Elephant, Dragon and Crescent: Border Disputes and the Relationship Between India, China and Pakistan (1947-71)

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April, 2022.

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Masters' Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores how and why international relations among India, China and Pakistan are shaped by three major wars in South Asia: the India China war of 1962, the India Pakistan War of 1965 and the India Pakistan war of 1971. Drawing upon postcolonial theories of geo-body and the anxiety concerning border among newly emerging states of Asia, this thesis focuses on three factors that played a pivotal role in contributing towards tensions: the troubled inheritance of colonial border making process, crisis of nation formation and cold war distrusts among communist and non-communist states. Problems concerning border in Himalayan region between India and China were based upon differing interpretations of colonial map making by both countries. In Chinese communist context, this was also tied with their policies in Tibet region. Communist attempt to unleash 'democratic revolution' in Tibet from 1956 onwards led to a rebellion in 1959 and Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama took shelter in India. Indian sensitivity towards Tibet question led towards further political tensions between two Asian giants and contributed towards 1962 border conflicts. Mutual distrusts between communist leaders and non- communist political actors further contributed towards the problem. Thus, complex interactions among the troubled inheritance of colonial border, crisis in nation formation and cold war distrusts paved the way for military conflict.

Political interventions by global superpowers in South Asian politics encouraged already existing tensions and accelerated conflicts. In 1950s United States' search for allies in the Middle East led towards arming of Pakistan as a potential bulwark against 'communist expansionism' though Pakistan had a clear aim of establishing its military supremacy over the disputed region of Kashmir. After the India China border war of 1962 Pakistan came closer to China and during war between India and Pakistan in 1965 over the disputed region of Kashmir, China offered strong support to Pakistan. In 1971 Pakistan experienced crisis as pro-regional autonomy political formation Awami League swept through East Pakistan and

Pakistani military junta's reluctance to suppress popular electoral verdict resulted in widespread rebellion. As President Nixon was using Pakistan as a go between in a rapprochement between US and China, US supported Pakistan in the struggle and ignored genocide in the emerging nation of Bangladesh. Meanwhile, India accepted a Soviet offer of peace treaty. Thus, the dynamic interaction among factors such as anxieties concerning border, crisis of nation formation in postcolonial states and cold war political alliance making contributed towards and political instability in the region.

Résumé

Cette thèse explore comment et pourquoi les relations internationales entre l'Inde, la Chine et le Pakistan sont façonnées par trois guerres majeures en Asie du Sud : la guerre sino-indienne de 1962, la guerre indo-pakistannaise de 1965 et la guerre indo-pakistanaise de 1971. Se basant sur les théories post-coloniales du corps géographique et l'anxiété concernant les frontières entre les nouveaux états émergents d'Asie, cette thèse se concentre sur trois facteurs qui ont joué un rôle central dans la contribution aux tensions : l'héritage troublé du processus colonial de création de frontières, la crise de la formation de la nation et la méfiance de la guerre froide parmi les communisteset les états non communistes. Les problèmes concernant la frontière dans la région himalayenne entre l'Inde et la Chine étaient basés sur des interprétations différentes de la cartographie coloniale par les deux pays. Dans le contexte communiste chinois, cela était également lié à leurs politiques dans la région du Tibet. La tentative communiste de déclencher une «révolution démocratique» au Tibet à partir de 1956 a conduit à une rébellion en 1959 et le chef spirituel tibétain Dalaï Lama s'est réfugié en Inde. La sensibilité indienne envers la question du Tibet a conduit à de nouvelles tensions politiques entre deux géants asiatiques et a contribué aux conflits frontaliers de 1962. Les méfiances mutuelles entre les dirigeants communistes et les acteurs politiques non

communistes ont davantage aggravé le problème. Ainsi, des interactions complexes entre l'héritage troublé de la frontière coloniale, la crise dans la formation des nations et les méfiances de la guerre froide ont ouvert la voie au conflit militaire.

Les interventions politiques des superpuissances mondiales dans la politique sud-asiatique ont déjà encouragé les tensions déjà existantes et accéléré les conflits. Dans les années 1950, la recherche d'alliés par les États-Unis au Moyen-Orient a conduit à l'armement du Pakistan en tant que rempart potentiel contre «l'expansionnisme communiste», bien que le Pakistan ait clairement pour objectif d'établir sa suprématie militaire sur la région contestée du Cachemire. Après la guerre frontalière indo-chinoise de 1962, le Pakistan s'est rapproché de la Chine et pendant la guerre de 1965 entre l'Inde et le Pakistan au sujet de la région contestée du Cachemire, la Chine a offert un soutien solide au Pakistan. En 1971, le Pakistan a connu une crise alors que la formation politique pro-autonomie régionale Awami League a balayé le Pakistan oriental, et la réticence de la junte militaire pakistanaise à supprimer le verdict électoral populaire a entraîné une rébellion généralisée. Alors que le président Nixon utilisait le Pakistan comme intermédiaire dans un rapprochement entre les États-Unis et la Chine, les États-Unis ont soutenu le Pakistan dans la lutte et ont ignoré le génocide dans la nation émergente du Bangladesh. Pendant ce temps, l'Inde a accepté une offre soviétique de traité de paix. Ainsi, l'interaction dynamique entre des facteurs tels que les angoisses concernant les frontières, la crise de la formation des nations dans les états postcoloniaux et la formation d'alliances politiques de la guerre froide a contribué à l'instabilité politique dans la région.

Acknowledgement:

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Subho Basu for his dedicated support and guidance. Prof. Basu continuously provided encouragement and was always willing and enthusiastic to assist in any way he could throughout of my thesis. I did my research project during this covid period, when I couldn't be able to access a lot of essential resources (example: primary resources) from the library of my university because it was temporarily closed. However, I got a lot of good secondary materials which helped my research. I would also like to thank my department history and classical studies of McGill University for giving the opportunity to study my masters and writing my thesis. And my biggest thanks go to my parents for their immense support and love throughout this journey.

Introduction

This thesis explores the international relationships of India, China and Pakistan in the period between, 1947 and 1971. Characterized by paradoxical moves, these diplomatic relationships registered many changes over time. In the early 1950s, Communist China and democratic India briefly explored the possibility of a peaceful coexistence. Around that time, the United States, which led the "free world," became a steadfast friend of authoritarian Pakistan, and began to exhibit a deep suspicion towards the neutralist policies of democratic India. The Indian attempt at a peaceful coexistence with China collapsed due to the troubled inheritance of an "amorphous border" from British colonial rulers. Chinese experiments with the occupation of Tibet and the engineering of a "democratic revolution" therein further led to a brief war with India, in 1962. By the end of the war, neutralist India relied on the United States for supply of arms, and Pakistan commonly, described as the most allied among the allies of the United States, befriended Mao's China.

This relationship deepened when the Pakistani military adventure in Kashmir in 1965 resulted in a war with India and reinforced a status quo. Yet In 1971, when Pakistan was imploding, and the ruling military dictator Yahya Khan unleashed severe repression in East Bengal (because the Bengalis had voted for a pro-autonomy party in the first general election held in the country), the United States offered unequivocal support to Pakistan and encouraged Communist China to invade India.[1] Democratic India, meanwhile, entered into an alliance with the communist regime in the Soviet Union to safeguard its interests.[2] The political grammar of these relationships did not follow the standard Cold War dictum of free

[1]Jonathan Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*, (First ed.), (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2013), 546.

[2]K. Subrahmanyam, "The Indo-Soviet Treaty: Strategic Analysis", 45:4 (2001): 353-361.

world versus totalitarian regimes. Obviously, the Cold War did influence the course of events and accelerated the process in South Asia. Existing scholarship on the India-China relationship focuses on the various facets of the war of 1962.

The most exhaustive study of the India-China relationship was produced by Lorenz Luthi and Amit Das Gupta in 2017. This edited volume explores, in three sections and twelve different chapters, the origin, evolution and consequences of the Sino- Indian war of 1962.[3] Of these, four chapters concentrate on the Sino-Indian war of 1962, and the text's introduction by Luthi and Das Gupta lays out an overview of extant literature and events which inadvertently leads to penetrating insights into the work.[4] Amit Das Gupta's provides an interesting account of the role of Subimal Dutt, India's foreign secretary, in securing a border agreement that is done through a study of his hitherto unexplored private papers. Das Gupta, attributes Dutt as the mastermind behind Nehru's talks with the Chinese leadership on the historical border, but scrupulously avoids holding him accountable for any blame.[5] In a separate chapter, Amit Das Gupta also engages with the impact of the 1962 War on Pakistan's foreign policy.[6] Besides, the crucial inclusion of Chinese perspectives on the border dispute, the book is remarkable for Eric Hyer's explanation of Sino-India relations in the context of the 1958-1960 Great Leap Forward, and internal transformation in China. Hyer

[3]Amit Das Gupta, and Lorenz M Luthi, *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*. First South Asia ed., (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group), 2017.

[4]Ibid, 1-26.

[5]Das Gupta, "Foreign Secretary Subimal Dutt and the Prehistory of the Sino-Indian border war", *The Sino-Indian War of 1962,* (New York: Routlegde, 2017), 48-67.

[6]Das Gupta, "Pakistan and 1962", *The Sino-Indian War of 1962,* 124-141.

demonstrates that despite China's pragmatic approach to the border situation, Indians were unwilling to negotiate, and were even prepared for military aggression.[7]

Borrowing from Luthi and Das Gupta's latest scholarly work, I engage here with major trends in the historiography of the relationship between India, Pakistan, and China, though in summing up the findings of this literature, I hope to provide a slightly different reading of these events. [8] The literature on the Sino-Indian war of 1962 often focuses on assigning blame for the conflict, Luthi and Das Gupta provided different interpretations of the war. Margaret F. Fisher, Leo E. Rose and Robert A. Huttenback argued that China was primarily responsible for the border conflict. They concluded that in all categories of substantive debate over the border in Aksai Chin, the Indians presented more concrete evidence for their claims, than the Chinese, who "often misrepresented the cited sources" and in general presented "a shoddy piece of work."[9]

To the Indians, it seemed that the Chinese were not interested in the substance of their presentation and used the talks chiefly to create an impression of being conciliatory. The Indian case, on the contrary, was thoroughly and carefully presented and its preparation turned up more evidence for New Delhi's claim. The book suggests that India's defence posture in Ladakh was strong enough to make an "all-out Chinese attack" on that quarter of the Himalayan border unlikely, hence the concentration of Chinese efforts in October 1962. This was on the Assam frontier, which was partly at least a manoeuvre to force India to give up Aksai Chin. Echoing a fear of China during the Cold War years among western scholars,

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[7]Eric Hyer, "The strategic and regional contexts of the Sino-Indian border conflict: China's Reconciliation with its Neighbours", *The Sino-Indian War of 1962*, 85-102.

[8]Das Gupta and Luthi, "Introduction", *The Sino-Indian War of,* 12-16.

[9]Margaret Fisher, Leo Rose and Robert Huttenback, *Himalayana Battleground: Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh,* (New York: Praeger, 1963), 99.

Fisher, Rose and Huttenback further argued that the area of open conflict between China and India is not confined to their common border but extends throughout the rest of Asia and even into Africa, claiming that one Chinese goal "is the complete control of Southeast Asia."[10] Contradictorily to this, Neville Maxwell, in his book, *India's China War*, pointed out that, India was to be blamed. He argued that India, and not China, was largely responsible for the deterioration in Sino-Indian border relations after 1959, and that it was directly responsible for the war of October 1962.[11]

Based on officially published Chinese documents, Liu Xuecheng, according to Luthi and Das Gupta, also reached same conclusion.[12] Dorothy Woodman, in an extensive survey of colonial sources, provides a critique of the Chinese position, and further suggests that India could have exchanged Aksai Chin and China would have recognized Indian claims over the land below McMahon line, which would have then enabled both powers to avoid the war.[13] This suggestion was not very different from what Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai had proposed to Nehru.

There took place a transition in Western scholarship with the publication of Allen S. Whitning's Chinese foreign policy on border in South Asia and Indo China. His book engages mainly with China's border war with India in late 1962, and Beijing's more indirect role in the heyday of the Vietnam War (1965—68). Subsequently, this book started the trend of engaging with China's policies outside the narrow confines of the India-China border war. Focusing on the 1962 War, the book argues that the Chinese response generally begins with

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[10]Ibid, 146.

[11]Maxwell Neville, *India's China War* London: Cape 1970.

[12]Das Gupta and Luthi, "Introduction", *The Sino-Indian War of 1962,* 14.

[13]Dorothy Woodman, *Himalyan Frontiers: A Political Review of British, Chinese, Indian and Russian Rivalries*, (London: Barrie & Rockliff, the Cresset Press, 1969).

"counter threats to perceived threats" and has sometimes led to what Chinese leaders considered a pre-emptive or forestalling attack.[14] In 1984, Yacoov Vertzberger wrote on misperceptions in foreign policymaking, this was based on his reworked doctoral thesis.[15] In a review of Vertzberger's book, Whiting wrote that:

> The lobbying by cliques and factions in the foreign and defence ministries, the role of pressure groups within the Congress party as well as the opposition, and the provocative playing up of Sino-Indian differences by the press, posed challenges that Nehru failed to master. In turn, the Chinese failure to understand the dilemmas posed by domestic and bureaucratic politics prompted Peking eventually to aim its propaganda guns at Nehru personally.[16]

Thus, the war was a product of misperception in foreign policymaking. F. Taylor Fravel adopted a broader analytical canvas to deal with China's security concerns. Fravel argues that the Chinese communist government inherited territorial disputes with all of China's 14 land neighbors and six sea neighbors. China also had to manage what Fravel terms three "homeland disputes," involving Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. Engaging with this wider parameter of border-making, Fravel further demonstrates that in 17 of these 23 conflicts, Beijing had offered concessions, abandoning claims to over 1.3 million square miles of land, while, in the other six disputes, Beijing had used force. In studying the Sino-Indian border

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[14]Allen S Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan press, 1974).

[15]Yacoov Vertzberger, *Misperceptions in Foreign Policy Making: The Sino-Indian Conflict 1959-1962,* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1984).

[16]Ibid, 803-804.

conflicts, between 1960 and 1962, Fravel held India's policy of forward movement, regarding the northern border, to be responsible.[17]

In contrast to these findings, based on interviews with Indian officials and politicians, Steven A. Hoffmann argues that after the border skirmishes of October 1959 between India and China, Indian decision-makers developed a fixed belief system that informed Indian official perceptions, continuing right up to the major Chinese offensive of 20 October. This belief system centers on an idea that even though China was a hostile antagonist towards India, instead of getting involved in a war, China intended to encroach on Indian Territory via infiltration and small unit "pinpricks." Nehru was convinced that a Sino-Indian war would inevitably lead to big power intervention. Fears of such an intervention would, Nehru believed, prevent the Chinese from resorting to a large-scale military attack.[18] In a recent work, Srinath Raghavan focuses on Nehru's position again, examining his liberal realist political ideology in relation to seven crises that India faced in its early years.[19] Raghavan's book partly focuses on the evolution of the India-China relationship and criticizes the Indian army for its passivity during the pre-war years in communicating the ground reality on the border as well as, blames civilian leaders for their faulty leadership during the war. The obsession with Nehru is reflected in the writings of Jayanta Ray as well, who blames Nehru and Menon for their failure to support Tibetan independence and fully prepare for the crisis.[20]

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[17]M Taylor Fravel, Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[18]Steven A Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[19]Srinath Raghavan, *War and Peace in Modern India: A Strategic History of the Nehru Years* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009).

[20]Jayanta Ray, *India's Foreign Relations 1947-2007*, (London: Routledge, 2011).

This thesis moves beyond the India-China war and looks at three other wars that occurred in close historical proximity. The war in 1962 was followed by two wars, one in 1965 and the other in 1971, between India and Pakistan. Yet all these wars involved China's allied position with Pakistan. Both these wars also brought into play the United States and the Soviet Union and subsequently produced long-lasting alliances in South Asia. The war of 1971 changed the balance of power in South Asia significantly, and all these wars involved principally three players: India, Pakistan and China. Based on critical engagement with the extant literature, this thesis identifies four crucial themes that impacted the international relations among these countries: namely, the mapping of the border and the postcolonial anxiety concerning border, the crisis of nation formation, irredentist conflicts, and Cold War mentality and alliances.

Postcolonial nations inherited the maps and external geographical boundaries of their state space from colonial states, and India was no exception to this. Following Alastair Lamb's monograph on the India-China wars, this research highlights the troubled colonial inheritance concerning borders and the ambiguity in relation to the status of Tibet.[21] This ambiguous border was a product of the geopolitical situation in the early years of the twentieth century. The newly established Republic of China had little control over the country's interiors and the central government remained a weak presence. Tibet also gained *de facto* autonomy from the Chinese central government and behaved like an independent political entity. China thus, did not have any border agreements with British India. The twin issues of a lack of a clearly defined border and the status of Tibet would come to haunt both the government of India and China in the following years. In this regard, it is crucial to keep

[21] Alastair Lamb, *The China India Border. The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, (Oxford University Press for R.I.I.A.), 196.

in mind Thongchai Winichakul's influential conceptualization of the geo-body, from *Siam Mapped*, which demonstrates how the discourse of geography and modern cartography directly produce political territoriality, values, and practices, thus creating the notion of a geo-body that would then later become the modern Thai nation. He argues that Siam actively tried to carve out a "we-self" space in the light of European expansion and neighboring polities. "The creation of otherness, the enemy in particular, is necessary to justify the existing political and social against rivals from without as well as from within."[22]

In the Indian context, this idea of geo-body is reinforced by the notion of *Bharat Mata* (motherland),[23]and an emotional investment in the idea of border is structured by, what Shankaran Krishna terms as, "postcolonial anxiety". For Shankaran Krishna, postcolonial anxiety arises from a sense that "the social construction of past, present and future for state elites and educated middle classes in the third world are mimetic constructions of what has supposedly already happened elsewhere, namely Europe or the west."[24] Thus a porous colonial border and contestation over it led to a situation of a series of border conflicts that neither India nor China desired.

The border conflict would not have led towards a bitter war if these postcolonial nations had not been constantly questioning the very meaning of nationhood, which would be included within this new nation, and on what terms this process of nation formation would proceed. The nation, as a category, is often unstable, and since these postcolonial

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[22]Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 167.

[23]For details about the relationship between map and the idea of Bharat Mata Please see, Sumathi Ramswami, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India*(Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[24]Krishna Sankaran, *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

states were emerging from the ramshackle of colonial empires or prolonged civil wars. In their attempts to dismember the very fabric of older pre-colonial imperial polities (as was the case in China), these nations witnessed a significant degree of crisis in the process of nation formation. Chinese communists conquered Tibet and tried to impose their control over the region and import the revolution there. This provoked reactions in India, where Hindu nationalists projected this as an affront to Hindu religious sentiment. The Dalai Lama's move to India and simultaneously the full-scale revolt by his supporters in Tibet, led to political stirrings in India. This reduced the Indian government's ability to approach the border question contributing to border conflicts in 1962. While Tibet posed as a crisis in China's policy towards its national minorities, India experienced comparable conflicts over the Kashmir question.

The irredentist conflicts between Pakistan and India had also a colonial origin, the British departure from India was due to two reasons, they were exhausted by the Second World War and the Indian nationalist opposition. The colonial state demarcated a border between the British-controlled parts of India but provided for an independent decision-making process with regards to the former princely states, which subsequently led to conflicts over Kashmir. A Hindu Maharaja, in ignoring the democratic opinion of his subjects, signed a treaty of accession with India, which then placed Kashmir on the frontline of the cartographic anxieties of India and Pakistan. India promised maximum autonomy to the regional powers in governing the state, and enjoyed the support of Sheikh Abdullah, a popular Kashmiri leader. However, as the central government tightened its rule over Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah was deposed from power. In 1964, there were mass protests, against India, when a relic of the Prophet disappeared from a famous shrine. At that point, Nehru had a proposal for the resolution of the Kashmir conflict, but he died before formally pushing forward his policies. Ayub Khan, the Pakistani dictator, thought this to be an

opportune moment for wresting Kashmir from Indian control through promoting a military conflict.

The ensuing war produced a stalemate, but China and Pakistan entered an alliance with each other, and this became one of the long-lasting international relationships in South Asia which had a profound impact on the future. Since the time Pakistan would go on to play a crucial role in the rapprochement between China and the United States. Pakistan's crisis of nation-formation became self-evident with the Bangladesh question and the Bengali Muslim desire for autonomy. This desire led to a civil war in the country (erstwhile East Pakistan), with India sending troops to the region to support the Liberation of Bangladesh. At the same time, there occurred a tectonic shift in international politics as China and the United States established diplomatic ties and India signed a treaty with the Soviet Union. Thus, each moment of the crises in nation-formation of the 1960s and early 1970s was followed by warfare and new alliances in regional and global politics. Such a crisis became more evident in the irredentist conflicts, of which Kashmir was the most prominent example. The crisis in Kashmir also profoundly influenced South Asian international relations, and resultantly brought Pakistan closer to China.

The "Cold War mentality" also played a crucial role in informing the policy perspectives of nations. Most Indian politicians and senior bureaucrats, barring Nehru and Krishna Menon, had a deep hostility towards communists and nurtured considerable doubts about the Chinese administration's policies. The problems concerning Tibet and the northern border had arisen even during the nationalist Chinese period in between 1947-49, even though the Indian National Congress enjoyed deeper ties with the Kuomintang. Chinese communists became nervous when Pakistan joined the US-sponsored Baghdad Pact and SEATO, and in turn received massive military and developmental aid in the 1950s from the United States and Western powers. It was only after the Sino-Indian war of 1962, when

the US provided arms to India to counter Chinese communists, which Pakistan finally began to pursue an active relationship with China. From 1969, Pakistan acted as diplomatic intermediary in the global rapprochement between China and the United States. Both Nixon and Kissinger were favorably disposed towards Pakistan, and during the 1971 crisis, the United States encouraged its Middle Eastern allies (Iran and Jordan), to arm Pakistan. The US also encouraged China to assume a hostile position towards India during that period. This obviously encouraged India to enter a treaty with the Soviet Union to counter the presumed Chinese threat. Thus, Cold War politics substantially contributed towards growing tensions in the South Asian subcontinent.

This thesis follows these threads of arguments through four chapters, opting for a temporal framework of enquiry, instead of a thematic organization, to reveal an intrinsic link between these themes and real events. The thesis offers a synthesis of arguments based on earlier research, drawing upon the work of Alistair Lamb[25], Lorenz Luthi[26] and Gary Bass,[27] but within this synthesis it offers the blending of the four themes identified above, to demonstrate how they interacted and produced seeming contradictions in South Asian international politics. While the first chapter looks at the colonial origins of border-making in Tibet and engages with the troubled inheritance of this border. The second chapter explores the shifts and developments in Tibetan politics, including the Tibetan revolt, and how the mutual distrust between Indian politicians of Chinese communists, informed the growing border conflict. Subsequently, the third chapter engages with the various facets of the Sino- Pakistani diplomatic relationship. Finally, the fourth chapter discusses the crisis and War of 1971 (Bangladesh Liberation War) in the context of global and regional dynamics of

[25]Lamb, *The China India Border.*

[26]Luthi, *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[27]Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide.*

the rapprochement between China and United States and the mutual treaty between India and the Soviet Union.

Chapter 1

Colonial Legacy: The Disputed Trans-Himalayan Border and the Rise of Sovereign Nation-States in India and China

In post-colonial Asia, borders and maps were fundamental to the geo-body of a nation-state and were marked with deep anxieties surrounding national sovereignty and strategic manoeuvring. One of the reasons behind this anxiety was that these borders had not evolved through diplomatic institutions of agreements and treaties; they were merely the relics of colonialism, representing the boundaries of an imperial entity's possessions. This was particularly true in the case of the border between India and China. This border had developed through British imperial efforts in the Indian subcontinent, and therefore it reflected their strategic designs. The British had left their Himalayan border ambiguous, since they had not perceived any threat from China. Tibet, and to some extent Nepal) remained a *de facto* quasi-independent state between 1912 and 1949 and acted as an "informal buffer" between British India and China. In the early years of the twentieth century, China had not been in any position to assert control over Tibet. However, the situation changed once the Communist Party of China emerged victorious in the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) and reasserted their control over Tibet.

This chapter argues that the Indo-Chinese border became a source of dispute between these two states because the erstwhile colonial configuration, had not defined their shared Himalayan border clearly and had particularly left, the western sector porous. To complicate matters further, the status of Tibet remained unresolved, and this troubled inheritance constituted for a source of conflict for India and China. After reasserting its control over Tibet, Communist China had an extended border with India which was not fully demarcated (from their perspective) by a mutually recognized treaty. Since India had witnessed a relatively smooth transfer of power from the colonial state, the postcolonial government

wanted to simply retain the British imperial border with Tibet. The disadvantage of this continuity was the lack of a clearly defined border in the Western sector – even British documents were ambiguous about its status. Similarly, Tibetan autonomy remained an unresolved question, and Tibetan resistance to the Chinese government would subsequently emerge as a focal point of tension between the two countries. This troubled inheritance, then, constituted a critical backdrop for future conflicts between the two nations.[28] Besides, these irredentist conflicts were further shaped by postcolonial anxieties regarding the border between India and China and the pertinent question of sovereignty over the border on both sides.

[28]For a detailed discussion of British policy towards Tibet and China See Alastair Lamb. *The McMahon Line: A Study in the Relations between India, China and Tibet, 1904-1914,* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 571; P. Mehra.*The McMahon Line and After: A Study of the Triangular Contest on India's North-eastern Frontier Between Britain,China and Tibet, 1904-1947* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1974). Other works on modern Tibet include: Goldstein, M. C. *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: the Demise of the Lamaist State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) A succinct summary of extant research had been made available by Das Gupta and Luthi, *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

The Great Game and the Wild West of the Jammu and Kashmir and Tibet Borders

The Republic of India and the People's Republic of China have never formally delimited their boundaries on the ground, through a mutually accepted treaty. The current border between India and China can be divided into three– the western, eastern, and middle sectors. The Western sector involves the dispute over the Aksai Chin area, a region that India claims as part of Ladakh. Aksai Chin is literally an uninhabited, desolate land which China considers strategically important because of the location of a motorway connecting Tibet to Xinjiang. The middle sector refers to a junction of the Tibet-Kashmir-Punjab (shared by India and Pakistan) borders as well as the Nepal-Tibet-Uttar Pradesh (and Bihar) borders. The eastern sector refers to the disputed McMahon Line, which divides Tibet and China from Indian-administered Arunachal Pradesh. The disputes over such a long and porous border could be in the history of border-making from the early decades of the nineteenth century through the twentieth century.

The border on the western sector began to emerge in 1834 when Gulab Singh, a Dogra feudatory of the Sikh ruler of Punjab, Ranjit Singh, conquered Ladakh. Gulab Singh's attention had been diverted to the Tibetan regions of Rudok and Ngari. However, the Tibetan forces from Lhasa, inflicted a crushing defeat on the mercenaries recruited by the Dogra chief. Tibetans reached the doorsteps of Leh, the main town of Ladakh, but were driven out again. In 1842, an uneasy peace was restored in the region through the resurrection of the near-forgotten Treaty of Tingmosgang, between Ladakh and Tibet, which had been reached in 1684.[29] Meanwhile, the colonial state in India recognized Gulab Singh as a ruler of the Jammu and Kashmir region, and the latter accepted British suzerainty over the region. Jammu

[29]W. F. van. Eekelen, *Indian Foreign Policy and The Border Dispute with China* (Second revised). (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 8.

and Kashmir became a native princely state enjoying a quasi-autonomous status within the legal framework of British supremacy in India. Thus, the border in the Akshai Chin region remained under the control of two semi-independent political entities – the Hindu kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir and the Buddhist theocratic state of Tibet, which in practice was a Chinese vassal state.

However, the situation in this border region did not remain free from international tensions. As the Chinese imperial grip over the East Turkestan region slackened, the British Indian government feared a Russian expansion into the region. In 1898, the negotiations between representatives of the Mir, the ruler of the princely state of Hunza in the Gilgit Baltistan region of north-Western Kashmir, and the Qing imperial official known as Amban, did not produce any conclusive results. Consequently, the British Indian authorities intervened to settle tensions in the entire northern frontier of Kashmir. Previously, Chinese officials, supposedly having taken their cues from imperial Russia, challenged the British Indian maps of the Aksai Chin plateau. As mentioned earlier, the plateau was an uninhabited area in the northeast corner of Kashmir where merchant explorers exploited high-lying salt deposits. British imperial interests in Aksai Chin were shaped by concerns over putative Tsarist Russian designs in the area, particularly because the Russian Empire had brought a vast track of land in Central Asia under its control in the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, in 1899, London (and not Calcutta, the capital of colonial India at that time) offered to delimit the boundary, by agreeing to cede the plateau and the Karakash basin, in exchange for Chinese recognition of Hunza's claims. The Chinese imperial authority in Beijing did not formally reply to this overture.[30] Luthi and Das Gupta point out that W. H. Johnson's 1865 *Survey of India*, had proposed to treat the entire Akshai Chin, up to the

[30]Ibid, 9.

KuenLun mountain range, as a part of Ladakh, though this was not accepted by colonial authorities.

In 1897, Sir John Ardagh suggested the same demarcations, which had been subsequently dubbed by the Ardagh Line, without success. They further assert that in 1899 colonial authorities suggested to the Qing office that Akshai Chin be placed within Chinese territory, but Beijing once again did not respond to this. In 1914, the British Indian government's foreign secretary argued at the Shimla Conference that Akshai Chin was to become a part of Tibet, in order to construct a buffer between the princely state of Kashmir, Russian-controlled Sinkiang, and Republican China. However, the Chinese delegation withdrew from the conference. In 1946, the Indian army, as Luthi and Das Gupta argued, produced a map for the Cabinet Mission which did not include Akshai Chin within British India. In other words, because of its rough terrain, the border on the western frontier of the Himalayas had been left undefined.[31]

[31]Amit Das Gupta, and Lorenz M Luthi (eds.). *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 3-5.

Border-Making in the East: Shadow of the Great Game, Imperial Autonomy and a Smaller Himalayan Kingdom

The colonial state in India was engaged with Tibet from the late nineteenth century onwards. Suspicious of growing Russian influence, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, sent British troops, under Colonel Younghusband, to Lhasa in 1904. The British retreated from Lhasa after Younghusband left Tibet for India, later that year.[32]. In 1906, because of the British expedition to Tibet, China concluded a treaty with Britain. Then in 1910, China sent troops to Lhasa. Subsequently, the Chinese "warden of marches," Zhao Erfeng, issued a decree to depose the Dalai Lama.[33] The colonial state now felt threatened with the assertive Chinese presence in central Tibet. Direct Chinese control over central Tibet would change the status quo in Himalayas, dotted with the quasi-independent Himalayan polities of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim. In order to stave off any further Chinese threats, the British mounted a series of military offensives, in what was then known as the Assam Himalayas, and pushed the outer limit of the border of the British Indian territory.[34]

In 1911, in the backdrop of the unfolding Chinese Republican revolution, the Chinese and Tibetan armies fought pitched battles that resulted in the victory of the Tibetan army by the end of 1912.[35] The 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1913, after the Chinese forces had left, and resumed the temporal and spiritual government of Tibet. The withdrawal of the army by Beijing meant the end of direct Chinese influence in Tibet for several decades.[36]

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[32]A. Lamb, *Tibet, China &India, 1914-1950: Ahistory of Imperial Diplomacy*, (City: Oxford Books, 1989), 9.

[33]Eekelen, *Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China,* 12.

[34]Ibid, 10.

[35]R. Kobayashi, "Tibet in the Era of 1911 Revolution". *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, *3*(2014),91–113.

[36]Eekelen*, Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China*, 12-13.

The interim President, Yuan Shikai, announced the foundation of "the Republic of Five Races," which included the Manchurians, the Hans, the Mongolians, the Muslims and the Tibetans after the Revolution.[37] Furthermore, the Chinese President also requested the Dalai Lama to participate in the Republic. The Dalai Lama maintained that his authority did not originate from China and further asserted that the relationship between Tibet and China mirrored a priest-patron dynamic.[38] This was followed by a Tibetan declaration of independence. Therefore, the Republic of China did not recognize the Dalai Lama government and attempted to annex Tibet.[39]

As Tibet became, *de facto*, an autonomous state, the British feared unrest and conflicts in Tibet, a region, that was by now, crucial to the maintenance of peace among the Himalayan polities of Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. In 1912, the British issued a memorandum on their Tibetan policy, stating that they sought to maintain peace on the northern border of their colonial territory. Additionally, they organised a conference to settle the Tibetan issues and maintained that Tibet had a right to govern its domestic affairs within the overall framework of Chinese suzerainty.[40] The Chinese were initially reluctant to participate in a conference, instead emphasized on a discussion on the British memorandum. China also wanted the proposed conference to be held in London, since a shift of location to the British capital would indicate a meeting between two sovereign political states. Prioritizing their own interests, the British suggested Darjeeling as a venue of the conference. Finally, Shimla, the summer capital of British India, was selected as the venue.[41]

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[37]Kobayashi, "Tibet in the Era of 1911 Revolution", 91–113.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Eekelen, *Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China*, 14.

However, just before accepting the invitation, the Chinese government declared Chen Yifan the "Commissioner for the Pacification of Tibet", this provoked an immediate British protest. The Chinese Government also objected to the equal status of the three plenipotentiaries. Exasperated, the British representative communicated to the Chinese authorities that the negotiations would proceed without Chen Yifan, if he did not arrive at the meeting with undisputed power over plenipotentiary. Chinese authorities also attempted to send a memorandum to the effect, that a new arrangement was necessary to enable China to regain her former position in Tibet.[42] Sir Henry McMahon acted as the mediator between the widely-divergent Chinese claims to full sovereignty over Tibet and the Tibetan demands for an acknowledgement of independence, which indicated that a, rescinding of the 1906 Convention, and the delineation of a frontier with China that would include all Tibetan people.[43]

While Britain rejected the independence of Tibet, it devised a distinction between Outer Tibet, west of the Yangtse, where Chinese influence would be severely restricted, and Inner Tibet, a broad peripheral area next to China, where the latter was allowed to send officials and troops with, however, a caveat that this area could not be converted into a Chinese province.[44]Britain proposed the Tibetans modify their claim to complete independence, but insisted that in return China recognise the autonomy of Outer Tibet.[45] McMahon also made it clear, that from thereon, that Chinese troops would not be allowed to

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[41]Lamb, *Tibet, China &India 1914-1950*, 10.

[42]Eekelen, I*ndian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China*,15.

[43]K. Gupta, "Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibetan Trade and Intercourse: Its Origin and Significance" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13 (1978), 696-702.

[44]Eekelen, *Indian Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute with China*, 16.

[45]Ibid.

be stationed in Tibet. Importantly, final drafts of these texts had been mutually agreed upon by British and Tibetan delegates. They completed formal discussions about the north-eastern border of India, which later became the "McMahon Line". The Chinese were not invited to participate in these deliberations, and neither was their approval sought out.[46]

While China remained busy with its domestic affairs, in the aftermath of the 1911 Revolution, and the Government of Tibet powerless in the face of the British Indian government, the British succeeded in extracting special rights in Tibet. Sir Henry McMahon, during the Shimla Convention in 1914, had proposed a border located sixty miles south of the Chinese one. McMahon engaged in cartographic *legerdemain* by promulgating a rather mendacious map with the ulterior motive of dividing Tibet.[47] The Chinese government never formally accepted any of the agreements between Britain and Tibet. Thus, the Shimla Convention went down in history as a failed treaty.[48] Yet the McMahon line remained as a fictive border that divided India from Tibet and China.

[46]Ibid.

[47]A. Muratbekova, "The Sino-Indian Border Issue as a Factor for the Development of Bilateral Relations". *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, (vol) 2018, 5-6.

[48]Amit Ranjan, "India-China Boundary Disputes: An Overview", *Asian Affairs*, 47(2016), 101-114.

Post-colonial Nation states and the Border

With the departure of the British from the sub-continent, the government of India inherited both the McMahon line and the implicit special rights over Tibet. However, the ground reality stood in stark contrast, China, with its powerful People's Liberation Army, was determined to extend its control to territories which had formerly accepted the suzerainty of the Qing. In 1951 China "liberated" Tibet and began to administer all parts of this trans-Himalayan theocracy.[49] It was obvious that China would not accept India's special rights and privileges in Tibet. The Convention of 1913-14had taken place under the auspices of British imperialism at a time when China was weak. The Communist Party of China was determined to negate "past wrongs" by European imperial powers. India, on the other hand, had its own interests in Tibet, and sought to maintain the status quo in the trans-Himalayan region. India considered Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim to be polities located within the Indian sphere of influence.[50]

More importantly, as a newly emerging nation-state, India suffered from a typical postcolonial anxiety about its borders. Indeed, the border became a symbol of the deified *Bharat Mata* or Mother India, a symbolic icon, signifying the geo-body of a nation. However, the border that nationalist India claimed was an imperial border, and the country's position

[49]K. Quereshi, "Pakistan and the Sino-Indian Dispute", *Pakistan Horizon*, 15(1962),310.

[50]For details of Indian relationship with three Himalayan Kingdoms at the time of independence see: Belfiglio, Valentine John (1970) "The Foreign Relations of India with Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal between 1947-1967: An Analytical Framework for the study of Big Power-Small Power Relations." The University of Oklahoma, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Political Science, International Law and Relations.

had been further weakened by the Partition.[51] Pakistan emerged as a crucial claimant to India's territory in Kashmir, a territory that lacked any demarcated border previously, instead it only had a ceasefire line or a "line of control." From the Pakistani perspective, a new system of relations had to be set up that reflected this post-colonial reality.[52] India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, an anti-colonial nationalist, was not very comfortable with the imperial privileges that India had inherited because of the colonial imposition on Tibet. Under Nehru's leadership, India renounced its rights to Tibetan 1954.[53]

Communist China, in those difficult early days, desperately needed of recognition and allies. Nehru estimated that, in return for India's exertions on behalf of China, the People's Republic would let India exert influence over Asia and might even accept India's diplomatic leadership. Initially, India objected to Chinese actions in Tibet, but subsequently accepted the reality. In any case, India had expected that China would allow Tibet to retain its autonomy and would exercise nominal suzerainty. Premised on this hope, India reached the Sino-Indian

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[51]Sumathi Ramswamy has demonstrated how the icon of Bharat Mata overlapped with India's map and distinctly communicated an idea of India as a sacred entity. Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[52]See for details of twists and turns of Pakistan's China policy in Chapter 3 in this thesis.

[53]According to Karunakar Gupta "The Agreement "on Trade and Inter- course between the Tibet Region of China and India" was signed on April 29, 1954. In it, India gave up all the extra-territorial rights which the British Government of India had exercised in Tibet by virtue of the Anglo-Tibetan Trade Regulations (which were born out of the abortive Simla Convention and hence could not be treated as legally valid). The new agreement provided that the Government of India would retain its Consulate at Lhasa and the Trade Agencies at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok and, reciprocally, the Chinese government would be entitled to establish Trade Agencies in, New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong." K. Gupta, "Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibetan Trade and Intercourse: Its Origin and Significance",*Economic and Political Weekly*, 13 (1978),701.

Agreement on Tibet in 1954.[54] However, India had miscalculated its position *vis-à-vis* the People's Republic of China (PRC), who, like other postcolonial nationalists, wished to control Tibet by centralizing governance.

With this treaty, India accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and gave up its special rights, and an agreement was reached on trade, commerce and the question of pilgrims. In the preamble to this agreement were mentioned the five principles based on which later India and China signed a diplomatic treaty.[55] In 1954, talks in Beijing between Premier Zhou Enlai and an Indian government delegation resulted in the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement, which formally envisioned "peaceful coexistence" between China and India. The India-China "honeymoon" of the 1950s began to show signs of strain by the latter half of the decade. In 1956, the CPC (Communist Party of China) issued its first official map of China and its surroundings, rejecting the McMahon Line of 1914. The map included large swathes of territory claimed by India within the borders of China. The Indian government reacted angrily, accusing the CPC of arbitrarily extending China's borders. In 1958, in order to strengthen Chinese control over the disputed territory, the government of China ordered the covert construction of a network of roads. India responded through the construction of military posts along the McMahon Line. This was unacceptable to the Chinese government.[56] Contradictory perceptions of British imperial borders and its differing interpretations by India and China, rooted in their varying historical experiences and political inclinations, led to border disputes.

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[54]See for details,K. Gupta,"Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibetan Trade and Intercourse: Its Origin and Significance", 2.

[55]K Qureshi,"Pakistan and the Sino-Indian Dispute". *Pakistan Horizon*, 15(1962),311.

[56]C. J. Rusko and K. Sasikumar, "India and China: From Trade to Peace?" *Asian Perspective*, 31(2007), 100-101.

Conclusion

As previously argued, India wanted to secure its northern border and considered itself a legatee to British-demarcated borders in the Himalayas. However, on the Western border, the British colonial authorities had not fully demarcated a land border between Kashmir and Tibet. This was a region that China considered vital to its strategic interests because it connected Tibet with Chinese Turkestan. As for the Eastern border was concerned, British India had secured special rights in Tibet, extended protectorate status to Sikkim, and regarded Tibet as an autonomous territory, albeit under nominal Chinese suzerainty. British India and the imperial authorities in the U.K. had secured special rights in Tibet through the Shimla Conference of 1913-14. The British demarcated a Tibet-Indian border and excluded China from the border-making deliberations. Sir Henry McMahon had negotiated this border, which remained a fictive line without Chinese consent.

After Independence, India regarded this border as the sacrosanct boundary of the Indian nation and had expected the status quo to prevail. It welcomed “revolutionary” China, with the expectation that the latter would also accept the border, including McMahon line. Although, “revolutionary” China, decided to ignore the line as a British imperial imposition and sought to deny Indian claims to Aksai Chin in the West. This took place at a time when both India and China were vying for the leadership of the so-called Third World. The border conflict became a source of tension for the two Asian giants. Ironically, both these avowedly post-colonial nations remained imprisoned within the boundaries imposed by their former Imperial ruler.

Chapter 2

Communism, Democracy and Cartographic Anxiety over the Border

The competing interpretations of the border by India and China clashed continuously with the Communist Party of China (hereafter CPC) coming to power in China. Many within Indian government distrusted a CPC-governed China's intentions, about Tibet and the adjacent Himalayan border region. India's Deputy Prime Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel, argued for greater vigilance against the CPC, and senior Indian bureaucrats, associated with the state's foreign office, remained deeply suspicious of the country's powerful neighbor. Many leading Congress politicians expected that there would be trouble over India's ill-defined northern border and expressed their unease about the prospect of a CPC-governed Tibet, moreover, their firm ideological anti-communism only provided fuel to such sentiments. They became deeply concerned when China's intervention in Tibet, which led to the Tibetan rebellion.

Furthermore, India's non-communist opposition was deeply hostile to China's policy in Tibet. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, was an exception to this suspicion, as he sought to adopt a policy of accommodation and friendship towards China, albeit within the parameters of British-defined borders. However, this attitude did not adequately resonate with Chinese perceptions, for which the McMahon Line was an imperial imposition. The Chinese communists were also full of doubts about Indian democracy. For Mao Zedong, China was a revolutionary country, and it was therefore imperative that the PRC (People's Republic of China), would actively support revolutions in other countries. In the 1950s and early 1960s the CPC identified the United States as an imperial power that sought to dominate Asia and rest of the world. India was thus perceived to be a "non-revolutionary" nation that had not yet tied its interests to the "American Locomotive", in Mao's own

language.[57] However, the anxieties remained about whether in the long-run India could be trusted, especially with regards to the matter of Tibet, and its connection with Sinkiang and McMahon Line. According to Mao, the idea of national self-determination could only be implemented once imperialism had been crushed. Furthermore, Tibet constituted a southwestern gateway to China, and was thus a strategic military location. For these reasons, the CPC regarded the cultivation of a revolutionary regime in Tibet as a critical component of the "democratic transformation" of Tibetan society. Yet for many Tibetans this implied a loss of their traditional, feudal lifestyle, and they revolted against communist governance. Functioning, as the Tibetan spiritual leader and temporal head, the Dalai Lama, took shelter in India as the situation worsened. Soon skirmishes and disputes over the location of the border predominated the political relationship between the two countries.

[57]October 19, 1954 "Minutes of Chairman Mao Zedong's First Meeting with Nehru", *Wilson Center International History Declassified* https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117825.pdf (Accessed March 4, 2022).

I

Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai and Latent Tensions in India China Relationship between 1950 and 1956

At the time of its independence, India, under the Indian National Congress, enjoyed a close diplomatic relationship with the Kuomintang (KMT)-controlled Nationalist China. Yet there were still serious differences between the two polities over the status of Tibet. During the Asian Relations Conference held in Delhi between March 23 and April 4, 1947, Chinese delegates objected to the inclusion of a separate Tibetan delegation and the exclusion of Tibet from the map of China, which was displayed in the conference. Though the Indian Council of World Affairs, a non-governmental organization, had organized the conference, it was certainly a manifestation of Nehru's ideas. Differences of equal proportions, surfaced in 1948, over the course of a review of the Tibet Trade Agreement (1908), the Nanjing-based Nationalist government requested to rescind the treaty to India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Nehru claimed that, after its independence, India had considered its state the "inheritor of the rights and obligations", derived from the conventions concluded between British India and Tibet; and the relationship between India and Tibet had been governed by the Shimla Convention of 1914. This then, implied that, there was no validity of the treaty agreement. The statement shocked the Chinese Nationalist government, since the latter did not formally recognize the 1914 conference. The Nationalist Chinese government also felt uneasy when, in 1948-49, Tibet sent its delegations abroad. More importantly, in July 1949, Tibet shutdown the *Lhasa mission* of Nationalist China, and India reluctantly allowed them to pass through India. These factors caused unease between the Nationalist Chinese and India.[58]

[58]Yun-yuan Yang, "Controversies Over Tibet: China Versus India, 1947-49." *The China Quarterly* 111 (1987): 407–420.

India's became far more concerned when, in the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists, the communists began to exert their influence over Tibet in 1950. Referring to the military presence of PRC in Tibet, Vallabhbhai Patel immediately warned Nehru that "The Chinese Government has tried to delude [the Indian government by professions of peaceful intention." He further argued that the danger posed by China were "both communist and imperialist, "and pointed out categorically that the "Chinese and their source of inspiration, the Soviet Union, would not miss any opportunity" of manipulating discontent in the India's border areas. He further maintained that while, till that point, "the Communist Party of India has found some difficulty in contacting communists abroad, or in getting arms, literature, etc., from them" a Chinese-administered Tibet would mean that Indian would "have to deal with communist threats to its security along its northern and north-eastern frontiers, where, for supplies of arms and ammunition, they can safely depend on communist arsenals in China." Patel's views were shared by many high-ranking cabinet members and bureaucrats in India,[59] such as C. Rajagopalachari, who questioned the Nehru's Tibet policy, as well as Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, a senior bureaucrat and the secretary-general of Nehru's Ministry of External Affairs, along with B.N. Mullik, the director of the Intelligence Bureau.[60] Girja Bajpai advocated for a critical diplomatic opposition to the Communist administration of Tibet. However, India had few options to enact such a response, and Nehru knew that Indian government was incapable of defending the country on two fronts.

Thus, a cautious policy was adopted by Nehru. Despite, a close relationship between the Indian National Congress and the KMT, India was one of the first countries to recognize

[59]Chandrashekhar Das Gupta, "Nehru, Patel and China, Strategic Analysis", 38(2014): 717-724.

[60]Ibid, 717.

the PRC and establish diplomatic relations with Beijing.[61] Consequently, the early 1950s witnessed a "honeymoon period" between the two nations. The PRC, at the time, was an isolated regime in the world, while Nehru had emerged as a critical advocate of the rapidly decolonizing Asian and African countries. However, Nehru regarded the friendship with China as a crucial condition for the constitution of an Asian power bloc, as opposed to Cold War conflicts in Europe and Southeast Asia. He said that, "I have always thought that it is important, even essential if you like, that these two countries of Asia, India and China, should have friendly and as far as possible cooperative relations."[62] Nehru spent twelve days in China in October 1954, and previously in April 1954, the government of India relinquished all the erstwhile British Indian imperial rights to Tibet.[63] Nearly half a million Beijing residents greeted Nehru on his journey from the airport to his hotel and China and India soon announced the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence." The slogan *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* (Indians and Chinese are brothers) became immensely popular.[64]

Despite, this initial emotional outburst, India had been a cartographic product of British imperial control, and so the border between China and India remained contested. From the Chinese perspective, India had been the only country with which China had not settled the border, and China did not even recognize a line of control, between the countries. From the Indian perspective, the border was already settled during the colonial-era in the east,

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[61]B. R. Deepak, "India's Political Leaders and Nationalist China: Quest for a Sino-Indian Alliance", *China Report*, 50(2014): 215–231.

[62]India, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations: In Press Conferences (New Delhi 1961, 1963), Part I: 115. (Hereafter PMIPC)

[63]G. Zhang, "Sino-Indian Security Relations: Bilateral Issues, External Factors and Regional Implications", *South Asian Survey*, 12 (2005):61–74.

[64]Z. Zhu, "China-India Relations in the 21st Century: A Critical Inquiry", *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, 24 (2011):1-2.

but in the west it remained unsettled. The position of Tibet made India-China relations precarious. Colonial India viewed Tibet as a buffer-state between China and India, and China a nominal suzerainty over Tibet. In 1956, when the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited India along with Dalai and Panchen Lama, on the occasion of 2500 hundred years of the Buddha's birth, Dalai Lama confided in Nehru that a revolt was brewing in Tibet and in such an event he might seek asylum in India.[65] Even Zhou Enlai admitted to Nehru that, unfortunate developments had taken place in Tibet. [66] Many Indians regarded Tibet as a holy place, the abode of the Hindu deity Shiva, and they enjoyed a lively relationship with Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism. Indian political parties, ranging from the socialist political associations to the arch-conservative Hindu nationalist, such as, Bharatiya Jan Sangha, viewed the extension of the control of Chinese communists over Tibet with a deep sense of anxiety.[67] Within the government, apart from Nehru and Krishna Menon, there very few who regarded the PRC in a positive light.

More importantly, in the colonial era, the British had considered the McMahon Line as a critical demarcation that would safeguard their lucrative tea plantations in Assam. The British, thus, feared the prospects of a Tibet governed by China. To this end, they divided the area in the North-eastern Frontier in terms of an inner and outer line. The inner line constituted a second border, at the foothills, beyond which one required a permit to travel.

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[65]Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 180.

[66]Ibid, 180.

[67]For the socialist attitude towards Tibet please see Yogendra Yadav. "What Is Living and What Is Dead in Rammanohar Lohia?", *Economic and Political Weekly,* 40 (2010): 92-107. Accessed July 28, 2021. For the view of right-wing political parties please see B. Madhok, "India's Foreign Policy—The Jana Sangh View". *India Quarterly*, 23 (1967): 3-7.

The outer line was the actual border. However, in between the inner and outer lines were densely forested areas, inhabited by tribal communities.[68] Nehru had stressed repeatedly that the frontier in the east was "clearly defined by the McMahon Line which was fixed by the Simla Convention of 1914... that is our boundary – map or no map."[69] The importance attached to this sector led to India's decision to occupy Tawang. On February 12, 1951, an Indian political officer with an armed escort took control of Tawang and instructed the administrators of the Buddhist monastery at Tawang to not pay taxes to Lhasa.[70] Gradually, Indian officers occupied other regions in the Northeastern Frontier area, and India formed the Indian Frontier Administrative Services to deal with different tribal communities living in the area. Verrier Elwin, a British-born Indian citizen and an anthropologist, trained these officers to deal with local communities.[71] To further consolidate Indian rule in the region, the Government of India formed a committee under the deputy Defense minister Major-General M. S. Himmatsinji. The Himmatsinhji Committee prepared a report in two parts, in April and September 1951, and recommended that the government of India extend administrative control over remote tribal areas of NEFA, to engage in the welfare of the citizens, construct roads, and establish check-posts close to the frontier. According to the committee, in the regions where the boundary was undefined, India should decide its claims and negotiate to prevent unilateral occupation of these areas by Chinese or Tibetans, and, if necessary, in

[68]Guha, *India After Gandhi,* 180.

[69]Statement, November20. 1950, Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru Second Series (SWJN),vol. 15, pt II : 348; Nehru to BC Roy, November 15, 1950

[70]R. Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(2006):3883.

[71]Guha, *India After Gandhi,* 181.

disputed areas armed police might be stationed to prevent any infiltration.[72] Thus, in the post-colonial era, the government of India surreptitiously extended its control in the border region.

Similarly, China expanded its hold on the western sector. The adjoining Buddhist region of Leh, and the Shia Muslim area of Kargil, jointly known as Ladakh, had been a part of the Dogra kingdom of Kashmir for nearly 150 years. It was separated from Chinese controlled Xinjiang by the plateau land of Aksai Chin. In 1842, an agreement had recognized the region as a part of Kashmir. The British considered the region critical in preventing Russian intrusion from central Asia during the "Great Game" or the scramble for Asian territory by those European great powers. However, the status of the boundaries, at the time of Indian independence, in the western and middle sectors, appeared to Indians as "un-defined."[73] The Ardagh Alignment of 1897 included the Aksai Chin area within the territorial boundaries of India, while the MacDonald Note of 1899 placed it within China's purview. China's refusal to respond to the MacDonald offer led the British to make further unilateral alterations as determined by their own changing perceptions. After 1950, the Chinese used this no-man's-land (Aksai Chin) to connect the Xinjiang town Yarkand with Lhasa. In 1956 the Chinese began constructing a road capable of carrying military convoy and completed it in 1957.[74] Such extensions of sovereign rule to border areas that had been lightly governed in the colonial era showed that underneath the apparent bonhomie between India and China there existed latent tensions.

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[72]Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60",3883.

[73]A. Das Gupta& L. M. Luthi (eds.), *The Sino Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives* (First South Asia), (place: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 9.

[74]R. Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(2006): 3882.

Beyond the strategic expansion of Chinese and Indian interests in these border regions, there also existed fundamental differences in the philosophy of foreign policy espoused by Nehruvian India and Communist China. Nehru avoided aligning with any power bloc to further the cause of peace and believed that India could play the role of an honest mediator in global politics.[75] In contrast, 1950's PRC utilised foreign policy as a tactical step in the international class struggle. India constituted one among many determinants, with in the structure of Chinese foreign policy, which ultimately aimed to oppose U.S. Global designs .Such a policy was developed out of the United Front tactics, espoused by the USSR in the build-up towards the Second World War, that aimed at "a limited and temporary alignment between a communist party or state and one or more non-communist political units."[76] Since the Yenan years (1935-1947) the CPC had prescribed a flexible policy that could switch from violent to a non-violent political struggle. As Mao remarked, "War and peace transform themselves into each other because in a class society such contradictory things as war and peace are characterised by identity under certain circumstances." Thus, in contradiction to Nehru's philosophy, war was considered "in terms of its utility and in rational terms of power relations," and was not necessarily regarded as a negative phenomenon.[77] Thus there existed fundamental differences in the Indian and Chinese approaches towards global affairs.

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[75]A speech in Washington, D.C., December 18, 1956, printed in the U.S. Department of State Bulletin, January 14, 1957: 4950. https://wordpress.viu.ca/davies/nehru-on-non-alignment/ accessed on 30 July 2021.

[76]V. Yaacov, "India's Border Conflict with China: A Perceptual Analysis", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17(1982): 622-623.

[77]Ibid.

II

The Making of a Border Dispute 1951-58

India was unaware of China's real attitude towards the border between India and Tibet. Though Zhou Enlai in 1951 had proposed to demarcate the border, the matter was never followed up. Nehru had requested the Indian ambassador and noted historian K. M. Panikkar to press the issue with China, but Panikkar refused to pursue the issue as Zhou stressed on cultural and trading rights.[78] In 1954 India renounced the treaty of Lhasa, signed between British India and the former Tibetan political authority in 1904, and yet, T.N. Kaul, a member of the Indian delegation negotiating with China, recorded in his note that within five years the Chinese would attempt to push their claim lines and India should, therefore, establish check-posts at important points to prevent Chinese encroachment.[79] Soon after, the 1954 agreement, both India and China disputed the ownership of a grazing ground called Bara Hoti along the Uttar Pradesh-Tibet border. Nehru, during his talks with Zhou, in Beijing in October 1954, indirectly referred to the locations of borders on Chinese maps. Zhou tacitly answered that China had been reprinting old maps, and these could not constitute the basis for fixing the boundary lines.[80] He did not raise any objections to the new Indian maps which showed a firm boundary in all three sectors and included Aksai Chin within India.[81]After the dispute over the grazing ground at Hoti, G. B. Pant, the Indian Home Minister felt that the Chinese had "their eye on Hoti." He communicated to Nehru that the boundary in this area might have

[78]Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal",3883.

[79]Ibid, 3885.

[80]Das Gupta & Luthi, *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, 10.

[81]Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal", 3885.

to be defined through negotiations.[82] In 1956, while visiting India, Zhou indicated that China would like to accept the border in the east under its own terms and conditions, which could then lead to a tacit recognition of the McMahon Line, but no direct reference to the line was made, since it was an "imperialist intervention."[83]

In September1957, to India's utter surprise, China announced that it had constructed a highway to connect Xinjiang and Tibet. The road had a strategic importance to the PRC, as it would substantially lessen the logistical difficulties faced by the PLA in Aksai Chin and would further enable the army to establish effective control over Tibet. The Government of India was taken by surprise since Premier Zhou had not mentioned the road, which now ran through a region that India regarded as part of its own territory. Indian military patrols also confirmed the construction of the road. Meanwhile, in October 1958, India lodged an official protest about the road with Chinese government. [84]

[82]Ibid.

[83]Das Gupta & Luthi, *The Sino Indian War of 1962,*10.

[84]"Geographic Intelligence Memorandum CIA China India Border Dispute", CIA RR GM59-3 20 November 1959, (Accessed on 30 June 2021). https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79-01006A000100140001-1.pdf

Tibetan Rebellion and the Border

From 1958 onwards the PRC stepped up its internal transformation of the national minority areas. During the time of the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962), the People's Commune "democratic reforms" were extended to areas like Tibet and the Muslim areas in Sinkiang. Around this time, China launched a campaign to strongly overthrow the "feudal remnants."[85] Consequently, in1959, Tibet witnessed a massive rebellion against the PRC's administration. The Tibetan rebellion brought about a fundamental transformation in the attitude of the government of India, and subsequently, of the PRC's towards India, this left an enduring mark on the Sino-Indian relations.[86] From this point on, Nehru faced serious opposition, from within the government and the country, to his China policy. Yet he pragmatically followed a policy of "peaceful containment" of China. But senior bureaucrats, such as G. S. Bajpai, K.P.S Menon and R. N. Kaul, politicians such as G.B. Pant[87], and Vice President S. Radhakrishnan, did not share Nehru's policy of accommodation with the PRC.[88] Opposition political parties, except for segments of the Communist Party of India, exhibited a significant degree of hostility to any political accommodation with China, and the rebellion in Tibet further intensified the opposition to the People's Republic's designs in Tibet and the Indian border.

The anti-communist revolt in Lhasa had challenged the PRC's governance of the autonomous region. On March 17, the 14th Dalai Lama, (Tibet's political and theological

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[85]W. A. C. Adie, "China's Foreign Policy", *The World Today*,24 (1968):115.

[86]C. Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's changing relations with India and the Soviet Union". *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8 (2006): 54–101.

[87]The attitude of G S Bajpai, KPS Menon or R N Kaul or politicians such Vallabhbhai Patel, GB Pant can be glimpsed from the writings of Srinath Raghavan.

[88]Dr. Radhakrishnan's view was available from Foreign and Commonwealth office Memorandum, 1961

head) left the capital while the revolt escalated further. On March 20Chinese authorities began suppressing the rebellion and transferred more PLA units to Tibet from various parts of China. On March 28, Zhou Enlai formally dissolved the Kashag (the Tibetan local government) and transferred power in Tibet to the hands of the "Preparatory Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region." Three days later, on March 31, the Dalai Lama and his followers crossed the border and sought asylum in India. By the end of May 1959, 7,000 Tibetan refugees followed the Dalai Lama to India.[89]

India's granting of political asylum to the Dalai Lama and his followers escalated tensions between India and China. In 1959, the PLA's successful diffusion of the Tibetan rebellion led the PRC to extend its governance to the entirety of Tibet. Public opinion in India had swung in favor of Tibet and become extremely critical of China.[90] Nehru tried to adopt a nuanced position in order to achieve a balance in India's overall policy toward China. While expressing respect for China's "special interests" in Tibet, he had a deep concern about Beijing's response to the unrest.[91] More importantly, in a democratic electoral set up, his hands were tied because of growing public resentment of China, primarily orchestrated by the Bharatya Jan Sangh's street-level agitations.

Chinese leaders did not comprehend India's democratic and pluralist political system. They regarded the criticism from India's press and political parties as indications of the Indian government's support for the rebels. On March 17, Zhou Enlai claimed that the Tibetan rebellion was fuelled by the Indian government and that both Britain and the United States were providing active support to the rebels. Zhou claimed that the commanding center

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[89]C. Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's changing relations with India and the Soviet Union", *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8(2006):54–101.

[90]S. C. S. "Indian Reactions to the Crisis in Tibet", *The World Today*, 15(1959): 236–246.

[91]Ibid.

of the rebellion was in Kalimpong on Indian Territory.[92] On March 25, Deng Xiaoping asserted that Nehru was deeply involved in the rebellion in Lhasa, though he argued that the time had not yet come for Beijing to voice public criticism of India. Quoting Mao, referring to India, Deng argued that "one is committing suicide if one has done many unjust things."[93] Mao, in a meeting of Chinese leaders, suggested that Beijing should launch "an open counteroffensive" justifying its stand on Tibet. Though Mao did not regard India to bean "imperialist country," and believed that attacks on Nehru and India would run the risk of increasing the strength of the enemy camp and further isolating the PRC in the international community, he was convinced that the Indian government had assisted the rebellion.

The situation worsened when the Dalai Lama, reportedly with the help of the Indian government, issued a statement on April 18, calling for Tibet to be independent of China, and announced that he was grateful to the Indian government for granting him asylum.[94] Mao now believed that the time had come to "expose" India's alleged role in the Tibetan rebellion, and the PRC launched an educational propaganda campaign asserting that "the British imperialists have acted in collusion with the Indian expansionists to intervene openly in China's internal affairs, in the hope of taking over Tibet."[95] From his theoretical perspective, Mao believed that by "pursuing unity through struggle" *vis-à-vis* India and Nehru, China could assist the Indian people in learning the truth about Tibet.[96]

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[92]Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's changing relations with India and the Soviet Union", 85.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid, 86.

[95]Ibid, 87.

[96]Ibid.

Border Dispute and War

The rebellion in Tibet escalated to the possibility of a full-blown military confrontation between Indian and China over the matter of the border. PLA troops pursued Tibetan rebels fleeing south into India, Nepal and Bhutan. This was their consorted attempt at sealing the disputed border with India. The Indians also deployed additional troops at the border to deal with the influx of Tibetan refugees and to defend the border against possible Chinese advances.[97] This further led to armed clashes between Chinese and Indian forces along the McMahon Line as well as in the Western Sector. The clash at Longju on August 25 and at the Kongka Pass on October 21, 1959 marked the beginning of a new stage in Sino-Indian relations. Nehru, however, was still willing to negotiate with China.

After the Longju incident occurred, Nehru faced questions in the Indian parliament about the border. Newspapers also mounted bitter criticism of the Prime Minister on the border question. Hoping to not further alienate the Chinese leadership, Nehru provided evasive answers to the parliament.[98] He conceded that China had indeed built a road but contended that the boundary in Ladakh was not strictly defined. The Indian government was prepared to discuss unsettled disputed areas but contested Chinese claims in the east and steadfastly held NEFA to be Indian Territory. This did not satisfy the opposition representatives, who thought that the government had not been alert to China's activities and was withholding important information.[99] Following a discussion in Parliament, Nehru agreed to release a White Paper on these issues. Once this document was released, he faced

[97]R. Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60: A Reappraisal", *Economic and Political Weekly*,41(2006):3887.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid.

enormous criticism in the parliament and in the press and the public.[100] To add fuel to fire, Zhou Enlai wrote back on November 7, 1959:

> This proposal is in effect an extension of the Indian Government's proposal contained in its note dated September 10 that neither side should send its armed personnel to Longju, to the entire border between China and India, and moreover a proposal to separate the troops of the two sides by as great a distance as 40kilometers. If there is any need to increase this distance, the Chinese Government is also willing to give it consideration. In a word, both before and after the formal delimitation of the boundary between our two countries through negotiations, the Chinese Government is willing to do its utmost to create the most peaceful and most secure border zones between our two countries, so that our two countries will never again have apprehension or come to a clash on account of border issues. If this proposal of the Chinese Government is acceptable to the Indian Government, concrete measures for its implementation can be discussed and decided upon at once by the two Governments through diplomatic channels.[101]

In fact, from September 1959, the Chinese leaders appeared to be willing to accept Indian control over the disputed territories in the eastern sector if India in return accepted China's control over parts of Aksai Chin. China was ready for such concessions because India's “trade embargo” in 1959 had restricted Beijing's control of Tibet.[102]

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[100]Ibid.

[101]Letter from the Prime Minister of China to the Prime Minister of India: November 1959 Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Governments of India and China Correspondence Nehru-Zhou”, *Ministry of External Affairs,* India, WHITE PAPER III, (November 1959 - March 1960):70

In response to Zhou's proposal, Nehru suggested that India withdraw to the west of China's claim line and China should pull back east of India's claim line. To China this was unacceptable because they would have to then evacuate nearly 20,000 square miles and abandon the Aksai Chin road.[103] Nehru had actually wanted to couple this proposal with an offer to utilize the area in Aksai Chin across which the road was built, but Home Minister Pant, had objected to the offer. Nehru now realized that public opinion in India, and to some extent even among his colleagues, had turned hostile to these negotiations. Nehru's hands were tied. Finally, in 1960, historian S. Gopal, son of the then-Vice President Radhakrishnan, convinced Nehru that India had a firm historical claim over Aksai Chin.[104] In February 1960, in a conversation with former Indian Civil service officer and Tibetologist Hugh Richardson, Vice President Radhakrishnan confided that he had disagreed with India's Tibet policy since 1950. Dr. Radhakrishnan further added that Nehru would meet with Zhou Enlai before attending the Prime Ministers' Conference in London. Radhakrishnan stated that the government of India would try to obtain a settlement of the border dispute based on Chinese acceptance of the McMahon line and Indian acquiescence to the continued Chinese occupation of the area in Ladakh.[105] Under pressure from the parliament, public opinion and from his colleagues from within the Congress party, Nehru hardened his stand. After all, as a democrat, he had to abide by the decision adopted by his parliament. Cartographic anxiety had reached its height among Indians, and it had fused with their natural sympathy for Tibet.

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[103]Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute", 3889.

[105]J A Scot to C M Anderson February 11, 1960 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Memorandum Relations between India and China DOI 133/148

In January 1960, the CPC leadership also decided to settle the border dispute with India through negotiations. China had signed a border agreement with the Burma-based McMahon line, with the idea that this would set a precedent for future negotiations with India and other countries.[106] At the summit meeting of April 1960 with Nehru, Zhou hoped to reach a consensus on McMahon Line, while India was supposed to accept Chinese control over Aksai Chin. The meeting was doomed to failure as Nehru's hands were tied by Indian public opinion and hostility to China among politicians. More importantly, Nehru was not ready to negotiate the entire border.[107] Thus when, in the opening session on April 20th, Nehru emphasized that, "the question of demarcation of the entire frontier does not arise," he had expected a long stalemate on the issue, but the Chinese leaders had different plans.

In 1961, the Indian army realized that it did not possess the logistical capabilities to fight a full-scale war in the Himalayas.[108] Both China and India in the summer of 1961 followed a policy of moving troops to the sensitive areas in the border. China moved towards its claim line and India installed border posts closer to Indian claim lines. Indians believed that the Chinese would not disturb these token positions.[109] Under Nehru's order, Indians started patrolling the border in Ladakh vigilantly, though they were instructed to avoid clashes. In May 1962, the PLA, after assuming a warlike posture, retreated in Chip Chap valley, and in June, the PLA surrounded an Indian post in Galwan valley in Ladakh. In September 1962 there took place sporadic clashes in the NEFA in the disputed Thagla

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[106]C. Dai, China's Strategy for Sino Indian Boundary Disputes, 1950-1962", *Asian Perspective*, 43(2019):449.

[107]Srinath, "Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute", 3889.

[108]A. Das Gupta, and L. M. Luthi (eds.), *The Sino Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives* (City: Routledge, 2017), 11.

[109]Ibid.

area.[110] Finally, full-scale war beganwith a Chinese attack on October 20, 1962. The PLA came to control the area up to the Chinese claim line.[111] After four days, fighting was halted on October 24, when Zhou offered that neither side should cross the claim line in Ladakh, and that the Chinese army would withdraw to the north of the McMahon Line in NEFA. Nehru wanted the border to be returned to the respective positions prior to September 8, 1962.[112] Since Zhou did not agree to such a proposal, the fighting resumed on November 17-18, and the Chinese army pushed the Indians to the Bramhaputra valley. On October 19, 1962, Zhou declared a unilateral ceasefire from November 21, and the PLA withdrew to the lines held before the October 20.[113] Thus, the border returned to the Macartney-Macdonald Line in Aksai Chin, while in the east it roughly corresponded to the McMahon Line. The PRC, therefore, achieved most of its objectives through war.

[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid, 12.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Cheng, Joseph Yu-Shek Cheng and Franklin Wankun Zhang. "Chinese foreign relation strategies under Mao and Deng: A Systematic and Comparative Analysis." *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 14 (1999): 91-114.

Conclusion

This chapter displays the varying approaches that India and China adopted towards the border they shared. India had been armed with colonial documents regarding the northern border and wanted to negotiate based on this historical evidence. The country was prepared to sacrifice certain rights and privileges that India inherited from the colonial state. Nehru had emphasised on a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the border. However, public opinion and parliamentary debate also determined the ways in which the border conflict was negotiated by the Indian state. As in other post-colonial nation-states, a cartographic anxiety prevailed over the idea of the border. India disregarded the erstwhile colonial state's policy of approaching the border only from the perspective of protecting its economic assets. Rather, post-colonial India tried to deepen its governance by extending the rights of citizenship to the tribal communities living in intractable border areas. This brought forth the Indian state into direct contact with a similar process being undertaken by the PRC in Tibet in the east. Moreover, Indian public opinion had been swayed against China due to the Tibetan rebellion and the exile of the Dalai Lama. Most Indian politicians, including Congress members, were at unease about India's Tibet policy.

From the Chinese perspective, their revolution was surrounded by hostile foreign powers. China also felt that it had to consolidate the revolution at home, and it thus embarked upon a policy of democratic reform in Tibet. However, a significant section of the Tibetan people, and the theocratic head of Vajrayana Buddhism and temporal leader of the Tibet government, the Dalai Lama, revolted against Communist rule, and when the Tibetan rebellion was crushed, the Dalai Lama and many of his followers took shelter in India. This obviously marked a shift in Chinese attitudes towards India, which they came to regard as aligned with the "imperialist powers" of the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Since then, the PRC, though apparently following a strategic path of negotiations,

had kept open the policy of a military solution, and in 1960, when negotiations failed, they opted for a confrontation. India had expected a limited border confrontation and had grossly underestimated China's ability to secure its aims with respect to the border.

Chapter 3

The Dragon and the Crescent: The Changing Nature of Sino-Pakistani Relationship

International relations between Pakistan and China have centered on their relationship with India. In the 1950s and early-60s, China criticized Pakistan for becoming a conduit for the Cold War in Asia due to the pacts the latter had made with the United States. Pakistan even proposed a common defense pact 1959 to India hinting at threats from communist China, and India's rejection of the plan was a turning point in Pakistan's attitude towards the PRC. Yet as India and China clashed over the border, Pakistan softened its attitude towards the PRC, and the latter also reciprocated. Though Pakistan was officially aligned with the PRC's principal adversary, the United States, China still supported Pakistan. To Pakistan, China appeared to be a trusted ally regarding India. The Pakistani military *junta* continued to have hostile relations with India because of an internal political necessity to placate irredentist sentiments regarding Kashmir. The U.S. tended to restrain Indo-Pakistani hostility and claimed to follow a policy of neutrality in relation to conflicts between Pakistan and India. China, because of its international isolation in mid-sixties, embraced Pakistan as a good friend, and Pakistan came to regard China as a new, and more reliable, patron, particularly in terms of the supply of arms during its military engagement with India. Thus, during the India-Pakistan war of 1965, Chinese criticism of India emboldened Pakistan, and China and Pakistan emerged as close allies, quite unaffected by international tensions between the PRC and the United States. The 1965 War, thus, permanently altered the dynamics of international relations in South Asia.

The Sino-Pakistan Relationship between 1950 and 1962

Pakistan recognized the PRC on January 4, 1950, becoming the first Muslim majority nation, and only the third non-communist country, after India and Burma. The first interaction between Pakistan and the Communist government of China occurred in 1949. In September 1949, India devalued its currency and Pakistan refused to follow suit, leading to a trade disrupter between the two countries. At that time, Pakistan was importing coal from India, and in turn, exporting cotton and jute to India. The unavailability of transportation, and coal, to run the limited industrial setup in the country, caused a setback to Pakistan's economy. At that critical juncture, the PRC came up with an offer of "coal for cotton barter deal" which helped Pakistan's battered economy to recover substantially.[114] In 1951, Major General N.M. Raza, from the Defence Service of Pakistan, was assigned the position of First Ambassador to Beijing.[115] In 1952, a Sino-Pakistan trade deal was agreed upon and Pakistan exported Rs. 97.2 million worth of cotton to China under its provisions.[116] In 1953, Pakistan signed a bilateral trade agreement with China.

Despite such smooth progress in their relationship, there existed latent tensions on the issue of theborder between Pakistan and China. In 1948, Pakistan had fought a war with India and extended its control over the northwestern part of the former princely state of Kashmir, consequently, Pakistan shared a border with China. According to Indian sources, China claimed parts of Hunza and Gilgit as its territory, which lies in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

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[114]A. Jahangir & U. Javaid, "Pakistan-China Strategic Relationship: A Glorious Journey of 55 Years", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 52(2015):162.

[115]Ibid.

[116]N.Mahdi, "Sino-Pakistan Relations: Historical Background", *Pakistan Horizon*, 39(1986): 60–68.

From 1953 onwards Chinese troops carried out localised intrusions into Hunza.[117] China also viewed Pakistan's attitude towards the United States with suspicion. Though Liaqat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, had made it clear that the country would not join either camp in the Cold War, he was clearly inclined towards U.S.[118] In fact, he cancelled his trip to the Soviet Union when he was offered a visit to the U.S.[119] In 1954, Pakistan aligned itself with the United States and started receiving massive amounts of U.S. aid. The U.S. believed that Pakistan was committed to preventing "red imperialism" and Pakistan on the other hand, used this alliance to secure modern arms and weaponry to attain parity with India.[120]Beijing obviously, bitterly criticized Pakistan's alliance with the U.S. A *People's Daily* correspondent argued that Pakistan's diplomatic treaties with the U.S. and Turkey would constitute a stumbling block towards peace in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The

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[117]"When Nehru rejected Pakistan's Offer of 'Joint Defence' Pact Against China", *The Week,* May 27, 2020,https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2020/05/27/when-nehru-rejected-pakistan-offer-of-joint-defence-pact-against-china.html (Accessed May 30, 2021).

[118]"Pakistan is neither tied to the apron strings of the Anglo-American Block, nor is a camp follower of the Communist bloc. It has steered clear of the inter-bloc rivalry and has an absolutely independent foreign policy" stated Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan in a statement on March 8, 1951. Cited in, Rais A. Khan, "Pakistan-United States Relations: An Appraisal", *American Studies International* 23(1985): 83-102.

[119]It had been argued that Liaquat Ali Khan maneuvered the invitation as "a move on the political chess board; the United States had invited Nehru and, fearing that America would be captivated by Nehru's charm, Liaquat Ali Khan applied shock tactics by arranging his invitation from Kremlin." F. M. Innes, "The Political Outlook in Pakistan," Pacific Affairs, XXVI (1953), 311. Once invited by Washington, he canceled his trip to Soviet Union. Chaudhri, Mohammed Ahsen. "Pakistan's Relations with the Soviet Union." *Asian Survey* 6, 9(1966): 492-500.

[120]A. Jalal, "Towards the Baghdad Pact: South Asia and Middle East defence in the Cold War, 1947-1955", *The International History Review*, 11(1989):409–433.

article, further predicted that these pacts would turn Pakistan into an American "war base" and jeopardize its own security and sovereignty as well.[121]

Nonetheless, Pakistan was not completely averse to opening a relationship with Communist China. In 1952, during the Korean War (1950-53), a Pakistani delegation attended a World Peace Council sponsored conference hosted in China and addressed by Mao Zedong.[122] In 1955, the Pakistani Prime Minster Mohammad Ali Bogra met, for the first time, the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai during the Bandung Conference.[123] During the Conference, Bogra possibly reassured Zhou that Pakistan had no quarrel with the PRC, and that its real confrontation was with India.[124] In 1956, Suhrawardy, as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, went on an official tour of China, and in 1957, Zhou Enlai reciprocated by visiting Pakistan. Thus, in the 1950s, the Pakistan-China relationship remained cordial, though not marked by the intense bonhomie that could be noted in the case of India.

In 1958 Pakistan witnessed a formal military takeover of state power, and the military junta, headed by Ayub Khan, was known for its pro-United States stance in international politics.[125] Domestically, this was reflected by the military *junta's* banning of the Communist Party. Irked by Chinese intrusion into the Hunza and Gilgit areas in Kashmir, Ayub Khan

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[121]A. H. Syed, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale*, (city: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), 56-58.

[122] See Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, later President of the independent Bangladesh, went as a young Pakistani delegate to the conference. He left his impression of China in his unfinished memoir posthumously published. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *Osompatoatmojiboni*(*Unfinished Memoir*), (Dhaka: The University Press, 2012), 225-234.

[123]Mahdi, "Sino-Pakistan Relations: Historical Background", 60-68.

[124]Vidya Prakash Dutt, "China and Indo-Pakistani relations", International *Studies,* 8 (1-2):126-27.

[125]A. Jalal,"Towards the Baghdad pact: South Asia and Middle East Defence in the Cold War, 1947-1955", *The International History Review*, 11(1989):409–433.

warmed up to India.[126]Pakistan welcomed the Taiwanese Haji Mission in Karachi in 1959. Ayub also remarked in an interview that, "The subcontinent would be vulnerable to attack within five years. Chinese occupation of Tibet and road construction activities in Afghanistan poses a serious threat from the north. It is a threat that cannot be overlooked by wishful thinking."[127]

Pakistan's apprehension of China's plans on the north of its border increased with the suppression of the Tibetan rebellion. On March 30, 1959, the Dalai Lama escaped to India. Pakistan had been closely observing the declining relationship between India and China. Mohammed Ali, Pakistan's Ambassador to Japan, said on April 20, 1959, "The Tibetan issue has jolted Asian people out of their complacency. The Tibetan revolt should have more impact on Asia than the invasion of Hungary by Russia. The Chinese have followed the same pattern, which should open the eyes of Asia to the danger of red imperialism."[128] On April 24, 1959, President Ayub offered a joint defense agreement with India.[129] This suggestion was welcomed by freedom fighter and veteran Gandhian social activist Jayaprakash Narayan, and Field Marshall Cariappa, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Indian Army. But Nehru was apprehensive about such a move.[130] On May 4, 1959, Nehru announced the following in the Indian House of Commons, the Lok Sabha:

> "I am all for settling our problems with Pakistan and living normal, friendly and neighborly lives. But we do not want to have a common defence policy which is

[126]J. N. Dixit,*India-Pakistan in War & Peace* (city: Routledge, 2002):127-29.

[127]Ibid.127-29.

[128] Ibid.

[129]Ibid.

[130]N. D. Palmer, *South Asia and United States Policy,* (Place: Houghton Mifflin, 1966):206-207.

> almost some kind of military alliance. I do not understand against whom people talk about common defence policies."[131]

Nehru still believed that that India's relationship with the PRC could be sustained. He considered any agreement with Pakistan as an alliance with a junior partner in the Cold War. Ayub Khan later wrote in his autobiography:

> I first tried to assure the Indian leaders that the proposal did not violate the 'nonalignment policy' professed by India. The crux of the proposal, I stated in unequivocal terms, was that, once differences between the two nations were resolved, the Indian and Pakistani forces then facing each other could be released to defend their respective territory.[132]

The military agreements, Beijing remarked in another comment, enabled the United States to build large-scale military bases openly in Pakistan and to use them against neighboring, peace-loving countries. It was noted that the newspapers in Pakistan did not "even attempt to cover up the hostile provisions of the bilateral agreement aimed against India and Afghanistan." China believed that within Pakistan people of all strata were mounting a resistance to the state's current policies, and charged that the rulers of the country, in their reliance upon American power to maintain their unstable control and to suppress the struggle waged by the people at home, were deepening instability.[133]

Beijing also criticized Ayub Khan for his alleged attempts to drive a wedge between India and China. Jen-min Jih-Pao denounced the Pakistani Foreign Minister for sowing

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[131]Dixit, *India-Pakistan in War and Peace*, 127-29.

[132]Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 126 cited in George J. Lerski, "The Foreign Policy of Ayub Khan." *Asian Affairs,* 1(197):255–73.

[133]Dutt, "China and Indo-Pakistani Relations", 129.

discord in the relations between China and India and for agitating for the Cold War'.[134] Beijing also asserted that the Pakistani government had only increased its dependency on the U.S.by allowing them to use armed forces and establish bases in Pakistan. The U.S. and Pakistan, from the Chinese perspective, seriously threatened the country's security. They argued that this policy of the Pakistani ruling clique was diametrically opposed to the interests of peace in Asia.[135]

Ayub Khan, on his part, was concerned about the implications of the Chinese military victory in 1962. Yet what later worried the Pakistani dictator was the outpouring of international sympathy for India and the flow of arms from the United States and United Kingdom to India. Pakistani public opinion expressed dismay with Ayub Khan for his pro-Western stand when it was announced in Washington that $525 million in military aid would be extended to India.[136]Ayub had realized that a militarily rejuvenated India would make it impossible for the Pakistani army to pursue its "pet project" of occupying Kashmir through military force. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* in January 1964, Ayub claimed that in December 1962, Nehru himself had admitted that "Indian military preparedness had been directed primarily against Pakistan." Pakistan was, therefore, disappointed with the United States when the latter decided to arm India.[137]

Ayub decided to exploit the Sino-Indian situation by requesting Beijing for a delimitation of the border between China and Pakistan in the Sinkiang and Baltistan areas. On January 15, 1961, foreign Minister of Pakistan, Manzur Quadir, declared that China had agreed to such an exercise, though he quickly qualified his statement by adding that such a

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[134]Ibid,130

[135]Ibid.

[136]G. J. Lerski, "The Foreign Policy of Ayub Khan", *Asian Affairs*, 1(1974): 255–273.

[137]Ibid.

settlement of border was not inconsistent with Pakistan's membership in defensive alliances with the Western powers.[138] By December 27, 1962, Pakistan had reached an agreement with China. The government of India was deeply disturbed by this development as India had never recognized Pakistan's right to hold the north-western "Azad (Free) Kashmir."[139] Notwithstanding the government of India's objections, Pakistan signed a boundary agreement with China on March 2, 1963. According to Pakistani sources, China had ceded 750 miles of territory beyond the main watershed of Karakorum Range.[140] This marked a new beginning in Sino-Pakistani relationship.

[138]Ibid.

[139]Ibid.

[140]K. B Sayeed,*The Political System of Pakistan,* (city: Houghton Mifflin, 1967),273.

Reversal in the Pakistan-China Friendship, 1962-1965

The turning-point in Sino-Pakistani relations came with the Sino-Indian border war of October 1962. India's defeat at the hands of the Chinese could have inspired those in Pakistan who desired a military solution to the Kashmir issue. Pakistan was disappointed with American military aid to India, and to Ayub Khan it became clear that India would not accept a plebiscite for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. Pakistan also developed a new respect for China's military capabilities and Ayub's cabinet member, the left-leaning Z. A. Bhutto, encouraged Ayub Khan to improve relationship with China.

On October 12, 1962, at the height of the Sino-Indian border dispute, Pakistan and Beijing started discussions. Both countries reached an "Agreement in Principle" on December 28, 1962, in relation to the location of the border with China in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Further, the first Sino-Pakistani Trade Agreement was signed in Karachi on January 5, 1963. This treaty provided for an exchange of Chinese-manufactured goods for Pakistani cotton, jute and leather goods. Pakistan and China also signed a Boundary Agreement, with provisions for a Joint Boundary Demarcation Commission, on March 2, 1963. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Z. A. Bhutto, met with Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi to this effect.[141] According to the agreement, Pakistan gave up its claim of nearly 13,000 square miles of territory, which had been under Chinese occupation. In return, Beijing agreed to evacuate 750 square miles of disputed territory already in its possession.[142] The Government of India considered the agreement illegal as it did not recognize Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to be an integral part of Pakistan and lodged a protest with the Security Council of the U.N. China, on the other hand, expressed a much milder reaction and acknowledged the provisional status of

[141]K. H. Pringsheim, "China's Role in the Indo-Pakistani Conflict", *The China Quarterly*, 24(1965): 171-72.

[142]Dutt, "China and Indo-Pakistani Relations",130-31.

the agreement. In all its public statements on the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir, China expressed hope that India and Pakistan would speedily negotiate and settle their dispute.[143]

As the Sino-Pakistani relationship warmed up, Pakistan cast her vote for the PRC's admission to the U.N. in October 1963.Indeed, when Premier Zhou Enlai visited Pakistan in February 1964, a China-Pakistan Joint Communiqué declared "that the United Nations could not be considered to be fully representative of mankind until the rightful place of the People's Republic of China in the organisation was restored." China issued a cautious statement about Kashmir, stating that the Kashmir dispute would be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir as pledged to them by the people of India and Pakistan.[144] President Ayub Khan made a state visit to China in March, 1965, accompanied by Foreign Minister Bhutto. Ayub addressed a mass rally of 10,000 people in Beijing, where he declared in an assertive manner: "Friendship with China is for us a long-term policy and not a matter of expediency."[145]

Though it had not been stated publicly, it was plausible that in the numerous private conversations between Pakistani and Chinese leaders, the possibility of an outbreak of hostilities between Pakistan and India was brought up. It was likely that President Ayub demanded assurances from Beijing that Pakistan would receive moral and material support if such hostilities were to take place in the future. China also gained the trust of Pakistan as credible patron when the former successfully carried out nuclear tests. U.S. President Johnson's postponement of Ayub Khan's visit to the United States possibly indicated that he

[143]Pringsheim, "China's Role in the Indo-Pakistani Conflict":170–175.

[144]Ibid.

[145]Ibid.

might have had a hint of certain Sino-Pakistani understandings which had not yet reached the public domain.[146]

The Pakistani military-bureaucratic regime had a clear motive, they wanted control over Kashmir, and the only major power which would endorse their moves in this regard was the PRC. It was also clear that if either the Soviet Union or the United States had been willing to support Pakistan's position on Kashmir, the Sino-Pakistani friendship might never have materialized.[147] It was thus hostility towards India that undergirded the Sino-Pakistani relationship, and China did not have to maintain a delicate balance between India and Pakistan. China understood clearly Pakistan's geopolitical ambitions and supported it, though in public pronouncements they were very cautious.

On 1st September 1965, Pakistan launched a massive armed attack in the Chhamb area across the international frontier. Pakistan's military aim was majorly the encirclement and detachment of Kashmir from the rest of India. India retaliated by launching a counter-offensive on the Lahore sector. Beijing remained silent during the first few days of the war, but as the tide began to turn against Pakistan, the PRC came out openly in support of its ally, Pakistan. China even threatened India with dire consequences if it continued its aggression against Pakistan. This time, Beijing tacitly ignored Pakistan's membership of the SEATO and the CENTO, two US sponsored defence treaty organizations. Beijing portrayed Pakistan as an innocent, small, progressive country that was "bullied" by a reactionary India, an imperialist America, and a revisionist Soviet Union.[148] Chinese leaders asserted that India had invaded Pakistan at the behest of the U.S. and announced their determination to provide support to Pakistan. They also reaffirmed their backing for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue and

[146]Ibid., 172-73.

[147]Ibid., 173.

[148]Dutt, "China and Indo-Pakistani Relations":131-32.

denounced the Soviet Union for its "shameful" support to India in its expansionist designs. Indeed, as the Indian forces were poised for a further push towards Lahore and Sialkot, the Chinese troops increased their aggressive activity on the northern frontier. India also intruded into Chinese territory in the Sikkim area and started building bunkers there. China gave India a 48-hour ultimatum, subsequently extended by another 48 hours, to remove these bunkers from the Chinese side of the border.[149] This threat coincided with the U.N. Secretary General U Thant's visit to India. Ayub Khan delayed his reply to U Thant's call for an immediate ceasefire. Pakistan waited so that this negative response could coincide with the Chinese ultimatum. China thus assured Pakistan of being a reliable ally.

The threat prevented the success of U Thant's mission of bringing about a ceasefire. At the end of the expiry of the second ultimatum, the Chinese government announced that the Indian armyhad demolished the military structures on the Tibetan side of the border with Sikkim, and thus provided an excuse for Beijing to cop out. The following announcement came just before Bhutto communicated to the Security Council Pakistan's acceptance of the ceasefire. It was apparent that China and Pakistan had foreknowledge of each other's moves.[150]Beijing's formal declared policy toward the Kashmir issue had moved from an agnostic position in the 1950s to a distinctly pro-Pakistan one in the 1960s. In 1965, China endorsed the war on behalf of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

[149]Ibid, 2.

[150]Ibid.

Conclusion

International politics in South Asia, particularly the relationship, between the three neighbours, India, China and Pakistan, was centered around their perspectives on their shared borders. This was further marked by a cartographic anxiety and combined with considerations about geostrategic advantage. Pakistan obviously had much deeper irredentist conflicts with India over several issues such as, the territory of Kashmir, canal waters, evacuee property, and so on. Chinese leaders, because of the primacy of Cold War considerations for them, had a deeper concern for their neighbors' hostile designs towards Tibet. Nehru, with his commitment to the idea of world peace and social democracy, took the PRC's slogan of an abiding friendship between China and India as the ultimate basis for diplomatic relations between the two countries. For Nehru, the question was not principally that of cultivating China for the sake of enmity with Pakistan, but of fostering friendly relations between the two biggest nations of Asia and two of the most ancient civilizations of the world. Nonetheless, China was aware of the possibilities of a future conflict with India, and thus, left room for manoeuvre in the Indo-Pakistani equation. Despite its vehement denunciation of the SEATO and its non-Western members for toeing the imperialist line, China did not completely close the door to Pakistan for future considerations. This was clear in the Chinese position on Kashmir, marked as it was by ambiguity. Pakistan, except for a brief period under Ayub Khan from 1958 to1960, also sought to impress upon China that despite their alliance with the West, they had no hostility towards the PRC, and that they had joined the United States only to procure arms to combat India. Yet in the initial period between 1950 and 1954 Pakistan had also been uneasy with the Chinese communist presence in the north.

Suspicious of the non-communist world, Chinese leaders too had been somewhat wary of Pakistani professions in the early period. But after observing Pakistan's growing

confrontation with India, China became more receptive to Pakistan's overtures. India remained at the center of this relationship. In May 1962, China and Pakistan announced their decision to begin negotiations on the delimitation and demarcation of their common border, and in 1963, after Sino-Indian border clashes, they settled their border question. For Pakistan, India remained the principal factor in the determination of its own foreign policy, and this then conditioned Pakistan's approach to China, the United States, and other countries and issues. While the United States turned out to be a more complex and ideologically scrupulous patron, which required that its supply of weapons be geared towards combating Communists and not India, China did not have such considerations. In 1962, Ayub Khan, disappointed in the U.S., turned his attention towards China as an alternative patron. Though Ayub's border agreement, signed between Pakistan and China on March 3, 1963, was an indication of the genesis of the cooperation, it was the 1965 war between Pakistan and India in which China clearly emerged as Pakistan's champion, and supplied weapons in its limited capacity and even threatened with a military intervention. Thus, China smoothly replaced the U.S. as Pakistan's most trusted ally, a position that they had earned through their impeccable hostility to India during the 1965 War. This was a relief to Pakistan as the U.S. and Soviet Union both searched for ways to maintain peace. Pakistan and China had a strategic alliance against a mutual enemy, based on a patron-client relationship otherwise, ideologically, socialist China and Islamic Pakistan remained as different as apples and oranges.

Chapter 4

US-China Rapprochement and the Shadow of the Cold War in South Asia

The war of 1965 ushered in a new era in the international politics of the Indian subcontinent. A large part of this novelty was due to the China-Pakistan axis, which constituted a new alignment in South Asia. Though the United States criticized the fast-developing relationship between the two, Pakistan was increasingly reliant on the PRC. India felt surrounded by hostile countries, though its relationship with the United States remained stable. Nonetheless, China, India and Pakistan experienced different types of domestic political turmoil between 1965 and 1971, and in each case the events profoundly impacted international relations in South Asia. Pakistan imploded because of the national liberation movement in East Pakistan against Pakistani military domination. It was at this historical moment that, the United States was seeking to establish diplomatic ties with the PRC in order to make a breakthrough in the Cold War and used Pakistan as a secret mediator. This U.S. decision further informed and influenced regional dynamics due to the changing political context within of the nation-state of Pakistan. Both communist China and capitalist United States supported the Pakistani military dictators in this moment of state crisis. Thus, it was the interaction between, on the one hand, the internal politics of South Asian nation states, and on the other hand, the shifting global political configurations, that shaped events in this specific historical juncture.

Pakistan, China, US and Quest for Democracy within Pakistan

The 1965 Indo-Pakistan war marked a major transition point in U.S.-Pakistan relations, as Pakistan increasingly moved closer toward China. Till 1965, U.S. aid to Pakistan had been substantial. According to one estimate:

> In terms of the badly needed military hardware, the total assistance extended to Pakistan from 1954 to 1965 amounted in between $1.2 to $1.5 billion. But economic assistance in the form of Public Law 480 or other agricultural commodity programs, grants for economic development, technical assistance development grants, and loans of various kinds were much larger. Over the period from 1947 through June 30, 1965, economic assistance of this nature amounted to $3 billion. It may also be noted that out of a total development outlay of $5.5 billion during the Second Five-Year Plan, the United States contributed $1.7 billion in the form of loans, grants, and other assistance, or about 30 percent of the total outlay.[151]

Therefore, in terms of economic aid China could hardly replace the United States', and yet Pakistan felt far more secure in the PRC's embrace. One key catalyst for this shift was the United States' decision to cut off arms sales to both India and Pakistan, which prompted Pakistan to seek arms from China. The reasons for this development can be found in the final years of the Ayub Khan regime.

As the Ayub era was drawing to a close, the PRC and Pakistan began work on a highway through the Karakorum passes to link their respective road systems, thereby facilitating the movement of labour and commodities between the countries. This obviously enabled China to access Pakistan's port facilities and score a geo-strategic gain against India

[151]K. B. Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, (Boston: Rapid City, SD: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 270

on the Kashmir front.[152]Indeed, the construction of highways was a development on the growing transportation network between the two countries. In August 1963, China and Pakistan had signed a commercial air travel agreement which had ended China's isolation from the non-communist world. Pakistan became the first non-communist country to provide opportunities to the Chinese citizens to travel by air. China, in turn, granted the Pakistan International Airline (PIA) all normal air traffic rights. At a reception for Air Commodore, Malik Nur Khan Awan, the civil aviation chief of Pakistan, Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi observed that: "We would like to point out that those who tried to isolate and blockade China have failed."[153]

Washington was particularly annoyed with Pakistan for granting permission to Chinese jets to use the American-built Dhaka airfield, terming it an "unfortunate breach of Free World solidarity."The US also postponed a $4.3 million loan for the extension of the important East Bengal installation in Dhaka.[154] In 1964, when the United States announced its intention to send the Seventh Fleet into the Indian Ocean, Pakistanis expressed their vehement opposition. In an interview with the BBC, Ayub Khan even asserted that, in the event of a serious confrontation between China and the US over North Vietnam, Pakistan would not become involved. Ayub Khan tacitly encouraged the Pakistani press to argue that US was trying to use foreign aid to coerce other nations into following the United States right down the line.[155] Consequently, President Johnson angrily postponed the scheduled state visits of both the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan. Furthermore, in July

[152]G. J. Lerski, "The Foreign Policy of Ayub Khan" *Asian Affairs, an American Review,* 1 (1974): 263.

[153]A. Syed, "Sino-Pakistan Relations—An Overview", *Pakistan Horizon*, 22(1969):114.

[154]Lerski, "The Foreign Policy of Ayub Khan",263.

[155]Ibid.

1965, Washington announced the suspension of an Aid-to-Pakistan consortium meeting, which was a disappointment for Pakistan.

With the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan on September 1965, the U.S. suspended military and economic aid to the belligerent countries.[156] This caused a serious reaction in Pakistan, and the latter strongly embraced Chinese friendship. As early as 1966, the U.S. officials had realized the geopolitical significance of a Sino-Pakistan alignment. In an internal memorandum drafted in April 1966, Secretary of State, Dean Rusk questioned the wisdom of the U.S. arms embargo. He observed that Pakistan's geo-strategic goal was to find a patron who would act as a reliable supplier of arms in response to what Pakistan perceived as threats of Indian aggression. The arms embargo imposed by the U.S. transformed Beijing into Pakistan's security guarantor. Thus, China replaced the United States as the main patron of Pakistan. U.S. officials were not willing to accept this new configuration without making efforts. In 1966, the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Eugene Locke, emphasized that America should try to "to keep Pakistan from becoming dependent upon or allied with Red China." In a direct correspondence addressed to President Johnson, Ambassador Locke emphatically argued that Washington's "failure to recognize Pakistan's need for security" would compel the country into an "alliance with China and into an irrevocable anti-U.S. posture." However, U.S. intelligence assumed that Pakistan had already received significant military assistance from China.[157]

From October 1968 onwards, Pakistan experienced a series of massive student unrests. Students demanded reforms in the educational structure as well as an end to military rule. A completely non-political incident had sparked the student unrest. A group of students

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[156]Ibid.

[157]P. J. Smith, The China-Pakistan-United States Strategic Triangle: From Cold War to the "War on Terrorism", *Asian Affairs*, 38(2011): 201-202.

were crossing the Afghan frontier and bought some consumer items which they carried in their cars. The police arrested and imprisoned them, but soon, students at various campuses began agitating for their release. These protests soon transformed into a massive student movement throughout West Pakistan, workers also joined the protests readily. To make matters worse, Z. A. Bhutto, a former member of Ayub Khan's cabinet, protested the peace terms agreed upon by President Ayub Khan and Indian Prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri on10 January 1966, during the peace summit in Tashkent.[158]

In November 1967, Bhutto formed a new left-leaning social democratic political party called the People's Party of Pakistan. Bhutto's support for the student protests increased his popularity.[159] In December 1968, the pro-democracy movement began spreading in East Pakistan and by the next year's February, it had acquired the shape of a mass insurrection. The Ayub Khan government had to release the incarcerated Bengali leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who championed the demands for the autonomy of East Pakistan through his six-point program.[160] Facing popular unrest, the army withdrew support from Ayub Khan.

On 25 March 1969, Ayub Khan resigned from his office and General Yahya Khan took power. He promptly declared martial law, but conceding to popular opinion, he also disestablished the one-unit policy in West Pakistan, and restored, approximately, the ethno-linguistic provinces of Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab and the North-Western Frontier Provinces.

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[158]T. Maniruzzaman, "'Crises in Political Development'and the Collapse of the Ayub Regime in Pakistan", *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 5(1971): 221–238.

[159]S. A. H. Shah, "Ideological Orientation of Pakistan People's Party: Evolution, Illusion and Reality", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 55(2018):155-160.

[160]H. W. Blair, "Sheikh Mujib and *deja vu* in East Bengal: The Tragedies of March 25", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6(1971): 2555–2562.

Afterwards, Yahya Khan proclaimed the first general election in Pakistan based upon universal adult franchise. He decided to provide for representation according to the population, and thus, East Pakistan, for the first time, was provided with a majority of the seats in the proposed constituent assembly. In East Pakistan, the movement for national autonomy had gained a huge momentum.[161] It was at this crucial juncture of Pakistan's history that the newly elected president of the United States, Richard Nixon, and his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, began to toy with the idea of a rapprochement with the People's Republic of China, and integral to this idea's fruition was Pakistan's involvement.

The relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. warmed up after President Richard Nixon assumed office on 20th January 1969. Nixon had previously visited South Asia in 1953, when he had been the Vice President in the Eisenhower administration. He had disliked Jawaharlal Nehru's lofty idealism of maintaining a nonaligned foreign policy. He was far more impressed by Pakistan and truly admired of General Ayub Khan, whom he appreciated as an honest anti-communist and pro-American general.[162] Like John Foster Dulles, the famous Eisenhower-era secretary of state, Nixon recommended arming Pakistan and including it in U.S.-sponsored alliances in Asia.

Pakistan thus enjoyed the distinction of being a member of both SEATO and CENTO as well as a signatory to both the Manila Pact (1954) and Bagdad Pact (1955).[163] Not surprisingly, by the late 1960s, the U.S. decided to utilize Pakistan's increasing closeness with Beijing. After the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, China's relationship with the

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[161]L. Ziring, "Militarism in Pakistan: the Yahya Khan interregnum", *Asian Affairs*, 1(1974): 402–420.

[162]G. J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 41-42.

[163]Mussarat Jabeen and Muhammad Mazhar, "Security Game: SEATO and CENTO as Instruments of Economic and Political Assistance to encircle Pakistan" *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, 49(2011): 109–132.

U.S.S.R. had worsened dramatically and they had fought a border war along the Ussuri River over ZhenbaoIsland in 1969.[164]This obviously alienated the PRC from the Soviet Union. From a strategic perspective, the U.S. realized the greater advantage of normalizing the relationship with China. Nixon had first sounded the idea of an American overture to China to Ayub's successor, the Pakistani President Yahya Khan, when he visited Lahore in July 1969. He used Pakistan, as well as Romania, as a secret channel through which to establish preliminary communication with China.[165] Once again, Nixon also personally liked Yahya Khan, whom he regarded as a "straight-talking army man."[166] He personally met Yahya Khan in October 1970 and promised to stand by Pakistan in the future, particularly if Pakistan faced a crisis.

Buoyed by the fact that he had the backing of the United States, Yahya created a new domestic political crisis. He refused to engage in prolonged negotiations with Sheikh Mujib, the leader of the Bangladeshi autonomy movement. In Pakistan's first general election, the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujib won 160 seats out of 300 in the overall National Assembly, though the Awami League victory was confined to East Pakistan. In East Pakistan, the Awami League had captured 160 seats out of 162 seats allotted to the province, it was a mammoth victory. However, on March 1, 1970, Yahya cancelled the session of the National Assembly due to begin on in the next few days. An angry Mujib declared a nonviolent civil disobedience movement, and the entirety of East Pakistan observed general strike. U.S. officials in Dhaka warned the state department of impending military chaos, but President

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[164]L. J. Goldstein, "Return to Zhenbao Island: Who Started Shooting and Why it Matters", *The China Quarterly*, 168(2001): 985–997.

[165]C. Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia", *Asian Survey*, 20(1980): 339–361.

[166] Bass, *The blood telegram,* 47.

Nixon and national security advisor, Kissinger did nothing. Yahya resumed negotiations under pressure from popular unrest, but on March 25, 1971, talks were suspended, Sheikh Mujib was arrested, and a massive military repression was unleashed by the government.[167] The U.S. deputy high commissioner in Dhaka, Archer Blood, categorized the repression as a selective genocide. Over a period of six months nearly ten million refugees flocked to India.[168] On March 30, 1971, Tajuddin Ahmad, the second-in-command of the Awami League, escaped to India. He met with Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi four days later. On April 17, he formed a government-in-exile in Meherpur near the Indian border. Bengali rebel forces, soldiers, and volunteers from East Pakistan formed a liberation army and India agreed to provide military support and training camps of volunteers. Pakistan now faced an armed rebellion in East Pakistan.[169]

[167]D. Dunbar, "Pakistan: theFailure of Political Negotiations", *Asian Survey*, 12(1972):444–461.

[168]A.Dutta, *Refugees and Borders in South Asia: The Great Exodus of 1971,* (city: Routledge Studies in South Asian Politics), 8.

[169]S. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013),62-68.

India and China in Turmoil: Maoist Insurgency and Cultural Revolution

In 1970-71 India was in a political turmoil too, in 1965, the war had unleashed an inflationary pressure on the economy and food prices skyrocketed. This was followed by a political crisis in the top echelons of India's traditional ruling party, the Indian National Congress. The Congress party bosses, informally known as *The Syndicate*, selected Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, as the Prime Minister of the country. The Congress "old guard" wanted to avoid having to choose Morarji Desai, a competent but abrasive leader of the party. But Indira Gandhi did not turn out to be a pliant and pliable leader for the party bosses, instead embarking on a path of her own. Initially she was less ideologically inclined than her father, but political circumstances transformed this disposition. While upon taking power, she had launched a more conservative economic policy of devaluing the rupee, this had turned out to be corrosive to the Indian economy, and she had to face massive public criticism.

In 1967, the Congress lost elections in most north Indian states; Indira Gandhi faced the challenge to her rule by moving against the Congress and orchestrating a split in the party. She moved to the political left and adopted a series of policies, such as bank nationalization and the cancellation of privy purses for Indian princes (the compensation that they received from the state because of the loss of their kingdoms). Under pressure from the U.S., Johnson administration, she adopted Green Revolution policies geared towards increasing agricultural productivity. The use of high-yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers, and shallow tube-wells enabled India to produce surplus amounts of food that helped the country avert a famine-like situation. In 1971, faced with a general election, Indira Gandhi's segment of the Congress entered an alliance with the Communist Party of India (CPI), and

campaigned on the populist slogan *garibihatao!* or eradicate poverty. She secured a massive mandate from the people.[170]

Yet all was not well for this new populist left-leaning political strategy. In West Bengal, on the border of East Pakistan, the Communist-led United Front had come to power in 1967. Soon, a breakaway militant faction, who came to be known as the Naxalites or the CPI-ML (Marxist-Leninist), called for the annihilation of class enemies and sought to organize an agrarian revolution. Prime Minister Gandhi decided to put parliamentary politics in the state on hold and suspended the elected communist government and adopted stern police measures to suppress the Maoist guerrillas, mostly radical students who were inspired by the message of the ongoing Cultural Revolution in China. The Communist Party of China supported the movement and categorized the anarchy unleashed by the Naxalites as a "Spring Thunder of Revolution."[171] It was at this crucial juncture that Prime Minister Gandhi was also faced with the rise of the Bengali nationalist movement in East Pakistan. She had to react fast to contain the political situation in Indian Bengal and the sensitive border areas of East Pakistan.[172] She also realized that lending support to the Bengali nationalist uprising in East Pakistan would help her to contain the spread of Communist influence through a healthy dose of "anti-Pakistani patriotism."

Meanwhile, India's rival China too was facing a self-made crisis. The launching of the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" led to violence and anarchy perpetrated by students, Red Guards and even ordinary civilians.[173] Mao Zedong now used the Red Guards

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[170]Sudipta Kaviraj, "Indira Gandhi and Indian Politics", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21(1986):1701-1702.

[171]B. Das Gupta, "The Naxalite Movement: An Epilogue" *Social Scientist*, 6(1978): 7.

[172]Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*,56-59.

[173]Y. Su, "*Collective Killings in Rural China during the Cultural Revolution* (city: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 7.

to purge and humiliate his opponents from within the party. Intense struggles among factions within the CPC paralysed the country and bureaucrats were uncertain about state policies. By 1966, President Liu Shaoqi, who had returned from a state visit from Pakistan, was denounced by Lin Biao as a "capitalist in-roader." Lin Biao, who had been the defence minister of the PRC, now replaced Liu Shaoqi as the Deputy Chairman of the CPC.[174] In 1969, he officially became the second-in-command of the party. However, by 1970, Lin began to lose his grip on political power, and rival factions gained supremacy in the party. In September 1971, Lin died while fleeing to the Soviet Union, though this event was also shrouded in mystery.[175] These circumstances indirectly reduced China's ability to intervene in shaping the events in South Asia that will be analyzed in the next section.

[174]P. J. Hiniker, "The Cultural Revolution Revisited: Dissonance Reduction or Power Maximization", *The China Quarterly*, 94(1983):300.

[175]S. Uhalley and J. Qui, "The Lin Biao incident: More than Twenty Years Later", *Pacific Affairs*, 66(1983):386–398.

U.S., Pakistan, and China in the Bangladesh Crisis

On January 30, 1971, Kashmiri separatists high jacked an Indian Airlines flight to Lahore and blew it up leading India to cancel Pakistani flights over India.[176] This made the transportation of soldiers to East Pakistan from West Pakistan very difficult. Politicians in West Pakistan criticized the Indian action while the Awami League condemned the act of hijacking.[177] Surprisingly, as tensions mounted between India, Pakistan and the two different wings of Pakistan, the U.S. adopted a policy of inaction. On March 6, Kissinger convened the South Asia Research Group meeting to review U.S. options as tensions mounted between the two West Pakistani leaders, Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the East Pakistani leader, Mujibur Rahman. At this meeting, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Alexis Johnson suggested that the U.S. could try to discourage President Yahya from using military force in East Pakistan. But Kissinger cautioned that President Nixon had a "special relationship" with Yahya and, therefore, he would be reluctant to advice Yahya to exercise restraint in East Pakistan.[178] Kissinger obviously did not reveal the grand plan of using Pakistan as a critical mediator between China and the U.S. Indeed, on March 29, 1971, in a conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, both agreed that Pakistanis would prevail over Bengali insurgents.[179] Even when the telegram from Archer Blood was brought to notice, it was dismissed by Kissinger, and the Secretary of State William Rogers stated very clearly that there would not be any change in the policy.[180] Indeed, while US-supplied weapons were

[176]"Kashmir Hijackers Blow Up Indian Plane in Pakistan" *New York Times,* February 3, 1971.

[177]Bass, *The blood telegram,* 141-143.

[178]C. Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia", *Asian Survey*, 20 (1980): 339–361.

[179]Bass, *The Blood Telegram,* 143.

[180]Ibid., 143.

being used to commit ethnic cleansing by the Pakistani army, the U.S. administration did not try to restrain the Pakistan government.[181]

Meanwhile, in India, civilian leaders began to push for an early war with Pakistan on April 1971. General Sam Manekshaw, the Indian army's Chief of Staff, refused this proposition and stated that, he feared an imminent Chinese attack over the mountains to be a factor. General Manekshaw advised Indira. Gandhi to wait till the winter season, when the Himalayan Mountain passes would be frozen, at which point India could have a free hand in East Pakistan. China figured large in Indian calculations.[182] At this historical moment, India was one of the few states supporting Bangladeshi Independence; the Arab countries remained latently hostile to the idea of the breaking up of Pakistan, and, the PRC was stringently critical of India and announced that the cause of the Bangladeshi refugee crisis was the Indian state.[183] In their private conversations, Nixon and Kissinger believed that India was the aggressor and that Pakistan had the right to do whatever it might need to do within its territorial boundary. Meanwhile, Yahya Khan clandestinely established networks with China for the U.S. to send diplomatic emissaries. In May 1971, during the ethnic cleansing in Bangladesh, Nixon wrote a warm letter to Yahya, and it was decided that Kissinger would visit China from Pakistan in between July 9-11, 1970.[184]

On July 6, 1971, Kissinger reached Delhi in a gesture of goodwill to investigate the India-Pakistan situation, and as part of a strategy to prove that the U.S. administration was neutral in the India-Pakistan conflict.[185] Kissinger's nearly two-day-long meeting with

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[181]Bass, *The Blood Telegram,* 377-382.

[182]Raghavan,*1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, 66-70.

[183]Lorenz Luthi, *Cold War, Asia the Middle East Europe* (city: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 169.

[184]Bass, *The Blood Telegram,* 304-315.

[185]Ibid,304-315.

Government of India officials revealed the extent of the difference between the Nixon administration and the Indian state. Kissinger falsely assured Indians of U.S. assistance if China intervened in the war.[186] Then, he resumed his journey to Pakistan, from where Kissinger discreetly boarded a plane to China, while officially he was sick with stomach infection. In his historic meeting with Zhou Enlai, Kissinger came face-to-face with the veteran communist leader's hostility towards India.[187] He also felt the warmth of China's friendship with Pakistan. Kissinger later reported to Nixon that the U.S. administration should not abandon Pakistan in its moment of crisis, because the Chinese leadership would lose their trust in the U.S. if they did so.[188]

Kissinger met Nixon on the morning of July 13 and briefed him on the details of the event: a historic rapprochement was achieved but it had altered Indian perceptions of the U.S. India realized that it could not count upon American support were China to intervene on Pakistan's behalf. The US's support for Pakistan, amid an existential crisis for both India and the future Bangladesh, altered South Asian geopolitical realities.

The U.S.S.R. had long-lasting ties with India which fluctuated, in terms of degrees of closeness, depending on changing political circumstances. In 1966, the Tashkent declaration improved the Indo-Soviet relationship, but when the Soviet Union sold arms to Pakistan, ties suffered a blow. India had also condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.[189] However, relations picked up in 1969 in the wake of Sino-Soviet border clashes, and the Soviet Union's proposition for a collective security pact among South Asian countries.[190] In

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[186]Ibid,311-312.

[187]Ibid, 325.

[188]Ibid, 327-328.

[189]Luthi, *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe,* 178.

[190]Ibid.

1971, facing international isolation, India embraced the Soviet offer of a treaty, and on 9 September 1971, India signed a defense pact with Soviet Union, this further pact infuriated the Nixon administration. On December 3, Pakistan declared war on India.[191]

At a secret meeting held on December 8, 1971, Nixon and Kissinger discussed ways in which China and the United States could possibly coordinate their actions to create pressure on India. In concert with anticipated Chinese actions, the United States envisaged deploying an aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, into the Bay of Bengal. It was also agreed that the United States would illegally allow Jordan and Iran to send air squadrons to Pakistan.[192] On December 10, 1971, Kissinger and other U.S. officials held a separate secret meeting with the PRC's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in which they discussed, once again, their responses to India. Irked by the Soviet encirclement of China, Mao, on May 1, 1970 invited Brajesh Mishra, Indian *charge de affairs* in Beijing, and asked him to send a message of goodwill to India.[193]Yet on November 5, 1971, in a meeting between Bhutto and senior officials, the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai did not mention any military aid to Pakistan, and the foreign minister Ji Pengfei politely hinted at an honourable settlement with the Bengalis.[194] China, weakened by the loss of Lin Biao, and with fierce factional squabbles taking place within the higher echelons of the CPC, was not in a position to help, and Indira Gandhi was well aware of this.[195]The Indian army's strong support for Bangladeshi resistance to Pakistan led to the Pakistan army's surrendering on December 16,

[191]Ibid, 179.

[192]Bass, *The Blood Telegram,* 523-24.

[193]Raghavan, *A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, 195.

[194]Ibid, 184-185.

[195]Ibid, 203-204.

1971. Thus, the internal crisis within these three Asian powers had determined the outcome of their external relationships.

Conclusion

What began in 1965, from internal political trouble in both India and Pakistan, and China's strong alignment in support of Pakistan, ended in 1971with the national independence of East Pakistan, as Bangladesh, and with China witnessing the entire process from the side. The Cold War calculations of Kissinger and Nixon, and the Soviet proposals of a treaty, provided a critical patina to the events, but it remained primarily a local Asian conflict. The U.S. intervention and the Soviet treaty proposal only worsened the matter and intensified the conflict among the belligerent nations, for the decisive die over the event was cast through the actions of local players. The real issue in South Asian international relations centred on the meaning of nationality among Indians, Chinese, Pakistanis, and later Bangladeshis, their perceptions of the territorial extension of their sovereignty, and conflicts arising from a cartographic anxiety concerning their borders.

Conclusion

On 16 December 1971, the combined forces of the Bengal Liberation army (*Muktibahini*) and the Indian army defeated the occupying Pakistan army and liberated Bangladesh. With the liberation of Bangladesh, South Asia witnessed another bout of Cold War events. On one hand, China and Pakistan refused to recognize the new state of Bangladesh. Even within Bangladesh, the pro-Chinese communists and Islamists declared a rebellion against the pro-Indian Mujib-led Awami League government. The resulting anarchy and chaos came to an end with the violent military coup against Sheikh Mujib's government. Similarly, in Nepal, the monarchical government remained latently hostile to India alongside various groups of Maoist communists, and the democratic Nepali Congress remained adamantly pro-India. In Afghanistan, Pakistan backed the Mujaheddins, and later the Taliban, while India aligned herself with the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and later the northern alliance. Following Pakistan's policy, China extended support to the Mujaheddins and then the Taliban. The pattern established by the India-China border clashes of 1962 continued to cast its shadow over South Asian international politics even beyond the years of the Cold War. China and Pakistan remained close allies and India remained opposed to the forces backed by this powerful alliance.

India remained a close ally of the Soviet Union till its fall in 1991, after which India slowly aligned itself with the United States. But extra-subcontinental actors often misread the political alignment in the South Asian subcontinent. The epicenter of political conflict remained the ill-defined borders in the Himalayas and the status of Kashmir. The introduction of modern geopolitics to South Asia through colonial agents continued to inform and influence postcolonial politics. For India, Pakistan and China, their nationhood was a product of colonialism. Consequently, the colonial legacy continued to exercise a critical influence

over international politics. China and Pakistan intermittently clashed with India over the boundaries in Himalayas. India and Pakistan fought a war over the ill-defined borders in the Kargil areas of Ladakh in the summer of 1999. They even exchanged threats of nuclear retaliation against each other. In the summer of 2020 India and China clashed over the border and nearly 20 Indian soldiers died, and India claimed to have killed 43 Chinese soldiers.[196] This has gradually become the new normal in sub-continental politics.

The origin of these clashes could be in the two postcolonial nations' very attempts to guard the claimed borders and subsequently, in establishing border outposts in the frontier regions of Tibet and Ladakh and Kashmir. Pakistan resolved its border issues with China in the late-1950s in order, to avoid a permanent Sino- Indian axis from evolving against Pakistan. Pakistan retained its focus on Kashmir against India, and China became its steadfast military ally in the process.

As a democratic polity India continued to be a prisoner, of its postcolonial anxiety about territorial integrity. As India was a multi-ethnic polity with different nationalities participating in a constitutional democracy, where Hinduism remained a weak religion-ethnic glue to hold this complex cultural mosaic together. India could not afford to allow any region to secede from the union, thus Pakistan's claim over Kashmir thus struck at the heart of the Indian union. No Indian government could afford to demonstrate any weakness over its northern borders in Kashmir or the troubled Northeastern region of the country. Chinese communists, lacking any democratic means to gain popular legitimacy, could not risk losing control over Tibet. They were haunted by the history of the weak Chinese central government in the early twentieth century. Consequently, China grew suspicious of Indian activities over

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[196]"India, China complete Troop Disengagement at Three Friction Points: Focus Now on Finger Area *"Hindustan Times,* New Delhi, 25 July,2020.

Tibet. Thus Tibet, Kashmir and the Northeastern region remained bitter points of contestation between the two Asian giants (China and India). Neither parties, of course, adopted any democratic means to assess whether the residents of these regions would like to remain within their respective territory. Similarly, Pakistan had a weak grasp over East Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. Indian support for secessionism in East Pakistan undermined Pakistan's territorial unity. This internal dynamic of nation-formation further informed and influenced external affairs in South Asia.

The powers outside these geographical limits, never fully understood the complexity of the South Asian region. The United States believed that Pakistan was genuinely committed to a democratic alignment against the aggressions of Communist power. The Soviet Union was aghast that China had alienated a neutralist country like India. Later, US support for Pakistan during the Bangladesh crisis completely went against the dynamics of nation-formation in the region. The problems regarding the borders of India, Pakistan and China could only be resolved by the regional players themselves. The involvement of external powers would only go on to exacerbate the situation.

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