

---

## Overview of China's Territorial Disputes

### FRONTIER DISPUTES

#### *North Korea*

China's territorial dispute with North Korea remains largely shrouded in mystery. Because the 1962 boundary treaty was never openly published, little information about the origins of the dispute is available.<sup>1</sup> The dispute stemmed from Japan's occupation of the Korean Peninsula in the late nineteenth century. In the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, China and Japan agreed that the Yalu River would serve as part of the boundary between China and Korea. In 1909, China and Japan further agreed that the Tumen River formed another part of this boundary. For roughly 20 miles around Changbai (Paektu) Mountain, however, the direction of the boundary was unclear, as the peak serves as a watershed for both rivers. Moreover, the 1909 agreement between China and Japan contained contradictory language with respect to the sovereignty of this area.<sup>2</sup>

After 1949, China and North Korea contested the sovereignty of Changbai Mountain. Manchus and Koreans view the mountain, especially its crater lake, as sacred. North Korean communist leader Kim Il-sung claimed to have been born on the slope of the mountain and viewed sovereignty over it as a birthright of the Korean people.<sup>3</sup> A 1713 boundary monument, however, suggested that the mountain lay within China, an ambiguity enhanced by the contradictory language in the 1909 agreement. Estimates of the size of the disputed area range from 467 square kilometers to 1,165 square kilometers, depending on how much of the mountain's eastern slope is included.<sup>4</sup>

The timing of this dispute's initiation is uncertain. Interviews suggest that Kim Il-sung first raised the claim during or soon after the Korean War. North Korea reportedly approached China again in 1960 when Kim

<sup>1</sup> Kim Il-sung asked China not to publish the treaty openly.

<sup>2</sup> Department of State, "China-Korea Boundary," *International Boundary Study*, no. 17 (29 June 1962); J.R.V. Prescott, *Map of Mainland Asia by Treaty* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1975), 499–503.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, Beijing, June 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Prescott, *Map*, 500–501. Also see "DPRK-PRC Border Pact Said Confirmed," Yonhap News Agency (Korea), 20 October 1999, in FBIS # FTS19991019001881.

visited Beijing and again through a diplomatic note in 1961.<sup>5</sup> In 1961, both sides repeated claims to Changbai Mountain in official periodicals.<sup>6</sup>

### Mongolia

China's territorial dispute with Mongolia was particularly acute because the latter had been part of the Chinese empire since the Yuan dynasty (1271–1378). When the Qing collapsed in 1911, Mongolia declared its independence. A series of agreements acknowledged China's continued suzerainty over Mongolia but also recognized Mongolia's autonomy, which in turn created a vacuum of power that Russia and later the Soviet Union filled. When the Mongolian People's Republic was established in 1924, the Republic of China refused to recognize it. The KMT did recognize Mongolia in 1945 as part of a treaty with the Soviet Union, a status that the PRC affirmed in 1950 through the establishment of diplomatic ties with Ulaanbaatar.<sup>7</sup>

The Chinese-Mongolian border had not been delimited before 1949. In the 1945 agreement recognizing Mongolian independence, the Nationalists included a clause to accept "the existing boundary as the boundary line." The boundary itself was not delimited in this agreement, but Mongolia subsequently claimed, based on this clause, that its border with the PRC was undisputed.<sup>8</sup> Clashes between Nationalist and Mongolian troops occurred in 1947 and 1948 in the western part of the border.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the boundary's topography, estimates of the size of the disputed areas vary. A Chinese scholar states that differences on maps ranged from 50,000 to 190,000 square kilometers.<sup>10</sup> An official Chinese diplomatic history states that the area under dispute was 16,808 square kilometers, an amount that likely refers to the area under negotiation in the spring of 1962.<sup>11</sup> Contested areas included Baogeda Mountain in the east and Beita Mountain as well as the Hongshanzui, Qinghe, and Shengtasi areas in the west adjacent to Xinjiang.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, Beijing, June 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Department of State, "China-Korea Boundary," 1–2.

<sup>7</sup> Department of State, "China-Mongolia Boundary," *International Boundary Study*, no. 173 (14 August 1985); Prescott, *Map*, 90–98.

<sup>8</sup> DDZGWJ, 150. Wang Yinqing and Zhaori Getu, eds., *Neimenggu zizhiqu zhi: junshi zhi* [Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region Gazetteer: Military Affairs] (Huhehaote: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2002), 465–468, 471–474.

<sup>9</sup> Wang and Getu, *Neimenggu zizhiqu zhi: junshi zhi*, 465–468, 471–474.

<sup>10</sup> Qu Xing, *Zhongguo waijiao 50 nian* [50 Years of Chinese Diplomacy] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2000), 219–220.

<sup>11</sup> Wang Taiping, ed., *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiao shi, 1957–1969* [Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China, 1957–1969] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1998), 102.

The dispute between the PRC and Mongolia arose in the early 1950s. In 1953, the two governments signed an agreement on border management, which acknowledged the presence of disputed territory.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Chinese and Mongolian maps contained contradictory depictions of the border. Local officials held informal talks over the Hongshanzui area in July 1956.<sup>13</sup> Mongolia formally approached China to settle the dispute in 1957 and in 1958 submitted a Soviet map illustrating its depiction of the border.<sup>14</sup>

### Soviet Union and Central Asian Successor States

China's most complicated territorial disputes existed with the Soviet Union. Much of the Chinese-Soviet border had been delimited through previous agreements in which the Qing ceded more than 1,500,000 square kilometers of land to Russia. After 1949, disputes arose in areas where the delimitation of these prior agreements was unclear or contradictory, such as Heixiazhi (Black Bear) Island.<sup>15</sup> Disputes also arose over areas that China maintained were excluded from previous agreements, such as the Pamir Mountains, which had been allocated to Russia by Britain during the 1895 Pamir Conference (which China did not attend).<sup>16</sup> More generally, both sides often held contradictory viewpoints about the location of the border as determined by the delimitations of these agreements. The border itself was infrequently demarcated, with boundary pillars tens of kilometers apart.<sup>17</sup>

The Chinese-Soviet territorial disputes emerged in the early 1950s. Among China's neighbors, the Soviet Union was a clear referent of Article 55 of the 1949 Common Program, which stated that China would seek to review or revise all prior international agreements. In addition, a 1951 agreement on river navigation indicated an awareness of these disputes

<sup>12</sup> Shen Bingnian, ed., *Xinjiang tongzhi: waishi zhi* [Xinjiang Gazetteer: Foreign Affairs] (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1995), 266; Wang, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo, 1957–1969*, 101.

<sup>13</sup> Shen, *Xinjiang tongzhi: waishi zhi*, 266.

<sup>14</sup> Wang, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo, 1957–1969*, 100.

<sup>15</sup> DDZGWJ, 122–123. Tai Sung An, *The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973); Dennis J. Doolin, *Territorial Claims in the Sino-Soviet Conflict: Documents and Analysis* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, 1965); George Ginsburgs and Carl F. Pinkel, *The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute, 1949–64* (London: Routledge, 1978); Genrikh Kireyev, "Demarcation of the Border with China," *International Affairs*, vol. 45, no. 2 (1999): 98–109; Tsui Tsien-hua, *The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute in the 1970's* (New York: Mosaic Press, 1983).

<sup>16</sup> John W. Garver, "The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute in the Pamir Mountains Region," *The China Quarterly*, no. 85 (June 1981): 107–118.

<sup>17</sup> Kireyev, "Demarcation," 98.

when it stated that its provisions applied “irrespective of where the line of the state frontier passes.”<sup>18</sup> Confrontations over transborder grazing lands in Central Asia adjacent to Xinjiang began in 1954.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the disputes were mentioned during high-level meetings and official visits, such as Nikita Khrushchev’s 1954 visit to Beijing, Zhou Enlai’s 1957 trip to Moscow, and Liu Shaoqi’s 1960 visit to Moscow.<sup>20</sup>

The actual amount of territory contested by both sides is substantial. Overall, China and the Soviet Union disputed 35,914 square kilometers of land.<sup>21</sup> Disputes in the eastern sector focused mostly on ownership of islands in the Amur and Ussuri rivers comprising roughly 1,000 square kilometers along with Heixiazhi and Abagaitu islands, approximately 408 square kilometers in size.<sup>22</sup> In the western sector, the disputes were more complicated. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, these conflicts were inherited by the newly independent states in the region. Along the Kazakh border, fifteen disputed sectors totaled 2,420 square kilometers. Along the Kyrgyz border, seven disputed sectors totaled 3,656 square kilometers. Along the Tajik border, three disputed sectors totaled 28,430 square kilometers, including the conflict over the Pamir Mountain region of approximately 28,000 square kilometers.<sup>23</sup>

### Afghanistan

China’s boundary with Afghanistan is its shortest, stretching only 92 kilometers. Similar to other boundaries in Central Asia, this one had never been delimited by a prior agreement. As the Qing had never accepted the results of the 1895 Russian-British conference on the Pamir Mountains, China disputed the boundary after 1949.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Neville Maxwell, “A Note on the Amur/Ussuri Sector of the Sino-Soviet Boundaries,” *Modern China*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1975): 119.

<sup>19</sup> Shen, *Xinjiang tongzhi: waishi zhi*, 284.

<sup>20</sup> Ginsburgs and Pinkele, *Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute*, 6–16, 41; Richard Wich, *Sino-Soviet Crisis Politics: A Study of Political Change and Communication* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 26.

<sup>21</sup> In a review of the literature in 1978, Ginsburgs stated that estimates of the disputed area include 38,000 square kilometers, 33,000 square kilometers, and 21,000 square kilometers, depending largely on the size of the Pamir region. Ginsburgs and Pinkele, *Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute*, 104. Tsui puts the total at roughly 35,000 square kilometers: the eastern sector river island disputes account for 1,000 square kilometers, fifteen Central Asian sectors account for 5,000 square kilometers, and the Pamir Mountains are 28,000 square kilometers. Tsui, *Sino-Soviet Border Dispute*, 73–74.

<sup>22</sup> Kireyev, “Demarcation,” 98–109.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang Zhouxiang, *Xinjiang bianfang gaiyao* [Overview of Xinjiang’s Frontier Defense] (Wulumuqi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 1999), 135–136.

<sup>24</sup> DDZG WJ, 153; Department of State, “Afghanistan-China Boundary,” *International Boundary Study*, no. 89 (1 May 1969); Liu Hongxuan, *Zhongguo mulin shi: Zhongguo yu*

In the early 1950s, Chinese maps indicated a claim to approximately 7,381 square kilometers of Afghanistan in the Wakhan Corridor.<sup>25</sup> The first mention of a dispute between China and Afghanistan is unknown. The two countries did not establish diplomatic relations until 1955, but it is likely that the dispute was raised in the negotiations preceding diplomatic recognition. In August 1960, a *People’s Daily* editorial referred to “several problems left over by history” in the relationship, a phrase usually used in official Chinese diplomatic statements to refer to territorial disputes with land neighbors.<sup>26</sup>

### Pakistan

The border between China and Pakistan had never been delimited in any prior boundary agreement. The dispute centered on the status of the Hunza, a state located around the Hunza River and its tributaries south of the Karakorum watershed.<sup>27</sup> In the eighteenth century, the Mir of Hunza began paying tribute to Chinese authorities in Xinjiang in exchange for grazing rights north of the watershed. In the 1890s, the Hunza was brought under British protection and became a vassal state of Kashmir, but its tributary relationship with China continued. In 1899, the British proposed a boundary line along the watershed, placing the Hunza within British India, but the Chinese government never responded to this proposal. The Mir was still paying gold-dust tribute to China as late as 1936, when the British government of India advised him to stop this practice.<sup>28</sup>

Estimates of the amount of disputed territory differ. In 1954, a map published in China showed more than 100,000 square kilometers of territory in Kashmir as belonging to the PRC as well as a series of strategic

*zhoubian guojia guanxi* [History of Good-Neighborliness: China’s Relations with Peripheral States] (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2001), 317–318; Prescott, *Map*, 238–241.

<sup>25</sup> “Eloquent Maps,” *China News Analysis*, no. 129 (27 April 1956): 6.

<sup>26</sup> RMRB, 28 August 1960, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Alastair Lamb, “The Sino-Pakistani Boundary Agreement of 2 March 1963,” *Journal of the Australian Institute of International Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1964); Prescott, *Map*, 231–234. Also, P. L. Bhola, *Pakistan-China Relations: Search for Politico-Strategic Relationship* (Jaipur: R.B.S.A. Publishers, 1986), 92–131; Department of State, “China-Pakistan Boundary,” *International Boundary Study*, no. 85 (30 May 1968); Fang Jianchang, “Jindai Zhongguo yu Bajisitan bianjie shi chutan” [Preliminary Discussion of the History of China and Pakistan’s Border in Modern Times], *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu*, no. 3 (1997): 63–78; Liu, *Zhongguo mulin shi*, 305–306; Mujtaba Razvi, *The Frontiers of Pakistan: A Study of Frontier Problems in Pakistan’s Foreign Policy* (Karachi-Dacca: National Publishing House, 1971), 166–193.

<sup>28</sup> Razvi, *Frontiers*, 179. Also, Lamb, “Sino-Pakistani Boundary Agreement.”

mountain passes in the region.<sup>29</sup> A map published in 1959 showed roughly 15,000 square kilometers of the Gilgit region (including the Hunza areas) as belonging to China.<sup>30</sup> During the negotiations in 1962 and 1963, however, talks focused on a smaller area, totaling roughly 8,806 square kilometers. The dispute included two drainage areas, grazing fields, a salt mine, seven strategic mountain passes, and the peak of K2, the second-tallest mountain in the world.<sup>31</sup>

The dispute arose shortly after the establishment of the PRC. The first known acknowledgement of the dispute occurred in April 1953, when Pakistan sent a formal protest to China about border violations in the Gilgit region.<sup>32</sup>

### India

Excluding the border between Sikkim and Tibet, the Chinese-Indian border had never been delimited clearly. Historically, this desolate and mountainous frontier was not actively administered by either British India, Tibet, or the Qing, nor had it ever been demarcated through the placement of boundary markers.<sup>33</sup> The lack of actual administration formed the crux of the dispute that emerged after Indian independence and the establishment of the PRC. Leaders from both states held opposing views of the location of the customary boundary.<sup>34</sup>

The territorial dispute between China and India concerns three sectors. The eastern sector includes 90,000 square kilometers south of the McMahon Line and north of what China claims as Tibet's customary boundary, effectively the present-day Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, previously known as the North Eastern Frontier Agency.<sup>35</sup> India claims that the fron-

<sup>29</sup> Razvi, *Frontiers*, 169.

<sup>30</sup> Francis Watson, *The Frontiers of China* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 140.

<sup>31</sup> Razvi, *Frontiers*, 177; Anwar Hussain Seyd, *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of Entente Cordiale* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), 87.

<sup>32</sup> Razvi, *Frontiers*, 169.

<sup>33</sup> Some agreements did exist, such as the 1842 Tibetan-Kashmir treaty or the documents from the Simla Conference. However, none of these agreements include precise delimitations of the "customary boundary" between the two sides.

<sup>34</sup> ZYBJ, 1–111; John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 79–109; Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line: A Study in the Relations Between India, China and Tibet, 1904–1914* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966); Alastair Lamb, *The Sino-Indian Border in Ladakh* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973); Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 17–64; Wang Hongwei, *Ximalaya shan qingjie: ZhongYin guanxi yanjiu* [Himalayan Sentiments: A Study of Chinese-Indian Relations] (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1998), 23–277.

<sup>35</sup> Wang, *Ximalaya*, 160–162.

tier here was delimited by the McMahon Line drawn at the 1913–14 Simla Conference. China does not recognize the McMahon Line itself or any of the documents from this conference, which it never ratified. In addition, as the line itself was drawn directly on a map, it lacks a precise delimitation.<sup>36</sup> Historically, Tibet had administered the area around Tawang in the far western portion of this sector, where the sixth Dalai Lama was born, and claimed additional areas on the southern slope.<sup>37</sup> After independence in 1947, India moved to assert its authority, slowly administering this region in the early 1950s and in some cases replacing local Tibetan officials.<sup>38</sup>

The western sector includes 33,000 square kilometers adjacent to Xinjiang and the Ali District of Tibet. PLA units first entered this area in 1950 after taking control of Xinjiang and gradually expanded Chinese control throughout the decade.<sup>39</sup> India claims that an 1842 treaty between Tibet and Kashmir established a customary boundary along the Kunlun Mountains to the northeast.<sup>40</sup> China maintains that the border in this region has never been delimited but that a customary boundary has existed along the Karakorum Mountains to the southwest. This region is largely uninhabited but encompasses a key communication route for China, the Xinjiang-Tibet highway, built in 1956.

The central sector, which comprises approximately 2,000 square kilometers, includes a series of mountain passes that lie to the west of the Indian-Tibetan-Nepal trijunction.<sup>41</sup> These passes link many trade and pilgrimage routes that connect India with Tibet. No prior agreement has attempted to delimit this section of the border.

Contention over these three disputed sectors arose in the early to mid-1950s. In 1953, Chinese and Indian diplomats agreed that they would not discuss the boundary in talks over India's trading privileges in Tibet. In 1954, China sent its first demarche to India after a confrontation between Chinese and Indian troops in the central sector.<sup>42</sup> In 1954 and 1956, Zhou Enlai and Jawaharlal Nehru discussed the McMahon Line as well as the border as whole.<sup>43</sup> In 1958, Nehru and Zhou exchanged diplomatic notes that began to detail each side's claims in all sectors.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*.

<sup>37</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, 39–64.

<sup>38</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, 73.

<sup>39</sup> ZYBJ, 43.

<sup>40</sup> Prescott, *Map*, 34–35.

<sup>41</sup> DDZGWJ, 181.

<sup>42</sup> WP, I, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Subimal Dutt, *With Nehru in the Foreign Office* (Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1977), 114–116.

<sup>44</sup> WP, I.

In addition to the three sectors described above, India also claims territory controlled by China adjacent to Pakistani-held Kashmir. After the signing of the 1963 Chinese-Pakistani boundary agreement, Nehru stated in Parliament that Pakistan had surrendered Indian territory to China, including the Shaksgam Valley.<sup>45</sup> Analysis of this dispute is excluded from this book, as it stems from a prior conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. The 1963 boundary agreement between China and Pakistan was provisional pending the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

### Bhutan

Little is known about China's dispute with Bhutan. The boundary had not been delimited by any prior agreement and was not included in the McMahon Line. The boundary itself was not even surveyed until the early 1970s. In the western sector, 1,128 square kilometers are under dispute.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Chinese and Bhutanese maps show a potential dispute in Bhutan's Gasa region along its northern border with China, an area that might comprise more than 1,000 square kilometers. Due to the limited contacts between China and Bhutan in the early 1950s, it is not known when this dispute was first acknowledged. Nevertheless, it emerged as a secondary issue in China's dispute with India and received prominence when Chinese troops sought to pacify the Tibetan rebellion and moved to seal the border with Bhutan.<sup>47</sup>

### Nepal

Although the Himalayas form a natural boundary between China and Nepal, the border itself had never been delimited. Conflicting territorial claims in this region stem from the waxing and waning of Tibetan and Nepali power in the nineteenth century. Many of the areas contested after 1949 arose in the mid-1850s when Nepal invaded Tibet.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Razvi, *Frontiers*, 179.

<sup>46</sup> National Assembly of Bhutan, *Translation of the Proceedings and Resolutions of the 77th Session of the National Assembly of Bhutan* (Thimpu: National Assembly of Bhutan, 1999), 27.

<sup>47</sup> WP, I, 96.

<sup>48</sup> Department of State, "China-Nepal Boundary," *International Boundary Study*, no. 50 (30 May 1965); Fang Jianchang, "ZhongNi bianjie chutan" [A Preliminary Investigation of the Chinese-Nepalese Border], *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu baogao*, nos. 3-4 (1992): 7-22; Arthur Lall, *How Communist China Negotiates* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 194-201; Prescott, *Map*, 265-271; Yang Gongsu, *Zhongguo fandui waiguo qinlue ganshe Xizang difang douzheng shi* [History of China's Struggle against Foreign Aggression and Intervention in Tibet] (Beijing: Zangxue chubanshe, 1992), 320-325.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955, China and Nepal disputed two types of territory. The first was grazing areas and villages along the border. The size of these disputed areas have never been discussed officially, but estimates range from 259 to 2,476 square kilometers.<sup>49</sup> Many of these areas were occupied by Nepal after it defeated Tibetan troops in 1854 but were often populated by Tibetans. The largest disputed region was the Nilai area, which comprised approximately 1,200 square kilometers.<sup>50</sup> In other areas, actual administration was simply unclear because both sides claimed jurisdiction or ruled through local leaders. Overall, the two sides contested eleven sectors.<sup>51</sup> The second dispute between the two countries was over Mount Everest. A 1952 government circular indicated Chinese sovereignty over the mountain, which Nepal also claimed.<sup>52</sup>

These disputes between China and Nepal emerged shortly after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1955. In February 1956, Prime Minister Tanka Prasad Acharya raised the issue of disputed areas with Chinese leaders and sought to open talks.<sup>53</sup>

### Burma

The majority of the Chinese-Burmese border was delimited in the late nineteenth century through agreements between the British and Chinese governments. The most significant agreements were signed in 1894 and 1897, which delimited the border from the Laos-China-Burma trijunction to the High Conical Peak in the north. Only two areas were not covered by these agreements and subsequently disputed by the two sides. The first was from the High Conical Peak to the India-China trijunction, which included the eastern portion of the McMahon Line. The second was a 257-kilometer portion of the border along the Burmese Wa state in the south, whose delimitation was not agreed on following the 1894 convention and remained in dispute throughout the early twentieth century. An exchange of notes signed by Britain and the Nationalist government in 1941 defined the border in this area, but it was never demarcated.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Lall, *How Communist China Negotiates*, 199; Guy Searls, "Communist China's Border Policy: Dragon Throne Imperialism?" *Current Scene*, vol. 11, no. 12 (15 April 1963): 11.

<sup>50</sup> Yang, *Zhongguo*, 320.

<sup>51</sup> Leo E. Rose, *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 235-236.

<sup>52</sup> Hemen Ray, *China's Strategy in Nepal* (New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1983), 25.

<sup>53</sup> S. D. Muni, *Foreign Policy of Nepal* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1973), 104.

<sup>54</sup> Prescott, *Map*, 347-353.

The total size of the territory disputed by China and Burma since 1949 is unclear. In the early 1950s, maps published in China showed large parts of Burma, especially in the north, as Chinese territory. The total amount of territory claimed was roughly 67,000 square kilometers, with 55,000 square kilometers in the northern Burmese Kachin state and 12,000 square kilometers in the southern Wa state.<sup>55</sup> In the process of negotiations in the mid-1950s, the scope of contested areas decreased, focusing on four sectors. In the north, China and Burma disputed the location of the boundary from the Izu Razi Pass to the trijunction with India above the Diphu Pass, an area following roughly the McMahon Line and totaling 1,000 square kilometers. Between the High Conical Peak and the Isu Razi Pass, the two sides disputed control of the villages of Hpimaw, Gawlam, and Kangfang, which Britain had annexed in 1911, an area of approximately 482 square kilometers. In the middle, the two sides contested the Nam-Wan Assigned Tract, a 220-square-kilometer area that the Qing had leased to Britain in perpetuity in 1897. In the south, the dispute focused around the Banhong-Banlao tribal region, an area comprising 189 square kilometers. Two smaller areas, 18 square kilometers in size, were also disputed.<sup>56</sup>

The territorial dispute emerged shortly after the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1950 and was raised by Burma's prime minister U Nu in 1954. After several clashes between Chinese and Burmese border forces in late 1955, the two sides began talks in 1956. China was actively patrolling its southern border with Burma to defeat remnant Nationalist troops, who had retreated to Burmese territory in 1950 and were launching periodic raids into Yunnan.<sup>57</sup>

### Laos

China's boundary with Laos was one of the few borders that had been delimited in detail and demarcated on the ground before the establishment of the PRC. In agreements reached in 1887 and 1895 between China and France, the two sides delimited the frontier of Indochina, including Laos. Although mostly following different watersheds, the border had been poorly demarcated, with only fifteen boundary markers.<sup>58</sup> After

<sup>55</sup> "Eloquent Maps."

<sup>56</sup> DDZGWJ, 145–148; "The China-Burma Border," *China News Analysis*, no. 349 (18 November 1960); Department of State, "Burma-China Boundary," *International Boundary Study*, no. 42 (30 November 1964); Wang Shanzhong, "Lunshu Zhonghua renmin gongheguo he Miandian lianbang bianjie tiaoyue" [Discussion of the Boundary Treaty between the People's Republic of China and Union of Burma], *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu*, no. 1 (1997): 78–84; Daphne E. Whittam, "The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 34, no. 2 (Summer 1961): 174–183.

<sup>57</sup> DDZGJD, 369–379.

<sup>58</sup> Department of State, "China-Laos Boundary," *International Boundary Study*, no. 34 (24 June 1964).

1949, the two sides disputed the location of the boundary in certain areas, contesting approximately 18 square kilometers.<sup>59</sup> It is not known when the first claim was made, but Chinese sources indicate that by 1960 the border was considered to be in dispute.<sup>60</sup>

### Vietnam

Like its boundary with Laos, China's boundary with Vietnam was delimited and demarcated through a series of agreements with France. These 1887 and 1895 agreements resulted in the placement of three hundred boundary markers.<sup>61</sup>

Overall, the two sides disputed 164 sectors totaling 227 square kilometers.<sup>62</sup> Most of the disputes arose through divergent interpretations of the Chinese-French agreements. Vietnam also claimed that China had moved one hundred boundary markers during the 1979 war, while China asserted that Vietnam had occupied additional territory after the war. Before 1979, China and Vietnam held one round of negotiations over the land border, but they could not even agree on principles for settling the dispute and then suspended the talks.<sup>63</sup>

After the establishment of the PRC, local officials from both sides acknowledged the presence of disputed areas in 1956. Subsequently, both countries agreed in official correspondence in 1957 and 1958 to maintain the status quo pending a final settlement.<sup>64</sup>

## HOMELAND DISPUTES

### Hong Kong

The British colony of Hong Kong was established in the late Qing dynasty through three separate agreements. After its defeat in the Opium War, China agreed in the 1842 Treaty of Nanking to cede Hong Kong Island to Britain, a transfer that formed the territorial core of the colony. In

<sup>59</sup> A Sen, ed., *Zhongguo lujiang fengyun lu* [The Stormy Record of China's Territory] (Beijing: Luyou jiaoyu chubanshe, 1993), 24.

<sup>60</sup> Wu Lengxi, *Shinian lunzhan: 1956–1966 ZhongSu guanxi huiyilu* [Ten Years of Polemics: A Recollection of Chinese-Soviet Relations from 1956 to 1966] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenshan chubanshe, 1999), 248.

<sup>61</sup> Department of State, "China-Vietnam Boundary," *International Boundary Study*, no. 34 (15 December 1978); Prescott, *Map*, 447–451.

<sup>62</sup> "Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Interviewed on Land Border Issues with China," *Nhan Dan*, 16 September 2002, BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, 17 September 2002 (Factiva).

<sup>63</sup> DDZGWJ, 338–339.

<sup>64</sup> Guo Ming, ed., *ZhongYue guanxi yanbian sishi nian* [Evolution of Chinese-Vietnamese Relations over 40 Years] (Nanning: Guangxi renmin chunabshe [internal circulation], 1992), 142.

1860, China agreed in the Treaty of Peking, after its defeat in the Second Opium War, to cede the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula to Britain. These first two agreements provided for the cession of territory, similar to agreements that the Qing government signed with tsarist Russia.<sup>65</sup> In 1898, China in the Convention of Peking leased territory north of Boundary Street in the Kowloon Peninsula to Britain, an area that became known as the “New Territories,” along with more than two hundred nearby islands. Overall, the size of the disputed area was 1,092 square kilometers. After 1949, China announced its intention to recover the colony, terminating the lease and recovering the ceded lands as well.

### *Macao*

The Portuguese colony of Macao was originally established without any formal agreement between China and Portugal. In 1553, a Portuguese captain reportedly bribed local Chinese officials for permission to anchor in Macao’s harbor and engage in trade. Soon thereafter, the Portuguese began to settle nearby. Initially they rented the land, but in the 1840s Portugal stopped paying rent and evicted the local authorities. This presence was made official in 1887, in the Chinese-Portuguese Treaty of Peking, which provided that “Portugal will administer Macao and subordinate areas in perpetuity, as any other region governed by Portugal.”<sup>66</sup> Unlike Britain in Hong Kong, Portugal controlled all of Macao through cession. The size of the disputed area was 28 square kilometers.

### *Taiwan*

The dispute over Taiwan refers to those areas held by the Nationalist government when it retreated to the island following its military defeat on the mainland in the Chinese civil war. As the new PRC government consolidated its control on the mainland, it prepared to invade Taiwan and bring the civil war to an end. Following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 and the dispatch of the U.S. Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait, China postponed plans to retake the KMT-held islands through force, though clashes continued over coastal islands. In total, this dispute accounts for approximately 35,980 square kilometers of land, including the island of Taiwan, the Penghu archipelago in the Taiwan Strait, as well as islands along the coast of Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, including Jinmen and Mazu.

<sup>65</sup> DDZGWJ, 379–383; Prescott, *Map*, 491–498.

<sup>66</sup> Prescott, *Map*, 489.

## OFFSHORE ISLAND DISPUTES

### *White Dragon Tail Island*

Little is known about China’s dispute with Vietnam over White Dragon Tail Island. Also known as Bach Long Vi Dao or Nightingale Island, White Dragon Tail lies almost in the middle of the Tonkin Gulf, only 70 nautical miles from Hainan, and is roughly 5 square kilometers in size. It is not known when Vietnam first claimed the territory, but it was under French control during the 1930s. It is also not known whether the PRC issued a formal claim to the island, but it did occupy it after the French evacuated sixty KMT troops who had retreated there when the PLA captured Hainan in 1950.<sup>67</sup> Although the PLA did not occupy White Dragon Tail until August 1955, a small Chinese fishing village had prospered on the island for almost a hundred years.<sup>68</sup> The dispute most likely arose when the PLA took possession of the island.

### *Spratly Islands*

Sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea commonly known as the Spratly Islands has never been determined in an international agreement. The Spratlys in whole or in part are claimed by China, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Brunei. The Spratlys contain more than 230 features, including 25 islets above the high-tide line in addition to reefs, rocks, and submerged shoals.<sup>69</sup> The largest single feature is Taiping (Itu Aba) Island, which the KMT occupied in 1956 and which comprises approximately 0.46 square kilometers.<sup>70</sup> The total size of all the features is roughly 5 square kilometers.

The PRC first claimed the Spratlys in 1951. During peace treaty negotiations with Japan in San Francisco, Zhou Enlai issued a statement claiming China’s sovereignty over the Spratlys and Paracels as well as coastal islands and Taiwan.<sup>71</sup> China’s 1958 territorial waters declaration issued during the Jinmen crisis repeated these claims.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Li Dechao, “Bailongwei dao zhengming” [Rectification of White Dragon Tail Island’s Name], *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu baogao*, vols. 1–2, no. 3 (1988): 22.

<sup>68</sup> Li, “Bailong weidao zhengming,” 21–23. The island was under French control until the 1954 Geneva Accord.

<sup>69</sup> Mao Zhenfa, ed., *Bianfang lun* [On Frontier Defense] (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe [internal circulation], 1996), 137.

<sup>70</sup> Dieter Heinzig, *Disputed Islands in the South China Sea: Paracels, Spratlys, Pratas, Macclesfield Bank* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976), 17–19.

<sup>71</sup> For a copy of the statement, see Han Zhenhua, ed., *Woguo nanhai zhudao shiliao huibian* [Collection of Historical Materials on Our Country’s South China Sea Islands] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe [internal circulation], 1988), 444.

<sup>72</sup> Han, *Woguo nanhai*, 445.

### Paracel Islands

China and Vietnam have contested the sovereignty of the Paracels since the early 1950s. The Nationalists have also claimed these islands as part of China. No prior agreement exists for the islands, but they were occupied at various times before 1949 by both France and China. Competing claims are based on historical use and administration, as the islands have provided natural shelter for fishermen in the region.

The Paracel Islands contain twenty-three features, including islands, rocks, reefs, and shoals divided into the Crescent Group in the west and the Amphitrite Group in the east. In total, the features comprise approximately 10 square kilometers of land.<sup>73</sup>

The PRC issued its first claim to the Paracels in 1951 along with its claim to the Spratlys. A PLA garrison established a presence on Woody Island in the Amphitrite Group after the Nationalists left in the spring of 1950.<sup>74</sup> Although China supplied this outpost from Hainan, the first naval patrol of the disputed area was not conducted until 1959.<sup>75</sup>

### Senkaku Islands

The Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands include more than eight features comprising approximately 7 square kilometers. Although Japanese civilians have harvested guano there, Japan has no permanent presence, military or civilian, on these islands.<sup>76</sup> China maintains that the islands reverted to Taiwan after the end of World War II, which abrogated the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, while Japan claims that the islands were never part of the treaty. China did not issue its first claim to the Senkakus until December 1970, after the Nationalists on Taiwan claimed them as being a part of China.<sup>77</sup> It is likely that both the mainland and Taiwan hoped that the United States would not transfer the islands to Japan as part of the Okinawa Reversion Agreement that was concluded in 1971.

<sup>73</sup> DDZGJD, 646.

<sup>74</sup> Heinzig, *Disputed Islands*, 32.

<sup>75</sup> Zhao Qimin, "Yuanhang qianli, shoujin Xisha" [Ocean Voyage for a Thousand Miles, First Advance to the Parcels], in *Haijun: huiyi shiliao* [Navy: Recollections and Historical Materials] (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe [military circulation], 1999), 424–429.

<sup>76</sup> Zhang Zhirong, ed., *Zhongri guanxi yu diaoyutai wenti yanjiu lunji* [Research Collection on Chinese-Japanese Relations and the Diaoyutai Problem] (Xianggang: Lizhi chubanshe, 1999), 428.

<sup>77</sup> RMRB, 29 December 1970, 1.

## Bibliography

- Abdulghani, Jasim M. *Iraq & Iran: The Years of Crisis*. London: Croom Helm, 1984.
- Accinelli, Robert. " 'A Thorn in the Side of Peace': The Eisenhower Administration and the 1958 Offshore Islands Crisis." In Robert S. Ross and Jiang Changbin, eds., *Re-examining the Cold War: U.S.–China Diplomacy, 1954–1973*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Akino, Yutaka. "Moscow's New Perspectives on Sino-Russian Relations." In Tadayuki Hayashi, ed., *The Emerging New Regional Order in Central and Eastern Europe*. Sapporo: Slavic Research Center Hokkaido University, 1997.
- Allee, Todd L., and Paul K. Huth. "When Are Governments Able to Reach Negotiated Settlement Agreements? An Analysis of Dispute Resolution in Territorial Disputes, 1919–1995." In Harvey Starr, ed., *Approaches, Levels, and Methods of Analysis in International Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Alptekin, Erkin. "The April 1990 Uprising in Eastern Turkestan." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1990): 254–256.
- Amer, Ramses. "The Sino-Vietnamese Approach to Managing Boundary Disputes." *Maritime Briefing*, vol. 3, no. 5 (2002): 1–80.
- Amnesty International. *Secret Violence: Human Rights Violations in Xinjiang*. New York: Amnesty International, 1992.
- An, Tai Sung. *The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973.
- Austin, Greg. *China's Ocean Frontier: International Law, Military Force, and National Development*. Canberra: Allen & Unwin, 1998.
- Ayoob, Mohammed. *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1995.
- Azar, Edward, and Chung-In Moon, eds. *National Security in the Third World*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1988.
- Bachman, David M. *Bureaucracy, Economy, and Leadership in China: The Institutional Origins of the Great Leap Forward*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Bajpai, G. S. *China's Shadow over Sikkim: The Politics of Intimidation*. New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1999.
- Barnett, Michael N., and Jack S. Levy. "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962–73." *International Organization*, vol. 45, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 369–395.
- Barnouin, Barbara, and Yu Changgen. *Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution*. New York: Kegan Paul International, 1998.
- Baum, Richard. *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.