1, p.104

<sup>18</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 101

the Persian Gulf, Iran seized three islands in the Strait of Hormuz that had been controlled by Britain on behalf of the Trucial States. It was noted earlier that Afghanistan's claims to Pushtunistan coincided with Britain's withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent and with fighting between religious groups in Pakistan. In February 1976, when Spain withdrew its forces from Spanish Sahara, the territory was annexed by Morocco and Mauritania.

In some cases it is the action of one state that induces another to make a territorial claim. In 1915 and again in 1927 Guatemala made grants of land to the American Fruit Company in the area between the Matagua River and the Meredon Mountains. This immediately prompted Honduras to raise claims, which had been dormant for a long time. In a similar fashion, the granting to the United States of a 99-year lease on the Great and Little Corn. Islands by Nicaragua encouraged Colombia to launch a claim that the islands were formerly part of the Province of Veragua and therefore properly part of Colombia under the principle of *uti possidetis*.<sup>19</sup>

#### **State's aims in territorial disputes**

When the aims of the state initiating the dispute are considered they can be divided into two classes. First there are those claims when the state genuinely wants the territory claimed and believes that it has some chance of obtaining it. In such cases the aim involves strengthening the state by the accretion of territory. The increased strength may come from resources found in the area, from the population which lives there, from the improved access the claimed territory gives to the sea or to majorities of communication, or because a better strategic situation is created.<sup>20</sup>

The second class of aims applies to those claims, which are apparently made without any hope of successful outcome. "It has been not uncommon for states that cast envious eyes on the lands of their neighbors to appeal to a higher law in justification

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<sup>19</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 102

<sup>20</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 102

of their claims.”<sup>21</sup> In such cases it appears that the dispute is initiated to serve some domestic or international policy. For example, it is generally considered that the Philippines claimed northern Sabah at the time the Federation of Malaysia was being formed in an effort to postpone or prevent the emergence of that political association. The claim was based on the most flimsy ground and was apparently abandoned in June 1977. Some countries have brought forward territorial claims to distract attention from internal difficulties.

Sometimes countries will encourage secessionist movements in neighbouring countries rather than claim territory for themselves. Of course if the secession, an opportunity for diplomatic and commercial influence and the state from which the territory is detached has been weakened. For e.g., India’s encouragement of secession in Pakistan. India was convinced that Bangladesh would be a better neighbour than East Pakistan and that Pakistan would be made weaker by the loss of its eastern territory.<sup>22</sup>

### **Legal bases of territorial claims**

When the arguments in favour of any territorial claim are considered it is useful to follow the division suggested by Hill (1976)<sup>23</sup>. He distinguishes legal arguments relating to a statement that the territory should belong to the claimant state from all other arguments designed to show that it would be more appropriate if the territory were ceded to the claimant state but where there is no claim that the territory is illegally held. “The interaction among claimants to various bounded spaces locally, nationally and internationally create much of what we know as politics political conflict over boundaries is not unusual because boundaries are a power-laden phenomenon that define entire social groupings and determine such human factors as citizenship, nationhood, and the kind of resources that are available to a country for development.”<sup>24</sup> Occupation of territory is one of the soundest bases on which to

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<sup>21</sup> Pounds, Norman J.G. (1951), “The Origin of the Idea of Natural Frontiers in France”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 41, no. 2, p. 146

<sup>22</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 102-103

<sup>23</sup> Hill, N.L. (1976), *ibid*, p. 26

<sup>24</sup> Griggs, Richard A. (2000), “Boundaries, Borders and Peace-Building in Southern Africa: The Spatial

mount legal claims. Such claims were disputing territory in Africa, Asia, and North America. It was generally considered that a statement of intention to occupy territory must be supported by a physical presence in the area. "In some situations there are the de facto frontiers between states with conflicting claims."<sup>25</sup>

"In cases where a colonial power determined their boundaries prior to independence, there is a particular urgency to the full attainment of border claims."<sup>26</sup> "They are mainly remains from the colonial era, either because there were no frontiers at all where new states exist now, or because some existing or new frontiers are unacceptable to the new states."<sup>27</sup> Claims were also made to territory during the last century on the grounds of contiguity and territorial propinquity. Territory and in particular border territory, can still play an important functional and symbolic role in international relations. In the political- military sphere, standing firm on border claims can be critical in maintaining or increasing one's influence<sup>28</sup> or reputation in the eyes of both people within a nation and leaders of other countries.<sup>29</sup> Such arguments maintain that the closest authority should exercise sovereignty over adjacent unclaimed land. "The perceived importance of justifying the pursuit of a territorial claim is suggested by the efforts to which states go to get across their side of the story."<sup>30</sup>

Sometimes there are claims because an area of special value is disputed. One amongst these is the case of Cambodia and Thailand who contested an area where a temple is located. In 1962, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) favoured Cambodia's claim, which was accepted by Thailand.<sup>31</sup> The continue rivalries among the Indochinese nations gave birth to some boundary disputes. One was the historical claim of Laos to

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- Implications of the 'African Renaissance', *IBRU, Boundary and Territory Bulletin*. Vol. 3, no. 2. p.2
- <sup>25</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1972), *Political Geography*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. p. 56
- <sup>26</sup> Mandel, Robert (1980), "Roots of the Modern Interstate Border Dispute," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 24, no. 3, p. 429
- <sup>27</sup> Levi, Werner (1973), "Third World States: Objects of Colonialism or Neglect?" *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, no. 2, p. 240
- <sup>28</sup> Mandel, Robert (1980), *ibid*, p. 429
- <sup>29</sup> Snyder, G.H. and Diesing, P. (1977), *Conflict Among Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. p. 64
- <sup>30</sup> Murphy, Alexander B. (1990), "Historical Justifications for Territorial Claims", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 80, no. 4, p. 534
- <sup>31</sup> Milne, R.S. (1993), "South East Asia" in Jackson, Robert H. and Jamil, Alan eds, *States in a Changing World: A Contemporary Analysis*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 180

the areas of the northeast Thailand, which consequently led them to border clashes in 1984 and 1987-88.

According to Hill (1976),<sup>32</sup> such claims have no strength in international law, and in modern times, when the whole land of the earth has been politically appropriated, it is difficult to see such arrangements being entertained.

According to some authorities on international law, it is recognized that legal claims to fragments of territory could be based on symbolic acts of possession. Such a concept is particularly important in supporting claims to islands in the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea. For example, there is a current dispute between China and Vietnam over ownership of Paracel islands, which China occupied with a military force in January 1974. According to Vietnamese sources, the Emperor Gia Long had made a symbolic act of acquisition in 1816.<sup>33</sup>

In 1930 the crew of the French vessel *La Malicieuse* erected 'sovereignty columns' on some of the Paracel islands. Eight years later further monuments were erected recording French authority and the date 1816, which was the first recorded symbolic act of possession by Vietnam. It is of course entirely possible that the Chinese authorities can produce earlier evidence to support its claim to these islands. "Although many of the claims based on historical arguments are surely facades for strategies motivated by political and economic considerations, can be credibly sustained without actions that are consistent with claim."<sup>34</sup>

Conquest is another means by which legal title to territory is acquired. As Hill (1976)<sup>35</sup> notes, this involves actual possession based on force, an announcement of the intention to hold the territory, and an ability to make good that declaration. This is usually a unilateral action in which no treaty is involved. For example, on 17 December 1961 Indian troops invaded the Portuguese colonies of Goa, Daman, and

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<sup>32</sup> Hill, N.L. (1976), *ibid*, p. 153

<sup>33</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 105

<sup>34</sup> Schachter, Oscar (1984), "The Right of States to use Armed Force", *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 82, no.5, p. 1623

<sup>35</sup> Hill, N.L. (1976), *ibid*, p. 161



Diu, and these territories were formally incorporated into the Indian state on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1962.

The last legal claim mentioned by Hill (1976), is based on prescription, which is defined in the following terms:

“...the acquisition of sovereignty over territory through continuous and undisturbed exercise of sovereignty over it during such a period as is necessary to create under the influence of historical development the general conviction that the present condition of things is in conformity with international order.”<sup>36</sup>

India uses arguments based on prescription as part of its case against China in the disputed areas of the Himalayas. India maintains that British authority was exercised for a long, continuous period without Chinese objection.

Territorial disputes based solely on legal arguments that the territory ought to belong to the claimant state are comparatively rare. It is usual for the legal arguments to be underpinned by other assertions founded in history, geography, strategy, and economics.

Strategic arguments, in favour of the transfer of territory usually have one of two aims. In some cases they are designed to deprive a country with a history of aggressive policies of territory from which attacks can be easily launched. In other instances the arguments support territory being given to a country, which has a history of being attacked so that its security is increased by the territorial buffer.

‘Located at the southern end of the Indochinese peninsula and opening out at the Gulf of Thailand, Cambodia has common boundaries with Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. The mutual relationship among these nations sustained belligerent relationships. At a moment in 1961, with Thailand and Vietnam engaged in an open conflict, and troop clashes also on the border.’<sup>37</sup> Later in March 1970, Cambodia had stated its willingness to abandon all of her claims against its neighbours in exchange for

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<sup>36</sup> Hill, N.L. (1976), *ibid*, p. 156

<sup>37</sup> Leifer, Michael (1962), “Cambodia and Her Neighbours”, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 34, no. 4. p. 361

unilateral declarations expressing recognition of Cambodia within its contemporary borders.

### **Consequences of the territorial disputes**

When the results of territorial boundary disputes are considered it is useful to classify them into two groups. First, there will be the consequences, which flow from the dispute being initiated. Secondly, there will be results, which follow any transfer of territory. Claims to the territory of a neighbour will normally cause deterioration in relations between the two countries concerned, and this may be reflected in a reduced level of commercial contact across the disputed boundary. "Conflicting legal claims over territory would seem of obvious importance as a predictor of war between states."<sup>38</sup> Within the claimed area the authorities in control probably seek ways to increase their defences. Such measures might include the removal of people who might sympathize with the proposed transfer, the construction of new strategic roads and airfields; the improvement in the services provided in the region, to win support from the local people. "People of the same tribe, political grouping and often the same family were separated by the arbitrary border."<sup>39</sup>

If the transfer of territory settles the matter, a wide range of consequences is possible. Some people in the transferred region who opposed the change may cross the new boundary to remain citizens of their original country; new patterns of administrative organization might be established; the orientation of the region's economy may be altered towards the country which has acquired the land; different forms of production might be encouraged by the new regulations which apply to the area and by access to a different market.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Kocs, Stephen A. (1995), "Territorial Disputes and Interstate War, 1945-1987," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 57, no. 1, p. 159

<sup>39</sup> McCoy, Alfred W. (1970), "French Colonialism in Laos, 1893-1945", in Nina S. Adams and Alfred McCoy, eds, *Laos: War and Revolution*, New York: Harper & Row. p. 75

<sup>40</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 115

## Positional boundary disputes

Although the basic cause of territorial boundary disputes is superimposition of the boundary on the cultural or physical landscape, positional boundary disputes arise because of incomplete boundary evolution. “Meanwhile, a surprisingly large number of land and maritime boundaries are in dispute. In the case of land boundaries the dispute is often to do with local detail over the position of the boundary to within a few metres. In others, the alignment of the boundary has yet to be agreed, and in a few cases vast tracts of land or seabed are in serious dispute.”<sup>41</sup> It is not the quality of the borderland but rather the defect of the boundary, which is crucial. Positional disputes will usually arise at one of two stages. Most of them will arise during the demarcation of the boundary because the commission will be faced with the problem of matching the boundary definition to the landscape. However, it is also possible that positional disputes will arise at a much later date if the demarcation commission makes an error. The location of the boundary is not always acceptable by both of the sides of boundary and they often used to fight among themselves over a location or a piece of the boundary. “Often fighting goes on over long periods of time due to disagreement over the location of the border between rival countries, turning border land areas into the battlefields.”<sup>42</sup>

According to the Indian Independence Act of 18 July 1947, the province of Sind was awarded to Pakistan. South of Sind there was a number of suzerainties, including Kutch, Sulgam, Tharad, Way, and Santalpur, which subsequently acceded to India. This meant that the boundary between Sind and Kutch became the international boundary between India and Pakistan. It soon became evident that India and Pakistan had differing views about the location of that boundary through the Great Rann of Kutch. It was agreed by both sides that the boundary extended from the mouth of Sir Creek in the west to the eastern terminus at the trijunction of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Hyderabad. Further they agreed that the western sector had been defined along the Sir

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<sup>41</sup> Blake, Gerald H. (1994) in Preface of Schofield, Clive H. eds, (1994), *Global Boundaries: World Boundaries*, Vol. 1. London: Routledge. p. xiii

<sup>42</sup> Martinez, Oscar J. (1994), “The Dynamics of Border Interaction”, in Schofield, Clive H. eds, (1994), *Global Boundaries: World Boundaries*, Vol. 1, London: Routledge. p. 10

Creek to latitude 23°58' north and then eastwards along that parallel for 22 miles to its intersection with meridian 68°41' east. The land section of this boundary segment was demarcated by sandstone pillars in 1923 and a further 66 pillars were then placed along the meridian of 68°41', apparently carrying the boundary northwards to parallel 24°17' north. This segment of the boundary was disputed between India and Pakistan. India maintained that it was a proper boundary and that it was only necessary to draw the boundary between the northern terminus of this extension and the eastern tri-junction. The Indian authorities pointed out that the northern edge of the Rann, which is a salt-impregnated alluvial tract, would be a convenient and direct boundary. The Pakistan government argued that the boundary drawn along meridian 68°41' east had no validity and that the boundary should connect the point where that meridian intersected the boundary drawn along the parallel 23°58' north. Pakistan recommended a boundary, which connected this point with the eastern tri-junction via the middle of the Rann. The two countries were unable to resolve the dispute and it was settled by arbitration in 1968, which defined a compromise line between the two extreme claims.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, mention must be made of a particular kind of positional boundary dispute, which arises because the feature with which the boundary was made coincident changes position. The most common case concerns rivers. Rivers shift their course within their flood plain, sometimes imperceptibly as the meanders widen and proceed downstream and sometimes dramatically when the neck of a wide meander is cut through.

The French and Thai authorities tried to avoid similar problems along the Mekong River between Laos and Thailand by a treaty in 1926. The treaty specified that where there was only a single channel the boundary would follow the Thalweg and where there was more than one channel, due to the presence of islands, the boundary would follow the channel closest to the Thai bank. It was also stipulated that if the channel nearest the Thai bank dried up the boundary would continue to follow it unless the Joint Permanent High Commission for the Mekong River decided to move the boundary to the nearest water channel.

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<sup>43</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 120-121

There was an interesting case of a telegraph line, which was supposed to have changed its position on the border between Cambodia and Vietnam. In 1873 the southern section of this boundary was agreed between the two authorities and part of the boundary was fixed along the telegraph line between Giang Thanh and Ha Tien. This boundary was demarcated in the period 1873-76. In 1891 the governor of Cochin china shifted the boundary away from the telegraph line, which lay close to the Giang Thanh River. He made the boundary coincide with the Mandarin's Way, which transferred 8 square miles of marshy land occupied by 50 people to Cochin china<sup>44</sup> He justified this move on the ground that in 1873 the telegraph line lay along the Mandarin's Way and not along the river road. After complaints from the Cambodian authorities a report was prepared on the matter by the French administrators in the cantons called Ha Thanh and Thanh Gi, which occupied the borderland of Cochin china. This report justified the governor's decision and provided the information that the telegraph line had been moved from the Mandarin's Way to the river road between the definition of the boundary in 1873 and the demarcation of the boundary two years later. This alteration was made because the activities of Cambodian rebels had made the Mandarin's Way insecure. The Cambodian complaints continued and the governor-general of Indochina appointed a further commission in 1896. This body included surveyors and administrators from both sides of the boundary. It concluded that the telegraph had been established along the river road in 1870 and had not been moved subsequently. That settled the matter, but it is interesting to record that the authorities in Cochin china used this loss of territory, which had never belonged properly to them, to justify the alteration of the boundary around Ha Tien in 1914 when 3 square miles were transferred from Cambodia to Cochin china.

“The boundaries between China and Laos are examples of lines set up in an attempt to separate states of vastly different power status. They are also colonially imposed linear demarcations between what is now the territory of a relatively firmly controlled power-but during the earlier period weak and yielding to western pressure-contiguous to a former colonial territory or territories previously firmly administered, but now characterized by political and administrative weaknesses or even disorder. This is a

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<sup>44</sup> Prescott 1972, *ibid*, p. 471-2

partial reversal of the positions obtaining during the colonial possessions were relatively firmly administered. The drawings of the boundaries were in fact at the expense of the earlier zones of influence of imperial China. The British and French set up these boundaries to separate their own political gains from loosely administered and relatively lawless territory of China. Reliance by the Laotian government on Vietnamese assistance after 1979 partially rectifies for Laos the weakness of its colonially inherited boundary.”<sup>45</sup>

Generally, positional disputes create fewer problems for border residents and international relations than territorial boundary disputes. “Colonial boundaries incorporating land yielded by neighbouring countries into what are now the post-colonial states remain a source of potential friction.”<sup>46</sup>

### **Functional boundary disputes**

A functional boundary dispute arises when one government believes that it has been adversely and unfairly affected by the functions of a neighbouring government along the boundary. Unlike territorial and positional disputes, it is possible to solve functional disputes to the satisfaction of both sides without any alteration in the boundary’s position. “Changes in the structure and function of the international borders, whether they are world-wide or restricted to state, reflect major changes in the strength and resilience of the nation-state, and in variety of social, political and economic processes long thought to be the sole or principal domain of the state. State borders in the world today not only mirror the changes that are affecting the institutions and policies of their states, but also point to transformations in the definitions of citizenship, sovereignty and national identity”.<sup>47</sup> These sorts of changes often led the state towards the disputes among themselves. These may occur due to the function and policies of the native states but also due to the interference of the colonial powers. “However, these borders, structures of the states themselves, are

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<sup>45</sup> Joo-Jock, Lim (1984), *Territorial Power Domains, Southeast Asia and China: The Geo-Strategy of an Overarching Massif*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. p. 54

<sup>46</sup> Joo-Jock, Lim (1984), *ibid*, p. 58

<sup>47</sup> Donnan, Hastings and Wilson, Thomas M. (1999), *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*, Oxford: Berg. p. 4

constructed by much more than the institutions of the state which present there, or of which the border's framework is a representative part, as in customs, immigration and security forces. Borders are also meaning-making and meaning-carrying entities, parts of cultural landscapes which often transcend the physical limits of the state and defy the power of the state institutions".<sup>48</sup>

Functional boundary disputes are comparatively rare when compared with territorial disputes. In recent years the functional disputes have usually been associated either with territorial disputes or with other international disputes. By imposing new regulations at borders it is possible for states to show their displeasure with a neighbour and the 'conflict of interests'.<sup>49</sup>

African states in the post-colonial period have sometimes resorting to close the border to record displeasure with a neighbour's policies or to increase national security at a time when civil wars were generating large number of refugees.

In some cases the closure of boundary was designed to force an alteration in a neighbour's policy.

### **Resource development disputes**

"In the economic sphere, gaining control over a valuable resource through annexation of territory seems to be especially important in an era of global resource scarcity, where there may not be enough of the resource to go around and where external sources of supply may be increasingly insecure. As inadequate resource stocks and high prices cause a large number of nations to turn to economic goals like energy self-sufficiency, the possession of resource-rich contested border territory becomes increasingly crucial."<sup>50</sup> The commonest sources of such disputes are water bodies, which mark or cross any international boundary.

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<sup>48</sup> Donnan, Hastings and Wilson, Thomas M. (1999), *ibid*, p. 4

<sup>49</sup> Bowman, Isaiah (1942), "Geography vs. Geopolitics," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 32, no. 4, p. 647

<sup>50</sup> Mandel, Robert (1980), *ibid*, p. 429

Boundaries were often drawn to coincide with rivers in order to allow easy recognition, and the disadvantages of such features as boundaries have already been considered. In many other cases, however, except when the boundary coincided with a watershed, river basins were divided between adjacent states. When the boundary coincided with a watercourse the agreement usually contained a clause providing equal rights for nationals from both sides. Generally, the clause did not define the position with regard to the tributaries of boundary waters nor make provision for the joint control of rivers, which crossed the boundary. Often this was because the border areas were underdeveloped and the use of rivers for hydroelectricity and irrigation had not been envisaged. It was only when the border areas became more closely settled and advances in technology made possible the use of the rivers for purposes other than navigation that disputes about the use of boundary and other waters developed. Different writers in referring to rivers forming use many terms and crossing the boundary; it is proposed here to distinguish three types. 'Boundary waters' are those features within which the boundary is drawn; this term is preferred to 'contiguous waters' used by Griffin (1959)<sup>51</sup>. 'Tributaries of boundary waters' form the second group. The term is entirely descriptive and it is essential to distinguish the tributaries from the boundary waters. Rivers, which cross a boundary, are called 'successive rivers'. This is a term suggested by Griffin (1959), which seems more satisfactory than any other, such as 'divided rivers', since boundary waters are also divided.<sup>52</sup>

Disputes over boundary waters are less common than disputes over successive rivers. This is due to two factors. First, most treaties governing boundaries along boundary waters contain clauses guaranteeing both sides equal rights and prohibiting any use, which adversely affects the other state. Secondly, since both states have access to the same parts of the river a unilateral action by one country can be met by retaliation by the other Country.

Glassner (1970)<sup>53</sup>, has provided a very interesting and comprehensive account of role of the maps in the settlement of boundary disputes.

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<sup>51</sup> Griffin, W.I. (1959), "The Use of International Drainage Basins under Customary Law", *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 46, no. 2. p. 64

<sup>52</sup> Griffin, W.I. (1959), *ibid*, p. 66

<sup>53</sup> Glassener, Martin Ira and Fahrner, Chuck (2004), *Political Geography*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. p. 77-87



## Importance of maps in boundary disputes

It is important in examining boundary disputes to use maps to understand the basic nature of the problems.<sup>54</sup>

Looking first at the characteristics of the map, it is important that the political boundaries under consideration should be marked on them. If the boundaries are not marked, there may be an effort to use the fact as evidence that no boundary existed, but such evidence would not be conclusive. Similarly, "The description should be illustrated by a map of scale appropriate to the case, but this map should not be considered a substitute for precision in the text."<sup>55</sup>

The scale of the map is also very important, and maps rapidly decline in usefulness as the scale is reduced. The accuracy of the map is also a critical factor, and historic maps, which are so often used in connection with boundary disputes, differ much more widely from each other in accuracy than modern maps produced with the benefit of satellite photography and modern programmetry. Attention must also be paid to the author of the map because it is a reasonable inference that boundaries will be shown more accurately on official maps than on unofficial maps and that certain government departments, such as those concerned with foreign affairs, will be more careful in boundary representation rather than other departments. Because maps represent the region at a particular time it is important to match the date of the map to the period of boundary construction or dispute under consideration.<sup>56</sup>

There are five situations in which maps are likely to contribute to the analysis of boundary disputes. First, it is appropriate to concentrate on the map attached to a particular treaty when the map alone defines the boundary or when the attached map is given precedence over the description in the text. "Maps are a primary tool for this endeavor."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Murty, T.S. (1983), *Paths of Peace: Studies on the Sino-Indian Border Dispute*, New Delhi: ABC Publishing House. p. 52

<sup>55</sup> Jones, Stephen B. (1943), *ibid*, p. 101

<sup>56</sup> Prescott, J.R.V. (1987), *ibid*, p. 129

<sup>57</sup> Hall, Derek R. (1981), "A Geographical Approach to Propaganda." In Burnett, Alan D. and Taylor, Peter J. (1981), *Political Studies from Spatial Perspectives*, New York: John Wiley and Sons. p. 315

Secondly, maps are vital when they alone provide the evidence needed to interpret the text.

Thirdly, the map may be useful in a situation when evidence is conflicting (Weissberg 1963).<sup>58</sup>

Fourthly, maps may be very useful in helping to understand the reasoning by which boundary architects selected a particular line.

Finally, maps are very useful in discovering the attitude of governments towards their boundaries. The phrase ‘cartographic aggression’ is now commonly used to describe the inclusion on a map by one state of territory, which is under the control of a neighbouring state. Maps may be regarded as strong evidence of what they purport to portray.<sup>59</sup>

### **Boundary Disputes: A Colonial Legacy**

‘Imperialism’ is the control by one state of other territories. ‘Colonialism stands for the establishment of the permanent or extended colonies in those territories. Imperialism may be military and political, (formal imperialism) in which the government of the concerned territory is taken over by the imperial power, or it may be (informal imperialism), in which the territory is formally independent but tied to the imperial power by other means.<sup>60</sup> “Colonialism is a form of domination-the control by individuals or groups over the territory and or behavior of other individuals or groups.”<sup>61</sup> “Colonialism breaks things. It shatters an imagined wholeness. Colonialism’s will to power creates binaries where a unified field and healthy singularity of cultural purpose once existed. The self of the colonizer explodes a native cultural solidarity, producing the spiritual confusion, psychic wounding and

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<sup>58</sup> Weissberg, G. (1963), “Maps as Evidence in International Boundary Disputes”, *American Journal of International Law*. Vol. 57, no. 2. p. 803

<sup>59</sup> Weissberg, G. (1963), *ibid*, p. 803

<sup>60</sup> Painter, Joe (1995), *Politics, Geography and ‘Political Geography’: A Critical Perspective*, New York: Arnold. p. 101

<sup>61</sup> Horvath, Ronald J. (1972), “A Definition of Colonialism”, *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 13, no. 1, p. 46

economic exploitation of a new and dominated other. Colonization imposes evil, fear and ignorance on the innocent native landscape.”<sup>62</sup> “Colonialism was Europe’s 19<sup>th</sup> century reply to the abolition of the institution of slavery. Colonization is to a society as slavery is to an individual.”<sup>63</sup> “A colonial estate enhances the prestige and adds to the wealth of the colonial power. If the estate is to be managed in the interest of the colonial power, colonial policy will be directed toward making the dependency incapable of independence, inducing the people to acquiesce in foreign rule, and gaining their cooperation in developing the estate as a business concern.”<sup>64</sup> “That is why a small number of small European states were able to dominate and control such a huge proportion of the globe, in terms both of land area and people, are hotly disputed.”<sup>65</sup> Because there was the logistical problem of governing tracts of territory and populations which were larger than the compact countries of Europe and often a long way away.<sup>66</sup>

“The importance of colonialism today does not lie in the area embraced by it or the number of people subjected to it. It lies in its legacy. Colonialism has largely disappeared, but its grin remains. We are concerned with the cruel grin of colonialism; the pluralism societies which it created... The public attitudes of many of the underdeveloped countries were endangered under colonialism, and the pictures of, for example, the Afro-Asian bloc represent, in effect, its reaction to decades, even centuries of rule from without.”<sup>67</sup> “The Asiatic and African problems examined are chiefly those resulting from the concern of European powers to separate clearly their respective areas of influence by delimiting and accurately marking boundary lines between their colonies or between the native states over which they exert special control.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Baker, Houston A. et al, (1995), “Colonialism and the Postcolonial Condition”, *PMLA*. Vol. 110, no. 5, p. 1047

<sup>63</sup> Porter, Philip W. and Sheppard, Eric C. (1998), *A World of Difference: Society, Nature, Development*, New York: The Guilford Press. p. 327

<sup>64</sup> Cited in Ginsburg, Norton (1973), “From Colonialism to National Development: Geographical Perspectives on Patterns and Policies”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. Vol. 63, no. 1, p. 1

<sup>65</sup> Elson, Diane, (1984), “Imperialism”, in McLennan, Gregor et al, (1984), *The Idea of the Modern State*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press. p. 154

<sup>66</sup> Painter, Joe (1995), *ibid*, p. 102

<sup>67</sup> Pounds, Norman J.G. (1972), *ibid*, p. 362

<sup>68</sup> Boggs, S. Whittemore (1940), *International Boundaries: A Study of Boundary Functions and Problems*, New York: Columbia University Press. p. 7

“In colonial territories, Europeans would try to apply some of the principles with which they had become familiar in Europe. They had, as in Europe, another inducement to do so, their own rivalries. If, moreover, they did not settle disputes among themselves in the colonies, their relations in Europe might worsen. They settled such disputes in the colonies-between Britain and the Netherlands, Britain and France, Britain and Spain-often with more reference to their own convenience than to the conditions of the territories in actual or potential dispute.”<sup>69</sup> They used to do this in regard of their own benefits and mainly in accord of their power. They had divided the territories of the colonies not according to the will of the colonies but to avoid the disputes regarding the territories among the colonial powers. “The colonial frontiers, moreover, were sometimes no more than lines on a map. They often designed to avoid future disputes rather than resolve present conflicts.”<sup>70</sup> “The evolution of new post-colonial nation states throughout the tropical world may presage further boundary conflicts once the forces of independent nationalism are directed to the artificial nature of those many frontiers hastily delineated in the late nineteenth century scramble for colonies.”<sup>71</sup> “The concept of natural boundaries took predominance over historical.”<sup>72</sup> The colonial modes of thinking generally influenced political discourse relating to the colonial regions.<sup>73</sup>

“The legacy of ill-defined boundaries from the colonial period and the potential for disputes and conflict associated with boundaries is enormous.”<sup>74</sup> “That mattered less, perhaps, while the frontiers were in fact those of colonial dependencies. They were, however, inherited by states in a world of nation-states. Nation-states require a more intense allegiance and a sense of community. Establishing them in Southeast Asia was likely, though in a different way, to be as difficult as in Europe, if not at times more

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<sup>69</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *Nations and States in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 48

<sup>70</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid*, 48

<sup>71</sup> House, J.W. (1968), *ibid*, p. 331

<sup>72</sup> Jones, Stephen B. (1959), “Boundary Concepts in the Setting of Place and Time,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 49, no. 3, p. 248

<sup>73</sup> Christie, Clive (2001), *Ideology and Revolution in Southeast Asia 1900-1980: Political Ideas of the Anti-Colonial Era*, Surrey: Curzon. p. 1

<sup>74</sup> Adler, Ron (2001), “Geographical Information in Delimitation, Demarcation and Management of International Land Boundaries,” *IBRU, Boundary and Territory Briefing*, Vol. 3, no. 4. p. 1

so, since the frontiers had emerged as a part of a process of settlement among other states, not among the states directly concerned.”<sup>75</sup>

“One important effect of colonialism was that the region was broken up into units that seemed to many local people arbitrary and irrational.”<sup>76</sup> While “more ‘colonial’ borders lead to more war.”<sup>77</sup> The states or their territories which were created by the colonial powers to settle the conflicts among them, were inherited the frontiers in the postcolonial period. “The boundaries of states were rarely changed, though battles might be fought across them. Too much was at stake. It was an apparent paradox, but not a real one, that in a world of states boundaries were more difficult to change than in a world of empires when bargains and deals been relatively easy to make.”<sup>78</sup> “Today’s boundaries between ‘citizen’ (or ‘son of the soil’) and ‘alien’, or between majority and ‘national majority’ often date from this colonial obsession with classification.”<sup>79</sup> As in the case of Cambodia and Vietnam, they consider their boundaries as unjust.

“In general the opening up of territory and the implementation of imperial government in Europe’s overseas colonies was carried on by military or quasi military, means. Military strategies varied widely between different imperial powers.”<sup>80</sup> “But colonialism differs from military occupation or temporary conquest insofar as it is based upon international recognition and implies some degree of permanence.”<sup>81</sup> “The boundary lines drawn by the colonial powers are often, mere markers of convenience when they transverse inaccessible mountain regions. With the development of power imbalances between neighbouring states, the argument of ‘imperialist legacies’ may be heard more often.”<sup>82</sup> “The manner in which the boundaries of colonial territories were drawn has meant that the new rulers, the

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<sup>75</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid*, 48

<sup>76</sup> Owen, Norman G. (2005), *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: A New History*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press. p. 78

<sup>77</sup> Starr, H. and Most, B.A. (1976), “The Return Journey: Richardson, ‘frontiers’ and wars in the 1946-1965 era,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, no. 4, p. 610

<sup>78</sup> Tarling, Nicholas (1998), *ibid*, p. 48-49

<sup>79</sup> Owen, Norman G. (2005), *ibid*, p. 78-79

<sup>80</sup> Painter, Joe (1995), *ibid*, p. 114

<sup>81</sup> Pounds, Norman J.G. (1972), *ibid*, p. 366

<sup>82</sup> Joo-Jock, Lim (1984), *ibid*, p. 63

inheritors of colonial power...became the de facto managers of problem-ridden territory, rather than of cohesive states, inherited from the departed colonials."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Joo-Jock, Lim (1984), *ibid*, p. 78

***CHAPTER VI***

## CHAPTER-VI

### CONCLUSION

The process of establishing clearly defined boundary between sovereign states in those previously ambiguous areas, which separated the core area of traditional kingdoms, has given rise to a multitude of potentially dangerous conflict situations in the world. Since, the mid-nineteenth century, the involved partner has disputed the establishment of every legally defined boundary in the various parts of the world several times. Which in result presents difficulties in maintaining the exact boundary functions properly, that it should be the problem free boundary.

The success in achieving this aim often varies with the type of boundary dispute. Territorial disputes arise when one government requests a neighbour to cede some territory for one of two reasons. It will argue either that the territory is presently held illegally or that it would be better for all concerned if ownership of the area were transferred. In the second case the arguments will usually be based mainly in history and geography. Such disputes are rarely settled quickly and some last for a very long time and have periods of intense activity separated by intervals of apparent disinterest on the part of the claimant.

These boundary disputes and conflicts regarding the claims are the gifts of the Colonial powers to the entire world. Once the boundaries of a state were modified by the Colonial powers, these states would keep themselves engaged in several boundary related disputes and conflicts time to time. The independent states of today are successors states to what were merely parts of the same kingdom or empire in the past. The Europeans colonial powers often divided these states for their own reasons, which were the parts of larger kingdoms. The French drew some lines around the Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia has become today's fixed boundaries. In other cases the Europeans sometimes hardened old territorial divisions that were result of pre-European intrastate conflicts, as they administered and protected the separate territory as part of their empires or spheres of influence.



The three main motives behind the European expansion were 'Gold, Glory and God.' They came to Indochina to acquire wealth from plunder and trade, to win prestige both as individuals and nations and to win converts to Christianity and western civilization.

The imperial policy of isolation, the arrogance of the mandarins and the lack of any interest in foreign trade, all served to increase mutual misunderstandings between Vietnam and France, which led to bring about the eventual conquest of French on Indochina.

French imperialism succeeded not only because of the possession of the superior weaponry, instead because it exploited the fatal social divisions in Indochina. These may be expressed in terms of peasant rebellions and the conversion of hundreds of thousands of poor Vietnamese people, to Catholic Christianity. The Nguyen court's prohibition and mistreatment of French missionaries provided the French government with its foremost excuse for intervention at the very first place.

However, as the French consolidated their control over southern Vietnam, where they interfered in the late 1850s, they started to take interests in Cambodia. The travellers told the French about the Cambodia's great economic potential. Their interests were also increased after the publishing of the report of 'discovery' regarding the ruins of Angkor in the Thai-Controlled Cambodian province of Siem Reap. The French were also known about the Geostrategic location of Indochina, in terms of its location. And they were also aware of the fact that if they succeeded in establishing their control over Indochina, than it would be easier to reach China and its markets through the river course of Mekong.

Boundary disputes have been an important issue in the politics of Indochina, since the arrival of the French. These types of issues severally served as the major reason for severe and disastrous wars.

The boundaries have replaced political frontiers in Indochina, some inaccessible and mountainous area are exceptional. They sometimes become areas of overlapping territorial claims, such as the Sino-Vietnam boundary and the Thai-Cambodian

The boundaries that evolved during the Colonial period, generally lies under the category of superimposed boundaries. These boundaries were sometimes badly delimited which resulted in the future conflicts among the native states. The ruling powers severally divided the territories of the controlled states in accord of their convenience. So, that they can rule them without interference and complexities. The new rulers of the of the post colonial territories have striven for the creation of countries modeled after the nation-state based on an identifiable nationalism which in turn would have been nurtured in the period of negotiations with the colonial powers for the attainment of the independence of their country. The new rulers of the pre-colonial states are the managers of problem-ridden territories, instead of cohesive states.

Once, when these types of boundaries are created, they incorporated enormous implications in establishing mutual harmony, cooperation and peace building processes. It is so because the historical possessions of can serve as a strong basis for territorial claims and it is also a fact that state always tries to maximize their national territory with the help of historical claims.

## APPENDIX- I

### Laos: General Information

Name:	Lao People's Democratic republic (LPDR)
Borders with:	China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar
Area:	236,800 sq. km (91,428 sq. miles)
Population:	4,581,258 (2,315,931 females)
Literacy:	65.6% (male-76.8%; female-54.4%)
Density:	19 per sq. km
Capital:	Vientiane
Important cities:	Vientiane, Savannakhet, Luang Prabang and Pakse
Currency:	Kip
Chief products	
(a) Agriculture:	Rice, Sugarcane, Maize, Tobacco, Pineapple, Soybean and Coffee, Cotton,
(b) Industries:	Cement, Detergent, Iron-industry, Beer and Lunbering.
GDP:	(PPP\$) 1,720
HDI/World rank:	0.534/135
Religion:	Buddhism (Hinayana)
Language:	Lao or Laotian

## APPENDIX- II

### **Cambodia: General Information**

Name:	Kingdom of Cambodia
Borders with:	Laos, Thailand and Vietnam
Area:	181,035 sq. km (69,898 sq miles)
Population:	11,437,656 (5,926,248 females)
Literacy:	68.7% in 2001(male-80.5%; female-58.2%)
Density:	63.18 per sq. km
Capital:	Phnom Penh
Important cities:	Kompong Cham and Battambang.
Currency:	Riel
Chief products	
(a) Agriculture:	Maize, Banana, Sugarcane, Cassava and Orange
(b) Industries:	Garment manufacturing, Rice milling, Timber, Rubber, Cement and textile industries
GDP per capita:	(PPP\$) 2,060 in 2002
HDI/World rank:	0.568/130
Religion:	Buddhism
Language:	Khmer

## APPENDIX- III

### **Vietnam: General Information**

Name:	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Borders with:	Cambodia, Laos and China
Area:	332,934 sq. km
Population:	76,324,933 in 1999
Literacy:	92.7% in 2001 (male-94.5%; female-90.9%)
Density:	229 per sq. km
Capital:	Hanoi
Important cities:	Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Long Xuyen, Nha Trang and Hue
Currency:	Dong
Chief products	
(a) Agriculture:	Maize, Cassava, Sugarcane, Bananas, Sweet Potatoes, Coconut, Coffee and Groundnut.
(b) Industries:	Cement, Sugar, Fertilizers, Detergent and Mining.
GDP per capita:	PPP\$ 2,300 (2000)
HDI/World rank:	0.691/112
Religion:	Taoism and Buddhism
Language:	Vietnamese, Chinese, French and Khmer

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