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to the Sino-Burmese  
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1954-1960**

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# Introduction

Now, finally, is China emerging from those two centuries of chaos. It is once again wealthy, united and strong. None of us really knows what that will mean. One reason is that China's secretive Communist Party leadership never tells anybody its intentions. And so we are left to read the 'China tea leaves', look at what China is doing and try to work out its intentions.<sup>1</sup>

A Tokyo-based Western journalist complained in these words, after he decided that the source of the current dispute in South China Sea was "all about China, or rather China's intentions".<sup>2</sup> It is hard to agree or disagree with this assessment from a historian's point of view. We are still in the history of the event and likely to be blinded by what we imagine to be true. But if we look at the past, it appears that the current media frenzy about China's intentions is not new. In 1956, for example, an influential Burmese newspaper reported a border skirmish that happened between People's Republic of China and Burma in the previous year. As a result, the Sino-Burma border dispute, previously existing largely in diplomatic notes, suddenly caught attention in both Burma and the world.<sup>3</sup> Inadequately equipped for a meaningful discussion on China's intent today, this paper will explore China's intent in history and, in particular, on the Sino-Burma border dispute.

This archive-based research paper will unravel and discuss the P.R.C.'s border policies regarding Burma between 1954 and 1960. It draws on

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<sup>1</sup> Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, "Why China warned the U.S. to stay away", June 24, 2015, [http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33205815?OCID=fbasia&ocid=socialflow\\_facebook](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33205815?OCID=fbasia&ocid=socialflow_facebook) (accessed on July 24, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Wingfield-Hayes, June 24, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Richard J. Kozicki, "The Sino-Burmese Frontier Problem," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol.26, No.3 (March 1957), p.33.

primary sources from multiple archives in India, Burma and China. The core document under discussion is an unpublished internal government record discovered by the author at China's Jiangsu Provincial Archives. Sent from the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Part (CCP) to the Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee, this document is a detailed record of the speech delivered by Zhou Enlai on July 9, 1957, outlining primarily Beijing's policies towards the border dispute with Burma.

The speech was reported in the editorial of *Renmin Ribao* the next day. But the editorial itself was no more than a brief summary devoid of details. According to the party instruction, the editorial should be informative only to the point of “explaining the spirits and significances of Comrade Zhou Enlai’s report”.<sup>4</sup> With the discovery of the record at Jiangsu Provincial Archives, we are now able to learn many more details about what and how Zhou spoke on China’s perceptions and objectives in territorial disputes.

The main body of this paper is divided into four parts. In the first part, we review briefly the history behind the Sino-Burmese border dispute. The focus of the paper falls on the second part in which we discuss in detail that particular speech of Zhou Enlai’s which remains unpublished. No attempt has been made hitherto in both English and Chinese literature to release such a high degree of information regarding this talk. In the third part, an evaluation of this record is made, mainly to find out the extent to which the archive under discussion is meaningful and how significant it is in terms of understanding the P.R.C.’s external behaviors. The fourth part is an application of the knowledge gathered from that transcript to the study of Indo-China relations in history. As the research shows, there was an omnipresence of India in the history of the Sino-Burma border dispute.

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<sup>4</sup> “An Instruction” September 21, 1957, 3023-3-161, Jiangsu Provincial Archives, P.R.C..

# Part I: History behind the Sino-Burmese Border Dispute

On the foggy morning of November 20, 1955, a few patrolling troops of Burma and Communist China ran into each other at a village called Huangguoyuan. This place, however, happened to locate near a undemarcated sector of Sino-Burmese border. As a result, both sides started to exchange fire, probably in the same belief that they were defending their own country. This is the so-called “Huangguoyuan Incident”. Indeed, in retrospective, this incident appears no less inevitable than accidental, because the border had already undergone a slow process of militarization for three years.<sup>5</sup> Fortunately, in the following eight months, it remained a military incident as Rangoon and Beijing coordinated secretly to deescalate the tension by removing troops from the borderlands.

The nature of this event, however, changed after the July of 1956. In this month, the story was broken by *The Nation*, an influential Burmese daily, which “waged a vigorous and well-documented campaign in its columns, calling public attention to the fact of Chinese aggression and to the long-standing Sino-Burma frontier problem.”<sup>6</sup> A previously isolated military incident was, therefore, brewed into a major diplomatic event between Communist China and Burma. As a result, Beijing and Rangoon were compelled to deepen and accelerate the diplomatic process that the prime ministers of the two countries started in 1954.<sup>7</sup> On October 1, 1960, they concluded a peaceful border treaty. Indeed, the course of negotiation

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<sup>5</sup> In 1952, chasing the remnants of defeated Nationalist/Guomindang troops mainly from the 237th Division and 93th Division, the Chinese Communist troops crossed the so-called “1941 Line”. This was a boundary agreed by Nationalist China and Britain in 1941, but was yet to be demarcated on the ground. As a counter-maneuver, Burma occupied other territories in dispute with China with its own troops. See Guan Peifeng, “A Study of the Sino-Burma Border Negotiation”, *Shilin*, (1) 2014, p.164.

<sup>6</sup> Kozicki, p.33.

<sup>7</sup> Zhou Enlai and U Nu agreed in a joint communique in 1954 that “at an opportune moment, [China and Burma] will solve the [border] problem via normal, diplomatic means”, *Renmin Ribao*, December 13, 1954.

was by no means smooth and there was a tense moment when the two sides were in a stalemate.

A complete history behind the Sino-Burma border dispute is, of course, much more complicated. One Western observer commented in 1957:

The problem of demarcating the 1,500 mile Sino-Burmese border is neither recent nor simple. Its roots extend beyond 1886 and the British annexation of Upper Burma and are entwined in the continuing struggle of minority communities (such as the Kachins, Shans and Wa) which straddle the boundaries in these wild and mountainous areas.<sup>8</sup>

Although the focus of this paper is not the history behind the Sino-Burma border dispute, some fundamental historical facts should be highlighted. First, the process of establishing a modern international border, in the form of a border alignment denoted by coordinates, was kicked off by the British Empire. After it annexed Upper Burma or North Burma in 1886, the British Empire felt it was necessary to find a secure northern border with China in the Sino-Burmese borderlands. Like the “Scramble for Africa (1881-1914)” that happened at the same period, in North Burma this project of reconfiguring the local geo-strategic landscape was also commanded by European principles. Under the new logic, an unquestionable border should consist of two key components: words on paper (delimitation) and stones on the ground (demarcation). Lacking any of the two components renders an existent frontier settlement questionable, consequently subject to being scrapped or re-made based on the principle of effective possession and administration.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Kozicki, p.33.

<sup>9</sup> In contrast to this rigid European approach to borderland management, the tribute-based one that had been practiced in the region for ages until the arrival of the British was characterized with a higher level of freedom and flexibility. One Burmese document provides an interesting description of the status of parts of Upper Burma on the eve of the British annexation: “The Burmese kings had been content to leave this matter [of having a clear boundary with China] undefined, for their administration in the more remote areas of their realm was far from strong, and so long as they received some measure of acknowledgement from the chiefs and headmen they were content: whether these same chiefs and headmen made similar acknowledgements to Chinese authorities was a matter of indifference.” See “Note on the Burma-China Frontier, Secret”, undated [but definitely after 1953], Series 12/14 Acc-376, p.4, National Archives Department of Myanmar.

Second, it is misleading to depict China always as a helpless victim of Western aggression and intrusion. In fact, China -- the Qing China over the period and the subsequent Chinese governments before 1949 -- slowly adapted to the Western-originated international norms and used them in China's favor. It is, however, more misleading to describe the situation as a sort of a scramble for Upper Burma by China and Britain as two imperialist powers. The latter description ignores the incongruity of Western international norms in the context of Asia in the period, not to mention that Britain enjoyed much too noticeable technological and military edges over China. In this sense, it is probably still justified to place the history of the Sino-Burmese borderlands before 1945 within the metahistory of the spread of European imperialism and colonialism across Africa and Asia.

From the annexation of Upper Burma in 1886 to the end of the Second World War in 1945, three border agreements were reached by the British Empire and central Chinese governments. These were the Boundary Convention of 1894 (Zhongying dianmian shangwu tiaoyue), the Boundary Convention of 1897 (Zhongying xuyi dianmian jiewu shangwu tiaoyue fukuan), and the Exchange of Notes of 1941 (Zhongying dianmian nanduan jiewu huanwen). Apart from these three agreements, one sector of the Sino-Burma border was affected by the problematic Simla Accord of 1914.<sup>10</sup> These agreements, however, were insufficient to generate an indisputable Sino-Burma border.

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<sup>10</sup> The Simla Accord of 1914 was the outcome of the Simla Conference 1913-14, which was convened by Henry McMahon, then the foreign secretary of the British Indian Government. It was attended by representatives from Tibet and the central government of China. The agenda, as the Chinese side was told at first, was to discuss Tibet's status vis-a-vis China whose previous central government lost its overall authority in the 1911 Revolution. When the meeting started in October of 1913, the deciding of British India's northeast frontier or its border with Tibet was not part of the agenda, so far as London was concerned. In the early April of 1914, McMahon successfully seduced the Chinese plenipotentiary, Chen Yifan, to initial on the draft Convention and its appended map; this process was completed based on the mutual understanding that initialing and signing are actions of two different natures. On hearing this development, the central government of China in Beijing reprimanded Chen and denounced this action of his. On July 3, 1914, the Chinese representative withdrew from the meeting. Consequently, on the ultimate text of the Simla Convention 1914,



The reasons for this failure were several. For example, in the south part of the Sino-Burma frontier, one sector of the border, also known as the “1941 Line”, was agreed by Britain and China on paper in 1941 but had remained un-demarcated on the ground. This became one of the major sources of the Sino-Burma border skirmish of 1955. In the north, two border sectors were demarcated. But the problem is that it was done “unilaterally by us”, as some officials of the British Government of Burma admitted, and “had never been agreed by China.”<sup>11</sup> Also, those documents in themselves, though carefully crafted at the time, unfortunately contained

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which was developed based on a secret exchange of notes between McMahon and the Tibetan representative in Delhi instead of in Simla, there was no Chinese signature. Indeed, this bilateral agreement obtained by McMahon and the secret exchange of notes in Delhi were in clear breach of the Russo-British Treaty of 1907, according to which Britain was not allowed to bypass the Chinese Government to deal with Tibet directly. What is also worth mentioning is that McMahon made revisions to the draft Convention that was initialed, an action that invites questions such as: to what extent, or if, did the Chinese initial reflect China’s acceptance or approval of the revised draft Convention? According to Neville Maxwell, the Simla Convention 1914 was later also rejected by London for its incompatibility with Britain’s obligations towards Russia and China. But clear evidence shows London welcomed the contents of the Convention and sought to pressure China to reassume negotiations with Tibet’s status, probably in the hope of legalizing what was illegally obtained in the Simla Conference 1913-14. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that regarding the legitimacy of the Simla Accord or Simla Convention, the governments of India in history and at present have been holding a view in sharp contrast to that of Republic of China (Taiwan) and People’s Republic of China (China); for a detailed account of the Simla Conference, see Neville Maxwell, *India’s China War* (London: Cape, 1970); for London’s interest in 1921 in China’s resuming of negotiations on Tibet’s status, see British Foreign Office File: No. FO535/25, No.24, FO to Alston, 27 August 1921. The McMahon Line is sometimes also known as “1914 Line”, which is a concept different from the “1941 Line”, and for the latter’s location see the “F-G” Sector in Appendix III.

<sup>11</sup> “Boundary from the tri-junction of Tibet, Assam and Burma running down more or less along the watershed between the N’Mai Hka and Salween as far as lat.26. This boundary, as far as I am aware, has never been agreed with China though part of it has been demarcated unilaterally by us.” “C.C.A.O (Burma)”, Confidential, January 18, 1944, Series 10/1 Acc-248, 37, National Archives Department of Myanmar; for the location of these two sectors, see “C-D” Sector and “D-E” Sector in Appendix III.

the seeds of potential future conflicts.<sup>12</sup> Finally, by the end of the 1940s, because the British had withdrawn from Burma and a Communist regime took over mainland China, whether and to what extent those old agreements on the Sino-Burma border should be observed became a question for new Burma and new China. In short, the texts in these agreements were either yet to be implemented, or inherently flawed in themselves, or challenged by new political facts.

Finally, a more comprehensive understanding of the history behind the Sino-Burma border dispute, as of the early period of Cold War, should also include those negative emotional elements that permeated the two countries in dispute. They certainly included grievances and fear. For example, the “1941 Line”, as the name suggests, was concluded in 1941. It was a moment when the 717-mile long “Burma Road” connecting Burma and the Chinese province of Yunnan had become China’s only connection to the outside world for strategic supplies. In other words, it

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<sup>12</sup> A secret Burmese government document discussed an unfavorable scenario that postcolonial Burma would face if the Chinese Communists were to explore those loopholes in legal texts: “...the wording of Article II of the 1886 Convention might be open to a troublesome interpretation; China, by that Article, undertakes only not to interfere in ‘the authority and rule which England is now exercising’ but as the authority and rule have now ceased to be exercised, what is China’s obligation under the Convention?...The Chinese are not in ignorance of the historical aspects of this subject; during the last ten years or so a good deal has been written by Chinese authors on the subjects”. See Note on the Burma-China Frontier, Secret, undated [but definitely after 1953], Series 12/14 Acc-376,1-19, National Archives Department of Myanmar, p. 4. Another example is Burma’s administration before 1960 at a small tract of territory called “Nanwan Assigned Area” by the British, or “Mengmao Triangular Area” by the Chinese, was legally based on a so-called “perpetual lease” obtained from the Qing China by the British Empire. A strategic highway was built by the latter in this area to connect its Shan and Kachin states of Burma. Because on the paper, this area was only *leased* to Britain, meaning that the Qing China did not forfeit its *ownership*, independent Burma was unable to reject Beijing’s proposal to discuss the *sovereignty* of Nanwan tract. On January 28, 1960, the Sino-Burmese Boundary Agreement was reached between Beijing and Rangoon: Beijing agreed to cede to Burma the sovereignty of Nanwan, and in exchange Burma returned to China three Chinese villages—Pienma, Gawlum, and Kangfang—which in 1950s were under Burma’s control but in history, even the British recognized these villages belonged to China.

was China's most desperate moment in its resistance against the Japanese Empire. A border deal discussed and reached at China's life-and-death moment was, therefore, remembered by common Chinese people as China being taken advantage of by the British imperialists. This grievance continued into the post-1949 era.

From a Burmese perspective, there were many moments in history, when those northern dynasties after unified China Proper took interests in extending their controls into Burma by sending large expeditionary forces. Towards the middle of 1950s, much of China again came under the control of one government. This time, it was powered by an ideology - Communism- largely unfamiliar to the Burmese people and supported by a grand army that had fought against possibly the most militarily potent country in the world, U.S.A. and not lost. Worries on the part of Burma of a return of the "Middle Kingdom" were, therefore, understandable in this context. In 1956, given what the Soviet Union had done to Poland and Hungary, Burma's fear that China—also large, powerful, and Communist—might do the same to its neighbors should not be dismissed as paranoid.

The primary purpose of highlighting such sentiments on both sides is to further contextualize the dispute. Only in this sense can we understand why the history behind the Sino-Burma border dispute was "neither recent nor simple".<sup>13</sup> In the next section, we will see how the highest Chinese Communist leadership in 1950s understood the history and problems behind the Sino-Burma border, and formulated their responses.

## **Part II: Speech on July 9, 1957**

On July 9, 1957, almost two years after the outbreak of the "Huangguoyuan Incident", Zhou Enlai delivered a comprehensive report on the P.R.C.'s approach to the dispute with Burma. It occurred at the Fourth Meeting

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<sup>13</sup> Kozicki, p.33.

of the First National People's Congress which was attended by over one thousand delegates. Zhou spoke as both the Premier and Foreign Minister.

Indeed, it was not a sudden proffering of government opinion. Rather, it was built not only on the frequent exchange of opinions between Beijing and Rangoon that started in the early 1956, but also on a series of internal deliberations and consultations made by the highest authority in China. On October 31, 1956, a primary consensus in the form of the "Directive on the Sino-Burma Border" was first reached within the highest party leadership. To build a wider consensus, Zhou delivered a report on the dispute during the second National People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing in the middle of March, 1957. Civilian representative, government officials, scholars and specialists attended the meeting and were encouraged to express their opinions. Besides, before meeting the Burmese Prime Minister U Nu in Kunming on March 29 and 30, Zhou arrived there earlier to listen to the representatives of Yunnan Province, including those from ethnic groups. Over a temporarily-convened meeting, some local representatives expressed the view that the Central Committee's approach to the dispute would make Yunnan "lose too much (*chikui taida*)" and affect the morale of the province.<sup>14</sup> Zhou made considerable efforts to convince such individuals to identify with the government line. It is against this background that, Zhou's speech in July could be considered the product of mature consideration, and therefore, a fairly sophisticated plan.

The reconstruction of the speech in this paper is based on a detailed Chinese document discovered by the author at the P.R.C.'s Jiangsu Provincial Archives.<sup>15</sup> Although it is marked as not being a verbatim record but a mere "abstract (*zhaiyao*)", the transcript has kept Zhou's speaking style. Compared to the most used existent source regarding the meeting — a

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<sup>14</sup> Song Fengying, "Zhou Enlai and the Sino-Burma Border Negotiation", *Wenshi jinghua*, (11) 2005, p.9.

<sup>15</sup> "Premier Zhou Enlai's Report at the Fourth Meeting of the First National People's Congress (Zhou Enlai zonli zai diyijie quanguo renmin daibiao dahui disici huiyishang guanyu zhongmian bianjie wenti de baogao zhaiyao) July 9, 1957", 3023-3-161, Jiangsu Provincial Archives, P.R.C.

18-paragraph *Renmin Ribao* article in 1957—this 20-page document, marked “unpublished”, contains 67 paragraphs. No scholar, including native Chinese, seems to have both possessed and fully discussed this document. Consequently, this document becomes the best evidence so far for scholars to understand both *what* and *how* Zhou really spoke that day.<sup>16</sup>

According to the transcript, Zhou divided his speech into eight major sections. They are: “Section I: The rise of the Sino-Burmese border as a problem”; “Section II: Discussing historical evidence and maps on the Sino-Burmese border problem”; “Section III: The negotiations on the Sino-Burmese border problem in history”; “Section IV: A new relationship

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<sup>16</sup> Zhou’s speech on July 9, 1957 has been either acknowledged or briefly introduced in a large number of fine studies on the Sino-Burmese border dispute both in English and Chinese languages. Chinese references include: Fan Hongwei, “The Solving of the Sino-Burmese Border Problem: Zhang Qingmin, “The Lessons from China’s Experiences in Solving its Land Border [Problems] to its Management of Maritime Border [Problems],” *Wajijiao Pinglun* 4 (2013); Feng Yue and Qi Pengfei, “The Course and Lessons of the Sino-Burmese Border Negotiations,” *Zhonggong Dangshi Yanjiu* 1(2012), pp.55-65; “The Course and Impact”, *Nanyang Wenti Yanjiu* 3 (2010), pp.36-45; Gao Fei, “A Brief Assessment of the Principles and Norms in China’s Management of its Border Disputes since the Establishment of the State,” *Wajijiao Pinglun* 5 (2008), pp.25-31; Feng Yue and Qi Pengfei, “A Summary of the Sino-Burmese Border Negotiations”, *Hunan Keji Daxue Xuebao* 6 (2006), pp.55-60. The English references include: M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China’s Territorial Disputes*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Luke T. Chang, *China’s Boundary Treaties and Frontier Disputes*, (London: Oceana Publications INC, 1982). These scholarly works’ revelation of Zhou’s speech is considerably limited by the primary sources they used. The three widely-cited primary sources for Zhou’s talk, all published, include: 1) a 18-paragraph *Renmin Ribao* article, published on July 10, 1957, 2) an entry in *Zhou Enlai Wajijiao Wenxuan* (The Collection of Zhou Enlai’s Papers regarding Diplomacy) , pp.230-238, which is in fact a mere replication of the 1957 *Renmin Ribao* article; 3) an entry in *Zhou Enlai Nianpu* [The Chronicle of Zhou Enlai] , vol.2, p.26, containing only a one-paragraph summary of the speech gists. There are, however, two exceptions, in which the same 67-paragraph record as used by this article was explored and demonstrated, but only to some degree. The two excellent references are: Shen Zhihua and Julia Lovell, “Undesired Outcomes: China’s Approach to Border Disputes during the Early Cold War”, *Cold War History* 1 (2015), pp.89-111; Liao Xinwen, “The Principles and Solutions Used by the CCP Central Committee in 1950s and 1960s”, *Dang De Wenxian* , 4 (2013), pp.78-85.

between China and Burma”; “Section V: The course of the Sino-Burmese border negotiations and our government’s fundamental policies” “Section VI: Answers to several policy-related questions”; “Section VII: Several examples of treaties concluded by New China”; “Section VIII: How to implement”. Below we will introduce and discuss them in detail.<sup>17</sup>

## **Section I: The rise of the Sino-Burmese border as a problem**

Zhou briefly explained the reasons behind the government’s reluctance to tackle head-on the border issues in 1949 and 1955. He said, “In the early period after the establishment [of New China], we were preoccupied with major issues in international and domestic affairs; Meanwhile, inadequate research had been done on the country’s frontier problems.”<sup>18</sup> Zhou then acknowledged the border disputes that China faced both on land — ones with Burma, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, and North Korea — and those at sea, including “South China Sea problem”, “Middle China Sea problem”, and “West China Sea problem”.<sup>19</sup> The larger part of this section, as the title suggests, was devoted to recounting those incidents and developments between China and Burma by then regarding their disputed border.

## **Section II: Discussing historical evidence and maps on the Sino-Burmese border problem**

This is an important emphasis of Zhou’s speech. Out of the 67 paragraphs of the record, as the archive indicates, over one third went into this section.

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<sup>17</sup> Unless being further specified, the “paragraph” that appears in the following footnotes is considered to be all from the record of Zhou’s speech on July 9, 1957, and the number indicates its position in the original text. To achieve accuracy and precision when translating Chinese into English, this paper has made considerable efforts. Two different kinds of brackets are used to denote both the added information and the original Chinese words that are critical for readers to appreciate the tone of Zhou’s speech. Many key words or sentences are also highlighted by the paper in bold letters. A reason is given where translation seems controversial.

<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 1.

<sup>19</sup> Paragraph 2.

Here, Zhou dealt with three themes that were from general to specific: first, the “three principles” that the Chinese Government adhered to when evaluating ancient evidence that emerged from China’s long history; second, the evolution of the Sino-Burmese border in history; and third, the extent to which existent maps, both official and unofficial, could be admitted as evidence when negotiating with Burma.

What are the “three principles” of historical evidence? To over one thousand National Congress members, Zhou said that “we must admit the objective historical facts and unveil their original faces.”<sup>20</sup> He used the example of China’s relations with Vietnam and Korea in history to explain what he meant by “objective historical facts”:

...in history, wars between China and its neighboring peoples or tribals were frequent; the two sides experienced both victory and defeat. [Sometimes,] China was invaded or dominated by some neighboring peoples, but the occasion when China invaded (qinlue) others was also not infrequent. [China’s dealings in history with] Korea and Vietnam are examples. Similar situations happened to [China’s dealings with] other peoples. [We] have to admit this kind of historical facts: in a very long time after we established Jiaozhi Prefecture China’s actions upon Vietnam fall into the category of invasion.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Paragraph 7.

<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 7; “Jiaozhi Prefecture (Jiaozhi Jun)”, comprised of present-day Northern Vietnam, was a Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-8 B.C., 25 B.C.-220 B.C.) subdivision created in 111 BC. It resulted from the conquering of the tributary kingdom of “Nanyue” or “Nam Viet” (203 BC-111BC) which was found by a Chinese general who declared independence at the moment of Qin Dynasty’s (221 BC- 206 BC) collapsing. During Tang Dynasty (618-907), the area became again the southmost subdivision of the “Middle Kingdom” with the name of “Annam” meaning “pacifying the south” in Chinese. However, it should be noted that a nation-state-based retrospective view of history makes people of the two countries receive the same past in conflicting ways: What China believes to be its repeated efforts to consolidate *China’s rule* on *China’s* periphery in history—China as an *insider*— is precisely what Vietnam remembers as China’s attempts to impose *foreign rule* over Vietnam—China as an *outsider*.

Zhou stressed that a lack of this historical awareness on the part of China amounted to “big-country chauvinism (daguo shawen zhuyi)” that “would easily cause other’s misgivings in a way we are completely unaware of.”<sup>22</sup>

The second principle explained what kind of historical evidence China would admit as legitimate evidence which would be laid down on the negotiation table:

History is in development; [for example,] it was one thing in the Han Dynasty, but another in the Tang Dynasty; therefore, [we] can’t pour over the entire [ancient Chinese] history in order to find evidence for discussing border problems...speaking of China’s boundary in general, only the materials emerging from the border negotiations conducted by the Late Qing Dynasty (1840-1911), Beiyang Government (1912-1928), and Nationalist Government (1928-1949/50), would be admitted as legal basis (fali gengju).<sup>23</sup>

The third principle is: “We should also take into account the current international situation and our country’s relations [towards concerning neighbors] while examining historical evidence.”<sup>24</sup> Zhou further elaborated this point:

For example, in the past Burma was a British colony and China a semi-colony. Imperialism invaded us from all fronts, attempting to occupy as much of our land as possible. But today is different: some [of the regions beyond our borders] have become Socialist countries, like Soviet Union, Mongolia, Korea, and Vietnam, while the other turned into Nationalist countries, like Burma, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan...Our policies towards Imperialist countries are different from those towards Socialist and Nationalist countries...[For example,] the areas that were ceded to Czar’s Russia are all resided by the Russian People, in other words, [the areas

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Paragraph 9.

<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 10.



that were] already Socialized; therefore, there is no need to audit again this bill (meiyou biyao qu suan zhebizhang)<sup>25</sup>

On the various Chinese maps that depict the Sino-Burmese border, Zhou expressed an opinion that is very close to the one on historical evidence: not all of them are admissible for border negotiation. After producing a map showing the changes in the depiction of the Sino-Burmese border in six periods of time after Emperor Kangxi's rule (1662-1722), he reminded his audience that most of these changes on maps did not reflect the situation on the ground. This was because "...all these changes were made according to the then [Chinese government's] imperative for the struggle [against imperialism] and people's patriotic demands. [They] do not reflect the truth".<sup>26</sup> In Zhou's opinion, these maps had become to the country more of a negative asset than a positive one. He said:

These maps, of which the contents do not square with the facts, have become a heavy burden to us after the liberation [of China]...[Because] ordinary [Chinese] readers, out of their love to the country, almost invariably prefer to see our territory to be presented bigger. Because of this preference the Chinese Government was given a big headache. Currently, we have to continue to use the old maps produced by unofficial (minjian) publishers ...[because of this,] we often found ourselves in an awkward diplomatic situation where [the Burmese side] asked us: 'what is the legal basis for this depiction of the border?' Our response was: 'this depiction is based on the maps published in the past. Our government did not approve the publication of these maps, therefore, is unable to take responsibility for them.' However, despite everything, the image [of a bigger China than it actually was in history] has been deeply ingrained into the minds of a vast number of our people...Yet because no border negotiation had been

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<sup>25</sup> Paragraph 10.

<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 27; Of the "six periods" Zhou spoke of, three are in Qing Dynasty, one during the Beiyang Government period, two under the Nationalist Government's rule. Also note that the document discovered at Jiangsu Provincial Archives contains no map.

conducted by us [ in the early years after the establishment of the P.R.C.] and it was also inappropriate for us to revise those maps at our own inconvenience (suiyi) it suddenly became a huge problem once the border problem was put to the front stage [in 1956]. But this problem must be solved by us and we should restore the truth...<sup>27</sup>

### **Sections III & IV**

In the third section, Zhou narrated a brief history about the Sino-Burmese border dispute. It started with Britain's initiative to redefine the border after its annexation of Burma in 1886, an attempt that was based on the European principle of effective possession and administration instead of the tributary system that had long been practiced by the borderland area between China and Burma.

Comprising of only one paragraph of the transcript, the fourth section highlighted only one idea: "Despite everything, Burma's colonial status has been changed finally, and politically speaking, it is an independent country."<sup>28</sup>

### **Section V: The course of the Sino-Burmese border negotiations and our government's fundamental policies**

While Section II by and large focused on China's perception of history, Zhou in this section emphasized China's approach to borderlands and negotiations. This section, therefore, provides an insight into the rationale behind the P.R.C.'s external behaviors in the 1950s. Zhou's speech here contained three themes: first, the government's "fundamental principle" of managing territorial problems; second, three policies for the territorial

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<sup>27</sup> Paragraph 27; Note on the translation: the Chinese character "neng" has two different meanings. One means "unable/incapable" while the other is close to "shouldn't/inappropriate" in accordance with certain normative criteria. Judged from its context — "Danshi women meiyou jingguo tanpan, you buneng suibian xiugai ditu. Xianzai bianjie wenti yibaichulai, zhe jiushige henda de wenti, dan zhege bixu jieju." — "buneng" is, therefore, translated here as "inappropriate" instead of "unable".

<sup>28</sup> Paragraph 32.

negotiations with Burma or Asia in general; and third, the plan for applying these principle and policies. Beginning with the “fundamental principle”:

For the areas that were ruled by the Nationalist Government before the liberation, we will take them over (jieshou); for the areas that the Nationalist Government nominally ruled and yet had not effectively run, we will take them over, too. [We] will not give away even a single inch of land (cuntu burang). This principle will apply to all fronts of the country. For example, as we peacefully liberated Tibet, some of the boundaries we have reached will be revised, but revised only in the future border negotiations. We left them to be solved in peaceful negotiations in the future.<sup>29</sup>

Zhou then laid down and explained the three policies for the P.R.C.’s territorial disputes with its neighboring countries. The first two policies were:

[First,] the purpose of our efforts to solve the border problem is to make friends with neighbors, to strive for detente in the international situation, and ultimately to create favorable conditions for domestic building. It is not [our purpose] to increase tension with our neighboring countries, for our our nation's policy is a peaceful foreign policy. But if [raising] the border question would raise tension between us and our neighbors, it would better to be not raised and unsolved ...[second,] to set an example of peaceful coexistence among Afro-Asian countries...on land, countries sharing boundary [with us] on land include Burma, India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Afghanistan. If we can manage to have these countries build genuine peaceful coexistent relations with us, it would help the expansion of peaceful areas and the application of peaceful coexistence policy [across the world].<sup>30</sup>

For the third policy, Zhou reminded the delegates again that China should take effective actions against “big-country chauvinism”:

We are a Socialist country; we must foresee the misgiving and apprehension (you yilv you weiju) of these Nationalist countries

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<sup>29</sup> Paragraph 33.

<sup>30</sup> Paragraphs 34, 35.

in the Old World (jiu shijie). On one hand, we should insist on and strive to protect our nation's women (minzu de) legitimate interests, on the other hand, we should indeed make some examples of [out commitment to] opposing big-country [chauvinism]. Taking the border dispute [handling] for example, the point is for us to find a solution on the ground of equality, mutual benefiting, and improving friendship; the point is not that we must take control of some extra tiny pieces of land, not to mention the fact that those areas have long ceased to be in our hands or never were in our hands in the first place.<sup>31</sup> To be short, what we must do is to demonstrate that we are taking some serious actions in opposing big-country chauvinism.<sup>32</sup>

Zhou moved on talk about the application of these principles and policies in the Sino-Burmese border negotiations. Among all the points he raised, one thing is worth highlighting: a preference for and also a confidence in a package settlement. This preference was stressed twice by Zhou in this section:

...On the second page of our written report, it says "most parts of the Sino-Burmese boundary have been delimited", referring

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<sup>31</sup> In contrast to Zhou's depiction here which tends to give all benefits of doubt to Burma regarding territorial ownership, a secret Burmese document paints quite a different picture about China's influence in the region: "The trans-Salween States of Monglem and Kiang Hung were found to have paid tribute to both Burma and China; indeed, Chinese influence was stronger than Burmese influence in these territories, for the chiefs of the two states corresponded with officials of the province of Yunnan, paid an annual tribute, used Chinese seals of office, and wore Chinese official costumes. It was true that at times tributes had been paid by them to Burma, but it had been paid more consistently to China." Consider another description in which both Burma and China could not establish a strong case for their claim: "At first administration [of British Burma] covered only the lowlands in the Irrawaddy valley, and it was found that between the administration area of Bhamo district [of British Burma] and the territory of Yunnan administered by the Chinese, lay a belt of independent country occupied by Kachins, over whom neither Burmese nor Chinese had ever had any authority." Note on the Burma-China Frontier, Secret, undated [but definitely after 1953], Series 12/14 Acc-376,1-19 National Archives Department of Myanmar, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Paragraph 36.

to the middle and southern parts. The following paragraph says, ‘but there are still three sectors of boundary still in question. Specifically on these three sectors, our government recommends a principle, that is believing that these areas should be considered as a whole (zuowei yige zhengti lianxi qilai jiayi kaolv). It is the same as what we proposed when Chairman U Nu visited Beijing in 1956...<sup>33</sup>

...We believe that dealing [with the three disputed sectors in the Sino-Burmese border] separately is not good; it becomes good only when all [sectors] are dealt together simultaneously; if [the border problem] could be connected to political problems, and all of them could be solved also together, it would become even better. The meeting [with the Burmese diplomats] in Kunming in March proved Burma’s willingness to guarantee peace and neutrality [towards China]... This proves that our basic approach to negotiations is correct...<sup>34</sup>

The success of this practice in the Sino-Burmese border negotiations probable influenced Beijing’s approach to the Sino-Indian border dispute.

## **Section VI: Answers to several policy-related questions**

This is essentially a “Q & A” section. Zhou provided answers to a range of hypothetical questions that were likely to be raised by the delegates after his presentation. These queries probably came out of Zhou’s extensive consultations with people before the meeting.

The first question is: “By doing so, [are we] actually ‘seeking peace by ceding territories (gedi qiuhe)’” Zhou then turned to a letter he had received. In this letter, the writer feared that the government policy towards the Sino-Burmese border dispute would entail “a loss of territories of thousands of square miles (shidi qianli)”, wondered if this would ‘forfeit sovereignty and humiliate the

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<sup>33</sup> Paragraph 37.

<sup>34</sup> Paragraph 43.

country (sangquan ruguo)' again, and warned Zhou that " 'even Li Hongzhang dare not go this far!'"<sup>35</sup>

These idiomatic expressions, such as "seeking peace by ceding territories", "a loss of territories of thousands of square miles" and "surrender of a country's sovereign rights under humiliating terms", along with the iconic term of "Li Hongzhang" are all part of the repertoire for the discourse on China's humiliation at the hands of the West and Japan. It had permeated the Chinese society long before the overall Communist victory in 1949. The first question, in this sense, was no longer simply a technical one. It became a moral interrogation. It went into the very heart of the new Communist regime's legitimacy. Zhou was essentially questioned if the Communist regime, which proclaimed solemnly on October 1, 1949 that "the Chinese people had now stood up", made its people stand still on their knees. Below is an excerpt of Zhou's response:

If this is the case [as described by the writer], I say [our policy] is of course wrong. But in fact, we have reached all frontier regions that we ruled in history, beyond which there was no administration [by China]. In this sense, nothing would be given away by us. Of course, on the map, if we believe the northern sector [of the Sino-Burmese border] rests on Hugong, and southern sector should reach as far as Salween River, then what we would lose is not "thousands of square miles" but "ten-thousands of square miles". The point is that this calculation is incorrect. Because in these areas, from the moment of the liberation, [the P.R.C.] has never administered; moreover, we actually can't say that the Qing Dynasty, Beiyang Government, or Nationalist Government gave away these areas, because neither the Qing, nor Beiyang Government, nor Nationalist Government had ever really ruled these regions. They were ruled by us in history only partially and for a short period of time. [To China], they were "Lands outside Civilization (huawai)"

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<sup>35</sup> Paragraph 45; Li Hongzhong (1823-1901), a prominent statesman in the late Qing dynasty, was mostly conceptualized as a traitor or collaborator in the Chinese mass culture through most time of the 20th century. Li signed, on behalf of China many, "unequal treaties" that the Qing China had to accept after its defeats by Japan or Western countries.

or “Kingdoms of Barbarians (manyi zhi bang)”...On this issue [of whether the government is giving away territories], let me state with my integrity: the government will lose [China] no territory.<sup>36</sup>

The second hypothetical question concerns negotiation strategy: “Is it possible to strive for more areas or to make the arrangement more fair?”<sup>37</sup> Clearly, Zhou understood that no matter what he said, the extent of the to-be-ceded disputed Chinese territories, according to those “incorrect maps”, looked startlingly big anyway, and that people would likely wonder again if there was a way to minimize this extent.<sup>38</sup> Zhou’s opinion, in general, was that while such an idea could be entertained, there wasn’t really a firm ground for China to do so. He said:

...This recommendation [more territories be strived for in negotiation] can be made, but the problem lies in whether [we] have justified reasons to do so. If one tract of land has not been part of us for a long time; [for the mere sake of having more land] we audit the old bill (ba jiu zhang fanchulai), for example, by tracing the history further back to Ming Dynasty or Yuan Dynasty, thereby arguing with other people. It would bring us nothing except making our neighbors tremble (huanghuangbu’an) and the world shocked. This, indeed, would benefit us little (hen buli)...<sup>39</sup>

While any excessive historical claim would bring China no friendly neighbors, Zhou continued to point out that advancing any territorial claim on ethnic affiliation would likewise invite troubles to China ultimately. He explained:

...If this principle [i.e. irredentism based on ethnic affiliation] is justified, then the Democratic Republic of Korea will rightfully demand our Korean Autonomous Prefecture at Yanbian. It can even ask for Anshan, Fushun, Shenyang, and Benxi, because in history, the Koreans had established a kingdom of their own on

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<sup>36</sup> Paragraph 46.

<sup>37</sup> Paragraph 47.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix VII.

<sup>39</sup> Paragraph 48.

the east side of Liao River for a long time. Also note that in both the Democratic Republic of Mongolia and our Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia live the same ethnic group...<sup>40</sup>

In other words, Zhou ruled out the possibility that in the talks with Burma, China would make territorial assertion on the basis of excessive historical or ethnic affiliations. He here stressed again the commanding role of admissible legal evidence in China's approach to negotiations. He said,

Our arguments raised in the border talk with Burma should all be supported by law, both eloquent and irrefutably convincing. Our proposal to deal with Pienma (Pianma) Kangfang (Gangfang) and Gawlum (Gulang), for example, exactly follows this principle. Because even Britain, when invading and occupying these three areas, continuously recognized that these three areas belong to China. The Burmese Government, wanting to inherit the previous British rule over these areas, accordingly will have to accept the [above-mentioned] legal basis. As to Nanwan area, it is Chinese because it was only 'perpetually leased' by Britain. For this reason, we have the right to propose the cancellation of this 'perpetual lease' through territorial adjustment. In so doing, we make our proposals very reasonable, which will be seen not only by Burma but also all of our neighbors as well as people around the world [as reasonable].<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Paragraph 48; and Burma did find the suggestions made by the P.R.C. very reasonable. In a letter to a high-rank Burmese official, presumably from Burmese PM U Nu after his visit to China in 1956, there were repeated expressions of satisfaction and even not a small amount of gratitude from Burma towards China: "I have had my talks with Premier Zhou Enlai, and I wish to pay tribute to his sense of justice and fairness. A realistic view had been taken by both of us. Like me he did not wish to go back to history"; "To my mind, the [Chinese] proposals are fair and just"; "We have examined the Chinese proposals and we find it difficult to say that it is not fair and reasonable...Burma must act on moral reasons. She should not retain what she does not own"; "In regard to Namwan, since we go upon a legal basis, we cannot say it is ours. We must leave it to the friendly feelings of the Chinese to consider what they would do with it". Untitled letter, Position of Burma China Border at the Invitation of Zhou Enlai, Series, 12/14 Acc- 398, pp.1-7, National Archives of Myanmar.



The third question is: “Will the [proposed] alignment divide the ethnic groups [who have lived] on both sides [of the border]?”<sup>42</sup> Zhou’s answer to this question was by and large another explanation as well as a statement that China would not practice ethnic affiliation-based irredentism. Compared to the answer given to the previous question, a slight difference here was that Zhou stressed that China, or hopefully both sides, should delimit the border in a way to facilitate the transportation of personnel between different tribes in the borderlands.

The fourth hypothetical question reflected the anxious concerns within China that were developed from economic and national security perspectives. “Would this demarcation hamper our economic and military development?” Zhou gave an unequivocal response, “It would not...[because] in an era such as today’s, to consolidate national defense and to develop economy, topographical features do not mean too much.” He then moved on to explain in detail what were the wise or fair approaches to enhancing China’s external security environment and managing natural resources. He said,

...Especially regarding our southwest-front defense, the focus of our attention should be placed on peaceful co-existence with neighboring countries. We should consolidate our southwest border through peaceful and friendly solutions, and focus our national defense on the major enemy, the United States [who would attack] our east coast from sea...About the question of economic development...just because there are some mineral deposits, we want the whole area — this is not appropriate (bu tuodang). In fact, China has many exploitable deposits, and the whole western mountain area has yet to be exploited. Regardless of whether there are mineral deposits or not, the principal issue is if these [potential] deposits belong to us.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Paragraph 49.

<sup>43</sup> Paragraph 52; Note, according to the 1894 Convention and the 1897 Convention reached between the Qing China and Britain, China retained the right of conducting mining activities at a few locations, that is, Banging and Banlao, in the Kawan mountain borderland, while its jurisdiction would cease to exist in the region.

The fifth question is: “Does this alignment actually amount to succumbing to imperialist arrangement (qucong diguozhuyi de anpai)?”<sup>44</sup> Zhou’s answer to this question is worth quoting in full, for it reveals several pieces of interesting information. First, it shows the much wider vision that the highest Chinese authority held when dealing with the dispute with Burma. Second, it shows Beijing’s diagnosis of the root problem of those territorial disputes that Asia had after the Second World War. Third, it reveals how the deadlock of nation-statism — that the nation’s territory is sacred and therefore, territorial issues are un-negotiable — was considered, philosophically.

Our answer is: on the contrary, imperialism did not arrange it as such. It is correct that [the British] imperialism aligned the Sino-Burmese border to realize its ‘divide-and-rule’ policy, creating trouble between China and Burma. In Asia, imperialism has left quite a few shambles as such. The Indo-Pakistan dispute, for example, was a direct result of Britain’s partition of India; now [Britain] is thinking of dividing Singapore and Malaysia into two countries. In the past, France created the disputes on the borders between the three Indochina countries, while Britain made the dispute between Burma and China as well as the one between India and China, for instance, regarding the McMahon Line. The whole purpose behind these arrangements made by imperialism was to make these areas constantly occupied by the fights between themselves which made divide and rule more possible, and also further complicated the problems [between Asian countries] which ensures the rise of new disputes in the new circumstances after its withdrawal. Apparently, our attempt to solve the border issue in a friendly and reasonable manner is not succumbing to the imperialist arrangements; rather, from the root [of the problems] we are destroying the plots and conspiracies of imperialism.<sup>45</sup>

The answer, as a nice example, shows that when Beijing spoke of its dispute with Burma, it actually eyed Asia in its entirety. And for all of

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<sup>44</sup> Paragraph 53.

<sup>45</sup> Paragraph 54.

Asia's territorial disputes that emerged after the Second World War, Beijing believed they were rooted in imperialism and its divide-and-rule policy. Zhou's articulation of this reasoning was critical in terms of stopping the audience from obsessing with the need to defend the believed sacred border and territory as the logic of nation-statism often commended people to do. The priority should be given to anti-colonialism, that is to thwart imperialist "plots and conspiracies" in Asia.<sup>46</sup> A true defiance of "imperialism's arrangements" was needed, which was, however, not contesting visible imperialist impositions such as the "McMahon Line(1914 Line)" or the "1941 Line". Rather, as Zhou showed, it was about pursuing something invisible, more strategic, and therefore fundamental, that is, to forge a united Asian front vis-a-vis imperialism by being friendly and reasonable to China's neighbors. Interestingly in Zhou's answer to the sixth question, we see nation-statism was philosophically transcended again, but via a different tool: Communism.

Question Six: Can [we] postpone [border negotiations] and wait for a change under heaven (yidai tianxiazhibian) or a change in Burma?<sup>47</sup>

We feel that however the world will change, there will not be a situation where territorial change becomes possible. A change under heaven means nothing but a world war (tianxiazhibian jushi shijiedazhan). [Unless you desire a world war,] the people of the two countries would better be continuing a peaceful co-existence, building their respective countries, and solving their own domestic problems by themselves. We believe, with peaceful co-existence and competition, the whole world will progress together and ultimately march towards Socialism and Communism. Since the whole world will end up belonging to the working class, it becomes pointless to hope for these areas to be recovered. If a world war happens, imperialism will naturally try altering [international] borders or frontiers. It is in their nature to swallow others' territories and change international borders. But we believe that a [world] war

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Paragraph 55.

inevitably ends up with imperialist defeat. Chairman Mao often said, according to the experience of the two world wars, the [ultimate] defeated side has [always] been imperialism while on the victory side its always the people. Not only many Socialist countries rose [from the ashes of the two wars] , Nationalist [countries] took birth too. So if the third world war were to happen, the victory would go to not imperialism but the people of all countries. That would make any attempt to change boundaries simply unnecessary.”<sup>48</sup>

The second reason for China to make less calculations on territorial gain and loss, as Zhou explained, was Communism. The nation-state was only one stop on the road to the ultimate Communist world. International boundary, the defining feature of a nation-based world, would become meaningless in a world where no nation exists. It was, therefore, better for China to go along with this trend of human societies' future evolution. In this sense, to insist stubbornly that a particular existent Sino-Burma border arrangement was unfair became as wrong as to insist that it was fair, for the institution of international border itself would tend to be obsolete. And even if this peaceful evolution process were to be disrupted by new world wars, the people would prevail ultimately and a general direction towards Communism wouldn't be affected.

In other words, whereas in the previous answer Zhou urged the audience to look back on the past experience of Asia, here Zhou asked people to look ahead at the future of human society. Either from an anti-colonialist standpoint or as a Communist country, according to Zhou, China should not pay any undue attention to the Sino-Burma border alignment. Question Seven: Shall referendum (gongmin toupiao) be considered?<sup>49</sup>

We hold that referendum will bring no benefit but hazard. These [northern bordering] areas [of former British Burma], after Burma's independence, have become autonomous states of the Union of Burma, with the northern disputed area becoming

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<sup>48</sup> Paragraph 56.

<sup>49</sup> Paragraph 57.

part of Kochin State and the southern part of Shan State. If a referendum were to be held, the result is hard to predict, probably still in Burma's favor, given people in these areas are already accustomed to the current situation because of [long-lasting] Burmese rule; also since the Burmese government is ruling these areas, [it] will make promotion efforts among local people to bring the referendum result in favor of the Burmese side. This scenario can be easily imagined. Referendum, therefore, would unnecessarily increase the discord between China and Burma, while Burma may also not approve it. What is worse is that once we propose settling the Sino-Burmese border problem through referendum, troubles will arise in other places of Asia, which plays right into the hands of imperialism. It is the wish of imperialism to delay the Nationalist movement in Asia by staging some referendums. [A proposal] as such will first affect the Kashmir Problem, because a referendum is precisely what Pakistan is advocating. If we propose solving the Sino-Burmese border dispute via referendum, we will end up siding with Pakistan and against India, and then naturally, India will oppose [this proposal]. Especially unfavorable to us will be that the United States can propose the same idea of referendum regarding Taiwan based on this precedence, and even stir up unrest in other regions [of China]. Even if some citizens in disputed areas vote to become part of China, [a referendum] will inevitably result in Burma's suspicion, which might even lead to further discord within Asia and to affect our struggle to recover Taiwan. This [proposal of a referendum], which would lose us much more than we could possibly gain (yinxiaoshida), shall not be adopted by any wise person.<sup>50</sup>

It should be noted that the word "referendum" is one of the politically sensitive words in mainland China. It is sensitive because its use entails a certain ideological or political position that is not fully compatible with the P.R.C.'s fundamental political organizational values. Nevertheless, it is not

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<sup>50</sup> Paragraph 58.

this paper's interest to join the debate on China's political system. What is worth highlighting here is China's approach to the possible tools such as referendum that could be employed to end the dispute. Arguably, the very fact that the highest Communist authority evaluated the option of referendum instead of sweeping it away before any pondering over it shows China's openness in diplomacy during this period or on at least this particular issue. Indeed, China was calculating. We see this particularly from Zhou's description of the referendum's potentially adverse impact on Beijing's approach of the Taiwan Problem. Yet it could be hardly argued that there was nothing but pure calculating based on self-interest. Readers of this paper may want to note Zhou's stress here on the danger of "playing into the hands of imperialism". In this sense, it becomes possibly more fair to argue that Beijing's approach to the territorial dispute with Burma was reasonable and appropriate.

Question Eight: Will this affect our neighboring countries?<sup>51</sup>

We say it will not necessarily [affect our neighboring countries]. Nowadays, China's neighboring countries had different relations with us. To our north, [North] Korea, Mongolia, and Soviet Union, they are all brother countries, so is Vietnam to our south. [Between brothers,] differences are always easier to be dealt with. When coming to border issues, we can always find solutions that are beneficial to both sides. As to Afghanistan to our west, and Pakistan and India to our southwest, although border disputes also exist, but they are not urgent. As to our maritime frontiers, they also need time. The problem [of the ownership of ] islands in South China Sea can't be resolved quickly, because Taiwan is yet to be liberated. Therefore, the future settling of the Sino-Burmese border will not force us to settle, instantly, a series of other territorial disputes. According to our investigation, there is no similar question demanding our urgent attention.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Paragraph 59.

<sup>52</sup> Paragraph 60.

## Sections VII & VIII

In the seventh section, Zhou listed four “model examples (fanli)” of treaty concluded by “New China” and articulated their meaning to the country as well as the world.<sup>53</sup> These four examples were the treaties with Soviet Union in 1950, with India in 1954, and with Indonesia in 1955, and ultimately the one with Burma in progress. Regarding the last, Zhou not only explained what message China expected this treaty to deliver to the world, but also answered yet another hypothetical question which, he said, “[our] people might raise”:

...if a treaty is concluded, it will set an example to Asia. By doing so, [we] will not only make others [i.e. other Asian countries] free of worries but also realize that our [future approach to] border problems will also be reasonable. We oppose others’ intrusion (qinfan) upon us, and meanwhile, we are [determined] not to threaten others, or intrude upon others’ [territories]. This is the principle we hold. Here people might ask such a question: by being so friendly to Burma and [indicating] even the readiness to reach any political agreement, can we actually guarantee that Burma will never change its face (fanlian) to us? We can’t guarantee that, because the Burmese Government is the government of theirs, not ours. Even after the conclusion of the treaty, Burma will remain a Nationalist country. Nationalist countries in nature have two faces (liangmian xing). We should encourage it to show and development its positive face (jiji de yimian), while avoiding its negative face (xiaoji de yimian). [So] we should help it develop friendship with us. If under such circumstances, the situation later still develops towards a wrong direction (renran fasheng biangua), that must be because some other factors come into play.<sup>54</sup>

The content of Zhou’s speech in the final section, “How to implement”, remains largely unknown. A significant proportion of the content was apparently deleted at the moment of this document’s creation.

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<sup>53</sup> Paragraph 62.

<sup>54</sup> Paragraph 66.

## Part III: Evaluation

Now the first and perhaps also the fundamental question posed to readers is: Overall, how do we evaluate this document? Several facts are worth highlighting.

First and foremost, when explaining to the 1,078 representatives at the meeting, Zhou's presentation on the disputed areas with Burma is both *impeccable* and *problematic*: Impeccable because Zhou made quite a compelling case that China had no effective administration/control over the vast area north of the city of Myitkyina; problematic because throughout the 67 paragraphs, Zhou made not a single reference to the effectiveness of Burma's rule in the borderlands both then and in the much earlier history. In other words, Zhou created an image of an undeserving China, and yet he did not make a strong case to his Chinese audience on whether Burma deserved these areas.<sup>55</sup> This rather unbalanced historical depiction is interesting.

Second, the capacity of Zhou when he delivered the speech and the preparations he made before this moment should be stressed. In the realm of diplomatic history, it is not uncommon for historians to discover a piece of evidence that discloses what a statesman said in private and that also contradicts what he or she said in public. Equally not uncommon is that within a leadership, another statesman might be found later to have held a different opinion. To stress that Zhou spoke as a national leader does not exclude the two mentioned possibilities. Rather, it is meant to highlight the fundamental characteristic of Zhou's speech: It was in a form of both consensus-building within China and a policy statement. Given the extensive preparations, including internal party discussions, contacts with Burmese diplomats, opinions collected from different sectors of

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<sup>55</sup> In contrast, some Burmese archives show that Burma had deep concerns over a potentially strong Chinese claim that could be advanced by Beijing in the future. For example, one Burmese government assessment, made after 1949, concluded in its end that "though the frontier has been delimited from 25°35'N southwards, the Chinese may demand the retrocession of KoKang and Namwan, while the undelimited frontier north of 24°35'N gives ample opening for Chinese claims." Untitled document, undated, *Position of Burma China Border at the Invitation of Chang En-lai*, Series 12/14 Acc-398, pp.1-7, National Archives Department of Myanmar.



China, Zhou's policy statement had become well-informed and sophisticated. We may, therefore, consider it as a blueprint. It stood for a sort of agreement within a large group of people about how a major problem should be handled. It is from this organizational perspective that this article chooses to describe it as *China's intent* behind its external behavior on territorial disputes in the early Cold War period.

How does it demonstrate *China's intent*? This leads to the third fact: the full content of Zhou's July 9 Speech has never been released to the public. The so-called "Report on the Sino-Burma Border Problem" published on *Renmin Ribao* the day after Zhou's speech is in fact only a carefully-worded short summary, leaving a substantial amount of information in the speech un-communicated, including:

- i. the acknowledgement that "the occasion when China invaded others was also not infrequent";<sup>56</sup>
- ii. Zhou's repeated warning of the potential "big-country chauvinism" of China<sup>57</sup>
- iii. the definition of the "legal basis" behind China's claim,<sup>58</sup>
- iv. the categorical dismissal of an irredentist Chinese approach based on excessive historical claim;
- v. that if China pressed an irredentist claim, "by doing so, we would cease to be a Socialist country";<sup>59</sup>
- vi. the critical evaluation of old Chinese maps;
- vii. Zhou's urging the audience to "think for those [Southeast] countries" who had legitimate concerns over the allegiance of the large Chinese population in their countries<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Paragraph 7.

<sup>57</sup> Paragraph 7, 36.

<sup>58</sup> Paragraph 9.

<sup>59</sup> Paragraph 15.

<sup>60</sup> Paragraph 65.

- viii. the suggestion that China would not interfere in Burma's domestic affairs in order to have a forever friendly neighbour.

The scale and quality of the information that did not appear in *Renmin Ribao* shows that Zhou spoke frankly at the meeting, and the very fact that this speech record has not been reprinted in any party document in China suggests Zhou's speech was not made for propaganda purposes. We may, therefore, end our evaluation by arguing that this transcript significantly reveals China's intent between 1954 and 1960.

## PART IV: INDIA

To argue that there was an omnipresence of India in the whole course of the Sino-Burmese border dispute is perhaps justified.<sup>61</sup> To begin with, one northern section of Burma's intended border with China was part of the "McMahon Line", the line remaining to be one central divisive theme in the Sino-Indian border dispute. Meanwhile, the highest level of Indian authority, long before the outbreak of the border dispute between Burma and China in 1956, was already involved.<sup>62</sup> New Delhi had watched

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<sup>61</sup> See Appendix II

<sup>62</sup> Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Burmese Prime Minister U Nu in 1954, fully disclosing the content of his conversations with Chinese leaders during his recent visit to the P.R.C. Nehru recollected, "I referred to Chinese maps which still showed portions of Burma and even of India as if they were within Chinese territory. So far as India was concerned, I added, we were not much concerned about this matter because our boundaries were quite clear and were not a matter for argument." See "Note on Visit to China and Indo-China", Secret, from Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu, November 14, 1954, Series 12/3 Acc-203, National Archives of Myanmar. In the same year (1954), T.N. Kaul, then as the Joint Secretary of Ministry of External Affairs, suggested to the Burmese government that "one of two [Burmese] officers should be attached to the Historical Division of the Ministry of the External Affairs to research work on [Sino-Burma] border affairs." See Cypher Telegram from Burmese Embassy in New Delhi to Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 19, 1956, Briefing Requested by Burmese Embassy in New Delhi in respect to Research Work on Burma-China Boundary, Series 15/3(21) Acc-317, pp.2-4, National Archives of Myanmar.

vigilantly the developments between Beijing and Rangoon, from the beginning in 1954 to the ultimate signing of the agreement in 1960 which was believed to “give an inkling into the Chinese mind and has bearing on their approach to the dispute with us [India].”<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, Communist China expected India to understand and appreciate its reasonable approach to border dispute as well as its will to maintain peace with India.

Here we may discuss a few more issues that seem to have haunted Indian decision-makers then. First, what were or are China’s objectives? It is worth quoting former Foreign Secretary of India (1967-1972), T.N. Kaul’s observation in 1979. This view of his, probably, either represented or influenced at least one school of thought on China’s intent within the society of India after the 1962 War. His observation is interesting also because it seems to echo those critical views in world media today towards the allegedly reckless external behavior of China in East Asia and Southeast Asia. Kaul wrote:

In 1962, they not only violated the Panchsheel agreement of 1954 but tried to achieve their objectives through massive force. What are their objectives? They are the same as those of previous governments in China from the Han, Sung, and Ming dynasties down to Chang Kai-shek, namely: To take back by force the territories that had ‘belonged’ to the Middle Kingdom like Tibet, Sinkiang, Mongolia; to keep their claims alive on territories like Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA, and Ladakh which may have, at one time or another, paid ‘tribute’ to the Chinese empire or to its vassals even by way of ‘gifts’; to create China’s sphere of influence in countries like Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaysia, Singapore and Korea which they consider vital to their security; and to reopen their claims to areas like the Soviet Asian Republics and the Far Eastern Soviet territories that China may have at one time ‘claimed.’ In short, the aim of China, whether Communist or otherwise, has always been

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<sup>63</sup> Letter from R.K. Nehru to Subimal Dutt, July 30, 1957, p.406, Subject File 52, Subimal Dutt Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and Letter from Subimal Dutt to Jawaharlal Nehru, February 13, 1960, p.85, Subject File 41, Subimal Dutt Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

to regard itself as the leading power in Asia, to have a string of vassal states around it, and to defy by force, if necessary, any other power in Asia or elsewhere that does not accept this claim of China. The only difference now is that while previous Chinese governments only made this claim verbally or on paper, the present Chinese government, drunk with its dream of power and success, is using and threatening the use of force to achieve its aims.<sup>64</sup>

India was one of very few countries in the 1950s that succeeded in realizing the nature of Communist China being not one of a puppet regime of Soviet Union, and indeed, it welcomed the emergence of an independent China in East Asia. However, India was deeply unsure about how the newly unified China was going to project its force on its periphery and what relationships China wanted to forge with its neighbors. And India's assessment of the fundamental character of Communist China, perhaps, contained not a small amount of "Middle Kingdom" conception: prone to use force rather than negotiation, interested in acquiring more territories whenever conditions permit, dreaming of rebuilding ancient tributary systems on its periphery rather than treating neighbors as sovereignties on equal footing. The 1962 War, no doubt, reinforced this reading, as we see in T.N. Kaul's assessment of China's intent. This perception, however, in retrospect appears so incorrect if we had access to Zhou's Speech on July 9, 1957, a speech that revealed the thinking of China as of 1957. And given the successful conclusion of the Sino-Burmese Border Treaty in 1960, one may argue that Zhou and the P.R.C. at that moment were looking forward to having a peaceful border settlement with India.

If we accept there was a continuation in China's general logic towards border dispute at least from early 1957 to late 1960, we may move to question another long-established view on the 1962 War: China's massive military assault on India was premeditated from the year of 1959, to be precise, the moment of India providing shelter to the Dalai Lama and his followers. This view seems to emphasize that New Delhi's welcome to

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<sup>64</sup> T.N. Kaul, "India and China: The Empty Slogan -I", *Patriot*, April 4, 1979, p.15, in *Speeches, Writings and Articles by Him 36*, T.N. Kaul Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

the Dalai Lama constituted a kind of slap in the face, particularly, to Mao Zedong. It was possibly true that the Chinese were found unhappy or disappointed by this move of New Delhi. But to what extent did the top P.R.C. leadership feel so personally infuriated that they would order troops to “punish” India? There is a question mark. We may consider Prime Minister Nehru’s description of a conversation he had with Zhou Enlai in 1954:

I referred also to the case of K.I. Singh, a Nepalese national who had rebelled against this Government and who, according to reports, had been given encouragement in China. This kind of thing created apprehensions in the minds of Asian countries. Premier Zhou replied that K.I. Singh crossed into Chinese territory with some other men in possession of rifles and ammunition. According to international custom, China disarmed them and gave them asylum. Nothing more was done. He referred in this connection to the intention of the Dalai Lama at one time to go to India. The India Ambassador had told the Chinese Government then that if the Dalai Lama came to India and sought asylum, they could not refuse this and they would treat him with courtesy but would not encourage any political activities on his part. As a matter of fact, the Dalai Lama came not go to India but some of his relatives did go there and had been given asylum. The Chinese Government did not mind this.<sup>65</sup>

As it turned out, what India did to the Dalai Lama in 1959 was almost precisely what it had said five years earlier. In other words, the Chinese Communists knew well in advance what move New Delhi would make if they let the Dalai Lama flee to India. The next question is: Could Beijing be shocked by India’s decision to provide shelter to the Tibetan exiles under this circumstance? Related to this is a view on Beijing’s massive military attack on India in 1962. The view suggests that Mao felt personally humiliated by Nehru’s decision to welcome the Dalai Lama and therefore, decided to punish India. This explanation of China’s rationale, placed on an individual level and involving assessing personal character and

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<sup>65</sup> “Note on Visit to China and Indo-China”, Secret, from Jawaharlal Nehru to U Nu, November 14, 1954, Series 12/3 Acc-203, National Archives of Myanmar.

temperament, appears to suggest that Mao was a despot-like ruler who would let his country into war merely for personal vengeance. This is, however, a suggestion that does not quite square with the records of Mao as a leader. Mao lost his first wife to an anti-Communist warlord in 1930, watched many his colleagues fall during the so-called “Long March” between 1934 and 1936, received the news in 1950 that his eldest son was killed in Korea by an American air raid but in 1972, still chose to shake hands with Richard Nixon. In contrast, the traditional explanation that attributed Beijing’s incentives of using force to P.R.C.’s “assessments of growing vulnerability and declining claim strength” seems to be more convincing.<sup>66</sup> This explanation is, indeed, also consistent with the impression gathered from Zhou’s speech on July 9, 1957. Beijing’s border behavior was commanded by factors that went far beyond individual idiosyncrasies.

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<sup>66</sup> Fravel, 2008, p.175.

## Conclusion

In the Sino-Burma border dispute (1954-1960), a direct source of this international conflict was Beijing's determination to inherit the territorial claims left by the defeated Nationalist regime. That, indeed, was part of a campaign to establish the real representative of entire China. "For the areas that were ruled by the Nationalist Government before the liberation, we will take them over; for the areas that the Nationalist Government nominally ruled and yet had not effectively run, we will take them over, too."<sup>67</sup> This logic, in fact, applies to all territorial disputes to which the P.R.C has been a party.<sup>68</sup>

Much as it may appear aggressive or uncompromising — "[We] will not give away even a single inch of land" — Beijing's efforts to succeed the Nationalist regime regarding these claims was hardly unique from a comparative perspective. For example, constituting the other direct source of the conflict, independent Burma was committed to keeping the fruits of the border agreements left by British Burma. Independent India, China and Burma's shared neighbor, demonstrated a similar attitude on its northeast border and territories, as shown in the ever mounting domestic pressure that Prime Minister Nehru faced between 1959 and 1962. This leads us to the second level of discussing China's intent: *how* China *intended* to pursue its territorial goals.

Here we shall first distinguish what China intended from what the other party felt or what the whole picture looked like from a third party's perspective. A change of standpoint results in a change in assessment. Also, empirically speaking, there is evidence of both gratefulness and grudge

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<sup>67</sup> Paragraph 33.

<sup>68</sup> A fundamental source of the current South China Sea dispute, as far as Beijing is concerned, is likely the P.R.C's determination to inherit the nine-dotted line produced by the Republic of China after the Second World War.

on the part of Burma towards the Chinese proposals during the course of the negotiation. This situation calls contemporary readers, especially non-Chinese readers, to lay down their own values and pre-existing perspectives with regard to Mainland China under the leadership of Chinese Communist Party. Ample evidence shows that China did not *intend* to achieve its territorial goal at the expense of its neighbors, particularly Burma.

Beijing appreciated the complexity of territorial disputes and most importantly, was willing to talk them over with the neighbors.<sup>69</sup> “We left them to be solved in peaceful negotiations in the future.”<sup>70</sup> The three key border policies explained by Zhou on July 9, 1957 demonstrate that Communist China was genuinely practicing peaceful co-existence with its neighbors, was committed to Afro-Asian solidarity, and was striving to overcome China’s “big-country chauvinism” derived from its long-lasting experience of being the largest and also the most influential player in East Asia.<sup>71</sup> Zhou was clear about China’s attitude toward potential territorial gain and loss: “The point is for us find a solution on the ground of equality, mutual benefit, and improving friendship; the point is not that we must take control of some extra tiny pieces of land”.<sup>72</sup> The ultimate alignment of the Sino-Burma border since 1960, clearly settled in the favor of Burma rather than China, is the best testimony to this intent of China characterized with pragmatism and reasonability.<sup>73</sup>

This paper understandably, though regrettably, carries a few gaps. First, speaking of China’s intent in the early Cold War period, this paper has not provided sufficient information or discussion on what Mao Zedong thought. Mao was, admittedly, a figure who was capable of almost single-handedly installing or overthrowing a particular foreign policy. Therefore,

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<sup>69</sup> Paragraph 33.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Paragraph 36

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> See Appendix VI.



despite being aided by the unpublished record of Zhou's speech, the paper is only partially successful in revealing China's intent. The next question is about the extent to which we could use China's attitude towards Burma to help understand its attitude towards India. Contrary to the peaceful settlement of the Sino-Burmese border dispute, Beijing failed to resolve its territorial quarrel with India which unfortunately evolved into the 1962 War. Whether it was because Beijing changed its general approach to territorial disputes when facing India, or because Beijing did not change but new complications from the Indo-China relations in the early 1960s made a peaceful deal impossible, this is an important question that the paper hasn't fully addressed. Third, this paper may look as though it is leaning excessively to China's foreign policy position at the expense of alternative interpretations. Hopefully, this could be overlooked by thoughtful readers, given that this archive-based work aims primarily to introduce a critical unpublished Chinese record which sheds new light on China's foreign policies both in history and possibly also in the present by implication. The paper, therefore, does a service to scholars in opening up fresh information on a fascinating aspect of China through the discovery and analysis of an archival text.

# Appendix I

## P.R.C.'s Major Foreign Policy Statements in the Early Cold War Period

	Statement	Time	Occasion	Availability	Note on content
In General	"Common Program"	1949.9.29	First National People's Political Consultative Conference	Published	"After careful investigation, every treaty or agreement signed between the Nationalist Government and foreign governments will either be recognized, abandoned, revised or reaffirmed."
	"Five Principles" (Panchsheel)	1954.4.29	"Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India"	Published	Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's affairs, equality and mutual benefits, and peaceful co-existence
	Zhou Enlai's Statment	1955.4	Bandung Conference	Published	Expressing P.R.C.'s readiness to delineate its border with neighbor, willingness to maintain status quo before delineation, use only peaceful means to resolve border dispute
On Sino-Burma Border Dispute	"Directive on the Sino-Burmese Border"	1956.10.31	CCP Central Party Committee meeting, Beijing	Unpublished	
	"Report on Sino-Burmese Border Dispute"	1957.3.16	Second National People's Political Consultative Conference, Beijing	Unpublished	
	"Report on the Sino-Burmese Border Dispute"	1957.7.9	First National People's Congress Conference, Beijing	Unpublished	

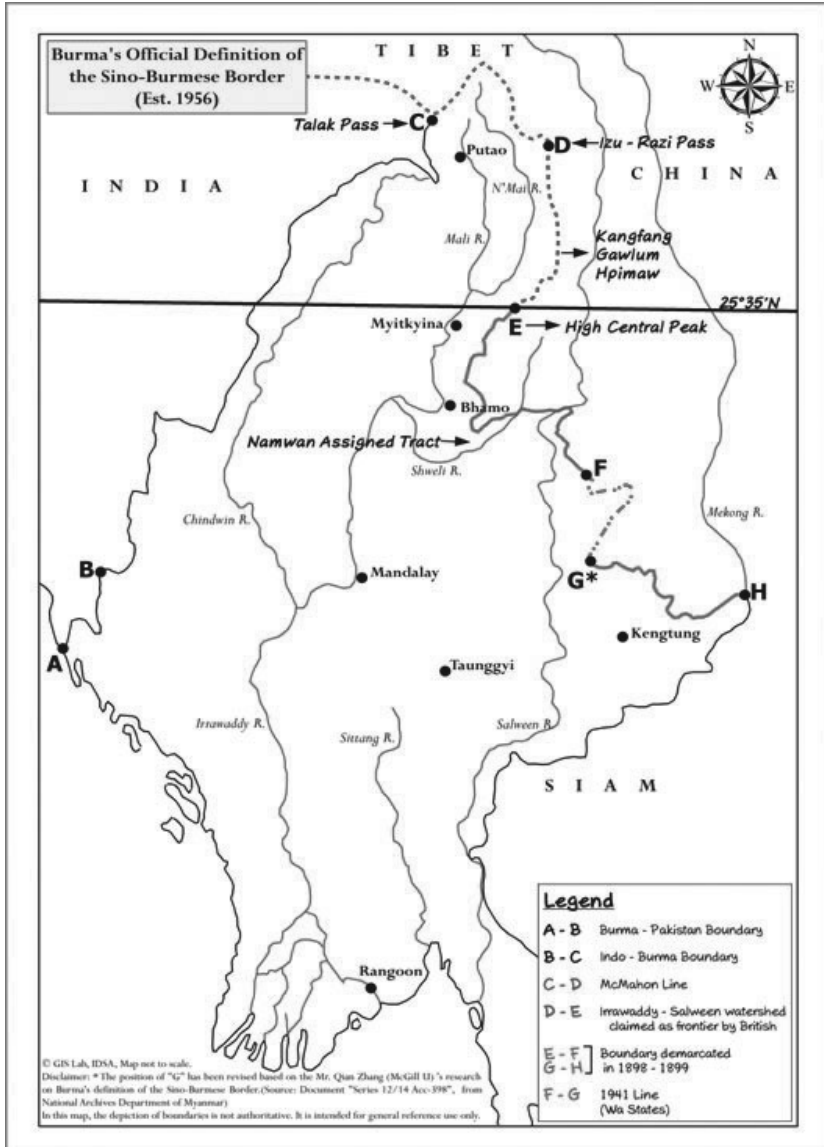
## Appendix II

### Areas Appearing in Zhou Enlai's Speech Other than "Burma" July 9, 1957

Terms	Number of Paragraphs Containing Particular Terms	Rank of Frequency	Number of Particular Terms	Rank of Frequency
"Britain"	11	1	22	1
"India"	9	2	22	1
"Vietnam"	7	3	14	5
"Tibet"	6	4	16	3
"Korea"	6	4	12	6
"Mongolia"	6	4	8	8
"Pakistan"	5	5	9	7
"U.S.A"	4	6	15	4
"Afghanistan"	4	6	5	9
"Russia/USSR"	3	7	16	3
"Taiwan"	3	7	5	9
"Japan"	2	8	17	2
"Indonesia"	2	8	4	10
"Bhutan"	2	8	3	11
"Okinawa"	1	9	3	11
"Sri Lanka"	1	9	1	12
"Kashmir"	1	9	1	12
"Uzbekistan"	1	9	1	12
"Kazakhstan"	1	<b>9</b>	1	<b>12</b>

## Appendix III

### Burma's Expectation (1956)

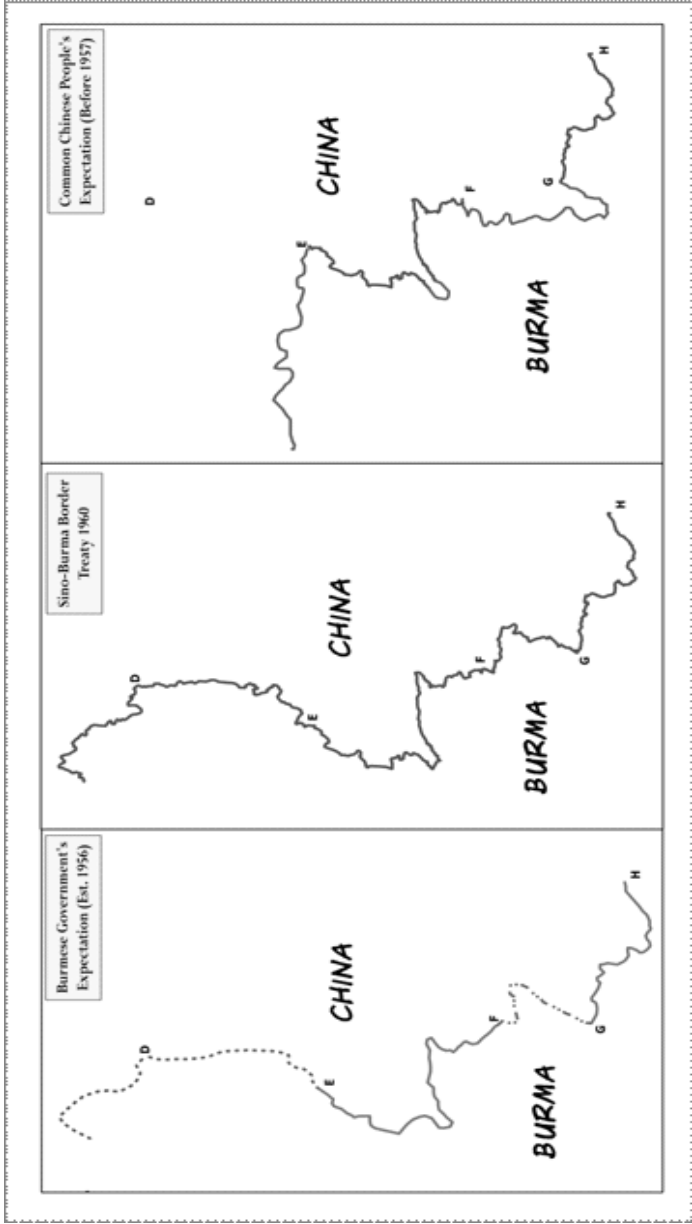






# Appendix VI

## A Comparison of the Three Border Alignments



## Appendix VII

### How Much Did the P.R.C. Actually Gain in the Sino-Burma Border Dispute Settlement?

BENCHMARKS	SCOPE OF "DISPUTED TERRITORIES" (KM <sup>2</sup> )	"DISPUTED TERRITORIES" CHINA GAINED ACCORDING TO THE 1960 TREATY (KM <sup>2</sup> )	PERCENTAGE
<i>Text of Sino-Burmese Border Agreement &amp; Treaty (1960)</i>	1,909		18%
<i>4th edition of "New Map of China's Provinces [中国分省新?]" by the newspaper Shenbao (1939)</i>	est. 75,400	342-344	0.45%
<i>5th edition of "New Map of China's Provinces [中国分省新?]" by the newspaper Shenbao (1948)</i>	est. 80,200		0.43%
<i>Common Chinese People's Perception (1957)</i>	est. 92,400		0.37%

Note: For the figures "1909" and "18%", see Fravel (2008), p.46



## Appendix VIII

### The P.R.C.'s Territorial Disputes & Their Settlements in the Early Cold War Period

Disputes with...	Time of Settlement	Scope of Disputed Territory (km <sup>2</sup> )	Gained by P.R.C.	Gained by the Other Side	Note
Burma	1960	1,909	18%	> 50%(82%)	
Nepal	1961	2,476	6%	> 50%(94%)	
North Korea	1962.10	500	0%	>50%(100%)	N.Korea also gained 54.5% of a sizable lake which was previously Chinese
“1962 War”/ Indo-China Border Conflict(1962.10.20- 1962.11.21)					
Mongolia	1962.12	16,808	35%	> 50%(65%)	
Pakistan	1963	8,806	60%	<50%(40%)	Before the settlement, only 18% of total disputed territory under de facto Pakistan control
Afghanistan	1963	7,281	0%	>50%(100%)	Wakhan Corridor went entirely to Afghanistan
<b>Total</b>		37,780	<b>31%</b>	69%	
Sources: Shen Zhihua & Julia Lovel (2015); M.Taylor Fravel (2008)					

This paper features a detailed discussion of a speech by Zhou Enlai on July 9, 1957 which was meant to outline “New China’s” approach to the Sino-Burmese border dispute. Hitherto available primary and secondary sources do not disclose much about the contents of this particular speech by Zhou. However, new evidence—a speech record recently discovered at China’s Jiangsu Provincial Archives—reveals a substantial amount of previously unclear/unknown content of Zhou’s speech. It describes in detail, for example, the departure and principles of Communist China’s approach to the territorial dispute with Burma. It highlights the limited weight that Beijing attached to historical evidence and old maps in territorial negotiations. Among many other things that have not been made public previously is Zhou’s unusual categorization of some of China’s external behaviours in history as that of “invasion”. Last, but not least, the numerous references to other countries, especially India, suggests that the list of neighbours with whom Beijing hoped to resolve peacefully their outstanding border problem included, probably, not just Burma. Therefore, with the rich and nuanced information it contains, this speech record gives us a great opportunity to reassess previous assumptions about China’s intent behind its external behaviours in the 1950s, that is, about whether the perceptions about Communist China at the time matched its real intentions.



**Qian Zhang** attained both his BA (International Studies) and MA (International Relations and World History) degrees from University of Nottingham. Since 2012, he has studied at McGill University, Canada, under the supervision of Professor Lorenz Luthi. His dissertation project investigates Sino-Indian relations in the early Cold War period, attempting to understand especially the long-term mechanisms that led to the 1962 War. As an archive-based work, he has done extensive research at numerous archives in the world, including Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa), the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (College Park), Foreign Ministry Archive (Beijing), the Academia Historica (Taipei), the National Archives of India (Delhi) and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Delhi).



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### **Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses**

No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg,  
Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010  
Tel.: (91-11) 2671-7983 Fax: (91-11) 2615 4191  
E-mail: [contactus@idsa.in](mailto:contactus@idsa.in) Website: <http://www.idsa.in>