



International Boundary Study

No. 24 – August 14, 1978

Norway – U.S.S.R Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 24 (Revised)

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NORWAY – U.S.S.R. BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Norway–U.S.S.R. boundary is approximately 196 kilometers (122 miles) long. It extends between the Finnish tripoint at Krokfjell (69°03'N, 28°55'E) and boundary pillar No. 415 (spar buoy) in the Varangerfjord. The boundary follows the Pasvikelv and Jakobselv rivers for a distance of 153 kilometers (95 miles); the remainder consists of geodesic lines demarcated by pillars.

II. GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The boundary traverses primarily a heavily glaciated upland approximately 1,000 feet above sea level. The coastal area is deeply indented with fjords while lakes abound in the upland. Many short rivers exist, most of which are interrupted by rapids and low waterfalls.

Climatically, the entire region is characterized by temperatures that are mild for such a high latitude (i.e., between 69° and 70° north). The coastal area has more uniform temperatures than the interior. Normal summer averages vary from 50° F along the coast to over 55° F in the interior. In contrast, winter averages along the coast are 32° F while those in the interior are approximately 8° F. Precipitation is on the scant side with less than sixteen inches falling during an average year.

In the north, the vegetation is composed of isolated tundra and stunted birch forest, while the south is covered with dense stands of pine, larch, and spruce forests. The valley of the Pasvikelv is particularly well endowed with marketable timber.

III. HISTORICAL ASPECTS

While the exercise of true sovereignty is relatively recent in this region, the Varangerfjord has long served as the eastern limit of Norwegian–Swedish influence in the north. At various periods, the activities of the Norsemen extended farther eastward—hence Murman or Norman Coast—to the White Sea. Nevertheless, the first agreement to delimit the boundary dates from the first quarter of the fourteenth century when the Varangerfjord was specified as the boundary. For several centuries thereafter, control over the area to the east appears to have passed to the Norsemen of the various Scandinavian kingdoms. By the eighteenth century, the Murman coast was held in common by Russia, Sweden, and Norway as a Lapp district.

In 1826 the Convention of Petersburg between Russia and Sweden established, in the main, the present-day Norway–U.S.S.R. boundary. It delimited the boundary as following the Pasvikelv and Jakobselv and created the "enclave" of Boris Gleb. Since this convention, the boundary has served to separate the sovereignties of Russia and Sweden

until 1905, Norway and Russia from 1905 to 1918, Finland and Norway from 1918 to 1944, and Norway and the U.S.S.R. from 1944 to the present time.

IV. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

In the south, the Norway–U.S.S.R. boundary originates at Krokfjell, the tripoint with Finland. For approximately four miles the boundary, demarcated by eleven pillars, extends southeast across the Pasvikelv, giving Norway, for a short distance, control over both banks of the stream. At pillar eleven the boundary swings abruptly northeastward and joins the thalweg of the Pasvikelv, which forms the boundary for the next 68.7 miles. The river trends generally northeastward but assumes a more northerly course toward the downstream limit. Islands in the stream are allocated by their position to the west (Norway) or east (U.S.S.R.) of the thalweg.

Boundary pillars have been laid down in pairs along the river sector with one each in the respective states. In accordance with a protocol signed by Norway and the U.S.S.R. on December 24, 1963, land in the Soviet Union has been made available for use by the Kingdom of Norway at two sites for the operation and maintenance of the Skogfoss power station (for details see Part V, Item N, of this study).

At pillar No. 196 the boundary departs from the river to circumscribe the former village of Boris Gleb. The Boris Gleb "enclave" of 3.6 square kilometers results from the establishment in the sixteenth century of Russian Orthodox missions in Pechenga (Petsamo) and Boris Gleb. The territory was included in Russia by the 1826 treaty. The possession of Boris Gleb, however, gives the Soviets control over both banks of the Pasvikelv for 2.6 kilometers below the important falls at Skoltefoss.

The total circumference of Boris Gleb to pillar No. 222 is approximately 6.2 miles. From this referenced point the boundary extends first southeast and then east in a series of straight lines for 16.5 miles to a junction with the Jakobselv at pillar No. 302. Local topographic features are ignored as the boundary crosses lakes, rivers, and marshes. Also, in accordance with the Norwegian–Russian protocol of December 24, 1963, land in Norway has been made available for use by the U.S.S.R. for the operation and maintenance of the Boris Gleb power station.

The final 26.7-mile segment coincides with the thalweg of the Jakobselv to its mouth, marked by a buoy as pillar No. 415. Islands are again assigned as a result of their position west or east of the thalweg. The position of pillar No. 415 is given as 69°47'46.14" N and 30°49'9.85" E.

V. TREATIES

Following are pertinent treaties affecting the Norway–U.S.S.R. boundary. All of the pre-nineteenth century accords have been omitted because they were replaced by later agreements.

- A. St. Petersburg Convention between Russia and Sweden**, signed in St. Petersburg on May 14, 1826. (British and Foreign State Papers 1: 338)

On September 17, 1809, Sweden ceded Finland to Russia by the Treaty of Fredrikshamm. As a result of the cession, a new boundary was created; surveying and demarcation were accomplished in 1810 and 1824 and incorporated into the 1826 Convention. The unusual situation at Boris Gleb dates directly from this action. In addition to the current Norway–U.S.S.R. boundary, the modern Finnish–Swedish boundary stems from the St. Petersburg Convention.

In 1848 and again in 1871, the boundary was reviewed and deteriorating monuments replaced. The 1826 Convention, however, continued to form the basis of the work.

- B. Haparanda Convention between Sweden and Russia**, signed at Haparanda on September 15, 1888, with the Stockholm Protocol, signed on August 9, 1892. (Sveriges Traktater 13: 558 and 13: 583)

Problems evolving from the earlier delimitation of the Russo–Swedish boundary were clarified and incorporated into the convention and the protocol. This led to a resurvey and redemarcation of the boundary, which was completed in 1896.

- C. Stockholm Note**, signed on October 26, 1905. (British and Foreign State Papers 98: 819)

Norway became independent when the union with Sweden was dissolved. The Christiana Declaration of November 2, 1907, granted official recognition of the new state by Russia, among other European powers. (British and Foreign State Papers 100: 536)

- D. Treaty of Peace and Amity between Finland and Russia**, signed on March 1, 1918. Ended the state of war and recognized the independence of Finland, declared previously on December 6, 1917.

- E. Treaty of Peace between Finland and the Russian Soviet Republic**, signed on October 14, 1920, at Dorpat (League of Nations Treaty Series 3:1) with protocols.

The treaty delimited the entire Finnish–Soviet boundary and transferred the territory of Petsamo (Pechenga) to Finland. The Czar had originally decreed this transfer in 1864, but it had never been effected. Article IV of the Treaty of Dorpat stated, in defining the district of Petsamo, that "the hitherto existing frontier between Russia and Norway" would be the northwestern boundary.

- F. Convention Concerning the Frontier between the Province of Finnmark and the Territory of Petsamo, and Final Protocol**, signed at Christiania, April 28,

1924. Exchange of Ratifications at Helsinki, September 26, 1924. (League of Nations Treaty Series 49: 62)

According to Article I, "the frontier between Norway and Finland ... shall remain as traced at the time of the last Norwego–Russian frontier delimitation and demarcation ... in 1896. In the portions of the Pasvik (Patsjoki) where the position of the line of demarcation cannot be clearly discerned ..., the frontier shall follow the median line of the channel."

In Article II, "From cairn No. 362, the frontier shall follow the course of the Jakobselv as far as its mouth, running throughout along the median line of the channel and down the center of the lakes formed by the river."

The territorial waters according to Article III were divided by a lateral line.

At the same time a Convention concerning the Passage of Travellers on the use and administration of the boundary was also negotiated. On October 15, 1925, the boundary commission maps and protocols were completed and signed.

G. Treaty of Moscow, signed on March 12, 1940; ratified on May 11, 1941. (III League of Nations Treaty Series 5)

This treaty terminated the first Russo–Finnish War and ceded certain territories in southern Finland to the U.S.S.R. However, Petsamo remained Finnish and the boundary was unchanged.

H. Moscow Armistice of September 19, 1944, and the Treaty of Peace with Finland, signed in Paris, February 10, 1947. (United Kingdom Cmd. 6586 and United Nations Treaty Series 48: 320)

Petsamo (Pechenga) returned to the U.S.S.R. and the boundary became the frontier between Norway and the U.S.S.R.

I. Final Protocol of the Mixed Soviet–Norwegian Commission. Descriptive Protocol with annexes, 415 Protocols describing the frontier marks, and an album of maps and triangulation diagrams constituting an agreement for the demarcation of the state frontier. Signed at Moscow on December 18, 1947. Came into force on May 23, 1949, by an Exchange of Notes. (United Nations Treaty Series 52: 3, No. 768—52: 211)

This postwar document created the modern boundary between the two states with little change from the 1826 boundary. The major modification was the specification of the thalweg in the two rivers rather than the previous "median line of the channel." The complete and comprehensive text describes the boundary in minute detail. The maps, "Kart over riksgrensen mellom Norge og Samveldet av Sovjetiske Sosialistiske

Republikker," 1: 25,000, eighteen sheets, published by the Commission, are the basic cartographic document.

- J. Agreement between the Royal Norwegian Government and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning the Regime of the Norwegian–Soviet frontier**, signed at Oslo on December 29, 1949. Entered into force on October 30, 1950, by an exchange of ratifications in Moscow. With protocols.

The agreement was concerned primarily with the maintenance and regulation of the boundary. No changes in the alignment were affected.

- K. Protocol regarding the maintenance of the frontier mark erected at Muotkavaara (Krokkfjellet) at the meeting point of the state frontiers of Norway, Finland, and the Soviet Union**, signed at Helsinki on February 7, 1953, by Finland, Norway, and the U.S.S.R. (United Nations Treaty Series 174: 143 I 2264)

The protocol and the earlier agreements of October 26, 1945, and December 3, 1947, establish and provide for the maintenance of the Fenno–Norwego–Soviet tripoint.

- L. Protocol concerning amendments to Regulations of April 24, 1947, for the regulation of Lake Inari in connection with the use of Niskakoski Dam and to the Protocol of April 29, 1954**, signed at Oslo on February 24, 1956, by Finland, Norway, and the U.S.S.R.

As a result of severe flooding along the boundary, the protocol was negotiated to control the level of the lake between 117.17 meters and 119.50 meters above mean sea level. The boundary was not affected.

- M. Agreement between Norway and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the utilization of water power on the Pasvik (Paatso) River**, signed at Oslo on December 18, 1957. (United Nations Treaty Series 312: 4522) Came into force on June 27, 1958.

The agreement provides for the control and utilization of hydropower from the mouth of the Pasvik to where it is crossed by the boundary between markers 9 and 10.

- N. Protocol (with annexed maps) concerning the land in Norwegian and Soviet territory** that is required for the operation and maintenance of the power stations at Boris Gleb and Skogfoss and that, in accordance with the above mentioned Agreement, is made available free of charge by one Party for use by the other Party, signed at Oslo on December 24, 1963 (United Nations Treaty Series 535: 4522). Came into force on August 8, 1964.

Article 1

The site which Norway, pursuant to Article 5 of the Agreement between Norway and the Soviet Union on the utilization of water power on the Pasvik (Paatso) River, shall make available free of charge for use by the Soviet Union for purposes of operation and maintenance as long as the Boris Gleb power station exists is situated at the junction of the Boris Gleb dam with the left bank of the Pasvik River and has an area of 1.01 hectares.

The aforementioned site has been surveyed and marked on the ground by the Mixed Soviet–Norwegian Commission for the redemarcation of a part of the State frontier between the Soviet Union and Norway, as shown on the map annexed to this Protocol.

The Norwegian Party has fenced in the site and will ensure that the fence is kept in good condition.

Article 2

The sites which the Soviet Union, pursuant to Article 6 of the Agreement between Norway and the Soviet Union on the utilization of water power on the Pasvik (Paatso) River, shall make available free of charge for use by Norway for purposes of operation and maintenance as long as the Skogfoss power station exists are situated as follows.

The first site, 1.50 hectares in area, at the junction of the right bank of the Pasvik River with the Skogfoss dam, which intercepts the main course of the river.

The second site, 5.20 hectares in area, at the waterstop wall intercepting the Little Männika River.

- O. Descriptive Protocol on the national boundary line between Norway and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the area of the reservoir of the Soviet power plant of Hestefoss**, newly demarcated in 1968. Came into force on May 21, 1970.

The boundary was redemarcated for a distance of 14.85 kilometers (9.23 miles) between pillar No. 11 and pillar No. 42.

- P. Protocol from the Mixed Norwegian–Soviet Commission for a redemarcation of the national boundary between Norway and the Soviet Union in the area of the power plant at Hestefoss**, regarding control of the national boundary and field inspection of maps from boundary marker No. 236 to boundary marker No. 415, newly issued by the Mixed Norwegian–Soviet Commission in 1968. Came into force on May 21, 1970.

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Government agencies may obtain additional information and copies of the study by calling the Office of the Geographer, Department of State, Room 8742, Washington, D.C. 20520 (Telephone: 632-2021 or 632-2022).