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The Frontier Regions in China's Recent International Politics

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THE Western powers and Japan intruded upon China not only along her Pacific littoral but also across her land frontiers. Accustomed to the idea that the sea itself constituted a barrier, nineteenth-century China had no real defence against the maritime powers. Once these powers established themselves along the coast, however, their naval might could no longer afford them the absolute supremacy which they had enjoyed at sea. Situated amidst dense Chinese populations, the treaty ports were ultimately doomed by the rise of Chinese nationalism.

Whereas China's maritime marches constituted an ethnic as well as a geographic frontier, her land frontiers were indeterminate. They had the aspect of a zone rather than of a line, and this zone was composed of ethnically distinct regions over which China exercised suzerain, but not sovereign, powers. In approaching these frontiers the Western powers and Japan did not possess the same preponderance of arms that they did along the coast, but penetration was made easier by the fact that the frontier peoples they encountered were not under direct Chinese administration.

Under the Ch'ing empire, the areas inhabited by these frontier peoples fell into three main categories: vassal states, imperial dependencies, and native districts. While the Ch'ing court had a special relationship with each type of frontier region, these relationships had certain features in common. In each case a lesser sovereign was recognized by a great sovereign: the emperor of China invested the local ruler with legitimacy, the investiture being manifested by a seal of office.

Far from being empty ritual, investiture by the emperor of China had real political meaning. Prior to the arrival of the

Europeans, Chinese power was politically decisive throughout a large area peripheral to China. Within this frontier region, no rule was legitimate which did not have imperial sanction. The Ch'ing empire was capable of deploying armies to put down usurpers, or to unseat rulers who had become disloyal. An imperial decision to support one faction or another could determine the outcome of the struggle which often attended succession to office in these frontier states. Flaunting of the imperial will by a local ruler invited political intrigue between the Ch'ing court and his political opponents. In arrogating to itself the role of political arbiter, the Ch'ing dynasty sought to safeguard its own security by maintaining a tranquil state of affairs on its frontiers.

The rulers in the frontier regions on China's periphery were permitted to govern their own people without reference to Chinese administrative procedures and institutions. This deference to local customs was in recognition of the fact that, from the Confucian point of view, these non-Chinese peoples were not yet prepared to accept the bureaucratic system of government which prevailed in China Proper. It was expected that, in time, these frontier peoples would become Chinese by adopting Chinese ways, at which point Chinese administration—a precious thing which had to be earned—could be extended to them. It was in this way that the Chinese state, over a period of several millennia, had expanded from its original centre in the middle Yellow River valley, and it was expected that this process would continue. The administrative autonomy enjoyed by the frontier dependencies of the Ch'ing empire was not inconsistent with the idea that they were intrinsically part of China.

Summing up his description of the various parts of the empire, a prominent Chinese historian has said: 'Spread out like stars in the sky, or pieces on a chess board, they reached the sea in the east, Persia in the west, Malaya in the south, and the Hsing-ling mountains in the north [Siberia], making up a great East Asian country [*tung-ya ta kuo*].[1] All modern governments of China—the Republican and communist as well as the Ch'ing—have to some extent held to this position, even though these frontier regions have had no status in the 'international' law of the Western powers. In her 'search for a political form' China has looked for a system of

[1] Hsiao I-shan, *Ch'ing-tai t'ung-shih* (General history of the Ch'ing dynasty) (Shanghai, 1928), ii. 157.

government which would take into account the special relationships existing between the Chinese core area and the non-Chinese parts of the empire—the vassal states, the imperial dependencies, and the native districts.

Severely shaken as it was by the encroachment of foreign states in its frontier regions, the Ch'ing dynasty did not seek a new basis for its relations with its dependencies to take the place of the Confucian system. On the contrary, it attempted, at first, to fit its relations with the Western powers into the imperial system. After 1860, when the Ch'ing court was obliged to recognize these powers on a basis of equality, it gradually allowed and finally encouraged Chinese colonization of the frontier regions, in many cases suppressing the local autonomy which the non-Chinese peoples in these regions had previously enjoyed. This was a policy of using Chinese imperialism to counter foreign imperialism; this same policy was pursued during the period of Republican rule on the mainland (1911–49). If the Ch'ing dynasty clung to an outmoded ideology, this ideology at least had the merit of once having been effective. The situation under the Republic was worse. The various strong men who held sway in different parts of China during this period had no workable intellectual system to draw upon, for the dominant ideology of the time was nationalism, a negative one from the standpoint of frontier affairs. The ideology which the Chinese communists took over from Stalin, on the other hand, did provide a systematic theory for the management of a multi-national empire, and this was one of the reasons it had appealed to Sun Yat-sen. One element which each of these periods—late Ch'ing, Republican, and communist—have in common is the interaction between frontier affairs and foreign affairs which characterized them all. Only in the last few years has a sharp distinction been made between the two.

COMPOSITION OF FRONTIER REGIONS

At the height of Ch'ing power, just as China was coming into contact with aggressive European imperialism, the dependencies of the empire consisted of Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Tsinghai, and Tibet. Together, these areas comprised China's northern and western marches. Imperial relations with the nomadic peoples who inhabited them were handled by the *Li Fan Yüan*, or Frontier

Control Bureau.[2] The *Li Fan Yüan* was an administrative office newly created by the Manchus. It grew out of a Mongol Affairs Office (*Meng-ku Yamen*) which had been set up by the Manchus before their entry into China, a fact which indicates the importance of the Manchu–Mongol relationship in this early period. When relations developed in the seventeenth century between the Russian and Chinese empires across this same frontier (*fan*) they were also put under the *Li Fan Yüan*.

For the management of its relations with tributary states, on the other hand, the Ch'ing court perpetuated an office in use in Ming (1368–1644) times, that of the *Chu K'o Ssu* (Reception Department) in the Board of Ceremonies (*Li Pu*), and Ch'ing relations with the European maritime powers were initially entrusted to this same office.[3] The principal tributary states of the Chinese empire at the time of the Opium war were Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, Annam, Burma, and Siam. With the exception of the Ryukyu Islands and Siam, the tribute missions from these states travelled overland to China.

The institution of *t'u-ssu* (native chiefs) inherited by the Ch'ing was a creation of the Mongols, who were also responsible for making the province the territorial unit of Chinese administration. The *t'u-ssu* system was employed for the administration of native (that is, non-Chinese) districts in the south-western provinces of Yunnan, Kwangsi, Kweichow, and Szechwan. The principal native tribes coming under *t'u-ssu* administration were the Miao (Kweichow and Kwangsi), Shan (Yunnan), and Lolo (Szechwan). They inhabited mountainous regions and malarial lowlands which were generally unattractive to the Chinese who began colonizing the far south-west during the Ming period. While the Manchus were never as partial to the *t'u-ssu* as they were to the Mongol princes and Tibetan lamas, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the restrictions on Chinese emigration to these districts were removed and the position of the *t'u-ssu* themselves gradually undermined. Ch'ing repression combined with Anglo-French aggressiveness on the southern frontier made the *t'u-ssu* areas especially sensitive to the fortunes of China's foreign policy.[4]

[2] See J. K. Fairbank, 'On the Ch'ing Tributary System', *Harvard-Yenching Inst. Studies*, vol. xix.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Chang Hsia-min, *Pien-chiang wen-t'i yü pien-chiang chien-she* (Frontier problems and frontier organization) (Taipei, 1958), pp. 69–70.

Taken together, the vassal states, imperial dependencies, native districts, and also the imperial domains in Manchuria, described China's frontier regions. It was in these land frontiers, as well as along the coast, that the Ch'ing dynasty confronted the imperialism of the Western powers and Japan. These frontiers had remained ethnically distinct from the Chinese core area because their climate and topography were inhospitable to the agricultural system upon which the Chinese bureaucratic state depended. Communist China has at its disposal the technology required for the colonization of these areas, but it was during the later Ch'ing period that China was forced to accept linear frontiers to delimit what was 'Chinese' from what was 'foreign'. There was the danger that in the process China would lose these frontier regions which, commanding the several land routes into China proper, were vital to the security of the state.

The importance of this frontier zone could not have been better understood than it was by the Manchus, who themselves had usurped China's seat of empire from a position on the frontier. No sooner had the Manchus consolidated their position in China Proper than the Russians, from their position in Siberia, began to probe the northern periphery of the empire. The Manchus replied by eliminating from Mongolia the threat of the Dzungars (western Mongols), with whom the Russians may have considered allying themselves, and by then meeting the Russians at Nerchinsk. There, on the Shilka river east of Lake Baikal, China signed her first treaty with a Western power. It was an unequal treaty, but unequal from the point of view of the Russians, who were compelled to dismantle their frontier posts and to leave the entire Amur basin in the hands of the Manchus. Maintaining their position of strength, the Manchus next met the Russians at Kiakhta, south of Lake Baikal, in 1727. The treaty signed there regulated Russian trade with the Ch'ing empire carried on at Ma-mai Ch'eng, the Chinese town opposite Kiakhta. The treaty also delimited the Mongolian sector of the frontier between the two states. The Manchus succeeded, too, in maintaining their position in the northern part of Chinese Turkestan (*T'ien-shan pei-lu*, or Dzungaria), which had been pacified by the Ch'ien-lung emperor in the middle of the eighteenth century, although at an early date the Manchus lost control of the Kazakhs in the Semirech'ye region east of Lake Balkhash. In a series of treaties signed

with the Russians at Ili and Tarbagatai in the first half of the nineteenth century, the frontier was delimited and an agreement reached concerning the trade to be carried on in this sector. Subsequent Russian dissatisfaction with their commercial opportunities in Chinese Turkestan was one reason for their intervention in Ili later in the century.

Partly as a side effect of its pacification of the Dzungars, the Ch'ing established its ascendancy in Tibet where the Dzungars had attempted to impose themselves. As a result of a series of expeditions to Tibet during the eighteenth century the Ch'ing succeeded in expelling the Dzungars and in establishing the Dalai Lama as the temporal ruler of Tibet. Perhaps the most spectacular feat of the Manchus in reducing the imperial dependencies to submission was their twin-pronged attack of 1792 which traversed the Himalayas to chastize the Gurkhas, who had invaded Tibet, and drive them back to Nepal.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the Ch'ing dynasty was on the defensive throughout its peripheral territories. From her position in India, Great Britain stripped away the Tibetan dependencies along the 1,500-mile arc of the Himalayas through Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Assam. In 1817 a British Resident took up his post in Khatmandu; the other states followed one by one.[5]

In the south, where the frontier zone intrudes upon China proper, Britain and France began their race, through Burma and Indochina respectively, for a commercial route to Szechwan. Lower Burma was annexed to British India and Cochinchina ceded to France in the same year, 1862. It was again in the same year, 1868, that François Garnier followed the Mekong into south China while a British expedition explored the Irrawaddy route via Bhamo. In 1873 a Chinese army under Ts'en Yü-ying, with French weapons, suppressed the Panthay (Moslem) rebellion in Yunnan led by the self-styled Sultan Suleiman, who in the previous year had sent a mission to London to solicit British support. In 1874 France secured a *de facto* protectorate over Annam, and in the following year the murder of a British subject, A. R. Margary, on the Burma–Yunnan frontier, gave Britain the opportunity of advancing new demands on the Ch'ing court.

[5] For the period of European encroachment I have relied mainly on H. B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (London, 1910–18).

Despite a military defeat at Langson in 1885, the French were able to secure in that year a treaty with China which ended, in a way satisfactory to France, her undeclared war with China. The effect of the Tientsin peace treaty was to open up the Red River route for the French penetration of Yunnan and to recognize the French protectorate over Annam and Tonking. One year later, in 1886, the British annexed upper Burma.

By the 1876 treaty of Kianghua, said to have been modelled after the 1862 treaty of Saigon by which France grabbed Cochinchina, Japan obtained the 'independence' of Korea, and several Korean ports were opened for trade.[6] As in many other instances of Ch'ing reluctance to assume responsibility for the defence of its client states against Western encroachment, the Manchus did not respond to the pleas of the Ryukyu Islands for help, and in 1879 they became a Japanese district. Following her defeat by Japan in Korea and Manchuria in 1894–5, China was obliged to cede Formosa and the Pescadores and to recognize the complete 'independence' of Korea. The 'Chinese family of nations' was a thing of the past.

All the nations tributary to China had now fallen to the Western powers except Siam which, having unilaterally abrogated her tributary relationship in 1882, had succeeded in maintaining her independence. It was now the turn of the imperial dependencies. The maritime powers had acquired positions on the continent by means of their seizure of China's tributary states. Great Britain was ready to force the 'opening' of Tibet from her string of protectorates along the Himalayas, while in Burma she readied herself for the commercial exploitation of Yunnan and all south-west China. The French, already proceeding with the economic penetration of Yunnan, dreamed of annexing south-west China and adding it to their Indochinese realm. The Japanese only awaited a favourable opportunity to annex Korea outright, the more purposefully to proceed with the penetration of Manchuria; the Russians were already busily engaged in Manchuria, having stripped away the Ch'ing possessions north of the Amur and east of the Ussuri. In the Mongolian sector the Russians were preparing to make use of Buryat Mongols from Siberia for the undermining of Ch'ing influence in Mongolia and, secondarily, in Tibet.

[6] Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840–1928* (Princeton, NJ, 1956), p. 129.

Events had taken an even more sinister turn in the far north-west of the Ch'ing empire. For ten years, from 1871 to 1881, the Russians actually occupied the Ili valley, taking advantage of a great Moslem revolt which by 1866 had eliminated Manchu control from all of Chinese Turkestan. Much to the surprise of the Russians and the British (the latter had supported the cause of the rebel chief, Yakub Beg, who operated from Kashgar), the Ch'ing mounted a great expedition under Tso Tsung-t'ang which gradually reasserted imperial authority north and south of the T'ien Shan, obliging the Russians to withdraw from Ili in 1881.[7]

THREATENED DISMEMBERMENT

The threatened dismemberment of China is generally thought to have been ushered in by the Ch'ing defeat at the hands of the Japanese in 1894–5. It was at this time that the intense rivalry among the Western powers and Japan for spheres of influence in China began. This contest, which did violence to the most-favoured-nation principle and to Chinese sensibilities, led to the American 'open-door' notes and to the Boxer rebellion. By this time, however, the Chinese empire, having been divested of its vassal states, was already but a shadow of its former self. Japan's defeat of China was thus the culmination of one process, the destruction of the tribute system, and the inauguration of another, the threatened dismemberment of China proper. Both were reflected in the treaty of Shimonoseki, which on the one hand removed all ambiguity from Korea's independent status *vis-à-vis* China and, on the other, ceded Taiwan, a part of China proper, to Japan.

China's defeat by Japan also, as Jerome Ch'ên has pointed out,[8] brought about an awakening of Chinese nationalism. This awakening had been foreshadowed in the 1860 treaty of Peking, which forced the Ch'ing court to recognize the Western powers on a basis of equality. No longer could they be regarded as tributary states; no longer, therefore, could the idea of a Middle

[7] A major policy question surrounded the dispatch of the expedition to Ili: should China try to maintain her position in the imperial dependencies or devote all her limited resources to meeting the challenge of the maritime powers in the coastal provinces? This dispute is the subject of *The Ili Crisis* (Oxford, 1965), by Immanuel C. Y. Hsu who, in my opinion, draws the wrong conclusion—namely that China could not afford to protect her land frontiers.

[8] See above, p. 8.

Kingdom be logically sustained. After the 1860 treaty the Western powers were permitted to station diplomatic representatives in Peking. To cope with this new situation, the Manchus established a Foreign Affairs Office (*Tsungli Yamen*) and gradually posted their own diplomats abroad.

With the recognition of other states, states which (except for Russia) had the special quality of being *nation*-states, as China's equals, and with the encroachment on the part of these states on China proper, the concept of Han Chinese assumes an *ethnic* in addition to its usual *cultural* connotation. It was as a cultural entity, embodied in a bureaucratic state, that the Chinese—i.e. the Han Chinese—had been so successful in incorporating ethnically and linguistically diverse peoples. The creed of nationalism, together with foreign imperialism, had rendered obsolete this traditional Han Chinese concept. And it was of no immediate advantage to China that the nationalism and the colonialism of their adversaries were mutually contradictory. For the moment, it seemed obvious that only as a nation-state could China become powerful enough to withstand the challenge of the Western powers, as Japan had done. This implied a policy of Han Chinese imperialism to counter Western and Japanese imperialism in those frontier regions of the empire which had not already been lost. The contest between these two imperialisms was to decide where the boundary between the two would be drawn.

The scrapping of the earlier Ch'ing device of isolating the different parts of the empire from one another was implicit in the establishment of Sinkiang as a province in 1884, following its pacification by Tso Tsung-t'ang. After the turn of the century the Ch'ing government went further by opening Inner Mongolia and Manchuria to Chinese colonization. Emigration to Inner Mongolia was facilitated by the completion of the Chinese-built Peking–Kalgan–Suiyüan railway in 1909. Railways already existed between China proper and Manchuria, which was reorganized into three provinces in 1907, the year in which Russia and Japan agreed on their respective spheres of influence in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. As the homeland of the Manchus which the Ch'ing court had sought to maintain as a special preserve, the opening of Manchuria is especially noteworthy as an indication of the straits in which the dynasty now found itself. In 1910, on the eve of the Manchu collapse, imperial

armies were dispatched to Tibet and Outer Mongolia, where the situation had been disturbed by the Younghusband expedition of 1904 and the Russian revolution of 1905 respectively.

The connexion between China proper (*pen-pu*) and the imperial dependencies (*fan-pu*) which the Ch'ing court had struggled so tenaciously to preserve was all but completely severed by the Chinese revolution of 1911. The Mongols and Tibetans had recognized the overlordship of the Manchu sovereign rather than that of China as such. To some extent, indeed, the Ch'ing dynasty rested on an anti-Chinese alliance between the Manchus and the non-Chinese peoples of the empire, notably the Mongols. The brake which the Manchu dynasty had placed on Chinese imperialism was greatly appreciated by the other peoples of the empire, just as British and French protection was appreciated by the minority peoples of Burma and Vietnam.

Mongolia declared her independence in December 1911, actually a month before the proclamation of the Chinese Republic. In 1913 the Dalai Lama declared the independence of Tibet and concluded a pact with the Living Buddha at Urga (Ulan Bator). At the Simla conference in 1914 Great Britain sought unsuccessfully to gain Chinese recognition of Tibet's independence, and in the following year a Sino-Russian-Mongolian agreement was signed recognizing the autonomy of Outer Mongolia. Although neither Sinkiang nor Manchuria ever became independent officially, the central government exercised no authority in either region between 1911 and the end of the second world war, and very little between 1945 and 1949. The authority of Chang Tso-lin and his son in Manchuria was superseded only by the Japanese-created 'Manchukuo', while in Sinkiang the personal rule of Yang Tseng-hsin was followed, after a brief interregnum, by the Soviet-sponsored rule of Sheng Shih-ts'ai.

Thus the establishment of the Chinese Republic only hastened the dismemberment of the larger China which had been constituted under the empire. In its powerlessness, the Republic sought to prevent the complete loss of the non-Chinese parts of the Ch'ing domains by resting its claim to authority on the idea of a free and natural union of the five peoples of China—the Chinese, the Manchus, the Tibetans, the Mongols, and the Mohammedans (*Han*, *Man*, *Tsang*, *Meng*, *Hui*)—symbolized by the five bars of the new national flag. Chiang Kai-shek recognized

the futility of this device by discarding the five-barred flag in 1928, following the victory of the Northern Expedition, and substituting for it a flag dominated by a white sun, symbolizing the central authority of the KMT. In the critical situation in which China now found herself it was deemed wiser to promote the national unity of the Han Chinese at the expense of the borderlands than to endanger that unity by appealing to the nebulous idea of a union of five peoples. Once this decision had been reached, the KMT sought to enlarge as much as possible the area under Han Chinese control at the expense of Tibet and Outer Mongolia, now treated as sovereign states, though not formally recognized as such, by Great Britain and the Soviet Union respectively.

In 1928 the half-Tibetan, half-Mongol region of Tsinghai came under direct Chinese administration, as did the new province of Sikang, established in the same year. By creating Sikang the government in Nanking simply detached eastern Tibet, sometimes referred to as the Chamdo region, from Tibet proper. On the northern frontier nearest Peking, the KMT placed Inner Mongolia under Chinese provincial administration with the establishment of Jehol, Chahar, and Suiyüan provinces. These had already evolved as special districts during the period of warlord rule preceding the Northern Expedition. Changes had already been made in the far north-west, too, where the Altai district, which would have otherwise fallen to Outer Mongolia, was attached to Sinkiang in 1919. Another Turkic region of the Ch'ing empire, however, became isolated from China by the emergence of an independent Outer Mongolia: this was Tannu Tuva, which became a republic of the Soviet Union in 1928. In the reorganized KMT administration of the post-1928 period, what remained of frontier—that is, non-Han Chinese affairs—could be handled by a Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Committee in the Administrative *Yüan*.[9]

In the south-west, the KMT accelerated the process of dissolving the *t'u-ssu* local governments which had commenced under the Ch'ing dynasty. By 1931 the *t'u-ssu* system had disappeared. The 'indigenous' peoples of the south-west had inhabited the Yangtze basin in ancient times, where they coexisted with the early Chinese. Driven before the Han Chinese advance, the remnants of these peoples took refuge on the Yunnan–Kweichow plateau,

[9] These developments are detailed in Chang, pp. 51 ff.

which afforded them some natural protection. The *t'u-ssu* system had helped them to preserve themselves, their lands, and their institutions in the face of Han Chinese colonization. They clearly had a special claim to national minority status. The elimination of the *t'u-ssu* system was a logical corollary of the equality of all citizens (i.e., no protection for minorities) proclaimed by the KMT.

KMT nationality policy was elaborated by the Third National Party Congress of 1929 which blamed the Manchus and the warlords for all the misunderstandings which existed among China's nationalities. It promised to right the wrongs of the past and to create a united nation (*Chung-hua min-kuo*) on the basis of the free association of China's five peoples who, because of the facts of geography and history, were really one nation (*Kuo-tsu*);[10] in effect, it sought to deny the existence of national minorities in China. In subsequent years, this position was rationalized by scholars sympathetic with the KMT. According to one:

> Heretofore it has been widely believed that China is a multinational state . . . , comprising large groups, namely, Han, Man, Meng, Hui, Tsang, and small ones, such as Miao, Yao, and Lolo. This is a mistake. . . . Due to a thousand years' interaction and Han influence there has developed a great Chinese nation (*Chung-hua min-tsu*).[11]

To the extent that the non-Han peoples of China were still minorities, it was asserted, they were geographic rather than ethnic minorities.[12] This academic discussion gave a certain intellectual veneer to the well-known view of Chiang Kai-shek that China was not composed of different nationalities but only of several 'clans' of a single nation.

The practical effect of KMT policy, coupled with foreign encroachment, was to reduce China to China proper, virtually eliminating the frontier zone. By the early 1930s the imperialists were at the gates of China proper. Following the establishment of 'Manchukuo' the Japanese invaded Chahar and Suiyüan in

[10] These developments are detailed in Chang, pp. 53 ff.

[11] Ch'en Chia-wu, 'Lun min-tsu yü tsung-tsu' (Concerning nations and clans), *Pien-cheng kung-lun* (Frontier affairs) (Chungking), iii (1944), p. 1.

[12] Ma Ch'ang-shou, 'Shao-shu min-tsu wen t'i' (The problem of national minorities), *Min-tsu-hsüeh yen-chiu chi-k'an* (Ethnological research), (Chungking), vi (1948), pp. 8–23.

1936–7 and later established an 'autonomous' regime there under a Mongol collaborator, Te Wang. Simultaneously, a detachment of Soviet troops was positioned at Hami, in the extreme east of Sinkiang, thereby controlling all access to the province. Just at that moment the Chinese communists arrived in Shensi, at the end of their Long March, and began propagandizing among the Mongols and the Chinese Moslems, promising them future autonomy in exchange for their immediate co-operation in the anti-Japanese United Front. Finally, the Japanese occupation of Indochina obliged the KMT to destroy the French-built Hanoi–Kunming railway in order to deny the Japanese use of this important link with south-west China.

Had there been no second world war, it is conceivable that the detachment of the entire frontier zone of China could have become permanent, but the Japanese invasion of China Proper and the emergence of a group of powers allied with Nationalist China in her struggle against Japan meant that China would once again, with the defeat of Japan, be able to advance her claims to the border regions. By raising a border issue with British Burma during the war the Chinese Nationalists made it clear that China's national crisis had not caused them to lose sight of old frontier questions. There was one contingency, however, which the KMT wartime strategy could not take account of, and that was the question of the Soviet attitude towards China's northern frontier zone following the cessation of hostilities.

The Soviet Union's eleventh-hour entry into the war against Japan enabled her to take up a strategic position in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia from which to influence the course of events in China; in Sinkiang she looked after her vital interests by means of the control she exercised over an anti-Chinese rebellion of Turkic peoples which controlled the Ili valley and most of Dzungaria. To any Chinese well read in the history of his country the threat posed by the Red Army situated beyond the Great Wall must have seemed reminiscent of past occasions when barbarian horsemen had paused to collect their forces before descending upon China Proper.

The interests of the Soviet Union in China's Inner Asian frontier zone were, apparently, not very different from those which she pursued in eastern Europe. She sought to extend her influence, both territorially and economically, by installing

governments subservient to her interests. Soviet concern about the small states peripheral to her was, then, rather like the traditional Chinese view of her *fan-pu*. What is unique about the post-second world war situation in Manchuria, Mongolia, and Sinkiang is that the similar frontier concerns of the Soviet Union and China overlapped in the same region. This clash of interests extended to Korea. While the Soviet Union stripped the Japanese-built industrial plants in Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia and transported this booty back to the USSR, just as she was doing in eastern Europe, she forced the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek to agree in 1945 to a plebiscite in Outer Mongolia which, held in 1946, established a Mongolian People's Republic completely separate from China.

Most provisions of the 1945 Sino-Soviet treaty concerning the inner Asian frontiers, including the one pertaining to the complete independence of Outer Mongolia, were reaffirmed in the treaty concluded between Mao and Stalin in 1950. The Russians were confirmed in their rights to participate in the management of the Manchurian rail network, to make use of Port Arthur, and to share in the exploitation of Sinkiang's mineral resources.[13] Despite these concessions, however, the Chinese People's Republic was in a much stronger position with respect to securing China's rights in her northern frontier region than would have been the case with a Chinese Nationalist regime. The Chinese communists succeeded in establishing control in northern Sinkiang, which had long been a Soviet sphere of influence,[14] and by 1954 Khrushchev had agreed to the termination of all special rights in China which the Soviet Union had been granted under the 1950 treaty.

If a KMT victory in the Chinese civil war might have resulted in the loss of parts of the northern borderlands other than Outer Mongolia, it would also have meant the exclusion of China from North Korea and North Vietnam. The first would have remained an exclusively Russian sphere of influence, while in Vietnam Ho Chi Minh would almost certainly have been defeated by the French. Ho's fear lest the Chinese Nationalist army which had

[13] Howard L. Boorman, 'The Borderlands and the Sino-Soviet Alliance', in Boorman & others, *Moscow-Peking Axis* (New York, 1957).

[14] George Moseley, *A Sino-Soviet Cultural Frontier: The Ili Kazakh Autonomous Chou* (Camb., Mass., 1966).

occupied North Vietnam on behalf of the allies in 1945 might remain indefinitely was one reason for his acceptance of the return of French military forces in 1946, for only in this way could he be certain that the Yunnanese army would retire to China. But it was Chinese communist military support which, from 1949 on, enabled him finally to defeat the French.

Soviet support for the Chinese communists in Manchuria in 1945 had scarcely been less important than the aid subsequently extended by the Chinese communists to the Viet Minh. Japanese units north of the Great Wall had surrendered to the Red Army. A large part of their equipment was thereafter turned over to the Chinese communists, who were already in control of much of the Manchurian countryside. They also controlled the rural areas of north China, but the Japanese surrender in the principal cities south of the Great Wall was taken by United States forces dispatched to China for that purpose. The Chinese communists' strongest base was therefore north of the Great Wall. When Chiang Kai-shek failed in his attempt to eliminate this base, the outcome of the civil war was virtually decided. The cities of north China which had been turned over to the KMT soon fell to the communists. The subsequent course of the civil war had the character of a barbarian invasion, in the sense of a descent into central and south China from Manchuria and the north China plain. The KMT continues to regard it in this light, interpreting the Chinese communist movement as but a creature of the Russians.

Like the Ming followers who fled before the Manchu invasion, the KMT faithful sought refuge in Burma as well as Formosa; a few trickled into Laos or trekked across the Tibetan plateau to Kashmir. Behind them, the new regime was making a tremendous effort to reassert Chinese authority throughout the traditional empire, exclusive of Outer Mongolia. During 1950 the People's Liberation Army was engaged in Tibet in addition to the obligations it was discharging in Korea and Vietnam; an invasion of Taiwan seemed to be in the offing. From the core area which was all that remained of China at the time of the Marco Polo Bridge incident of 1937, the Chinese communists, taking immediate advantage of the momentum afforded by their victory in China proper, were thrusting out in all directions in order to drive the foreigners as far as possible away from the Middle Kingdom and

reinstitute an order in Asia which would allow China once again to be the arbiter of men's destinies in her part of the world.

POLICY TOWARDS NATIONAL MINORITIES

The 'liberation' of China extended only to 'the sacred frontiers of the motherland' (a phrase frequently used in the literature of the period). There was no uncertainty about where, in a general sense, these frontiers lay. With the exception of Outer Mongolia, they embraced all the frontier dependencies of the Ch'ing empire, including Tibet, as well as all of Manchuria and China proper, including Taiwan. The former vassal states were outside these frontiers. They had either already attained, or were in the process of attaining, full independence. As soon as it was feasible to do so, the CPR established normal diplomatic relations with all her immediate neighbours:

Soviet Union, North Korea, Outer Mongolia	October 1949
Burma, India	December 1949
Pakistan, Afghanistan, North Vietnam	January 1950
Nepal	1955
Laos	1962

The foreign relations of Bhutan and Sikkim are under the control of New Delhi, although no Chinese Government conceded India's right to exercise this control. By formally recognizing the independent governments of all the states contiguous to China, the CPR endorsed its inherited frontiers as China's outer limit.

The communists also recognized a delimitation between the areas of the CPR inhabited by Han and non-Han peoples. The latter, embracing fully half of the total area of the country, covered most of China's frontier zone. Called 'frontier' peoples (*min tsu*) by the KMT and minority peoples[15] (*hsiao shu*) by the

[15] Sometimes referred to as national minorities.

communists, these non-Han peoples had occupied the *fan-pu* and *t'u-ssu* areas of the Ch'ing empire. Under the CPR, which employed Stalin's definition of 'nation', some fifty different national minorities were identified, including some which had not previously been administratively differentiated from the Han Chinese. As envisaged in the Common Programme of 1949, autonomous areas were established for each national minority. By 1956 this process was well advanced.

The Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region (SUAR) was established in 1955, following the creation in the previous year of autonomous *chou* (prefectures) for the principal non-Uighur ethnic groups in the province—the Mongols on the frontier with the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) and the Kazakhs, Kirghiz, and Tajiks on the Soviet frontier, where they looked across at their fellow nationals organized in constituent republics of the USSR. The enormous expanse of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR), established in 1947, had been brought more firmly under the control of the CCP. In the south-west, Yunnan and Kweichow were covered with autonomous *chou* and autonomous *hsien*, while in Kwangsi steps were being taken towards the establishment of a provincial-sized autonomous region for the Chuang people (established in 1958). In Manchuria an autonomous *chou* had been established for China's Korean minority; it bordered the Soviet Union as well as the Korean People's Republic. And in 1955 a Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region had been established under the chairmanship of the Dalai Lama. Although the Ninghsia Hui Autonomous Region was not established until 1958, most of China's Moslems who lived in compact communities had been organized into autonomous regions earlier. Altogether in 1956 there were 74 autonomous areas at the *hsien* level and above. These gave precise administrative form to the frontier zone between the Han Chinese core area and the independent states contiguous to China.

The formal distinctions drawn between the foreign and domestic spheres and between the national minority and the Han Chinese spheres produced three separate fields of action for Chinese communist policies. Such a division was in keeping with Marxist-Leninist theory and conformed, in the main, with Soviet practice. Moreover, it suited the requirements of the Chinese revolution,

which was being consolidated in the Han Chinese sphere, established in the national minority sphere, and projected into the foreign sphere. This configuration placed China's frontier zone in a middle position in the spectrum of the CPR's overall policies.

As Paul Linebarger once remarked: 'From Han [times] down to the present, the border areas have been centers of Chinese strategic thinking.'[16] This concern with a frontier zone was different from the style of Tsarist imperialism. The comparatively recent advance of Russian power into Siberia and Central Asia had been based on territorial acquisition. The Cossack lines were gradually extended, with new forts being erected to mark the line of imperial control. In this fashion, one after another of the tribal lands of Siberia and the Moslem principalities of Central Asia were brought within a Russian sphere of influence militarily defined. The interests of imperial China, on the other hand, were relatively constant and limited: she sought to maintain the tranquillity of a frontier zone inhabited by peoples with whom the Chinese had long been in contact.

In European Russia the empire included peoples, such as the Ukrainians and the Poles, who were at least as advanced as the Russians themselves. Furthermore, their populations were quite large. At the time of the October revolution, in fact, the Russians accounted for less than 50 per cent of the population of the empire; in China in 1949, the Han Chinese made up 95 per cent of population of the country. The different compositions of the Russian and Chinese empires, and the different conceptions of the Russians and Chinese with respect to their frontiers, explains in large measure the dissimilar ways in which Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question was applied in the two cases.[17]

After coming to power, the Bolsheviks hoped that other states,

[16] P. M. A. Linebarger & others, *Far Eastern Governments and Politics* (Princeton, NJ, 1954), p. 75.

[17] Some of these differences are dealt with in Chang Chih-i, *Chung-kuo ko-ming ti min-tsu wen-t'i ho min-tsu cheng-ts'e chiang-hua* (*t'i-kang*) (A discussion of the national question in the Chinese revolution and of actual nationalities policy (draft)) (Peking, 1956), which has been translated in George Moseley, ed., *The Party and the National Question in China* (Camb., Mass., 1966). It should also be mentioned that, according to Marxist-Leninist theory, China was not an imperialist country, as was Russia, but rather an oppressed, semi-colonial country. It does not appear, however, that this doctrinal fine point contributed as much to the differences in Soviet and Chinese communist national minority policy as did the real differences mentioned above.

not previously part of the Russian empire, could be brought into the Soviet sphere as republics of the USSR. Persia and Afghanistan looked particularly tempting. Soviet extension was a task specifically assigned to the new Kazakh SSR, which declared in a public document:

> We wish to point out the special task which results from the location of the Kirghiz [Kazakh] republic. Being situated in the Asian borderland, and having close contact with the peoples of the East, we, the Kirghiz [Kazakhs], will be the instrument for spreading the revolutionary influences of Russia in the East. . . . In joining the ranks of the Russian Soviet Federation, the Kirghiz [Kazakh] Soviet Socialist Republic hopes to become the school of revolution for the entire East. . . .[18]

This mode of territorial extension was implicitly rejected by the Chinese communists when they chose the autonomous area rather than the federated republic as the administrative unit of their national minority programme. The autonomous areas of China are inalienable parts of a unitary state, whereas the Soviet republics had the formal right of secession. The state structure of the CPR did not invite the adherence of other states, as did the state structure of the Soviet Union in the days when Stalin was Commissar of Nationalities.

The thrust of Chinese communist policy in the frontier zone has aimed at full integration in the national minority sphere and at reasserting Chinese influence in the adjacent foreign sphere, occupied in part by former vassals of the empire. In the words of Robert Scalapino, China has been engaged in 'moving the buffer zone which was once *inside* her boundaries to encompass states adjacent to her.'[19] Geographical and historical factors, together with trans-frontier ties of race, language, and religion, have placed the frontier regions of the CPR in a special position with respect

[18] 'Declaration of the First Congress of the Soviets of the Kirghiz [Kazakh] Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic to all Autonomous Republics and Oblasts of the Russian Soviet Federation, October 4, 1920', in X. J. Eudin & Robert C. North, *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920–1927: A Documentary Survey* (Stanford, Calif.; 1957), p. 53. The governor of Sinkiang, Yang Tseng-hsin, interpreted the Soviet attitude at the time as proof that Moscow meant to subvert Moslem regions of China adjacent to the Kazakh SSR.

[19] R. A. Scalapino, 'Tradition and Transition in the Asian Policy of Communist China', in Edward Szczepanik, ed., *Economic and Social Problems of the Far East* (Hong Kong, 1962), p. 267. This theme is taken up by C. P. FitzGerald in his interesting Chatham House Essay, *The Chinese View of their Place in the World* (London, 1964).

to the conduct of communist China's foreign policy. While it is not possible, from the outside, to investigate the formulation of this policy, the following examples of the involvement of the frontier zone in China's international relations suggest that the foreign and national minority policies of the CPR are related.[20]

NATIONAL MINORITIES AND FOREIGN POLICY

China's Mongol, Turkic, and Tibetan peoples have been especially important as intermediaries in the foreign policy of the CPR. In the early 1930s, when Chinese communist policy had favoured the establishment of republics on the Soviet model, a federal China had been envisioned which would incorporate a Chinese republic together with republics for each of these three peoples; today they constitute the major autonomous units of the CPR. Each of these peoples spans the frontier, extending into areas which are now parts of adjacent states.

The MPR established its first consulate abroad at Huhehot, the capital of the IMAR (in 1957). Huhehot also has a branch of the Sino-Mongol Friendship Association. The MPR and the IMAR are linked by a trans-Mongolia railway, completed in 1956, which connects Peking with the trans-Siberian railway at Irkutsk. This line was used in 1961 by a special IMAR delegation which attended celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the victory of the (Outer) Mongolian people's revolution. It is noteworthy that a Kazakh from the Altai district of Sinkiang joined the delegation, for the MPR includes a Kazakh minority in territory adjacent to Sinkiang. The daily newspaper of Inner Mongolia (*Nei-Meng-ku jih-pao*) always carries a good deal of material concerning the friendship between the peoples of the IMAR and the MPR. This was particularly so at the time a delegation from Ulan Bator visited Huhehot in 1957 to participate in the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the IMAR. Later in the same year an agreement was reached which provided for use of adjacent grazing areas of the MPR by herders of the IMAR.

As in Sinkiang, an indicator of the state of Sino-Soviet relations in Mongolia has been the issue of language reform. It became

[20] These examples have been taken mainly from the clipping files of Chinese communist newspapers held by the Union Research Institute, Hong Kong. This chapter does not take account of developments during China's Cultural Revolution, in the course of which there has been a notable deterioration in Peking's relations with certain of her neighbours, and especially Burma.

known in 1955–6 that the Chinese communists intended to replace the traditional Mongol script with the Cyrillic alphabet, which the Russians had earlier introduced in the MPR. In 1958, however, the Chinese announced that the Latin alphabet, rather than Cyrillic, would be used. This was in line with a new programme for the reform of the written languages of all the peoples of China, including the Han. But the programme was short-lived, and what has actually happened in the IMAR is that the Chinese have encouraged the continued use of the traditional script. If this was a gesture calculated to please the Mongols of the IMAR, it also suggests that the Chinese still hope to regain influence among the Mongols of the MPR.

In the past few years the MPR has taken the Chinese communists to task for attacking the Soviet leadership; it has also criticized the CPR for its treatment of national minorities. While there have been instances of Mongols quitting the IMAR for a new life in the MPR, it is probable that these accusations of the MPR derive more from its reliance on the Soviet news agencies than from dissatisfaction with CPR policy specifically in the IMAR.

The issues of revisionism and of national-minority policy have been much more important in Sinkiang than in the IMAR. In Sinkiang, moreover, these two questions have been closely connected. In 1963, 50,000 people—mainly Kazakhs—of Sinkiang's Turkic population fled across the border to the Kazakh SSR. This was the culmination of Sino-Soviet friction in Sinkiang which had been produced by the CPR's determination to exclude Soviet influence from this border region. Soon thereafter the several Soviet consulates in Sinkiang, including the consulate-general in Urumchi, were closed down under Chinese pressure, while the Soviet press began to castigate the CPR's national minority policy. Unfavourable comments made by refugees from Sinkiang were frequently quoted; the crowning invective used on the Soviet side was the labelling of people's communes for the minority groups in Sinkiang as 'concentration camps'.

The Chinese, for their part, accused the recalcitrant Uighurs and Kazakhs, who had demanded Soviet-style republics, of 'Khrushchev revisionism'. The label of 'revisionist' became simply a euphemism for pro-Soviet, and a great many non-Han people in Sinkiang were guilty of this 'error'. The language issue

has raged furiously in Sinkiang, too. As in the IMAR, the Chinese initially planned to make Cyrillic the standard vehicle for the writing of the national minority languages of the SUAR, the most important of which, apart from Mongol (Khalkha), are Uighur, Kazakh, and Kirghiz. This was dropped in favour of the Latin alphabet in 1958. In contrast to the IMAR case, where the traditional Mongol script was ultimately retained, the mainly Islamic peoples of the SUAR have been denied the right to retain the Arabic alphabet which had previously been in use. The Chinese communists are apparently more worried about outside influence in Sinkiang than in Inner Mongolia. In recent years Sino-Soviet trade across this frontier has dwindled, while the Sino-Soviet rail link through Sinkiang, scheduled to be opened in 1962, has never been completed.

Notwithstanding their various language-reform schemes, the Chinese communists have apparently not interfered with the use of the traditional script in Tibet, which is, as a result of vastly expanded printing facilities, more widely used than ever before. This suggests that the CPR does not wish to antagonize the Tibetans unnecessarily; it also suggests that use of the traditional Tibetan writing may be considered useful in promoting Chinese communist influence in the Himalayan states of Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, which are largely Tibetan in race and culture. Construction of the Nepal–Tibet highway, agreed upon in 1961, is probably more indicative of the trend in this area than is the Sino-Nepalese accord of August 1962 which, presumably aimed at the Khamba (east Tibetan) rebels operating from the Mustang area of Nepal, restricted the movement of tribespeople across the frontier.

The 'question of Tibet', which arose in the United Nations after China's suppression of the 1959 Tibetan revolt, has probably had more influence on the CPR's international relations than any other situation arising in a national minority area. It poisoned China's relations with India, which gave sanctuary to the Dalai Lama, and became a test of the attitude of many other states towards China. Nepal, which sympathized as much with the plight of the Nagas in India as with that of the Tibetans in China, was one of the states which held the 'correct' view: namely, that Tibetan affairs were a purely domestic concern of the CPR. The Philippines and Malaya, which at different times raised the

Tibetan issue in the United Nations, were bitterly attacked by the Chinese communists. The 1962 fighting between Indian and Chinese troops added fuel to these flames, bringing the Soviet Union in on India's side. By 1964, with the Soviet Union deeply involved in a military aid programme to India, Peking charged that *Pravda* was 'singing a duet' with the Indian news agencies in 'spreading slander about Chinese maps showing Nepalese territory as Chinese.'

Compared with China's major frontier regions of Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet, her southern frontier region has been relatively tranquil. With the exception of the fiercely independent Lolo, most of the national minorities in the south, formerly under *t'u-ssu* administration, have assimilated much more readily to Han Chinese ways than have the Mongol, Turkic, and Tibetan peoples of the old *fan-pu*. Since Chinese communist policies did not arouse the kind of national consciousness among the southern minorities that they did among those in the north and west, the CPR has been able to assume a relatively confident stance along its southern frontier in Yunnan and Kwangsi provinces.

Thailand has been sensitive to developments in the national minority regions of Yunnan despite the fact that she does not have a common frontier with the CPR. At least half a million T'ai (Thai) live in Yunnan, and the Thai government, which has been politically conservative ever since the ousting of the Prime Minister Pridi Panomyong shortly after the second world war, has been apprehensive lest a Thai government-in-exile be set up on Chinese soil. Thai fears were especially aroused by the establishment in 1953 of an autonomous region for the T'ai in the Sipsong Panna region of southern Yunnan, where China comes within 100 miles of the Thai border. At various times the former Prime Minister, Pridi, who is thought to live in Peking, has been reported as visiting the Sipsong Panna. Thai apprehensions appear to have been exaggerated, however, as it was not generally realized in Bangkok that autonomous areas for national minorities were being set up all over China, and not solely among the T'ai peoples of southern Yunnan. While fears about the activities of Thais in exile seem to have abated, the Thai government is still worried about its northern hill tribes, such as the Lahu and Lisu, which represent southern extensions of national minority groups

found in the CPR. These anxieties have not caused Sino-Thai relations to be bad. They would have been bad in any case. The very fact that there is a sizeable T'ai minority in communist China, however, has provided further insurance that relations between Peking and the right-wing government in Bangkok would remain icy. Suspicions between the two countries have been mutually reinforcing.

Nothing could more clearly indicate the opposite attitudes of the Thai and Burmese governments towards Peking than the visit of the Prime Minister, U Nu, in April 1961 to the same T'ai autonomous region in southern Yunnan which had caused so much concern in Bangkok. U Nu and his family, who were on holiday in Yunnan, were accompanied by the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai on their trip to the Sipsong Panna T'ai autonomous region. Their visit occurred at the time of the Thai new year, and U Nu and his party joined in the festivities.

Two substantive agreements were reached in discussions which took place at this time between U Nu and Chou En-lai. Economic co-operation between Yunnan province and Burma was to be strengthened: agricultural specialists from Burma were to study farm machinery and production in Yunnan, while Yunnanese specialists were to visit Burma to study the growing of tropical crops. At the same time it was agreed that the CPR and Burma should co-ordinate their efforts to eliminate KMT bands in Burma, which the two statesmen described as a threat to both countries.

Several of Burma's northern peoples are closely related to minority groups in Yunnan. This is especially true of the Shan (T'ai), who are practically indistinguishable from the T'ai peoples across the frontier. Minority questions are of great importance in the Union of Burma; there has been almost continuous fighting between central government forces and partisans of one or another of these non-Burman peoples, yet Rangoon has taken an interest in, rather than become alarmed by, the national minority policy of the CPR. (It must be said that this statement applies more to U Nu than to Ne Win.) During a visit to China in 1956, U Nu went to the Nationalities Institute in Peking, and in 1957 he had talks with the Vice-Chairman of the Nationality Affairs Commission of Yunnan. And he has visited several of Yunnan's autonomous areas in addition to the Sipsong Panna. On the Chinese side,

Peking did not allow itself to be deterred by the tense situation among north Burma's national groups from concluding a border agreement with Rangoon.

The influence of the frontier zone on Sino-Laotian politics has been mixed: when the government in Vientiane has been neutralist or left wing, the frontier peoples have acted as a bridge between the two countries; when the Vientiane government has been under right-wing control, the frontier peoples have been an irritant in Sino-Laotian relations. For many years Laotian politics have been dominated by the question of the Pathet Lao, a movement composed largely of non-Lao peoples on the Chinese and North Vietnamese frontiers. It has been continuously supported by Hanoi, while Peking's support seems to have been intermittent. The CPR attitude appears to be that the Pathet Lao may be useful as a way of making Chinese pressure felt in Laotian politics, but that it would dissociate itself from the Pathet Lao if a friendly government remained in office in Vientiane. When the Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma, and Prince Souphanouvong, the Pathet Lao leader, visited China together in 1961, the two governments agreed on the establishment of diplomatic relations and the construction of a road from southern Yunnan to the northern Laotian province of Phong Saly. Souvanna Phouma was as enthusiastic about the new road as were his Chinese hosts. In the spring of the following year, however, the Chinese gave active support to a Pathet Lao offensive against Muong Sing and Nam Tha, border districts which had once been part of China.

North Vietnam is the only country on China's frontier which has adopted a national minority programme based on the CPR model. Both of North Vietnam's two autonomous regions have common borders with China: one of them, the Viet Bac Autonomous Region, extends along most of the frontier between North Vietnam and the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region; the other, the T'ai Bac Autonomous Region, abuts on Yunnan province. The T'ai and Miao peoples who predominate in these autonomous regions are closely related to national minorities of south China. Trans-frontier relations between the autonomous regions of the CPR and North Vietnam have been marked throughout by expressions of comradeship and goodwill. For instance, in 1958 a delegation from the Viet Bac Autonomous Region went to Nanning to participate in the establishment of the

Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region; in 1959 a Yunnan provincial delegation visited the T'ai Bac Autonomous Region to celebrate the fifth anniversary of its founding.

Much more important than national-minority relations between the two countries, however, has been the direct support which the CPR has given North Vietnam, particularly in her long war with the French and, now, in her struggle with the Saigon–Washington combination. The bases for this support are mainly in Kwangsi and Yunnan, both of which are linked with North Vietnam by rail. Thus these frontier provinces have been more directly involved than have other parts of China in the CPR's relations with North Vietnam. Peking has frequently charged that United States aircraft have intruded into the region, as well as over the island of Hainan.

The involvement of Manchuria in China's relations with North Korea has been of the same nature, namely as a base for CPR support for Pyongyang. The significance of this relationship has declined steadily since the end of the Korean war and the 1958 agreement on the withdrawal of all Chinese troops from North Korea. Although Manchuria's Kirin province has a Korean population of over half a million, this minority group has not had any discernible influence on the CPR's relations with North Korea. Indeed, these Manchurian Koreans are almost never mentioned. There have been some recent indications (spring 1967) that Peking has sought to involve the North Korean regime in a renewed effort to 'liberate' the south by force, and that for his refusal to co-operate in this venture the Prime Minister, Kim Il Sung, has been attacked by the CPR as a 'revisionist'. Renewed hostilities in Korea would give the Chinese communists an opportunity to reassert themselves in North Korea.

TRANS-FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS

The states contiguous to China have become closer neighbours as the result of the development of China's communications system. China's trans-frontier communications before 1949, such as the Japanese and Russian railways into Manchuria and the French railway into Yunnan, had been constructed almost entirely by foreign powers. An exception was the Burma road, built by the Chinese at the beginning of the Pacific War. As Owen Lattimore has pointed out, construction of the Burma road

marked the first time in modern Chinese history that an important communications link had been built *outward* from China, reversing the process of imperialist penetration of China.[21] Many more such links have been forged since 1949, while the Burma road has been hard-surfaced. The new Chinese roads to Nepal and Laos have already been mentioned, as has the trans-Mongolia railway. Agreement on the construction of a new road from Sinkiang to Gilgit, in the Pakistan-administered portion of Kashmir, followed the settlement of the Kashmiri border question between the two countries. After the second world war the Hanoi–Kunming railway had to be rebuilt, and a new railway linking Hanoi with the Chinese rail system by way of Kwangsi was opened in 1954. The development of China's external communications links has been more than matched by the expansion of her internal system, in particular by new railways in western China, Tibet, and Sinkiang.

Especially important in terms of passenger travel has been the CPR's improvement of air service. The first contingent of the PLA which entered Sinkiang in late 1949 had to be flown in by Soviet aircraft, as the Chinese communists had none of their own. The national airline of the CPR now links all major cities of the country, and the domestic service is supplemented and extended at several points by international connexions. North Korea, North Vietnam, Burma, and Pakistan, in addition to the Soviet Union, are among the countries which have regular air services with the CPR. Kunming is especially important in this network, as the twice-weekly flights between Rangoon and the Yunnanese capital provide China with her most important access route to the non-communist world; there are also regular flights from Kunming to Dacca, East Pakistan.

China's neighbours can now communicate with one another, as well as with China, by means of the CPR's rail and air system. For instance, in 1961 the king and queen of Nepal visited the Mongolian People's Republic by way of Peking. In the same year the Laotian Prime Minister travelled to Hanoi via Kunming. Kunming was also a transit point for Ho Chi Minh when he went to Indonesia in 1959; later in the same year he stayed in Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang, on his way home from a visit to the Soviet

[21] Owen Lattimore, 'Yunnan, Pivot of Southeast Asia', *Foreign Affairs*, Apr 1943, pp. 476–93.

Union. In 1957 a Burmese parliamentary delegation went on to North Vietnam after visiting China; also in 1957, a group of MPR visitors travelled through Peking *en route* to Hanoi. In 1958 the North Korean Prime Minister took the train via Antung to Peking and then flew to North Vietnam.

The impression of a regional pattern suggested by the itineraries of travellers to and through China is reinforced by the location in China's frontier regions of consulates of several governments among the states contiguous to China. The MPR consulate in Inner Mongolia and the former Soviet consulates in Sinkiang have already been mentioned. Under a 1956 agreement, Nepal was to maintain a consulate in Lhasa. The CPR has a consulate in the Burma border town of Lashio, while the Burmese maintain a consulate-general in Kunming, where there is also a Laotian consulate-general. North Vietnam has a consulate in Nanning as well as in Kunming.[22] Sometimes a neighbouring country's ambassador in Peking acts also as that country's ambassador to other neighbouring states, an example of which is the Nepalese ambassador in Peking who is also accredited to Ulan Bator and Rangoon.

In the early 1960s the CPR put her relations with her neighbours on a firmer basis by negotiating boundary treaties with the MPR and all the non-communist states contiguous to China except India (including Bhutan and Sikkim) and Laos. The settling of these boundary issues proceeded as follows:

	Agreement in principle	*Boundary treaty*	*Boundary protocol*
Burma		1960	1960
Nepal	1960	1961	1963
Mongolia		1962	1964
Pakistan	1962	1963	1965
Afghanistan		1963	1965

China has not signed boundary agreements with her other neighbours—the Soviet Union, North Korea, North Vietnam, Laos, and India. No serious frontier questions appear to have arisen with North Korea and North Vietnam, where traditional boundaries are accepted on both sides. There have, however, been altercations between Peking and Pyongyang with regard to the

[22] This listing is not exhaustive.

location of the boundary in the Changpai Shan range on the Sino-Korean frontier. Since the Vientiane government's administrative control falls far short of the China frontier, any questions relating to the Sino-Laotian border would seem to be, for the time being at least, academic. In 1963 China intimated that she did not accept the existing frontier with the Soviet Union, which had been imposed by unequal treaties; according to Soviet calculations, half a million square miles of Siberia and Soviet Central Asia were involved in the Chinese claims.[23]

The CPR described the boundary problems she had inherited as 'questions left over from history'. In settling them, Peking did not attempt to introduce claims to 'lost territories'; she kept to a minimum the number of questions which had to be resolved. In negotiating the demarcation of her boundaries, moreover, Peking's attitude was one of compromise and even generosity. Of the areas in dispute, she gave more than she received. The signing of the border treaty with the MPR was hailed in Peking as proof that all problems between communist countries could be solved 'in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism and the principles guiding relations between fraternal countries laid down in the 1957 Moscow Declaration and the 1960 Moscow Statement'.[24] This was a veiled criticism of the Soviet Union, which, according to Peking, had trampled on these principles in her relations with the CPR. Similarly, New Delhi was indirectly criticized in the oratory which accompanied the demarcation of China's borders with Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Peking hailed these settlements as victories for the 'five principles of peaceful coexistence' which India, according to the Chinese, had persistently violated.

It is not at all evident, however, that in concluding these frontier agreements with her neighbours the CPR was primarily motivated, as has sometimes been asserted, by a desire to embarrass or bring pressure upon New Delhi and Moscow for having opposed Chinese ambitions.[25] If these agreements coincided with

[23] For a discussion of this dispute, see Dennis J. Doolin, *Territorial Claims in the Sino-Soviet Conflict: Documents and Analysis* (Stanford, Calif., 1965).

[24] *Peking Review*, 28 Dec 1962.

[25] This odd (as it seems to me) interpretation is advanced by Guy Searls, 'Communist China's Border Policy: Instrument for a New Empire', *United Asia*, July 1963, pp. 469–82, and also appears to be favoured by Francis Watson, *The Frontiers of China* (London, 1966).

China's embroilment with India and the Soviet Union, they also came at a time when the CPR was shifting gears in her overall policies. The early 1960s was a time of readjustment in China's domestic programme, following the 'Great Leap Forward' and the attempt to build people's communes. Peking's control in her frontier zone had by this time been consolidated, and the national minorities were now called upon to go ahead with their socialist revolutions: this was the essence of the pertinent decisions of the tenth Plenum of the CCP central committee, held in 1962.[26] Tibet, although still trailing behind the other non-Han areas, was moving forward in the context of Chinese communist development, as was indicated by the long-delayed establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region in September 1965, just six months after the Foreign Minister, Ch'en Yi, had journeyed to Kabul and Rawalpindi to sign the last in the series of border protocols. In the foreign policy of the CPR, the year 1960 marked a watershed as Peking moved vigorously to assert herself in the Afro-Asian world. Peking's visitors during the year included Sekou Touré of Guinea, with whom the CPR signed her first technical assistance agreement with an African country, and Che Guevara of Cuba, who won a US$60 million grant from China, the largest she had ever extended to a country outside the established communist bloc.

China's formal delimitation of her outstanding border questions can best be understood in the context of these broad political developments rather than in relation to any single objective which the CPR was pursuing at the time. The concurrent founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region is relevant to this interpretation. Tibet was the last area of the CPR to be given final administrative status. Thus within the space of a few months both the CPR's international frontiers (exclusive of those with her communist neighbours and with Laos) and internal political organization were definitively established. China thus had a trans-frontier base from which to reach farther afield.

It appears that Peking, confident of the revolution's success within her frontiers and optimistic about the prospects for welding the adjacent states of Asia (other than the Soviet Union) into a new 'Chinese family of nations', was now hopeful of becoming ascendant throughout the Afro-Asian world, which, as

[26] See the editorial on this subject in *Min-tsu t'uan-chieh* (Nationalities' unity), Nov 1962.

Chou En-lai put it, had become 'the storm centres of world revolution'.[27] The Chinese revolution, advancing from the Han Chinese core area and encompassing by stages the frontier zone and adjacent states, was being projected into the underdeveloped and non-white 'third world'. It has since become apparent that in this venture the Chinese communists overreached themselves. Following a series of severe setbacks in the foreign field, prominent among which was the thrashing taken by the Indonesian Communist Party, the Chinese communists have taken up a defensive position in their immediate frontier regions.

[27] NCNA, 30 Dec 1964.