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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

THE SOUTHWESTERN FRONTIERS OF CHINA

Frontiers with Kashmir and India from Afghanistan to Nepal

CIA/RR-G-8

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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THE SOUTHWESTERN FRONTIERS OF CHINA*

Frontiers With Kashmir and India From Afghanistan to Nepal

Summary

The southern frontiers of Sinkiang and Tibet form a zone of tension between Communist China on the one hand and Pakistan and India on the other. The manner in which this tension is influenced by various factors peculiar to the frontier region -- topography, vegetation, climate, the culture and economy of the frontier peoples and their political history -- is discussed in this report. The segment of the frontier covered extends from the eastern tip of Afghanistan to the northwestern corner of Nepal.

The frontier region lies amidst some of the most elevated and rugged mountains on the face of the earth. Rugged terrain, arid climate, and extreme altitude combine to create inhospitable living conditions and difficulties in travel. The population is comparatively sparse and is concentrated in the stream valleys. The limited agriculture is generally carried on here by means of irrigation. The majority of the population is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, but transfrontier trade is of paramount importance to certain groups among the inhabitants. With respect to physical conditions and the means of making a living, the frontier region is more like the Tibetan plateau and other portions of Central Asia than it is like other parts of India and Pakistan. No major invasion routes cross this region, but routes crossing the many passes are important for trade, local warfare, and pilgrimages to Buddhist and Hindu shrines in or near the frontier region. The Chinese Communists are improving the approaches to the frontier region from their side by building roads and establishing airfields. The Indians and the Pakistani have done the same from the southward to a somewhat lesser extent.

The boundary is indefinite throughout the entire frontier region, and there have been conflicting territorial claims and occasional clashes between frontier officials. China maintains long-standing claims to the territory north of the Karakoram Range in Kashmir. In recent years, Chinese Communist troops from Sinkiang have penetrated the portion of Hunza north of the Karakoram. Before the mid-nineteenth century, it was customary for local Tibetan officials to exercise jurisdiction in a narrow belt of territory southward from the crest of the Himalaya in what is now Uttar Pradesh, and it is rumored that the Tibetans have recently tried to reestablish their authority here.

* Members of the Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State, read the manuscript before publication and made valuable suggestions.

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The peoples of Hunza, Nagir, and Baltistān are Muslims, as are the majority of the people of Pakistan, under whose administration they now are. In other respects, however, they differ from the surrounding peoples. Most of the population of Ladākh and Spiti are Tibetan in language and culture and Buddhist in religion. The monastic system of the lamas has a strong hold in these areas, and Lhasa is the center of their religious and intellectual life. Tibetan influence is also strong in Chamba and Lahul. Tibetan and related dialects are still spoken in Baltistān and the border districts of Himāchal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh states among peoples that have lost many other aspects of their Tibetan culture and, except in Baltistān, have adopted the religion and customs of the Hindus.

In general the frontier region is one of a deficit economy, and out-migration is continuous. Except in a few areas such as Hunza, land ownership is concentrated in the hands of the monasteries or other large holders, and a large percentage of the actual cultivators are tenants who are always in debt to landlords or grain merchants. Attempts by the Srinagar Government of Kashmīr at a redistribution of land in Ladākh antagonized the powerful Buddhist clergy but apparently did not bring permanent relief to the peasants. Transfrontier trade, which is of especial importance to the town of Leh in Ladākh and to the Bhōtiā and related groups in Himāchal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, has been disrupted by the Communist take-over in Sinkiang and Tibet. Each of three important classes of the frontier society -- the clergy, the peasants, and the traders -- has its own reasons for being dissatisfied with current economic and political conditions. The region appears to be susceptible to the campaign of infiltration and propaganda that the Communists are now conducting. Insofar as this campaign is intended to detach frontier districts from India and Pakistan and add them to China, it would seem to have the best chances of success among the peoples of Tibetan culture.

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I. Introduction

The frontier between China on the north and the Indian Subcontinent and Burma on the south extends for approximately 3,200 miles through some of the highest and most rugged country on the earth's surface. At the western extremity, where it separates Sinkiang and Tibet from the Jammu-Kashmir territories controlled by Pakistan and India, this southern frontier of China lies in the area of the Kun Lun, Karakoram and Ladakh Ranges; at its southeastern extremity, where it separates Yunnan from Burma, the border crosses the Yunnan and Shan Plateaus; in the central section, where it separates Tibet and Sikang from India, Nepal, and Bhutan, the frontier extends generally along the crest of the Great Himalaya Range. Except for the southeastern end and a short segment between Tibet and Sikkim, there has never been a demarcated boundary, and most of the region is only partially explored and surveyed. Although the frontier region possesses characteristics of both the Chinese and the Indian-Pakistani-Burman territories, it is a distinct region, differing in many respects from both these larger regions.

In this frontier region, culture, national economy, and political control overlap; and types of culture differ from one section to another. Several of the groups have strong cultural orientations toward Tibet; others are oriented toward India. Although some of the groups profess the Hindu or Moslem religions, they differ in other important respects from the major cultural groups of India or Pakistan. Still other inhabitants of the frontier region are primitive tribes, entirely unlike the cultural groups on either side of the frontier. In Northern Burma the pattern of cultural distribution is intricate, resembling that of adjacent parts of China, Indochina, and Assam. Since the frontier region is backed on the Chinese side by the high and inhospitable Tibetan and Pamir tablelands and the rugged Yunnan highlands, it is crossed by no major avenues of invasion or migration. For many centuries, however, a considerable amount of trade has crossed the mountain barriers. This trade has been of benefit to its areas of origin and destination on either side of the frontier region, and the frontier peoples have gained a large portion of their living from the trade by serving as carriers and middlemen.

Throughout most of their history the peoples of the frontier region have been free from the yoke of strong central authority from either the south or the north, even though states on either side have maintained conflicting territorial claims and upon occasion have made their power felt in the border highlands. The Manchu Empire and the successor Chinese Republic claimed wide areas southward of the crests of the border mountains, in some cases down to the lower foothills or plains of India and Burma. Local officials of southern Tibet also frequently exercised jurisdiction

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beyond the crest and down onto the southern slopes of the Himalaya in certain areas. On the other hand the British in India gradually pushed their control northward to the zone of the mountain crests.

The frontier region has now acquired additional importance as marking the limit, for the time being at least, between the Communist world and the free, non-Communist world. From 1911 to 1950, the Chinese Central Government was weak and in no position to assert its authority over outlying areas. Now, however, the Chinese Communist regime has extended its power over Tibet and other southwestern areas adjacent to the frontier zone. The frontier peoples are being subjected to Communist propaganda and to other forms of pressure from north of the border. Although the Chinese profess willingness to negotiate with the Indians regarding border questions, the aim of the Communist campaign appears to be (1) the subversion of the existing state and national governments in India and (2) the detaching of certain of the frontier areas from India and Pakistan in order to add them to the Chinese dominions.

The present report considers one segment of this frontier as a zone of tension between Communist China on the one hand and Pakistan and India on the other. The segment covered extends from the eastern tip of Afghanistan to the northwestern corner of Nepal. This segment falls naturally into two sections -- (1) the Sinkiang and Tibet frontier with Kashmir* and (2) the frontier between Tibet and the Indian states of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. The first is considered in Section II of this report and the second in Section III. The report discusses the natural features of the frontier area -- topography, hydrography, vegetation and climate -- particularly as a barrier to communication and as a place for human habitation. The cultures of the different groups of frontier peoples are considered from the standpoint of their orientation toward the Chinese-Tibetan sphere or the Indian-Pakistani sphere, or their independence of such orientation. The character of the transfrontier trade and its importance to the border peoples is considered. The history of territorial claims and the present extent of actual control by the different states is discussed, as are also the basic factors of the region that favor or hinder Chinese Communist penetration. No attempt is made, however, to predict the success or failure of such penetration.

* The term "Kashmir" is used in this report to denote the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, except where otherwise specified.

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II. The Sinkiang-Tibet-Kashmīr Frontier Area

A. Orientation

The Sinkiang-Tibet--Kashmīr frontier area extends from the crest of the Great Himalaya Range northward to the crest of the Kun Lun Range and from the western edge of the Hunza River Valley southeastward to the Shipki Pass, the Pangong Tso (lake), and the Aksai Chin Basin. Throughout this area, both the natural landscape and the pattern of population distribution are similar. The area, however, is inhabited by several different ethnic groups and is divided among several regions, each with its own separate historical existence. To the northwest are Hunza and Nagir and to the southeast is Ladākh, which in turn is divided into Baltistān on the west and Ladākh "proper" on the east.

B. Physical Setting

The Sinkiang-Tibet--Kashmīr frontier area lies in the great Central Asian highland region that extends from eastern Tibet to Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan. In its Kashmīr and Tibetan portions, this highland is crossed by several ranges of mountains trending roughly parallel to the Himalaya and the Kun Lun. The highland is narrower in the Kashmīr section farther east, and the mountain ranges are accordingly closer together (see map CIA 12128). In the Kashmīr section the principal mountain ranges between the Great Himalaya and the Kun Lun are from south to north the Zāskār, the Ladākh, the Karakoram, and the Aghil -- the last continuing north into Sinkiang as the Muztah Ata. Associated with the main ranges are shorter ridges and outliers. Continuing eastward into Tibet and having the same general trend as the Kashmīr ranges are the Kailās, Pangong, and Chāng Chenmo, as well as a number of other mountain chains. At the northwestern end of the Great Himalaya stands the peak Nānga Parbat (elevation 26,660 feet). West of the meridian of this mountain, the ranges change their direction from southeast-northwest to southwest-northeast and extend into Afghanistan as the Hindu Kush and the Hindu Rāj. The region of the Pamirs, lying to the north of the Hindu Kush and embracing parts of China, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union, is characterized by mountain ridges separated by broad valleys. Most of the ridges and valleys have a general east-west alignment, but the Taghdumbash Pamir of Sinkiang and its flanking ranges, the Kirebet Sarykol'skiy and the Muztagh Ata, trend roughly north-south (see Figure 1).

The frontier area lies mainly within the watershed of the Indus River, but it extends northward into the drainage area of the Tarim Basin of Sinkiang, and to the northeast it includes the interior lake basins of the Pangong Tso and the Aksai Chin. The Indus and its tributaries have cut deeply into the Central Asian highland and for considerable

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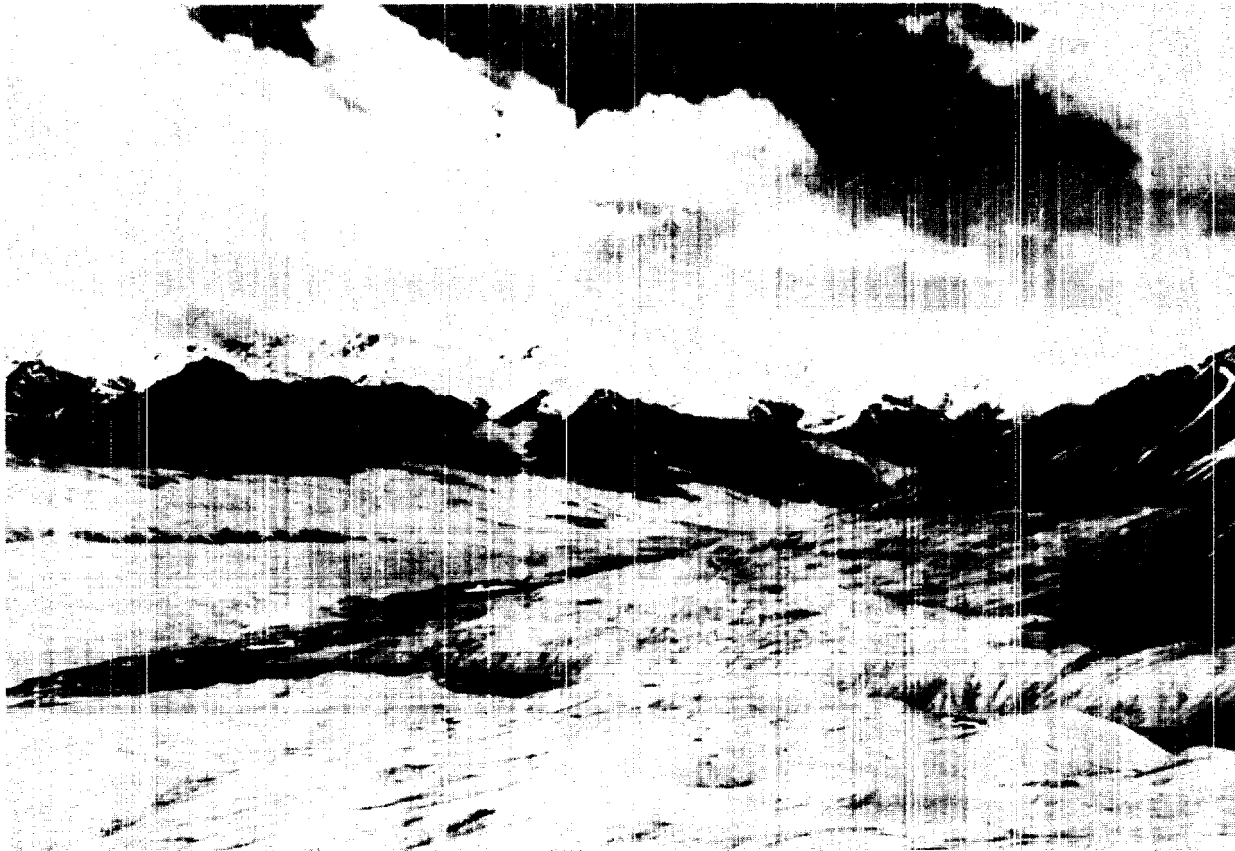


Figure 1. The Qara Chukor Valley, Taghdumbash Pamir.

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distances flow through deep gorges. The gradient of the Indus River from the Tibetan frontier to the point where the river enters the Indo-Gangetic plain is fairly steep, but towards the source of the river in Tibet the gradient is much gentler. The tributaries of the Indus in the Kashmir frontier area also have steep gradients. In some places, however, the Indus Valley is an alluvial plain several miles wide, in which the river is a braided stream flowing among marshy islands; these wide stretches alternate with gorges, where mountain spurs close in upon the river and the stream is a narrow torrent. Smaller streams in the area, such as the Hunza and the Shyok, are also bordered in places by relatively wide areas of valley floor.

Both the general elevation and the relative relief* along the Sinkiang-Tibet-Kashmir region are great. In the Great Himalaya Range of Kashmir, areas of considerable size are over 18,000 feet in elevation, and several peaks are over 20,000 feet. The principal passes across the chain range in elevation from 11,580 to over 17,000 feet. The Zaskar and Ladakh ranges are rugged mountain masses only slightly lower than the Great Himalaya. In general the Karakoram Range is the highest in the frontier area, and on its slopes lie some of the most extensive icefields outside the polar regions (see Figure 2). Some eight peaks in this range attain elevations of over 25,000 feet, and the mountain K2 (Mt. Godwin Austin, 28,250 feet) is the second highest in the world. The relative relief is greater in Kashmir than in most other parts of the Central Asian Highland. Thus, in the locality of Nanga Parbat where the Indus makes the sharp turn from a northwesterly to a southerly direction, its bed is at an elevation of about 4,000 feet, or more than 22,000 feet below the peak of the mountain, which is some 14 miles away. Above Tashigong, Tibet, on the other hand, where the Indus flows at an elevation of about 14,000 feet, it is only about 10,000 feet below the highest peak in that general vicinity.

Although the main range of the Karakoram is the loftiest in Kashmir, it forms a major drainage divide between the Indus Valley and the Tarim Basin for only about half of its length. Most of the water parting between the Hunza and the Shyok Rivers to the south and the Tash Kurgan and Yarkand Rivers to the north lies on the north side of the main Karakoram Range, and considerable parts of the Hunza and Shyok Valleys are on the Central Asian side of the great Karakoram peaks. The principal passes into Sinkiang -- such as the Karakoram, Mintaka, and Shimshal -- are located on the line of the water parting. 1, 2, 3/**

* Relative relief, as used here, means the vertical distance from the low points in the valleys to the high points on the mountains.

** Numbers refer to citations in Appendix B, Section 2, Sources.

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Figure 2. A typical panorama in the Karakoram Range. The view first looks north from Marble Peak towards K2, turns east to the Gasherbrum Group, then south over the Baltoro Glacier to include Baltoro Kangri, and ends at Paiju Peak approximately 14 miles southeast of the Muztag Pass (See Map CIA No. 12128).

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The arid climatic conditions of the frontier area resemble those of adjacent parts of Central Asia. The monsoon winds, which control the precipitation of the subcontinent, bring less rain to the western Himalaya than to the eastern. Such moisture as is brought by the monsoon to the Kashmir area is deposited mainly on the Himalayan Ranges or to the southwest of them. The frontier areas to the northeast of the Himalayas receive little or no benefit from the moisture-bearing monsoon. The precipitation at Leh, coming in the form of rain and snow, is only about 3 inches a year; this station is probably typical of other points in the valleys. In the mountains, precipitation occurs mostly as snow and appears to be heavier.

The winters of the border area are rigorous, the four winter months having a mean temperature below 32°F at Leh. Clear skies and bright sun are common in winter, however. The mean temperature in July is 63°F. The diurnal range in temperature is large. The glaciers and snow fields of the mountains are fed by snow and sleet storms that occur not only in winter, but also occasionally during other seasons. The lower limit of perpetual snow varies with locality from 18,500 feet to 20,000 feet in elevation. During the summer thaw the streams become swiftly flowing torrents that impede travel and often overflow and destroy valuable agricultural land. 1, 4, 5/

The slopes of the Himalaya from 5,000 feet to about 10,000 or 12,000 feet are covered with a temperate mountain forest of oaks, pines, deodars (Cedrus deodara), spruce, fir, and beech. In the drier parts especially, the forests are often found on the northern slopes, where the snow lies longer and the moisture is not evaporated so quickly as on the southern slopes, which are likely to be bare. Progressing northward from the Himalaya the mountains and valley flanks are increasingly barren of vegetation. Grass suitable for rather scant pasturage is found in the mountains in the zone near the snow line and in other localities where moisture is available. On the valley floors of the larger streams are poplars and willows, many of which have been planted; shrubs and grass grow in the marshy areas adjacent to the streams. In the western portion of the Indus Valley, where the elevation is from 4,000 to 9,000 feet, there is considerable variety in the types of trees and shrubs, but in the upper portion of the valley and in the high lake basins near the Tibetan frontier the vegetation becomes increasingly sparse and stunted. 5, 6/

From the standpoint of physiography, climate, and vegetation the Kashmir frontier area belongs more to Central Asia than to the Indian Subcontinent, to which it has been attached politically for over a century. The frontier area lies behind the Himalayan Ranges, which form the frontier for most of India to the east; and, like Tibet, it is considerably higher in elevation than the Subcontinent. With respect to the alignment of mountain ranges, the Kashmir frontier area appears to

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be a western extension of the Tibetan Plateau. It lies far inland from the monsoon winds that influence the climate and vegetation of most of the Subcontinent. Yet this area has peculiarities that distinguish it from adjacent parts of Central Asia. The rugged terrain and narrow, deep valleys of the Indus watershed are in sharp contrast to the broad, flat-bottomed valleys and basins of the Pamirs and Tibet. The Indus Valley, in its lower and more sheltered portions, is somewhat more hospitable than the Tibetan Plateau and the Pamirs.

C. Permeability of the Frontier Area: Transportation Routes

The Tibetan Plateau and the several parallel mountain chains of Kashmir together form one of the most effective barriers to human movement on the face of the earth. These areas have been both unattractive and difficult of access to would-be invaders from the steppes of Central Asia or the more remote central portion of China. Generally speaking, India has been protected from major inroads on its northern Himalayan frontier; the principal invasions and migrations into the Subcontinent from the land side have been by way of the northwest, where the passes lead more easily to India from the Central Asian grasslands. Nevertheless, there have been small-scale migrations and military expeditions, as well as trade of considerable importance, across and within the barrier region throughout history. Movement across the Himalaya, the Karakoram, and the Kun Lun has not been large in absolute terms, but it has been sufficient to serve the sparse population of the barrier region. Factors contributing to the barrier quality of the highland, in addition to its great width, are the ruggedness of the routes, the closing of the passes during the long winter season, the scarcity of food and fuel and the inability to secure them in the extensive uninhabited areas, and the extreme altitudes that cause exhaustion to man and beast and mountain sickness in persons who are unacclimated.

The principal routes are confined to the stream valleys and the passes at the heads of the valleys. The only means of transportation possible are by horse or donkey, yak, sheep (which not only are pack animals but also form a travelling food supply for the humans), goat, or human porter. In the narrower valleys and gorges the most feasible paths in the low-water season of winter are over the ice of the streams or along the dry stream beds. In summer, when most of the travelling is done, however, high water often forces caravans to ascend the steep valley flanks. Precipices and steep slopes of loose rock debris, where the going is very difficult, are numerous. On or near some of the high passes the way is impeded by glacial tongues; at a few points, as in Hunza, glaciers descend even across the main valley trails. Maintenance of permanent trails is impossible under such conditions. During the season of cold weather, often lasting from November to June, the passes are blocked by snow and ice, and sometimes snowstorms are encountered

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even in summer. On some routes -- as across the Bārā Lācha Pass in the Himalayas into southeastern Ladākh or across the Karakoram Pass -- travelers encounter no habitations for days or weeks, and food and sometimes even fodder must be carried by the caravan. On such routes, which lie for the most part above 15,000 feet, fuel is very scarce, consisting mostly of animal dung or the low dama bush. Campsites must be carefully selected with reference to fuel supply and grazing for the animals. The rate of animal mortality for caravans travelling some of these routes, especially across Karakoram Pass, is very high. Entire caravans, including men and beasts, have at times perished on the Karakoram route.
7, 8, 9/

The Kashmīr frontier area is accessible from Chinese territory by three important routes. Two of these pierce the Karakoram barrier from Sinkiang and the third follows the Indus downstream from Tibet. At the northwest end of the frontier area, one of the routes extends from Kashgar up the valley of the Tash-Kurghān River and crosses the Karakoram at the Atābād-Gulmit Gap, where the Hunza River flows through the range. The route then continues down the Hunza to Gilgit. From the Atābād-Gulmit Gap eastward to the Saser Pass and the Shyok Valley, the Karakoram is a wall of rock and ice with no important breaks. The Muztagh Pass, leading to a branch of the Shigar Valley, was negotiable at one time but is now blocked by glacier ice. Small parties might possibly make their way through this central portion of the Karakoram, however. The second route leads from Kashgar and Yarkand via the Karakoram Pass, the Shyok River, and passes across the Ladākh Range to Leh. The third route runs from Gartok, Tibet, down the Indus to Leh.

The Kashgar-Gilgit route crosses the water parting between the Yarkand and the Hunza Valleys by any one of four alternate passes -- the Kilik, Mintaka, Khunjerāb, and the Shimshāl. The first two are the passes most generally used. The route from the Taghdumbash Pamir south via the Mintaka Pass is easier to traverse than that via the Kilik Pass, which has very rough boulder-strewn stretches. Although the Kilik has no steep gradients and is used more frequently in summer, the Mintaka is shorter, has less snow, and can be used in winter, spring, and autumn, as well as in summer. The Mintaka is never closed except during snow storms. Between 1941 and 1947, mail was regularly carried by runners from Gilgit to Kashgar across this pass, and a considerable amount of caravan traffic formerly passed over the route. Southward from Murkushi the route continues all the way to Gilgit -- a marching distance of approximately 150 miles that can be traversed in 12 stages of about 12-1/2 miles a day. From Murkushi to Baltit alone requires 7 marches. This stretch covers the area of roughest mountains and includes many dangerous sections, such as the Bili Gorge at the juncture of the Kilik and Khunjerāb Streams (see Figure 3). Another difficult section is at the Batura Glacier, where the track varies from week to

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Figure 3. The Bili Gorge, looking south from the junction of the Kunjerāb and Kilik Rivers. Note the pack animals on the narrow trail winding around the spur in the right foreground.

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week. Here a lightly loaded pack pony under average conditions requires 1-1/2 hours to cross a 1-1/2 mile stretch, with no assurance that the animal will not slip into a glacial pond and drown. It is often necessary to use yaks. A jeep road has now been built from Chalt to Gilgit, a distance of 32 miles. 10/ Since the Chinese Communists came to power in Sinkiang, it has been reported that they are pushing construction of a motor road southward from Kashgar, with the intention of extending it over the Mintaka Pass. In early 1953, the road was reported to have been completed to a point south of the town of Tash-Kurghān. 11/

The Yarkand-Leh route is more important from the standpoint of trade than the Kashgar-Gilgit route, but it is also one of the most rugged routes in the world. The distance from Yarkand to Leh is about 600 miles. The journey from Khargalik, near Yarkand, to Leh requires about 30 days, and for 20 days the trail runs through uninhabited country. The Karakoram Pass is not the most difficult one on the route, but from both directions the approaches, requiring successive marches at high altitudes, take their steady toll of life. Southeast of the pass are the Depsang Plains, where the land is soft and spongy until July and ponies may get mired. Continuing its course the route crosses the main Karakoram Range by the Saser Pass (elevation 17,480 feet, see Figure 4) and the Ladākh Range by the Khardūng Pass. Glaciers must be crossed in traversing both these passes. The Khardūng Pass is believed to be open, at a maximum, from late June to November, but it can be forced earlier by driving yaks through the snow. It is necessary for ponies to travel over the Khardūng unloaded. An alternate route over the Ladākh Range is by way of the Digar Pass to the southeast of the Khardūng. The Digar Pass is blocked less often and is passable for coolies. The Yarkand-Leh route is feasible for caravans of considerable size -- one consisting of 75 animals and 30 men traversed it in 1949 -- but it would be extremely difficult for very large parties to traverse this route. 8/*

The Gartok-Leh route differs from the two others discussed because it parallels a major river and is aligned with the mountain ranges instead of across them. The gradients along this route are therefore much less steep than those along the routes into Sinkiang. Portions of the upper Indus Valley are fairly wide, but in other places (for example, the area known as Rong, some distance above Leh) the river flows through wild and forbidding gorges. A branch of this route extends from Rudog in western Tibet, via Chushul, to Leh. The Gartok-Leh route is a segment of the important Lhasa-Leh route.

In addition to these main transfrontier routes, several others should be mentioned. Two trails, one extending westward from the Kashgar-Gilgit

* Information on routes was derived principally from Source 7.

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Figure 4. The Saser Pass. The caravan men are spreading felt pads to prevent the pack animals from slipping.

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route in Hunza and another from Gilgit northwestward, converge upon the Baroghil Pass, across the Hindu Kush Range in northern Pakistan. From this point, other trails extend through the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan and across the narrow strip of Afghan territory into the Soviet Union. A lateral route inside the frontier area connects Leh, Skardu, and Gilgit along the Indus and Gilgit Rivers.

Several routes connect the frontier area with the main portions of Pakistan and India. One route in Pakistan connects Gilgit with the Northwest Frontier Province by way of the Babusar Pass (elevation 13,690 feet) and the Kunhar Valley. This route is traversable by jeep. Another but more difficult route into Pakistan continues down the Indus from Chilās. 11/ Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, is connected with Skardu on the Indus by two routes -- (1) by way of the Burzil Pass over the Great Himalaya and (2) by way of the Zoji Pass (elevation 11,580 feet) and the Dras and Indus Rivers. The main connection between Srinagar and Leh branches southeastward off of the Zoji Pass route at Kargil and reaches the Indus River at Khalsi. The distance of 240 miles from Srinagar to Leh formerly required about 16 days of travel, but it is now possible to make this trip in 7 days, since the Indian army has built a motorable road for part of the distance. 12/ The only direct connection between the Kashmir frontier area and India proper is from Leh southward across the Bāra Lācha Pass to Mandi; this route is closed by snow for a large part of the year, but it is of considerable military and commercial importance, nevertheless.

The Kashmir frontier area has long been an important region of transit between the adjoining regions in spite of its severe environment. Before the Communist conquest of Sinkiang and Tibet and the fighting between Pakistani and Indian forces in Kashmir, Leh was an important port of entry between Chinese territories and the Indian Subcontinent. In summer, caravans brought goods to Leh from Sinkiang by way of the Karakoram Pass and from Tibet by way of the Indus Valley and Rudog and exchanged them for items from India, which were carried back to the Chinese territories. Goods from India in transit to Sinkiang and Tibet were brought in over the Bāra Lācha route from the south or the Zoji route from the Vale of Kashmir. There was also considerable local trade with points in Ladakh and Baltistan. Wool is one of the principal items of export from Tibet (see Figure 5). Data from the wool trade illustrate the relative importance of Leh in the total foreign commerce of Tibet. It is estimated that of the total normal production of Tibetan wool, 10 percent (over 2,000,000 lbs.) is exported eastward to China, 15 percent (over 3,000,000 lbs.) is exported to India via Leh, 45 percent (over 9,225,000 lbs.) is exported to India via Kalimpong, and the balance is consumed locally. 13/ Thus, Leh holds a place of some importance in the export trade of Tibet. Most of the trade of Sinkiang, on the other hand, is with the Soviet Union. Before World War II, India accounted for only about 5 percent of

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Figure 5. Shearing sheep along the banks of the Karnāli River near Tāklākot, Tibet.

the Sinkiang trade, but most of this trade was by way of Leh. Considerable trade with Sinkiang found its way over the Hunza Valley route, but it was much less important than the Karakoram route to Leh.

The Kun Lun and the Karakoram barriers have served rather effectively to shield Kashmīr from invasion from the north, whereas parts of the frontier area have been invaded from the south or east on several occasions. Conversely, the frontier peoples have at times expanded outward to the north and east. Probably the only large-scale military incursion from the north came during the sixteenth century, when the ruler of Kashgar sent an army across the Karakoram that penetrated into Kashmīr but was defeated by the climate when it attempted to invade Tibet. The ancestors of the present ethnic Tibetans of Ladākh and Baltistān penetrated the area from the direction of central Tibet to the east, and Ladākh has been invaded from Tibet on several occasions in more recent times. On the other hand, the kings of Ladākh ruled over a large portion of the territory that is now western Tibet for several centuries.

Most of the successful military expeditions into the region from the seventeenth century to the present have been from the south, although there have been several expeditions from the direction of Tibet. In the 1680's, an army of the Mogul emperor of India entered Ladākh to counter an invasion from Tibet. During the period 1834-41, Zorawar conquered Ladākh and Baltistān for his master, Gulab Singh, ruler of Jammu. After subduing the frontier region, Zorawar imprudently attempted to conduct a winter campaign in Tibet but was defeated and killed near Gartok in 1842. The armies engaged in these various expeditions were not large, in spite of the claims of some of the old chronicles. The army despatched by the Mogul Empire to save Ladākh from the Tibetans, for example, was said to have numbered 600,000 by Mogul historians, but modern writers place the figure at nearer 6,000. Zorawar commanded a force of about 10,000 upon his first invasion of Ladākh in 1834, and the whole number of men available to the Ladākhis during this war was probably between 15,000 and 20,000. A Tibetan or Tibetan-Chinese army of 3,000 attempted unsuccessfully to conquer Ladākh after Zorawar was defeated. During the Indian-Pakistani fighting over Kashmīr, a small Indian force crossed the Himalaya from Mandi in early 1948 to prevent Leh from falling into Pakistani hands, and in November 1948 the Zoji Pass route from Leh to Srinagar was taken from Pakistani irregulars by Indian troops. 12, 14, 15/

Living at the gap in the Karakoram Range and near the Mintaka and other passes opening down into the Tarim Basin, the people of Hunza were in a position to descend to either side of the mountain barrier. They formerly raided the trade routes and settlements as far as Gilgit and Baltistān on the south and the Pamir area and the upper Yarkand on the north. 16/ The ruler of Hunza also acquired certain rights in the Taghdumbash Pamir. Since the accession to power of the Chinese Communists

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in Sinkiang, however, the Communist troops have on occasion crossed the passes and conducted patrol actions in the upper Hunza Valley.*

Developments of the last 6 or 7 years, both political and technical, may have reduced somewhat the effectiveness of the mountain barrier, but it is yet too early to say definitely that the barrier has lost its value as a protection to India and Pakistan. The retirement of Great Britain from India, the partition of the Subcontinent, and the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmīr have tended to weaken the defenses along the border at the same time that pressures from the Soviet Union and Communist China have increased. Probably the Soviet Union or China could bring much more power to bear on an invasion of this region than could any of the former states to the north and east. The construction of motor roads or jeepable tracks and the establishment of airfields tends to make the border region more permeable.

The building of motor roads in these mountains could probably never be justified for commercial reasons alone because of the expense and the comparatively short period during the year that such roads could be used. Military and political considerations, however, have dictated the road improvements undertaken in recent years. 17/ Since the occupation of Tibet by Chinese Communist troops, various road- and airfield-construction projects in western Tibet have been reported. By early 1952, a road was said to have been completed from Lhasa to the Lake Mānasarowar area or Gartok. 18, 19/ About the same time the construction of a road linking Sinkiang and western Tibet was reported. 20, 21/ Such a road, if it passed near the northeast corner of Ladākh, would be a difficult undertaking, since it would have to penetrate a wide area of uninhabited, desolate country in the Kun Lun.

Construction of a road from Kashgar, Sinkiang, to the Mintaka Pass is reportedly in progress and apparently would not be too difficult, but the extension of the road southward to Chalt to connect with the existing jeep track passing through the Hunza Valley to Gilgit and south through the Kunhār Valley (thus forming an invasion route almost across the great barrier from the Tarim Basin to the Pakistan plain) would be hazardous, and the maintenance of such a road would present many problems. 11/ North of Chalt this projected road would have to pass through the narrow Hunza Valley, where the maintenance of even the pack trail is difficult as a result of precipitous slopes and glacier ice. If the Chinese should complete the proposed roads in western Tibet and southern Sinkiang, it would facilitate their control of these hitherto loosely-held regions

* The history of Hunza interests to the north is considered in greater detail in Section II-E.

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and would increase the effectiveness of Chinese pressure on Ladākh and the Gilgit Agency.*

Work is under way, according to report, on an airfield on the plain near Lake Mānasarowar, and Russians are said to have helped select the site. 22/ No regular air service had been established in Tibet as of late 1952, however. 23/

Meanwhile, Pakistan and India have not been idle. The building of the jeep track from the Kunhār Valley of Pakistan to Gilgit and from Gilgit to Chalt and the improvements on the Srinagar-Leh route made by the Indian army were referred to above. A Pakistan air transport service connects Peshāwar with Gilgit and Skardu, and an Indian air service connects Srinagar with Kargil and Leh. The Leh airstrip is said to be the second highest in the world. 12/

In summary, the mountain barrier, inaccessible to large movements of population, has often been penetrated on a local scale. Trade across the barrier forms one of the principal bases of the economic life of Ladākh, and to a lesser extent is important to Hunza. The mountain and plateau wall has protected India from major invasions from the north, but military campaigns involving only limited numbers of men have been conducted within and across the barrier region, and portions of the border area have been conquered and held by forces from the outside at various times. Most difficult to penetrate from the military standpoint has been the Karakoram Range, but the peoples to the south of this range have always been exposed to flank attack from the east. As modern transportation penetrates the area, the mountains will become somewhat less effective as a barrier, but the harsh environment of this greatest mountain mass in the world will not be easily overcome.

D. Population Distribution and Agriculture

Since the northwestern portion of the border region is both arid and mountainous, the pattern of human settlement has characteristics of desert and highland. Areas of permanent habitation are confined almost exclusively to the stream valleys and, within these valleys, to so-called oases of relatively level land with access to a water supply from the surrounding heights. The principal population areas are the valleys of the Indus, Gilgit, Hunza, Shigar, Shyok, Drās, and Zāskār Rivers. The mountains on either side of these streams comprise most of the area and are almost uninhabited. Eastward from the Hunza Valley, the area between the Karakoram and the Kun Lun Mountains (including the upper valley of the

* Consideration of possible Soviet penetration into the Gilgit Agency by way of the Wakhan Corridor is beyond the scope of this report.

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Yarkand River and the Aksai Chin lake basins) is also largely devoid of population. Very sparsely inhabited areas are also found along the eastern borders of Ladākh.

The principal areas of settlement and agriculture are in the wider portions of the Indus Valley, of which the vicinities of Leh and Skardu are examples (see Figure 6). Alluvial fans have been formed at points where glacier-fed tributary streams descend into the main valleys. Many of the oases, with their irrigated and terraced fields, are found at these points because water from higher altitudes is available. The settlements are generally located near the edge of the valley rather than along the main river. Some canals have been dug to conduct irrigation water from the Indus, but generally the main river is not tapped as a source of water because it flows at a lower level than that of the alluvial valley floor and the inhabitants do not have facilities for lifting the water. Along the narrower portions of the Indus and its tributaries, there is very little level land. Here the valley floor slopes rather steeply from the river to the foot of the precipitous mountain flank. Settlements are scattered, and cultivation is possible only if the fields are terraced. Nevertheless, small isolated communities are found in the Indus Valley, even in the least accessible gorges where the mountains close in upon the river. 24/

Because of the mountainous terrain and the aridity, cultivable land is at a premium. The farmers have developed considerable skill in the laying out of irrigation canals and terraced fields. Where necessary, water is conducted for long distances from mountain torrents to the fields, which requires the construction of stone aqueducts across the face of steep cliffs. In some localities, steps are taken to preserve the snowfall by the creation of "artificial glaciers" high up in the lateral valleys, thus assuring a supply of water for irrigation in late summer when it is most needed. Terrace walls, laid out more or less at right angles to the slope of the land, are also made of stone. The small field on the upper side of a terrace wall is either graded level by the farmer, or the dirt is allowed to wash down against the wall until, in the course of several years' time, the land becomes level (see Figure 7). Terraces are constructed during the winter. On level land where terracing is not required, the fields are laid out in geometrical patterns defined by the course of irrigation ditches and bordered by stone walls or rows of poplar, willow, or fruit trees. 24,
25/

The principal crops of these valleys are barley, wheat, buckwheat, millet, peas, beans, potatoes, mustard seed, turnips, and a considerable variety of fruits. Barley forms the basis of the principal foods and drink -- parched barley, barley cakes, and beer. Of the fruits, apricots are most important, forming one of the principal items in the

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Figure 6. Leh, looking south from the palace roof.

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Figure 7. Terraced fields near Baltit in the Hunza Valley, looking eastward.

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diet; but apples, peaches, pears, plums, grapes, pomegranates, and mulberries are also raised. Walnuts are produced in some localities. At elevations below 10,000 feet, it is customary to raise two grain crops a year, barley and wheat being sown in early spring and millet and buckwheat in later summer. Animal dung is used for manure, but dung for use on the fields is often at a premium, since it is also used as a fuel. To supplement the dung, human excreta mixed with dirt is also used. The soils thus inadequately manured are kept in cultivation for a succession of years without lying fallow and without much attempt at rotation. Consequently, the yield of cereals, which is about sevenfold, is not large. Even though the amount of good grazing land is negligible, sheep, goats, and a small type of cattle are raised to supply wool, milk, and fats. The dzo, a type of ox produced by the crossing of yak and cow, is used for plowing. In some places, lucerne is raised for forage on hillsides that are not valuable enough for other crops. The animals are kept in the villages in winter and are herded up into the hills for grazing in summer. By late summer, pastures are dry and forage is very scarce. At such times, dry leaves and even the bark of the willow tree serve as fodder. 26/ Willows and poplars serve multiple purposes. They provide the principal lumber for house construction, and they are planted for ornamentation.

The agriculture of this frontier region is akin to that of Sinkiang, Tibet, and other parts of Central Asia. With their irrigation agriculture, the oases of the Indus and its principal tributaries are in many ways small replicas of the larger and richer oases at the foot of the Tien Shan, Kun Lun, and Alai in Sinkiang and Soviet Central Asia. Lying at a higher altitude, however, the variety of crops grown is not as great in the upper Indus watershed as to the north. In this respect the upper Indus is more like Tibet. The cultivation of barley, buckwheat, wheat, and a number of fruits is carried on in the river valleys of Tibet under climatic conditions somewhat similar to that of the Indus Valley (see Figure 8).

E. Hunza and Nagir

The "states" of Hunza and Nagir are at the northern extremity of the territory administered by Pakistan. Hunza occupies the upper portion of the watershed of the Hunza River and is bisected by the Karakoram Range; Nagir lies mainly to the south of the river and southwest of the mountain range. Each state is a little autocracy ruled by a Mir. The origin of the states and their people is obscure, but the two royal families derive from a common source and claim that their ancestors came from Baltistan to the southeast some 600 years ago.

The principal element in the population speaks the Burushaski language, which is believed to be unrelated to any extant tongue. There

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Figure 8. Barley field and farmhouses outside
Tāklākot, Tibet.

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are about 32,000 Bushuro (Burushaski speakers) in the two states and scattered in adjacent areas; westward, in the Yasin Ilaqa of Gilgit Agency, is a group speaking Wershigwār, a variant form of Burushaski. In the western and southwestern portions of both states, a sizable minority of the population speaks Shinā, the principal language of the Gilgit Agency. In one or two of the valleys opening into the Hunza Valley from the west is a Wakhi-speaking group related to the inhabitants of the Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan. 27, 28/ Although the Wakhis form a separate and distinct group in Hunza, there has long been considerable contact between the Wakhis and the Bushuro. There are a few Bushuro in the Wakhan, and the wife of the present Mir of Hunza is related to the Afghan governor of the Wakhan.

The centers of population of Hunza and Nagir are in the central Hunza Valley west of the Atābād-Gulmit gap, where the river flows through the Karakoram Range. The two capitals -- Baltit and Nagir -- are located here, and the best land is in this vicinity. The land in the Shimshāl and Khunjerāb Valleys to the east of the Hunza River is the home of only a few shepherds and outcasts. North of the Karakoram the Hunza Valley is more elevated, narrower, and less hospitable to agriculture than to the south. In this area, Misgar is the most important of the few settlements.

Although the majority of the inhabitants of Hunza and Nagir speak the same language and have approximately the same social institutions, observers have noted certain differences in temperament between the Hunzakuts and the Nagirkuts. The former are happy and cheerful, whereas the latter give the impression of somberness and depression. The inhabitants of Hunza are also said to be more energetic and skillful as farmers than their neighbors to the south. 27/

In common with most of the peoples under the administration of Pakistan, the inhabitants of Hunza and Nagir belong to Islam, but they are not of the Sunni sect, which is dominant in Pakistan proper. Nagir and a belt of territory south and east of Hunza is inhabited by Muslims of the Shia sect. Hunza forms part of a region in which the inhabitants belong to the Ismāīli (Maulāi) sect of Islam. This region extends westward into other parts of the Gilgit Agency and northward into Afghanistan, the Tadzhik SSR, and the Taghdumbash Pamir of Sinkiang. The Hunzakuts were converted to the Ismaili sect from Shiaism only about three generations ago. The Ismailis owe spiritual allegiance to the Agha Khan, but the Mir of Hunza acts as the Agha Khan's representative in the frontier area. Formerly the Mir collected a tithe on behalf of the Agha Khan not only from his own people but also from the Sarikolis of the Taghdumbash Pamir and the small group of Bushuro living in the Wakhan. Possibly some of the amounts collected remained in the hands of the Mir. The small group of Sarikolis in the extreme southwestern part of Sinkiang is composed of settled cultivators. They are coreligionists of the Hunzakuts,

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but they speak an Iranian tongue and are in other respects unrelated to the Hunzakuts. Within recent years the Sarikolis have ceased to pay the tithe to the Mir. The Hunzakuts are also unrelated to the other principal groups of southwestern Sinkiang -- the nomadic Kirghiz and the oasis-dwelling Uighurs. 9, 29/

The Maulāi of Hunza are fairly liberal in their interpretation of religious duties, religious observances, and prescriptions, all of which play little part in the life of the people. The Shia of Nagir are somewhat more strict, but even they appear to lack the fervor characteristic of large portions of the Sunni community. It has been suspected that some Pakistan officials desire to settle members of the Sunni sect in these northern areas where the population is considered spiritually unreliable by the officials. 30/

Shut up in their mountain fastness near the meeting place of five Asiatic states, the Hunzakuts have a strong consciousness of and pride in their own group, accompanied by a tendency to look down upon some of their neighbors. They have been forced to subordinate their state in matters of "foreign affairs" to more powerful groups, first on one side of the Karakoram, then on the other; but in domestic matters they have been left very much to themselves. After the 1840's, Gulab Singh (the founder of the state of Jammu and Kashmir) and his successors gradually increased their hold over the area now in the Gilgit Agency. Responding to the Russian advance in Central Asia, the British became interested in the Gilgit region. Following the decision of the central government of India in the 1890's to exercise a more direct control in the Gilgit region, the Gilgit Scouts were organized as the major local defense force. At the same time the Mir of Hunza with the aid of his retainers was held responsible for maintaining law and order in his territories and for defending them from incursions from the north. However, the Gilgit Agency, including the two states of Hunza and Nagir, continued to be part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the two states paid an annual tribute consisting of a small piece of alluvial gold to the Maharajah of Jammu-Kashmir through the British agent at Gilgit. The Maharajah's government in turn sent gifts to the Mirs in acknowledgment of the act of fealty. 31/

The Chinese claims in the Hunza-Nagir and adjacent Pamir areas are of long standing, dating from the period of the Manchu dynasty, if not earlier. The Mir of Hunza formerly sent annual tribute of gold dust to the principal Chinese official at Kashgar and received presents of silver, silk, teacups, tea, or cloth in return. About 1935, the tribute was estimated to be worth about £10 and the presents to the Mir about £40. 32/ The Chinese apparently considered that the Mir of Hunza held both the territory in Taghdumbash Pamir and in the upper Hunza Valley as a vassal of China, but the British and the Mir took a different view of the matter. It is also reported that at one time the Chinese sent official emissaries to Baltit to accord recognition to a new Mir. 31/ The state of Nagir also paid "tribute" to the Chinese, but within recent decades -- until the rise of the Chinese Communist regime -- the Chinese do not seem to have advanced a serious claim to Nagir as a result. 33/ Chinese maps, published under both the Nationalist regime before 1949 and the

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Communist regime since that date, show a southwestern boundary for China that coincides with the southern boundary of the Wakhan Corridor, extends thence southeastwards generally along the crest of the main Karakoram Range, crosses the Karakoram Pass, and then follows approximately the northeastern watershed line of the Shyok Valley to the eastern border of Ladākh -- line A on map CIA 12128. This line, if it became an actuality, would place northern Hunza above the Atābād-Gulmit Gap in Sinkiang but would leave the most populous part of Hunza and all of Nagir within Kashmir. East of Hunza the line would follow roughly the water parting between the Indus, the Tarim, and the Aksai Chin, thus including within China the uninhabited upper Yarkand Valley and interior basins of Aksai Chin.

The Mir of Hunza maintained a counterclaim in Sinkiang. The Mir formerly claimed that territories to the northward of the Kilik and Mintaka Passes in the Taghdumbash Pamir and to the eastward in the upper valley of the Yarkand River belonged to him. For over two and one-half centuries, tribesmen from the present Hunza area had enjoyed grazing rights, granted by the Chinese, in the Taghdumbash Pamir. ^{34/} With the permission of the Chinese the Mir collected a yearly tribute or grazing tax from the nomads in the Taghdumbash area northward to a point near Tāsh-Kurgān, ^{32/} and in addition his own people used these grazing lands. The Chinese tolerated this Hunza privilege probably because they claimed suzerainty over a part of Hunza itself, but the Mir and the British apparently considered that the tribute to the Chinese was paid only with respect to the Taghdumbash Pamir and not with respect to any part of Hunza proper. ^{31/} The Chinese did not acknowledge any Hunza rights in the Yarkand Valley.

The claims of the Mir of Hunza formed the basis for the widely held belief that the territories of India and Russia adjoined each other to the north of the Qara Chukor Valley of the Taghdumbash Pamir. This was not the view held by British officials in India or Russian officials to the north, however. The narrow Wakhan Corridor of Afghanistan was maintained as a buffer between British and Russian power, and the northern boundary of the Wakhan was laid out in 1895 in such a manner that its eastern end would adjoin Chinese territory. ^{35/} China was not a party to the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1895 and, judging from Chinese maps, has never fully recognized Afghan sovereignty over the Wakhan strip or Russian sovereignty over the Pamir area to the north. Most Chinese maps, including some published under the Chinese Communist regime, show the Wakhan and the Russian Pamir area as part of China, although they indicate the boundaries as indefinite (see line A on map CIA 12128).

In the 1930's the Chinese-Hunza relationship was strained, and the Chinese disputed all of the territorial claims of Hunza. In the period 1930-34, civil war in Sinkiang caused the British to maintain temporarily several military posts to the north of the Kilik and Mintaka Passes. With a strongly anti-British and pro-Soviet government installed

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in Sinkiang about this time, the claims of the Mir to the north of the passes became a source of embarrassment to the British Indian Government. About 1935 the British persuaded the Mir to abandon his claims in the Taghdumbash Pamir in return for territorial compensation southward in Kashmir. At the same time, he was advised to cease his annual remittances to Kashgar. The Chinese, however, refused to give up their claim to Hunza. 31,36/

The Hunzakuts and the British at various times had intermittent connections with the territory along the upper Yarkand River and its western tributaries -- the Oprang Jilga, the Muztagh, and the Raskam. This area, crossed by the important Karakoram Pass trade routes from India to Sinkiang, was raided by the Hunzakuts in the 1880's, and the nomadic Kirghiz inhabitants were driven out. Desiring to protect the trade routes and also counter possible Russian influence in Hunza, the British despatched a small expedition under Sir Francis Younghusband, which explored the upper Yarkand region and penetrated Hunza proper. 37/ The activities of the Hunza raiders were finally stopped when the British extended more effective control over the area in 1891.

Activities such as those of Younghusband appeared to the British to give them a shadow of claim to the upper Yarkand Valley (see lines B and D on map CIA 12128). In 1899, on the other hand, the Government of India forwarded a note to the Chinese Government proposing the adoption of a boundary line running, with minor exceptions, along the crest of the Muztagh-Karakoram Range. The Chinese Government did not reply to the note.

In the late 1920's, Hunza tribesmen of the Shimshāl Valley also cultivated land to the east and north of the Shimshāl watershed but were often in danger of being driven out by the Chinese frontier guards before they could harvest their crops of barley. In 1938 the Chinese even attempted to molest Hunza herders inside the Shimshāl Valley in an area considered by the British to be clearly a part of Hunza. The Mir simultaneously gave up his claims to the area east of the Shimshāl and to the Taghdumbash, thus accepting as the northern and eastern limits of Hunza a line corresponding approximately to line C on map CIA 12128. 31, 36/

The problem of Hunza has been characterized as falling more within the sphere of Soviet-Pakistani relations than Chinese-Indian relations. 36/ This arises from (1) the close Soviet association with Sinkiang and (2) the offer of accession to Pakistan by the Mir of Hunza following the partition of India in 1947. After the end of World War II the hold of the Central Chinese Government over Sinkiang, always rather tenuous, became even weaker. The present Chinese Communist Government in Sinkiang is reported to be under the close control of the Soviets or Chinese agents of the Soviet Union. If the Sinkiang Communist forces come under the direct

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control of the Soviet Union, the separation of the Indian Subcontinent from Russian power on the north by a narrow wedge of Afghan and Sinkiang territory, which had been an objective of British diplomacy for roughly half a century, would be nullified by Soviet hegemony within Sinkiang itself.

Regardless of whether the control of Sinkiang rests with the Soviet Union or with the Chinese Communists, the pressure on Hunza from the direction of Sinkiang has been increasing since 1950. In that year, Communist forces penetrated into northern Hunza by way of the Kilik, Mintaka, Khunjerāb, and Shimshāl Passes. Pakistani forces, which were supposed to guard the frontier, maintained only one small post at Misgar, considerably south and west of the line of these passes. A party of British officers preparing to survey the Shaksgam Valley to the east of the Shimshāl Pass was withdrawn by an agreement between the Mir of Hunza and a representative of the Pakistan Government in order to prevent provocation of the Chinese. By the following spring, the Pakistan government seemed willing to consider that the de facto boundary should run along the water-parting line between the Hunza and its tributaries and the Yarkand and its tributaries. The four passes would be on this line, and to the east the line would continue along the crest of the Karakoram Range (see line C on map CIA 12128). ^{38/} The eastern frontier of Nagir, lying amidst the Karakoram peaks and the Hispar glacier, was not so susceptible to penetration. The Mir of Nagir did not worry about Chinese incursions and had even abandoned his old penal colony at the village of Hispar near the frontier because of a lack of irrigation water.

During 1952 and early 1953, the Chinese Communists became more active in the border region. The Pakistani and Indian consular offices in Sinkiang were forced to close, presumably to prevent any intelligence of Chinese intentions or activities from reaching Pakistan or India. ^{39/} The road southward from Tash-Kurghān was in process of construction (see pages 13 and 18), and several parties of Chinese military engineers had come south of the Mintaka and other passes to survey possible routes. This penetration caused the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Sir Zafrullah Khan, to state publicly that the frontiers of Pakistan had been violated by the Chinese Communists. ^{40/} Pakistan, absorbed in territorial disputes with both India and Afghanistan and having many pressing internal problems, however, has not wanted to antagonize Communist China. Since 1950, therefore, Chinese pressure on Hunza has caused Pakistan and the Mir of Hunza to accept, at least temporarily, a frontier along the line of the four passes, which excludes territory at one time claimed by the Mir or by British India. Chinese patrols have been active even south and west of this line in an area that had been claimed by China for a considerable period but hitherto had been under the control of Hunza or the British.

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The Hunza-Nagir region has a deficit economy. Most of the people are farmers, yet agriculture is very precarious in the narrow, steep-sided valleys and under the arid climatic regime. The small amount of arable land available is not sufficient to support the increasing population, and about all the suitable land on the steep slopes has been converted into new stairstep terraces. Food supplies gathered in the summer and fall are often exhausted by the end of the winter. "Starvation springtime" is the term applied to the period after the barley bread and dried apricots have been consumed and before the new crop has come to harvest. At this time the farmers are forced to subsist on dandelion and turnip greens and similar forage gathered from the mountainsides. ^{25/} To supplement their meager living from farming at home, the Bushuro at various times engaged in brigandage, raised crops and grazed their flocks in the territory to the north and east of the watershed, sold supplies to passing caravans, exploited the alluvial gold deposits of their streams, or migrated temporarily to more populous areas to seek employment. Some of these sources of income are now denied to them, and the problem of making a living, always serious, has become critical.

In the nineteenth century the Hunzakuts were notorious highway robbers. They gained a large portion of their living by plundering the caravans that plied the neighboring trade routes and by selling the horses, camels, and human captives in other parts of Central Asia. They also raided Gilgit and the nearby mountain tribes. The British put an end to this, and the caravan trade was carried on in peace in the areas under British control. The Mir of Hunza was paid a subsidy in lieu of his former returns from loot. Another resource of value to the Mir and the people was the grazing and hay-producing lands of the Taghdumbash Pamir. When the present Mir gave up his claims in this area in the 1930's, a source of revenue was lost, but the British granted the Mir a jagir (estate) in Gilgit and Matamdas and increased his subsidy in compensation for the loss. As a partial relief for population pressure in Hunza, a colony of Hunzakuts was settled on the estate and a new irrigation channel developed. ^{31/} This did not alleviate conditions to any great extent, however. In contrast with many other parts of India and Pakistan, there is no great concentration of land ownership in Hunza and Nagir. The two Mirs own relatively large holdings that are worked by tenants, but most of the farmers own their own small plots. In spite of this, there is not enough land for all. Approximately 1,200 young men leave Hunza each year to seek temporary employment in the Punjab. During the years of peace on both sides of the frontier, Hunza derived some benefit from the traffic on the Kashgar-Gilgit route -- from tolls charged the caravans and supplies sold to them -- although very little of the trade had its origin or destination in Hunza. Since the Communist triumph in Sinkiang, most of the trade from the north has been cut off, thus depriving Hunza of another source of income.

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Hunza's economic difficulties and its forward position render it vulnerable to Communist propaganda and to military incursions from the north. 9/ The Pakistan Government has done little to relieve Hunza's economic difficulties. Although it has expanded the Gilgit Scouts and improved their military equipment and supplies, it has not attempted to build up military posts at the border. The Pakistan Government has also tended to alienate the Mir of Hunza, who feels that he is being treated as of little account and that the possibility of using his men to help guard the passes is being disregarded.

Proposals have been made for increasing the amount of cultivable land, instituting programs of technical assistance, and developing mineral resources, but little has been done to date. Some quarters in the Pakistan Government hoped that new irrigation works could be built and even that hydroelectric projects could be undertaken. The concept of large-scale undertakings in this remote region is perhaps visionary, one observer remarking that it is doubtful if more than two or three small new villages could be established in Hunza and Nagir as a result of the installation of even the most elaborate modern irrigation works. 30/ The hand-made irrigation systems now in use seem to be best adapted to the region, but it is doubtful whether they can be profitably extended to many new areas. Since there is a possibility that the Gilgit Agency may be connected with Pakistan proper by road, the prospects for commercial fruit raising in various parts of the Agency are being explored. Geological explorations have also been undertaken. The institution of a technical assistance program has been proposed to encourage small-scale village industries such as wood carving, leathercraft, and weaving. An American who lived for a time in Hunza undertook such a program on his own initiative, but the results of his work have been subject to conflicting reports.

Hunza and Nagir, located on one of the two principal corridors through the Karakoram rampart, are of primary importance in the defense of northern Kashmir and northern Pakistan. For over two decades these states, especially Hunza, have been under intermittent pressure from north of the border. This pressure has been especially great since 1950, after the Communists had come to power in Sinkiang. Hunza has been forced to give up claims to territory or to other rights north and east of the Hunza River watershed, and its own territory has been invaded. Now comes the threat to its security posed by the projection of a motor road southward across the Mintaka Pass. The ability of Hunza to withstand this pressure has been weakened by the deterioration of its economy and the inability of Pakistan to render much assistance, either military or economic. Hunza and Nagir might possibly be overrun and conquered by the Chinese Communists, but whether or not the people of the two states could be induced by propaganda and subversion to join Sinkiang would be conditioned in part by the fact that they are unrelated, except in religion, to any cultural groups in Sinkiang, and by their long habit of independence from close control by any outside power.

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S-E-C-R-E-TF. Ladākh

The Ladākh Frontier District may be divided into two subregions: (1) the somewhat more prosperous mercantile, agricultural and pastoral eastern part, which roughly corresponds to the Ladākh and Kargil tehsils (minor civil divisions); and (2) the poorer, exclusively agricultural and pastoral western part, known historically as Baltistān and corresponding to the Skardu tehsil. Eastern Ladākh, the first of these two subregions, is at present under the administration of the India-oriented Government of Kashmir. The total population of this subregion is about 90,000, the majority of whom are Muslim in religion. There are nevertheless somewhat more than 40,000 Buddhists in the entire Ladākh Frontier District, most of whom are concentrated in eastern Ladākh. The Lamaist form of Buddhism practiced here is identical with that of Tibet, and the Ladākhis speak a dialect of Tibetan. So similar to the Tibetan is the culture of eastern Ladākh that the subregion has been known variously as Western Tibet, Second Tibet, and Little Tibet. Western Ladākh, the second of the two subregions (referred to hereafter as Baltistān), is in the portion of Kashmir under Pakistani control. The total population is about 106,000.* The Baltis are Muslim in religion, but they speak a dialect of Tibetan similar to that of eastern Ladākh and are similar to the Ladākhis in other aspects of their culture. Baltistān also is sometimes termed Little Tibet. Eastern Ladākh has for many centuries been strongly under the influence of the main part of Tibet, but the Tibetan influence in Baltistān has not been quite so strong.

Like the people of Tibet proper the eastern Ladākh people are divided into a group of settled cultivators and pastoral nomads. The Ladākhis, properly so-called, are settled on the oases of the river valleys from a point above Dah to the general vicinity of Chumātang on the Indus, as well as on the upper Shyok, the Nubra, the Zāskār, and the southeastern tributaries of the Drās. The Champas, a group of tent-dwelling pastoral nomads, inhabit the higher valley of the Indus, the Chāng Chenmo Valley, a portion of the Shyok Valley, and the basins of the Tso Morari and the Pangong Tso. In summer they migrate to the upland pastures of the Ladākh-Tibet border area with their flocks and herds, and in winter they camp in the more sheltered valleys near the bodies of water. The herds of the Champa range over a rather wide area, but their total number is comparatively small. Except for the fact that they are nomadic, the Champa appear to be much like the settled Ladākhis in language and religion; they are also similar to the nomads of the adjacent parts of Tibet. Several groups of Muslim Baltis have settled among the Ladākhi population, notably along the Indus near Leh. The town of Leh contains a mixed population, some elements having descended from unions between

* Population statistics are from Sources 12 and 28.

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Ladākhī women and Kashmīr or Sinkiang merchants, Dogra troops, and other foreign sojourners. 6, 24/

The Tibetan-speaking Baltis are centered in the Skārdu Basin, which extends along the Indus for about 18 miles and is from 2 to 5 miles wide, as well as in the tributary valleys of the lower Shyok, the Shigar, and several smaller streams. They are also found along the Indus to the northwest for a considerable distance beyond the Skārdu Basin and to the southeast as far as the vicinity of the cease-fire line separating the Indian- and Pakistani-controlled areas. The Baltis were converted to Islam from Buddhism several centuries ago. They profess the Shia form of Islam, in contrast with the Sunni Islam of Pakistan proper. The small valleys leading northward to the Indus from the Deosai Mountains and the upper Drās Valley around the town of Drās are inhabited by Dards (Brokpas), another local group, most of whom have been converted to Islam. This area of Dardic speech and culture is an outlier of the large one in Dardistan, farther down the Indus in the Gilgit Agency. A group also termed Dards inhabits the Indus Valley around the town of Dah -- to the north and south of the junction with the Drās River. Much of this area is rugged canyon country, rarely visited by outsiders. Although the people speak a Dardic tongue, they claim to have a separate religion that is neither Islamic nor Buddhist. In reality, they appear to be Buddhists. The cease-fire line runs through or near the transition zone between Islam and Buddhism. 24/

In Buddhist Ladākh, as in Tibet, religion plays a large part in the lives of the people. Visible evidence of this is found in the landscape, in the form of the numerous mani (prayer) walls, chortens (religious monuments), and monasteries, both large and small. The contrast is striking between Ladākh, with its many religious structures, and Baltistān, where about the only religious structures currently in use are the small village mosques. The congregations of lamas in the monasteries of Ladākh are the official bodies of the Buddhist religion. In the life of the ordinary Ladākhī layman the lama functions in many capacities -- as priest, oracle to be consulted in the ordering of one's daily affairs, magician for the propitiation of evil spirits, physician, banker, and landlord. Nearly every family has at least one son who is a lama. Women also take holy orders, but the practice is not as prevalent as among the men. The two principal sects of lamas are both represented in Ladākh. In the red-hat sect, which is the more ancient, the lamas are allowed to marry; in the yellow-hat or reformed sect, to which the Dalai and Panchan Lamas of Tibet belong, the lamas must be celibate. The most famous monastery in Ladākh, Himis, is located in a side valley near the Indus about 25 miles southeast of Leh and belongs to the red-hat sect. The lamas of Ladākh must go to one of the several large monasteries near Lhasa and to one of the two lamaist academies in that city for their higher training, since there are no appropriate institutions either in their own country or in western

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Tibet. Every year a number of lamas leave Ladākh for training in central Tibet, where they may remain for 10 or more years. Probably all the lamas in higher positions in the monasteries of Ladākh received their education in Tibet. The Buddhist hierarchy of Tibet is also very influential in the selection of the rinpoche or head lama of each monastery. According to Buddhist belief, the head lamas are reincarnations of earlier notables. When a head lama dies, he must be replaced by a baby boy who is his authentic reincarnation. This selection is made after consulting the oracle at Lhasa. 9, 41, 42/

Before the tenth century, Ladākh was a part of the empire of Tibet, but since that time it has either been independent of or only nominally subject to central Tibet. On the other hand, Ladākh itself was at one time the center of a state of considerable importance in this part of Central Asia. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this kingdom, with its capital at Leh, extended from the vicinity of the Drās River eastward into modern Tibet to a point about three-fourths of the way from Mānasarowar Lake to Shigatse. Near the end of the seventeenth century the kingdom was attacked by an army from central Tibet, and in order to secure assistance from the Mogul Empire in Kashmir and India the king promised to become a Muslim and send an annual tribute to Kashmir. The Tibetans, however, again attacked Ladākh and conquered its eastern territories. The eastern frontier of Ladākh was then placed in the vicinity of the Pangong Tso and, although undefined as a boundary line, has remained in approximately the same location to the present. The treaty establishing this border also provided that the king of Ladākh should send a mission once every 3 years to Lhasa, the spiritual capital of Lamaism, with presents for the clergy. Stated amounts of gold, calico, cotton cloth, and scent were to be delivered for the Dalai Lama. In return, a trade mission was to be sent every year from Tibet to Ladākh with 200 loads of brick tea. These provisions have continued in force, with few alterations, until recent times. 14/ The presents to the Dalai Lama were considered, at least by the Ladākhis, as recognition of his spiritual authority only, not as tokens of political subjection. 24/ The armies of Gulab Singh, founder of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, conquered Ladākh and Baltistān during the period 1834-41. The king of Ladākh was allowed to retain his rank and one village as an estate, but the country came under the direct administration of the Kashmir Government. Before the nineteenth century, Baltistān was generally divided into many petty states, each centering on one of the valley oases, but portions of it were occasionally under the influence of the Kingdom of Ladākh. During one period, however, the ruler of Skārdu conquered surrounding territory, including even Ladākh. After Baltistān was added to the dominions of Gulab Singh, the petty rulers, like the king of Ladākh, retained their titles but were stripped of any real authority.

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Since Ladāk̄h came under the dominion of Kashmīr, the approximate location of the frontier with Tibet has been known fairly accurately by the local inhabitants and the caravans crossing it. One group of nomads has been recognized as belonging to Ladāk̄h and another to Tibet. However, since there is no defined boundary line and since the region is very sparsely inhabited, informal crossing from one jurisdiction to the other has probably been fairly common. 24/ Patrolling of the boundary was lax on the part of both Kashmīr and Tibet. Since the Chinese Communists have taken over Tibet, however, they appear to have tightened the control by Lhasa over the western border region of Tibet. The Indians, on the other hand, have placed most of their small force near the cease-fire line with Pakistan or to the north along the trail to Sinkiang, but they have not attempted military occupation of the Tibetan border area. From time to time, there have been disputes along the frontier. In 1918, for example, a Tibetan official removed a Kashmīr subject and his flocks from grazing grounds that Kashmīr claimed as part of Ladāk̄h. 36/ During the last several years Kirghiz nomads, who may have come down from Sinkiang into western Tibet, have penetrated eastern Ladāk̄h. In the summer of 1952, armed Tibetans infiltrated Ladāk̄h, a development that caused the government of India to prepare a protest to the Chinese Communist Government. 43/

The majority of the people of Ladāk̄h are peasant cultivators or herders, but in contrast with Baltistān and Hunza-Nagir, trade is also an important activity in Ladāk̄h, centering on Leh (see Section II-C). Traditionally one of the most important items of trade has been the pashmina wool from the goat. The wool was brought from Tibet, Sinkiang, and the Champa districts of Ladāk̄h to Leh, where it was hand-cleaned and forwarded to Kashmīr or other parts of northern India for final processing. Other types of wool for carpetmaking have also been exported from Tibet. Within recent years the United States has been one of the principal ultimate consumers of Tibetan wool. Other items of export from Tibet to Leh have been borax and brick tea, which is as important an article of consumption in Ladāk̄h as in Tibet. Manufactured goods are sent to Sinkiang and Tibet from Leh. Other products exchanged with Tibet have been silk, woolen goods, carpets, hides, fruit, grain, and furs. 12, 44/ Various foodstuffs such as barley, dried apricots, salt, rice, and butter are traded locally. During the period of British ascendancy in India, an attempt was made to foster trade over the northern passes between Kashmīr and Sinkiang. Russian territory on the west, however, was much more accessible to Sinkiang, and the Russians secured most of the Sinkiang trade. Thus, in the 1930's, India accounted for only about 5 percent of the external trade of Sinkiang. Yarkand merchants nevertheless sold wool, raw silk, carpets, and course cotton goods in Leh and bought manufactured goods from India. Indian merchants invested in caravan loads of charas, a narcotic something like marijuana, which they imported from Sinkiang. In the 1930's, this drug traffic is

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said to have accounted for 42 percent of the Indian imports from Sinkiang.
29/

The caravan traffic was carried on by foreign merchants, who also conducted the trade in the several serais (market places) of Leh. The role of the Ladākhis in the trade was to supply ponies and yaks and to hire out as porters on the caravans. In this way, peasant farmers secured cash to supplement their poor living from the soil. At some places along the routes, it was also customary for the peasants to rent out pasture land to passing caravans. Baltistān lies off of the caravan tracks and derives no direct benefit from the trade. Since the peasants of Baltistān must live off the soil, which is poor in all but a few favored spots such as the Shigar oases, they make very little above a bare subsistence. In consequence, Baltistān is a region of seasonal out-migration, the men hiring out as coolies in other parts of the border area or in the Punjab. Formerly, they also emigrated temporarily to Sinkiang to find work.

The conflict between Indian and Pakistani forces in Kashmīr and the Chinese take-over in Sinkiang and Tibet caused almost complete cessation of trade in Ladākh -- particularly between Ladākh and Sinkiang -- after 1948. Later, trade between Tibet and the Subcontinent revived somewhat, but the Chinese are making great efforts to provide a market for Tibetan wool and to replace India as Tibet's chief customer for this commodity. Because of the political uncertainties of the time, the regular third-year mission from Ladākh to Lhasa, scheduled for 1950, did not take place. Plans were made by Kashmīr to send the mission in each of the two succeeding years, but the plans were not carried out. The caravan was again planned for 1953. The regular yearly caravans from western Tibet to Ladākh have continued as usual. 45, 46/ During the period when the Communists were gaining ascendancy in Sinkiang the only traffic from the north over the passes down into Ladākh consisted of refugees fleeing from the new regime. The market places in Leh were almost deserted. The arrival of units of the Indian army during the Indian-Pakistani fighting compensated in part, however, for the lost caravan business. Porterage for the army, labor on roads and defense works, and service in the newly created Kashmīr militia at least partially replaced the caravans as sources of cash income. 12/

The problem of land redistribution has come to the fore in Ladākh in recent years. The operation of several social institutions -- fraternal polyandry, primogeniture, and monasticism -- have maintained the concentration of landownership in comparatively few hands. An estate customarily descends to the eldest son, but it is maintained intact for the benefit of the whole family. All the sons remain together in one household, join in marriage to one wife, and enjoy the proceeds and share in the management of the estate. Conversely, if there are no male heirs,

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several sisters may remain together and marry a common husband, who becomes heir to the estate. Monasteries are supported mainly by the revenue from their lands. Monastic estates have become very large over a long period of time through donations from the faithful. Until recently, as a result, Ladākh had a relatively small number of landowners and a large body of landless tenants or share croppers. The landless peasants, not having enough capital to support their operations throughout the year, are generally forced to borrow food and other supplies in the winter. After the harvest, these loans are repaid in the form of grain at interest rates ranging up to 25 percent. Monasteries and grain merchants are engaged in the loan business. 9/

The population of Ladākh remains fairly stable, but because of the rigors of the environment very little new land can be put in cultivation to relieve the poverty of the average peasant. Restrictions on the increase in the amount of arable land have not been caused entirely by nature, being in part the result of the conservatism of the Ladākhī farmer. The making of new fields and the construction of irrigation works must be approved by the local community as a whole, and the desire to prevent encroachment of cultivation on communal pastureland often restrains individuals from bringing more land into cultivation. 26/

The present government of the Indian portion of Kashmir is committed to a program of land redistribution for the benefit of the peasants. Ladākh tehsil has some 30,000 acres of cultivated land, of which the monasteries own about 9,000 acres. By mid-1951, it was claimed that most of the non-monastic land, formerly owned by 24 large holders, had been distributed to new peasant proprietors. Reportedly, the former large owners were left with about 22-1/2 acres each, whereas the new owners possessed an average of 2 acres apiece. Such small peasant holdings appear to be in line with the amount cultivated per family in the past, and the acreage is now rent-free. In spite of this, the living to be gained from such small holdings would not appear to be adequate. The lamas were influential enough to prevent a redistribution of monastic land, arguing that if the land was taken away from the monasteries they would have no means of support other than possible government subsidy. 9, 12/ The effects in Ladākh of any program the Kashmir Government may have had for reforming the system of agricultural credit are not known. There are signs, however, that at least some of the peasants are dissatisfied with the present status of church lands and the system of credit imposed by the monasteries and the merchants. In at least one instance, villagers have petitioned authorities for a distribution of monastic lands, and a recent demonstration was accompanied by violence against money lenders. 47/ It appears, therefore, that the partial redistribution of land has not solved two of the basic economic problems faced by the peasant -- the problems of enough land to till and of securing adequate credit to conduct village operations without becoming overburdened with debt.

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The Buddhist hierarchy in Ladākh is faced on the one side by the government of Kashmir, whose innovations in the frontier territory seem to have brought to light a certain discontent with the ascendancy of the monasteries over the economic life of the country, and on the other side by the possibility of infiltration from Communist-dominated Tibet. Considering the paramount influence exercised by the church of Tibet over that of Ladākh, it would appear that the Chinese Communists might be in a position to extend their sway over Ladākhī Lamaism if they succeeded in gaining control of Tibetan Lamaism and converted it into an apparatus for political domination of the country. Even if the Ladākhī hierarchy should remain free from such domination, the Communists might exploit the latent discontent of the peasants. In the spring of 1952, rumors indicated that Communist agitators from western Tibet had crossed into Ladākh. 48/

The disturbances of recent years have been blamed on "outsiders," but these seem to have been persons who came in with the Kashmir-Indian administration rather than Communists. Kausahak Bakula, the head lama of Spitok, is the principal spokesman for the Ladākh hierarchy and the most important political figure in the country. In the spring of 1952, he criticized the Kashmir Government for alleged discriminatory practices against Ladākh and for not allowing greater representation for the frontier area in the Kashmir legislature. He pointed out that Ladākh was linguistically and culturally different from most of the remainder of Kashmir, and requested that Ladākh be granted autonomy under Kashmir or that Ladākh accede to India directly as an area independent of Kashmir. On other occasions the Lama, however, has expressed his uneasiness at the proximity of the Communists in Tibet. His statements probably indicate the alarm with which the hierarchy views the reforms instituted by the Kashmir Government in Ladākh and the suspicion with which the Ladākhīs in general view the alien but dominant Kashmiri.

The nature of the Chinese threat to the frontier territories of Ladākh differs somewhat from the threat to Hunza and Nagir. In the case of Hunza and Nagir, a territorial and boundary dispute of long standing was inherited by the Chinese Communists; in the case of Ladākh, boundary disputes are of minor importance. The only dispute of consequence is that regarding the vacant lands north of the Karakoram Pass; along the frontier with Tibet, the disputes over territory were minor, even though the boundary was not defined. The Chinese have made no claim to territory in Ladākh. Aside from military action, any forward movement by the Chinese in this direction would probably depend upon their ability to infiltrate the lamaist organization or to exploit latent discontent with economic conditions on the part of the peasants. Any attempt to absorb eastern Ladākh and Baltistān into Chinese territories might be accompanied by the plea that kindred Tibetan peoples were being "liberated." Such a plea might have some weight with the Buddhist Ladākhīs. The Muslim

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Baltis and Dards, who outnumber the Ladākhis by a considerable margin, might feel little kinship to the Tibetans, but at the same time their feeling of identity with the Pakistanis would not be strong. The Communists might exploit the differences between the Shia and Sunni sects, as well as cultural differences, in order to drive a wedge between the Baltis and the Pakistanis.

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III. Western Himalayan Sector of the Border

A. Physical Setting

From the southeastern corner of Ladākh to the northwestern corner of Nepal the undefined Tibet-India border parallels the Great Himalaya Range. In this area the streams flowing down to the Indo-Gangetic plain from the Tibetan Plateau have cut the great rampart of the plateau into an intricate pattern of peaks and ridges, between which the stream valleys are deeply incised. In the numerous isolated valleys of this mountain zone dwell a group of peoples that display characteristics of both the Hindu culture of the plains and the Tibetan culture of the plateau but are distinct in many respects from both. Until the British conquest, these peoples were organized into a number of petty states and, in some areas, were under the domination of Tibet. Under independent India the mountain belt is divided, from northwest to southeast, among the states of Punjab, Himāchal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.

The mountain belt may be divided into four parallel zones: (1) the zone immediately to the northeast of the plains, including the comparatively low Siwālik Range; (2) a zone varying from 40 to 60 miles in width, containing peaks ranging from 6,000 to 15,000 feet in elevation and including "hill" lands behind the Siwāliks and the spurs extending southward from the peaks of the main range; (3) the main range, or the Great Himalaya, containing the snowy peaks with elevations generally over 20,000 feet; and (4) the zone including the water-parting range between the rivers that flow directly toward the plains and the rivers that flow in the trough of the Tibetan Plateau to the north of the Himalaya, the highest elevations of this zone being about 4,000 feet below the peaks of the main range. This water-parting range is considered by some authorities to be a southeastern extension of the Zāskār Range or Ladākh, and is so treated on the accompanying map (CIA 12128). 1/

The northwestern part of this mountain belt lies within the Indus drainage basin and the southeastern portion within the Ganges. The Sutlej River, tributary to the Indus, has its source near Lake Mānasarowar in Tibet, flows northwest along the north side of the Zāskār Range, then cuts across the mountain belt from east to west before entering the Punjab Plain (see Figure 9). With this exception, all the streams have their sources in the Zāskār and flow generally south or southwest, crossing the axis of the Great Himalaya. The great snowy peaks such as Badrīnāth (23,190 feet) and Nanda Devi (25,645 feet) are, therefore, not part of a continuous ridge but stand out as isolated mountains or groups of mountains separated by the deep transverse valleys of the rivers flowing from the Zāskār Range down to the plains. Southeast of the place where the Sutlej cuts across the mountain belt, each of the great peaks or groups of peaks has as its pedestal a ridge that is aligned parallel

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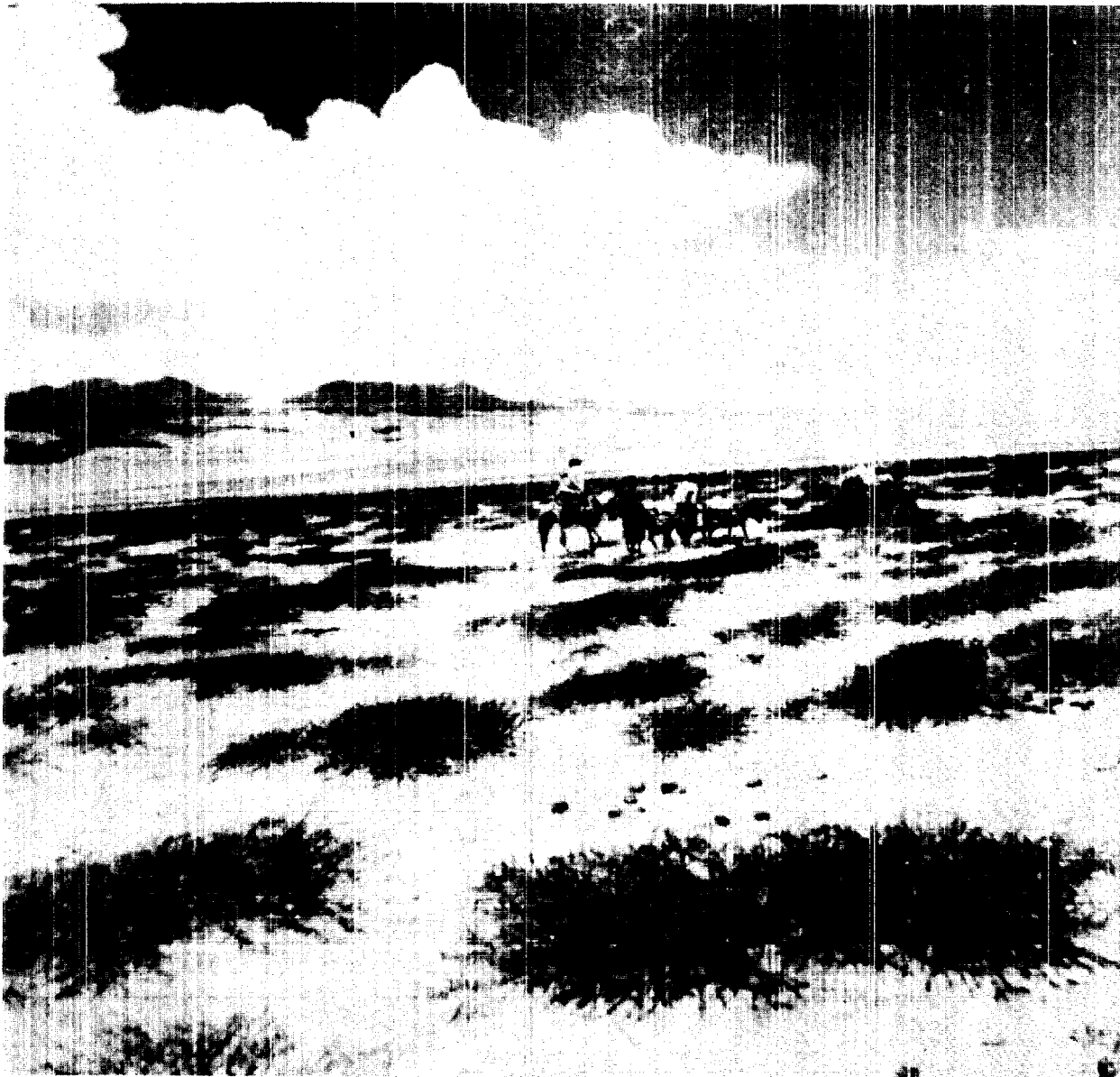


Figure 9. The Sutlej Valley immediately northwest of Mānasarowar Lake.

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to the transverse valleys and that extends southward from the Zāskār to a point somewhat south of the great peaks. To the north of the Sutlej crossing the distance between the Great Himalaya and the Zāskār Ranges is roughly 50 miles, and the interval is occupied by the valley of the Spiti River, a trans-Himalayan tributary of the Sutlej. To the south of the Sutlej crossing, the distance between the Great Himalaya and the Zāskār narrows to between 20 and 30 miles. Several passes cross the Zāskār Range at or near the heads of the transverse valleys. These include the Māna, the Nīti, the Kungribingri, and the Lipulek, which range in elevation from over 16,500 feet to 18,300 feet, and several others not shown on the accompanying map. A pass of a different type is the Shipki, which is at a much lower elevation (15,400 feet) than the others, being located in the gap where the Sutlej crosses the Zāskār Range. The boundary is considered by the British and the Indians to lie, in most places, along the axis of the Zāskār Range and at the points where the passes cross the range. 1, 49, 50/

The climate of the first two zones of the mountain belt -- the "hill" region -- is only slightly different from that of the plains of India. A cold season with relatively little precipitation lasts from October to March, a dry hot season from April to June, and a season of monsoon rain from July to September. The Great Himalaya Range limits the influence of the monsoon climate here just as it does in Kashmir to the northwest. On the south side of the range the luxuriant vegetation produced by the monsoon type of climate extends up to about 12,000 feet, and the line of permanent snow lies at about 15,500 feet. On the north side of the great peaks the sequence of seasons is generally the same as to the south, but the climate is much drier and cooler. Between the Great Himalaya and the Zāskār, however, there are considerable local differences due to differences in elevation. The valleys that open to the southward receive the influence of the seasonal moisture-bearing winds; places lying at higher elevations or behind the peaks receive much less precipitation. Approaching the crest of the Zāskār Range the amount of moisture brought by the monsoon is less and less, and only a few showers are received in the "rainy" season. To the north of the Great Himalaya the winter is rigorous. From mid-November to mid-April, all areas above 10,000 feet are buried under snow. The amount of snow that falls at this time is probably considerably greater than in drier Tibet to the north. During the dry summer the snow line retreats to 18,000 or 19,000 feet, and the force of the sun's rays in exposed situations is excessive. 50/ The luxuriant temperate forest of the hills southwest of the Great Himalaya is duplicated to the northeastward only in the lower parts of the valleys. The deodar, oak, and pine of the lowest elevations in the valleys give way at higher elevations to fir, spruce, beech, a different species of pine, and birch. Rhododendron and the dama are also found. Much of the area northeast of the Great Himalaya, however, consists of outcrops of bare solid rock or shale slope. 49/ The Spiti Valley is a desolate place, similar to much of Tibet proper and Ladākh.

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Transportation in the Himalayan border region is primitive, but almost the entire economy of the border dwellers is dependent upon the ability to move persons and goods along the narrow pack trails (see Figure 10). Railroads extend to the edge of the plains or into the lower hills as far as the hill stations such as Simla, Dehra Dūn, and Ramnagar. From the railheads, roads traversable by wheeled vehicles extend for some distance further into the hills to a few towns such as Almora. Above these towns and across the ranges into Tibet, pack trails are the only routes. In general the trails extend along the transverse valleys and across the passes in the Zāskār Range into Tibet. The so-called Hindustan-Lhasa trade route extends along the Sutlej River, across the Shipki Pass, and continues to Gartok, Tibet, but the trails crossing the other passes to the southeast of Shipki are of equal if not greater importance to the local traders of the border region. Along the trails pass the traders, herders, and peasants in their seasonal migrations from the high mountains to the plains. No major military expeditions have crossed this portion of the Himalaya, but trading caravans have crossed the passes during the summer months for many generations (see Figure 11). It would therefore appear entirely feasible for lightly equipped troops to move over the trails.* The effectiveness of such troops against determined and large-scale resistance upon reaching the lower hills or the plains would be problematical. Nevertheless, possession of the area between the Zāskār Range and the main axis of the Great Himalaya would be of value to the Chinese or any other power controlling Tibet. It would give them control of both sides of the passes leading from Tibet into India and would place them in favorable jump-off positions on the down-hill slope of trails leading through the lateral valleys down to the plains.

B. The People and Their Economic Activities

Geographically, the hill lands in general are unmistakably part of India, although lying at the fringes of Indian civilization. Located here are the famous hill stations such as Simla and Dehra Dūn, which serve as hot weather refuges for people from the plains. The people of the hills are for the most part Hindus. From the general vicinity of the Great Himalaya northeastward, however, in the zones of cooler and more arid climate and higher elevations, the Hindus give way to people who are more like the Tibetans in ancestry and culture. In general, these peoples live between the Great Himalaya and the Zāskār Ranges, but they are also found on the southwestern slopes of the Great Himalaya immediately to the south of the Kashmīr boundary. The zone between the Great Himalaya and the Zāskār, together with the nearby areas inhabited by peoples closely akin to the Tibetans, constitutes the real border region between India and Tibet in this sector.

* A Tibetan-Chinese army of possibly 12,000 invaded Nepal in 1792 and defeated the Gurkhas. The terrain in Nepal is somewhat similar to that in the area under discussion. 51/

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Figure 10. Laden goats going south from Tibet through the valley of the Dhaulī River.

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Figure 11. The Lipulek Pass.

One group of peoples related to the Tibetans inhabit the districts of Chamba and Lāhul south of Kashmīr, particularly the latter. The people are Buddhists, although the Buddhism is said to be considerably mixed with Hinduism. 52/ The dialect of Tibetan spoken is related to Ladākh and Balti, but the grammar shows traces of Aryan influences from other parts of India. Lāhul was conquered by Ladākh during the great days of that kingdom, but later came under the rule of Kulu to the south. Lāhul lies on the main trade route connecting Ladākh by way of the Bārā Lācha Pass with the plains of India and is also on a route that leads eastward through Spiti to Tibet. The British acquired Lāhul and Spiti in the 1840's in hopes that the route through Spiti would give them direct access to the western Tibetan wool-producing areas. Lāhul did attain considerable importance in the wool trade. An annual market was held at Patseo in Lāhul, to which the Changpas of eastern Ladākh and western Tibet and other shepherd groups brought their wool. A similar market was held in Spiti. The wool from Lāhul was taken southward to Kulu, where it was eventually bought by down-country purchasers for the Indian mills. The Kunāwaris of Bashahr State, southeast of Lāhul and now included in Himāchal Pradesh, acted as middlemen for a part of the trade coming south from Lāhul. 53, 54/

The isolated valley of Spiti, bordered on the north by Kashmīr and on the east by Tibet, is inhabited by Tibetans. It lies across the Himalaya from Lāhul. The people are Buddhists and speak a dialect of Tibetan related to that spoken in the neighboring part of Ladākh and to that of central Tibet. 55/ The several monasteries in the Spiti Valley own much of the land and absorb a large percentage of the male population and much of the meager resources of the valley.

One group living in Kunāwar in the former Bashahr State and the Jads of the Bhāgīrathi River valley in Tehri-Garhwāl District of Uttar Pradesh speak a dialect of Tibetan closely related to that of central Tibet. Farther down the Sutlej River in Kunāwar, however, the people speak one of the so-called Himalayan dialects. These dialects are classed with the Tibeto-Burman family of languages but are not actually similar to Tibetan. This Kunāwari (Kanāwari, Kanāuri) dialect possesses considerable traces of Mundā, the family of languages spoken in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Bengal. 55/ The Jads emigrated from Bashahr to the vicinity of Nilang, and from there have spread down the Bhāgīrathi Valley. Because of the former practice of buying Hindu slave girls from Tehri-Garhwāl, they are considerably mixed with elements from the lower hill districts. The Jads are migratory traders and cultivators like the Bhōtiā of Garhwāl and Almora Districts of Uttar Pradesh and are included among the Bhōtiā by some writers. Their annual cycle of trade and migration is treated along with that of the Bhōtiā in paragraphs to follow. Although both Hindu and Buddhist rites are practiced among the Jads, they also observe ceremonies of an older local religion. 49, 56/

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The Bhōtiā are divided into two groups -- (1) the western Bhōtiā who dwell in the valleys leading to the Māna and Nīti passes in Garhwāl and the valleys around Milam in northwestern Almora (see Figure 12), and (2) the eastern Bhōtiā of northeastern Almora in the valleys tributary to the Kāli River leading to the Dārma and Lipulek Passes. A rough estimate places their number at about 50,000. ^{57/} The term "Bhōtiā" is derived from the Tibetan name for Tibet (Bod-yul) and is applied by Hindus to several groups related to Tibetans but living in the confines of the Indian Subcontinent from Ladākh to Assam. The Bhōtiā of Garhwāl and Almora live in the tract described above, which is termed "Bhot" by the adjacent Hindu peoples. The limits of this tract cannot be defined with precision because there are considerable local differences between the different Bhōtiā groups and because, at the southern edges, there is considerable admixture with the people of the lower hills. Generally speaking, however, the Bhōtiās inhabit, as their home base, the valleys that cut across the Great Himalaya Range, from the points where these valleys intersect the axis of the range up to the passes leading over the Zāskār Range into Tibet. ^{49/}

The western Bhōtiā of Garhwāl speak the so-called Garhwāl dialect of Tibetan, similar to that of central Tibet. The same dialect is also spoken in portions of the western Bhōtiā area of Almora, but here the villages speaking Tibetan appear to be intermingled with villages that employ the tongue of their Khasia neighbors to the south. This is a Hindi dialect and is spoken by most of the hill peoples of Garhwāl and Almora.* Among the western Bhōtiā of Almora is also a group designated as the Jethora who speak Rangkas, one of the Himalayan dialects. The Jethora, unlike all other Bhōtiā, are settled cultivators, who neither engage in trade nor migrate with the seasons between higher and lower elevations. The eastern Bhōtiā of the northeastern corner of Almora are divided into three groups according to location, and a separate Himalayan dialect is identified for each. However, there seems to be little difference among the three dialects. The eastern Bhōtiā are considered to be less civilized than their western kinsmen and are looked down upon by the latter.

All of the Bhōtiā profess the Hindu religion and follow Hindu customs to a greater or lesser degree. The caste system is present in a rudimentary form, and certain conventions observed in the intercourse between the upper and lower castes resemble somewhat those of the orthodox Hindus of the plains. Their profession of trader conditions the observance of other conventions by the Bhōtiā, however. They dine and drink tea with

* Sources 41, 49, 50, and 55 disagree on several points regarding the Bhōtiās, such as the exact location of the Tibetan and the Khasia dialects in Almora and the number and identity of the castes of the Bhōtiā. Probably the intermingling of the Hindu and the Tibetan elements in the area makes precision difficult.



Figure 12. Milam, Gorigariga Valley, India.

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the cow-killing Tibetans with whom they have business dealings, which many orthodox plains Hindus would not do. For this reason the Hindus of the plains will not generally eat with the Bhōtiā. ^{41/} Greater importance is attached by the Bhōtiā to local deities and less to the great gods of the Hindu pantheon than is the case in the plains. With the exception of the famous hill temples (mentioned below), the shrines erected by the Bhōtiās are of the simplest sort. In the early part of the present century, vestiges of an older religion reportedly still lingered in the more remote valleys. ^{58/} The Bhōtiā practice polygamy and monogamy as do other Hindus.

There is a tradition among the Bhōtiā that their ancestors were Rajputs who lived in India at an early period but migrated to Tibet and, after several generations, returned southward and settled in the Himalayan borderland. The tradition is given some support by Chinese and Tibetan writings, which mention the early existence of Rajput colonies in Tibet. Assuming that the tradition is true, the original Rajput strain must have mixed with the Tibetan, since evidences of the Rajput strain have disappeared in the descendants. In physical features the Bhōtiā are now much more like Tibetans than the hill or plains dwellers to the south. ^{49/} It may be that the eastern Bhōtiā, the western Bhōtiā, the Jethora, or subdivisions within these groups, represent different waves of migration. In addition to the Bhōtiā, there are in the border area a considerable number of inhabitants who came from Tibet proper or whose ancestors a few generations back came from eastern Tibet. The term Khampa is applied to this group, and its members are considered temporary sojourners even though they may have lived in the area all their lives. In the Kāli Valley, there is one village of converts to Islam.

The mountain districts of Uttar Pradesh and the not far distant area of Mt. Kailās (see Figure 13) and Mānasarowar Lake in Tibet are considered to be holy places by both Hindus and Buddhists. Many of the Hindu gods are believed to have dwelt in the Indian hills, and a number of temples have been erected at the scenes of their exploits. Since the same deities are revered in both the Hindu and the Buddhist religions and since the hill region was once dominated by Buddhism before it was again reclaimed for Hinduism, the temples are used by both religions. The temple of Badrināth in Garhwāl, probably originally erected in the eighth century A.D., is the most famous. It is dedicated to one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Every year, thousands of pilgrims visit this shrine to worship and bathe in the adjoining hot spring, acts which are supposed to gain particular merit for the devotee. Many also make a circuit of several other temples in the vicinity on their pilgrimage. Gifts are brought to the Badrināth temple both by the pilgrims from India and by lama delegations from Tibet.

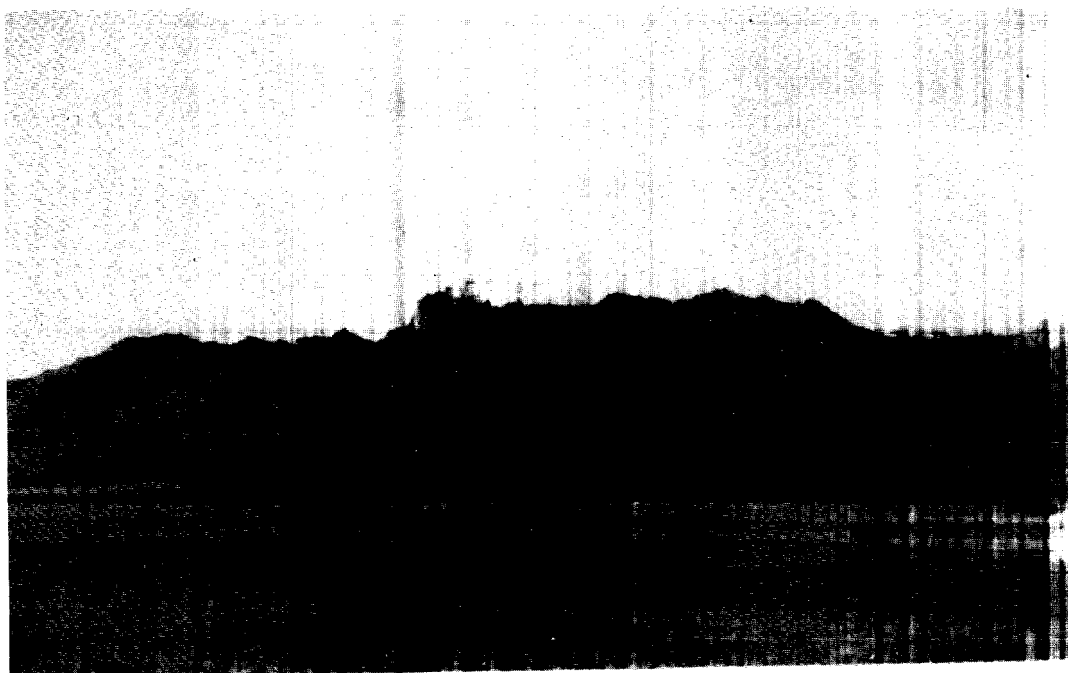


Figure 13. Mt. Kailās, Tibet, showing a possible
landing site immediately below the mountain.

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Mt. Kailās and Mānasarowar Lake are also the objects of pilgrimage by persons from India, who make the difficult journey over the Himalaya and into Tibet by way of the Lipulek and other adjacent passes. Hindu and Buddhist writings describe Kailās as the hub of the shaft on which the wheel of the universe rests. Several years ago an airfield was built at Badrīnāth. Before the Communists invaded Tibet, some of the faithful hoped that air service could also be established to Kailās and Mānasarowar so that the rigors of the journey could be lessened for those who could afford air travel. 41, 49, 59/

The trade carried on by the Bhōtiā and related groups along the Tibetan border constitutes their most important economic activity, and they are even more dependent upon it than on agriculture for a living. This trade has been carried on for many generations, although the type and volume of commodities handled has varied to some extent over the years. The Bhōtiā are the exporters, importers, and middlemen for all the Tibetan trade of this part of India. To Tibet they carry barley, wheat, rice, manufactured piece goods, utensils, Chinese tea, and other items; from Tibet they bring salt, borax, wool, coarse Tibetan blankets, sheep, goats, ponies, and the skins of such wild animals as the snow leopard, lynx, snow marten, and musk deer.

By customs in force for a long period of time, the Bhōtiā enjoy a monopoly of all the trade passing into Tibet across their section of the frontier. The Bhōtiā of any given locality in India are restricted in their trading operations to specified markets in western Tibet, and individual traders are, in many cases, restricted in their dealings to certain correspondents in Tibet. Apparently, however, Tibetan traders are allowed to cross the passes and bring goods into the border region. The mandi or market at Tāklākot, Tibet, is one of the more famous, perhaps because it is on the pilgrim route from India to Kailās (see Figure 14). The eastern Bhōtiā enjoy the monopoly of trade with this place. From the standpoint of volume of trade, the mandi at Gyanyima, which is frequented by the Bhōtiā of Milam and the adjacent areas, is the most important. In former years, an annual business of about 25 lakhs of rupees (approximately \$525,000) was done here. Other important mandis are at Chhakra, where the eastern Bhōtiā trade, and at Nabra, used by the Jads and Bhōtiā of Garhwāl. Traders from Jad villages, from Fashahr, and some of those from Garhwāl go to a place named Chaprang. All of the Bhōtiā apparently have the privilege of trading at Gartok, the summer capital of the viceroy of western Tibet. A number of mandis of lesser importance are also found throughout the area. 41, 58/

Mandis are held every summer for periods ranging from 2 weeks to 5 months, at which time the nomadic shepherds of Tibet and Tibetan dealers meet the Bhōtiā traders from over the passes. For most of the remainder of the year the passes are under snow and no trade southward

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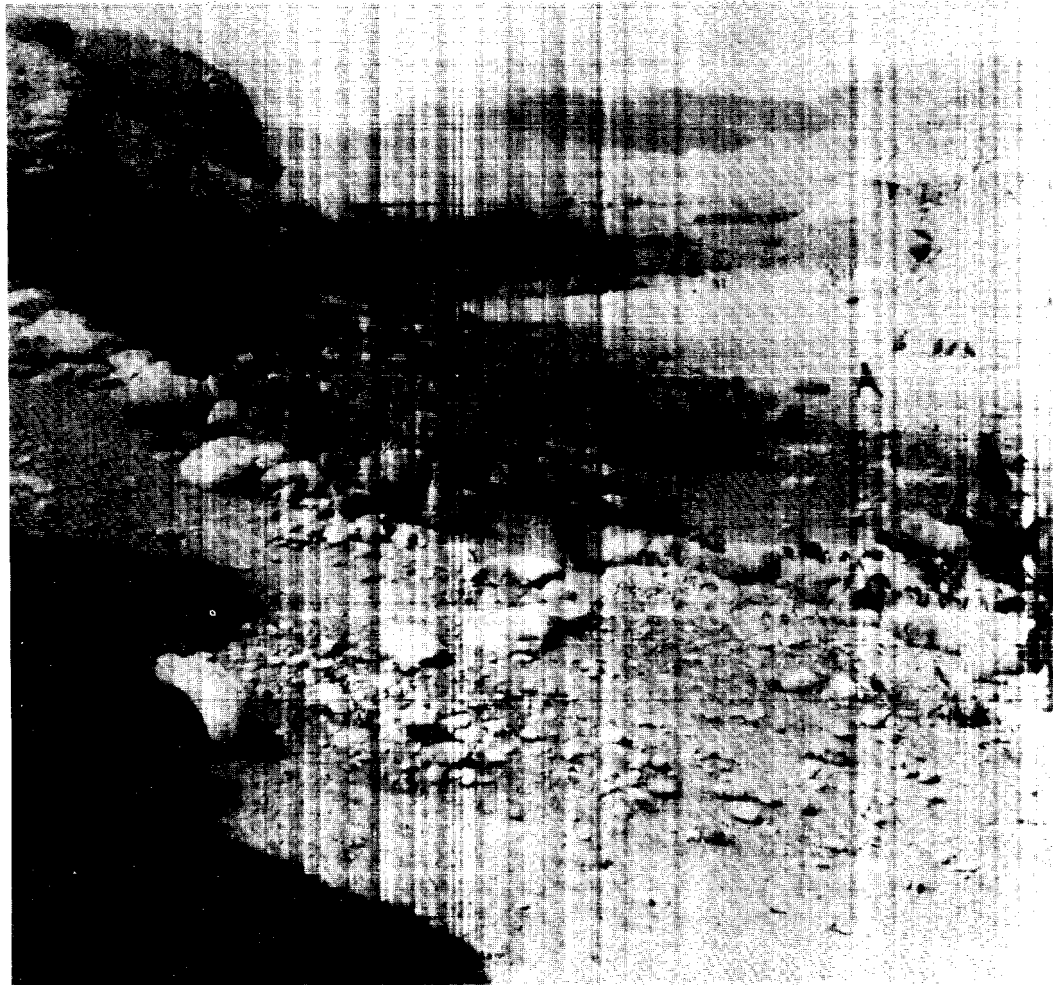


Figure 14. Tāklākot mandi (market), Tibet.

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can be conducted. The Bhōtiā combine their trading operations with their regime of annual migration in a remarkably well coordinated system. During the trading season from about June or July to October, the principal men and the women and children occupy the home villages in the upper valleys between the Himalaya and the Zāskār Ranges, while most of the men shuttle back and forth from the villages to the marts in Tibet. The women and children tend the crops. About October, before snow covers the upper valleys, the entire villages (except for a few caretakers or old persons) migrate to points lower down near the foot of the Himalaya, taking with them the trading goods from Tibet. Here, in semipermanent encampments, are their winter quarters. During the fall and early winter the men barter the wool and other Tibetan goods for Indian goods at various fairs that are held in the middle and lower hills and make side excursions to hill villages to barter Tibetan salt and wool. The women stay in the winter quarters to weave and take care of the flocks of sheep, goats, and other stock. As winter advances the men go farther south to the railheads or even to the ports to secure goods for the coming season's trade. In the spring and early summer, purchases of grain are made in the hill villages to supplement grain stocks that were secured farther south during the winter. In early summer, when the Bhōtiā make their upward migration, all the commodities intended for the coming season's trade are transported up to the home villages and stored. As soon as the passes into Tibet open the annual cycle starts over again. Sheep, goats, and jhibu (as the cross between the yak and the cow is called in this locality) are the principal means of transport in all these operations. 49, 60/ The Jads of Harsil village in the Bhāgīrathī Valley are almost exclusively traders, who do not own or cultivate any of the surrounding land. In this locality, there are three groups of annual migrants: (1) the Hindu peasants and landowners who come in the spring to raise a crop of hill rice or buckwheat during the short growing season and then retire southward; (2) the pastoral nomads who take their flocks into the surrounding alpine pastures during the summer and descend to the lower hills for the winter; and (3) the Jad traders who occupy Harsil in summer to conduct the trade with Tibet. 56/

For the Bhōtiā, agriculture is of secondary importance. Cropland in the precipitous upper valleys is scarce, and that available is dry and stony. Irrigation is practiced to some extent. The well-to-do Bhōtiā, such as those of Milam, have the plowing done by hired servants; the crops are sown and harvested mostly by the women and children. The principal crops are barley, buckwheat, amaranth, turnips, leeks, and potatoes. In the extreme north, buckwheat only is grown. Sowing is generally completed by the first week of June, and the crop is ready for harvest about the middle of September. 49/ Occasionally, a succession of unusually severe winters makes crop production impossible in some of the more exposed villages. Although the Bhōtiā raise livestock for food, clothing, and transport, they do not always have enough pack animals and at times must purchase stock from Tibet or other parts of the highland area.

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S-E-C-R-E-TC. Political Influences

The Bhōtiā tract apparently belonged to Tibet until about the seventeenth century, although written evidence to this effect seems to be lacking. At about that time, Garhwāl became consolidated under a dynasty having its capital at Srīnagar on the Alaknanda River,* and the Chand dynasty of Almora secured the central and western Bhōtiā valleys of that district. The eastern Bhōtiā area remained subject to a state in western Nepal. The Hindu states of the sub-Himalaya region, however, were often turbulent and weak and unable to hold the frontier areas firmly. The Bhōtiā, therefore, acknowledged the supremacy of states on both sides of the mountains impartially; a situation that was no doubt encouraged by their trading interests in both territories. About 1790, the entire Bhōtiā area was conquered by the Gurkhas, who held it until 1815, when the British became supreme. Under the Gurkhas the Bhōtiās were subject to ruinous taxation on their trade. The indefinite sovereignty status of the Bhōtiā continued under the British. Although the British authorities discontinued the ruinous taxation imposed by the Gurkhas, they claimed the territory up to the watershed in the Zāskār as part of India. The Tibetans, on the other hand, continued to claim jurisdiction down to about the axis of the Great Himalaya. ^{49/} Local officials in southern Tibet were most concerned with the exercise of this jurisdiction, the authorities in Lhasa and Peking apparently paying little attention to the claims. That is probably the reason why Chinese maps show the India-Tibet boundary in this area as extending generally along the crest of the Great Himalaya, in substantial agreement with many British and Indian maps, and generally do not indicate a Chinese claim south of the crest.

Tibetan administration gradually disappeared from the Bhōtiā area, but quarrels among the Bhōtiā continued to be settled in Tibetan courts until near the turn of the present century, and local officials in Tibet continued to collect taxes and imposts. The levies included a land tax, a grazing tax, and a poll tax on certain classes. Some of these taxes were received at the opening of the trading season by a Tibetan functionary who came to officiate at the ceremony of opening the pass. A transit duty of 10 percent and certain other stated import duties were levied at the first place of call of the Bhōtiās after they entered Tibet. The Bhōtiā villages nearest the passes were exempt from some of the taxes and were also allowed to collect an import tax from Tibetan traders passing south into India. The Bhōtiā apparently were satisfied with these arrangements since, except for the transit duties levied in Tibet, the imposts were not burdensome. About the 1870's, the British ordered the Bhōtiās to cease imposing the import tax on Tibetan traders. The British found the Tibetans less accommodating, however. The complacent belief was current among the

* Not to be confused with Srīnagar, Kashmīr.

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British that western Tibet was entirely dependent upon the grain brought by the traders from India and that the people of western Tibet would starve if this trade were stopped. Later the British decreed that no more taxes were to be paid to the Tibetans, whereupon the latter stopped all trade into Tibet. The British found that the Bhōtiā were as dependent upon Tibetan trade as the Tibetans were on Indian grain. The Bhōtiā, at their own urgent request, were allowed to pay the taxes and resume the trade. 50/ As late as the 1930's and 1940's, the Tibetans continued their attempts to collect taxes in areas claimed by the British. From 1914 to 1940, for instance, protests and counter protests were issued by British and Tibetan officials regarding Tibetan occupation and collection of taxes in a small area of upper Tehri-Garhwāl, possibly near Nilang. 36/ By an agreement of 1904, the British were allowed to station a trade agent in western Tibet, with headquarters at Gartok, for the 6 months of the trading season to look after the interests of the traders and pilgrims from India. The complaint was made that this official was of only nominal assistance to the Indians. Traders and pilgrims visiting western Tibet were often exposed to robbery by bands of Tibetans, who were alternately shepherds and bandits, and the British trade agent was unable to prevent the brigandage. The condition continued after the British trade agent was superseded by an Indian trade agent. 41/

Since the Chinese Communists have taken over western Tibet and established garrisons at Tāklākot and possibly other points near Indian territory, the old problems regarding the border have been aggravated and new ones have been added. The activities of the Communists with respect to the border areas fall into three general categories: (1) reassertion of the old Tibetan claims to territory and taxes, (2) harassment of the Indian traders and pilgrims crossing the frontier, and (3) infiltration of the Indian border areas by Communist agents and propagandizing of the frontier population.

In 1951 and 1952, Indian newspapers reported that Tibetan officials and Chinese Communists were penetrating southward from the Zāskār passes to collect "tribute" and lay claim to territory. The Chinese Communists were said to have put forward a claim in Badrīnāth on the grounds that it was once administered by the Toling monastery of Tibet or sent gifts to the monastery. Tibetan authorities were reported to have extended their tax collections to a village in the vicinity of Badrīnāth and Nilang and to another village in Tehri-Garhwāl, as well as several villages in Almora. One Indian long familiar with the area was inclined to think, however, that the activity reported was nothing more than the normal collection of taxes by the Tibetans. He discounted journalistic stories regarding the existence of a Tibetan boundary marker at Balml Dhunga south of the Lipulek Pass, and pointed out that prayer flags left by passing Tibetan pilgrims and mani walls erected by them might have been mistaken for boundary markers. Nevertheless, he suggested that, in areas where

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Tibetan officials were accustomed to come down into Bhōtiā areas to collect taxes, arrangements should be made for local Bhōtiā officials to pay these taxes in Tibetan territory. There would then be no excuse for the Tibetans to penetrate south of the passes. Furthermore, if reports of the existence of boundary stones proved to be true, the Indian recommended that these stones should be quietly removed. The Uttar Pradesh Government has established a border guard and set up a system of permits for persons crossing the border. 61/

Chinese Communist authorities have placed many restrictions on the Bhōtiā merchants and Indian pilgrims entering Tibet. At best, these are regarded by the Indians as disrupting to the customary methods of conducting trade and travel and, at worst, as arbitrary and oppressive measures designed to ruin the merchants. Chinese Communist officers have entered the trade on their own account. By exerting pressure on the Tibetans, the Chinese Communist officers have secured a large portion of the salt and wool trade and, by intimidating the Bhōtiā traders bringing grain into Tibet, have forced them to sell the grain below the market price -- thus causing considerable losses to the Bhōtiā. Numerous check points were set up on the trails leading to the mandis and places of pilgrimage, and the Indians were subjected to delays and humiliating treatment. During 1951, the Indians were allowed to carry firearms but the next year this privilege was revoked. Consequently the Indians were forced to go unarmed through bandit-ridden territory. The Indian trade agent was powerless to ameliorate this situation. 61/ Negotiations between India and Communist China took place in Peking at the end of 1953 and in early 1954 regarding frontier relations, and it appeared that India might give up all or many of the trading privileges it had previously enjoyed in Tibet.

If the Chinese Communists have antagonized the Bhōtiā traders, who represent in general the more well-to-do segments of the frontier society, they have also set about to woo the ordinary peasants and hillmen. Communist agents have infiltrated the hill and mountain areas to spread discontent and plant the seeds of Communism. They are trained in Tibet and take advantage of the constant movement of Tibetan peoples across the frontier to make their journeys. The Communist agents travel into India in the guise of pilgrims going to the mountain shrines or perhaps along with Khampa groups, who move about freely in the border area. The border surveillance set up by Indian authorities appears to have little effect in stopping the movement of agents. The agents readily make contacts among the several Tibetan or Tibetan-affiliated groups. They exploit existing friction between landlords and peasants and play upon dissatisfaction regarding the lack of roads and educational facilities and the general poverty of the remote hill and mountain areas. It is said that the propaganda is having considerable success, especially in impoverished Spiti. The influence of the propaganda is also being felt in areas nearer the plain, such as Kulu. At the same time the Indian Communist party has

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established a headquarters at Rāmpur in Himāchal Pradesh. 62, 63, 64/ Indians familiar with the border area have urged the use of more forceful steps to counteract the Communist propaganda -- the sending of Hindu religious men and others familiar with the hill peoples into the region to conduct a campaign of counter-propaganda, the establishment of schools, the building of roads, and improvement in the quality of local administration.

The establishment of the Chinese Communists in the Tibet-India border area between Nepal and Ladākh would place them in a favorable position overlooking the plains of India. The penetration of the area by the Chinese or by Tibetan agents of the Chinese is facilitated by the age-long habits of circulation of nomads, traders, and pilgrims back and forth across the border. The physical obstacle of the great ranges does not greatly hamper activity of persons of this sort, who are accustomed to live in the high altitudes and to travel the trails across the passes. Contact with the inhabitants of the border region is not difficult to establish because many of the frontier peoples are like the Tibetans in language and customs. Although the Chinese do not have formal claims to territory south of the Zāskār Range, local Tibetan officials have collected taxes and exercised other types of jurisdiction in this area, and the Chinese might use this as the basis of a claim. Such activities also facilitate the other types of Chinese-Tibetan penetration of the border area. The Bhōtiās and the other groups who depend upon trade for their livelihood are at the mercy of the Chinese in Tibet for the continuance of trade. In the past the traders have sought to accommodate themselves to whatever political groups exercised control in Tibet or India in order to continue their traffic. It is possible that they might follow the same principle and attempt to come to an understanding with the Chinese Communists in Tibet if sufficiently hard pressed. On the other hand, the Bhōtiās are partially Hinduized and would not readily amalgamate with the Tibetans.

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IV. Conclusions

India and Pakistan are vulnerable to infiltration by Communist China in the border region extending from Afghanistan to Nepal. Although the great Central Asian Plateau has always hindered any major descent upon the plains of the Subcontinent from the interior of Asia, the great plateau and the mountain ramparts that gird it on the south have never presented insuperable obstacles to medium-sized military expeditions or trading caravans. The activity of the Chinese Communists in building roads and establishing airports in southern Sinkiang and western Tibet and the Indian and Pakistani construction of jeep roads, combined with the establishment of air routes, is bringing nearer the day when the greatest of all mountain masses will be crossed by modern transportation. Since the Chinese Communists are at present more aggressive than the Indians and Pakistani in the frontier region, they may be the ones who will benefit most from the development of modern transport.

The British, in their vigorous push northward from the plains of India in the last century, brought under their sway areas where cultural influences from the Subcontinent had only a tenuous hold and areas that were totally unrelated culturally to the Indians. India and Pakistan, beset with the many problems of becoming established as nations, are now left with the obligation to govern and defend these areas. The frontier areas do not, for the most part, feel any great kinship for the Indians and Pakistanis. At the same time the social and political upheavals that have taken place on either side of them are making the frontier peoples aware of maladjustments in their own societies and possibly more critical of any failure or supposed failure of India or Pakistan to fulfill its obligations.

The peoples on or near the Sinkiang-Pakistan frontier -- the Bushuro, Balti, and Dards -- differ from the plains Pakistani in nearly all respects. They are faced with poverty and overpopulation in their harsh environment but find that any assistance they can expect from Pakistan is slow to arrive. The ruler of Hunza, for instance, although he has thrown in his lot with Pakistan, discovers that Pakistan is unable to prevent Chinese Communist incursions along his northern frontier or to render his people much assistance in solving the problems of making a living in his overcrowded valley. The Chinese, who maintain a claim to a large part of Hunza, have brought intermittent pressure on the territory since the 1930's. In Tibetan-oriented Ladākh the Kashmīr Government, under the influence of India, attempted to bring relief to the landless, debt-ridden peasants by a redistribution of the large estates. This action has in part alienated the Buddhist clergy, who are among the principal landholders and bankers, without solving the basic difficulties of the peasants. The peasants are vulnerable to Communist propaganda from Tibet, and the clergy are strongly influenced by happenings to the hierarchy of the parent church in Tibet.

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A spokesman for the Ladākh clergy has even threatened that, under certain conditions, Ladākh might secede from Kashmīr and join Tibet.

The groups with Tibetan cultural heritage on the southern fringes of Ladākh -- in Spiti, Lāhul, and adjacent areas -- are being given the propaganda treatment by agents from Tibet, and the propaganda is reported to be taking effect. The infiltration of agents from Tibet is facilitated by the fact that the frontier is undefined and extends through a wild region difficult to police. Furthermore, the frontier peoples have been accustomed to pass in both directions across the frontier without much hindrance for many generations in order to conduct trade and make pilgrimages. Some of the groups subject to the propaganda campaign are landless peasants who, like those of Ladākh, must support the weight of the Buddhist monastic system. The appeal is not confined to the Buddhists, however, but is directed to all the lower classes of the mountain and hill districts.

In the trans-border trade the Chinese Communists have a potentially powerful means of bringing pressure on the frontier peoples. This is especially true of Leh, which before the upheavals of recent years owed a large part of its livelihood to the trade, and among the Bhōtiā and related groups of Himāchal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, whose entire way of life is based on the trade. The Tibetans might attempt to tighten their hold on the Bhōtiā by reasserting former claims to jurisdiction south of the Zāskār Range. The Bhōtiās, who are descendents of Tibetans who have been Hinduized, have always attempted to keep on good terms with states on both sides of the border. Complete stoppage of the trade would probably be as harmful to Tibet as to the border groups of Kashmīr and India. Even a partial disruption of the trade by additional taxes or regulations, however, would cause distress to the merchants, increase the economic difficulties of the border areas, and force India to assume an additional burden in order to prevent these areas from seeking accommodations with the Communists to the north.

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APPENDIX A

GAPS IN INTELLIGENCE

The region discussed in this report has been visited on many occasions by Europeans and Americans, and their writings give a good reconnaissance picture of the region. Since the region is difficult of access, however, it has not been subject to intensive scientific study or continuous observation. Some areas have been studied by many expeditions, whereas others have been visited by only a few and are much less well known in the outside world. Hunza, for instance, is a favorite target for explorers in this part of the world, whereas neighboring Nagir is off the beaten track and fewer writers have devoted attention to it. Detailed anthropological studies might serve to modify some of the conclusions reached regarding the peoples of the frontier region.

Current intelligence information on the frontier region is scanty, in part because the Indian and Pakistani governments have placed restrictions on travel by foreigners since the Chinese Communists have increased pressure on the area. On the Chinese side of the frontier the Communists have systematically attempted to block all sources of information.

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APPENDIX B

SOURCES AND EVALUATION OF SOURCES

1. Evaluation of Sources

The principal information for this report was gathered from general accounts of explorers, scholars, and government officials in the area; and from special studies in fields such as geology and languages and reports of American official personnel. Among the older general geographical and historical accounts are those of Drew (6), Francke (14), Cunningham (15), Atkinson (49), the Almora Gazetteer (50), and the Garhwāl Gazetteer (59). Valuable information on Ladākh and Baltistān is contained in the reports of the Italian expedition of 1913-14 as summarized in the volume by Filippi (24). More recent general accounts include those of Douglas (9) and Swami Pranavananda (41), the former being of value because of its discussion of present economic and social problems. Books by mountain climbers sometimes yield useful information on the inhabitants of surrounding areas. Murray (60) is in this category. Among the special studies, the classic account of the physical geography of the Himalayan region is that of Burrard and Hayden (1), although greater descriptive detail is available for selected areas as a result of later physiographic investigations such as those of de Terra (2). The survey of languages compiled by Grierson (55) is useful not only for that subject but also for other aspects of culture. D. L. R. Lorimer (27) and his wife, E. O. Lorimer (25) have written detailed studies of the Hunza area -- the former dealing with the Burushaski language and the latter with the customs of the people. Principal reliance for route information was placed on Mason (7) and the American Foreign Service Officer Paxton (8). On the subject of agriculture, Asboe (26) proved useful. In general the value of reports from American official personnel is limited by the fact that none of them are stationed in this region permanently and consequently must rely upon short trips and second-hand information. In the list of sources, numerical evaluations of individual citations are given only for intelligence reports from the field. Numerical evaluations are not given for published works since they are the basic sources of information on the area.

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2. Sources*

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* Evaluations following the classification entry and designated "Eval." have all been assigned by the author and have the following significance:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A - Completely reliable | 1 - Confirmed by other sources |
| B - Usually reliable | 2 - Probably true |
| C - Fairly reliable | 3 - Possibly true |
| D - Not usually reliable | 4 - Doubtful |
| E - Not reliable | 5 - Probably false |
| F - Cannot be judged | 6 - Cannot be judged |

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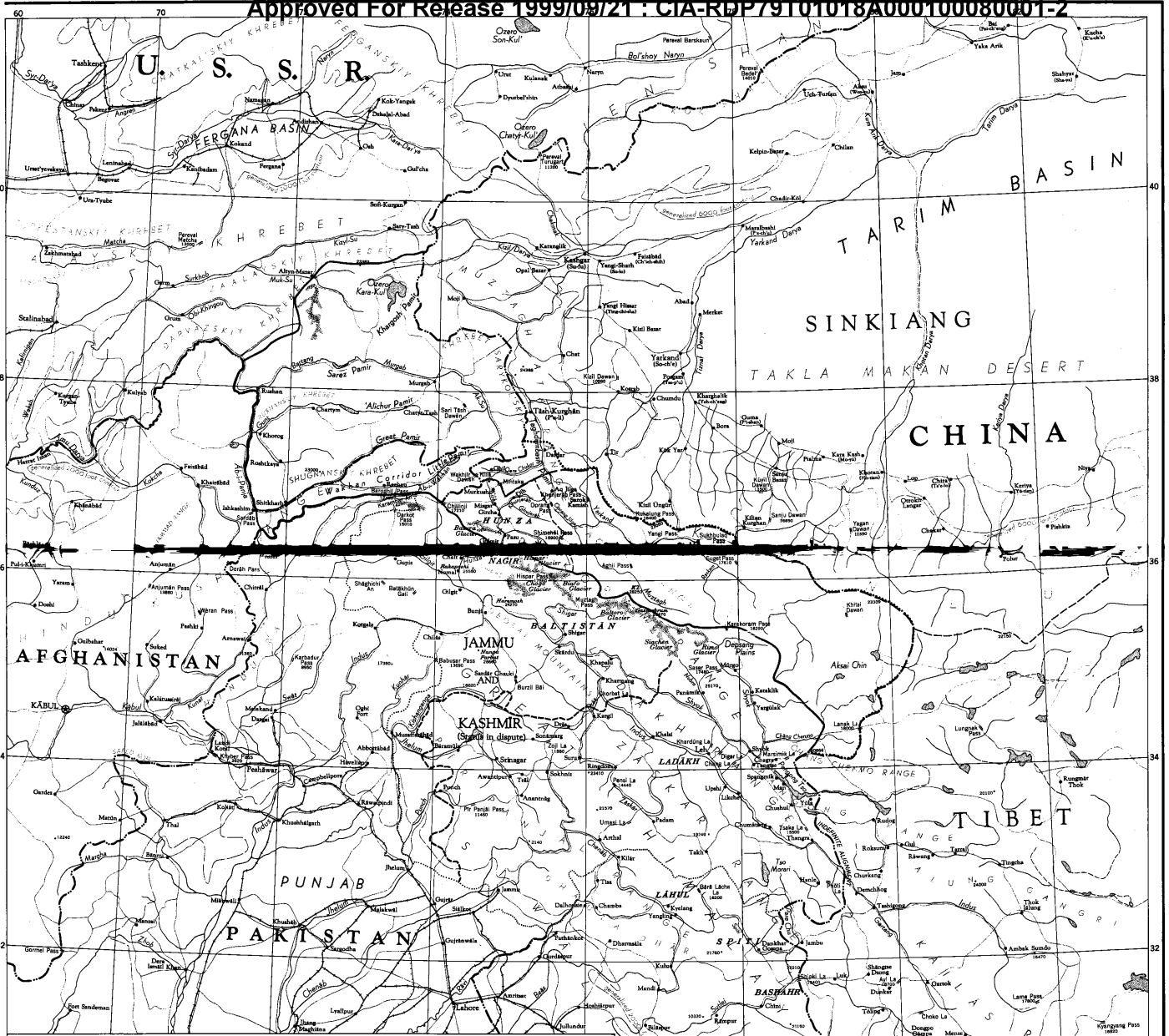
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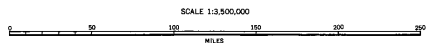
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SOUTHWESTERN BOUNDARY OF CHINA
Afghanistan to Nepal

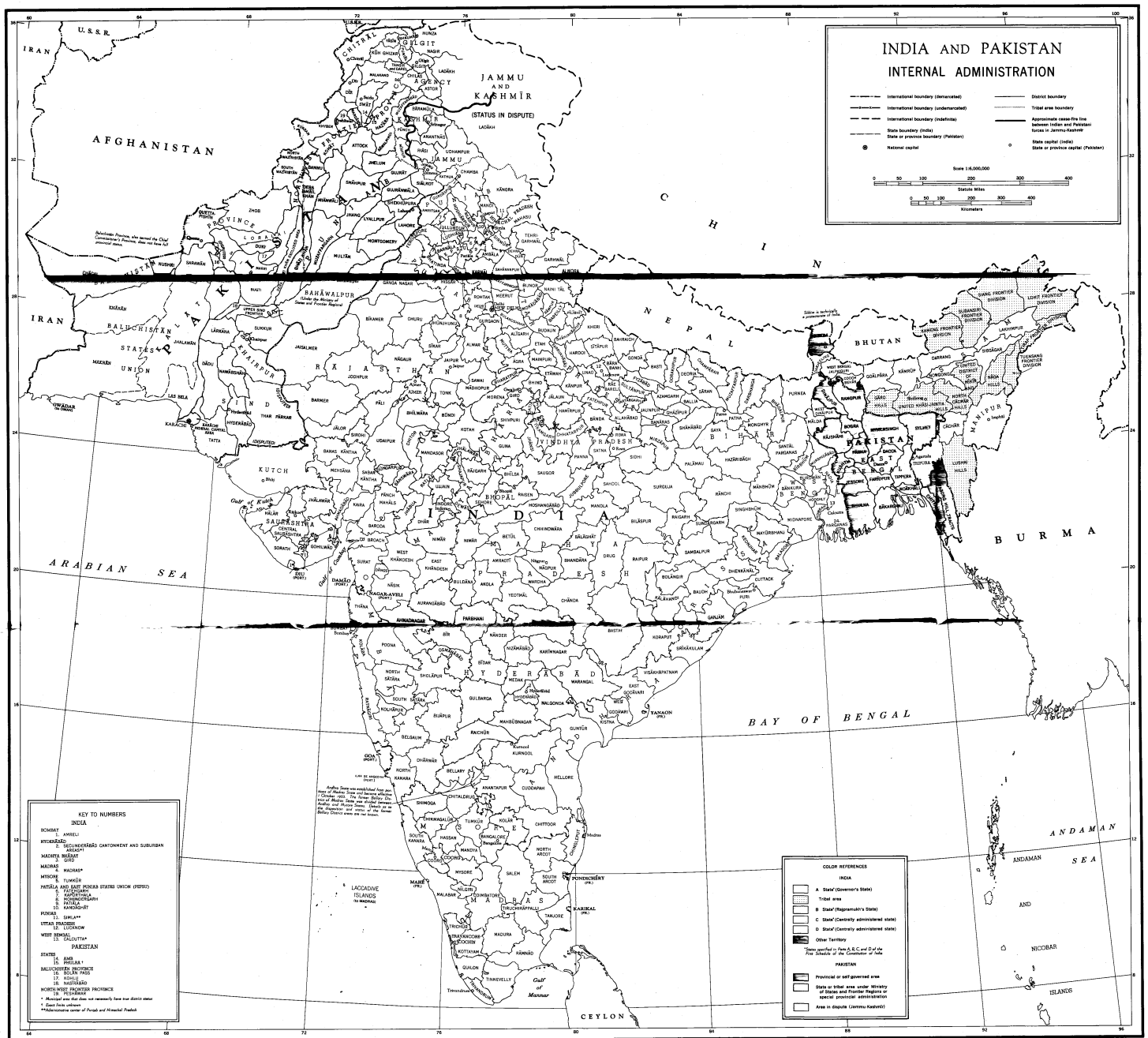
CHINA AND INDIA-PAKISTAN FRONTIER AREA

- A ——— Boundary shown on recent Chinese maps (approximate)
- B ——— Boundary in effect 1950 (approximate)
- C - - - - - Boundary indicated by Pakistan Foreign Office
- D ······ Boundary shown on some Pre-1951 Survey of India maps
- E - - - - - India-Pakistan cease-fire line
- F ——— Boundary in effect 1952
- Principal route
- Principal railroad
- Mountain pass
- Area above 18000 feet
- Spot height (in feet)



BASE: Highlevel of Tibet and Surrounding Region
1:2,500,000, Survey of India, 1943 edition

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THE SOUTHWESTERN FRONTIERS OF CHINA

Frontiers with Kashmir and India from Afghanistan to Nepal



CIA/RR-G-8

May 1954

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