

## **The Role of the Swedish Explorer Sven Hedin in Sowing the Seeds of the Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute: The Western Sector**

### **Abstract**

*This article attempts to examine the role of Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer, in sowing the seeds of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. The sequence of events that emerges provides adequate circumstantial evidence to establish Hedin as the author of the privately published Shen-pao Atlas (1934) in Shanghai, through whose maps of China the elevated plains of Lingzitan and Aksai Chin in Ladakh in the western sector and the tribal territory up to the skirts of the southern foothills of the Himalayas in Assam (corresponding broadly to present day state of Arunachal Pradesh minus Tawang) in the eastern sector were cartographically absorbed without there being a shred of evidence available to show that either the Manchu (1644-1912) or Republican China (1912-1949) ever exercised jurisdiction over these areas or there is any Manchu map—official or otherwise—that has been in public domain since its publication—which depicted these areas as Manchu territory. The first official Chinese map to include the two aforesaid areas appeared five months after Indian independence. The territorial claims of the People's Republic of China (PRC) against India rest on the maps of the Shen-pao Atlas. The article also demonstrates that Indian territorial claims are based on one of the most scientific and professional surveys ever conducted, whose entire record has been in public domain. The article is divided into three parts: the first covers the said cartographical absorption, the second discusses the survey and mapping of Kashmir, and the third proposes two possible lines of action for arriving at a settlement on the Sino-*

*Indian boundary dispute. The eastern sector does not form a part of the present narration, as it deserves treatment in a separate article.*

## Part I: Cartographical Absorption of Indian Territory

### Sven Hedin, The Swedish Explorer

Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer, led 4 expeditions but his 3<sup>rd</sup> (1906-08) and the 4<sup>th</sup> (1927-35) expeditions to north-eastern Ladakh, western Tibet and Sinkiang are of interest here, especially the latter for in it were sown the seeds of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. In an appraisal of Hedin's survey work executed during his 3<sup>rd</sup> expedition, T.H. Holdich, a former Surveyor General of India, did not regard Hedin's methodology rigorous enough to meet the minimum acceptable standards prescribed for official map-making purposes.<sup>1</sup> To complicate matters, Hedin's superciliousness and scant respect for the work of past explorers became evident during the reading of the paper on his 3<sup>rd</sup> expedition at the *Royal Geographical Society (RGS)* on 8 February 1909.<sup>2</sup> Hedin followed up the reading with a hurriedly written statement on 23 February 1909, which would not have either helped matters.<sup>3</sup> Rather than maintaining a dignified silence in keeping with the prevalent norm of the Edwardian era, Hedin betrayed an overwhelming and urgent desire to project virtue and individual heroism, when he replied, *'...whatever the value of my maps may be, I suppose I have done more for our knowledge of this province (Trans-Himalaya, changed voluntarily by Hedin to Southern Tibet) than all those thousands of officers (of the Survey of India) put together and, inclusive, Sir Thomas Holdich'*.<sup>4</sup> Not to be distracted by these outbursts, the geographical community in Britain continued to heap honours, awards and accolades on Hedin and feted him wherever he went.

## Sven Hedin, the Fascist

Even then, Hedin found himself in the company of Kaiser Wilhelm II during World War I.<sup>5</sup> He toured the western front at the invitation of the Kaiser and came up with a propaganda book, *With German Armies in the West*, in which he put forward a case for Germany's 'racial obligation' for a strong Germanic world order apart from providing justification for the War.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Hedin's name was struck off the rolls of the *RGS* and other distinguished institutions and he was even stripped of his medals and awards. In 1918, Hedin came out with another book, *Sveriges Ode* in which extolled the beauty and honour of war<sup>7</sup> and continued his rant, '*The peril that threatens us...is the Anglo-Saxon peril*',<sup>8</sup> clearly signaling his hate for the British. After Germany's defeat, a crestfallen Hedin saw *that our historical duty lies in the east*.<sup>9</sup>

## Expedition's Purpose and Methods Questioned by Chinese

After a gap of 19 years, Hedin returned to Central Asia in 1927 with material and financial support provided by *Lufthansa*, the German airline, for the stated purpose of conducting fieldwork for *opening an air-traffic route between Germany and China via Central Asia*.<sup>10</sup> Even before the expedition's team members could step out of Peking, Hedin's main collaborators in China, W.H. Wong/Wong Wen-hao, Director, *National Geological Survey of China*,<sup>11</sup> and V.K. Ting/Ting Wen-chuang, described as someone having specialized in natural science,<sup>12</sup> both of who will feature later in this article, came to be suspected by '*a large number of learned men, professors, students, directors of museums and others*'—called by Hedin the '*opposition*'—of aiding and abetting Hedin in his expedition, whose purpose and methods appeared questionable to them.<sup>13</sup> To diffuse

matters, the then Foreign Minister, Wellington Koo, who would later serve as a judge of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, suggested that the contract for the expedition entered into by Hedin with Wong be published in the press.<sup>14</sup> Hedin chose to skirt the transparency suggestion. In due course, the ire of the *opposition* fell on Erik Norin, the geologist team member, who will also feature later in this article.<sup>15</sup> Mediation led to the *opposition* approving the expedition with certain conditions, many of which would never be observed.<sup>16</sup> Opposition at the provincial level led to foiling of Hedin's plan to survey the proposed air route, which triggered Lufthansa's withdrawal from the expedition in 1928.

### **Hedin's Expedition (1928-1933)**

What was intended to be the final phase of the expedition (1928-1933), primarily funded by the Swedish Government, coincidentally commenced with the rise of Chiang Kai-shek in which the aforereferred Wong emerged as the Kuomintang Minister of Culture.<sup>17</sup> Hedin had recused himself from the expedition's fieldwork for close to 4 years beginning end December 1929 with his first thirteen-month stay in Peking ending in January 1931. During this period, Hedin appears to have reset the purpose of the expedition when he acknowledged 'that the aim of the expedition had been to investigate the suitability of the country for the building of motor-roads to Central Asia.'<sup>18</sup> He convinced those in authority 'that a railroad...would take many years to build and would cost hundreds of millions of dollars...in the meantime, motor-roads would be a useful makeshift...and if China did not take serious interest in the matter of communications with Sinkiang she would lose that province....'<sup>19</sup> With the new aim having strong undercurrents of nationalist fervour, Hedin consolidated his position, with Chiang Kai-

shek agreeing to meet him.<sup>20</sup> In October 1930, a committee comprising the '*opposition*' on its own volition expressed a desire for the continuation of the expedition by another 2 years!<sup>21</sup> Even, a set of postage stamps was issued by the Kuomintang to commemorate the expedition.<sup>22</sup> All this would make Hedin to observe, '*We now enjoyed great good will on the part of the Chinese and had actually a privileged position as compared with other nations*'.<sup>23</sup> Having successfully reversed the situation, Hedin took off for Stockholm and Chicago and returned to Peking in January 1933 after an absence of 2 years from that city. Meanwhile, E. Norin and N.P. Ambolt commenced surveying parts of Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains from March 1932; Ambolt completing his work on the Lingzitang only in August 1933,<sup>24</sup> which is puzzling, especially since these plains had already been surveyed and mapped.

Privately Published *New Atlas of the China by Provinces* Appears in Shanghai in 1933

What tasks the expedition had performed during five year period, Hedin is unwilling to elaborate though he has conceded that, 'The defect from which part II (of the History of the Expedition) may seem to suffer, in that the scientific work belonging there is missing, will shortly be made good in parts IV and V'.<sup>25</sup> The promised part V never appeared while part IV also never gave away anything. Instead, sometime after his return to Peking in 1933, the *Chung-kuo fen-sheng hsin-t'u*—New Atlas of the China by Provinces by the aforereferred V.K. Ting and W.H. Wong, appeared in Shanghai, brought out by Shen-pao,<sup>26</sup> a Chinese language daily newspaper owned by the (Ernest) Major Company Limited, ostensibly to commemorate the sixtieth year of its founding (1872). Meanwhile, at the other end of the Eurasian continent, Hitler had come to power and one of his first acts on assuming the

chancellorship of the *Third Reich* was to send two telegrams to Hedin in February 1933, including one wishing him on his birthday.<sup>27</sup>

### Hedin Initiates the Ultimate Round of the Game

Now, brimming with a new found confidence at a farewell given in his honour on conclusion of the expedition, Hedin initiated the ultimate round of the game when he encountered Liu Chung-chieh, the Kuomintang's Assistant Foreign Minister, with the question as to why only one link, Sinkiang, remained in the semi-circle of buffer states—Tibet, Sinkiang, Outer Mongolia, and Manchuria—created by the Manchu, while others had dropped off one by one after the formation of the Republic. Hedin provided the answer himself, 'I think the first step ought to be and can be taken is to make and maintain first class motor roads between China proper and Sinkiang....'<sup>28</sup> Within a few days Hedin was invited to Nanking, the then capital of China, where it was announced that the expedition's term had been extended by another two years (1933-35), and that the bankrupt Kuomintang government would meet the expenses for the extended period.<sup>29</sup>

### Norin Was Not in a Position in 1934 to Incorporate the Results of their Survey in the 'Revision' of the Atlas

It is indeed perplexing to note that 'In 1934 Norin was attached to the *National Geographical Survey of China* assisting at the revision of the Central Asia sheets of the "New Atlas of China" by V.K. Ting, W.H. Wong and S.Y. T'seng',<sup>30</sup> only a few months after the Shen-pao Atlas (1933) had made its appearance. The question arises

whether Norin was in a position to incorporate the results of their aforementioned surveys, in 1934? It is known that Ambolt had published coordinates of 160 points only by 1938.<sup>31</sup> A handful of these points cover the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin and several others that fall within Kashmir territory had already been surveyed. The triangulation calculations that would have given, among other parameters, altitude were taken up only after 1938,<sup>32</sup> making it possible for plotting of maps to commence. Accordingly, work on Hedin's Central Asia map could begin in Gotha only in 1939.<sup>33</sup> Norin published his *Geological Map of Western Chang-Thang* to include Lingzithang and Aksai Chin, in 1946.<sup>34</sup> The aforesaid establishes that the said survey results were not available to Norin for incorporation in 1934 but much after that and these would be eventually incorporated in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Atlas in 1948.<sup>35</sup>

#### Appearance of the Privately Published *New Atlas of the Chinese Republic* in 1934

The stated 'revision' came out in the form of the controversial, *Chung-hua min-kuo hsin ti-t'u*—New Atlas of the Chinese Republic by the same two V.K. Ting and W.H. Wong, who have been shown as authors of the first Atlas and another, S.Y. T'seng.<sup>36</sup> This Atlas too which was brought out by Shen-pao in Shanghai, in 1934 is generally regarded as having cartographically absorbed the Lingzitan and Aksai Chin plains in the western sector along with the southern slopes of the Assam Himalayas up to the administered areas of Assam (corresponding broadly to present day Arunachal Pradesh minus Tawang) in the eastern sector.<sup>37</sup> The unilaterally declared new boundary in relation to India in the Shen-pao Atlas (1934) finds no support in history, for nothing had happened in 1934 or immediately before or after, to give rise to such a claim. As the Shen-pao Atlas (1934) neither purported to be an official

publication nor did it have any stamp of official recognition, the Government of (British) India did not consider it necessary to lodge an official protest with the Kuomintang although the Atlas led to some reactions from the (British) Indian side, mainly in the eastern sector.

### Circumstantial Evidence Establishes Hedin as the Author of the Shen-pao Atlas (1934)

From the narration given earlier in respect of V.K. Ting, one of the authors of the Shen-pao Atlas, it can be inferred that he could not have had any pretensions to lay claims to mapmaking or cartography. W.H. Wong, in his capacity as director of the American assisted (Boxer Indemnity Fund)<sup>38</sup> Geological Survey, might have been associated with the preparation of that Survey's *General Geological Map of China* (1924-28).<sup>39</sup> About the third, S.Y. Tseng, neither Hedin nor his team members have shed any light. The three were no cartographers but, at best, mere collaborators of Hedin in a quid pro quo relationship. When Hedin had gone to Nanking, referred to earlier, he had carried along with him detailed maps of the proposed road alignments.<sup>40</sup> In the absence of the expedition's survey results, Hedin's maps were in all likelihood based on published Indian maps emanating from the Kashmir Survey and works of subsequent (British) Indian surveyors. Incidentally, when Hedin was in Nanking in August 1933, Ambolt was busy on the Lingzitang doing a route survey, as already referred to. It can be presumed that without receipt of official permission from Nanking, Hedin could not have taken steps to cartographically absorb Indian territory and depict it as Chinese territory. It is only on receiving such permission would Hedin have asked Norin to add it to the existing Shen-pao Atlas (1933). This led to Norin's attachment to Wong's Geological Survey and subsequent appearance of the Shen-



pao Atlas (1934). The aforementioned chain of events provides adequate circumstantial evidence to establish Hedin (along with some of his team members) as the author of the Shen-pao Atlas (1934), if not of both the Shen-pao Atlases.

#### Hedin's Previous Views on the Cartographically Absorbed Areas

While traversing the Lingzitang and Aksai Chin during September 1906, Hedin has admitted to the use of maps of the Survey of India (Sol) for navigation purposes on these elevated plains.<sup>41</sup> On Aksai Chin, Hedin's rhetorical observation was, 'We were now in a country belonging to the un-annexed region Aksai Chin, in north-west Tibet (plateau). Or tell me to what Power this land belongs? Does the Maharaja of Kashmir lay claim to it, or the Dalai Lama, or is it a part of Chinese Turkestan? No boundaries are marked on the map and one looks in vain for boundary stones'.<sup>42</sup> Hedin, however, refrained from offering any comment on Lingzitang. Interestingly, in 1909, Hedin had considered India's boundary in the eastern sector to be the Himalayas, for he had spoken of 'the eastern Himalaya as a granite wall impregnable to modern armies and sufficient to protect India from any fear of invasion...any apprehensions on this score may be fairly called "exaggerated". The response Hedin received then from a member of the *RGS* was, 'Mountain chains have never served—except in poetry—as efficient ramparts'.<sup>43</sup> It appears that with a hardening of Hedin's world-view, there would be a perceptible change in his thinking in respect of India's northern boundary which became apparent by 1933, the year coincidentally Hitler assumed power.

#### Shen-pao Atlas (1934) Maps Given Official Recognition Five Months After Indian Independence

The tampered Manchu maps of the Shen-pao Atlas (1934) were provided official clothing by the Kuomintang in December 1947, just five months after India attained independence, with the publication of the Ministry of Interior's *Map of the Administrative Areas of the Chinese Republic*.<sup>44</sup> The appearance of this map a few months before the publication of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Shen-pao Atlas in 1948 does not appear as an isolated event but it fits into a pattern, with the invisible hand of Hedin appearing to become evident in it as well. The PRC published its first map in People's China in October 1950 reiterating the boundary alignment given in the Kuomintang map (1947).<sup>45</sup> A year later in 1951, it would go a step further to include the Changchenmo valley in Ta Chung Society's *New Map of Tibet*.<sup>46</sup> It would, however, revert to the 1950 alignment with the Ya Kuang Map Publishing Society's *Big/Physical Map of the People's Republic of China* that appeared in November 1953,<sup>47</sup> a month before the commencement of discussions on the so called Panch Sheel agreement (1954). The 1950 alignment was reiterated in the Map Publishing Society's *Wall Map of the People's Republic of China* published in January 1956,<sup>48</sup> in keeping perhaps with the of Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai atmospherics. The 1960 Chinese map went back to the 1951 map alignment.<sup>49</sup>

Official and Unofficial Chinese Maps and Atlases Published Prior to 1933 Do Not Depict Lingzitang and Aksai Chin Plains as Manchu/Chinese Territory

It is worthwhile to note that the three consecutive official *Postal Atlases of China*, brought out during the Republican China period in 1917, 1919, and 1933 respectively never showed the Lingzitang and Aksai Chin as Chinese territory; instead, they followed the alignment depicted on Indian maps.<sup>50</sup> Even, maps published earlier during the Manchu China period in the *Ta Ching ti kuo chuan tu*—

Atlas of the Chinese Empire—brought out by the China Inland Mission in Shanghai, in 1908 followed the alignment shown on Indian maps.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, the *New Atlas and Commercial Gazetteer* published by the *North China Daily News and Herald* in Shanghai, in 1917, and a map of China showing the maximum territorial extent under the Manchu, brought out by the Peking University, in 1925, never showed Lingzitan and Aksai Chin as Chinese territory.<sup>52</sup> The maps in the aforesaid Atlas of the Chinese Empire (1908) were essentially based on the first modern maps of the Manchu realm prepared by French Jesuits between 1717 and 1773, for which purpose contemporary European surveying and mapping techniques had been employed. The Jesuits fixed 641 points of latitude and longitude by astronomical and geographical measurements.<sup>53</sup> Eastern Turkestan, the last imperial conquest, was incorporated in the Jesuit map of 1761. Indigenous mapmakers took over from the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and effected changes in Jesuit maps based on territorial additions made at the provincial level, with imperial consent. A superimposition of PRC's map of 1987 on the aforereferred 1908 map of the Manchu empire, reveals that Manchu maps never included the cartographically absorbed areas in the two sectors as Manchu territory.<sup>54</sup>

#### Hedin Emerges Unrepentant Till the End

The President, Chiang Kai-shek and others down the ladder gave a warm farewell to Hedin. In his farewell meeting with Chiang in February 1935, Hedin spent over an hour discussing the Shen-pao Atlas (1934) and 'the importance of roads to China's westernmost province'.<sup>55</sup> Hitler sent a German welcoming committee to the train station in Warsaw for the arrival of the 'oldest friend of Germany'—Hedin on his return trip on completion of the Expedition.<sup>56</sup> The last few years of Hedin's life were spent in defending his actions during

the War when he wrote a book—the translated version appearing as *German Diary*—in which he emerges unrepentant.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, in Hedin's obituary appearing in the *RGS* is recorded, '*By temperament Hedin was a Nazi, to whom exploration was a Kampf...The generous help and encouragement he had received from Britain and India...were forgotten....*'<sup>58</sup>

## Part II: Survey and Mapping of Kashmir and After

### The Kashmir Survey (1855-1865)

The Great Trigonometrical Survey of India undertook the survey of the territories of the Maharaja of Kashmir between 1855-1865. Preparation of the triangulation charts was done at the computing office in Dehradun between 1876-1878, making it possible for more accurate results of the Survey to be published in a Synopsis, in 1879.<sup>59</sup> While Lingzitan is depicted as Kashmir territory in Degree Sheet No. 37,<sup>60</sup> Aksai Chin is shown to belong to Tartary in Degree Sheet No. 38.<sup>61</sup> The geographical area of Kashmir was estimated at 79,000 square miles.<sup>62</sup> However, the official geographical area of Kashmir is given as 86,023 square miles,<sup>63</sup> which is 7,000 (86,023-79,000) square miles higher than what had been estimated by the Kashmir Survey. It has been suggested that the additional 7,000 square miles could be on account of the area north of the Lokzhung mountain, namely, Aksai Chin, that was perhaps subsequently included.<sup>64</sup>

### The Proposed for Alignment of the Kashmir-Sinkiang Boundary (1899)

It has been argued that through his proposal made to the *Tsungli Yamen*—the Manchu Foreign Office in March 1899 regarding alignment of the Kashmir-Sinkiang boundary, Claude MacDonald, the British Minister in Peking, while suggesting it along the watershed crest-line of the Lokzhung mountain (aka the Macartney-MacDonald Line), implicitly agreed to cede (western) Aksai Chin in exchange for the Manchu's recognition of Kashmir's sovereignty over Hunza (apart from Hunza's claims to Raksam), which the Manchu too had considered as its (Hunza) dependency.<sup>65</sup> The British Minister's understanding of the reason why the *Tsungli Yamen* had not responded to his proposal was not because of the proposed boundary alignment but due to some reservations in respect of the Hunza portion of the proposal, which too was on account of Russian objections.<sup>66</sup> In so far as the western sector is concerned, there had never been any doubt in respect of the Kashmir's rights to Lingzitan although at times there was some reservation in (British) India in having Kashmir to assert its rights over Aksai Chin, which too was decided in the princely state's favour in 1912.<sup>67</sup>

#### Game of Guile and Deception (1960)

The Chinese mounted a three-pronged attack in support of their territorial claims in the western sector. First, they asserted that the Manchu's territorial limits extended not up to the Kunlun but the Karakoram from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>68</sup> In attempting to uphold this assertion, recourse was taken to classical Chinese geography that had erroneously considered the headwaters of the Indian Ganges and the Chinese Huang-ho rivers to lie in the Kunlun, which in turn led to the depiction of a single mountain range separating Kashmir from Sinkiang.<sup>69</sup> From this desideratum, Chou concluded that the Kunlun was a 'very high peak' of the Karakoram<sup>70</sup> and the latter was the same as the 'Tsung' or the

Tsungling.<sup>71</sup> The Chinese officials would pick up this assertion later to reassert that the Tsungling in Chinese maps should be equated with the Karakoram.<sup>72</sup> However, the Tsungling has been described as a 'horse-shoe shaped indigesta moles of mountain masses', with the Tien-shan providing its northern arm and the two southern arms being the Kunlun and the Hindu Kush, sometime with and at other times without the Karakoram—all arms joining the meridional Kashgar range.<sup>73</sup> Thus, the Karakoram could have formed one constituent part of the Tsungling, depending on how these mountains are depicted cartographically.

Alongside, the Chinese asserted that since Kashmir's territorial limits shown on (British) Indian maps up to 1862 extended up to longitude 78<sup>0</sup> E, these limits ought to be treated as the traditional customary boundary.<sup>74</sup> Admittedly, British maps of Kashmir prior to the publication of the aforereferred triangulation charts of the Kashmir Survey were inaccurate as they were based on traveller's tales and the partial route surveys of Kashmir conducted during the late 1840's by Alexander Cunningham et. al. In comparison, the Jesuits had given the Manchu a lead in surveying and mapping of around a hundred years over India. Even then, it was only in December 1947 that an official Kuomintang map appeared showing for the very first time Lingzitan and Aksai Chin as Chinese territory. On the other hand, (British) Indian maps from the late 1860s have depicted the Kashmir-Sinkiang boundary along the southern foothills of the Kunlun mountains, sometime with the legend 'undefined'.<sup>75</sup>

Third, The Chinese official's have attributed all sorts of motives to some (British) Indian surveyors and in the process have accused them of being biased in respect of the territorial claims of Kashmir.<sup>76</sup> It needs to be mentioned here that out of the

topographical survey's output of 21,000 square miles during 1865 only 7800 square miles was admitted as Kashmir territory,<sup>77</sup> which goes to show that Indian surveyors alone did not determine the territorial limits of Kashmir, as has been erroneously alleged. Additionally, inconvenient evidence was summarily dismissed as that 'inspired by imperialists'.<sup>78</sup>

#### Changes Effected by India in its Map in 1954

Two changes were effected to the official Indian map in 1954: first, to the east of the Karakoram pass, the said legend 'undefined' on these maps stood deleted. Indian officials explained that the legend 'undefined' 'only indicated that the boundary had not been demarcated on the ground, or defined in detail from point to point'.<sup>79</sup> Second to the west of the Karakoram pass, India voluntarily relinquished its rights to northernmost areas shown in colour shade (belonging to Kashmir) that as a result stood ceded to China. This latter change brought down the alignment of the northern boundary southwards from the peak Pavalo-Schveikovski, where the *three empires* met—'Amidst the voiceless waste of a vast white wilderness 20,000 feet above the sea, absolutely inaccessible to man and within the ken of no living creature but the Pamir eagles—there the three great empires actually meet. It is a fitting trijunction. No god of Hindu mythology ever occupied a more stupendous throne'.<sup>80</sup> Nehru explained these two changes to be 'in favour of the Chinese Government'.<sup>81</sup>

#### Part III: The Wrap Up

It is quite apparent that Chou En-lai was fully aware that Indian territory in two sectors had been cartographically absorbed through the Shen-pao Atlas (1934) and subsequent Kuomintang and PRC's maps, as referred to, when during the Nehru-Chou talks held in Peking in October 1954 he conceded '(i)t is a historical question and we have been mostly printing old maps...At least we do not have any deliberate intentions of changing boundaries as KMT had. The whole thing is ridiculous'.<sup>82</sup> In the current situation, China could begin by reiterating Chou's offer made during the Nehru-Chou talks held in New Delhi in April 1960 under which '...both sides take into account not only the historical background but actual situation...neither side should put forward claims to an area which is no longer under its administrative control.'<sup>83</sup> Since then, the position on the ground has been substantially altered by China in its favour. This offer should still be acceptable to China but it definitely goes against India's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and self-respect. There appear to be two options for a possible settlement of the boundary dispute in keeping with the broad understanding arrived at during the Nehru-Chou talks in New Delhi in April 1960 that required 'a solution which brings no defeat to any side and that it should be reasonable, equitable and friendly'.<sup>84</sup>

The first requires recognition of the watershed principle for delineating the Sino-Indian boundary, which then appeared agreeable to Chou as he had said, 'If we take the watershed principle, it should be applicable to both sectors'.<sup>85</sup> Defining the watershed would require acceptance of, among other things, the geographical fact that in many parts the highest Himalayan range is not the water-parting but a subsidiary watershed and that there is a double range of snowy peaks—roughly parallel—with the relatively lower northern range constituting the watershed.<sup>86</sup> The acceptance of the watershed principle leads to the recognition of the Sino-



Indian boundary alignment along the watershed-lines—the Macartney-MacDonald Line in the western sector, the watershed-line in the central sector, and the McMahon Line in the eastern sector—which involves dropping of the Indian claim to Aksai Chin in exchange for China's recognition of the three Lines.

The second involves acceptance of the main mountain axis principle as the Sino-Indian border alignment and accordingly recognition of the peaks on the main-axis of the Karakoram and Himalayas except in places where a mountain pass falls not on this line but on the watershed-line, so as to include the pass (eg. Karakoram pass). This involves India giving up her territorial claim beyond the main Karakoram axis, east of the Karakoram pass—Lingzitan and Aksai Chin—in exchange for China ceding the Chumbi valley salient (which once formed a part of Sikkim but was forcibly taken away from it)<sup>87</sup> and its giving up the claim to other salients, alongwith recognition by it of the McMahon Line. As a matter of fact, Chou had spelt out the outlines of such a resolution during the aforementioned Nehru-Chou talks, while proposing, 'People to the north and south of the Himalayas have common feelings around the Himalayas...Himalayas should become the mountain of friendship between China and India...Karakoram...should also become a mountain of friendship'.<sup>88</sup>

These two approaches would also pass the test of 'peace with dignity and self-respect of each country', suggested by Nehru.<sup>89</sup> The negotiations could include a treaty on sharing of waters of rivers flowing from Tibet into India apart from a resolution of all other pending issues. Alongside, there could be a renewed effort by India for official recognition of the Sino-Indian boundary alignment along the Macartney-MacDonald Line in the western sector and the McMahon Line in the eastern sector. The U.S. has already done so

in respect of the McMahon Line in October 1962. To begin with, it could recognise the Macartney-MacDonald Line in the western sector, for Indian support elsewhere. Russians appear to have already recognised the Sino-Indian boundary alignment as shown on Indian maps in around 1967.<sup>90</sup> The least that is expected from Britain, under whose rule of India these Lines came into being, is that it should accord official recognition to them in a manner similar to the one employed in October 2008 for recognising Tibet as a part of China.

Notes:

1. T.H. Holdich, 'What We Have Learnt from Dr. Sven Hedin', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (April, 1909), pp. 436-438.
2. Sven Hedin, 'General Narrative', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Apr., 1909), pp. 353 onwards; and Clement Markham (in the Chair), 'General Narrative: Discussion', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4, (Apr., 1909), pp. 392-396.
3. Sven Hedin, 'Discoveries in Southern Tibet', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Apr., 1909), pp. 396-416; and Clement Markham (in the Chair), 'Discoveries in Southern Tibet: Discussion', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Apr., 1909), pp. 416-434.
4. Sven Hedin, 'Reply by Dr. Sven Hedin', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Apr., 1909), pp. 439-440.

5. Sarah K. Danielson, *The Explorer's Roadmap to National Socialism: Sven Hedin, Geography and the Path to Genocide*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, p. 81.
6. Danielson, no. 5, pp. 77-102.
7. Danielson, no. 5, p. 104.
8. Danielson, no. 5, p. 106.
9. Danielson, no. 5, p. 105.
10. Sven Hedin, *History of Expedition in Asia, Part I*, Publication 23 of the Sino-Swedish Expedition, Stockholm: 1943, consulted reprint edition Saarbrücken: Fines Mundi, 2017, pp. 1-4.
11. Hedin, no. 10, pp. 6 and 12.
12. Hedin, no. 10, p. 12.
13. Hedin, no. 10, pp. 12, and 17.
14. Hedin, no. 10, p. 17.
15. Hedin, no. 10, pp. 21-22.
16. Hedin, no. 10, pp. 53-60.
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