

# **International Boundary Study**

No. 64 (Revised) – February 13, 1978

# China – U.S.S.R. Boundary

(Country Codes: CH-UR)

The Geographer Office of the Geographer Bureau of Intelligence and Research

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#### CHINA – U.S.S.R. BOUNDARY

### I. Boundary Brief

The China-U.S.S.R. boundary stretches in an interrupted arc from Pamirs in central Asia to the Pacific Ocean. The 4,150-mile-long boundary is divided into nearly equal sectors by the Mongolian People's Republic. The western, or Sinkiang-Turkestan, sector measures approximately 1,850 miles in length. East of Mongolia, the Manchurian-Siberian sector extends for 2,300 miles primarily along the courses of the Argun (O-erh-ku-na Ho), Amur (Hei-lung Chiang), and Ussuri (Wu-su-li) rivers.

There are at least five minor territorial or alignment problems along the boundary, most of which was delimited by a series of Sino-Russian treaties negotiated during the Czarist and Manchu period. In the extreme west, no treaty delimits the boundary in the Pamirs south of the pass commonly known as Kizil Jik Dawan (Pereval Kuzyl-dzhiik, Wu-tzu-pieh-li Shan-k 'ou). East of Mongolia, disputes exist over the alignment of the boundary: (a) between the eastern tripoint with Mongolia and the Argun river; (b) in the Argun, Amur, and Ussuri; (c) in the vicinity of the "64 villages) along the Amur; and (d) adjacent to the islands at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri rivers. Additional disputes could develop over islands in the Amur and the Ussuri owing to the vague language used in the various treaties.

The Chinese Government in 1963 raised the question of possible renegotiation of certain treaties signed during the declining years of the Manchu Empire. Although the Chinese appear to have made no specific claims, in early 1964 Russian and Chinese officials met for boundary discussions. The results of these and subsequent discussions, however, have not been publicized and no boundary changes have been announced.

#### II. Geographic Background

#### **Physical**

The China-U.S.S.R. boundary arbitrarily cuts across the principal physiographic regions of central and northeastern Asia. In the west, the boundary begins at the Afghanistan tripoint on the edge of the Pamirs, often referred to as the "roof of the world." This tangled knot of high mountain ranges surrounding a generally flattened plateau constitutes the central core of the mountain system of central Asia. From the Pamirs, the world's loftiest mountain ranges radiate in all directions. To the south and southeast lie the Karakorum Range, Great Himalaya Range, and Kunlun Mountains which separate Pakistan, Kashmir, and India from Sinkiang and Tibet. To the northeast a complex pattern of mountain systems extends across and along the boundary.

The Pamirs, although of great elevation, are characterized by a general flatness of both ridges and valleys and have been described as a "partially peneplained area in which wide, mature valleys are separated by residual ridges." In general, elevations increase westward, where the highest peaks attain 25,000 feet or more. The parallel valleys vary from 5 to 10 miles in width and have an average elevation of 12,000 to 13,000 feet. The intervening ridges, which are aligned generally east-west, extend about 4,000 to 5,000 feet higher than the valley floors. Melting snows and glaciers have all but removed any evidence of soil from the ridges, leaving only a mantle of rock and glacial debris. The valley floors, in contrast, have collected the alluvium, resulting in flattish, but rock-strewn, floors.

Northward into the Alay Mountains the same general "pamir" characteristics dominate. However, unlike the true Pamirs, the lateral extension of the mountain ranges is relatively limited. To the east and west extend lowlands—in the case of China, the Tarim Basin (T'a-li-mu P'en-ti); in the U.S.S.R., it is the steppe and basin region of Kirgizya and Fergana. The mountains descend steeply to the lowland, leaving the principal passes at great relative and absolute elevations. The major routes through the mountains are in the neighborhood of 13,000 to 14,000 feet. The major peaks lie at 23,000 feet while the mean elevation of the lowlands is about 3,000 feet, although many parts of Russian Turkestan are much lower.

After crossing the Alay Mountains, the boundary extends to the Tien Shan, the northernmost of the great ranges which radiate from the Pamir knot. With an east-west alignment, the Tien Shan divide Sinkiang into two component parts: the deserts of the Tarim Basin to the south and the steppes of the Dzungarian Basin to the north. The Tien Shan comprise old limestone and slate rock formations which have been sharply folded and faulted into a series of parallel ranges alternating with shallow basins. Abrupt rises in elevation occur, with the basins generally lying about 10,000 feet in elevation while the ridges average only 3,000 to 6,000 feet higher. The highest peaks measure about 25,000 feet, most of them concentrated in the southern part. To the north, the ranges are lower and the valleys are much wider. The lowlands of the Tekes (T' e-k 'o-ssu Ho) and Ili rivers form distinct natural routes across the boundary. North of the Ili, the Tien Shan give way to the Khrebet Dzhungarskiy Alatau (Chan-ka-erh-a-la-T'al Shan) one of the block mountain systems of central Asia and the Dzungarian Basin.

The Dzungarian Basin is a triangular wedge of lowland projecting between the Tien Shan to the south and the Altai Mountains to the north. On the west, the basin is closed off by the Khrebet Dzhungarskiy Alatau, the Birlik Tau (Pa-erh-lu'k'o Shan), the Khrebet Saur (Sai-li Shan), and the Khrebet Tarbagatay (T' a-erh-pa-ka-T'ai Shan), most of which are boundary mountains. Primarily a steppe region, the Dzungarian Basin links western China and Soviet central Asia by means of the famous Dzungarian Gate. The strategic pass is actually a 10-mile-long gorge lying at 700 feet about sea level between two lakes: Ai-Pi Hu (Ebi Nur), and Ozero Alakol'. It is through this pass that the Chinese and the Soviets planned at one time to link their Turkestan railroad systems. The actual "Gate" of the great historic migrations is considered to be the lowland area to the north in the vicinity of T'a-ch'eng (Chunguchak). Beyond the Khrebet Tarbagatay a third

major routeway, the lowland valley of the Chernyy Irtysh (O-erh-ch'i-ssu Ho), also cuts across the boundary.

The Turkestan sector of the boundary terminates in the Altai Mountains adjacent to Mongolia. The Altai Mountains are neither high nor spectacular. However, their location, alignment, and elevation combine fortuitously to produce heavy precipitation in the form of rain and snow. The surrounding region, as a result, is relatively well-watered and many streams rise on the flanks of the range along the China-Mongolia boundary.

East of Mongolia, the boundary area is less complex. The Khrebet Khingan and their northward continuation, the Khrebet Stanovoy, form a steep escarpment to the lowlands of Manchuria and a barrier to the maritime influence of the Pacific. Rising to approximately 6,000 feet in the south, elevations on the range decrease slowly northward to about 4,000 feet. The fall to the east, however, remains abrupt to the high plains of Manchuria, creating for the range a more mountainous character than the elevations would indicate. The range is important as the interior limit of the maritime and monsoonal influence in climate and vegetation. It forms, as a result, a cultural boundary as well. To the east, the Han Chinese and their intensive agriculture have become established while to the west there exist the nomadic and/or extensive settlements of the Mongols.

East of the Khrebet Khingan, in the boundary area of the Amur-Ussuri plains, elevations are relatively low and the dominant landforms are gently rounded with forested hills alternating with poorly drained riverine plains. The large area of forest has been an economic attraction to the Chinese. Excellent stands of pine, larch, cedar, and spruce are found along the Amur while hardwoods, particularly oak and maple, grow along the Sung-hua Chiang (Sungari) and the Ussuri. Extensive swamps occur at the confluence of the Amur and the Ussuri and around the upper Ussuri in the south. Primarily, the development and utilization of the valuable region suffer because of its isolation from both the Soviet and the Chinese centers of production and communincations.

#### Historical

Until recent historical times, the China-Russia boundary in central Asia passed through an area occupied by numerous and fragmented tribes and peoples. China developed to the east and south in the great river basins. With an intensive, agricultural economy based on irrigated rice culture, the early Chinese empires found the steppes and deserts of central Asia ill-suited to Chinese settlement. Czarist Russia, essentially a European power, was occupied in the creation of a nation-state with a Western orientation. Neither state, however, could ignore central Asia.

The Chinese faced periodic threats from the nomadic tribes along the boundary. To maintain peace, it became necessary for China to launch military operations into the

steppe-desert region. Furthermore, trade with the Near East and Europe could best be carried out by the Chinese along the interior routes skirting the Tarim Basin.

Although Chinese agriculture and hence Chinese culture were not easily adaptable to the grasslands of Inner Mongolia, the Manchurian forest lands, or the desert wastes of north-west China, these vast outlying territories were of great political significance to China. Political control was essential to protect and preserve key centers of Chinese power located in the fertile river plains of north China.

During several imperial periods, the latest of which, the Manchu era, was of principal importance to the formation of the present boundary, Tibet, Chinese Turkestan, eastern Russian Turkestan, Mongolia, and Manchuria owed suzerain allegiance to the emperors of China. The western boundary of Manchu China in the early 18th century extended to Lake Balkash and northward to the west of Ozero Zaysan to include Mongolia and Tannu Tuva. In the northeast, the suzerain limits at that time probably coincided with the Stanovoy Range and Yablanovyy Range north of the Amur. These probably were the outer limits of Manchu influence at the time when Russian explorers and administrators began their advances into Asia.

Russia, in turn, was attracted by the wealth that the natural environment offered in the form of furs, minerals, timber, and the like. Furthermore, the desire to create an imperial Russia, which was blocked in Europe by the major powers, made Siberia appealing. The rate of Russian expansion into Siberia was amazing. In 1580, Perm, west of the Urals, marked the eastern limit of Russian occupation. The next year the present-day site of Tobol'sk was occupied, and in 1857 a city was founded. Eastward, along the lowlands of the great Siberian rivers and their tributaries, Russian cities were established at Tomsk on the Ob in 1604; at Yeniseysk on the Yenisey in 1619; at Yakutsk on the Lena in 1632; and at Okhotsk on the Pacific shores in 1638.

Thus, in six decades, Russia had expanded across Asia from the Urals to the Pacific. Its line of city-forts, however, was far north of China or Chinese suzerain territory. Soon, while following the Lena to its source, Russian explorers came upon the Amur valley and ran into tribes under the political influence of the Manchu Empire. After several inconclusive battles, the Manchus, close to the height of their power, gained the upper hand and forced a Russian withdrawal from the middle and lower Amur valley.

By the terms of the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk, the first boundary was created between the Russian and the Manchu Empire. From the Argun source in the west, the line followed that river to the Shilka (Kerbetchi) and then northward to the mountains that serve as the Shilka's source. The boundary then progressed eastward along the drainage divides of the Yablonovyy Range and then the Stanovoy Range to the Eastern or Pacific Ocean. The question of authority was not established over "other rivers" between the Uda (Oud, Ud) river and the mountains near the Amur, a situation which was continued by the agreements of 1727.

The Bur, or Bura, Treaty and protocols and the Kiakhta Treaty of 1727 defined the limits of the two states from the Argun westward through the Khrebet Tabagatay (Abagatuy) area north of Mongolia to the valley of the upper Chernyy Irtysh. These agreements gave Russia title to approximately 100,000 square kilometers of territory south of the line of earlier penetration and north of present-day Mongolia. This delimitation remained valid in the main for over a century and a quarter.

In the 19th century, the vigor of the Manchu dynasty waned and the Chinese became less able to resist the pressures placed upon the empire by foreign states for trading stations and concessions. In 1858, China signed the Treaty of Aigun with Russia which delimited the boundary eastward along the Amur from its confluence with the Shilka. The treaty provided, however, that the Manchu settlers in "64 villages" north of the Amur between the Zeya river and the village of "Holdoldzin" would remain under Chinese administration. A precise determination of the amount of territory ceded to Russia is not possible, but an estimate places the total at 598,000 square kilometers. In 1860, the Treaty of Peking completed the delimitation of the Manchurian boundary. The 400,000 square kilometers of territory between the Amur, the Ussuri, and the sea, which had been left in doubt by the Aigun Treaty, were ceded to Russia.

During this period, Russia began a southward movement into Turkestan from the earlier line of Siberian penetration. The southern boundary of Russia had been advanced by 1855 to a line stretching from midway on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea to the Aral Sea to a point south of Alma-Ata, before turning sharply northward. The advance of Czarist forces brought Russia into direct contact with Manchu administration in Turkestan.

The Treaty of Peking mentioned above also created a Manchu–Russian boundary in Turkestan for the first time by stating that the existing line of Chinese pickets would form the boundary. A sketchy delimitation provided for the boundary from Mongolia to the limits of the State of Kokand (not conquered by Russia until 1876). A detailed delimitation remained for a mixed commission to arrange. This action was accomplished in the 1864 Treaty of Tarbagatay (Chuguchak), the 1870 Treaty of Uliassuhai, and the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg (Ili). The latter contained a large number of demarcation protocols which established the details of the modern-day boundary. The Tarbagatay agreement had left many points vague or unsettled.

In addition, Manchu control over Turkestan faded in 1871 with a Moslem revolt led by Yakob Beg. At this time, the British in India and the Russians in central Asia eyed one another suspiciously, each fearing movements by the other into the political void. The British at one point entered into negotiation with Yakob Beg in hopes of stabilizing the situation and then denying Russia entrance into Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. The United Kingdom considered the Russian threat to India to be very real. In fact, in the name of keeping order, the Russians had occupied the Ili valley in 1871 and attempted to extend Czarist influence beyond. The Chinese could not force the evacuation of Russian forces or exert their own administration over the area. A treaty (Livadiya) was

negotiated in 1879 ceding the Ili valley to Russia, but the Manchu Emperor refused to ratify the agreement and a stalemate resulted.

Finally, in 1881, the Petersburg agreement returned the Ili valley to China in exchange for a small sector "for the resettlement of voluntary emigrants" and the Ozero Zaysan territory eastward along the Chernyy Irtysh. The demarcation protocols of the next decade created the modern boundary "to the limits of Kokand." A 1915 agreement, however, created the Khorgos (Ho-erh-kuo-sso Ho) river as the boundary north of the Ili to the Khrebet Dzhungarskiy Alatau.

Russian expansion farther south into Turkestan again darmed the British in India and led to bilateral agreements defining the respective spheres of influence. The later of these, signed in 1895, created the Wakhan corridor as an Afghan buffer between Russian Turkestan and British India. The two powers appear to have continued the China–Russia boundary southward from the limits of Kokand (Kizil Jik Dawan) to (peak) Povalo-Shveykovskogo (Kokrash Kol) and to have created a China–Afghanistan boundary along the drainage divide. Certain sources show that these boundaries were accepted as a *de facto* line by a Sino–Russian exchange of notes in early 1894, but no record of this correspondence has been found. Chinese forces had occupied the Pamirs earlier but had abandoned the region under Afghan pressure in 1892. No subsequent Chinese government has accepted the Pamirs boundary although the extent of claims has varied.

With respect to the boundary east of Mongolia, the Tsitshihar agreement in 1911 redefined the boundary between Mongolia and the Argun, ceding approximately 900 square kilometers to Russia. (China has since maintained that the agreement was void because of lack of ratification.) In 1915, a Russo–Mongolian–Chinese agreement delimited an "autonomous" Outer Mongolia under Republican Chinese suzerainty, negating the 1911 Mongolian declaration of independence. The pattern changed after the Russian Revolution in 1917 when both Tannu Tuva and Mongolia shortly established Soviet regimes. The former declared itself independent in 1921 (to be absorbed in 1944 by the U.S.S.R.) and the latter followed several months later.

The *de facto* detachment from China of these two territories completed the establishment of the present boundary between China and the U.S.S.R. On August 14, 1945, the U.S.S.R. and the Republic of China in an Exchange of Notes agreed to recognize the independence and territorial integrity of "Outer Mongolia" if a plebiscite confirmed the desire. Confirmation occurred on October 20, 1945, and on January 5, 1946, China formally recognized Mongolian independence. The Republic of China subsequently repudiated this agreement. On December 26, 1962, envoys of the Governments of China and Mongolia signed a boundary delimitation agreement. The effect of this agreement was to confirm the common tripoints of the Mongolian, Chinese, and Soviet boundaries.

#### **Ethnic**

Ethnically, the China-U.S.S.R. boundary area has been inhabited by a variety of minority groups. In Turkestan, the original settlers have been described as "fair-haired and blue-eyed." The present pattern of occupation became established about the sixth century: domination by the Turkic peoples in the southwest and by Mongol-type peoples in the north. Two definite patterns of occupance also developed: restricted, sedentary agriculture in the oasis-desert environment of the south, and a pastoral nomadism in the steppes of the north. The mountainous spine, while rugged and forbidding in areas, never served as a complete wall isolating the two parts.

Tadzhiks occupy settled portions of the boundary area from Afghanistan northward to the Tien Shan. From the Tien Shan to approximately  $80^{\circ}$  east, the dominant group is the Kirghiz, a predominantly pastoral people. Their distribution is more widespread in the U.S.S.R. than in China, where their eastward extension is limited by the Uighurs. The oasis country of the Tarim Basin forms the center of the latter. The designation "Uighurs" is of recent vintage; formerly these Turkic groups were designated primarily by their place of residence, e.g., Kashgarians.

North of the Tien Shan, a more complex pattern evolves. South of the Tekes and in the valley of the Po-lo-t'a-la'Ho (Boro Tala), Mongols occupy the immediate frontier area in China. Uighurs, with centers of Han Chinese and Sibos, are in between. On the Russian side of the boundary the Russians and the Ukrainians dominate, with substantial groups of Uighurs and Kazakhs located primarily in rural areas. This pattern continues northward to Mongolia although a substantial number of Mongols inhabit the Chinese side of the boundary.

A limited degree of Turkic nationalism has developed in the last century, probably as a resistance to Russian and Han Chinese cultural and political pressures. The two states have, in recent times at least, met the resistance of these minority peoples in a similar fashion: they have divided the minorities into separate groups with emphasis placed upon their differences. The creation in the U.S.S.R. of the Tadzhik, Kirgiz, and Kazakh republics and subordinate autonomous oblasts has been matched in China by the establishment of the Tibetan, Sinkiang-Uighur, and Inner Mongolian autonomous regions with the autonomous *chous* and *hsiens* for local groupings.

At various times, however, each of the two states has championed the rights of the minorities to gain a political advantage in the other state. Russia, in particular, endeavored to use the Turkic nationalism to its advantage before the establishment of the communist regime in China. In recent times, the policy has been reintroduced for Soviet advantage. Most of the boundary difficulties in Turkestan probably stem from minority problems rather than from the location of the boundary, *per se.* 

The ethnic problem in the Manchurian sector of the boundary is not as acute. The original Tungusic people have been reduced to a few isolated pockets of hunters and fishers. A sizable number of Koreans inhabit the area adjacent to Korea; Mongols

dominate on the Chinese side, west of the upper Argun. The Amur and Ussuri valleys are occupied by Han Chinese in varying densities.

On the Soviet side of the boundary, Russians dominate the entire area with the exception of the Jews near Birobidzhan, the Jewish autonomous region, and substantial Ukrainian elements along the middle Ussuri and Lake Khanka. Thus, in the main, the boundary represents an ethnic line of separation.

#### Communications

While many paths and trails cross the long boundary, the principal routes connecting the states are few. In Turkestan, the historic "Silk Routes" skirted the northern and southern rims of the Tarim Basin, lacing together the oasis centers. Kashgar formed the western hub of the routes which then led across the Tien Shan to the oasis of central Asia.

North of the mountains, the valleys of the Tekes and Ili provide easy access from Ining (Kuldja) to Alma-Ata and Frunze. In Dzungaria, the famous "Gate" has been since historic times the major door from the steppes of eastern Turkestan to the plains of central Siberia. The Soviet and Chinese Governments once planned to connect their rail systems through this low, natural passage. Russia extended its Turk–Sib system from Aktogay to Druzhba to the boundary. The Peking regime, in turn, was to extend the Chinese system to Urumchi, then through the oil fields to Tu-shan-tzu, to the west of Ai-pi Hu, and thence to the "Gate." The Chinese probably have not extended their line beyond Urumchi or, at most, Tu-shan-tzu.

In the Manchurian sector, the Argun, the Amur, and the Ussuri carry a significant amount of local barge traffic. At least two postwar treaties have been negotiated between Moscow and Peking to provide for the regulation of this commerce. The principal routes across the boundary, however, are the rail lines between Man-chou-li and Zabaykal'sk in the extreme west and Sui-fen-ho and Ussuriysk in the extreme east.

#### **III. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT**

In the Turkestan sector of the China–U.S.S.R. boundary, the 1860 Peking delimitation is no longer valid. The 1864 delimitation of Tarbagatay is applicable from the Kizil Jik Dawan northward to the Tekes valley and from the Khrebet Dzhungarskiy Alatau to the Chernyy Irtysh. The remaining segments stem from the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg. Post-Petersburg protocols, however, affected details of the boundary throughout the entire area of delimitation. South of Kizil Jik Dawan, the boundary has not been delimited as a result of a Sino–Russian agreement.

From the Afghanistan tripoint in the south, the customary or "conventional" boundary between China and the U.S.S.R. extends along the ridges forming the drainage divide between the Amu Darya (Oxus) and Ya-erh-ch'iang Ho (Yarkand) rivers to about latitude 39° 35' North. From this point northward to the Tien Shan, six major and minor rivers cross the frontier: (a) Markhansu, (b) Kyzylsu (K'a-shih-ka-erh Ho), (c) Suykbulak, (d) Aksay (To'-shih-Ho), (e) Chong Uzen, and (f) K'un-a-li-k'o Ho. The boundary coincides with the ridge lines of the eastern Tien Shan, the K'uo-k'o-sha-lo Ling, which constitutes only a minor drainage divide.

After passing through the glaciated region of Khan Tangri, the boundary turns due north in a complex pattern. First using ridge lines, then the Tekes and its tributary, the Sumbar (each for about 25 miles), and finally a straight line, the boundary crosses the Ili at the confluence of the Khorgos (Horgos). This part has been demarcated and about 12 markers are shown on some 1:1,000,000 topographic maps.

The boundary then follows the Khorgos northward to the point where it "leaves the mountains," then transfers to the local divide, and then to the main ridge of the Khrebet Dzhungarskiy Alatau as far as the Dzungarian Gate. Northward for about 100 miles, the boundary extends in a series of straight line segments to the Khrebet Tarbagatay, which forms the border east-southeastward. After leaving this range, the boundary crosses the Chernyy Irtysh valley in a complex pattern without regard to physical features. North of the Chernyy Irtysh, the boundary, for the most part, follows the Alkabek (A-lieh-k'o-pieh-k'o Ho) and Alkaba streams to the Mongolian tripoint in the Altai Mountains.

In the Manchurian sector, the extreme western part from the tripoint with Mongolia to the Argun stems from the 1727 Kiakhta Treaty (Chinese version) or the 1911 Tsitshihar Treaty (Russian version). The boundary then follows first the Argun and then the Amur. The Argun boundary also was delimited by both the Kiakhta Treaty and the Tsitshihar Treaty. In view of the Chinese refusal to accept the Tsitshihar agreement, no valid allocation of islands in the Argun has been made. The course in the Amur, with the exception of the "64 villages," is a product of the Aigun Treaty while the southern continuation was authorized by the 1860 Treaty of Peking and its subsequent protocols. The Aigun Treaty did not delimit a precise position for the boundary in the Amur.

Near the confluence of the Amur and the Ussuri, the Chinese version claims that the boundary follows the main Amur channel northeast to a point opposite the city of

Khabarovsk. The Russian version follows the Kazakevicheva (Fu-yuan) Channel southeastward to the Ussuri, annexing to the Soviet Union the Chinese-claimed island of Hei-hsia-tzu (see inset on map, China–USSR Border: Eastern Sector). From the Ussuri junction, the boundary proceeds upstream to the Sungacha (Sung-a-ch'a Ho), which is followed to Lake Khanka. A minor water divide forms the boundary southwestward from the lake. Then the boundary is a straight line south-southeastward across the Sui-fen-ho lowland.

After crossing the stream also named Sui-fen-ho, the boundary is delimited by the south bank tributary, Ta-wu-she Ho, southward to the drainage divide of the coastal range. The Korean tripoint is situated on the Tumen River (Tumyn' Tszyan, T'u-men Chiang, Tuman-gang) about 10 miles above its estuary. The 1861 demarcation commission had established the tripoint some four miles farther upstream, but the new location was adopted in 1886.

#### IV. TREATIES AND OTHER ACTS

Listed below are the treaties and other international acts which have been found to affect the location of the present Sino-Soviet boundary. Several of the treaties have been located only in secondary sources, where they may not have been considered in their entirety. A second and more serious deficiency exists—none of the maps associated with the delimitation and demarcation protocols has been located. The absence of the demarcation maps would create a serious problem except that official Chinese and Russian maps have been in accord in their alignment when diplomatic agreements have been reached.

Many additional treaties have been negotiated by the two countries, including the leasing of the Port Arthur (Lu-shun) area. In the interest of simplicity, these teaties have been omitted here although they often had a greater effect on Sino-Russian relations than those quoted. Their lack of application to the alignment of the boundary led to their exclusion.

Where treaties have been available in multiple sources, the one considered the most readily available has been quoted.

A. <u>Nerchinsk Treaty of Peace and Boundaries</u> signed on August 27, 1689. (*Hertslet's China Treaties*, I:437, 3rd edition, London, 1908.)

Although Manchu China defeated the Russians and forced them to abandon their posts on the Amur, Russia gained title to approximately 230,000 square kilometers of territory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The poorly drained area at the confluence of the Amur and the Ussuri comprises two relatively large islands, Chimnaya Island on the east and Tarabarovskiy Island on the west (together named Hei-ksiatzu by the Chinese), and several smaller islands.

The China-Russia boundary followed the Argun to its confluence with the Amur and then the latter river to the Shilka (Kerbetchi), a northern tributary. The Shilka formed the boundary in the mountains serving as its source. The water divide of these mountains (Yablanovyy Range and Stanovoy Range) delimited the boundary to the "Eastern Sea" (Pacific). The treaty added that the question of jurisdiction over "the other rivers which lie between the Russian river Uda and the aforesaid mountains—running near the Amur and extending to the sea—which are now under Chinese rule ..." remained open.

**B. Peking Treaty** of April 1 (?), 1727.

No test of this treaty has been found, but according to secondary sources, the temporary agreement for the Uda area continued in effect owing to the lack of precise geographical data.

C. <u>Bur Treaty</u> of August 20, 1727, with ratifications exchanged on the Bur River near Kiakhta. (China, Treaties, Conventions, etc. between China and Foreign States, Vol. 1, p. vii, Shanghai, 1908.)

The Manchu–Russian boundary between present-day Mongolia and the upper Argun was delimited rather vaguely. The boundary protocols (see paragraphs D and E immediately following) to this treaty replaced the treaty delimitation almost immediately.

**D.** Boundary Protocol exchanged at Abagatuy (hill) on October 12, 1727. (China, op cit., p. xi.)

The protocol delimited the boundary east of Kiakhta by a description of 63 markers forming the boundary east of Kiakhta to the headwaters of the Argun. The protocol is occasionally referred to as the Abagatuy Treaty of October 12, 1727. See below:

E. <u>Boundary Protocol</u> exchanged on the Bur River on October 27, 1727. (*Ibid.*, p. xviii.)

The second protocol delimited the boundary of the Bur Treaty west of Kiakhta. Twenty-four points were identified.

**F.** <u>Kiakhta Treaty of Peace</u> signed on October 27, 1727, with ratification by Russia on June 14, 1728. (NOTE: Confusion exists on the actual signing date of the treaty. Variously, October 21, 24, and 27 are given by sources. In view of the date of the Bur protocol, it seems more logical to date the treaty October 27.) (*Ibid.*, p. 8.)

Although less specific than the previous protocols, the Kiakhta Treaty tied together their delimitations for the entire Mongolia–Argun segment of the boundary with a general agreement on peace and relations. In addition, Article VII stated that the Uda river section would continue to remain without a new delimitation.

A general analysis of the boundary as defined from the Sayan Mountains in the west to the Argun in the east shows that Russia gained approximately 100,000 square kilometers in area. Territory in the upper course of the Chernyy Irtysh, south of Lake Baikal, and along the northern periphery of Mongolia was involved. In addition, the imprecision of the delimitation in the Sayan Mountains formed a basis for later Russian claims to Tannu Tuva. With minor amendments, however, this treaty remained in force until 1858.

**G.** <u>Kiakhta Supplementary Treaty</u> amending Article X of the *Kiakhta Treaty of Peace* ... signed on October 18, 1768. (Hertslet, *op. cit.*, I:439.)

Primarily, the supplementary treaty amended Article X dealing with boundary traffic between the two

states. However, the two parties also made minor modifications in the boundary posts in the vicinity of "Mont Bourgoutei" so that the boundary would pass on the reverse side of the mountain.

**H.** Aigun Treaty of Friendship and Boundaries signed on May 16 (28), 1858, and ratified by the Manchu Emperor on June 2, 1858, and the Czar of Russia on July 8, 1858. (Hertslet, *op. cit.*, I:454.)

This major treaty brought the boundary to the Amur, with one exception, as far east as the Ussuri. The treaty provided that the Manchu settlers situated on the left bank of the Amur between the Zeya (Zela) river and the village of "Holdoldzin" would remain under Manchu administration. The Manchu settlers in these so-called 64 villages were guaranteed their domiciles in perpetuity. Between the Ussuri and the Pacific the two states would rule the territory in common.

By the terms of the Aigun Treaty, Russia gained title to approximately 598,000 square kilometers of territory. Navigation on the Amur, Sung-hua Chiang, and the Ussuri was restricted to Russian and Manchu vessels.

I. <u>Tientsin Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation</u> signed on June 1 (13), 1858. (Hertslet, *op. cit.*, I:455.)

Because the signing of the Aigun Treaty was unknown to the negotiators in Tien-ching (Tientsin), a brief section on boundaries was included in this general commercial treaty. However, the earlier treaty had already solved the problems raised under Article IX.

J. Peking Additional Treaty of Commerce, Navigation, and Limits signed on November 2 (14), 1860, with ratification on December 20, 1860, in St. Petersburg. (Hertslet, op. cit., I:461.)

Supplementing the Aigun and Tientsin Treaties, the Peking agreement completed the delimitation of the boundary in the northwest along the Ussuri. Continuing southward, from the Amur confluence, the boundary followed the Ussuri and its tributary, the

Sungacha, crossed Lake Khanka (Lake Hinkai), and proceeded southward to the Korean boundary on the Tumen river above its mouth. The boundary was marked on a map with 20 specific points (shown by Russian letters and Chinese phonetic equivalents). A mixed commission was to trace this line on the ground (Article III). Thus Russia gained the harbor of Vladivostok and 400,000 square kilometers of territory bounded by the Amur, Assuri, and Tumen rivers and the Sea of Japan.

In combination with the Aigun Treaty, this treaty established the basic boundary in existence today between "Manchuria" and the Soviet Far East.

In addition, the Peking Treaty specified that the western or Sinkiang-Turkestan boundary should be the existing line of Chinese pickets. Article II vaguely delimited the boundary from Chabindabaga (Shaban-Dabeg) southwestward along the mountains (Khrebet Dzhungarskiy Alatau and Khrebet Kokshaal-tau) south of Ozero Issyk-kul' to the limit of the possessions of Kokand. A commission was also created (Article III) for the detailed delimitation of this western boundary.

K. Additional Article to the Treaty of Peking signed June 16 (28), 1861, at the mouth of the Belenkhe river (Baylen Khe). (China, op. cit., p. lxxvii.)

The Manchurian commission created under the Peking Treaty met, delimited the boundary from Lake Khanka south to Korea, and exchanged maps showing the proper alignment. The maps covered specifically the boundary from the Ussuri to the Tumen as well as the general boundary from the Ussuri Shilka–Argun confluence to the Tumen as defined by the Peking Treaty. Wooden demarcation pillars were erected at the 20 points specified in the treaty.

This agreement of 1861 has been referred to variously as the "Treaty of Lake Hsing-Kai" (Hanka) and the "Protocol for the Exchange of Delimitation Maps resulting from the Convention of November 2 (14), 1860 signed at Belenkhe." The Belenkhe flows into Lake Khanka on its west shore where the China–Russia boundary leaves the lake.

L. Protocol of Conference between Russia and China defining the Boundary between the Two Countries signed at Tchuguchak (Tarbagatay) on September 25 (October 7), 1864. (Hertslet, op. cit., I:472.)

In fulfillment of the Peking Treaty, representatives of the two states met and specifically delimited the boundary from (modern-day) Mongolia southwestward to approximately 40° 15' North and 74° 40' East, the limits of Kokand.

For much of the length, the major water divide of central Asia served as the boundary. In the extreme north, however, the boundary extended along the shore of Ozero Zaysan to the Chernyy Irtysh, which became the boundary upstream to the Manitu-gatul Khan picket (approximately where the modern boundary crosses the Chernyy Irtysh).

Many points were left vague or undefined in part because of the unsettled condition in Chinese Turkestan.

#### M. [Russo-Chinese Boundary Treaty of Uliassuhai, 1870]

This treaty has been cited in several secondary sources as completing the unfinished work of the Tarbagatay Protocol. The treaty reputedly completed the delimitation and demarcation of the Kobdo, Uliassuhai (Tannu Tuva), and Tarbagatay regions of Mongolia and Turkestan. After the boundary monuments were established, Russia is said to have encroached farther into China, cutting the main road between Tarbagatay and Altai.

N. Treaty between Russia and China respecting the Reestablishment of Chinese Authority in the Country of III; Boundary ... signed at St. Petersburg February 12 (24), 1881. Ratifications exchanged at St. Petersburg on August 7 (19), 1881. (Hertslet, op. cit., I:483.)

As a result of the Moslem revolt in 1871 against the Manchu dynasty, Russia occupied the Ili valley, ostensibly to keep order in the region. The Chinese, however, were never able to convince the Russians that they should leave, nor were the Chinese strong enough to enforce such an action. In 1879, Russia and China negotiated a treaty (Livadiya) whereby Russia gained control of the Ili valley. The Chinese Emperor, however, refused to ratify the treaty, and the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg (Ili) was drawn up to replace it.

Russia evacuated the eastern Ili valley, the Tekes valley, and the main ridge of the Tien Shan for a distance of approximately 200 miles. The Khorgos river became the dividing line across the Ili valley. In addition, the boundary was changed in the north, as China ceded the territory about Ozero Zaysan and Ozero Markakol'. The total ceded territory has been estimated at 70,000 square kilometers. The treaty delimitation, however, was not sufficiently detailed, and the following additional "treaties" (protocols) were required to complete the boundary. Each protocol covered a specific portion of the boundary in detail:

- 1) <u>Protocol signed at IIi</u> on August (?), 1882. Not found in primary source but cited in several secondary sources.
- 2) <u>Protocol signed at Goulimtou</u> on October 16, 1882. (Sbornik dieystuyushikh traktatov, konventsiy i soglasheniy ..., St. Petersburg, 1891. Vol. III, No. 62, page 286.)
- 3) Protocol signed at Kashgar on November 25, 1882. (*Ibid.,* Vol. IV, No. 42, p. 379.)
- 4) Protocol signed at Sary-Oulen-Tchibar on July 31, 1883. (*Ibid.*, Vol. III, No. 63, p. 287.)

- 5) Protocol signed at Tarbagatay (Tchougoutchak) on September 21, 1883. (*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 289.)

  NOTE: several sources mention a Tarbagatay protocol of July 1883, but the two are probably the same.
- 6) Protocol signed at Novi-Margelan on May 22, 1884. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 381.)
- 7) <u>Protocol signed at Tarbagatay</u> on December 20, 1893 ... relative to the territory of Barlyk. Refers to earlier (1883) protocol. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 385.)

The treaty and protocols delimited and demarcated (in part) the boundary between Russian and Chinese Turkestan as far south as Kizil Jik Dawan, situated at approximately 38° 40' North and 73° 50' East.

## O. Treaty of Hun ch'un signed in 1886.

(Not found in primary sources but cited in several secondary sources.)

The original wooden demarcation pillars erected west of Vladivostok soon rotted away and disputes developed over the precise location of the boundary. A new treaty was negotiated which appears to have affected only the location of the final pillar on the Tumen at the Sino–Russian–Korean tripoint. The original demarcation of the Lake Hsing-H'ai (Kanka) Treaty placed the final post 20 *lo* (old style measurement), about 13.2 miles, from the mouth of the Tumen. However, the new tripoint pillar was established 30 *li* (about 10.4 miles) upstream from the estuary.

# P. <u>Anglo-Russian Agreement concerning Spheres of Influence in the Region of the Pamirs</u> signed on March 11, 1895.

As British and Russian influence expanded into central Asia, the fear of a clash between the two states led to the delimitation of the boundary between Afghanistan and Russia. Furthermore, the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan projected eastward to China, creating a narrow buffer zone between British India (Hunza) and Russian central Asia. The Afghanistan–China boundary and the China–Russia boundary in the Pamirs developed from this agreement. These two boundary lines were drawn, apparently without consultation with the Chinese, along the main ranges that form the water divides in the region. As a result, the Afghan–Chinese–Russian tripoint became (peak) Pik Povalo-Shveykovskogo, the easternmost point on the Anglo–Russian surveys of 1895. (The Afghans and Chinese utilized this peak as the northern point on their common boundary in 1964.)

Mention has been made in certain sources that the China–Russia boundary along the water divide of the Pamirs was touched upon by an official Exchange of Notes on March 31 (April 11), 1894. Pending an agreement the *status quo* was to be maintained. However, no evidence of this correspondence has been found in primary sources.

Moreover, the Chinese have maintained since the Anglo-Russian exchange that they did not recognize the boundary.

Q. <u>Tsitsihar Treaty: Delimitation of frontier, River Argun and River Amur</u> signed on December 20, 1911. (British and Foreign State Papers, 104;883, London.)

This agreement redelimited the boundary from Mongolia to the Mutnoi Protok (Mutonaya Ho) and then to the Argun. This segment of the boundary stemmed from the 1727 Kiakhta (Abagatuy) agreement, which placed pillars (obo) on certain specified points. During the chaotic period of the Manchu collapse and the 1911 revolution, Russia renegotiated the boundary, according to many sources, by either moving the original pillars (Nos. 58 to 63) or by constructing new ones. The Tsitshihar boundary generally encroached about 5 miles into China along a 60-mile front. In addition, differing channels of the Argun are utilized for an additional 40 to 50 miles.

The Government of China has never recognized the validity of this agreement. Moreover, after the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Government in 1919 announced its intent to abrogate all aggressive Czarist treaties signed with China after 1896. Consequently, even though Soviet maps continue to adhere to the Tsitsihar Treaty, there is a question on the status of the agreement.

In McMurray (I:919), the treaty is designated as "Treaty fixing the national boundary between Russia and China, from Tarbaga Dagh to Abahaitu, and along the Argun River to its confluence with the Amur River, with Protocols."

R. Protocol of delimitation along the River Horgos signed on June 12, 1915. (McMurray, Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China, New York, 1921. Vol. II, page 1245.)

The boundary was delimited along the Khorgos from the point where the river leaves the mountains to its confluence with the IIi.

S. Agreement on Navigation and Construction on Border Waterways of the Amur, Ussuri, Argun, and Sangacha rivers and Lake Hanka signed January 4, 1951.

This treaty primarily concerned the administration of the boundary river traffic and the rights of navigation. Article I stated that traffic in the rivers would follow the main navigational channels regardless of their relationship to the boundary. This wording strongly implies that the boundary is not directly related to the *thalweg, i.e.,* main navigable channel.

# V. <u>SUMMARY</u>

The China–U.S.S.R. boundary has been delimited for most of its length; large segments were demarcated by international agreements negotiated during the Czarist-Manchu period. It should be considered as an accepted international boundary and so represented on official U.S. Government maps with the following exceptions:

- (a) From the Afghanistan tripoint in the Pamirs north to the Kizil Jik Dawan, the boundary has never been delimited or demarcated and should be shown as "in dispute."
- (b) From the Mongolian tripoint in the west to the middle Argun (approximately 119° E.), the question of the validity of the Tsitsihar Treaty of 1911 enters. In view of the Chinese adherence to the Kiakhta boundary and the Chinese declaration of the invalidity of the Tsitsihar agreement, this sector must also be shown "in dispute."
- (c) The course of the boundary in the Argun, Amur, and Ussuri has never been precisely delimited. Earlier treaties referred to lands on the north bank and the south bank but never to the river itself. In cases such as this, two alternatives exist in international law: (1) utilization of the thalweg, or deepest line of the main navigable channel; or (2) the median line of the river. Usually the former course is preferred if the river is navigable and the latter if it is not. However, in the 1951 agreement on navigation, shipping is permitted to use the thalweg regardless of its relationship to the boundary. This act implies that the parties either do not agree where the boundary is or that it is not in the thalweg. The logical alternative for the boundary, in the latter event, would be the median line. The boundary should be shown by an indefinite symbol in these three rivers; administration should be assumed to be *de facto*.
- (d) The last valid treaty placed the "64 villages" under Manchu jurisdiction. During the 1900 Boxer Rebellion, however, Russia expelled the Manchu inhabitants and assumed jurisdiction over the territory. The Amur boundary between the Zeya and Bureya rivers, as a result, should be shown in dispute.
- (e) At the junction of the Amur and Ussuri, the course of the boundary is "in dispute."

Since the Soviet-claimed lines appear to be the *de facto* limits of administration, these lines should be shown as the present boundaries with appropriate disclaimers and symbols. The alignments are: (a) the water divide in the Pamirs as shown on Russian and post-1953 Chinese maps; (b) the line of the Tsitsihar Treaty in the Man-chou-li sector and in the Argun; (c) a median line or an approximate median line where islands are involved; (d) the Amur in the "64 villages" area; and (e) the Kazakevicheva Channel near Khabarovsk, placing Hei-hsia-tzu (Chimnaya Island and Tarabarovskiy Island) under U.S.S.R. administration.

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