Closing Windows on the Frontier:
Explaining China’s Settlement of Territorial Disputes

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Introduction

Based China’s increasing assertiveness towards Taiwan since the mid 1990s, scholars and policy-makers alike have concluded that China is especially prone to use force to settle its territorial conflicts. Segal, for example, posits “an irredentist China with a boulder rather than just a chip on its shoulder” that will seek to regain by force if necessary all territory ceded or lost by previous governments.1 In fact, however, the current tensions over Taiwan do not reflect China’s behavior in its other disputes over territory with neighboring states. As indicated in Figure One, although China has participated in 23 unique territorial disputes, China has defused or resolved the majority of them.2 Moreover, in resolving these disputes, China has usually pursued compromise agreements that divide contested territory and received a smaller share of land in the overall settlement. Why?

To explain this variation, I develop an opportunity cost model of territorial dispute settlement. In my model, leaders face strong incentives not to settle territorial disputes, lest they be punished at home or abandon an important international source of leverage. Facing these incentives, leaders will only settle territorial disputes when an increase in the opportunity costs of the dispute, such as poor relations with the opposing state, makes compromise more attractive. For China, ethnic geography shapes the underlying opportunity costs of its territorial disputes. China is much more likely to settle disputes over land frontiers in non-Han Chinese areas than disputes over Han Chinese areas or uninhabited offshore islands. Settlements occur when internal windows of vulnerability, such as border area instability or domestic political upheaval, suddenly and sharply increase

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2 A dispute is defused through a preliminary agreement on the principles for delimiting the disputed area. A dispute is resolved through a final treaty that includes detailed delimitation and demarcation of the disputed area.
the cost of disputing territory for China’s leaders. These windows constitute rapid internal decreases in China’s internal power, decreases that make territorial disputes more costly and settlements more attractive.

Examination of China’s territorial dispute settlements topic addresses a number of important issues. Territorial disputes are linked to basic questions about war and peace in international relations, questions that have assumed increasing importance with China’s rise over the past two decades. As China still participates in a number of hot disputes, especially over Taiwan and the Spratly Islands, the likelihood of violence remains. Analysis of China’s dispute settlements will enhance understanding of the conditions under which the possibility of war between states can be greatly reduced. More generally, this research should also increase understanding of the link between rising power and territorial expansion, as many of China’s disputes were settled in the 1990s, as its power crested. Finally, China’s behavior in its many territorial disputes has received little attention in the academic literature. The few published studies appeared more than three decades ago and focused on the dispute settlements in the early 1960s. With some exceptions, most recent work examines the issue from the perspective of international law and does not seek to explain the variation in China’s settlements over time.

To explain China’s behavior, I have adopted a comparative research design. In particular, I created a data-set for each of China’s 23 unique territorial disputes based on the negotiating record as well as China’s own decision-making process. To determine the causes of China’s territorial dispute settlements, I compared for each dispute the conditions preceding settlement with the conditions during the settlement phase, looking for similarities across all of the cases for periods of settlement versus non-settlement. I also compared the

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settlement process in both the 1960s and the 1990s to be sure that there was no bias based on time period. Because of China’s large the number unique disputes \( n = 23 \), I can have a high degree of confidence in my findings, especially since such these comparisons involve observations over 53 years of diplomatic history.

Several caveats are necessary before proceeding. First, this paper focuses on explaining the settlement strategies that leaders chose and the decision to compromise over territory. I do not try to explain when disputes do in fact become resolved through the successful conclusion of an agreement. Leaders choose different settlement strategies because they believe that these strategies will probably succeed. In the bargaining process, a number of different factors can lengthen the period of time between a settlement attempt and a final settlement. Second, I do not consider the initiation or escalation of China’s territorial disputes and limit my inquiry only to attempts to settle existing disputes. These are both important topics, but will not be covered in this paper.

The Puzzle

China’s settlement of disputes varies distinctly over time and by geography. As Figure Two demonstrates, China moved to settle most of its disputes in either the early 1960s or the early to mid 1990s. From 1960 to 1964, China settled disputes with Burma, Nepal, North Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and also conducted substantive talks with India and the Soviet Union (SU). From 1991 to 1999, China signed agreements defusing or resolving dispute with Laos, the SU, Vietnam, India, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Bhutan and Tajikistan. In other periods of time – throughout the 1950s and from the second half of the 1960s through the early 1990s – China made no effort to settle outstanding territorial disputes. While China did conduct talks with the SU and India, in the 1970s and 1980s, respectively, they focused on conflict management, not dispute settlement.

Moreover, most of the settlements occurred along China’s long land frontier. Fifteen of China’s 18 settlement attempts are linked to disputes over territory along its land borders, including all of the disputes settled in the early 1960s and the early to mid-1990s. Moreover, these land disputes were all settled through compromise agreements, where China
made significant concessions to neighboring states. In particular, China both abandoned claims to territory that had been lost by previous governments, especially the Qing dynasty, and agreed to divide control over contested land. In most cases, as demonstrated in Figure Three, China has usually received less than half of the contested land in the final settlement.5

Three exceptions exist to the pattern of timing and territorial compromise. Disputes over Hong Kong and Macao were settled in the early 1980s but without any compromise over territorial sovereignty by China. In both cases, China received 100 percent of the contested land. The dispute over White Dragon Island in the Tonkin Gulf was settled in 1957, when China transferred it to North Vietnam. Other offshore island disputes, including the Paracel, Spratly and Senkaku islands, have not only not been settled, but have never been the subject of negotiations aimed at producing a settlement. Rather, China has consistently sought to delay these disputes. Likewise, and not surprisingly, Taiwan, China’s most important territorial dispute, remains unresolved.

China’s territorial dispute behavior challenges both realist and constructivist approaches to international relations. Based on its capabilities and power asymmetries, realist arguments might predict that China would pursue maximal territorial demands frequently backed by the threat or use of force. Following the dramatic increase in Chinese power over the past two decades, realists might further expect that China would not only become more coercive in the pursuit of its existing disputes, but also increase the scope of the claims that it pressed. Despite a surplus of relative power, China has frequently settled disputes through compromise agreements in which it relinquished the majority of its claim. Likewise, China’s recent rise in the past two decades has generally not led to increased assertiveness or broadened demands over territory, as roughly half of China’s territorial disputes were defused or settled through compromise agreements as Chinese power crested in the 1990s.

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5 This figure is based on what was claimed by both sides and represents the amount of the claimed area that was received in the final settlement. It does necessarily represent the actual transfer of territory, as the territorial status quo before an agreement is almost impossible determine, even when using historical sources.
China’s pattern of behavior also challenges constructivist approaches to international relations that explain state actions in terms of national identity or culture. Soon after the establishment of the Qing Dynasty in 1644, the empire grew to control territory in parts of contemporary Russia, Central Asia, the Himalayas and continental Southeast Asia. By the late 1800s, however, China’s geographical scope contracted with the growing weakness of the imperial system. Through unequal treaties coerced by outside powers and the colonization of tributary states on its periphery, China ‘lost’ considerable amounts of territory. Combined with the establishment of foreign spheres of influence, this ‘century of national humiliation’ sparked an aggrieved nationalism that has identified numerous irredentist claims that China could pursue today. The central role of territorial loss in this shared identity suggests that disputes over territory should be highly salient for China’s leaders and thus basically an issue that is both non-negotiable and prone to the use of force. Nevertheless, China has settled most of its existing territorial disputes by abandoning broad claims, recognizing borders established by unequal treaties and receiving a smaller share of disputed land in the final settlement.

In addition to challenging both power-based and constructivist approaches, China’s pattern of behavior does not appear to be well explained by any of the common variables used in the general study of territorial disputes.6 Table One depicts these variables and settlement attempts. None of the characteristics of the disputes or the states that appear in the literature are systematically related with China’s settlement attempts. Traits of both the opposing state (regime type, regime ideology from a socialist perspective, alliances) and of the dispute (size of dispute, strategic value, economic value, prior agreement, ethnic ties) are not systematically related to China’s settlement attempts since 1949.

An Opportunity Cost Model of Territorial Dispute Settlement

To date, much of the literature on territorial disputes has focused on explaining dispute initiation and escalation. This research program, which emerged from statistical studies of war initiation and enduring rivalries, examines the relationship between the

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presence of a territorial dispute and crisis escalation, including war.7 Through this research program, scholars have used a variety of quantitative methods to demonstrate how conflicts over territory are more likely than other disputes to reach higher levels of hostility and how territorial disputes perpetuate enduring rivalries.

While this literature has produced interesting results concerning territorial disputes and the outbreak of war, it largely overlooks the conditions under which states settle territorial disputes. One scholar that does examine an aspect of dispute settlement is Kacowicz, who explains peaceful territorial change through the interaction of six background conditions and four process variables.8 Kacowicz argues that such changes are most likely under an asymmetrical distribution of power, homogenous regime type and a convergence on international norms. However, the object of inquiry, peaceful territorial change, focuses on the transfer of territory, not specifically on the settlement of existing disputes. In other words, this study includes cases such as the Louisiana Purchase, which cannot be readily viewed as a territorial dispute, and excludes coerced changes, such as the territorial treaties imposed on China by Tsarist Russia.

Another scholar that examines dispute settlement is Huth, who offers a ‘modified realist model’ that incorporates aspects of domestic politics to explain territorial dispute initiation, escalation and resolution.9 With respect to settlement, Huth’s findings include both incentives and disincentives for dispute resolution. In general, Huth reports that there are strong domestic incentives for leaders not to compromise over existing disputes, either because of the underlying importance of the disputed territory for strategic, nationalist and political unification reasons or because of a history of rivalry and mistrust with the opposing state. The one exception would be disputes over economically valuable territory, where compromise settlements are more likely because the prize is more readily divisible. Huth concludes that the strongest link to settlement comes from the international political

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9 Huth, Standing Your Ground.
environment, especially when a state is involved in multiple territorial disputes or is in an alliance with the opposing state. However, other systemic variables, such as military capabilities, are negatively related with settlement, as stronger states are less likely to settle their disputes. The only domestic variable positively associated with settlement is regime type, as democracies are more likely to seek compromise agreements than non-democracies.

Building on Huth and Kacowicz, I propose a model of territorial dispute settlement based on the opportunity costs of these disputes. My model of territorial dispute settlement expands upon Huth’s assumption that leaders face strong incentives to not to settle territorial disputes. Domestically, territorial claims resonate with the core interest of a nation and fundamental questions of national sovereignty. Leaders have strong incentives to stand firm in such disputes lest they be labeled by political rivals as traitors or unpatriotic and face potential removal from office. Leaders have little or nothing to gain domestically by compromising in a territorial dispute. Likewise, internationally, an unsettled dispute often provides bargaining leverage against the opposing state, especially potential or current rivals. After settling a dispute, this card becomes much more costly to play, as it would require abrogating a treaty or international agreement. Based on these incentives, leaders will prefer to postpone consideration of a settlement and wait for the other side to make a concession.

In Table Two, the following stylized game demonstrates how these incentives induce leaders to delay the settlement of disputes. Leaders whose states are involved in a territorial dispute will always prefer that the opposing leader make a concession while they stand firm and concede nothing. In the game, state $A$ receives a payoff of 1 for standing firm while state $B$ receives nothing for making a concession in the dispute. Regardless of the underlying value of the disputed territory, leaders will not want to appear weak by backing down from an existing claim to territory. Moreover, as in the classic prisoner’s dilemma, both leaders would receive some positive payoff for conceding if the opposing state also concedes, but this would be less than standing firm when the opposing leader compromises. What varies in this interaction is leaders’ value for standing firm, which can also be thought of as the value for making a concession in the dispute. When leaders negatively value making a concession, when $p_i > 0$, the dominant strategy in the game will be for leaders from

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10 For a discussion of these incentives, see Huth, *Standing Your Ground*, pp. 41-43.
both sides to delay settlement of the dispute. When one or both leaders positively value making a concession, when $p < 0$, this dominant strategy no longer holds and a settlement occurs.\textsuperscript{11}

### Table Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader ( A )</th>
<th>Make Concessions</th>
<th>Stand Firm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make Concessions</td>
<td>( \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{2} )</td>
<td>0, 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand Firm</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td>( p_a, p_b )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Explanations of territorial dispute settlement must examine the conditions that compel leaders to overcome the incentive to delay – that is, the conditions that make otherwise costly concessions attractive. However, in contrast to the existing literature, such a change is not likely to stem from most commonly cited variables, namely the attributes of the dispute areas. Huth concludes, for example, that states are more likely to settle disputes over territories with economic value than those with strategic value, linked to national unification or bordering minorities.\textsuperscript{12} Most attributes are relatively constant over the duration of the dispute and thus cannot explain variation in settlement attempts. At most, examination of the attributes of a dispute can shed light on the necessary conditions or underlying probability of a settlement. Some disputes might have a much lower probability of compromise than others, especially those disputes that are deemed indivisible.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Of course, this value is not the same for all types of disputes. The mean value for standing firm can vary by the type of territorial dispute.
\item Huth, \textit{Standing Your Ground}, pp. 141-179.
\item On the indivisibility of territorial disputes, see Walter, Toft and Hassner
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Rather, compromise becomes more attractive when the opportunity costs of disputing territory increases. By opportunity costs, I mean what is lost or forgone by leaders for disputing territory with another state, namely the price that leaders pay being in a dispute. States usually bear at least three types of opportunity costs for disputing territory. The first type of opportunity cost is diplomatic, which refers to the negative impact that disputing territory has on the bilateral relationship with the opposing state in the dispute as well as other neighbors. Dispute that block more cooperation have a higher opportunity cost than those that do not, depending on the type of dispute. Disputes with alliance partners or potential partners, for example, are more costly than disputes with rivals. The second type of opportunity costs that states might bear for being in a territorial dispute is lost trade that might have otherwise occurred in the absence of a dispute. This type of cost is perhaps more relevant to disputes that occur along a common land border, especially those that bisect areas with a high degree of economic or social integration. The greater the volume of lost trade as a result of the dispute (through embargos, sealed borders or frozen relations), the higher the opportunity cost. The third type of opportunity cost that states might bear for disputing territory is the resources that a state must devote to supporting its claim, which include military resources and internal political resources. Territorial claims that require more resources to support will have a higher opportunity cost.

For many types of conflicts, sharp increases in one or more of these costs should change the context of the dispute and make concessions or compromise more attractive. Attempts to settle territorial disputes are most likely to follow significant and sudden increases in these costs. Such shifts in costs could occur as a result of major domestic or international events, which borrowing from the literature on preventive war can be thought of as windows of vulnerability.\textsuperscript{14} Of course, the causal effect of such windows will depend not just on the nature of changing costs, but also the nature of the dispute. There may be some types of disputes, such as homeland or heartland disputes, where leaders will pay almost any price and have little or no value for compromise and concession. Other disputes, however, may have a much larger win-set.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{15} As implied above, this is when the attributes of disputes may be most relevant.
The factors that drive these costs are usually exogenous to the dispute itself. Externally, the opportunity cost of disputing territory should vary with a state’s position in the international system or, more likely, the regional balance of power linked to the dispute. During a negative shift in the regional balance, improved or good relations with the opposing state in a dispute may increase in importance or resources might need to be diverted to deal with more pressing issues. The need to build an alliance or an entente for some unrelated security goal, for example, may outweigh the rigid pursuit of claims in a territorial dispute. Alternatively, a state may face multiple external security challenges simultaneously, both territorial and otherwise, which would require that external conflicts be prioritized, settling second-tier issues to support first tier ones.

Moreover, in contrast to earlier research, internal sources of changes in these costs can be as important as external ones. During periods of economic decline or hardship, the prospect of increased cross-border trade may outweigh the uncompromising pursuit of territorial claims. A weak regime beset by internal conflict, or a new state struggling to establish its authority, may place greater importance on peaceful borders with neighboring states to conserve scarce political resources and limit external challenges. A legitimacy crisis within a state might increase the value of stable relations with neighbors to create breathing space for regime rebuilding and consolidation.

The logic of this model is consistent with Huth’s findings concerning changes in the international political military environment, such as the existence of multiple simultaneous territorial disputes and disputes with alliance partners. But this model also suggests that there may be even more international sources of territorial dispute settlement, such as the need for a state to improve relations or form an alliance with a neighbor in order to address a non-territorial security problem – namely a change in grand strategy that alters the importance of bilateral relationships or the allocation of resources. In addition, this model suggests that there may be a range of domestic reasons for leaders to settle disputes apart from those suggested by regime type. One implication is that certain types of autocratic regimes may be more likely to settle territorial disputes simply because leaders in such
regimes face much lower domestic costs for compromising over territory. Another implication is that regimes may seek to settle territorial disputes in order consolidate political authority within the jurisdiction that they claim, especially frontier or borderland regions adjacent to territorial disputes. Finally, some disputes may be so important to leaders that no change in the opportunity cost will matter, either due to the intrinsic value of the dispute (such as national unification) or the relationship with the opposing state (or a bitter rival).

China’s Opportunity Costs and Windows of Vulnerability

For China, ethnic geography shapes the underlying opportunity costs of its territorial disputes. Ethnic geography refers to the spatial distribution of ethnic groups within a state. With respect to territorial disputes, it refers to the location, density and ethnicity of contested areas. Based on ethnic geography, I distinguish among three types of disputes. Core or heartland areas are densely populated regions with a supermajority of Han Chinese inhabitants that have historically been administered directly by previous Chinese governments and empires. While the Han constitute more than 90% of China’s population, they dominate only 36 percent of the land mass. Since 1949, three core areas have been under dispute, namely Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Peripheral or frontier areas are sparsely populated with non-Han groups that historically have been administered indirectly by Chinese governments and empires. While non-Han groups account for less than 10 percent of the population, they occupy and dominate more than 64 percent of the land mass of China as well as 107 of 135 border counties. Since 1949, sixteen of China’s territorial disputes occurred along frontier areas adjacent to Guangxi, Yunnan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia and Heilongjiang and Jilin. Offshore or maritime areas are islands located offshore that contain no permanent, self-sustaining population and that are far from the mainland. Since 1949, China has disputed four offshore islands, namely White Dragon Tail.

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17 Bu He, ed., 民族理论与民族政策 [Minzu lilun yu minzu zhengce, Nationality Theory and Nationality Policy], (呼和浩特: 内蒙古大学出版社, 1995), p. 27. Bu’s calculation is based on the size of autonomous regions, some of which have relatively high numbers of Han residents.

Island, the Spratly Islands, the Paracel Islands and the Senkaku Islands. China is much more likely to settle disputes over land frontiers in non-Han Chinese areas than disputes over Han Chinese areas or uninhabited offshore islands.

In the context of China, the role of ethnic geography requires elaboration, as it not only justifies the typology of disputes but also shows how internal windows of vulnerability increase the opportunity costs of China’s disputes and make compromise more attractive. The heartland, also known as the ‘central plain’ (中原), ‘inner China’ (内地) or ‘China proper’, refers to the densely populated, Han (Chinese) ethnic area that runs from north to south along the coast and engages in sedentary agriculture. Inner China has constituted the geographic and ethnic core of every Chinese dynasty since the Han, including those dynasties led by Mongol and Manchu conquerors. The rise and fall of imperial dynasties, as well as modern efforts to reunify China since 1911, have all struggled to establish control over these areas. The periphery, also known as frontiers (边疆) or ‘outer China’ (外地), encircle the Han heartland to the north, west and southeast. As demonstrated in Map One, these areas are dominated by a variety of non-Han ethnic groups, especially Tibetans, Mongols and various Turkic groups.

Historically, these borderland areas posed special challenges for the central government, what I call ‘frontier control problem’ or the challenge of governing vast areas populated by non-Han Chinese ethnic groups. As demonstrated in Map Two, the combined areas of Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia compromise more than 45 percent of the land mass of the PRC, but less than 4 percent of the total population. Throughout the imperial era, nomadic populations based in these regions posed a continuous threat to the Han core.

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Based on their size and geographic location, they became important buffer regions for the core, which Chinese government sought to influence or to control. Starting in the Ming, and ending in the Qing, many of these areas were included, however loosely, into the scope of the Chinese empire.

However, because the frontiers are dominated by non-Han groups, the central government’s influence or control over these areas has always been fragile and unstable. The frontiers were not only quite large, but also dominated by various non-Han ethnic groups, with widely divergent cultural, social and economic practices. Because of their sheer size and cultural differences, none of these frontier areas were administered directly by the empire and integrated into the main institutions of the state that governed the 18 provinces of China proper. Rather, these areas were ruled through different indirect systems of governance: Xinjiang as a military colony, Tibet as a protectorate but basically ignored, Mongolian tribes as divided by the banner system and southwestern areas through the ‘local official’ system (土司制度). In the Republican era, this pattern of indirect rule continued through the warlord system and the highly decentralized nature of the Chinese state.

With the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the CCP pursued a political goal that no previous Chinese government had ever achieved: the integration of these non-Han frontiers into the administrative structure of the central government by turning colonies and protectorates into provinces and autonomous prefectures. Ostensibly, this integration was deemed necessary in order to ‘liberate’ the people of these areas from various backward and feudal ways. In practice, these areas still served as buffers and needed to be integrated into the Chinese state lest they fall under the influence of China’s neighbors, especially India and the Soviet Union, and expose the heartland to direct military threats. However, control over the frontiers remained fragile and unstable. Due to the Qing and Republican legacy of autonomy and indirect rule areas, the CCP lacked the institutions, cadres and economic ties

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20 James Millward, Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1959-1864, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Herold J. Wiens, China's March Toward the Tropics, (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1954); Luciano Petech, China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century: History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet, (Leiden: Brill, 1972). As buffer regions, these areas did not need to be ruled directly. Unlike China proper, these areas provided little economic value to the empire. Indirect rule provided the most efficient means to control these buffer areas, as economic integration would have been much more costly.
through which to consolidate its support and integrate the frontiers into the new state. Moreover, these frontier areas remained vulnerable to external influence, as communications links, trade dependence and cultural affinity all fostered strong ties between the frontier regions and neighboring states, not China proper. Such ties not only frustrated the CCP’s attempts to consolidate its position, but also supported local groups with separatist or secessionist ambitions, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet.

By distinguishing among frontier, heartland and offshore island disputes, ethnic geography outlines the opportunity cost structure of China’s territorial disputes. Because of the dynamics of the frontier control problem, ethnic geography suggests that internal windows of vulnerability should be the primary drivers of China’s territorial dispute settlements. Internal challenges to political authority in frontier areas should significantly increase the costs to China of disputing territory with neighboring states because of the need to strengthen its fragile authority. External windows are consistent with the logic of my model, but they explain China’s only a very small portion of China’s dispute settlements. Below, I elaborate on these opportunity costs and windows for all three types of disputes.

**Frontier Disputes.** Due to ethnic geography, frontiers pose special challenges for China’s leaders. In particular, China’s leaders are always concerned about political stability and the potential for unrest in the non-Han frontiers. The opportunity costs of disputing territory adjacent to these regions (frontier disputes) are intertwined with internal political control. Indeed, since 1949, the primary goal of the CCP has been to secure its long international border and integrate its frontiers into the political and economic institutions of the state. The stabilization and development of the hinterland has been more important than incremental additions of territory from frontier disputes. As a result, China has been willing to compromise in frontier disputes when such compromises support internal political consolidation.

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Events that exacerbate the frontier control problem should generate opportunity costs that make settlement more attractive. In particular, two types of internal windows of vulnerability can significantly increase the costs of disputing frontier disputes. In general terms, both represent internal crises that led to a reduction of internal power and compel leaders to focus on rebuilding domestically. These windows have led to the settlement of territorial disputes because, in both cases, the settlement of the dispute not only supercedes bilateral or international concerns, but also assists directly in the process of consolidating the authority of the regime.

The first type of window that increases the costs of frontier disputes is political instability in border areas. Armed revolts, popular uprisings and sustained demonstrations by non-Han groups against Chinese authority all pose serious challenges to the fragile authority of the central government in the frontiers. When such unrest occurs near China’s international borders, it significantly raises the cost being in territorial disputes with neighboring states. Ethnic unrest in Tibet or Xinjiang is more consequential than in Gansu. When such internal challenges to territorial integrity occur, poor relations with neighbors are much more costly, as these states may shelter or support rebels, seek to intervene in the conflict or permit others to intervene, or take advantage of crisis to press claims against China. More generally, such periods require that the resources of the state support internal rebuilding, not external defense. If such internal unrest stems from economic grievances, the absence of border trade, especially in areas that are far from China proper, also becomes more costly. During periods of dramatic instability in frontier regions, China should seek to settle territorial disputes with states in adjacent areas. Improved relations with neighbors should enhance internal stability.

The second type of window that increases the costs frontier disputes is domestic political upheaval or crisis of legitimacy in the political core. After such upheavals, like the ‘three lean years’ after the Great Leap Forward or the aftermath of Tiananmen, leaders must focus resources on rebuilding support among key constituencies and stabilizing the position of the regime. Because attention is focused internally on regime consolidation, peaceful and stable borders are especially important to marshal resources for the domestic agenda and
prevent or preempt outside intervention. Unlike border area instability, settlements under these conditions are not linked to a specific region, as China’s leaders should be generally more concerned about stable and secure borders all along the land frontier.

The effects of both types of windows may be exacerbated by a decline in relative power vis-à-vis other states. Such a decline in relative power may work in two different ways. First, such a rapid external decline may increase the sense of vulnerability posed by either border area instability or domestic political upheaval, as Chinese leaders may think that outsiders are seeking to take advantage of internal difficulties. However, unless the decline in relative power is sudden and massive, it alone should not raise the costs of disputes sufficiently to lead to settlements. Second, the existence of simultaneous disputes should also multiply the effect of either border area instability or domestic political upheaval.

When these windows occur, otherwise costly compromise agreements over the sovereign control of territory become more attractive. By accepting less than it could have demanded, China sends a deliberate and clear signal by offering at attractive agreement to neighboring states. Through improved relations, China elicits cooperation to support its internal objectives. In particular, China seeks to: 1) elicit support to crackdown on rebels operating in neighboring countries through the closing guerilla bases across its border, improved patrolling of border areas and enhanced border defense; 2) reduce the potential for inadvertent escalation caused by either hot pursuit across the border or misperception of military deployments near the border; 3) close an external window of vulnerability by decreasing external pressure on the border or reducing the likelihood of third-party involvement; 4) through a border agreement, allow the government to focus on internal territorial consolidation, not external border defense; 5) pursue economic development of frontier areas through increased cross-border trade.

In the absence of these conditions – border area instability or domestic political upheaval – China should delay the settlement of existing frontier disputes. That is, without border area instability or domestic political upheaval, China’s leaders have no incentive to seek a settlement and pursue costly compromises over questions of national sovereignty. Without these conditions, the costs of disputing territory to China are not high enough to
compel concessions – settlement is an unattractive alternative. Rather, China should seek to delay the dispute, in order to bide time or to postpone a difficult decision.

**Heartland Disputes:** Viewed as a vital national interest, heartland disputes are extremely important to China’s leaders. Since the establishment of the PRC, these areas have been linked clearly and consistently to the survival of the Chinese state, the legitimacy of the regime and the political fate of senior leaders. In short, they are viewed as indivisible. As a result, there is probably no plausible set of opportunity costs that would compel China to pursue a compromise settlement in these disputes, much less abdicate its claims. Rather, China’s leaders would be willing to bear almost any price – costs that would certainly not be shouldered for frontier or offshore island disputes.

As a result, heartland disputes should not be affected by either internal or external windows that might produce the settlement of other types of disputes. For example, given the physical separation between Taiwan and the mainland, border area instability does not apply to the dispute over Taiwan. Potential unrest in Fujian or Zhejiang should not make China’s leaders more willing to make a concession over Taiwan because settlement would not help to restore order in the coastal provinces. Likewise, during domestic political upheaval, the rigid pursuit of claims over Taiwan is perhaps even more important than ever when leaders face a legitimacy crisis. Finally, because of the willingness to bear high costs for disputing Taiwan, external windows such as a sudden decline in relative power should not make concession more attractive, but harden resolve to dispute the territory.

In heartland disputes, the default strategy is to bide time and delay consideration of a settlement. Concerning the resolution of the Taiwan question, Mao famously declared that China could wait one hundred years. By delaying, China’s leaders engage in a waiting game,

22 While it is clear that disputes are settled to improve relations, this does not mean that disputes are settled necessarily as some sort of balancing activity. This would only hold under relatively strong conditions, where due to a sudden change in the international distribution of power, a state needed to improve ties with neighbors to balance against this new distribution. There are many policy options short of dispute settlement that can be used to improve relations.

23 On the indivisibility of territorial disputes, see Toft, Walter, Hassner
waiting for the other side to find the costs unbearable and offer a settlement.24 China may also hope to increase its own leverage over the dispute by enhancing the coercive option, but that is perhaps most important for Taiwan, as China’s ability to project power over HK and Macao was always quite high.

**Offshore Island Disputes:** Similar to heartland disputes, there are few compelling reasons for China’s leader to settle offshore island disputes. But the logic is different: these islands are quite cheap to dispute and thus the opportunity costs of disputing them are extremely low.25 As unpopulated rocks and reefs far from the continental mainland, control of offshore islands is not linked strongly to the territorial integrity of the mainland and the stability of the regime. Rather, the islands are largely symbolic. These distant islands are cheap to dispute because they require few military or other resources and no political resources. There is also a lower risk of inadvertent escalation, because of the small number of forces involved in protecting these remote outposts and the vast oceans between them.26

In offshore island disputes, the default strategy is to delay settlement. Internal windows of vulnerability should have no effect on these disputes. Because of the distance from the mainland and the lack of human habitation, border area instability does not apply. Likewise, because of the tenuous link between these islands and territorial integrity of the mainland, domestic political upheaval should not produce settlement, either. Indeed, because of geography, only external factors linked to the relationship with the opposing state should play a role. But because the opportunity costs are low, only major changes in the importance of this relationship should lead to the making of concessions and settlement of the dispute. Most likely, this might occur during period of rapid decline in relative power

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24 China’s uses of force in the dispute may very well stem from efforts by China’s leaders to increase the costs of non-settlement for Taiwan.

25 An alternative explanation consistent with my model might be more similar to logic concerning heartland disputes. The economic value (resulting from petroleum reserves) and strategic value (of controlling SLOCs) are extremely high, leaving few options for settlement. Leaders will pay a high price for these goodies. Empirically, however, disputes over the areas predated the oil bonanza and concern with SLOCs. Moreover, what oil does exist is natural gas, which is extremely expensive to exploit offshore. Likewise, control of SLOC stems from occupy these islands, but rather from a robust blue water navy.

26 More precisely, there may be a greater likelihood of tactical escalation than land disputes, due to the maritime location and limitations on command & control. Build-ups quickly noticed.
and engagement in some sort of conflict with a much more powerful adversary that would require improving ties with states who disputed offshore islands

Explaining the Cases

China’s pattern of settlements is roughly consistent with the expectations outlined above. Most of China’s disputes of that have been settled (15/18) lie along the land frontier. Moreover, as demonstrated below, China has significantly compromised in these disputes in both the 1960s and the 1990s. While two core disputes were settled, China made no compromise over territorial integrity. Only one offshore island dispute has been settled, which did involve compromise, but the other three remain active.

Frontier Dispute Settlements in the 1960s

From 1960 to 1964, China moved to settle almost all of the outstanding territorial disputes along its land frontier. These settlement and settlement attempts are summarized in Table Three. In addition to agreements with Burma, Nepal, North Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, new and newly available sources demonstrate that China also held substantive negotiations with India, in April 1960, and the Soviet Union, from February to August 1964. This first wave of frontier settlements stemmed from two different internal windows of vulnerability. In early 1960, China moved to settle three disputes in response to the border area instability created by the Tibetan revolt and Lhasa uprising in 1959. Starting in the spring of 1962, China moved to settle five disputes as a result of border area instability linked to renewed pressure on the Tibetan border and mass migration from Xinjiang, which was exacerbated by the domestic political upheaval following the Great Leap Forward. These two windows greatly increased the costs of disputing territory and led directly to territorial dispute settlements.

Tibetan Revolt. In March 1959, the uprising in Lhasa represented perhaps the most serious internal challenge to the territorial integrity in the history the PRC. After 1951, China confronted severe obstacles to governing Tibet: the absence of institutions linking Tibet to the central government, a dearth of cadres and strong social-cultural-economic ties
with India and Nepal. As a result, the central government chose to govern Tibet indirectly through the Dalai Lama and the existing Tibetan institutions. However, from the mid 1950s, a series of armed uprisings that in the Kham region of Sichuan led to widespread revolt within Tibet, which peaked from 1957 to early 1959. At its height, the revolt involved perhaps more than 50,000 rebels who controlled large parts of southern, eastern and northern Tibet apart from Lhasa and the principle highways. In short, the revolt threatened Chinese control of a strategically important frontier region where its authority was already fragile. Moreover, the revolt highlighted China’s weaknesses: that Tibet maintained stronger social and economic ties with India than with China proper and that its long border with India, Nepal and Burma was basically undefended.

After the Lhasa uprising, the central government moved quickly to establish its authority through a systematic and brutal pacification of rebels along with communizing reforms that had been deferred. To achieve these internal goals, China also sought to consolidate control over Tibet’s borders, as the revolt dramatically altered the context of China’s disputes with India, Nepal and Burma, which are described in Table Three. While territorial disputes with these countries had been acknowledged since the early 1950s, China had previously rebuffed efforts by opposing states to open negotiations. In 1954, Zhou and Nehru touched upon the border in their talks, but agreed not to pursue them. In 1956, Wu Lingxi, 十年论战: 1956-1966 中苏关系会议录 [Shinian lunzhan: 1956-1966 zhongsu guanxi huiyilu, Ten Years of Polemics: A Recollection of Sino-Soviet Relations from 1956 to 1966], (北京: 中央文献出版社, 1999), p. 212; Zhongyin bianjia zhiwei zuozi, 中印边境自卫反击作战史 [Zhongyin bianjia zhiwei zuozi zuozhan shi, History of China's War of Self-Defensive Counter Attack against India], (北京: 军事科学出版社, 1994), p. 86.


29 While the PLA had garrisoned certain areas, such as Yadong, defense of the border was responsibility of the Tibetan Army. The PLA only began to garrison the entire border after the 1959 revolt. See Wu Lingxi, 十年论战: 1956-1966 中苏关系会议录 [Shinian lunzhan: 1956-1966 zhongsu guanxi huiyilu, Ten Years of Polemics: A Recollection of Sino-Soviet Relations from 1956 to 1966], (北京: 中央文献出版社, 1999), p. 212; Zhongyin bianjia zhiwei zuozi zuozhan shi bianji zu, ed., 中印边境自卫反击作战史 [Zhongyin bianjia zhiwei zuozi zuozhan shi, History of China's War of Self-Defensive Counter Attack against India], (北京: 军事科学出版社, 1994), p. 86.
Nepal sought to open talks with China over their border, but China demurred.30 In 1956, China and Burma did hold negotiations after a clash between Burmese and Chinese troops, but they stalled in early 1957 when China would not accede to Burma’s demands concerning four disputed areas.31 In short, China’s leaders had deferred consideration of settlements because at the time there were no compelling reasons to make concessions.

After the Lhasa uprising, however, the need to consolidate its position in Tibet made settlements more attractive. As the PLA pursued Tibetan rebels who moved south to India in the summer of 1959, they encountered Indian troops.32 On 25 August, a violent clash near Longju threatened to increase tensions along the border and complicate the consolidation of authority within Tibet. Chinese leaders had also concluded that the Indian Army was sheltering rebel groups and allowing them to operate from bases in India. In response, China moved to open talks with India, Nepal and Burma. While India was the most important state, agreements with Nepal and Burma would not only stabilize part of Tibet’s border, but also pressure India to reach a similar settlement with China.

Immediately following the Longju clash, Zhou Enlai ordered an investigation of the incident. On 8 September, Mao Zedong convened a Politburo meeting, which agreed that China should prepare to seek a negotiated settlement to all aspects of China’s border dispute with India and that before negotiations occur, China should suggest that both sides maintain the status quo and solve any problems that arise through temporary agreements.33 After the meeting, China then approached Nepal and Burma to open talks on their border disputes. On 24 September, Zhou wrote to General Ne Win, then a caretaker prime minister of Burma, stating his interest in re-opening talks based on earlier correspondence between the

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32 For the classic account of the dispute, see Neville Maxwell, India’s China War, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).
33 On the details of the meeting, see Wu Lingxi, Shinian lunzhan, p. 212.
two sides. On 9 October, Zhou met with a visiting Nepalese minister and expressed China’s willingness to enter into talks with Nepal over their border dispute. After a second armed clash in late October 1959, China proposed talks at the prime ministerial level with India. In December, despite repeated offers by Zhou, Nehru refused to agree to hold talks.

As Zhou waited for a reply from Nehru, the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) discussed the Sino-Indian border problem during a ten-day working meeting in Hangzhou in January 1960. At this meeting, PBSC members agreed that the border with India should be settled swiftly through negotiations based on the principle of ‘give and take’ (互谅互让). According to the recollection of participant, “China should make some concessions, India should make some concessions, [and] in this way reach an agreement through mutual compromise.” The meeting also agreed to adopt a similar approach to China’s other border problems and stated that China should strive for a quick settlement with Burma and Nepal.

Over the next three months, Zhou implemented the PBSC’s instructions. While India remained most important negotiating partner, China sought first to reach agreements with Burma and Nepal. In early January 1960, before Nehru had agreed to talks, Zhou invited Ne Win to visit Beijing. On 28 January 1960, the two sides signed a preliminary agreement, where China acceded to most of Burma’s demands from early 1957. In early February, Nehru agreed to hold discussions with Zhou, who replied that he would visit New Delhi in April. In early March, after Nehru had agreed to talks, Nepalese Prime Minister

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36 Properly translated, 互谅互让 means “mutual accommodation and concessions,” but as one Chinese scholar, Liu Xuecheng, has mentioned, ‘give and take’ is more appropriate.
37 Wu Lingxi, _Shinian lunzhan_, p. 248.
Koirala visited Beijing, where the two sides reached a preliminary agreement to settle their
dispute based on the customary line of control.  

Before departing for New Delhi, Zhou personally drafted a plan for China’s talks with Nehru. The document, entitled Plan for the Sino-Indian Premier Talks on the Border Problem [draft] (中印两国总理关于边界问题会谈的方案[草案]), outlined Zhou’s intention to ease tensions between the two sides and establish a framework for settling the dispute, in particular the principle of compromising over disputed territory. In his most optimistic scenario, Zhou hoped to reach an agreement “the same as with Burma and Nepal.” In those agreements, the acceptance of the McMahon line in its agreement with Burma and affirmation the direction of the McMahon line in its agreement with Nepal clearly implied that China would also accept the McMahon line with India, which would have addressed India’s largest concern. During the talks themselves, Zhou proposed a territorial swap with Nehru. In their sixth meeting, Zhou stated that China would recognize India’s sovereignty and administration of the area south of the McMahon Line and stated that India should recognize China’s sovereignty, pending a few adjustments.

The April 1960 talks between Zhou and Nehru failed spectacularly. The failure was so complete that the two sides could not even issue a joint statement at the conclusion of the talks. Nevertheless, this episode does demonstrate the underlying logic of my model of territorial dispute settlement. The outbreak of rebellion in Tibet dramatically changed China’s opportunity costs for disputing territory with India, Nepal and Burma. By seeking

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41 The McMahon Line served as the line of control between China and India along the eastern sector of the border. China refused to acknowledge the line because it was delimited during the 1914 Simla Conference without China’s approval, though it seem to agree to accept the division created by the line. See Maxwell.
42 Chinese accounts of the meetings between Zhou and Nehru come from two sources. The Nianpu contains a summary of each meeting, Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, eds., Zhou enlai nianpu (zhong), pp. 304-314. The Zhou Enlai Zhuan contains similar summaries, but cites minutes of the meeting (会谈记录) as the source, Jin Chongji, ed., Zhou Enlai zhuan, pp. 1516-1525.
43 Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, eds., Zhou enlai nianpu (zhong), p. 312.
to focus on the consolidation of authority in Tibet and securing its borders, China no longer sought to press large or inflexible claims against its Himalayan neighbors. Internal domestic concerns over political stability and control trumped diplomatic or strategic concerns. Without the Tibetan rebellion in 1959, China may very well have not even entered into negotiations with India, Nepal and Burma, much less proposed compromise solutions.

1962 Territorial Crisis. Three events in the spring of 1962 constituted a second internal window of vulnerability that compelled China’s leaders to seek to settle territorial disputes with North Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. This window resulted from a combination of specific instances of border instability and the domestic political upheaval associated with the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward. In February and March 1962, the PLA discovered the extent of India’s ‘forward policy’ of establishing sentries in disputed sections of the border. While the outposts themselves were not threatening, they were viewed as a renewed challenge to China’s control of Tibet because they were discovered just as the PLA had completed the pacification campaign and political reforms to consolidate Chinese authority in Tibet. In April and May, the flight of more than 60,000 people from the Yita region of Xinjiang, as well as violent protests in key towns, underscored the limits of Chinese authority in the area and its gaping exposure to Soviet influence. At the time, China’s long border with the Soviet Union and Mongolia was basically undefended. According to an internally circulated official history, China had only 10 frontier defense stations with a total of 136 soldiers on the border from Afghanistan to Mongolia. Recent archival research has demonstrated how local Chinese leaders viewed the Soviet Union has fomenting unrest in the area by issuing false documentation, broadcasting propaganda about the good life in the SU and opening its border to refugees. In May, the third Taiwan Straits crisis deepened the sense of threat to China’s borders as Chiang Kai-shek appeared to prepare for an assault on the eastern coast. All of these events occurred against the backdrop of the economic difficulties of the ‘three lean years’ created by

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the Great Leap Forward, which no doubt increased concerns about the security of frontier areas.

In terms of dispute settlement, the 1962 crisis was more consequential than the Tibetan revolt. Now, China faced threats in at least two frontier regions, Tibet and Xinjiang, during a period of extreme economic hardship and internal rebuilding. The start of the ‘forward policy’ ended roughly two years of peace along the Sino-Indian border, while the unrest and migration in Xinjiang demonstrated a similar set of vulnerabilities along the lengthy and important Sino-Soviet border. As the 1962 territorial crisis peaked in April and May, China moved to open dispute settlement talks with North Korea, Mongolia and Pakistan. Previously, in 1959 and 1961, China had declined Pakistani attempts to open talks on their disputed border. But on 28 February 1962, China finally agreed to consider talks, which were announced in May. Likewise, China had rebuffed Mongolian efforts to open talks with China in 1957 and 1960. But on 13 April 1962, China moved to hold negotiations with Mongolia, proposing a series of measures to maintain peace on the border in light of recent provocations. When Mongolia did not reply, Zhou Enlai met with the Mongolian ambassador in Beijing in early May to press for talks. Still lacking a response, China sent a formal diplomatic note in June 1962 and map with a proposed boundary that conformed with the actual administration by the two sides. Information surrounding China’s negotiations with North Korea is thin, as the agreement is still viewed as an internal matter, but interviews indicate that China refused North Korean efforts to open talks in 1960 and 1961. Only after the outbreak of the Yita incident, China began to push for talks and Zhou met with the North Korean ambassador in June.

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48 Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, eds., Zhou enlai nianpu (zhong), p. 477.


50 Interview, Chinese diplomatic historian, Beijing, June 2002.

51 Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, eds., Zhou enlai nianpu (zhong), p. 486.
Over the summer of 1962, tensions on the Sino-Indian border continued to escalate and became the focal point for China’s territorial dispute settlements. China resumed patrolling disputed areas, while India expanded the ‘forward policy’ to the eastern sector in regions linked to vital communication routes with Tibet. In late July, China again pursued negotiations with India, continuing these efforts in September and early October. At the same time, in October and November, China conducted negotiations with North Korea, Mongolia and Pakistan and reached draft or final agreements by the end of the year. In all cases, as demonstrated in Table Three, China offered significant concessions, giving North Korea most of the disputed Changbai/Paekdu mountain area, dropping large claims against Mongolia and transferring more than 1,600 sq km to Pakistan.

In the short term, the timing of these agreements was linked to China’s failed efforts to compel India to negotiate in the 1962 war. In addition, however, the successful conclusion of these agreements helped China to prepare for talks with the SU, which China’s leaders had decided to pursue in the spring of 1962. Similar to China’s agreements with Burma and Nepal in 1960, treaties with North Korea and Mongolia, as fraternal socialist neighbors, were designed in part to persuade the SU to reach a similar agreement with China. For example, in December 1962, the People’s Daily opined that the Sino-Mongolian agreement was “an important contribution to the strengthening of the unity of the socialist camp…set a good example for the socialist countries in handling their mutual relations … [and] confirms to the interests of friendly unity between the peoples of all socialist countries.”

In April 1963, after announcing talks with Afghanistan, China approached the Soviet Union to hold talks that began in Beijing in February 1964. New and newly available sources

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52 Chinese leaders had decided in the spring of 1962 to pursue a negotiated settlement with the Soviet Union, but needed time to prepare.
54 人民日报 (People’s Daily), 27 December 1962.
indicate that both sides achieved far more progress in settling their differences than was previously thought.\textsuperscript{55} During these talks, the two sides reached a preliminary agreement concerning the eastern sector of the border along the Amur and Ussuri rivers that was almost identical to the agreement reached in 1991, giving China control of 52\% of the islands totaling roughly 800 sq km.\textsuperscript{56} The two sides also began discussions on the western sector in Soviet central asia. Negotiators adjourned in August 1964 and planned to resume talks in Moscow on 15 October 1964, the day after Khrushchev was sacked. Talks failed to resume not only because of the change in Soviet leadership, but also because of increased Soviet suspicions after Mao’s famous comments to members of the Japanese Communist Party in July about unequal treaties.

Frontier Dispute Settlement Attempts in the 1990s

From 1990 to 1999, China moved to defuse or settle all its remaining frontier disputes. These settlement and settlement attempts are summarized in Table Four. This second wave of frontier settlements stemmed from two different internal windows of vulnerability. The first was the domestic upheaval and resulting international isolation and economic depression associated with the Tiananmen demonstrations and massacre. This legitimacy crisis suddenly increased the cost of poor relations with neighboring states, especially socialist ones. The second was renewed ethnic unrest and instability in Xinjiang exacerbated by the collapse of the SU in Central Asia, which increased the importance of strong ties with the newly independent Central Asian states.

Similar to the 1960s, these internal windows of vulnerability in the 1990s increased the costs of disputing territory with neighboring states, especially the cost of poor diplomatic


\textsuperscript{56} Tang Jiaxuan, ed., Zhongguo waijiao cidian, p. 725.
ties. However, unlike the 1960s, the pace of settlements during this period has been much slower. In the 1960s, boundary treaty negotiations, surveying and demarcation were usually completed in about two years, with relatively limited technology. In the 1990s, this process has required up to eight years for some disputes, while much of the surveying and demarcation work, especially with Vietnam and the Central Asian states, remains incomplete. Two factors can explain this lag in the pace of settlements. First, the effect of the internal widows were not as great as those that occurred in the 1960s, due to the more diffuse nature of these windows and three decades of infrastructure development in frontier areas that reduced the frontier control problem. Second, growing bureaucratic pluralism and nationalist sentiments produced internal opposition within the government to compromise settlements that did not exist in the 1960s and limited the flexibility of leaders to compromise on questions of national sovereignty.

Tiananmen Upheaval. The Tiananmen demonstrations and massacre in the June 1989 created the most serious crisis of legitimacy for CCP since the Great Leap Forward.57 After the crisis, China’s leaders needed to not only rebuild internal support, but also faced a range of serious economic difficulties that were exacerbated by external isolation from Western states, especially the United States. The isolation was especially powerful because these Western states played a key role in Deng’s strategy of ‘opening and reform’ as sources of trade and investment and because China had not yet normalized ties with its socialist neighbors or other states in the region like India, Indonesia, South Korea and Singapore. Domestic rebuilding and isolation increased the cost of China’s poor relations with its socialist neighbors as well as India. By seeking to settle disputes with these states, China hoped to not only to counter the political isolation, but also to help develop poor frontier areas through increased border trade.58

The most important agreement signed during this period was with the Soviet Union. The original impetus for the 1991 agreement came not from China but from the SU. In

57 I do not include the aftermath of the GPCR as a same type of legitimacy crisis, because it was both directed by China’s senior leaders and exposed divisions within the party, not between the party and the masses.
58 See, for example, Zhang Baijia, “九十年代的中国内政与外交 [Jiushi niandai de zhongguo neizheng yu waijiao, China’s Internal Politics and Diplomacy in the 1990s],” 中共党史研究 [CCP History Studies], No. 6 (2001), pp. 29-34.
1986, Gorbachev stated that the SU would accept the *thalweg* principle along the eastern sector of the border, thereby acceding to one of China’s long-standing demands. The Soviet decision is consistent with my model, as poor relations with China had become quite costly with the growing economic crisis inside the Soviet Union. In 1990, after Tiananmen, the pace of talks quickened, with two meetings of the joint working group as well as meetings of a border survey group and the agreement drafting group. In the 1991 agreement, China received control over approximately 52 percent of the disputed areas and made further concession during the demarcation process. However, China and Russia were unable to resolve their dispute over Black Bear Island at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri rivers.

China also moved to settle outstanding frontier disputes with its other socialist neighbors, Laos and Vietnam. After only three rounds of talks, China and Laos settled their small border disputes and signed a boundary treaty in 1991. Likewise, China and Vietnam opened negotiations in 1991 and reached a preliminary agreement in 1993. Due to the legacy of the 1979 war and a decade of border skirmishes, a final settlement with Vietnam took much longer and was not reached until 1999. Obstacles to a final settlement included the need for massive mine-sweeping operations along the border as well as internal resistance from governments on both sides who opposed making concessions to a former enemy. Boundary agreements with Laos and Vietnam were also linked to efforts to increase border trade through the opening of ports, bridges and rail links.

Concurrently, China moved to settle its dispute with India. In 1991, a joint working group established in 1989 began substantive discussions, which led to the signing of the 1993 agreement on *Agreement On The Maintenance Of Peace And Tranquility Along The Line Of*

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61 Reportedly, China was going to drop its claim to the Pamirs in exchange for the return of Black Bear Island, which China claims the SU illegally occupied in 1929. After the collapse of the SU, however, this trade was no longer available. Interviews, Beijing, June-July 2001.

62 The PLA reportedly withdrew its members from the border joint working group in protest for the concessions that were made.
A further agreement outlining CBMs was signed in 1996. Both agreements had the effect of stabilizing the border, reducing potential for inadvertent escalation and increasing trade between the two sides. During this period, China reportedly again offered a compromise settlement based on exchanging positions in the eastern and western sectors (以西换东). Similar to Vietnam, the legacy of war and internal opposition created significant obstacles to a final agreement over the dispute. However, the 1993 and 1996 agreements for the LAC have established an effective boundary between the two sides, giving China achieved most of what it sought – improved ties with an important neighbor at a time of isolation, demilitarization of the border and increased border trade.

Looking forward, final settlement of the Sino-Indian dispute should be linked to external factors that increase the importance of ties between China and India, not border area instability or domestic political upheaval. In stark contrast to the 1950s and early 1960s, China has greatly strengthened its position in Tibet, with a network of highways, primary and secondary roads as well as military bases. Years of embargo by India have also increased economic ties with China proper. As a result, the impact of either border area instability or domestic political upheaval should not generate extremely high opportunity costs in the region. Only external windows should increase China’s opportunity costs such that a settlement becomes more attractive. Audience costs for settlement are extremely high, especially for India, as any agreement with China would require an amendment to the Indian constitution, something inconceivable under a BJP administration.

Xinjiang Unrest. From the early 1990s, Chinese leaders have been especially sensitive to political stability in Xinjiang because of the ethnic unrest and protests that followed the upheaval in Tiananmen. In April 1990, a large protest near Kashgar that was violently suppressed inaugurated a decade of unprecedented demonstrations, bus bombings and separatist activities. Renewed protests in Tibet in 1988 and 1989 no doubt increased fears

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63 Refers to the Line of Control created at the end of the 1962, which was largely consistent with the Line of Control in 1959.
64 “Chance to Resolve Dispute Missed?,” The Telegraph (Calcutta), 15 May 1997 in FBIS-NES-97-135
65 See, for example, Anthony Davis, "Asia, Xinjiang Learns to Live with Resurgent Islam," Jane’s Intelligence Review, Vol. 8, No. 9 (1996); Matthew Forney, "One Nation–Divided: Since Sept. 11, Beijing has been
of ethnic unrest in frontier areas. The collapse of the SU sharpened the effect of this unrest in two ways. First, each of these newly independent states could become potential base areas or sources of support for co-ethnics residing in Xinjiang, especially Kazakhis and Uighurs. Second, the very creation of these states provided moral support to separatist groups in Xinjiang, as it demonstrated that autonomy was obtainable, especially during moments of weakness at the core of the Chinese state.66

The collapse of the SU might have presented China with an ideal opportunity to regain the approximately 35,000 sq km of territory it claimed in the region. In context of ethnic unrest, however, China chose to improve ties with the newly independent states in order strengthen its own position in Xinjiang. By improving ties with these states, China could elicit cooperation to patrol porous borders and prevent these states form being used by separatist groups in Xinjiang to support their cause. China’s first dispute settlement occurred with Kazakhstan, which is Xinjiang’s biggest neighbor with the largest population of the three. Talks between China and Kazakhstan began less than a year after the collapse of the SU. In the 1994, 1996 and 1997 agreements, China made significant concessions, holding roughly 20 percent of the disputed areas.67 In 1996 and 1999, China made similar concessions in agreements with Kyrgyzstan, where it received roughly 30 percent of disputed land.68 Reaching an agreement with Tajikistan, however, was more complicated, due to the

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civil war that erupted after the collapse for the SU.\textsuperscript{69} Talks resumed in 1997, leading to a preliminary agreement in 1999 and a supplemental agreement in 2002. China made perhaps its largest concession over this area, essentially dropping its 28,000 sq km claim to the Pamir Mountains, a claim it had pressed since the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{70}

From China’s perspective, all of these settlements greatly contributed to stability in Xinjiang. In various joint statements issued with Central Asian leaders since 1992, China has placed support of the Central Asian states against ethnic separatism on par with support that Taiwan is a part of China, the primary criterion for establishing diplomatic ties with China. For example, in 1996 during a summit meeting with Jiang Zemin, the Kyrgyz President even stated that he resolutely opposed ethnic separatism and would not allow Kyrgyz territory to be used to carry out separatist activities against China.\textsuperscript{71} The subsequent focus of the ‘Shanghai Five’ and resulting Shanghai Cooperation Organization on border security and the challenges to internal political stability posted by ethnic separatism, religious fundamentalism strengthen this interpretation of China’s dispute settlements with these states.\textsuperscript{72}

**Heartland Disputes**

Because heartland disputes are considered a question of national survival, there are few if any opportunity costs that would compel leaders to seek settlement. Rather, the default strategy should be to delay consideration of a settlement and bide time for the other side to make a concession. China has disputed three heartland areas, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao, and has settled disputes over two of them, Hong Kong and Macao. The dispute

\textsuperscript{69} The Pamir area of Tajikistan was controlled by the opposition group, leaving China with no negotiating partner.

\textsuperscript{70} With the signing of the 2002 Supplemental Agreement, China received only 1,000 of the 28,000 sq km of the Pamir mountain area. “Tajikistan transfers 1,000 km territory to China,” 21 May 02, Interfax. FBIS # CEP20020521000161. In all of these agreements, it is not clear whether the final settlement affirmed the territorial status quo, and claims were dropped, or if territory was actually transferred. According to the Zhang Zhouxian’s description of the disputes, very little territory seems to have been transferred. Zhang Zhouxian, Xinjiang bianfang gaiyao, pp. 135-136.


\textsuperscript{72} On the Shanghai Five and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, see Xu Tao and Li Zhiye, eds., 上海合作组织: 新安全观与新机制 [Shanghai hezuo zuzhi: xin anquann guan yu xin jizhi, Shanghai Cooperation Organization: New Security Concept and New Mechanism], (北京: 事实出版社, 2002).
over Taiwan remains China’s most important territorial dispute. In all three, China has never taken the initiative to seek a settlement through a compromise agreement. Instead, it has adopted delaying strategies, designed to wait out for the other side to make the first move.

The settlement of disputes over Hong Kong and Macao, in 1982 and 1984, respectively, provides strong support for my argument. These disputes were initiated with the establishment of the PRC, referred to in the Common Program as unequal treaties that would need to be reviewed and revised. Despite migration across the border, political upheaval and economic crisis, China has never seized the initiative to seek a settlement of these disputes. Rather, the disputes where settled when the colonial powers, Britain and Portugal, concluded that the costs of maintaining the colonies exceeded what ever benefit they once provided and moved to divest their assets. China adopted a delaying strategy, while Britain and Portugal made concessions that brought about a settlement of the dispute.

With respect to Taiwan, China, as expected, has made no effort to seek any sort of compromise settlement. The delaying strategy has prevailed since the early 1950s, after China abandoned hopes of an early liberation of the island. Despite internal political upheavals and economic crises, China’s policy towards Taiwan has remained unchanged, though such internal windows of vulnerability do seem to be associated with moderation in policy towards Taiwan. Of course, because the status of Taiwan is also a question of survival for most of the people of Taiwan, there is also no set of opportunity costs that might lead Taiwan’s leaders make any sort of compromise, which explains the mainland’s increasing attention to coercive options in the past decade.

**Offshore Island Disputes**

Because they are cheap to contest, disputes over offshore islands should persist for a long time without settlement as China’s leaders have no reason to settle them. Through geography, border area instability and domestic political upheaval tend not to compel leaders to settle disputes over offshore islands. As a result, baring large external windows of vulnerability, China should not seek to make any compromises in these disputes.
China’s diplomacy concerning these disputes supports my argument. China has rarely agreed to negotiations concerning the status of the Paracels, Spratlys or Senkakus, much less considered any form of compromise that would facilitate a final settlement or ever offered a concession that would bring about a settlement of any of these disputes. In July 1995, during negotiations over the land border, China and Vietnam established a maritime problem expert group (海上问题专家小组) to discuss the Spratly islands. Five rounds of talks have been held, but they have focused on maritime cooperation, not dispute settlement. China has never offered a compromise to reach a settlement nor has China held talks over the sovereignty of islands with Malaysia and the Philippines. With respect to the Senkakus, Deng agreed in 1979 to “set aside” the dispute over the islands as part of China’s normalization of relations with Japan. While this was a minor concession at the time – the status of the islands could have been closely linked to normalization – it was a tactic to delay settlement of the dispute. In other words, either normalization did not require a settlement (from Japan’s perspective) or it was not deemed to important enough to China warrant a compromise. Formal negotiations over the final status of these rocks have not been held, nor has China ever hinted at compromising over their sovereignty. China’s perceptions of Japan suggest that China’s claim would only be abandoned in the most extreme circumstances where Japan was an ally, which is quite unlikely.

The exception to these three cases of delaying settlement proves the rule. In 1957, China transferred control of White Dragon Tail Island (白龙尾岛), which lies in the middle of the Beibu (北部湾) / Tonkin Gulf, to North Vietnam. While little is known about the island, limited Chinese sources indicate that it was occupied by PLA forces in 1955 and transferred

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73 For a detailed history of these disputes, see Austin, *China's Ocean Frontier*.
74 Tang Jiaxuan, ed., *Zhongguo waijiao cidian*, p. 751. An ‘expert group’ is also the lowest level used by China in such talks, after vice-ministerial level negotiations and working group talks headed by assistant foreign ministers.
76 Negotiations over a code of conduct with ASEAN states has been pursued, but after four years of talks agreement has not been reached. All sides also agreed that the code of conduct would have no bearing on negotiations over the sovereignty of the islands.
to North Vietnam in 1957. According to an internally circulated book, Mao ordered the transfer of the island to support North Vietnam in its struggle against the US. At the time, the US was strengthening its position in South Vietnam, which greatly increased the costs to China of disputing the island with North Vietnam. Along with US alliances in the region and the establishment of SEATO, the extension of US influence in South Vietnam compounded China’s sense of threat. The need to counter the US and support North Vietnam by giving it a maritime foothold in the Beibu Gulf outweighed the pursuit of sovereignty claims. However, China is not likely to face a similar threat in the region that would that would make ties so important with Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia that it would drop its current claims.

Conclusion and Implications

In conclusion, I have offered an opportunity cost model of territorial dispute settlement and used this model to explain China’s territorial dispute settlements since 1949. In particular, I have demonstrated that two different internal windows of vulnerability, border area instability and domestic political upheaval, have increased the cost of disputing territory and led China’s leaders to settle outstanding territory disputes. These internal windows explain not only why China has made compromises to settle all but one frontier dispute on its land border, but also why China has only settled heartland disputes by delaying compromise and rarely settled offshore island disputes.

This research has at least two implications for the study of Chinese foreign policy. First, despite the ‘century of national humiliation’ and obsession with ‘lost’ territory, China has not pursued many potential irredentist claims to areas that former Chinese governments once controlled or influenced. Rather, as demonstrated in Table Five, the size of territory negotiated in the various settlements is considerably smaller than whatever territory had been ceded in past agreements or otherwise lost to imperialists during the process of colonization.

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77 Chinese sources on the dispute over the island are extremely limited. See Li Dechao, "白龙尾岛正名 [Bailong weidao zhengming. Rectification of White Dragon Island's Name]," 中国边疆史地研究报告 [China Borderlands History and Geography Report], Vol. 1-2, No. 3 (1988), pp. 21-23; Mao Zhenfa, ed., Bianfang lun, p. 137.
in Asia. Moreover, openly published, internally circulated and teaching materials from the Ministry of Public Security all affirm China’s current borders and do not indicate that the current regime harbors such irredentist ambitions.\textsuperscript{79}

Several factors can explain this difference between lost territory and China’s actual claims. First, control of these ‘lost’ areas would not have made China more secure. That is, because of the frontier control problem, China already faced real obstacles to the establishment of its authority of frontier areas. Increasing the already large size of non-Han areas would have only exacerbated the control problem. Second, the sheer length of China’s land border also limited such claims, as expansion in one area no doubt would have provoked responses in other areas and complicated China’s relations with most of its neighbors. The presence of multiple, simultaneous disputes have had a dampening effect on all of China’s frontier claims. Third, perhaps most importantly and contrary to contemporary historiography on the mainland, China’s territorial expansion has, in fact, already occurred – in 1949, with the establishment of the PRC according roughly to the maximum scope of the Qing empire and the incorporation of imperial frontiers into the modern state, which created the frontier control problem in the first place.

In addition, the settlement of a border dispute is a strong indicator of peaceful relations between China and its neighbors.\textsuperscript{80} While the claim is certainly not that border disputes cause peace, the presence of an agreement is strongly correlated with the absence of armed conflict between China and its neighbors. Using data from a supplemented MID 2.1 data set, Table Six demonstrates the relationship between the settlement of a territorial dispute and the absence of militarized conflict, which is significant at the .001 level.\textsuperscript{81} In only two cases did China become involved in a militarized dispute with a neighboring state after it had resolved a territorial dispute. The first occurred with Burma in 1969, though little is known about the origins of the clash, as it does not appear to be recorded in the secondary


\textsuperscript{81} The claim here is not that the resolution of a territorial dispute cause peaceful relations, as dispute resolution might just be a reflection of an improved relationship. But perhaps more than any other indicator, the resolution of a territorial dispute suggests that peaceful relations will follow.
literature on Burma’s foreign policy. The second occurred with Mongolia in 1974, which was a satellite state of the Soviet Union with whom had an active dispute. In all other cases, peaceful relations and the absence of forces has followed the settlement of territorial disputes.

This finding suggests two further implications for the future settlement of China’s existing disputes. First, from the perspective of power shifts and territorial expansion, China’s behavior to date provides evidence against such a link. China has neither pursued broader claims nor become more coercive as its power has increased in the past two decades. Second, for unresolved disputes, however, there remains a much higher probability that force will be used as part of the settlement process. The conditions under which China uses force in territorial disputes, however, is the important subject of another paper.
Figure One
China's Settlement of Territorial Disputes

Figure Two
China's Territorial Dispute Settlement Attempts
Figure Three

Territory Held by China in Dispute Settlements

Percent of Total Disputes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>Stronger</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<td>Stronger</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>No</td>
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### Table Three

**China’s Dispute Settlement Attempts (1960s)**

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Disputed Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Talks</th>
<th>Agreements</th>
<th>Settlement Attempt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>1,560 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed four sectors</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1960: Prelim. Agreement</td>
<td>China received 21-60% of disputed territory, including two village areas. Burma received strategic highway, salt mine and preferred watershed boundary in north</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1960: Boundary Treaty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1963: Boundary Protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2,103 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed 11 sectors as well as ownership of Mt. Everest</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1960: Prelim. Agreement</td>
<td>China received 6% of disputed territory (1 of 11 sectors) and half of Mt. Everest. Nepal held most of the traditional grazing areas and passes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt. Everest</td>
<td></td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1961: Boundary Treaty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1963: Boundary Protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>125,500 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed three sectors, the western (held by China), the eastern (held by India) and the central (divided)</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>No agreement</td>
<td>Zhou offered ‘package deal’ to India, with China controlling 26% of disputed land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>1,165 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed the area around Changbai / Paekdu Mt between the Yalu and Tumen rivers</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1962: Boundary Treaty</td>
<td>China received 40% of the disputed Changbai / Paekdu mountain, giving 60% to North Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1964: Boundary Protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>17,000 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed numerous sectors along the entire border</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1962: Boundary Treaty</td>
<td>China received 29% of disputed territory, mostly grasslands in the Steppe.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1964: Boundary Protocol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>7,480 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed the xx valley as well as control of seven mountain passes and salt mine</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1963: Boundary Treaty</td>
<td>China received 61% of disputed territory, but transferred 1650 sq km of territory it controlled to Pakistan. Pakistan held control of 6 of 7 strategic passes as well as salt mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1965: Boundary Protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>12,950 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed the Wakhan corridor between Pakistan and Tajikistan</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1963: Boundary Treaty</td>
<td>China did not receive any of the disputed Wakhan corridor. Boundary affirmed 1895 Russo-British agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1965: Boundary Protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>33,500 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed 5 sectors, including river islands in the east and the Pamir Mountains in the west</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>No agreement</td>
<td>China and the SU reached a preliminary agreement to divide control of islands in the eastern sector, with China receiving control of approximately 50 percent of the islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Disputed Area</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Talks</td>
<td>Agreements</td>
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<td>---------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>764 sq km</td>
<td>Two disputed sectors, both grazing lands</td>
<td>1984-2002</td>
<td>1998: Maintenance of Tranquility Agreement</td>
<td>China offered to hold 35% of disputed territory.</td>
</tr>
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<td>SU</td>
<td>~1,000 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed islands in the Amur and Ussuri rivers as well as adjacent areas</td>
<td>1987-1991</td>
<td>1991: Easter sector agreement 1999: Demarc. communiqué</td>
<td>China received 52% of river islands. Other areas were divided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>125,000 sq km</td>
<td>Disputed three sectors, the western (held by China), the eastern (held by India) and the central (divided)</td>
<td>1989-2002</td>
<td>1993: Maintenance of Tranquility Agreement 1996: CBM Agreement</td>
<td>Affirmed actual control, with China controlling 26 percent of disputed land.</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>Dispute over location of boundary line in western sector</td>
<td>1992-1994</td>
<td>1994: Western sect. agreement 1999: Demarc. communiqué</td>
<td>Affirmed the line of actual control</td>
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<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2,248 sq km</td>
<td>15 disputed sectors: 8 held by Kazakhstan, 2 held by China, 3 used by both and 2 uncontrolled</td>
<td>1992-1998</td>
<td>1994: Boundary Agreement 1997: Supplemental Agreement 1998: Supplemental Agreement</td>
<td>China received 18-20% of disputed territory</td>
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<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>3,650 sq km</td>
<td>7 disputed sectors: 5 held by Kyrgyzstan, 1 held by China and 1 uncontrolled</td>
<td>1992-1999</td>
<td>1996: Boundary Agreement 1998: Supplemental Agreement</td>
<td>China received 25-30% of disputed territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>28,430 sq km</td>
<td>3 disputed sectors, including the Pamir Mts.</td>
<td>1992-2002</td>
<td>1999: Boundary Agreement 2002: Supplemental Agreement</td>
<td>China received 6% of dispute Pamir Mountains; 50% of one sector and 0% of another sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>350 sq km</td>
<td>Black Bear Island at the confluence of Amur and Ussuri rivers</td>
<td>1990-1997</td>
<td>No agreement</td>
<td>Island controlled by Russia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table Four*

China’s Dispute Settlement Attempts (1990s)
Table Five  
China’s Territorial Disputes and Lost Territory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Disputed Area</th>
<th>States Involved</th>
<th>Size of Disputed Area (km²)</th>
<th>Size of “Lost” Territory (km²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kyrgyzstani Border</td>
<td>SU / Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>3,650</td>
<td>~200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pamir Mountains</td>
<td>SU / Tajikistan</td>
<td>28,430</td>
<td>~100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vietnamese border</td>
<td>Vietnam (DRV)</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>329,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Macao</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kazakh Border</td>
<td>SU / Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2,248</td>
<td>~600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pasamulung Valley</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Western Russia</td>
<td>SU / Russia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>~10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Laotian border</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>236,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hong Kong</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1,042</td>
<td>1,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Askai Chin / NEFA</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Eastern Russia</td>
<td>SU / Russia</td>
<td>~1,000</td>
<td>820,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Kashmir border</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>7,480</td>
<td>~50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mongolian Steppe</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>1,565,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Wakhan Strip</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>12,950</td>
<td>~50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Changbai Mountain</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>220,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Nepal</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2,103</td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Burmese border</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>574,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Taiwan</td>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>32,260</td>
<td>32,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Senkaku Islands</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>~7</td>
<td>4,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Black Bear Island</td>
<td>SU / Russia</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. White Dragon Island</td>
<td>DRV</td>
<td>~5</td>
<td>~5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Paracel Islands</td>
<td>RVN / DRV</td>
<td>~2</td>
<td>~2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Spratly Islands</td>
<td>RVN / DRV</td>
<td>~5</td>
<td>~5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table Six
Militarization and Territorial Dispute Status
(1949-2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Militarized</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dispute Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dispute Status</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settled</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 75, 839, 1050

$X^2 = 26.02$ (1 d.f., p < .001)

Note: Each unit represents a dispute dyad
Map Two