'This book is an essential contribution to discussions on the India–China war of 1962, its origins and its aftermath. In twelve chapters and a comprehensive introduction, the editors have put together studies that answer most of the remaining questions about the conflict, put to rest many controversies, and shed light on the existing obstacles to better relations between Asia's two largest countries and emerging world powers. This volume will be mandatory reading for politicians, historians and researchers in all the countries covered by the book.'

Krishnan Srinivasan, Former Indian Foreign Secretary, Government of India

'This excellent and timely volume revisits the Sino-Indian war of 1962 – a brief but immensely consequential conflict. Dasgupta and Luthi have brought together a group of fine scholars to examine afresh the causes and consequences of the conflict. The volume is particularly noteworthy for its attempt to situate the Sino-Indian war against a wider international backdrop of the Cold War and decolonisation. This book will be indispensable for scholars and general readers alike.'

Srinath Raghavan, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Studies, New Delhi, India

'This important collection of original essays sheds fresh light on the origins, course, and consequences of one of the Cold War era's seminal – and yet most understudied – conflicts. The authors demonstrate the great value of history written from a truly international, multi-archival perspective. Highly recommended for all students of China, India, and, more broadly, the post-1945 world order.'

Robert J. McMahon, Ralph Mershon Professor of History, Ohio State University, USA

The Sino-Indian War of 1962

New perspectives

Edited by Amit R. Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Lüthi

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China's policy of conciliation with its neighbours

Eric Hyer

Focusing on the strategic and international context in which China's relations with India unfolded in the wake of the tumultuous Great Leap Forward (GLF; 1958–60) helps our understanding both of the country's failure to resolve the bilateral boundary dispute and of the ensuing war in 1962. The comparative analysis of the relations of the People's Republic of China (PRC) with the other South Asian neighbours at the time of the war in 1962 further deepens our understanding of China's efforts to resolve its boundary dispute with India. Actually, in the years before the war with India, Beijing had adopted a new foreign policy strategy that was motivated by the parallel decline of China's relations with India and the Soviet Union, and the escalating US involvement in Southeast Asia.[1] As Beijing began to seek a resolution of its multiple boundary problems 'left over by history', it focused on 'diplomacy and the nation's security'.[2] It undertook efforts to improve its relations with its neighbours in an attempt to balance against the perceived threats emanating from the Soviet Union, the United States and India.[3] Indeed, China's successful boundary settlements with Burma, Nepal and Pakistan at around the 1962 war facilitated closer, or at least less hostile, relations with these neighbours.[4] Previous authors have speculated that the accommodation of Burmese, Nepalese and Pakistani territorial demands was motivated by China's efforts to pressure India into accepting a compromise settlement or into embarrassing India for its refusal to negotiate.[5] The pragmatic Chinese policy of the 'Three Conciliations and one Reduction' (*sanhe yishao*), however, was supposed to ameliorate tension between the PRC and the 'modern revisionists' (the Soviet Union), 'imperialists' (the United States) and 'reactionaries' (mainly India, but also Pakistan and Burma), and to reduce its support for leftist national liberation movements throughout the world in order to improve relations with its neighbours.[6] Despite the radical inclinations of many of China's top

leaders at the time, Beijing pursued a policy of conciliation because the strategic imperatives of China's international environment threatened to undermine its domestic and ideological long-term objectives.[7]

New Chinese approaches to foreign policy, 1960–62

In the wake of the economic collapse and the famines which the GLF caused by the spring of 1960, the PRC was 'confronting a storm' in international relations, particularly because of its poor relations with both superpowers.[8] Thus, the Chinese supreme leader, Mao Zedong, warned that the PRC should not allow relations with India to deteriorate to the point that it 'becomes caught in the middle of a desperate situation with enemies on all sides'.[9] As early as 1959, Beijing had expressed to Delhi its alarm over the increasingly hostile international environment, which was the reason why it sought conciliation with its southern neighbour: 'China will not be so foolish as to antagonize the United States in the east and again antagonize India in the west. . . . We cannot have two centres of attention, nor can we take friend for foe.'[10] Reiterating the same point in April 1960, Foreign Minister Chen Yi told Railway Minister Sardar Swaran Singh, a confidant of Prime Minister Nehru: 'It is clear to us that our most important enemy is the United States which may attack us at any time. . . . It would be stupid if we created a tense situation with India in the west, too. . . . We are in a serious situation and need your friendship.'[11]

It was in this context that China's conciliatory foreign policy 'emerged as part of an overall policy derived from a sense of weakness and vulnerability', as the political scientist Allan Whiting has argued early on.[12] The policies adopted by the PRC in the years before mid-1962 were in accordance with the strategic principles laid out by Wang Jiaxiang, one of China's leading diplomats.[13] Heading the CCP International Liaison Department, Wang pioneered the policy of *sanhe yishao* in 1961 under the oversight, guidance and support of top party leaders, although some of its ideas had already been tested in relations with India and Burma, in particular, since 1959.[14] With Mao's agreement, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai had called for a review of China's foreign policy strategy given the domestic and international circumstances.[15] In several memoranda to central party leaders, Wang outlined his views on the international situation and the need to formulate a flexible strategy, recommending specific policies to deal with the Soviet Union, the United States, India and towards national liberation movements around the world.[16] He characterized China's radical foreign policy in preceding years as a case of adventurism that had caused international tensions and alienated the Soviet bloc, leaving Beijing without an ally to assist in its economic development. Wang advocated *sanhe yishao* as an alternative foreign

policy that would allow the PRC to ease tensions with both superpowers as well as with India, and to reduce foreign aid to revolutionary causes abroad in accordance with China's economic capabilities.[17] He recommended that the PRC should adopt a strategic foreign policy that distinguished between waging revolution and governing the country. If China only championed revolution, it would weaken and obscure the peaceful character of China's foreign policy and hamper its own economic development.[18]

China's new approach to its deteriorating strategic environment motivated its attempts to resolve boundary disputes with its neighbours in South Asia: India, Burma, Nepal and Pakistan. At a state banquet honouring Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk in February 1963, Liu Shaoqi stated that 'it has always been the sincere desire of the Chinese Government to . . . settle complicated questions left over by history through negotiations with its Asian neighbours and strive for a peaceful international environment favourable to socialist construction'.[19] The compromise boundary settlements with India's neighbours, as covered towards the end of this chapter, testify to Beijing's attempt to reassure and placate its neighbours after they had grown apprehensive about Chinese political radicalism in previous years.

The PRC pondered a policy of accommodation towards India, in particular, already as early as 1959. In April of that year, Zhou, in his official 'Report on the Work of the Government', had reconfirmed China's respect for India's non-alignment policy while expressing the desire for peaceful negotiations to settle the boundary dispute.[20] During the Sino-Indian summit in Delhi the following April, Zhou linked China's deteriorating domestic and international situation to his country's effort to settle the boundary dispute. He said that although 'we do not stress [this] in public . . . I want to tell you all the facts. Only in the past two years [during the GLF] things have become very complicated and we know that non-settlement of this problem will harm us both. This is why we have come to Delhi to try and reach some sort of settlement'.[21] The available primary and secondary Chinese-language evidence suggests that the PRC adopted a conciliatory policy towards India in the fall of 1959, after a time of growing tensions along the border.[22] As late as July 1962, in a note to its own embassy in Delhi, Beijing pointed out that the 'Chinese Government has repeatedly stated that China is not willing to fight with India and the Sino-Indian boundary question can be settled only through routine negotiations'.[23]

China's attempts to come to an agreement with India in the early 1960s were also related to its concerns over the deteriorating situation in Laos, particularly in the context of the increasing American involvement in all of Indochina under President John F. Kennedy.[24] Beijing was concerned that the United States would pull neutral Laos into the South East Asia

Treaty Organization (SEATO), which it had established in 1954 to contain the perceived expansion of North Vietnamese and Chinese Communism.[25] The alignment of Laos with the United States, Beijing feared, could have a tremendous impact in South Asia as it would put growing pressure on Burma to relinquish its neutralist policy as well. Thus, China engaged Burma actively in constructive boundary negotiations (as covered below) to prevent that country's drift towards the United States.[26] This larger strategic view of its South East Asian and South Asian border areas explains China's policy of supporting continued Laotian neutralization during the Geneva Conference in 1961–62. This included both the establishment of diplomatic relations with the non-communist government in April 1961 and pressure on the insurgent, communist Pathet Lao to conclude a cease-fire and enter into a government of national unity.[27] In the end, the Geneva agreement of July 1962 that re-established Laos as a neutral country exemplified the influence of *sanhe yishao* on Beijing's foreign policy and helped 'the PRC to come in from the cold'.[28]

For a long time, Mao supported the idea that 'new initiatives should be adopted vigorously in order to create a new situation in diplomacy'.[29] As late as during the '7,000 Cadre Conference' in January 1962, he supported moderation in China's foreign policy.[30] However, in the wake of the unrelated radicalization of his domestic policies in the summer of 1962, he started both to advocate class struggle in international relations and to criticize Wang's *sanhe yishao* sharply.[31] The causes for this change of views were rooted in his fears that the success of the pragmatic economic recovery policies, which his fellow leaders Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping had implemented to alleviate the economic problems that Mao's own brainchild – the GLF – had caused, threatened his political standing within the party and the country. The radicalization of internal policies thus was primarily related to an escalating domestic power struggle which, however, had indirect and sometimes even direct consequences on foreign policy.[32] It is likely that Mao's colleagues would not have agreed in the fall of 1962 to 'teach Mr. Nehru a lesson' given their previous support for *sanhe yishao*, had Mao not steered left in the previous summer and thereby forced their hands in foreign policy.[33] Yet, Mao's left turn also needed some time to achieve its full impact, which explains why some successful territorial settlements with China's neighbours still occurred even after the Sino-Indian border war in late 1962.[34]

Sino-Indian relations and the boundary dispute

A longer periodical focus on how China specifically tried to come to terms with the unsettled borders with India helps to explain that the problems

there were more complicated than in the cases of the other South Asian countries. China's approach to the border with India was based on the perceived imperialist nature of the McMahon Line, the need to survey a border which it essentially considered non-delineated and simultaneously its willingness to reduce tensions and come to a compromise agreement. For the first five years of the relationship between the newly established PRC and India, Beijing was unhappy about how Delhi dealt with various kinds of issues related to common borders.[35] Yet, during the negotiations on the Tibet Agreement in the first four months in 1954, neither side was willing to raise the issue of the unsettled border.[36] Zhou was convinced that 'big countries like India and China with long frontiers were bound to have many questions at issue'. However, in 1954 he also believed that conditions were not yet 'ripe for settlement' because the Chinese side had not yet had sufficient time to 'study the question', and thus was unwilling to discuss the issue without any prior survey.[37] Ironically, while the Indian public in the early 1960s was unhappy with what it perceived as Nehru's surrender to Chinese demands with regard to Tibet in the 1954 agreement, the Chinese leaders were angered by what they perceived was India's continued meddling in Tibetan affairs. For example, Beijing believed that Delhi was behind the Dalai Lama's initial refusal to return to Tibet during his visit to India in late 1956 on the occasion of the 2,500th birthday of the Buddha.[38] In the shadow of these rising tensions, boundary incidents occurred even before the Tibetan Rebellion in the spring of 1959.[39]

Officially, Beijing argued that since the boundary was unsettled, such incidents were predictable; thus, both sides should make every effort to avoid actions that increased their likelihood.[40] In confidential communications in the second half of the decade, however, the PRC was willing to accept the so-called McMahon Line as a *basis* for negotiations in the eastern sector. Indian primary documents of Zhou's visit to India at the turn of 1956–57 suggest that he stressed that no Chinese government ever had recognized the McMahon Line but that he also maintained that since 'it is an accomplished fact, we should accept it' and promised to 'try to persuade and convince Tibetans to accept it'. Zhou added, however, that 'although the question is still undecided and it is unfair to us, still we feel that there is no better way than to recognize this line'.[41] Two years later, in January 1959 on the eve of the Tibetan Rebellion, Zhou reiterated the view that China 'finds it necessary to take a more or less realistic attitude toward the McMahon line', indicating Beijing's willingness to use that line as a basis for settling the borderline with some minor technical adjustments.[42] At no point did these conversations address the border issues at the western sector.

Several boundary incidents in 1959 had forced New Delhi and Beijing to engage subsequently in direct talks. The head of the Chinese delegation,

Yang Gongsu, did not fail to note that India's boundary claims were primarily based on the documentation of British officials from the colonial era. As a self-declared anti-imperialist country, the PRC rejected these claims as morally questionable; subsequently, Beijing was unwilling to commit to any specific boundary line without a survey of the whole border.[43] Despite the revolutionary rhetoric generated by the concurrent GLF and despite the Tibetan Uprising that had erupted in March 1959, Mao two months later discounted the disagreements with India as 'one episode in the thousands of years of friendship between our two countries. It doesn't warrant the people and government officials becoming alarmed'.[44]

After the occurrence of border skirmishes at the Tibetan–Indian border in August, Zhou returned to the topic of the British imperialist nature of the McMahon Line 'which constitutes the fundamental reason for the long-term disputes over and non-settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question'. He called on Nehru to reach 'an overall settlement of the boundary question . . . taking into account the historical background and existing actualities'.[45] In an otherwise stormy meeting with Khrushchev in Beijing on 2 October 1959, Zhou confirmed China's willingness to seek a negotiated settlement, and Mao even assured the worried Soviet leader 'that the McMahon line with India will be maintained'. Two weeks later, in a conversation with Soviet Ambassador S.F. Antonov, Mao again stated, 'we never, under any circumstances, will move beyond the Himalayas. This is completely ruled out. This is an argument over inconsequential pieces of territory'.[46]

Despite another border skirmish in October and against objections from military leaders, Mao in early November 1959 decided to reduce tensions along the border with India by proposing a mutual troop withdrawal 20 kilometres from the customary boundary line; he even advocated a unilateral Chinese withdrawal even if India did not agree to the proposal.[47] The offer went out in a letter by Zhou to Nehru dated 7 November 1959, expressing the Chinese hope that the mutual withdrawal would 'create a favourable atmosphere for a friendly settlement of the boundary question'.[48] On 5 February 1960, Nehru eventually agreed to the idea of a meeting with Zhou for a 'general discussion of bilateral relations' – but not to the Chinese proposal to withdraw forces from the respective actual line of control – while insisting that the McMahon Line was the delineated border between the two countries.[49]

By then, the Standing Committee of the Chinese Politburo had adopted guidelines for negotiated border settlements with all of China's neighbours which should be based on 'mutual understanding and mutual accommodation'.[50] Zhou had defined four pragmatic principles that were supposed to guide boundary negotiations in general, but which also reflected the

supposed anti-imperialist nature of New China: first, boundary disputes should be considered the result of imperialism; second, China should give up older historical claims, including tributary territory (i.e. claims from the Chinese imperial period); third, boundary agreements should be negotiated on the basis of existing boundary agreements, even if they had been forced on China during the imperialist era; and finally, China should adopt a 'national stand' but avoid 'big nation chauvinism'.[51] Beijing was willing to delimit its borders based on 'customary boundaries' but insisted on adopting modern techniques to determine the boundaries more precisely in order to establish 'distinct and stable' boundary lines.[52] By the time Zhou put these four principles in place, China had already started negotiations with Burma, hoping to pursue a similar approach in negotiations with India.

Before departing for Delhi in early April, Zhou defined two objectives for the talks with Nehru: to strive for establishing principles while reaching agreement on particular aspects in order to pacify the current situation, and to create the conditions for the continuation of negotiations with the goal of finding an equitable settlement of the boundary dispute. For China, however, the primary point was that – apart from Aksai Chin being undoubtedly Chinese territory – the entire boundary was unsettled – only defined by a 'traditional and customary boundary' – and that it was to be delimited through negotiations and not through the wholesome Chinese acceptance of the imperialist McMahon Line in the eastern sector. Zhou was confident that 'principle favoured China' (*daoli zai women de fangmian*), although he did not anticipate resolving the boundary during the talks in Delhi. Since Zhou's primary objective was to reach agreement on the principles governing border negotiations during his visit to Delhi and not to discuss minute details of the borderline, he decided not to bring documents or maps to India.[53] In the event the talks failed, the Chinese side had prepared three policy alternatives. All included some form of continued negotiations while avoiding military engagements at the border areas. None envisioned the use of military force to create facts on the ground at the disputed border.[54]

While Zhou publicly reiterated his government's desire 'to resolve reasonably the boundary problem and other problems' at his arrival in Delhi, he was irritated by the low-key welcome at the airport which he believed was Nehru's way to 'show the cold shoulder'.[55] The Indian transcripts of the seven days of negotiations between Zhou and Nehru and between the two country's delegations testify to the strategy the Chinese side had established beforehand. While Nehru asserted India's historical claims on the basis of British-era documentation and insisted that China simply needed to change its maps, Zhou tried to work for the outline of a pragmatic

compromise settlement by taking into account the 'traditional customary boundary' and by requesting a formal delimitation of the actual boundary line through a survey.[56]

In the course of the talks, Zhou also proposed what would become known as a 'package deal'.[57] China was willing to recognize India's claim to the North East Frontier Administration (NEFA) in the eastern sector, comprising 84,000 square kilometres, in spite of China's view that this area historically was connected with Tibet, in exchange for India accepting China's claim to Aksai Chin in the western sector, encompassing 38,000 square kilometres. Zhou believed this was a practical solution to a historically complex and politically intractable dispute, but Nehru did not want to consider it. Zhou then pushed for a mutual troop withdrawal from the line of actual control to avoid further incidents.[58] He argued that 'disengagement of the armed forces . . . would not prejudice the stand of either side on the boundary question' but would avoid future clashes.[59]

In general, Zhou had misjudged India's views of the boundary because he assumed that, given the shared anti-imperialist nature of their countries, both sides would adopt 'an attitude of mutual sympathy, mutual understanding and fairness and reasonableness in dealing with the boundary question'.[60] One Chinese foreign ministry official later reminisced in frustration that 'we repeatedly asked India to observe the spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation that is the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence [from 1954] in order to resolve the boundary issues, but they wouldn't listen'.[61] Zhou's failed attempt to set the stage for further negotiations left China convinced that India was unwilling to put aside the complicated historical legacy and to see beyond the recent border skirmishes in order to delimit a legitimate boundary. During their final meeting, Zhou and Nehru even had difficulties in agreeing on the text of the joint communiqué. The Chinese pushed hard for a more positive tone but the Indians resisted making any statements that would have indicated any progress towards a resolution of the border issue.[62] Despite the disappointing outcome, Zhou told the People's Congress later that spring that 'we isolated him [Nehru] and proved that while we are willing to resolve the boundary issue, he is unwilling to solve the boundary problem; we have gained the initiative'.[63]

Several rounds of lower-level meetings followed in the period from June to December 1960. The 47 meetings in total accomplished little more than a joint report about the conflicting views of both sides. China participated in these talks in order to show that it was keeping the door open for negotiations.[64] After the completion of the report, the former Indian ambassador in China R.K. Nehru visited Beijing in his new function as secretary general of the Ministry of External Affairs to meet with Prime

Minister Zhou. It was clear that the report had provided no avenue for a compromise, 'given the impossibility of reaching a consensus on the facts' and the 'sharp differences of opinion'. At least, the two agreed to consider alternative paths to a settlement through 'unofficial talks'.[65]

India's Ambassador Gopalaswami Parthasarathy and Zhang Wenjin, the director of the Asian Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conducted three sessions of unofficial talks in Beijing on 17–19 July 1961. The Chinese sought to place the boundary dispute in a larger strategic context arguing that 'one cannot get tangled up in the details. The relationship between our two countries is too important; we should view it from a greater distance, from an elevated height, considering the big picture, and seek resolution'. The Indians seemed to embrace this perspective, responding that our 'two sides have sharp differences of opinion; one method is to place the reports to one side and ignore them, while both sides proceed from a political angle to reconsider [the issues]. . . . But the difficulty lies in swaying popular opinion'.[66]

As these talks did not lead to a breakthrough either, tensions at the border built up again. By the summer of 1962, both sides had reinforced their military positions at the unsettled border to such a degree that skirmishes became more frequent.[67] The time-line of the decision-making process in Beijing with regard to using military force had been established reasonably well.[68] Yet, the mutual inability to agree to a solution at the negotiation table is insufficient to explain why China chose to go to war in October 1962, as the diplomatic deadlock had existed for several years. The little available Chinese evidence sketches two possible, mutually complementary explanations why China eventually decided to resort to military force.

On the one hand, the internal radicalization, which occurred for unrelated domestic reasons in the summer of 1962, led to spill-over effects in foreign policy. As in 1958, when Mao had launched the radical phase of the GLF by manufacturing an international crisis in the Taiwan Strait, he connected in July 1962 again the need for revolutionary fervour in domestic affairs with the supposed lack of it in foreign policy.[69] This allowed him, by late September, to brand *sanhe yishao* – including the policy of relaxation of relations with India – as ideologically erroneous.[70] Soon thereafter, Wang Jiaxiang was sidelined and while in declining health suffered severe public criticism until his death in 1974.[71]

On the other hand, the Chinese leaders seemed to have become worried about the recent Indian military assertiveness in the Himalayas. Starting in mid-July, they convinced themselves that Indian activities looked like preparations for a military operation.[72] Consequently, on 20 October, the PRC started the war of 'self-defence and counterattack' as a quasi-pre-emptive attack with the double goal of clearing out Indian military installations

in all of NEFA while using the opportunity to occupy Aksai Chin completely – thereby implementing Zhou's package deal from 1960 on the ground.[73] The well-prepared and swift Chinese incursion deep into disputed territories and eventually beyond belied the supposedly defensive and reactive character of the military response against a supposed Indian attack at 7 a.m. on October 20, which Chinese public statements claimed had happened at the very beginning of the war.[74] Despite the fact that Chinese propaganda milked the claim of India's supposed military aggression in its concurrent revolutionary propaganda while simultaneously attacking Soviet ideological errors in the parallel Cuban Missile Crisis,[75] China's leaders to all accounts genuinely believed that India had tried to seek some form of military solution to the border dispute since the summer of 1962. The Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio returned from Beijing to Jakarta in early 1963 with the impression that the Chinese were 'sincerely' convinced that the 'Indians began aggression [,] and that they [the Chinese still] must be ready for eventual further Indian thrusts'.[76]

On 22 November 1962, one month into the war, Beijing announced the start of withdrawal of its troops by 1 December to areas 20 kilometres behind the 'illegal McMahon Line' in the eastern sector while calling for the return to the negotiation table.[77] Yet, even the Chinese leaders understood that Indian public opinion was strongly against any negotiations because they could only have led to what it must have considered territorial concessions under pressure, or even the legal recognition of Chinese control of Aksai Chin.[78] It took more than half a century, until May 2015, before the two sides seemed to return to the spirit of the informal Zhang–Parthasarathy talks, agreeing that 'bearing in mind the overall bilateral relations and the long-term interests of the two peoples, the two sides are determined to actively seek a political settlement of the boundary question'.[79]

The boundary settlements with other neighbouring states

Before and after China went to war with India over the disputed border, Beijing was able to conclude border agreements with three other South Asian nations. At this point, we must keep in mind, however, that the disputed areas in each of these cases were much smaller. While Beijing failed to resolve its boundary dispute with Delhi, the treaties with Burma and Nepal in 1960 and the agreement with Pakistan three years later show that China did seek conciliation with those neighbours.

On 28 January 1960, the PRC concluded a boundary settlement with Burma on terms generally corresponding to Rangoon's claims. It generally

followed the McMahon Line, indicating China's willingness to compromise while not accepting the legitimacy of the McMahon Line. Beijing thereby ceded territory which was, in strategic or logistical terms, more valuable to its neighbour. The Namwan Assigned Tract had always been Chinese territory but provided territory for a vital link between the Shan and Kachin states of Burma. Following the same logic, the PRC implicitly expected that India should agree to a reasonable compromise on Aksai Chin because the Xinjiang-Tibet road which traverses that territory was strategically vital to China. The PRC in return was willing to cede all of NEFA and to transfer Tibetan territory (i.e. the 'Chicken's Neck') that was strategically important to India.[80] On a larger plane, China's boundary settlement with Burma cost little in terms of national security, but had a high return in terms of public relations, helping to polish the country's international image as a champion of 'peaceful coexistence'.[81]

In the case of Nepal, China acceded to all of the demands of the South Asian neighbour. Talks had begun in February 1960, two months before Zhou's ill-fated journey to Delhi. In an 18 March meeting with Prime Minister Koirala, Mao personally agreed to divide Mount Everest; on 21 March, an agreement was signed that asserted the goal of respecting the 'traditional customary boundary' until the conclusion of a formal treaty.[82] Zhou publically confirmed the Chinese concessions during his 26–29 April 1960 visit to Kathmandu when he signed a peace and friendship treaty.[83]

Pakistan, however, was the most complicated of the three cases. In late 1959, Pakistan broached the issue of boundary differences with China, but Beijing was reluctant to engage. Eventually China responded in February 1962, and on 3 May agreed on negotiations to start by 12 October 1962 – a date that eventually would be just eight days before China's attack on India. The PRC and Pakistan reached with little difficulty a boundary agreement, which was announced on 27 December. As the news release occurred just hours before negotiations between Pakistan and India over Kashmir were scheduled to begin, Indian government officials in Delhi reacted with anger, believing that Beijing and Rawalpindi were conspiring to undermine the impending talks between the two hostile South Asian neighbours.[84]

Yet, for many years, Beijing had delayed responding to Pakistan's initiatives so as not to risk derailing the possibility of a Sino-Indian Agreement.[85] Only after a compromise settlement with India appeared less and less likely by the spring of 1962 did China engage with Pakistan.[86] Already during the Zhang–Parthasarathy talks in mid-1961, China had mentioned to India that it needed to settle the borderline with Pakistan because 'there are practical problems that must be handled'.[87] When negotiations with Rawalpindi started, Beijing insisted that the agreement be provisional, pending

the outcome of India-Pakistan negotiations over the Kashmir dispute, thus leaving the door open for an eventual agreement with Delhi on Sino-Indian borders. Liu Shaoqi told Pakistan's ambassador to China, N.A.M. Raza, as early as in mid-1961, that 'China and Pakistan will . . . sign a temporary agreement. This is for the sake of safeguarding a stable border and good neighbourly relations. . . . We are not intervening in Pakistan and India's dispute over Kashmir; this has consistently been our position'.[88] China's ambassador in Rawalpindi also told Ayub Khan that his country did not want Pakistan to use the boundary settlement 'merely as a lever to gain advantage over India'.[89] The communiqué issued in March 1963, when the treaty was formally signed, expressed the hope that the Sino-Indian boundary dispute would be settled by mutual accommodation and good will.[90]

At the same time, China also settled boundary disputes with Afghanistan and Mongolia. Following the Sino-Mongolian compromise agreement in late December 1962, Zhou pointed out that China had now solved 'complicated boundary questions with other countries'. Implicitly referring to India, he expressed the hope that this 'reasonable settlement of the border question [with Mongolia] . . . will be an example and an encouragement for border negotiations with other countries'.[91] The message to India was clear; China wanted a compromise settlement that would resolve an issue that had hampered Sino-Indian relations for a long time.

Conclusion

To understand China's policy towards its boundary disputes and the settlements fully, they must be placed within a larger context. China's larger strategic concerns in the wake of the GLF, the unfolding Sino-Soviet dispute, the escalating involvement of the United States in South and Southeast Asia and deteriorating relations with India all deeply concerned Beijing. These larger strategic concerns motivated the PRC to take a new tack in its foreign policy. The policy of *sanhe yishao* revealed that China wanted to reduce tensions with its neighbours; boundary settlements were a major way to achieve this goal. Thus, the long-held view in the literature that compromise settlements with other countries were supposed just to serve China in its attempt to resolve the Sino-Indian boundary dispute obscures the larger strategic forces at play. China's efforts to achieve a compromise settlement with India followed the pattern which the PRC had adopted to seek 'mutual understanding and mutual accommodation' with all of its neighbours. From China's perspective, Zhou's 'package deal' proposal in April 1960 was an 'earnest effort to reach a preliminary agreement that would help settle the boundary question'. However, the PRC was frustrated by the failure of 'the sincere efforts of the Chinese side' and even

believed that, 'if Nehru really wanted to settle the boundary question, it should have not been difficult to do so'.[92] To Chinese eyes, Nehru's unwillingness to negotiate increasingly looked like intransigence and even preparation for military aggression.

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