**India's Boundary Disputes with China, Nepal, and Pakistan**

  The recent detonation of a series of nuclear devices by India and Pakistan has increased tension in South Asia and threatens to inflame long-standing boundary disputes that India has with China, Nepal, and Pakistan. The disputes with China and Pakistan have already triggered several wars. The new Hindu-nationalist government in New Delhi has reversed movement toward détente with Beijing and Islamabad. The areas in contention with China and Pakistan are among the largest land-boundary disputes in the world. The Indo-Nepali dispute over Kalapani is more recent and involves a small area.

***India-China (Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh)***

In the 1962 Sino-Indian War, China seized a Switzerland-sized area, Aksai Chin (Aksayqin), and overran Arunachal Pradesh (an Indian state the size of Austria). There are also other, smaller pockets of disputed area.[1] The PRC withdrew from virtually all of Arunachal Pradesh to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which approximates the McMahon Line that is found in a 1914 agreement initialed by British, Tibetan, and Chinese representatives.[2] Chinese and Indian forces clashed in the Sumdorong Chu valley of Arunachal Pradesh in 1986-87. Relations began to thaw in 1988.

On 7 September 1993, China and India signed an accord to reduce tensions along their border and to respect the LAC. During November 1996, China and India agreed to delimit the LAC and institute confidence-building measures (CBMs) along the frontier. The agreement pledged nonaggression, prior notification of large troop movements, a 10-km no-fly zone for combat aircraft, and exchange of maps to resolve disagreements about the precise location of the LAC. In August 1997 the sides ratified the CBM agreement. There seems to have been little substantive progress, except for a series of high-level visits.[3] The most recent, on 27 April, was the first visit by a PRC Chief of Staff to India. However, two weeks before the visit the new Indian Defense Minister, George Fernandes, accused the PRC of repeated violations of Indian territory, including the construction of a helipad on "Indian" territory in the disputed zone, and of aiding Pakistan's nuclear and missile programs. On 3 May he publicly labeled China as India's number one threat and alleged that the PRC was stockpiling nuclear weapons in Tibet, expanding naval activity off the Burmese coast, and conducting surveillance against India from Burma's Coco Islands.[4] After the visit of General Fu Quanyou and PRC protests, Fernandes said that his characterization of China as India's principal threat was a personal view, but he went on to pledge that the number of Indian troops along the frontier with China would not be reduced. Such a statement calls into question part of the agreed CBMs.

China and India have yet to address their fundamental and very large land boundary disputes. Moreover, their bilateral relations are complicated by the issues of Tibet (Xizang), Sikkim, and Kashmir. India plays host to the Dalai Lama and a large number of Tibetan refugees. They present an implicit threat to Chinese control of Tibet, which it invaded in 1950. On its maps, the PRC continues to portray Sikkim, which was absorbed by India in 1974, as an independent country. In addition to the Aksai Chin, China and India dispute another section of Kashmir (the area west of Aksai Chin).

***India-Pakistan-China (Kashmir)***

When India and Pakistan became independent of Great Britain in 1947, the various princely states, including that of Jammu and Kashmir, could accede to either country. An armed revolt of Muslim peasantry against the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir prompted the Maharaja to accede to India in order to gain military aid. Pakistan objected and the countries went to war. The matter was taken up by the UN Security Council in 1948, which adopted a resolution calling for the restoration of order, the withdrawal of Pakistani forces and reduction of Indian forces, and a UN plebiscite. India and Pakistan objected to various of these provisions. They went to war over Kashmir again in 1965. In 1971 India intervened in Pakistan's civil war that led to the independence of Bangladesh. India and Pakistan came close to war over Kashmir in 1990.

UN observers monitor part of the Indo-Pakistani cease-fire line. The current line was established by the 1972 Simla accord and approximately follows the 1949 Cease-fire Line. The coordinates of the Simla line have not been published, and the line was never delimited in the forbidding Siachin Glacier, near the Chinese frontier, where India and Pakistan frequently trade artillery rounds. Firing incidents and allegations of infiltration are chronic along the entire cease-fire line.

The Indian-controlled part of Jammu and Kashmir became a state in 1974. The parts of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan, Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas, have anomalous status as administered territories. In 1963 China and Pakistan delimited a boundary that India claims illegally gave part of Kashmir to China. In 1987 a Sino-Pakistani protocol formalized demarcation of their boundary. The termination of this boundary at the Karakoram Pass on the Chinese line of control suggests that Pakistan recognizes Chinese sovereignty over Aksai Chin, which is part of the former Princely State of Kashmir.

India and Pakistan have held sporadic talks. In June 1997, they agreed to eight issues for discussion, including the issue of Kashmir and their maritime boundary. Pakistan wants to set-up a separate task force on Kashmir; India has resisted the idea. Talks have made little progress due to changes in the respective governments. The recent efforts by US Ambassador Richardson to resolve the dispute seem to have been blown out of the water by Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests.

***India-Nepal (Kalapani)***

The dispute between India and Nepal involves about 75 sq km of area in Kalapani, where China, India, and Nepal meet. Indian forces occupied the area in 1962 after China and India fought their border war.[5] Three villages are located in the disputed zone: Kuti [Kuthi, 30°19'N, 80°46'E], Gunji, and Knabe. India and Nepal disagree about how to interpret the 1816 Sugauli treaty between the British East India Company and Nepal, which delimited the boundary along the Maha Kali River (Sarda River in India). The dispute intensified in 1997 as the Nepali parliament considered a treaty on hydro-electric development of the river. India and Nepal differ as to which stream constitutes the source of the river. Nepal regards the Limpiyadhura as the source; India claims the Lipu Lekh. Nepal has reportedly tabled an 1856 map from the British India Office to support its position. The countries have held several meetings about the dispute and discussed jointly surveying to resolve the issue.[6] Although the Indo-Nepali dispute appears to be minor, it was aggravated in 1962 by tensions between China and India. Because the disputed area lies near the Sino-Indian frontier, it gains strategic value.

Like most boundary dispute, those of India with its neighbors are symptomatic of wider bilateral relations. Boundaries are manifestations of national identity. They can be trip-wires of war. Recent developments in South Asia suggest that peaceful resolution of these disputes is receding from reach.