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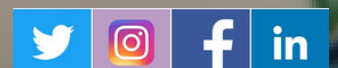
CHINESE CARTOGRAPHIC AGGRESSION AGAINST INDIA

SAI PRIYA BANOTH

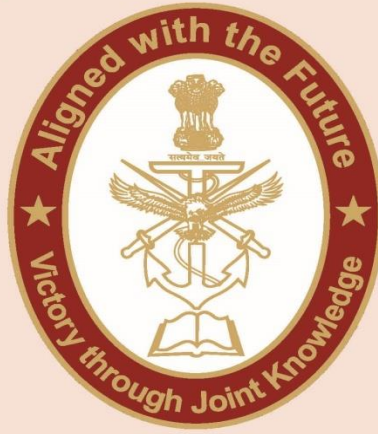
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**CHINESE CARTOGRAPHIC
AGGRESSION AGAINST INDIA**



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Abstract

The deliberate manipulation of maps and geographic data for tactical, military, or political ends is referred to as cartographic aggression. China has 14 nations with whom it shares borders, and it has been utilising cartographic violence to obtain the upper hand in the story of its territorial claims. This research project proposes to perform an extensive investigation on Chinese cartographic aggression, assessing its goals, tactics, precedents, and effects. The phenomenon of Chinese cartographic aggression and its effects on India's territorial integrity are examined in this web article. This study contributes to a better understanding of the intricate interplay between cartography, geopolitics, and international relations in the context of Sino-Indian relations by a thorough investigation of the topic. This study investigates the times where Chinese maps have made territorial claims that infringe on India's borders through a thorough investigation of historical episodes. Additionally, in order to address the difficulties raised by these cartographic assertions, this research analyses various channels for diplomatic engagement and dispute settlement.

Introduction

For the majority of people, maps serve a neutral but crucial purpose: they help you locate objects and navigate a new area. One's perspective of and understanding of the world can be influenced by maps. They are the instruments that shape and control discourses on global politics and Maps, like images or projections, assist in forming our worldview. They are frequently utilised to communicate narratives with a point and stories with a political intent, offering much more than just geographical data. This phenomenon, known as "Cartographic Aggression," started before "Nation States" existed. Through the employment of visual messages like maps, cartoons, posters, and postcards, the strategic use of cartography can be regarded as a component of psychological warfare operationalised during the times of peace. Cartographical aggression is based on the manipulation of images to influence how the domestic and global audience perceives the aggressor's claim to a particular territory. This blurs the distinction between the aggrieved state's legal and factual claims to the territory, giving the aggressor an advantage in the territorial dispute.

Maps are essential for shaping a worldview because they graphically portray geographic information, assisting us in comprehending how the world is organised, how different locations are related to one another, and how resources are distributed. Think of classic world maps from the imperial age, which were coloured with what Benedict Anderson termed the imperial dye (French territory was purple-blue, British territory was pink-red, and so on), or maps from the Cold War, which were coloured red and blue to support the notion of a split globe.¹ These maps contribute to the development of what has been called our geographical imagination (Watts 1999; Gregory 2009), which is a part of the geographical outlook we unconsciously utilise to make sense of the world.² Maps shape how we interpret the dynamics, cultures, and environments of the world by affecting how we perceive size, distance, and position, and they have a significant impact on how we see politics, society, and the economy.

Where Do The Two Countries Currently Stand On The Issues Of Cartography?

The India-China border dispute has been a longstanding and complex issue, with differing perceptions of the boundary between the two countries. This has led to occasional tensions and incidents along the border. One aspect of this dispute involves the depiction of territories on official maps. Both India and China have published maps that reflect their respective territorial claims. China has been known to assert its territorial claims through the publication of official maps that include regions India considers its own, and have historically belonged to India. These maps often draw borders that are inconsistent with India's position. China's actions have been a source

¹ Imagined communities, reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, page number 175

https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2016/SOC757/um/61816961/Benedict_Anderson_Imagined_Communities.pdf

² Daniels, S. (2011). Geographical imagination. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 36(2), 182–187. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23020810>

of concern for India and have led to diplomatic tensions. India, on the other hand, has also published maps that reflect the territorial jurisdiction as inherited on India's independence in Aug 1947. These maps typically show regions like Aksai Chin as part of Indian territory, based on the lines negotiated or communicated by the British to the Tibetan and Chinese. India's publication of such maps is seen as a way to justify its sovereignty claims over these disputed areas. The publication of these maps can be seen as a form of asserting sovereignty over the disputed areas. The maps issue is just one facet of the larger India-China border dispute. Both countries have engaged in negotiations and discussions to resolve their differences and clarify their respective boundary positions. However, progress has been slow, and a comprehensive resolution has remained elusive.

Cartographic Aggression Of China Against India: A Historical Context

Since gaining its independence, India has continued to coexist with two of its troublesome neighbours (in the west and the north). India's neighbour's methods of aggression against it have become more sophisticated in both the physical and psychological spheres. To support their territorial claims, Pakistan and China continue to distort the boundaries between their countries and India on maps. India has been fighting against cartographic aggregation ever since it gained its independence. Nepal has recently resorted to revival of historical cartographic aggression against India. China and Pakistan's support for cartographic fabrication has harmed how the world sees India's genuine geographical borders.

The boundary between areas under Chinese and Indian authority is known as the LAC. The LAC is believed to be 3,488 km long by India, but only about 2,000 km by China.³ The Indian and Chinese border is divided into three sectors namely the western sector, the middle sector and the eastern sector. The western sector is alongside the union territory Ladakh, the middle sector is alongside the states Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and finally the eastern sector is alongside the states of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, "The border is not fully demarcated and the process of clarifying and confirming the Line of Actual Control is in progress".⁴ The region is known for its high-altitude topography, which has prevented appropriate infrastructure development in these areas. Despite the fact that each side has disputed territory claims in each of these three areas, the western and eastern sectors have been more open to direct clashes between the forces of the two Nations. For instance, the Galwan valley, which is located along the western portion of the LAC, became the scene of a conflict in June 2020 for the first time since 1962.

We start by examining the eastern sector. The Simla Accord of 1914 saw members of the British Indian government, China, and Tibet draw the boundary between Arunachal

³ LAC whereuf it located? <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/line-of-actual-control-where-it-is-located-and-where-india-and-china-differ-6436436/>

⁴ Management of INDO-CHINA border, ministry of home affairs
https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/INDO%20CHINA_05052017.pdf

and Sikkim, known as the McMahon line.⁵ China currently disputes this claim, claiming that the Tibetan government, which wasn't a sovereign state at the time it was signed, was responsible for putting it into force. As a result, Tawang and other areas of Arunachal Pradesh are claimed by China as being a part of southern Tibet. North Sikkim and Chumbi Valley in Sikkim, Namkha Chu, Sumdorong Chu, Yangtse, Asaphila, Longju, Dichu, Fish Tail-1 & 2 (Dibang Valley), and Lamang in Arunachal Pradesh are among the disputed regions along the eastern border. India has persisted in calling the McMahon line the true border and has pushed for the preservation of the status quo there.

Similarly, the two nations dispute their respective perceptions of control over Aksai Chin, which is now unlawfully held by China, along the western section of the region that borders Ladakh. Pangong Tso Lake, Galwan Valley, Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO), Hot Springs-Gogra, Demchok, Chushul, Spanggur Gap, Samar Lungpa, Trig Heights, Chumar, Dumchele, and Kongka La are among the contentious regions. To define the nation's borders, the British Indian government suggested two lines. While the 1893 McDonald Line recommended putting the territory as part of China's Xinjiang province, the 1865 Johnson Line proposed including the region as part of India.⁶ China has persisted in insisting that the Aksai Chin region is an extension of the Tibetan plateau.⁷ The maps created by Delhi as late as 1950 clearly show that India to identify the area east of the Karakoram range, that is western and middle sectors, as "Boundary undefined" on maps at the time of independence.⁸ This portion of the boundary has never been mutually demarcated, and the stance of "Boundary undefined" changed in 1954, adopting the Johnson Line.

The Chinese opened the roadway connecting Tibet and Xingjian in 1957, marking the first instance of cartographic and physical encroachment on Indian territory. According to recently made public Central Investigation Agency (CIA) documents, the motorway that unlawfully passes through Aksai Chin in Eastern Ladakh was built beginning in the early 1950s.⁹ It was then followed by the publication of a map that for the first time showed the entirety of Aksai Chin as being part of Chinese territory, much to India's dismay. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru brought up the issue of previous Chinese maps showing the wrong Sino-Indian border with his Chinese counterpart in 1954 and again in 1956, but the Chinese dismissed India's concerns by labelling the maps as being from the Kuomintang era, and the Communist regime lacked the time to update them. But in September 1959, the Chinese legally asserted control over more than

⁵ *Sino-Indian Boundary Dispute, 1948-60* : (2006, September 9). Economic and Political Weekly. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://www.epw.in/journal/2006/36/special-articles/sino-indian-boundary-dispute-1948-60.html>

⁶ looking for common ground on the borderline <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/looking-for-common-ground-on-the-borderline-156910>

⁷ India-China boundary dispute: shadow of 60-year old war at border flash point <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-63969040>

⁸ Report of the officials of the GOI and PRC on the boundary question http://www.archive.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/ORC_01-32_Part1.pdf

⁹ Claude Arpi, 'When Nehru hid the truth about China building a road across Indian territory', Daily O, 18 February 2017. http://www.archive.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/Corres_Nov59_Mar60.pdf

50,000 sq km of territory in Ladakh and the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA, now Arunachal Pradesh).

A “Package Deal” proposition was put up by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1960 to settle the border conflict in both the eastern and western sectors. It required both nations accepting the current situation, which entailed Indian sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh and Chinese possession of Aksai Chin.¹⁰ This agreement, which is referred to as a swap, unites the conflicts between the two industries under a single heading. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister at the time, vehemently rejected this package deal because he believed that any concessions, even from the western sector, would only encourage Beijing to escalate its actions along the border. The second proposal, known as the “LAC Plus Solution,” included modest concessions from China in the western sector and acceptance of the status quo in the east.¹¹ However, India did not accept this either and the Chinese side also rejected it in 1985.¹² The Chinese invasion in October 1962 followed, leading to the unlawful occupation of the Aksai Chin people in Ladakh, and the rest is history. Only four months after the 1962 assault, Pakistan attempted to further alter the existing geographical reality when it illegally transferred the Shaksgam Valley to China in March 1963.¹³



Shaksgam Valley

Source: Manohar Parrikar Institute For Defense Studies And Analyses
<https://idsa.in/askanexpert/ShaksgamValleytoChina>

¹⁰ Guruswamy, M. (2017, March 15). *Sino-Indian Border Dispute: New Package Deal Floated by Former Chinese Negotiator Is No Deal at All*. Scroll.in. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://scroll.in/article/830978/sino-indian-border-dispute-new-package-deal-floated-by-former-chinese-negotiator-is-no-deal-at-all>

¹¹ <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/not-quite-out-of-the-box-right-yet>

¹² colonial history, many pacts, different maps: roots of differing perceptions of LAC between India, China <https://www.outlookindia.com/international/colonial-history-many-pacts-different-maps-roots-of-differing-perceptions-of-lac-between-india-china-news-245808>

¹³ battling cartographic aggression against india: a reality check https://www.claws.in/static/IB-249_Battling-Cartographic-Aggression-against-India-A-Reality-Check.pdf

Chinese envoy Sun Yuxi expanded their earlier conventional claim, which was limited to the Tawang Tract, in 2006 by expressly claiming the entirety of Arunachal Pradesh.¹⁴ In addition to this, since 2008, the stapling of Indians' visas from the then-state of J&K as well as Arunachal Pradesh sparked additional controversy. The Chinese Embassy denied an official from Arunachal Pradesh a regular visa in 2007 on the grounds that it violated Chinese "sovereignty." The same thing happened in 2010 when the then-Northern Army Commander operating in the then-state of J&K was given a stapled visa, and it happened again in 2012 when an Indian Air Force Officer from Arunachal Pradesh received the same treatment. Each of these delegation visits was subsequently cancelled, with the exception of 2012. Since PM Manmohan Singh's 2011 BRICS Summit meeting in, the residents of J&K have been given valid visas, while the situation in Arunachal Pradesh has stayed the same.

Since then, Beijing's strategy of pushing claims aggressively through cartographic adventurism has simply taken on additional forms. China began issuing electronic passports in 2012, and they included watermarks showing Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin as being on Chinese soil. It was met with great opposition from India, which instead began printing relevant Indian maps on Chinese visas.¹⁵

A significant border dispute between the two countries occurred in 2013 when Beijing asserted its claims to the Depsang Plains in northern Ladakh. India's response was seen as being rather accommodative, with both the then-PM Manmohan Singh and the external affairs minister Salman Khurshid referring to it as a "local incident" on two consecutive occasions.¹⁶ Following this, India later that year withdrew from a trilateral naval exercise with the US, Japan, and India off the island of Guam in an effort to allay Beijing's concerns. This only reflected India's apparent accommodation towards China in its fight against China's cartographic aggression. No new maps were created right after this incident.

In order to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Panchsheel, or the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence between India, Myanmar, and China, China updated their "vertical atlas" in 2014.¹⁷ This atlas shows large portions of J&K (Aksai Chin), all of Arunachal Pradesh (Southern Tibet), and the coast of Vietnam (South China Sea) as territory it has annexed. According to the published map, China has long asserted its

¹⁴ Saurabh Shukla, No boundary talks during Hu Jintao's India visit, <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/diplomacy/story/20061127-president-of-china-visits-india-784225-2006-11-27>

¹⁵ *India Hits Back at China's Controversial New Passports With Visas*. (n.d.). The World from PRX. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://theworld.org/stories/2012-11-24/india-hits-back-chinas-controversial-new-passports-visas>

¹⁶ *Chinese Incursion a Localised Problem, Can Be Resolved: PM* | India News - Times of India. (n.d.). The Times of India. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/chinese-incursion-a-localised-problem-can-be-resolved-pm/articleshow/19761946.cms>

¹⁷ (n.d.). *New Vertical Atlas of China Issued[1]*- Chinadaily.com.cn. New vertical atlas of China issued[1]- Chinadaily.com.cn. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-06/24/content_17612879.htm

exclusive sovereignty over areas that other international claimant states consider to be on their “national soil.”



Chinese 2014 “Vertical Atlas”

Source: *New Vertical Atlas Of China Issued*[1]- *Chinadaily.com.cn*. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-06/24/content_17612879.htm

This happened again in 2015, and very interestingly, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s state visit to China. At that time, the entire then-state of J&K was removed from the morphing map of India, which was broadcast on the state-run Chinese Central Television (CCTV).¹⁸ Similar maps have long been available in Chinese marketplaces. According to some observers, New Delhi’s responses to these occurrences consisted mostly of verbal protestations in an effort to preserve expanding financial ties.

The Doklam dispute in 2017 marked a turning point in bilateral ties between China and India. Maps showing Doklam to be a part of China were widely disseminated by Chinese media outlets affirming their claim after a road was erroneously built in Bhutanese territory.¹⁹ In the midst of this standoff, Indian troops made their first contact with Chinese troops on the soil of a third country due to the serious security

¹⁸ battling cartographic aggression against india: a reality check https://www.claws.in/static/IB-249_Battling-Cartographic-Aggression-against-India-A-Reality-Check.pdf

¹⁹ battling cartographic aggression against india: a reality check https://www.claws.in/static/IB-249_Battling-Cartographic-Aggression-against-India-A-Reality-Check.pdf

implications for India and Bhutan. The status-quo-ante was then restored. This episode was one of those instances when on-ground aggressiveness was followed by aggressive cartography.

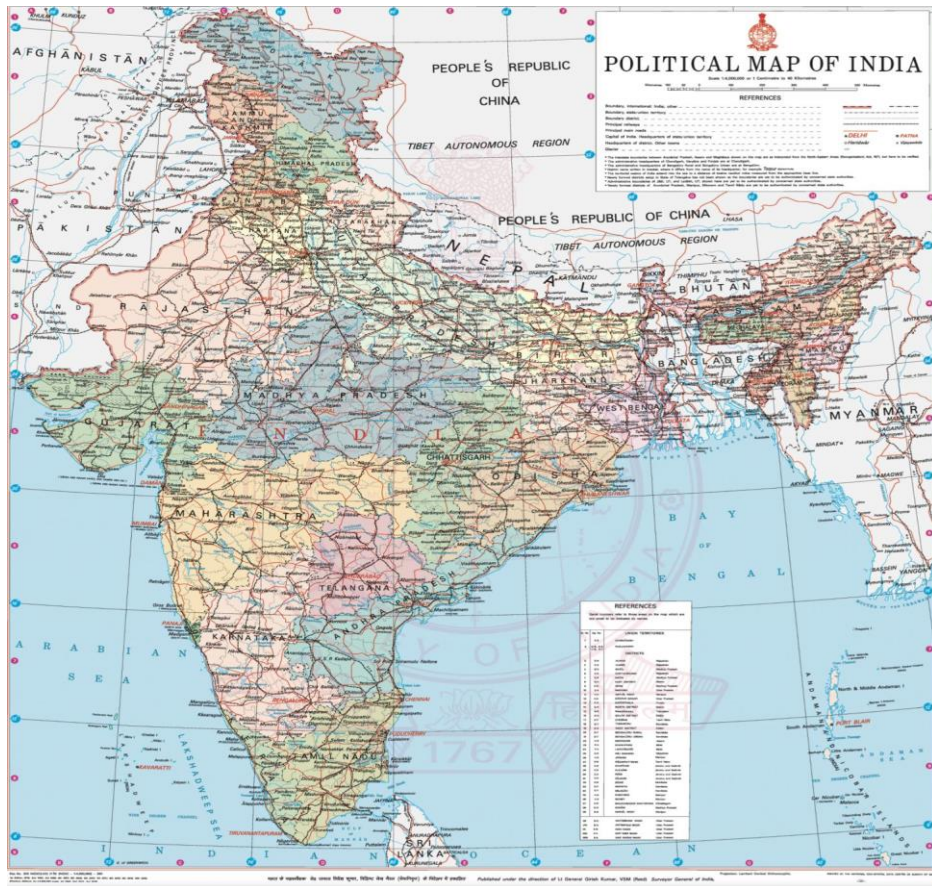


Maps Showing Doklam To Be A Part Of China By The Chinese Media

Source: *Battling Cartographic Aggression Against India: A Reality Check*
https://www.claws.in/static/IB-249_Battling-Cartographic-Aggression-against-India-A-Reality-Check.pdf

After Article 370 was struck down on August 5, 2019, India published updated maps of India on November 2, 2019, that show Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh as Union territories. The Indian government officially announced the establishment of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union territories, which depicted the disputed territory under its administrative jurisdiction. This led to a protest from China's foreign ministry spokesman: "The Indian Government officially announced the establishment of so-called Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union territories".²⁰ They asserted that doing so contravened India-signed border agreements. The vast amount of opposition to this new map that exists at higher levels of Chinese leadership mostly remained unknown to the Indian public.

²⁰ New Delhi failed to anticipate China's reaction to the change of Indian map
<https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/world-news-opinion-new-delhi-failed-to-anticipate-chinas-reaction-to-the-change-of-indian-map/303359>



Map of India

Source: Survey Of India <https://surveyofindia.gov.in/documents/polmap-eng-11012021.jpg>

The 2020 Eastern-Ladakh standoff was the latest significant attempt by Beijing to enlarge its territorial claims, but it is important to remember that Sky Maps, China's leading provider of digital maps, released inaccurate maps in April 2020, which went completely unnoticed. An Arunachal Pradesh MP brought up the subject.²¹ Following the transgression in Eastern Ladakh, a new map was released in July 2020, with the Chinese perspective of the LAC shifted far westward in comparison to the earlier maps.

²¹ <https://odishabytes.com/chinas-sky-map-includes-indias-arunachal-pradesh/amp/>



Disputed Territories And Disputed Borders Between India And China

Source: *National Herald News* <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/national/china-includes-arunachal-in-its-updated-map>

The Chinese government's cartographic aggression against its neighbours also shows a pattern. China faced border issues with Russia, but because Russia is much stronger than China, it was able to handle them under Russia's terms. However, China behaves in the most expansionist manner conceivable when it comes to its neighbours like India, Nepal, and those who do not possess military power comparable to its own. A definite pattern of Chinese attack may also be identified after reviewing the period of Chinese cartographic aggression against India. China has decided to address its neighbouring regions in three ways. The first phase in establishing effective control over the territory is to assert its claims using false evidence, the second is to launch incursions into these territories, and the third is to set up its political and armed forces. This is the precise course of action, even though it might be prolonged. The goal of China's massive defence spending and upgrading of its armed forces is to keep the neighbouring countries feeling threatened and keep them from taking any further action beyond merely diplomatically criticising the Chinese aggression.

India and China's military standoff in eastern Ladakh, which began in May 2020, has yet to be resolved. The Chinese government has used new nomenclature to rename contested territory for a long time. China announced a list of names for 80 geographical objects in the South China Sea, including 25 islands, in April 2020.²² China has already classified 287 features in the oil-rich disputed region in 1983. On April 2023, China's ministry of civil affairs issued the "standardised" names for 11 locations in "Zangnam," Chinese nomenclature for the northeastern states (according to them it is part of south

²² *For The Third Time, China Renames Places in Arunachal Pradesh.* (n.d.). The Wire. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://thewire.in/security/for-the-third-time-china-renames-places-in-arunachal-pradesh>

tibet).²³ The move was "outright" rejected by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. "Arunachal Pradesh is, was, and always will be an integral and inalienable part of India" said the MEA Spokesperson.²⁴ Two residential communities, five mountain summits, and two rivers were among the areas designated. Their coordinates, place name categories, and subordinate administrative districts were all listed in the document. China has announced the third batch of names in Chinese characters, Tibetan, and pinyin. The first six names were released in November 2017, just a few days after Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama visited Arunachal.²⁵ The second came out in December 2021, only two days before China's new land border rule took effect.²⁶

India's Response To Chinese Cartographic Aggression

Given China's constantly shifting notions of the LAC, it has been actively and aggressively altering narratives by using inaccurate maps over time. Instead, discussion has focused on how India responded to such attacks.

Depending on the aggressor, the aggression itself, the period, and India's current interests as determined by the successive Indian governments, India's reception and response to such aggression have varied. It is important for us to examine these incidents and the development of Indian response in this context at a time when such hostility is only increasing, notably from Beijing.

Through diplomatic channels, India has repeatedly expressed its worries about Chinese cartographic aggression, highlighting the need to respect predetermined boundaries and international conventions. This contains communications at various levels, as well as diplomatic notes and statements. These interactions not only help to convey India's position but also to create a forum for discussion and conflict resolution. India's diplomatic initiatives are intended to persuade China to uphold the values of peaceful coexistence and respect existing agreements.

In addition, India has looked for international assistance and consensus to confront Chinese cartographic aggressiveness. India emphasises the value of maintaining the rule-based international order and respecting territorial sovereignty by bringing up the problem in international venues like the United Nations and interacting with other nations facing comparable difficulties. This strategy emphasises the wider effects of cartographic violence beyond bilateral relations and encourages a group response to such difficulties. However, India insists on settling the boundary issues bilaterally.

²³ *For The Third Time, China Renames Places in Arunachal Pradesh.* (n.d.). The Wire. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://thewire.in/security/for-the-third-time-china-renames-places-in-arunachal-pradesh>

²⁴ *For The Third Time, China Renames Places in Arunachal Pradesh.* (n.d.). The Wire. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from <https://thewire.in/security/for-the-third-time-china-renames-places-in-arunachal-pradesh>

²⁵ *beginning names six places in Arunachal in chinese charecters*
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-reinforces-claims-to-arunachal-within-days-of-dalai-lamas-visit/article61794427.ece>

²⁶ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202112/1243788.shtml>

China interpreted any act of restraint and caution by its neighbours as a sign of that country's weakness, which encouraged China to continue its aggressive attitude. Undoubtedly, poor policy has not led to the desired results. A strong and vocal opposition of cartographical aggression is meant to strongly denounce China's wrong conduct, not that someone should start a war with China. India had previously tried taking a tolerant stance. Military representatives from J&K or Arunachal Pradesh were not being dispatched by India. This encouraged China to provide stapled visas to residents of some regions since it saw it as an indication of India's vulnerability. If there had been a strong reaction sooner, China might not have carried out these activities. India has taken the right action by stamping the proper map on passports that now feature Chinese maps that claim Indian land as their own, but all the countries must come up with a coordinated strategy to put pressure on China to stop indulging in such actions. All other nations should support the concerned nations in this effort if they have the power to effectively impose pressure on China. In spite of China's desire to boost its international trade, it may be possible to convince the new leadership to put a stop to these acts, which are further damaging China's reputation in the world.

It is however crucial to recognise that combating Chinese cartographic aggression remains a difficult problem that is constantly morphing. The geopolitical environment, the desire of both parties to engage in substantive engagement, and the overall dynamics of the region all have an impact on how well India responds. It takes perseverance, justification of India's stance based on historical facts, a readiness to make mutual concessions where historically and geographically justified, and a dedication to preserving international norms to reach a sustainable agreement.

Impact Of This Cartographic Aggression On Bilateral Relations And Regional Stability

The 3Cs—Cooperation, Competition, and Conflict—define the bilateral relationship between China and India, with boundary disputes at the centre of the conflict between the two neighbours. Since the border along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is not precisely defined by bilateral agreements, there are different perceptions of it. China's cartographic aggression against India has had a significant impact on bilateral ties and the stability of the region.

The aggressive cartography has increased diplomatic tensions and led to numerous border standoffs. For instance, China's construction of a road in the disputed Doklam plateau near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction set off the Doklam stalemate in 2017. The bilateral relationship between China and India has been seriously damaged by China's cartographic aggression. This episode demonstrated the danger of military escalation and emphasised the urgent requirement for efficient communication systems to avoid unintentional confrontation. India has strengthened its military posture along the border, mirroring China's military provocations, raising the possibility of military encounters and eroding long-established confidence-building measures, which had been unilaterally abandoned by China in April-May 2020. Mistrust and hostility between the countries have grown as a result of China's unilateral moves, which include redrawing maps to support its territorial claims. These activities show a lack of

commitment to peaceful conflict settlement in addition to disregarding India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated in response to inquiries from the media in September 2022 while on one of his visits to the United States that India will continue to have a relationship with China that is based on "mutual" sensitivity, respect, and interest. S Jaishankar firmly emphasised during a media conference that "we continue to work towards a relationship with China, but one that is built on mutual sensitivity, mutual respect, and mutual interest."²⁷ But nevertheless, we cannot deny that the border issue continues to be crucial to overall bilateral relations between China and India.

Beyond bilateral relations, China's territorial assertiveness has a substantial negative impact on regional stability. In the greater geopolitical environment of Asia, China and India play significant roles, and their contentious ties have an impact on the entire continent and the world. A climate of uncertainty has been sparked by China's activities, which has an impact on regional trade, investment, and economic cooperation generally. For an atmosphere to be favourable for economic development, regional stability is crucial, and China's aggressive cartography threatens to upset this delicate balance. Border disputes and territorial conflicts create instability that deters foreign direct investment and slows economic expansion.

While China also pushed some of India's neighbours to use cartographic aggression as a weapon against it, China's assertive acts and expanding military may have spurred some of its neighbours to fear China's ambitions and the potential for regional hegemony. With the exception of Aksai Chin, Pakistan had previously designated all of the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh as disputed territory.²⁸ On August 4, 2020, Pakistan issued their revised political map, which included Junagarh in Gujarat only after a new map had been published by China in July 2020.²⁹ A new map created by the Nepalese government in June 2020 contained three regions—Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani—totaling 334 sq km of Indian territory.³⁰ This action, which was reportedly encouraged by China, was perceived as a surprise by India.³¹ Despite the protests over Nepal's decision, New Delhi has mostly maintained a cautious and measured diplomatic profile. It is interesting to note that complaints are being made even from within Nepal about the government's complete silence regarding China's occupation of Nepalese territory and its selective amnesia regarding another India-

²⁷ NDTV.com. "India's Ties With China Built On Mutual Interest, Respect': S Jaishankar," September 29, 2022. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/indias-ties-with-china-built-on-mutual-interest-respect-s-jaishankar-3387145>.

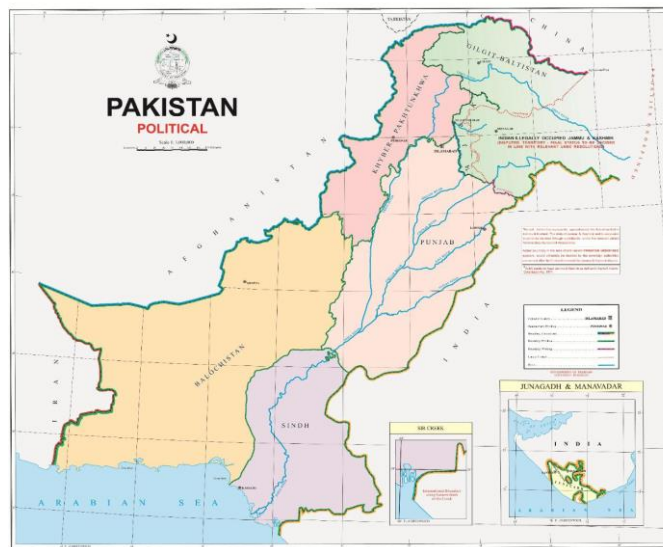
²⁸ New Pakistan map includes J&K, parts of Gujarat, India dismisses it as 'ridiculous' <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/pakistans-new-map-shows-jk-as-its-part-india-dismisses-it-as-ridiculous-assertions/474897/>

²⁹ New Pakistan map includes J&K, parts of Gujarat, India dismisses it as 'ridiculous' <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/pakistans-new-map-shows-jk-as-its-part-india-dismisses-it-as-ridiculous-assertions/474897/>

³⁰ nepal's new political maps claim india's territories <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/nepals-new-political-map-claims-indias-territories/article31632033.ece>

³¹ battling cartographic aggression against india: a reality check https://www.claws.in/static/IB-249_Battling-Cartographic-Aggression-against-India-A-Reality-Check.pdf

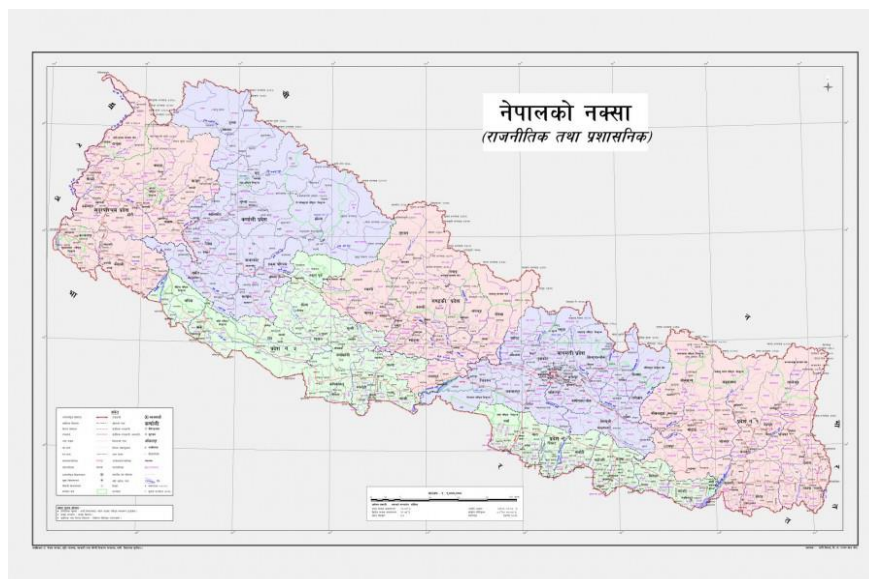
Nepal dispute in Susta, a region that is not as strategically important for China as the previous three.³²



Map Published By Pakistan That Includes Parts Of Gujarat

Source: *India Times*

<https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/here-is-why-pakistan-claimed-junagadh-in-gujarat-as-its-in-new-political-map-519634.html>



Map Created By The Nepalese Government

Source: *Nepal Redraws Political Map By Incorporating Three Disputed Areas With India*

³² battling cartographic aggression against india: a reality check https://www.claws.in/static/IB-249_Battling-Cartographic-Aggression-against-India-A-Reality-Check.pdf

<https://thewire.in/south-asia/nepal-redraws-political-map-by-incorporating-3-indian-areas>



Map Showing India-China River Dispute In Susta

The territorial aggression of China has made security relations between India and other regional players stronger. India has worked to strengthen its ties with nations like Japan, Australia, and the US in order to balance out China's expanding influence. These four nations make up the Quad, a forum for strategic consultation that has acquired notoriety as a means of advancing regional security and stability. This indicates a widespread worry about China's actions and how they may affect the balance of power in the area.

Conclusion

China has also attempted to alter its boundaries with its other neighbouring countries. China made an assertion when opposing the financing proposal for the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary project in eastern Bhutan at a web-based meeting of the 58th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council that the sanctuary is part of its territory.³³ However, Bhutan objected to the Chinese assertions. The Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, which is on the agenda of China-Bhutan border talks, is allegedly located in the China-Bhutan disputed territory. China also uses the Nine-Dash Line as a boundary to demarcate its claimed territory in the South China Sea. Due to the overlap with their own territorial claims and international maritime limits, it is a point of contention between China and other nations in the area. Because China has made disproportionate territorial claims based on historical justifications rather than international law, the Nine-Dash Line is regarded as a kind of cartographic aggression. A collection of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea are known as the Senkaku Islands (also known as the Diaoyu Islands in China). These islands are disputed by China and Japan, and as a result, there have been tensions, but nevertheless China has included these islands in their maps and recognises them as their own territory. In the name of protecting its national security, a nation may designate a certain region as an Air Defence Identification Zone

³³ Why Bhutan's Sakteng wildlife Sanctuary is disputed by china

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55004196>

(ADIZ), where aircraft must identify themselves and adhere to specified rules. Concerns have been expressed by China's neighbouring nations and the international community over China's designation of an ADIZ and limits on innocent bystander movement in the South China Sea.³⁴ This action is viewed as an effort to exert control and territorial claims over contested regions, and it may violate the freedom of navigation concept, which permits ships and planes to move about without restriction in international seas.

This behaviour reflects that in the regions that China considers to be its "core interests," China has shown a rising interest in engaging in asymmetrical warfare over the past ten years. There is a theory that it dates back to Sun Tzu, who placed significant emphasis on "winning without fighting." We can connect and recognise the Chinese cartographic aggression against India as part of that strategy which is referred to as the 3Ws approach of the Chinese state. The subject of "the three warfares": swaying public opinion, conducting psychological operations, and putting together a potent legal defence on territorial problems and the 3W strategy includes psychological, legal, and media warfares.³⁵

Through the manipulation of maps and territorial claims, China's Three Warfare Strategy, which combines psychological, media, and legal warfare, can be linked to its cartographic aggressiveness. It is now clear that in order to support its territorial claims, China has been known to use psychological tricks, media sway, and legal justifications. These techniques are frequently depicted on maps. Maps may need to be distributed with false information, borders and marine boundaries may be quietly changed, or territorial expansion may be justified by legal justifications. By influencing perceptions and gaining control over contested areas, these strategies can support cartographic aggressiveness. They are consistent with the three warfare strategy's tenets.

In conclusion, bilateral relations and regional stability have been significantly impacted by China's cartographic aggression against India. There have been border standoffs and strained diplomatic ties between the two nations as a result of the aggressive assertion of territorial claims and unilateral redrawing of maps. Additionally, the consequences of this behaviour have an impact on the dynamics of regional security and economic cooperation. Cartographic aggression mitigation efforts must place a high priority on peaceful conflict resolution, efficient communication channels, and adherence to international norms and agreements. The ability of nations to cooperate on common problems and participate in constructive discussion, as opposed to taking unilateral steps that undermine confidence and escalate tensions, is crucial for maintaining regional peace. The only way India, China, and the surrounding area can progress towards a more secure and prosperous future is through coordinated efforts to address these concerns.

³⁴ the skies over south china sea
<https://www.reuters.com/graphics/TAIWAN-CHINA/byvrjrmgnve/>

³⁵ China's three warfares and India
https://www.idsa.in/system/files/jds_7_4_AbhijitSingh.pdf

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