Failure to Resolve: What the Unsettled 1962 Sino-Indian Border Dispute Reveals About China's Current Foreign Policy

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For thousands of years the Himalayan frontier provided a natural barrier between two of the world's most powerful civilizations. Following the intrusion of the Western imperialist, bent on economic expansionism and colonial legacy, China and India were brought together in what many believed would lead to a great friendship. In 1962, however, the two nations embarked on a short-lived border war whose aftereffects are still felt today. The following analysis will examine factors from the Chinese perspective that prevent a resolution of the border dispute after nearly half a century. The conclusion holds that China's foreign policy is currently pulled in two dimensions, which leaves its behavior towards India fragmented and puzzling to international players, and even to Chinese leadership. Consequently, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) maintains a strategic pause on a frontier resolution as it bides time to build strength internally, and simultaneously maintain leverage over its Himalayan neighbor. China's commitment to a "peaceful rise" remains peaceful only because the CCP—in recognizing the nation's current fragility—waits for the most opportune times to act.

As one of the longest inter-state borders in the world, the 2,520 mile frontier between India and China remains the only one of China's land borders that is not defined, let alone demarcated, on maps or on the ground.[1] In recent years both nations have been raising the heat with additional air force and army troops at the border, as claims of incursion multiply in line with Beijing's rising political and economic influence. Both sides hold high stakes on the Himalayan frontier, as the unresolved dispute represents more than merely a border conflict; it pulls into the argument factors of history, culture, politics, and power, rendering a clean-cut resolution hard to come by. Contemporary scholars propose that the Sino-Indian border dispute be held as a litmus test against China's claims to peaceful rise.[2] Analysis of China's reaction to the territorial dispute bears directly on the future peace and stability of Asia, and provides a basic indicator of whether the state is pursing status quo or revisionist foreign policies—an issue of growing significance to the rest of the world, in light of China's status as a rising power.[3] The strategic orientation and military posture of the People's Republic of China will be a key variable determining regional stability and security in the 21st century.[4]

[1] Mohan Malik, "India-China Competition Revealed in Ongoing Border Disputes," *Power and Interest News Report*, October 9, 2007, http://www.gees.org/documentos/Documen-02608.pdf.

[2] Jeff M. Smith, "The China-India Border Brawl," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 24, 2009, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124578881101543463.html.

[3] Taylor Fravel, "Regime Insecurity and International Cooperation: Explaining China's Compromises in Territorial Disputes," *International Security* 30 (2005): 47.

[4] David Shambaugh, "China's Military Views the World: Ambivalent Security," in *The Rise of China*, eds.

China's foreign policy towards India is pulled in two directions, one which fosters the image of a benign rising power for the protection of vital national interests, and another that promotes assertiveness in accordance with a traditional Chinese identity shaped by historical precedent. Unable to reconcile the two objectives, Beijing's policy towards India remains fragmented and puzzling to international players, and even to Chinese leadership. Consequently, Beijing deliberately delays the move towards a Sino-Indian border resolution, utilizing the time to develop internally and build its strength, while simultaneously maintaining a source of leverage against India's rising status.

The following analysis intends to explain how, on one hand, China remains unwilling to compromise on the 1962 Sino-Indian border dispute due to strong notions of traditional Chinese nationalism, imperialism, and Sino-centrism, as well as longstanding historical mistrust towards India. On the other hand, China realizes the necessity of maintaining a friendly periphery in order to promote a stable regional environment that will facilitate its internal stability and continued economic development.

BACKGROUND

Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai

For two civilizations as old as China and India, there is very little evidence of historical interaction. The Himalayas constituted an impenetrable frontier, a natural and accepted boundary between two powers that enjoyed uneventful coexistence for centuries.[5] Ironically, it was the work of the foreigner that provided them with a common history for the first time. It was only after the invasion of Europeans into Asia, and the consequent subjugation of both nations to imperial ambition, that the two met in trade as tools of Western economic expansionism.[6] China and India were brought together by the influence of the British East India Company, and although the contact was brief, it resulted in opium and war during the 18th and 19th centuries.[7] Under the Western influence of globalization, India and China became inevitable competitors.

India and China were liberated from the same enemy—colonialism—at around the same time in history, and so both struggled simultaneously to establish independence in the international arena. In fact, "Each country looked with sympathy and admiration at the powerful nationalist movement which was deeply influencing the other."[8] India achieved independence from Britain in 1947, while China emerged as a communist state not too long after in 1949.[9] There were great expectations that common goals and policies would enable cooperation, and that the two states would forge a significant friendship in the post-colonial world.[10] For almost a decade Indian leaders emphasized *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* ("Indians and Chinese are brothers"); more than a slogan, the constant reiteration became an article of national faith that rode on the "historic," "age-old" friendship between India and China.[11]

Trouble on the Horizon

Although the border was never formally delimited, no dispute had ever arisen

Michael E. Brown et al. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000): 105.

[5] P.C. Chakravarti, *India-China Relations* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay Publishers, 1961): 29.

[6] Shanti Prasad Varma, *Struggle for the Himalayas: A Study in Sino-Indian Relations* (Delhi: University Publishers, 1965): 4.

[7] Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers: A Political Review of British, Chinese, Indian, and Russian Rivalries* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1969): 7.

[8] Varma, *Struggle for the Himalayas*, 5.

[9] M.L. Sali, *India-China Corder Dispute: A Case Study of the Eastern Sector* (New Delhi: S.B. Nangia, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 1998): 72.

[10] Varma, *Struggle for the Himalayas*, 6.

[11] Chakravarti, *Indian-China Relations,* 1.

until the British colonists came to the East. That there should be a boundary line between them was a purely modern notion, a product of Western occupation and strategy, and particularly that of British occupation in India.[12] According to the Chinese, the Simla conference, from which the McMahon boundary line was drawn, was planned by Britain for the purpose of territorial expansion.[13]

The boundary dispute over the McMahon Line is at the core of relations between the two most influential nations in Asia. The 550 mile McMahon Line came about in the early 20th century when Britain sought to establish buffer zones around its colony in South Asia. From 1913-1914, representatives from Britain, Tibet, and China negotiated a treaty at the Simla Conference that demarcated the boundary between the British colonies and Tibet. India accepted the Himalayan frontier as part of its inheritance after its partition.[14] Although Chinese representatives were present at the conference, the Central government never formally signed the agreement.[15] To this day, the CCP maintains that it has never officially recognized the boundary, thereby withholding its legal status; instead, it claims the true boundary—as according to historical precedent and status quo—has always been the long-standing frontier on the high ridge of the Himalayas which divides the new nations at the watershed.[16]

China currently claims two areas in dispute (see Appendix A). One area, the size of Switzerland, falls in the western sector, on the Aksai Chin plateau in the Ladakh district of Jammu and Kashmir. The second region is in the eastern sector over a claim that includes the disputed state of Arunachal Pradesh, which is three times as large. This 890 km stretch of frontier is where the disputed McMahon Line was settled in 1914. China also resents being deprived of Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. This district of roughtly 40,000 inhabitants, over 2,000 square kilometers of valley and high mountains, is the center of Tibet's Buddhist culture. It was occupied by Indian troops in 1951, shortly after China's new Communist party dispatched troops to Tibet.[17] From 1956 to 1959, revolts against the Chinese broke out in Tibet, and in March, 1959, the Dalai Lama fled to India, where he was granted asylum.[18]

The first major clash between Beijing and Delhi occurred over Tibet, the natural saddle whose status has been the subject of dispute for centuries. Whether or not armed forces on either side intruded upon the territory of the other country depends on where the legal line is drawn.[19] Under such circumstances, both forces saw their actions as necessary for self defense, and having no other alternative, crossed the so-called McMahon line. Marking the beginning of the end of *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai,* the situation in Tibet not only illustrates the origins of the Sino-Indian border dispute, but also demonstrates the ideological cornerstone that discriminates the two nations. Any discussion of the Sino-Indian border war begins with the issue of Tibet.

Lead up to War

Just two days after Indian diplomatic recognition of the Communist regime in 1949, Chinese leadership proclaimed that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would "liberate" Tibet from Western imperialists, and "stand guard at the Chinese frontiers."[20]

[12] Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers*, 6-7.
[13] Sudhakar Bhat, *India and China* (New York: Humanities Press Inc., 1967): 61.
[14] Sali, *India-China Corder Dispute*, 70.
[15] Amardeep Athwal, *China-India Relations: Contemporary Dynamics* (New York: Routledge, 2008): 20.
[16] Bhat, *India and China,* 64-65.
[17] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry," *The Economist*, August 19, 2010, http://www.economist .com/node/16843717.
[18] Sali, *India-China Corder Dispute*, 78.
[19] Bhat, *India and China,* 57.
[20] Chakravarti, *Indian-China Relations,* 14.

Sure enough, in October 1950, forty-thousand troops of the PLA occupied Tibet. At the time, Indian leadership accepted China's complete sovereignty over Tibet and disclaimed any desire to intervene in its affairs. The government not only refused to comply with Tibetan requests, but encouraged them to negotiate with the Communists for a peaceful solution. During the Tibetan crisis of 1950-51, Indian Prime Minister Nehru continued to emphasize friendship with China, so much so that he declined to sponsor Tibet's case to the United Nations.[21]

On May 23, 1951, the government of the Dalai Lama at Lhasa and the Communist Government of China entered into an agreement from which China emerged as the de jure sovereign over the territory of Tibet.[22] This treaty recognized Chinese sovereignty over the region, but maintained the existing social and political system in Tibet. More importantly, it advanced China's frontiers more than 1500 miles across Asia and brought democratic India face to face with communist China on the Himalayas. The new occupation destroyed the buffer between the two nations, and erased the natural border of the Himalayas as a protective barrier on India's northern frontier. [23]

Three years later, in May 1954, India officially recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet in an eight-year agreement that set forth the basis of their relationship in the form of *Panch Shila,* or the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence.[24] Although critics called the *Panch Shila* naïve, Nehru reasoned that India's best chance of security was to establish a psychological buffer zone in place of the physical one that had been lost in 1951.[25] Nehru had sought to appease China, because it was in his eyes the only power that might disturb Asian peace. Seeking to avoid an unfriendly policy that would antagonize the communists, he further judged that China would settle down once its ambitions were satisfied.[26] Thus, *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai* dominated Sino-Indian relations during the 1950's. Having secured the elimination of Indian influence from Tibet, as well as Indian support of Chinese aims in the wider field of international relations, Beijing enhanced the tempo of friendship with Delhi in the years following the 1954 agreement, which became years of a Sino-Indian honeymoon.[27]

Despite small border skirmishes, Chinese and Indian leaders amicably agreed that the border was a peaceful one, up until 1959—when an Indian reconnaissance party discovered a completed Chinese road running through the Aksai Chin plateau. Clashes along the border became more frequent, and policy more heated, until October, 20, 1962, when the PLA swept into Tawang, from neighboring Tibet. [28] In a weeklong war, the PLA seized much of Arunachal Pradesh, as well as a portion of Kashmir in the western Himalayas. Although various sources dispute the reasons for the border war, contemporary scholars generally agree that the war was an act of Chinese aggression that sprung from its desire for western Aksai Chin—the lofty plain that links Xinjiang to Tibet.[29]

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[21] V.B. Karnik, ed., *China Invades India: The Story of Invasion against the Background of Chinese History and Sino-Indian Relations* (New York: Allied Publishers Private Limited, 1963): 127-128.

[22] Alfred P. Rubin, "The Sino-Indian Border Disputes," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 9 (1960): 96.

[23] Karnik, *China Invades India,* 128.

[24] Bhat, *India and China,* 12.

[25] James Heitzman, and Robert L. Worden, ed., *India: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1995) http://countrystudies.us/india/129.htm.

[26] Francine R. Frankel and Harry Harding, ed., *The India-China Relationship: What the United States Needs to Know* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004): 108.

[27] Chakravarti, *Indian-China Relations,* 63.

[28] Heitzman, *India: A Country Study*.

[29] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

THE AGGRESSIVE DRAGON THEORY

National identity is the way in which people perceive their nation in relation to others, thus influencing policies, and providing the psychological foundation for the behavior patterns of a country in the international arena.[30] Since national identity appears to be defined domestically, it is easy to attribute it exclusively to internal factors, but in truth what is often viewed as a domestic process is fundamentally shaped by international forces. One cannot account for a state's international identity without accounting for the interaction of international factors with domestic politics.[31] Ultimately, any argument for an aggressive rising dragon stems from China's historical outlook. The following section will illustrate how China's history has influenced strong notions of nationalism and Sino-centrism that continue to affect the imperialistic backdrop of Chinese aggression towards India today. The analysis will also shed light on how deep seated mistrust, originating from the 1962 conflict, continue to hinder a final resolution.

A Century of Humiliation

In China there is a latent yet profound sense of vengeance and grievance against the outside world, originating from a certain understanding of historical records. Chinese history in the national consciousness affirms that China has been bullied in the last 150 years.[32] The account of "unequal treaties" that forced the nation to cede lands to foreign powers in the nineteenth century, and the critical role of national unification in modern Chinese history, suggests that territorial disputes are highly salient for Chinese leaders.[33] Beginning with China's defeat in the Opium War, narratives about the "Century of Humiliation" frame the perspective with which China interacts with the world today. This period is marked by the collective memory of partial treaties that forced indemnities, extraterritoriality, foreign settlements for political and economic privileges, and most of all, a humiliating loss of sovereignty. The century of loss fundamentally challenged the Chinese view of the world by destabilizing its place within it and continues to constrain what transpires in the present.[34]

China prides itself for being one of the longest continuing civilizations in the world, but the intrusion of Western powers into China shattered the traditional notion of a world order based upon the Middle Kingdom.[35] For centuries the Chinese believed their culture was superior to all others—a cultural center of the universe—reflected in the concept of *Zhongguo*, or "Middle Kingdom." This Sino-centric perception of the world influenced the Chinese way of conducting foreign relations.[36] The intrusion of Western powers forced the Chinese to alter their perceptions of state power and world order, and threatened their cultural nation. It was against this background that Chinese modernization and nationalism originated.[37] While national interests, power struggle, and ideological

[30] Yong Deng, "Escaping the Periphery: China's National Identity in World Politics," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*, eds. Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojing Zha (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2000): 45.

[31] Deng, "Escaping the Periphery," 44-45.

[32] U.S. Congress, 2005, U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *Hearing on China's State Control Mechanisms and Methods*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., April 14, 2005, 119-121.

[33] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 47.

[34] Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004): 46-47.

[35] Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China: Modernization, Identity, and International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 23.

[36] Sanqiang Jian, *Foreign Policy Restructuring as Adaptive Behavior: China's Independent Foreign Policy 1982-1989* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996): 38.

[37] Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism,* 16.

differences all play their parts in the Sino-Indian struggle, the ethnocentric tradition takes center stage.[38] The bitter recollection of suffering created a strong nationalist desire to rid itself of foreigners and restore China's past glory through modernization.[39]

Consequently, the boundary problem cannot be isolated from ideology. China continues to maintain that the Sino-Indian frontier is a complicated issue left over by history. A product of aggressive imperialist policies, the McMahon boundary reflects how Britain harbored ambitions against China's Tibet region.[40] The communist party accused Britain of using Tibet to bring India within its influence: "They hope to use India as their Asian base… They have earmarked Tibet, like Taiwan, as part of their defense system. To preserve their rule over India, they must control Tibet."[41] Chinese leadership propagated that the Indian government had inherited British imperialist ambitions over the Tibet region of China, and persisted to regard Tibet as India's sphere of influence, or at least as a buffer zone between itself and China.[42] Following its imperialistic foreign policy, the Communist regime declared it a sacred duty to free the Tibetans from Western oppression in the 1950's.[43] The consequent 1962 border war was born from a series of events following China's ambitions to bring Tibet back to the "Motherland's big family," and consolidate the nation's line of defense.[44]

New Nationalism: Restoring the Glory

One of the chief characteristics of the communist government was—and continues to be—its intense nationalism.[45] The ideology remains a potent force in China's political and cultural landscape, and contains an underlying attitude of imperialism—an immense glory—that continually entrenches itself into the popular conscious due to state-controlled media.[46] Chinese nationalism has many faces, including the recovery of sovereignty, the unification of divided territory, national self-respect, moral order, and the preservation of traditional values.[47] Because China still clings to traditional notions of sovereignty, it feels fully justified to change the territorial status quo, although most other nations view such actions as not only aggressive but also dangerous and provocative.[48] Accordingly, "There are very dangerous tendencies in this new nationalism which presumes that Japan, Asian, et al, must be subordinated to … Chinese leadership."[49] Chinese patriotic passion is very sincere and deeply felt, but—like a fever—it is also very volatile.[50]

China's nationalism is indivisible from its imperialism. With the end of the Cold War, the decline of superpowers, and an emerging power vacuum in Asia, China's leaders proclaimed an interest in restoring ancient boundaries that had been lost to foreign aggressors in the past two centuries.[51] The regime, which continued the Chinese tradition of looking upon itself as the greatest power in the world, sought to negate the century of humiliation brought upon their nation by Western imperialists. Mao's desire to restore the glory of the past was "an imperial nationalism presented in a discourse

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[38] Gondker Narayana Rao, *The India-China Border: A Reappraisal* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1968): 1.

[39] Jian, *Foreign Policy Restructuring,* 39.

[40] Bhat, *India and China,* 58.

[41] George N. Patterson, *Peking versus Delhi* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), 95.

[42] Foreign Language Press, *The Sino-Indian Boundary Question* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1962): 12.

[43] Chakravarti, *Indian-China Relations,* 29.

[44] Ibid., 14.

[45] Patterson, *Peking versus Delhi,* 46.

[46] U.S. Congress, 2005, *Hearings on China's State Control*, 119.

[47] Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism,* 14-15.

[48] Ibid., 113.

[49] U.S. Congress, 2005, *Hearings on China's State Control*, 114.

[50] Ibid., 111.

[51] John R. Faust, and Judith F. Kornberg, *China in World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995): 39.

of anti-imperialism."[52] China reiterated its aims to liberate Tibet, Korea, Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, Hong Kong, and Annam from foreign control, and announced in Beijing in 1950 that the PLA was prepared to march to further victories until "the liberation of all Asia was completed."[53] They believe that everything, including Taiwan, has always been part of China.[54]

Narratives of China's victimization and its eventual victory coexist in Chinese nationalism today, eagerly capturing the moral authority of past sufferings.[55] The nation's suffering under imperialism has rendered it especially sensitive to the issue of its sovereignty, which provides protection from foreign encroachment in world politics, and entitles the use of force to protect territorial integrity.[56] The Chinese treasure national sovereignty and independence because of the tremendous sacrifices made by several generations to attain such a status. The popular belief supported by the general public is that anything can be sacrificed by national sovereignty, rendering it politically incorrect for Chinese leadership to be soft on an issue related to sovereignty or independence. The wounds left by foreign imperialism are still fresh in the collective memory, making them believe that foreign aggressors are still bent on subjugating China. In the conduct of foreign relations, Beijing tends to remain suspicious of ulterior motives, and sensitive to any implications of inferior status.[57] The end purpose of international relations studies in China is to safeguard China's national sovereignty and to carry on the historical tradition of Chinese culture.[58]

Chinese foreign policy cannot be separated from its culture and identity. To this day, China has retained a high degree of historical consciousness as a grand civilization.[59] Greatness is inherently associated with territorial definition, while the expansion of territory is associated with the virtue of imperial diligence.[60] Passed down from traditional Chinese civilization, unification through territorial integrity is at the soul of Chinese identification_and military strategy.[61]

Deep-Seated Mistrust

As of late, cooperation in climate change and oil supply has somewhat accelerated improvements in the strained relationship, while bilateral trade continues to grow exponentially: only $270 million in 1990, it was projected to exceed $60 billion by 2010. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh commemorated the 60th anniversary of India's recognition of the People's Republic by noting that "India and China are not in competition…There is enough *economic* space for us both [emphasis added]."[62] Although India has a strong interest in building economic partnerships with its Chinese neighbor, New Delhi is still wary of China's military rise in the region.[63]

Despite the deepening interdependence and eagerness of the

[52] U.S. Congress, 2005, *Hearings on China's State Control*, 114-116.

[53] Varma, *Struggle for the Himalayas*, 8.

[54] U.S. Congress, 2005, *Hearings on China's State Control*, 113.

[55] Gries, *China's New Nationalism,* 50.

[56] Xinning Song and Gerald Chan, "International Relations Theory in China," in *China's International Relations in the 21st Century: Dynamics of Paradigm Shifts*, eds. Weixing Hu, Gerald Chan, and Daojing Zha (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2000): 49.

[57] Jian, *Foreign Policy Restructuring,* 39.

[58] Song, "International Relations Theory in China," 21-22.

[59] Jian, *Foreign Policy Restructuring,* 38.

[60] U.S. Congress, 2005, *Hearings on China's State Control*, 119.

[61] Bang Quan Zheng, "A Rising China: Catalysts for Chinese Military Modernization," in *China's Peaceful Rise in the 21st Century: Domestic and International Concerns,* edited by Suijian Guo (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006): 184-185.

[62] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

[63] Jayshree Bajoria and Esther Pan, "The U.S. Nuclear Deal," *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 20, 2009, http://www.cfr.org/publication/9663/usindia_nucelar_deal.html, 5.

governments to expand relations, the historical distrust holds Sino-Indian relations vulnerable to setback. Neither nation has forgotten the perceived breach of trust on either side in the years leading up to war. Although prospects for another military conflict between the two nations appear to be low, there is also little chance that the two will put aside their differences to become close partners due to deep-seated mutual suspicions on either side.[64] Recent quarrelling has made it clear that India and China are still rivals in many ways, and their relationship remains strained. In recent years China's claims to Arunachal Pradesh have increased alongside its incursions into Indian territory, while it methodically develops highway and railway infrastructure along the border. In response, India announced in June 2009 that it would deploy two additional army divisions and two air force squadrons to Assam, bringing the troop level to more than 100,000. Additionally, two squadrons of advanced Sukhoi aircraft will be complemented by three Airborne Warning and Control Systems, as well as upgraded airstrips and landing stations in Assam. [65]

Public opinion further supports the idea that increased interdependence has not necessarily led to improved mutual perceptions, which is imperative to the development of future cooperation.[66] According to a recent survey of global opinion, released by BBC, forty-seven percent of Chinese view India negatively, while thirty-eight percent of Indians view Chinese in an equally derogatory nature. This has been more or less the case since 1962.[67] Such attitudes are reflected in political decision making, where the posture is constructive towards most policy issues, but suspicious on security concerns. Consequently, notions of military deterrence and balancing remain appealing.[68]

THE BENIGN DRAGON THEORY

Diversionary war theory asserts that leaders facing domestic strife seek external conflict with other states to improve their positions at home, but Fravel presents a counterintuitive argument: internal conflict often creates conditions for cooperation, as embattled leaders seek compromise with other states in hopes of countering their domestic sources of insecurity. "Violence is less common than diversionary war theory predicts because, under certain conditions, leaders can have strong incentives to pursue cooperation instead of war to strengthen their domestic political security."[69] Not coincidentally, regime insecurity may help explain China's many attempts to compromise on territorial disputes. Scholars have discerned one overarching imperative of regime leadership that explains Chinese policy throughout its periphery in recent years: the need to promote regime legitimacy through domestic economic growth and political stability, dependent on active economic exchange, globalization, and modernization.[70] China's pattern of cooperation reveals a higher level of compromise when faced with threats to regime security; internal threats—not external ones—account for when China pursues cooperation.[71]

James Rosenau's notion of "linkage politics" in 1969 shed light on the importance of domestic factors in the formation of foreign policy, while Peter Katzenstein and Stephen Krasner demonstrated that central decision-makers must be simultaneously concerned

[64] Robert G. Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia: Promises and Perils* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005): 239-241.

[65] Smith, "The China-India Border Brawl."

[66] Jonathan Holslag, "Progress, Perceptions and Peace in the Sino-Indian Relationship," *East Asia* 26 (2009): 42, 54.

[67] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

[68] Holslag, "Progress, Perceptions and Peace," 54.

[69] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 49-51.

[70] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 3-4.

[71] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 81.

with domestic and international pressures.[72] Likewise, China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen remarked in the latter part of the last century that Chinese "diplomacy is the extension of domestic affairs."[73] In recent years, the primary concern for Chinese leadership has been to guarantee national security, maintain internal order, and pursue economic development. The regime recognizes the prerequisite of establishing a relatively stable strategic environment, especially around the country's periphery, before any of these objectives can be accomplished.[74] Consequently, Chinese leadership has worked to ease tensions and incrementally advance Chinese influence with countries around its border in order to establish the peaceful international environment needed for China's economic and domestic agendas.[75]

A Renovation in Foreign Policy

As the domestic situation deteriorated in the 1960's, external challenges to China's territorial integrity exacerbated regime insecurity.[76] During the Sino-Indian border dispute, China was countering internal threats to territorial integrity, which they believed India would exacerbate or exploit.[77] This was a period of increasing domestic discontent and rising regime concern over rebellion and border security.[78] The consideration of third country threats, such as those in Taiwan and Sinkiang, enlarges the focus to include the total perspective as seen from Beijing when the Sino-Indian border crisis transpired. The Chinese Foreign Minister over Sino-American relations stated to the media at one point that the nation was faced with two tests: overcoming internal economic difficulties, and coping with external aggression of imperialism, especially against Chiang Kai-shek. His remarks emphasized the coupling of internal economic challenges with the threat of external attack by the United States, Chinese Nationalists, and India.[79] In other words, the Sino-Indian border crisis cannot be analyzed in isolation. Although nothing changed in the pattern of Indian military behavior and public pronouncements in the years leading up to the 1962 border war, Chinese reactions to them occurred within an atmosphere of heightened crisis. Indian actions were increasingly perceived as a function of encouragement from other sources, from Washington, Moscow, or both.[80] State insecurity, which easily translates into national insecurity, compelled Chinese leadership to remain sensitive to foreign issues that may have aggravated domestic crises, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity. As border conflicts surged, the central government stepped up its efforts to demarcate boundaries with the purpose of turning customs-based boundaries into legally binding ones.[81]

Since the 1980's, however, new developments in Asia have challenged China's understanding of its region, which has forced Chinese leaders to pay particular attention to its periphery.[82] In an effort to support regime consolidation and economic rebuilding, China has sought to alleviate territorial conflict and tension, and has pursued a more moderate foreign policy since the latter part of the century.[83] Beijing began to formulate a periphery policy that would help China create a regional environment conducive to its economic modernization and national security.[84] Foreign policy restructuring is

[72] Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism,* 130.
[73] Frankel, *The India-China Relationship*, 76.
[74] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 37.
[75] Ibid., 232.
[76] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 71.
[77] Frankel, *The India-China Relationship*, 69.
[78] Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1975): 45.
[79] Ibid., 64.
[80] Ibid., 75.
[81] Deng, "Escaping the Periphery," 52-54.
[82] Suicheng Zhao, "China's Periphery Policy and Its Asian Neighbors," *Security Dialogue* 30 (1999): 336.
[83] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 71.
[84] Zhao, "China's Periphery Policy," 336.

defined as the dramatic wholesale alteration of a state's previous pattern of external relations within a region or in the global system. In 1982—starting with the Twelfth National Congress of the CCP—China 's foreign policy was restructured from a united front policy to the "independent foreign policy of peace" due to dramatic internal and external forces. Under Deng Xiaoping's new leadership, independence, peace, and development became the central themes, thereby enhancing China's security environment and promoting its economic growth. This marked an official shift in the PRC's anti-Soviet foreign policy of the 1970's.[85] Beijing did all it could in the 1980s to convince its neighbors of its benign attitude in order to gain acceptance as a cooperative and nonthreatening neighbor.[86] In 1994 China proposed a system of collective security in Asia through ASEAN, and although no major progress has been made, such a move aids in perception and relations with neighboring nations.[87] The notion of "peaceful rise" was first announced in 2003 and 2004, providing a foundation for China in Asian and world affairs. In fact, regime leadership has played down China's global ambitions in the past decade, adopting a relatively low profile on most international issues.[88]

Follow the Money

Economic interests, at the core of national comprehensive power, have rendered Chinese leadership more pragmatic in its approach towards India, and no longer reliant on ideological factors—such as nationalism, imperialism, or Sino-centrism—to play a major role in foreign policy behavior. Even territory-related issues will be compromised if they will cost China economically.[89] Some scholars contend that modernized China will not be a threat to regional or international order. On the contrary, China has sought incorporation in an interdependent, globalized world. Despite the traditional strategic culture that has long emphasized the preservation of national integrity, the new strategic "peaceful development" has been stressed by leadership in order to maintain a stable domestic and international environment for China's economic development.[90] In the 1980's, Chinese government documents began to connect foreign policy with the domestic situation, linking economic recovery to a relaxation of tensions abroad.[91] The record of Chinese policy and behavior since then demonstrates an active role in keeping the country's periphery as free as possible from hostile great power pressure. It also shows the regime's current emphasis on economic imperatives and pragmatism over a more assertive and disruptive policy.[92] As according to Lieutenant General Li of the PLA, "Cooperation is better than confrontation, and consultation is better than conflict. Economic policies that are mutually beneficial are preferable to economic sanctions."[93]

While China's own international relations specialists are realistically aware of the nation's internal weaknesses and limitations, they have had a difficult time convincing the world of China's priorities; domestic challenges oblige Chinese leadership to subordinate international aspirations in order to build a global environment that will allow the nation to repair itself internally.[94] Even optimistic analysts about China's potential readily concede that the nation still

[85] Jian, *Foreign Policy Restructuring,* xi-1.
[86] Ibid., 196.
[87] Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism,* 137.
[88] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 4-5.
[89] Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism,* 138.

[90] Zheng, "A Rising China," 208.
[91] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 71.
[92] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 35.
[93] Jijun Li, "Traditional Military Thinking and the Defensive Strategy of China," Address, United States War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, August 29, 1997, 7, http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/doctrine/china-li.pdf.
[94] Roger Irvine, "Primacy and Responsibility: China's Perception of Its International Future," *China Security* 6 (2010): 27.

faces formidable challenges. If there is any consensus, it is that China will maintain growth, even if at a lower rate, for perhaps another decade as it manages internal challenges.[95] Minxin Pei maintains that "The often breathless conventional wisdom on China's economic reform overlooks major flaws that render many predictions about China's trajectory misleading, if not downright hazardous."[96] At best, China will be an economic superpower, with geopolitical and military influence constrained by "internal fragility and external rivalry."[97]

EVALUATION OF A PEACEFUL RISE

Current media in America often highlights the debate over China's integration into the current world order; will the dragon rise peacefully, or will it awaken with a vengeance? Research indicates that there exist two camps of thought regarding China's rise. One fosters the image of a benign rising power that is most concerned with the protection of vital national interests, such as economic development, internal stability, and CCP legitimacy. The other promotes aggressiveness in accordance with a traditional Chinese identity shaped by historical precedent, and the aspiration of returning the nation to its rightful place in the world.

Scholars have had a hard time discerning a coherent Chinese policy towards Asia. For a long time, Beijing was seen as a regional power without an integrated policy toward the countries on its periphery.[98] Rather than a consistent regional policy, there seems to be a collection of distinct bilateral relationships due to varying incentives for cooperation and divisive issues such as territorial disputes and security concerns.[99] Likewise, China's own international relations specialists are not even unanimous in their interpretation of international trends, or their recommended policy responses.[100]

The following analysis will demonstrate that the continuation of the unresolved border dispute represents a deliberate delay by Beijing. Unable to reconcile between its strong Sino-centric identity, and its contemporary necessity for a peaceful periphery, the CCP's forestalling of a resolution on its frontier represents a strategic pause since the 1980's. Beijing is biding its time, developing internally to build strength, while simultaneously maintaining a source of leverage against India's rising status. China's commitment to a "peaceful rise" in the region remains peaceful only because the CCP bides its time, waiting for the most opportune time to act.

Winning a War without a Fight

Although China introduced its intentions of a peaceful rise in 2003 and 2004, there is continued disagreement over the term "peaceful rise," both in the Chinese government and academia, in particular about the word "rise."[101] China's rulers speak of peaceful rise as *heping jueqi*, which in direct translation means "peaceful emergence." Although *jueqi* means "emergence," it is translated into English as "rise" to create a notion of China's greatness to its Western audience. The Chinese citizenry, however, associate their emergence with the notion that China is not a great power, let alone a menace to the world: "the image the people have from the propaganda inside the country is

[95] Ibid., 24.

[96] Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[97] Minxin Pei, "China's Not a Superpower," *The Diplomat.Com*, http://apac2020.the-diplomat.com/feature/china%E2%80%99s-not-a-superpower.

[98] Zhao, "China's Periphery Policy," 335.

[99] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 3.

[100] Irvine, "Primacy and Responsibility," 35.

[101] Sujian Guo, ed., *China's Peaceful Rise in the 21st Century: Domestic and International Concerns* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006): 2.

that…China is just emerging like a little chicken, a chickadee. It's just emerging from its shell, therefore it's fragile…"[102] Since the 2004 Bo'ao Forum, Chinese President Hu Jintao responded to the debate by changing the term to "peaceful development," or *heping fazhan*, clearly sending the message that Beijing's official stance on foreign policy is one of incorporation, not one of hostility.[103]

China's frequent use of cooperative means to manage its various territorial conflicts, however, suggests a pattern of behavior more complex than many portray. China has offered substantial compromises in most of its settlements, receiving less than fifty percent of the contested land.[104] The nation's pattern of behavior since 1949 suggests that it attempts compromise on disputed territory only in response to heightened levels of threat to its regime, but otherwise seeks delay.[105] Accordingly, Deng Xiaoping promoted the notion of avoiding international conflict for a considerable period of time, making good use of a few decades of peace for internal development.[106] In September of 1989, Deng introduced China to his 24-character policy in an effort to consolidate CCP power, maintain domestic stability, and continue economic reform. His moderate foreign policy called on China to "observe things cooling, deal with things calmly, keep a firm footing, hide our capabilities and bide our time, get some things done" [*lengjing guancha, chenzhuo yingfu, wenzhu zhenjiao, taoguang yanghui, yousuo zuowei*]. Improving relations with peripheral states through compromise was a part of this broader, moderate strategy that would buy the nation time as it built itself up from the inside.[107] Peaceful development, therefore, remains at the core of China's philosophy—but that notion remains fundamentally tied not only to *whatever* is most advantageous to China, but also *whenever* it is most advantageous for China to act. According to Rao, it is possible that a genuine misunderstanding lies at the root of the dilemma, or that the Chinese have been exploiting the issue in order to disrupt relations when it suited them.[108]

Before the eruption over the Tibetan revolt in 1959, China had rebuffed efforts by India to negotiate over their disputed territory. In 1954, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru touched upon the border talks, but agreed not to pursue it. Two years later, in 1956, Beijing again shied away from Delhi's attempts to initiate dialogue.[109] At the time of the Tibetan uprising, Chinese leaders viewed India as a threat due to their beliefs about Indian ambitions in the area. Specifically, China was seeking to counter India's growing influence in the region, and territorial compromise would not have furthered this objective.[110] Consequently, China turned to a pacification campaign designed to penetrate Tibetan society and implement direct rule.[111] China was not likely to abandon its long-term goal of unification, nor was it willing to turn away from its Sino-centric outlook.

It is debatable whether the implementation of China's peaceful development is a continuation of Deng Xiaoping's 24-character strategy to bide time until the moment is right. The Chinese place value in a foreign policy strategy that wins a war without resorting to force (*buzhan er qu ren zhi bing*).[112] Due to their Confucian roots, the Chinese highly regard deception, stratagem, and other psychological means over the utility of military in their foreign policy. Sun Tzu reinforces this notion with his

[102] U.S. Congress, 2005, *Hearings on China's State Control*, 130.
[103] Guo, *China's Peaceful Rise*, 2.
[104] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 46.
[105] Ibid., 62.
[106] Irvine, "Primacy and Responsibility," 27.
[107] Frankel, *The India-China Relationship*, 75.
[108] Rao, "The India-China Border."
[109] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 65.
[110] Frankel, *The India-China Relationship*, 69.
[111] Fravel, "Regime Insecurity," 66.
[112] Song, "International Relations Theory in China,"24.

phrase "win without fighting." [113] It is conceivable that China's peaceful development will remain peaceful only because the CCP waits for the most opportune times to act: when results are likely to favor China *and* when the nation on the other side of the negotiating table is least likely to oppose through force. It is worth noting that, historically, China has negotiated border issues with neighbors in their moment of national weakness (Pakistan, Myanmar in the 1960's, and Central Asian republics in the 1990's), after they have ceased to be a major threat, or only after the balance of power has shifted in China's favor (Russia and Vietnam in the 1990's). China does not negotiate, however, with those who are perceived as present rivals or future threats, such as India, Japan, and Taiwan.[114] Indian leadership recognized this behavior in the years leading up to the 1962 border dispute, when clashes became more frequent, and policy more heated; it was widely believed that "China has been expansionist whenever it is strong," (December 12, 1959) and "…a strong China is normally an expansionist China….likely to create a very novel and very dangerous situation not so much for India, but for India also" (November 27, 1959).[115]

Back and Forth

Progress towards a resolution has fluctuated over time. In 1993 and 1996, a series of agreements were signed by China and India, principally to prevent unintended escalation from misperception, mistrust, and miscalculation in a tense security environment.[116] Both sides pledged to reduce troop levels, respect the cease-fire line along the border, increase cooperation on environmental and border trade issues, and exchange military delegations. The truth remains, however, that these agreements only represented intent; the lack of follow-up resulted in continued confrontation.[117] According to Waheguru Singh, the agreements were limited in scope and application, and in large measure declarative, with minimum provisions of constraint. Because the agreements were meant to function more as conflict avoidance measures, the impetus for the negotiations were predominately political and only secondarily military. Consequently, implementation receives little mention, and progress comes incrementally at best. [118]

Most recently, in 2003, a coalition government led by the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party launched a campaign for peace—an impressive feat, given that this same party had cited the Chinese threat to justify the launching of Indian nuclear tests back in 1998. There was great optimism of a breakthrough in Sino-Indian relations; India's readiness to concede on Tibet was matched by China's willingness to recognize Sikkim as part of India in its maps.[119] Both nations appointed special envoys who have met more than a dozen times for negotiations. The fruit of these talks seemed to take hold in 2005, when the two nations revealed the "Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the Boundary Question," an outline deal that implied China had dropped its historical demand for Tawang. Since then, however, relations have generally soured as Chinese state-controlled media has reasserted China's demand, and PLA border soldiers continue their construction of infrastructure along the disputed frontier.[120] As of March 2011, China

[113] Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism,* 6.
[114] Malik, "India-China Competition," 8.
[115] Foreign Language Press, *The Sino-Indian Boundary Question*, 103.
[116] Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, and Jing-Dong Yuan, "Resolving the Sino-Indian Border Dispute: Building Confidence through Cooperative Monitoring," *Asian Survey* 41 (2001): 360.
[117] William W. Bain, "Sino-Indian Military Modernization: The Potential for Destabilization," *Asian Affairs* 21 (1994): 132.
[118] Sidhu, "Resolving the Sino-India Border," 360-361.
[119] Malik, "India-China Competition," 1.
[120] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

has continued to construct roads from its major highways and defense installations to all strategic passes and military units along the border.[121] Ties between the two nations were further strained in 2007, in light of PLA encroachments across the border, as well as a new Chinese demand that India remove two old Army bunkers near the junction of Sikkim, Bhutan, and Tibet, because these were located in so-called Chinese territory.[122]

As recent as December 16, 2010, India and China issued a joint statement to declare an end to the border dispute through diplomatic talks.[123] Despite the apparent progress, however, Lieutenant General KT Parnaik, head of the Indian Northern Command, warned in April 2011 that China's military presence alongside Pakistani troops in Kashmir was too close for India's comfort.[124] On April 7, 2011, China dismissed reports about the presence of Chinese troops in Pakistani Kashmir as "baseless and ridiculous"—a statement that comes before the planned meeting between Chinese President Hu Jintao and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in mid-April.[125] Historical mistrust continues to plague the Sino-Indian relationship, and hinder progress on the historical border dispute. Despite joint statements of intention, a resolution in the near-future does not appear promising. Historical precedent demonstrates that progress is less than guaranteed, and incremental at best.

Maintaining Leverage

In the years leading up to the 1962 border war, Chou En-Lai accused the Indian government of using the boundary issue for ulterior political motives, thereby preventing the two nations from settling the issue once and for all.[126] Ironically, this is the same accusation that some scholars place upon China today—that the CCP is holding back from a final resolution as a means to remind India of its superiority in negotiations. China has been preoccupied with issues close to home: nurturing friendly neighbors, border security, recovery of lost territory, maritime jurisdiction, and most of all, ensuring that hostile powers do not establish dominance around its periphery. As late as 2005, Chinese leaders recommended that Beijing maintain its current strategic leverages over India—to include its territorial claims.[127]

The "Tibet" Card

One of the greatest impediments to full resolution is the issue of Tibet, and more specifically, the Dalai Lama who found exile in India in 1959. China blames him, and by extension his hosts, for the continued rebelliousness in his homeland. As recent as March 2008, Tibet witnessed its largest uprising in decades. [128] To this day, the disputed sovereignty over the territory in Tibet remains the key to China's policymaking on the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. The unsettled border is China's bargaining chip—the strategic leverage—that keeps India uncertain about Chinese intentions, and nervous about its capabilities, obliging Delhi to act in "good behavior" on issues that are of

[121] Manu Pubby, "China Linking Highways, Military Units with Border," *Indian Express*, March 25, 2011, http://www.indianexpress.com/news/govt-china-linking-highways-military-units-with-border/767168/.

[122] Malik, "India-China Competition," 2.

[123] Hindustan Times, "India, China agree to end border dispute through talks," *Hindustan Times*, December 16, 2010, http://www.hindustantimes.com /specials/coverage/jiabaovisit/India-China-agree-to-end-border-dispute-through-talks/newdelhi/SP-Article10-639107.

[124] Hindustan Times, "Too Close for Comfort," *Hindustan Times*, April 07, 2011, http://www.hindustantimes.com/Too-close-for-comfort/Article1-682474.aspx.

[125] Dasgupta, Saibal. "China Rejects Reports About Troop Presence in POK," *The Times of India*, April 07, 2010. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china /China-rejects-reports-about-troop-presence-in-POK/articleshow/7905590.cms.

[126] Bhat, *India and China,* 58.

[127] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 3.

[128] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

vital concern to the CCP.[129] Many scholars hold that China will never settle the border, and so relinquish a potential source of leverage over India, so long as the Dalai Lama is still alive.[130] Others point out that China's desire to control the next Dalai Lama has led Chinese leadership to keep pressure on India, and especially the Tawang region.[131]

Balancing India

India's economic resurgence, coupled with its growing relations with the United States, greatly bothers the Chinese. In March 2005, U.S. Secretary of State Condolezza Rice offered to "help make India a major world power in the 21st century."[132] This cooperation, and the nuclear energy deal that followed soon thereafter, have been compared by Chinese analysts to former President Nixon's tilt towards China to contain the common Soviet threat in 1971. The regime is concerned that the U.S.-India nuclear deal will bring about a major shift in the balance of power in South Asia, which is currently tilted towards China. Of strong symbolic significance, the nuclear deal is perceived as the key to unlocking the door that leads to the big league in world politics.[133]

The tipping point in Sino-Indian relations came on May 11, 1998, when the Indian government detonated three nuclear devices in the first series of tests conducted by Delhi that month. Whereas before, Beijing paid Delhi little attention, these tests uncovered the simmering suspicions that the two nations continued to harbor, and posed the most serious threat to Sino-Indian relations since the end of the Cold War. Chinese military strategists suddenly saw India as a rival power.[134] Strong rhetoric was used to condemn India for its ambitions to seek regional hegemony and regional expansionism. China went so far as to trace the threat back to the 1962 border war, and charged India for allowing separatist activity in Tibet.[135] Headlines roared over India's military superiority along the Sino-Indian boundary as a means to contain China. Delhi was further accused of waiting for the opportune moment for further expansion to continue its control over weaker countries in South Asia.[136] In reply, Indian leaders charged that the root cause of their nuclear tests was a desire to check the "China threat."[137] In fact, Indian leaders justified the nuclear tests by citing China's armed aggression against India back in 1962.[138] The series of verbal and diplomatic attacks following the nuclear incident demonstrate the depth to which the border war still affects relations today, as well as the deep-seated mutual mistrust on both sides of the Himalayan frontier.

In the past decade, the 1962 frontier dispute has transformed into a broader contest over influence. America's nuclear deal with India in 2005 indicated to Chinese leaders that the United States was using India as a counterweight to China's rising power. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the United States is seeking a strategic relationship with the world's largest democracy.[139] This fear reflects a larger Chinese paranoia against encirclement by America and her allies, which is supported by America's recent strengthening of ties with South-East Asian nations, including Vietnam and Indonesia.[140] Likewise, India also fears encirclement, which is derived from the "string of pearls" that China is investing in

[129] Malik, "India-China Competition," 5.
[130] "A Himalayan Rivalry."
[131] Malik, "India-China Competition," 2.
[132] Ibid., 2.
[133] Ibid., 2-4.
[134] Ibid., 2.
[135] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 235.
[136] Shambaugh, "China's Military Views," 129.
[137] Sutter, *China's Rise in Asia*, 235.
[138] Neville Maxwell, "Sino-Indian Border Dispute Reconsidered," *Economic and Political Weekly* 34 (1999): 905.
[139] Bajoria, "The U.S. Nuclear Deal," 4.
[140] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

along the southern coast of Asia, including port facilities in Bangladesh, radar and refueling stations in Burma, the deepwater port of Gwadar in Pakistan, as well as continued projects in Thailand and Cambodia.[141] Such actions point to the notion that the Sino-Indian border dispute is no longer about a mere border; it is irrevocably tied to the power struggle between Asia's two giants. The contested territory is part of a greater struggle for control, which has rendered a resolution hard to come by, short of war.

The Pakistan Factor

According to some scholars, there are a number of reasons to be less than optimistic about enduring Sino-Indian peace. To begin with, each side holds strategically significant territory. The dispute involves the ethnically unstable region of Kashmir on the Indian side, and the equally sensitive regions of Tibet and Xinjiang on the Chinese side. Furthermore, China's long-standing alliance with Pakistan—India's arch rival—continues to act as a significant impediment to a permanent resolution.[142] The 1962 border dispute provided an impetus for the friendship; despite a disputed boundary between Pakistan and China, the two nations, in the interest of a common enemy, peacefully negotiated in order to reach a common defense against India. In an effort to set its own terms for India's emergence as a great power, China has combined traditional strategic balancing and diplomatic engagement.[143]

A mainstream position holds that China has left open the option of threatening or starting border hostilities if it should ever desire to do so. In a similar point, China could initiate such hostilities to demonstrate its willpower and capability, rather than to gain more territory.[144] Those who perceive a hostile China allege that, although China is not poised to attack India in the immediate future, it is practicing strategic encirclement while simultaneously enabling Pakistan's nuclear and missile capabilities. By enabling Pakistan, China also ties up Indian troops along the Himalayas.[145] Brajesh Mishra, a former national security advisor and special envoy to China, claims that China "does not want a rival in Asia…Its main agenda is to keep India preoccupied with events in South Asia so it is constrained from playing a more important role in Asian and global affairs."[146] Despite reports in December 2010 that China and India were determined to end the border dispute through diplomatic talks, during that same month Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao reassured both houses of Pakistan 's Parliament that "to cement and advance the all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation between China and Pakistan is our common strategic choice." According to Pakistan's interior minister, Rehman Malik, the message was meant to send a strong message to the "enemies of Pakistan," including India. [147]

CONCLUSIONS

All in all, there are a dozen stretches of frontier whose borders remain disputed. In these so-called "pockets," Indian and Chinese patrols circle each other endlessly, but since 1967 there has been no confirmed exchange of fire, which brings to light the notion that neither side is looking for a fight—or that at least one of them is waiting for the most opportune time to strike.[148]

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[141] Smith, "The China-India Border Brawl."
[142] Bain, "Sino-Indian Military Modernization," 132.
[143] Christopher Griffin, "Containment with Chinese Characteristics: Beijing Hedges against the Rise of India," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research Asian Outlook* 3 (2006): 1.
[144] Frankel, *The India-China Relationship*, 43.
[145] Ibid., 47-48.
[146] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."
[147] Hindustan Times, "Too Close for Comfort."
[148] The Economist, "A Himalayan Rivalry."

China's convoluted policy towards India is not unique to the CCP, nor is the stratagem of deliberate uncertainty new to foreign policy. In fact, in Washington there are two schools of thought regarding China, one holding that the nation is a rival that must be contained on all sides, the other holding that China's rise is inevitable, and must therefore be engaged to play a constructive role in the world: "Washington's China policy in recent years has turned out a combination of the two, while its [recent] acts are all-sided containments under the cloak of engagement… as frustrating as Beijing finds this perceived policy…it has found the approach increasingly useful in its own relationship with India."[149] Additionally, it is not a given that the Chinese government is acting with a unified strategy towards India. It is possible that disjointed policy is crafted by separate divisions of the Chinese bureaucracy; in fact, a well-articulated India strategy did not exist for much of China's history. Despite the apparent enigma, however, it is certain that in recent years China's policy toward India has moved up the policymaking food chain in Beijing.[150]

Although the swell of diplomatic and commercial ties would suggest that India and China are moving gradually towards a resolution, the situation on the ground paints a diametrically opposing picture. The recent addition of troops and aircraft, as well as the continued construction of infrastructure on both sides of the border, suggests that both nations are gearing up for the potential of a conflict that will not be resolved any time soon. Given the historical tenacity of Sino-Indian agreements, the border dispute promises to simmer in the background as it has for the past half a century, despite recent talks and declared intentions. Negotiations in the past few years have been held against the backdrop of a general consensus in both capitals that no breakthrough to the territorial dispute should be expected for some time.[151] Although the probability of all-out conflict is extremely low for the time being, the divide between China and India is so deep-seated that any dramatic improvement in the bilateral relationship is unlikely.

American headlines in the past year alone demonstrate the general uncertainty by which the international community approaches China's growing power. Scholars hold an ongoing debate over whether China will be a threatening dragon or a peaceful panda to the existing world order. The alternative position presented by this study of the unresolved 1962 border dispute posits that China does whatever is necessary: outwardly, the CCP is committed to a peaceful development, but its actions suggest otherwise. China will remain peaceful only when such a position suits its best interest.

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[149] Griffin, 1.
[150] Ibid., 7.
[151] Malik, "India-China Competition," 1.

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