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THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINO-SOVIET
BORDER IN THE FAR EAST

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U. S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

JESSIE WANG, Major, Signal Corps

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1965

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**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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U. S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the United States Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency.
(References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

The Sino-Soviet border in the Far East developed into its present state over a period of more than three centuries. The primary force in the development of this border was Russia's eastward and southward expansion and the filling of a vacuum between China and Russia. This thesis examines that portion of the Sino-Soviet border which delineates the area commonly known as Manchuria. This particular area was selected since it has been the primary focus of conflict involving Tsarist Russia and Imperial China, the Soviet Union and Republican China, the Soviet Union and Japan, and, more recently, the Soviet Union and Communist China.

If we except the Soviet offensives in 1945 that ended the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, for example, the greatest conflict was that of Nomonhan in 1939, which was a major armor battle employing corps-size forces. Next in order of intensity was the Changkufeng incident of 1938, which involved division-size forces. The incident-prone nature of these and other localities, including river boundaries, has not been limited to the period of the Japanese occupation. Earlier examples can be cited. It is important to note that the major Soviet invasion routes of 1945 generally passed through the areas of critical incidents. These routes also corresponded with routes featured in Japanese offensive plans

as well as in the scheme of fortifications and railroads.

The analysis of the border is performed in three major steps. First, terms used in connection with the border are defined, and the border itself is traced briefly. Second, the border is described in terms of the three main geographical frontiers--the western land frontier, the river frontier, and the southeastern land frontier. The development of the border is also traced with reference to significant events such as treaties, military conflicts, and the functions of the boundary. Finally, the military significance of the border is assessed with reference to its development and functions by reference to three main questions. The first of these questions is, "Is the area, or part of it, a cause for armed conflict, or susceptible to incidents leading to armed conflict?" The second, "Is the area of sufficient value to the powers on either side to warrant armed conflict?" The third, "Is the area suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent?"

As a result of the analysis, the most likely trouble spots along the border are isolated. Each of the three sections of the border, of course, has incident-prone areas which have generally served as invasion routes in time of war. The magnitude and intensity of incidents and conflicts

along the western and southeastern land boundaries, however, have been greater than those occurring along the river boundary. It is concluded that the most likely trouble-spots along the border are on the two land boundaries, although in the event of all-out conflict, fighting would probably occur in all incident-prone areas isolated in this thesis.

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PREFACE

Recent reports of Sino-Soviet border strife have indicated that there are border differences between the two communist giants. The ideological issue dominating the Sino-Soviet dispute has apparently given way in part to "bourgeois nationalism." A major part of the long border curves around the Chinese northeastern provinces or Manchuria. It is the common border delineating this rich agricultural and industrial plum, so often coveted by China's neighbors, that is the subject of this thesis.

For historical military data the author drew heavily on the Japanese Studies on Manchuria and the Japanese Monograph series, both distributed by the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army. These documents were originally based on, or consisted of monographs or accounts written by former members of the Japanese forces in Manchuria, or former Japanese Army staff officers concerned with Manchuria. A large portion of the remaining material was made available in the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College Library. Chinese sources, such as the Draft History of the Ch'ing Dynasty, were used as references

whenever available for the history of the earlier development of the border. In addition, Professor Ts'ung-wu Yao and Mr. S. Jagchid of the National Taiwan University did much to fill gaps in the author's knowledge of post-war Chinese history of the area and certain Chinese historical sources. News and clippings of recent border disputes and related matters were obtained from the Union Research Institute in Hongkong.

Professor John A. Morrison, formerly of the University of Pittsburgh, with his extensive knowledge of Soviet geography and developments in the Far East, was particularly helpful with comments on and information for the thesis, and with the loan of his material pertaining to the subject.

The author is also grateful for the helpful comments and cheerful assistance extended by members of the staff and faculty of the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, and by his wife.

While heartfelt gratitude is due all those who guided, assisted, or suffered with the author in the preparation of the thesis, the responsibility for the views and conclusions of the thesis, and for any defects contained therein, remains with the author.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1963, Communist China challenged the Soviet Union's right to the possession of over a million square kilometers of territory to the north of China acquired under Sino-Russian treaties in the nineteenth century. The Chinese Communists listed the treaties among instruments which they intended to "recognize, abrogate, or renegotiate when conditions are ripe."¹ A statement by Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, in the summer of 1964 indicated that China had "not yet called for an account" of the fact that "about 100 years ago the area to the East of Lake Baikal became the territory of Russia and from then on Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Kamchatka, and other points are the territory of the Soviet Union. A long editorial in Pravda vehemently retorted that Mao was "not just claiming this or that part of Soviet Territory but is portraying his claims as part of some general territorial question. We are faced with (an) openly expansionist programme with far-reaching pretensions."²

¹ South China Morning Post (Hongkong), 10 Sep 1964, p. 10.

² Ibid.

The magnitude of the claim, the Soviet Union's sharp rejoinder, rumors of Soviet troop movements from Germany to the Far East, and the fact that Red China acquired a nuclear capability in October 1964 serve to direct attention to the Sino-Soviet border.³ These phenomena should also give rise to questions regarding the location and length of the border, how it was developed, and whether there remain causes for international disputes along its length.

Stretching about 4500 miles (7200 kilometers), the entire Sino-Soviet border is too long and too complex to examine in one thesis. Accordingly, this thesis will examine that portion of the border which has been the primary focus of conflict between major powers over the past 300 years; disputes which have involved Tsarist Russia and Imperial China, the Soviet Union and Republican China, the Soviet Union and Japan, and now the Soviet Union and Communist China.

The analysis of the border will be performed in three major steps. In this introductory chapter, the terms to be used in connection with the border will be defined, and certain terms of reference cited. In addition, the border itself will be traced briefly to provide a guide for the description

³ Hsing-tao Jih-pao (Hsing Tao Daily, Hongkong), 9 Aug 1963, p. 4.

and examination of the frontier and the analysis of its relation to the border. In subsequent chapters, the current border area will be described in detail. The development of the border will be discussed chronologically with reference to significant events such as treaties, military conflicts, and the functions for which the boundary was intended. Those portions of the border which are by their nature susceptible to incidents or are likely to lead to conflict between the powers on opposite sides of the border will be isolated and identified. The purpose of investigating the border incidents is to determine how or why certain things happened, not to determine which side was right or wrong in the legal or ethical sense. Lastly the military significance of the border will be assessed in terms of the areas discussed or isolated in the above-mentioned areas, and how well the boundary discharges the function for which it was intended. This will be done by discussing the border area with reference to the following questions:

First, is the area, or part of it, a cause for armed conflict, or susceptible to incidents leading to armed conflict? From an historical viewpoint it can be seen that certain areas of the border are incident-prone. While the censorship of news and communication media practiced by communist regimes normally results in the release of information favorable to the communists

interests, recent information available from unclassified, western sources, as well as from communist agencies and officials, indicates that incidents have been occurring in the Sino-Soviet border areas. Specific examples will be cited.

Second, is the area of sufficient value to the powers on either side of the border to warrant armed conflict? The value of an area can be tangible, intangible, or both. The natural resources as well as the nationalistic spirit connected with these areas will be considered.

Third, is the area suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent? The answer to this question will be drawn from history rather than from a detailed terrain analysis with reference to current military organizations.

It should be pointed out that the normal dictionary terminology of borders and borderlands is not precise enough to be completely useful. Webster refers to a border as a boundary or frontier, and to borderland as the land or area adjacent to a border. For the purposes of this paper, the term border will be used to mean the actual dividing line between two countries, and the terms frontier and border area to describe the land area adjacent to the border on either side. For most other boundary terminology, however, a more definitive source should be used. Samuel Whittemore Boggs,

in his International Boundaries, established a body of boundary terminology adequate to describe and discuss a border, and enunciated certain criteria to help determine the significance of a boundary.⁴ His definitions which apply to this study will be listed in this chapter and used in subsequent chapters to describe the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East, to discuss its functions, and in part to assess its importance.

According to Boggs, the term boundary denotes a line defined from point to point in a treaty, arbitral award, or boundary commission report. The oldest classification of boundaries divided them into two types -- natural and artificial or conventional. Natural boundaries were those marked by nature, such as mountain crests, rivers, and shore lines of lakes and seas. Boggs also stated, however, that the fact that a line is marked by nature does not imply that it is natural to use it as a boundary or that it may be a desirable line of separation. Artificial or conventional boundaries are not marked by nature, but must be marked on the ground by stones or monuments placed by man.⁵ A comparatively recent example

⁴ Samuel Whittemore Boggs, International Boundaries; a Study of Boundary Functions and Problems (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 25-26.

⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

of such man-made boundaries is the Military Demarcation Line in Korea, which is based on the line of contact between the United Nations forces and the North Korean and Chinese Communist forces at the end of hostilities in July 1953.

Boggs went on to suggest a more precise and appropriate method of classifying boundaries. The classes of boundaries he used were physical, geometric, anthropogeographic, and complex or compound. His examples pertinent to a discussion of the military aspects of the Sino-Soviet border are listed below.

Physical boundaries follow some feature marked by nature.

a. Mountains.

(1) Crests.

(2) Water divides.

b. Deserts.

c. Lakes, bays, and straits.

(1) Median lines.

(2) Principal navigable channel.

(3) Bank or margin.

d. Rivers.

(1) Median lines.

(2) Thalweg.

(3) Bank or margin.

e. Swamps.

f. Boundaries through territorial waters to the high seas.

g. Contour line, but not the bank or margin of a river or lake.

Geometric types include straight lines, arcs of circles, and similar types of boundaries that disregard the physical geography and topography of the country.

a. Straight lines (meridians and other great circles).

b. Lines parallel to, or equidistant from, a coast or river.

Anthropogeographic types are related to the human occupancy of the land.

a. Tribal boundaries.

b. Economic boundaries.

c. Historical boundaries.

d. Cultural boundaries.

Complex or compound boundaries include compromise lines adjusted to many factors.

It should be remembered that the four classes of boundaries are not mutually exclusive. A boundary in a desert or swamp may be a straight line or other geometric type of boundary.

Delimitation is defined as the choice of a boundary site

and its definition in a treaty or other formal document. Demarcation is defined as the actual physical marking of a boundary on the ground.⁶

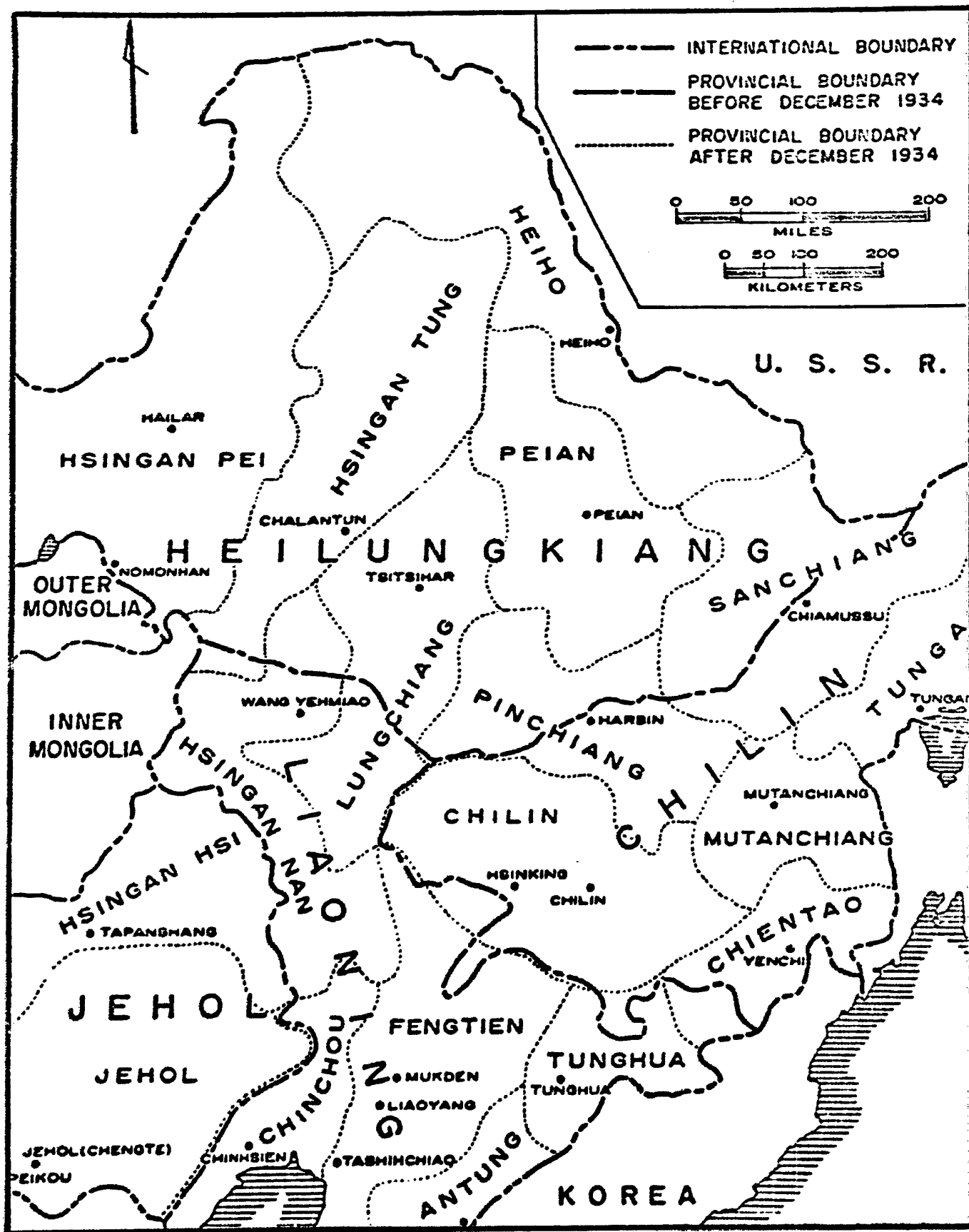
The preceding terms deal with definitions that are used to describe a border as a demarcation line between two nations. It is also recognized that a frontier is properly a region or zone with width as well as length. The word is sometimes used as a synonym for the term boundary, but will not be so used in this thesis.⁷

With respect to the area under discussion, certain qualifications will be used. While the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East encloses the area known to much of the Western world as Manchuria, the Chinese do not refer to it as such. The Chinese Nationalists formerly referred to the area as the Four Northeastern Provinces of Liaoning, Chilin (Kirin), Heilungchiang (Heilungkiang), and Jehol.⁸ Between the end of the Japanese

⁶ U.S. Department of State, Boundary Concepts and Definitions, Geographic Report No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, Office of the Geographer, 28 April 1961), p. 3.

⁷ Boggs, p. 22.

⁸ R. H. Mathews, Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary. (Revised American Ed.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 963, entry 6605, discusses all except Jehol, which was seized later by Japan. Together, the four provinces were referred to by the Chinese as "Tung-pei" or "Northeast" and "Tung-pei Ssu-sheng" or "Four Northeastern Provinces." Also see Map 1.



Map 1.--Manchuria showing internal boundaries before Dec 1934 and after Dec 1934 (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. IV, "Air Operations," (Washington, D.C., Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History. 27 Mar 1950). n. viv Man 1)

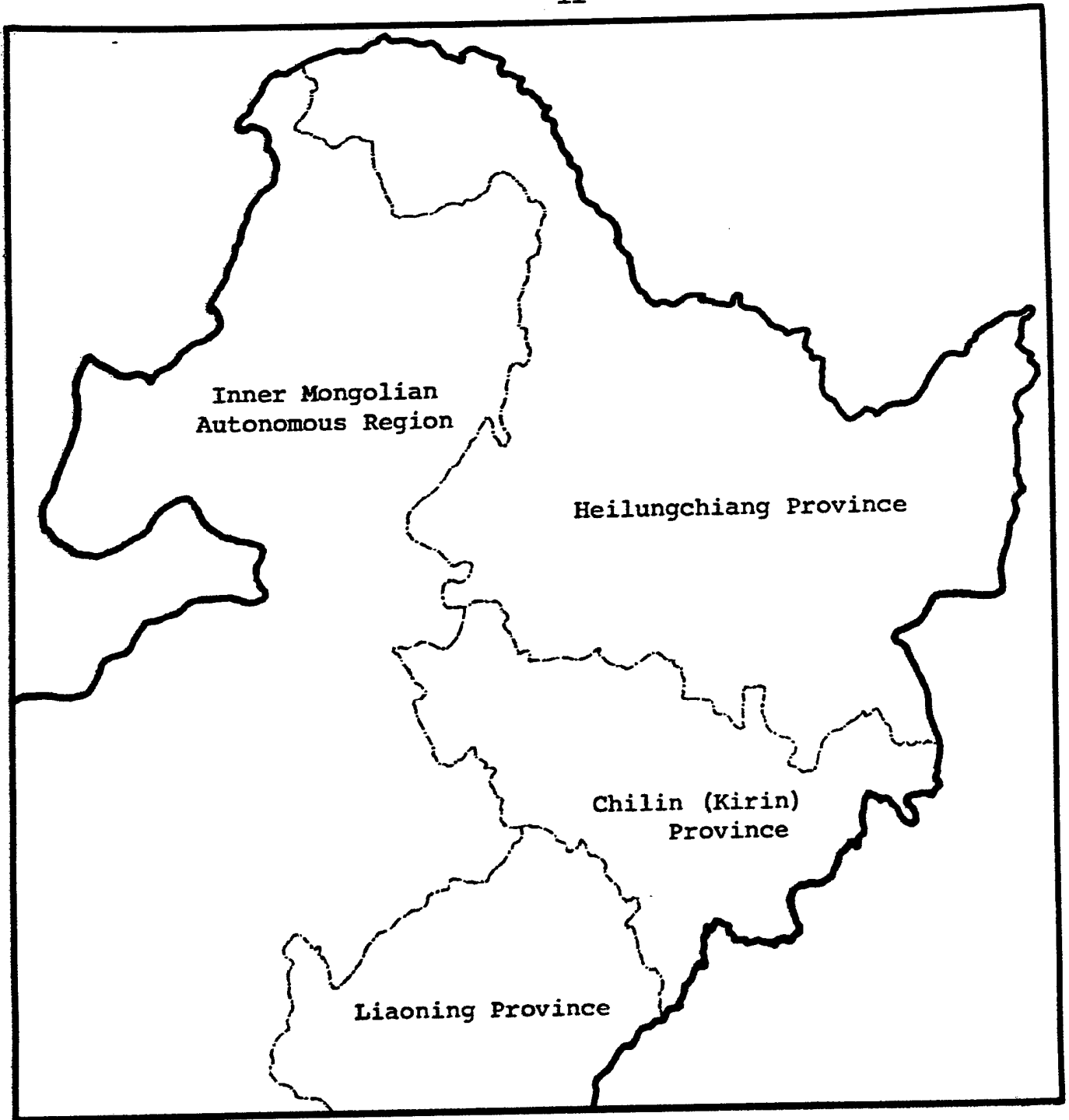
occupation (with its puppet state of Manchukuo) and the Chinese Communist take-over, the Chinese Nationalists reorganized the area into ten provinces.⁹ Under the Communists, the area consists of the provinces of Liaoning, Chilin, and Heilungchiang, plus the northern part of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (Map 2).¹⁰ The term Manchuria is essentially a geographic one of foreign origin, but it will be used for convenience and ease of reference for the area enclosed on the Chinese side of the boundary.¹¹

Further qualification deals with that portion of the border west of Manchuria which is technically the border between Communist China and the Mongolian People's Republic. Because of the satellite nature of Outer Mongolia or the Mongolian People's Republic, however, for the purposes of this paper the border will be considered as part of the Sino-Soviet border rather than the Sino-Mongol border. From 1911 to 1913, Outer

⁹ Chang-chu Kao, Pien-chiang yü Kuo-fang (Frontiers and National Defense; Taiwan: Commission on Mongolia and Tibet, 1961), Map 3. Letter from Mr. S. Jagchid, National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, 24 Mar 1965.

¹⁰ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. China, Provisional Atlas of Communist Administrative Units (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959). Chung-hua Jen-min Kung-ho Kuo Ti-tu (Map of the Chinese People's Republic), scale 1:5,600,000 (12th ed.; Peking: Map Publishing Agency, 1962). Also see Map 3.

¹¹ Owen Lattimore, Inner Asian Frontiers of China (2d ed.; New York: American Geographic Society, 1951), pp. 105-106.



Map 2.--Chinese Communist Administrative Units of Manchuria (Chung-hua Jen-min Kung-ho Kuo Ti-tu (Map of the Chinese People's Republic), scale 1:5,600,000 (12th ed.; Peking: Map Publishing Agency, 1962)).

Mongolia was a Russian protectorate.¹² In 1915, a tripartite agreement was made among Russia, Outer Mongolia, and China to settle on the borders of Outer Mongolia.¹³ From 1921 to 1924, Outer Mongolia was actually occupied by Soviet troops.¹⁴ Prior to the Nomonhan conflict of 1939, which will be discussed in later chapters, Outer Mongolian troops had been trained by Soviet officers and Soviet Barga-Mongols.¹⁵ Soviet divisions and Soviet air forces were committed in the Nomonhan conflict, and Outer Mongolian troops participated in Soviet offensives against Japanese-held Manchuria in 1945.¹⁶ Outer Mongolia's ruling communist party and government are carbon copies of those of the Soviet Union.¹⁷ The written language of the Outer

¹² David J. Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 77.

¹³ Russo-Chinese-Mongolian Tripartite Agreement, June 1915, digested in W. A. Douglas Jackson, The Russo-Chinese Borderlands (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), pp. 114-115.

¹⁴ Gerard M. Friters, Outer Mongolia and its International Position (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), p. 351.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 296-297, cites various sources.

¹⁶ S. N. Shishkin, Colonel, Soviet Army. Khalkhin-Gol (Moscow: Military Publishing House, Ministry of Defense, 1954), trans. and quoted in Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol XI, Part 3, Book C, "Small Wars and Border Problems--The Nomonhan Incident (Conclusion)" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 28 May 1956), Appendix H, p. 564.

¹⁷ Dallin, pp. 77-78.

Mongolians has been changed from the original script derived from the Uighur to the Cyrillic script derived from the Russian.¹⁸ All of this indicates that Outer Mongolia or the Mongolian People's Republic is more of a Soviet satellite, closely tied to the Soviets, rather than a sovereign or even Titoistic nation. Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, Outer Mongolia is considered as part of the Soviet Union or immediately responsive to the Soviets. The area on the Soviet side of the border to the north and east of Manchuria is the Eastern Siberian and Far Eastern portion of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).¹⁹ This area is also called the Soviet Far East.²⁰ A final qualification is that Sakhalin Island is excluded from this discussion of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East since Sakhalin is not part of the Asian land mass and cannot be considered a part of the border. Although Sakhalin was for a time divided between Japan and Russia, it has during most of its history been held solely by China, Russia or Japan.

The border to be considered in this thesis begins where

¹⁸S. Jagchid, Meng-ku Chih Chin-hsi (Mongolia--Past and Present) (Taipei, Taiwan: China Cultural Publications Commission, May 1955), p. 9.

¹⁹National Geographic Society. Map, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, scale 1:9,000,000. (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1960).

²⁰Jackson, p. 23.

the easternmost tip of Outer Mongolia meets both Manchuria and what the Chinese Nationalists called Chahar Province of Inner Mongolia (See Map 1, which shows the boundary of Inner Mongolia before 1934). Stretching in a northerly direction, it crosses the plateau which lies to the west of the Greater Khingan Range (Ta Hsing-an Ling), passes around the west and north of Manchouli and then meets the midcourse of the Argun River, which it follows for 600 miles (965 kilometers) to the east. The border continues for the next 1,000 miles (1609 kilometers) on the course of the Amur River starting from the point where the Shilka River joins the Argun from the north to form the Amur. The border thus runs east and southeast to a point about 25 miles (40 kilometers) above Khabarovsk, where it meets the Kazakevicheva Channel, which leads to the Ussuri River. The border then follows the Ussuri River to Lake Hanka (Lake Khanka or Hsingk'ai Hu). After crossing the north end of Lake Hanka, the boundary follows a series of low hill ranges to a point about 20 miles (32 kilometers) from the coast, where it meets the Soviet-Korean border.

Having established the possibility of international conflict, and with the above limitations, terminology, techniques of analysis, and the trace of the border, attention can now be turned to the current border and the area through which it passe

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT BORDER AREA

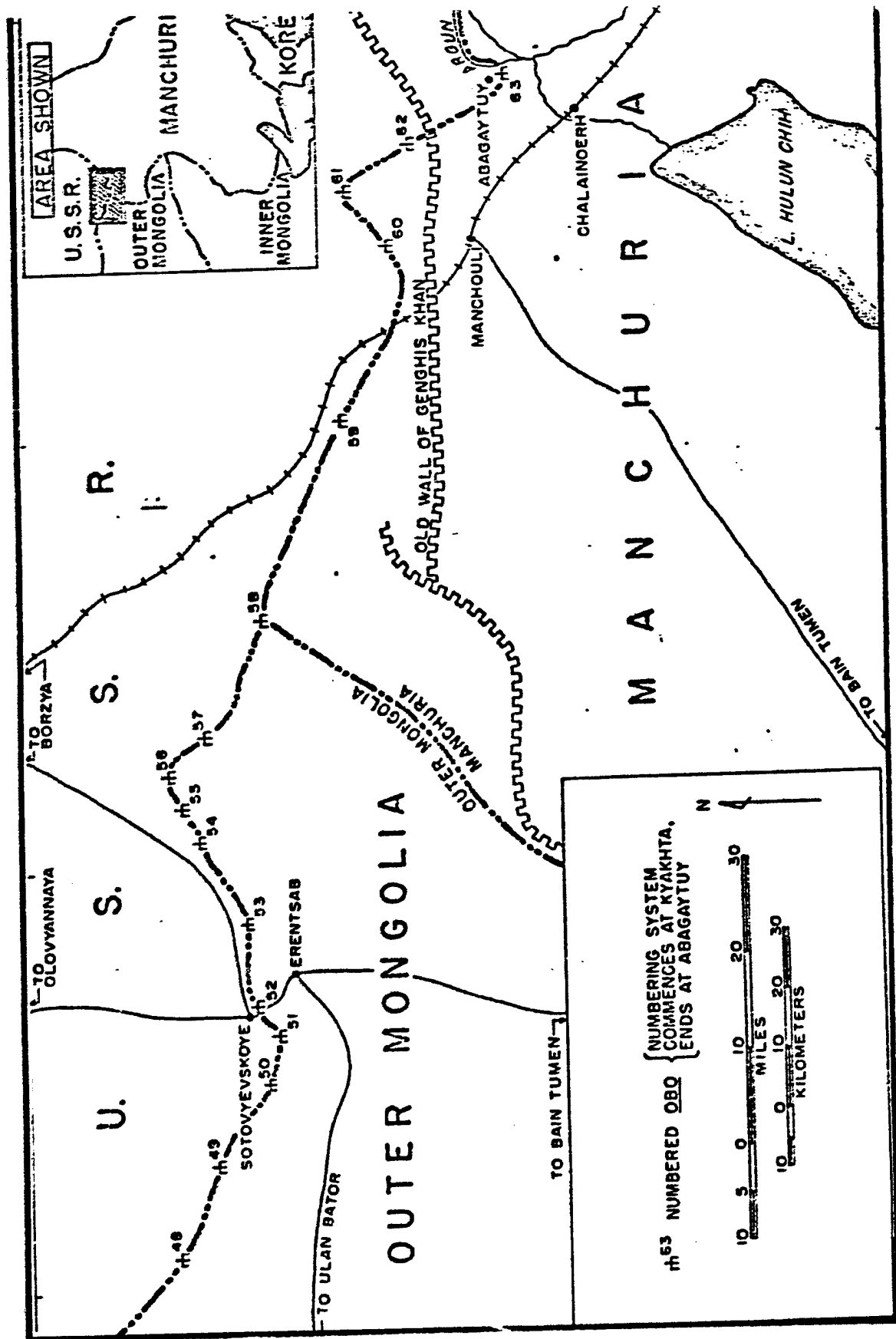
Although the Manchurian border has been described in general terms, it is necessary to provide a more detailed description of the frontier in order to understand its importance as a scene of later conflict. The frontier will be divided into three general geographic areas for discussion. The first is the western plateau, where the boundary is primarily compound or geometric--a line theoretically drawn through a desert. The second area is in the north, northeast, and part of the east, along a physical (river) boundary--the Argun, Amur, Ussuri, and Sungacha Rivers. The third area is a compound geometric land boundary extending from Lake Hanka, the source of the Sungacha River, to the Korean-USSR border.

The first general area, the western plateau frontier, is bounded on the east by the Greater Khingan Range, and is geographically a part of the eastern plateau of Outer Mongolia (Map 3). The border of this area starts at the easternmost tip of Outer Mongolia (Mongolian People's Republic or MPR), approximately 33 miles (53 kilometers) southwest of Khalon

Arshan (Wen Ch'üan or Hot Spring).¹ It follows the Numergen River and then the Halha (Khalkha) River (Khalkhin-Gol) generally northwest. The border then turns generally north to pass through Nomonhan (Nomenkhan), the site of a major engagement in 1939 between Japanese and Manchukuo troops on one side and a Soviet and MPR force on the other. After turning southwest the border again follows the Halha River to Buir Nor (lake). After crossing Buir Nor near its north shore, the border turns west at a point just northwest of Tamsak Buluk (Tamsag Bulag). It then turns almost due north about 60 miles (96 kilometers) east of the communication center of Choybalsan (Choibalsan, formerly Baiyan Tumen or Bain Tumen). The boundary then runs generally north-northeast past the old wall of Genghis Khan and turns east at Stone Marker 58, about 45 miles (72 kilometers) west-northwest of Manchouli (Map 4). The line of 63 stone obo running generally from west to east was established pursuant to the Sino-Russian Treaty of Kyakhta (Kiakhta), which was signed in 1727. The markers are numbered from one to sixty-three from Kyakhta to Abagaytuy.² This geometric and compound border discussed so far has technically been the boundary

¹ Herbert Mueller, Map of All Mongolia, scale 1:3,000,000. (Peking: Dr. Herbert Mueller, 1939). Also see Map 3.

² Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956), pp. 31, 37. Also see Maps 3 and 4.

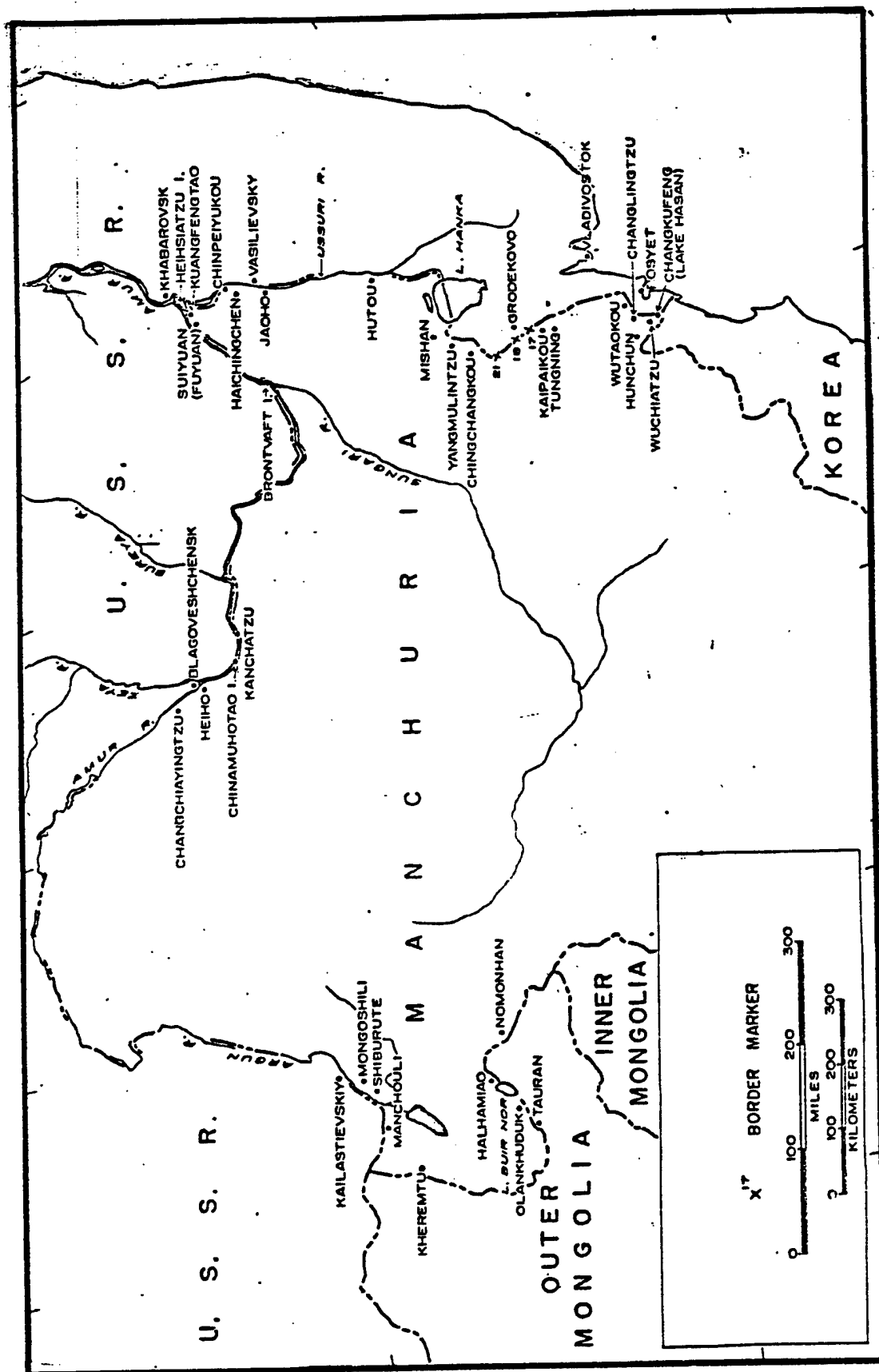


Map 4.---Sino-Soviet Border in Manchouli Area (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History 30 Apr 1956), p. 33, Map 6 which is based on a Chinese War Department Land Survey Bureau Map

between the MPR and Communist China's Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR). The remainder of the western land boundary separates the IMAR from the Soviet Union. This portion of the border begins at the previously mentioned Marker 58 and follows the line of stone markers (Number 58 to 63), to a point just south of Abagaytuy.

At this point just south of Abagaytuy, the second general area begins. This area contains the river boundary which constitutes over one-half of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East. The river boundary begins where the border turns north-northeast to become coincident with the middle course of the Argun River, which it follows for over 600 miles (960 kilometers).³ The boundary turns east with the Argun River, and, at a point just south of the town of Pokrovka, the Shilka River joins the Argun to form the Amur River, which in turn forms the boundary for a thousand miles (1,600 kilometers). The arid steppes of the west give way to greener and more luxuriant vegetation as the Amur River passes from the IMAR to Heilungchiang Province and on the Soviet side from Chita Oblast to the Amur Oblast (Region). As the course of the Amur continues in a southeasterly direction, the Chinese side

³W. A. Douglas Jackson, The Russo-Chinese Borderlands (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1962), p. 14. Also see Map 5.



Map 5.--Locations of Border Incidents (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1956), p. 45, Map 8).

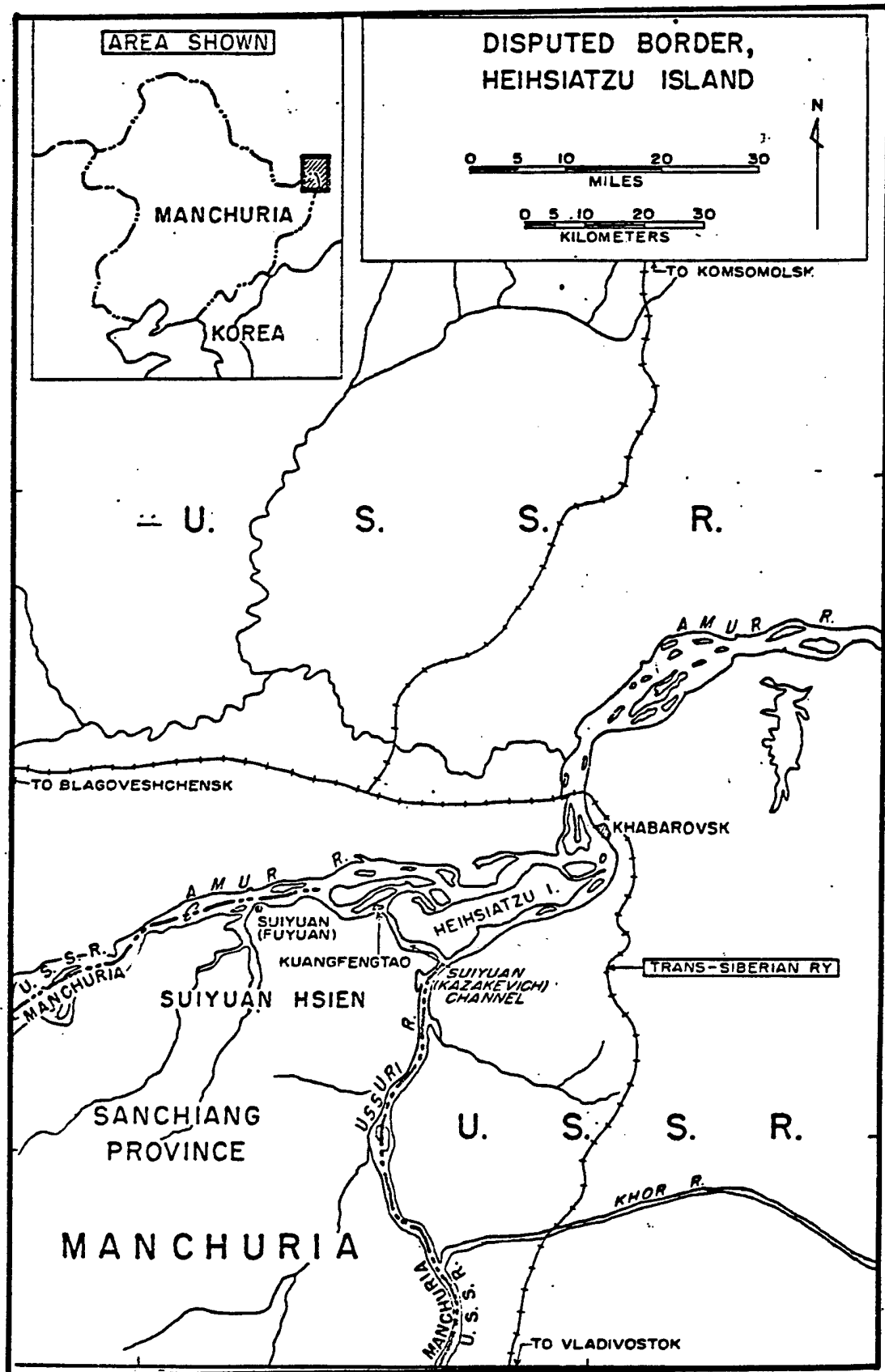
or right bank stays higher than the Soviet side and the 3000-foot (914-meter) rounded peaks of the Lesser Khingan (Little Khingan or Hsiao Hsing-an) Range extended eastward almost to the Sungari River (Sung-hua Chiang). The Lesser Khingan Range serves to separate the Amur valley from the fertile Manchurian Plain to the south. On the Soviet side, near the mouth of the Zeya River, the uplands recede to the north, leaving the wide Zeya or Zeya-Bureya Plain. Dotted with collective farms, the Zeya Plain is an important local granary. The major city of this fertile plain is Blagoveshchensk (population 95,000), administrative center of the Amur Oblast. Blagoveshchensk is linked by a branch line to the Trans-Siberian Railway, which runs along high ground some distance from the Amur. Opposite Blagoveshchensk, on the Chinese side, is the city of Aihun, Aigun, or Heiho. Southeast of Blagoveshchensk, the plain narrows where the Lesser Khingan Mountains, parallel to the Amur on the Chinese or Manchurian side, are met by the Bureya Range (elevation 6,000 feet, or 1829 meters), which extends toward the Amur from the northeast. Here the mountains form an "Iron Gate" for the Amur--a narrow gorge with steep cliffs on both sides. The Amur also flows in a rough semicircle around the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (Yevreyskaya Autonomous Oblast) on the USSR side. Beyond the gorge, the Sungari and Ussuri Rivers

successively join to swell the waters of the Amur, which flows across an extensive level plain as it turns northeast toward its outlet in the Sea of Okhotsk. Bogs and reed thickets are common on both sides of the river in this level plain.⁴ The lowland back from the river is poorly drained. The land beyond the flood plain is at higher elevations, has better natural drainage, and is under cultivation.

About 25 miles (40 kilometers) to the west of Khabarovsk and the principal mouth of the Ussuri River, the Amur is joined by the Kazakevicheva, a branch of the Ussuri. Here low, flat, and uninhabited islands lie between the Kazakevicheva and the main course of the Ussuri. One of the large islands, Heihsiatzu, was the subject of a Soviet-Japanese dispute in 1936 (Map 6). Communist Chinese and Soviet maps still disagree as to whether the island is Chinese or Soviet.⁵ At the junction of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southwest of Khabarovsk, the Amur River turns north toward the Sea of Okhotsk.

⁴ Jackson, p. 17.

⁵ Chung-hua Jen-min Kung-ho Kuo Ti-tu (Map of the Chinese People's Republic, scale 1:5,600,000, referred to hereafter as Map of the CPR; 12th ed.; Peking: Map Publishing Agency, 1962), shows Heihsiatzu Island on the Chinese side of the Sino-Soviet Border. Atlas SSSR (Atlas of the USSR; Moscow: Main Directorate of Geodesy and Cartography, Ministry of Geology and Conservation, 1962), pp. 54-55, "Map of Eastern Siberia and the Far East," shows Heihsiatzu Island on the Soviet side.



Map 6.--Disputed Border, Heihsiatzu Island (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1956), p. 29, Map 5).

From this point south toward its source the north-flowing Ussuri River constitutes the border. The Soviet Maritime (Primorskiy) Krai occupies the left (east) bank of the Ussuri from a point about 130 miles (209 kilometers) south of Khabarovsk. From the headwaters of the Ussuri, the boundary continues on to Lake Hanka via the Sungacha River, turning west with the Sungacha just before reaching the lake. East of the Ussuri and the Sungacha Rivers, the terrain rises into the low, heavily wooded Sikhote-Alin range which parallels the coast from Vladivostok to the mouth of the Amur, cutting off the Amur valley from the Pacific coast. The most concentrated settlement in the area is in the Lake Hanka Plain and in and around Vladivostok.⁶ Vladivostok, with a population of 283,000, has until recently been the Soviet Union's principal Pacific port. It is kept open the year round by ice-breakers.⁷ Nakhodka, to the east of Vladivostok, is easier to keep open in the winter and has assumed many of the commercial functions of Vladivostok. No foreign shipping is allowed in Vladivostok, which is now primarily a naval base.⁸ Vladivostok is only 39 miles (63 kilometers)

⁶ Jackson, p. 17.

⁷ National Geographic Society. Map, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, scale 1:9,000,000 (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1960).

⁸ Letter from Prof. John A. Morrison, University of Pittsburgh, 26 March 1965.

from the closest point on the Sino-Soviet border. Along the coast there are fishing villages and reportedly numerous naval and military installations.⁹

West of the Ussuri, in the Heilungchiang Province of Manchuria, the Nadan Khada-Alin range (Changkuangling) projects northward to separate the Ussuri and the Lake Hanka Plain from the Lower Sungari.¹⁰ This range is a continuation of the Eastern Manchurian Highlands which enclose the fertile Manchurian Plain on the southeast.

The physical boundary formed by the Argun, Amur, Ussuri, and Sungacha Rivers ends at Lake Hanka. The third and final general area, which contains the southeastern land boundary, begins at the northwest shore of Lake Hanka. After turning southward, the border follows a line of markers erected pursuant to the Peking Convention of 1860, the Lake Hanka Border Pact of 1861, and the Hunchun Border Pact of 1886.¹¹ The line

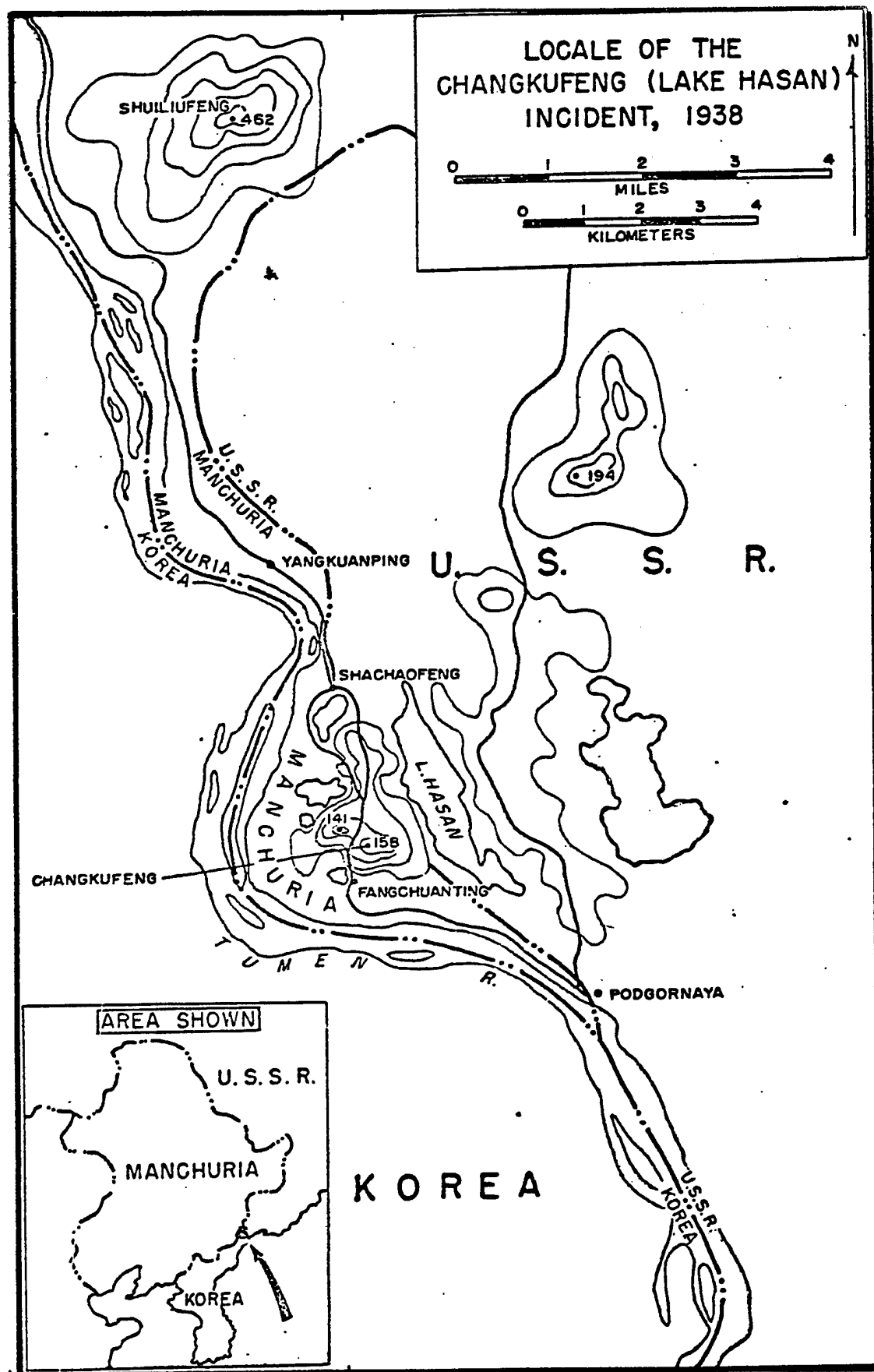
⁹ Jackson, p. 17.

¹⁰ Ibid. Chung-kuo Tsui-hsin Fen-sheng Ti-t'u (Latest Provincial Atlas of China, referred to hereafter as Chinese Atlas; Hongkong: Ta Chung Book Co., n.d.), Map 1. Hsieh, Shou-ch'ang, et al (ed.), Chung-kuo Ku-chin Ti-ming Ta Tz'u-tien (Gazetteer of Ancient and Modern Chinese Place Names, referred to hereafter as Gazetteer of Chinese Place Names; Taipei, Taiwan: Commercial Press, June 1960), p. 560.

¹¹ Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria (Referred to hereafter as J.S.M.), Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956), pp. 20-21.

of markers goes up and down hills and then generally winds along a ridgeline to the west toward Hunchun and Changlingtzu. There the border turns southward and meets the Tumen River in the vicinity of Changkufeng, the site of a serious border clash between Japanese and Soviet forces in 1938 (Map 7). There the Sino-Soviet border ends. To the south, the Tumen River acts as the Soviet-Korean boundary to the mouth of the river where it enters the Sea of Japan. Looking back to the northwest, the Tumen River forms part of the Korean-Manchurian boundary. The boundary in the third general area, then, is a geometric and complex land boundary, which extends for 275 miles (448 kilometers).

The above description of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East and its geographical setting furnishes the background to understand where and how certain disagreements, incidents, or conflicts between the neighboring nations occurred. The full significance of a border and frontier, however, is also determined by what lies deeper in the territory. For example, does the border enclose wealth or resources? Does it deny a country access to certain resources or facilities? The answers to these and similar questions, plus the characteristics of the border itself, will help explain why incidents occurred. With reference to such questions, attention will now be directed to



Map 7.--Locale of the Changkufeng (Lake Hasan) Incident, 1938 (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956). p. 25, Map 4).

what lies farther back from the border, first on the Chinese side--the heart of Manchuria, then on the Soviet side, and finally on the Outer Mongolian side of the border.

On the Chinese or Manchurian side, the source of most of the wealth lies in the fertile Central Manchurian Plain, which the Chinese call the Greater Northeastern Plain or Sung-Liao Plain.¹² This plain is bounded by the Greater Khingan Range on the west and northwest, the Lesser Khingan Range on the northeast, and the Eastern Manchurian Highlands on the east. This rich alluvial flood plain is watered by the Sungari (Sung-hua) and Liao Rivers. It is a broad plain in the center, and narrows at the north and south ends. The Kungchuling watershed divides the plain into a northern and southern part. Although most of the region is under 200 meters in elevation, the southern part is low and flat, while low hills predominate in the northern portion.

The resources of the Central Plain have earned for it the name "Ruhr of the Far East," since it produces 30 per cent of China's coal, at least 70 per cent of its iron, and half of its electric power.¹³ The Japanese also reported extensive mineral deposits other than iron and coal.¹⁴ Heilungchiang

¹² Chinese Atlas, Map 1.

¹³ Jackson, p. 18.

¹⁴ J.S.M., Vol. VIII, "Logistics" (16 Dec 1959), p. 169.

Province has about 85 percent of Manchuria's gold deposits. The richest and most widely exploited coal deposits are in such areas as Hailun and Nenchiang in Heilungchiang Province, Changch'un in Kirin Province, and T'unghua and Saima in Liaoning Province.¹⁵ Oil shale is available in Heilungchiang Province, and other minerals include copper, lead, aluminum, asbestos, magnesite, limestone, manganese, tungsten, chromium, nickel, vanadium and cobalt.¹⁶

The favorable ratio of agricultural production-to-population has made Manchuria a granary for much of North China and at different periods a "promised land" for peasants in famine-stricken areas in North China.¹⁷ The black earth of the Nonni (Nen) and Hulan River areas of Heilungchiang Province--the granary of Manchuria--produces soybeans and wheat. The plains along the lower reaches of the Mutanchiang and Muleng River basins produce wheat, soybeans and rice. Liaoning Province produces such staples as corn, sorghum, wheat and rice; and such cash crops as soybeans, peanuts, cotton, tobacco, fruits and ginseng. Kirin Province, benefiting from the Sungari

¹⁵Chinese Atlas, discussion of Map 15.

¹⁶J.S.M., Vol. VIII, pp. 171-172.

¹⁷Cho Chu, Wo-kuo Te Nung-yeh Ti-li (Our Nation's Agricultural Geography, Chinese Geographical Education Series. Peiping: April 1957), trans. as J.P.R.S. 16911 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 31 Dec 1962), p. 12.

River, has the highest soybean production in the northeast, while millet is the main food product, with wheat being grown in the bend of the Sungari and rice in the low flat areas. Animal husbandry--cows, chickens, and ducks--is a subsidiary occupation in the farming areas. In addition, extensive settling and land reclamation has been undertaken.¹⁸

Industrially, Manchuria has been ahead of the rest of China since before 1931. Before the Japanese seizure of Manchuria the Shenyang (Mukden) arsenal was one of the two or three major arsenals in China. Extensive facilities were developed during the Japanese occupation, but Soviet forces stripped Manchuria of practically all of its manufacturing capability during the occupation immediately after World War II. Most of this capability has been restored, and Chinese efforts continue to emphasize Manchuria as a center of heavy industry.¹⁹ ~~Manufacturing products include steel, machinery,~~ textiles, chemicals, leather, milling, cement, sugar refining, paper and light industry.

Most of the people who make this productivity possible live in the plains area. Jackson listed seven per cent of

¹⁸ Szu-kai Chin, Communist China's Relations with the Soviet Union, 1949-1957 (Kowloon, Hongkong: Union Research Institute, Nov 1961), p. 45.

¹⁹ A. Doak Barnett, Communist China-The Early Years, 1949-55 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), p. 242.

China's 600,000,000 population as living in the Manchurian Plain, with a population density of 400 persons per square mile.²⁰ The Rand McNally Cosmopolitan Atlas of 1964 lists the population of Manchuria (309,498 square miles) as 58,000,000 as of 1 January 1964.²¹ Other than the Chinese (Han or Chinese-proper), ethnic groups include 2,000,000 Manchus, who have adopted the Chinese language, and an insignificant number of Mongols, who, including those in the Khingan area, total about 350,000.²² Urban population in the major cities of Manchuria

²⁰ Jackson, pp. 17-18. The 1964 estimate of China's population, excluding Taiwan, is 710,000,000 and its area is 3,691,500 square miles, giving it a population density of 192 per square mile (Rand McNally Cosmopolitan World Atlas (Referred to hereafter as Rand McNally Atlas. New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1964), p. 163).

²¹ The 1957 figures cited in the Chinese Atlas list the population of the northeastern provinces as 46,045,612 out of a population of 601,938,035 in all China (excluding Taiwan). The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: New York World-Telegram and the Sun, 1963), p. 337, lists the area of Manchuria as 404,428 square miles. The discrepancies are believed to stem from the fact that many changes have occurred in the official designation of both Manchuria and its various components (Maps 2 and 3). It will be seen, however, that even the lowest estimate dwarfs the population figures for the Soviet side.

²² Jackson, p. 17. O. Edmund Clubb, Chinese Communist Development Programs in Manchuria, with a Supplement on Inner Mongolia, Secretariat Paper No. 3, Twelfth Conference, Institute of Pacific Relations, Kyoto, Japan, Sep-Oct 1954, (New York: International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1954), p. 39.

is listed as follows:²³

	<u>Urban Population</u>	<u>World Ranking</u>
Mukden (Shenyang)	2,650,000	33
Harbin	1,950,000	63
Changchun	1,150,000	121

Much of the population increase since the turn of the century has been attributed to the railroads. Except for the east coast, this area has China's greatest railroad network. The initial railroad construction was completed by the Soviet Union and Japan before 1945. In 1959, ten years after the communist take-over of China, Manchuria still contained 40 per cent of China's railroad mileage.²⁴

In contrast with the resources and development on the Chinese side, the Soviet side of the border has little more than 5,000,000 acres of cropland, a short growing season, and poorly drained soil with permafrost--all of which limit agricultural potential. The sparse population, about 4,000,000, has lived for the most part along the Trans-Siberian Railway.²⁵

²³ Rand McNally Atlas, p. 170.

²⁴ A.I. Il'yin, and M. P. Voronichev, Zheleznodorozhnyy Transport Kitayskoy Narodnoy Respubliki (Railroad Transport of the Chinese People's Republic; Moscow: State Publishing House of Railroad Transport, 1959), J.P.R.S. 3484, trans. under contract and reproduced by Annapolis Research and Microfilm Publications, Inc., p. 42.

²⁵ Jackson, p. 18.

From the overall viewpoint, however, the area has considerable economic potential, which the Soviets appear to be developing. Siberia contains manganese, silver, zinc, lead, bauxite, wolfram, and gold.²⁶ There are lignite deposits to the east of Lake Baikal.²⁷ Between them, Siberia and the Soviet Far East have 70 per cent of the total of Soviet coal reserves.²⁸ In addition, the Soviet Far East has coal, iron ore, and gold along the Amur and Ussuri Rivers.²⁹ To feed the people in these areas, fertile lands for agriculture do exist along the Amur and Ussuri valleys. The Zeya-Bureya Plain is fertile, comparatively well-settled, and an important local granary.³⁰ The Ussuri-Khanka Lowland east of Manchuria has been cited as promising agriculturally.³¹

With the food and resources available, the USSR is evidently developing Siberia as an industrial base. In World War II, 665 factories were moved to Siberia from Europe to

²⁶Yurii Nikolaevich Semyonov, Siberia; its Conquest and Development, trans. J. R. Foster (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963), p. 380.

²⁷Ibid., p. 379.

²⁸Paul E. Lydolph, Geography of the U.S.S.R. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 240.

²⁹Ibid., p. 235, Fig. 12-2.

³⁰Jackson, p. 15.

³¹Lydolph, p. 289.

avoid the German invasion.³² Iron and steel works have been built in Kabarovsk and Komsomolsk. While the Amur basin has a good hydroelectric potential, the development of which is emphasized by the Chinese, the Soviet Union has been undertaking power projects in other locations not too distant.³³ Professor John A. Morrison, an authority on the geography of the USSR, has found indications that two hydroelectric stations are under construction or authorized, one on the Zeya and one on the Bureya River.³⁴ He also knows of two large thermal-electric power plants, one at Borzya near the Soviet-Manchurian-MPR border and one north of Iman in the Maritime Province. They are to be connected to a long transmission line extending from Vladivostok to Irkutsk.³⁵ All the activity should indicate, according to Professor Morrison, that planned industrial development in the area east of Lake Baikal and in the maritime regions will be such as to require a large increase in power.³⁶

³² Semyonov, p. 381.

³³ Jackson, p. 28. Chin, p. 44.

³⁴ Letter from Prof. John A. Morrison, University of Pittsburgh, 29 Mar 1965.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

Despite relatively sparse settlement, Siberia and the Soviet Far East were a source of manpower for the USSR during both world wars in Europe. In other than the fertile areas mentioned previously, the short growing season, poor soil drainage, and permafrost limit agricultural potential and consequent settlement. For example, the combined population of the Soviet Far East (4,347,000) and Eastern Siberia (6,960,000) was 11,307,000 as of 1959.³⁷ This is about one fifth of Manchuria's 58,000,000 people.

Outer Mongolia's greatest asset is its position, which Friters, in his Outer Mongolia and its International Position, described as belonging to a "chain of strong points, from the Kuriles to Outer Mongolia" by which the USSR wants to guard its Far Eastern territory.³⁸

A sparse population of 1,050,000, which amounts to a density of 1.8 persons per square mile, and poor geography impose limitations on development.³⁹ Between the two mountain chains that cross the MPR lie green steppes, on which the

³⁷ Norodnoe Khoziaistvo R.S.F.S.R. v 1959 godu. Statisticheskii ezhegodnik, Moscow, 1960, pp. 36-37, quoted in Jackson, p. 23.

³⁸ Gerard M. Friters, Outer Mongolia and its International Position (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), p. 150.

³⁹ Rand McNally Atlas, p. 164.

majority of the nomadic people graze their flocks, and gravel or sand deserts. Only a small portion of the MPR is suitable for cultivation since most of the lakes, streams and rivers are in the north and northwest.⁴⁰ The lakes are small and many are salty.⁴¹ Mongolia has also been described however, as having large forest resources and lake and river fisheries. Its minerals include coal and iron and such rare metals as tungsten. Oil was also struck in the south in the 1950's. The possibility exists of developing an advanced modern mixed and diversified industry.⁴² The backbone of MPR economic development until recently, however, has been the livestock industry, an outgrowth of the steppe vegetation and Mongol tradition. Examples of industrial development have been in meat-packing, leather-working, and wool-processing, all of which are related to the livestock industry. Other industries have had supporting roles. Coal mining has provided power, agriculture has provided fodder, and laboratories and factories have produced serums to control and eliminate animal diseases. A recent exception was a steel plant planned for

⁴⁰ Friters, p. 301.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Owen Lattimore, Nomads and Commissars, Mongolia Revisited (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 158.

construction in 1961. All plants, however, have been built primarily with Soviet aid and by foreign contractors, such as the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Red China.⁴⁴

As a prelude to discussing the development of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East and the incidents and conflicts associated with it, this chapter has traced the boundary in detail. The border surrounds China's Manchuria, which is rich in agricultural and industrial resources. The border itself passes through steppes, mountains, fertile plains, and coastal lowlands. The border is a compound and geometric boundary in the west, physical (river) boundary in the north, northeast, and east, and again a compound and geometric land boundary in the southeast.

North and east of the border, the Soviet side of the border has been sparsely populated and of limited agricultural potential. The Soviet Far East is fairly rich in minerals and hydroelectric and industrial potential. Some efforts, although limited, are being made to develop the area. The Soviet Far East also provides the USSR with an outlet to the Pacific Ocean.

Outer Mongolia in the west, long a satellite of the Soviet

⁴³ A. Doak Barnett (ed.), Communist Strategies in Asia (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 267.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 268. Lattimore, p. 175.

Union, has considerable strategic value from a locational point of view, particularly on Manchuria's west flank. Although mineral and forestry resources are present, limitations imposed by population and agriculture tend to limit industrial development. The main industrial development to date has been livestock-oriented, and industrialization has required extensive external aid.

With the nature of the border and the regions on both sides of it as a background, attention can be turned to the fundamental character of the border disputes, incidents, and conflicts which have occurred over the years regardless of the nationality or ideology of the powers controlling the opposite sides of the border.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BORDER-- A PERIOD OF SINO-RUSSIAN CONFLICT

The current Sino-Soviet border as described earlier did not come into being overnight. Its development spanned three centuries and followed the general pattern of Russian expansion toward China and the Pacific Ocean. Countering this expansion were China's efforts to maintain dominance over the northern and western regions claimed by China and to fix the border. As might be expected, conflicts arose between the two nations and were resolved by treaties and agreements which established and adjusted the border. The significance of these conflicts and agreements will become increasingly apparent. Most of the incidents and disputes of the twentieth century had their antecedents or origins in those earlier conflicts and the subsequent agreements.

The earliest Russian movement eastward began in 1645 when Vasily Poyarkov sailed via the Oldan River, down the Amur River to the Sea of Okhotsk.¹ Later, Khabarov, a Russian commander,

¹Yurii Nikolaevich Semyonov, Siberia; its Conquest and Development, trans. J. R. Foster (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963), p. 94.

moved down the banks of the Amur, seized and fortified Albazin (Albasin) in 1650, and continued to seize and fortify posts along the Amur. In 1651, he defeated forces dispatched by the Manchu government at Peking. Under Khabarov's inept successor Stepanov, however, Khabarov's brigade was defeated and scattered at the confluence of the Amur and Sungari Rivers in 1658 by Chinese regular troops. The fort of Albazin was burned to the ground, but Russian remnants dug in on the Shilka River.² Between 1665 and 1674, the Russians rebuilt Albazin and re-occupied the area from which they had been driven. The Manchu lack of energy or follow-up in their conflicts with the Russians during this period may be ascribed to their preoccupation with completing their conquest of China and consolidating their gains there, which task spanned about 40 years (1644-1683).³

During this period, two major missions or embassies were dispatched to China. That of Baikoff in 1656 was viewed as a tribute-bearing delegation, as was that of Spathary in 1675 and 1676.⁴ Spathary had been directed to report on the armament

² Ibid., p. 101.

³ John F. Baddeley, Russia, Mongolia, China (2 vols.; London: Macmillan & Co., 1919), Vol. II, pp. 217-218.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 154, 210.

of Manchus, as were all other envoys.⁵ His primary mission, however, was to recommend friendship between the sovereigns of Russia and China, the freeing of Russian prisoners held by the Chinese, and the opening of travel routes and trade channels.⁶ In reply, the Manchu Emperor K'ang-hsi had three demands conveyed to Spathary. The first was the extradition of Gantimur, a Tungus prince who had defected to the Russians with his followers, embraced Christianity, and served the Russians well. The remaining two demands were to have ambassadors to China follow Chinese customs and to keep peace along the frontier.⁷

In addition to other matters mentioned in his report, Spathary, based on information he had received from Russian deserters in Peking, made an "estimate" in a letter to the Tsar from Yeneseisk regarding taking advantage of Manchu

⁵ This practice was not confined to the Russians, T'u-li-ch'en, a Manchu emissary to the Tourgouths (1713-1715), prepared a detailed report on his return, including therein the strength of the garrison in each locality visited (T'u-li-ch'en, I-yü-lu (Description of Border Countries), rev. and annotated by S. Imanishi (Tokyo: Tenri University, 1964), pp. 40, 196-205).

⁶ Spathary's 12 articles as listed in the Russian Foreign Office archives are shown in Russian in Baddeley, Vol. I, p. ccxlv, and translated in Vol. II, pp. 352-353.

⁷ Spathary's Stateini Spisok, trans. and quoted in Baddeley, Vol. II, pp. 403-404.

weakness and preoccupation with remnant Chinese dissident elements in south China and Taiwan and using 2,000 regular Russian troops to bring the Dahuria territory up to the Great Wall under the sway of the Tsar.⁸ This recommended "fishing in troubled waters" was a pattern to be followed by Nicholas Muraviev in the Amur valley and Ignatiev in Peking two centuries later.

The intermittent see-saw struggle for Albazin continued. The Chinese captured and burned it again in June 1685, and the Russians returned with 700 men and eight cannon in August to bring in the harvest, rebuild the fortress, and conduct patrolling. A year later the Chinese returned with seven-to-eight thousand men and 40 cannon, and beseiged the fortress from July 1686 to May 1687 without taking it. They then withdrew, because negotiations which were to lead to the signing of the Treaty of Nerchinsk had already begun.⁹

When the emissaries of the Russian Tsar and Manchu Emperor finally met in a tent pitched between the Shilka River and Nerchinsk, the Russians represented by Golovin were at a

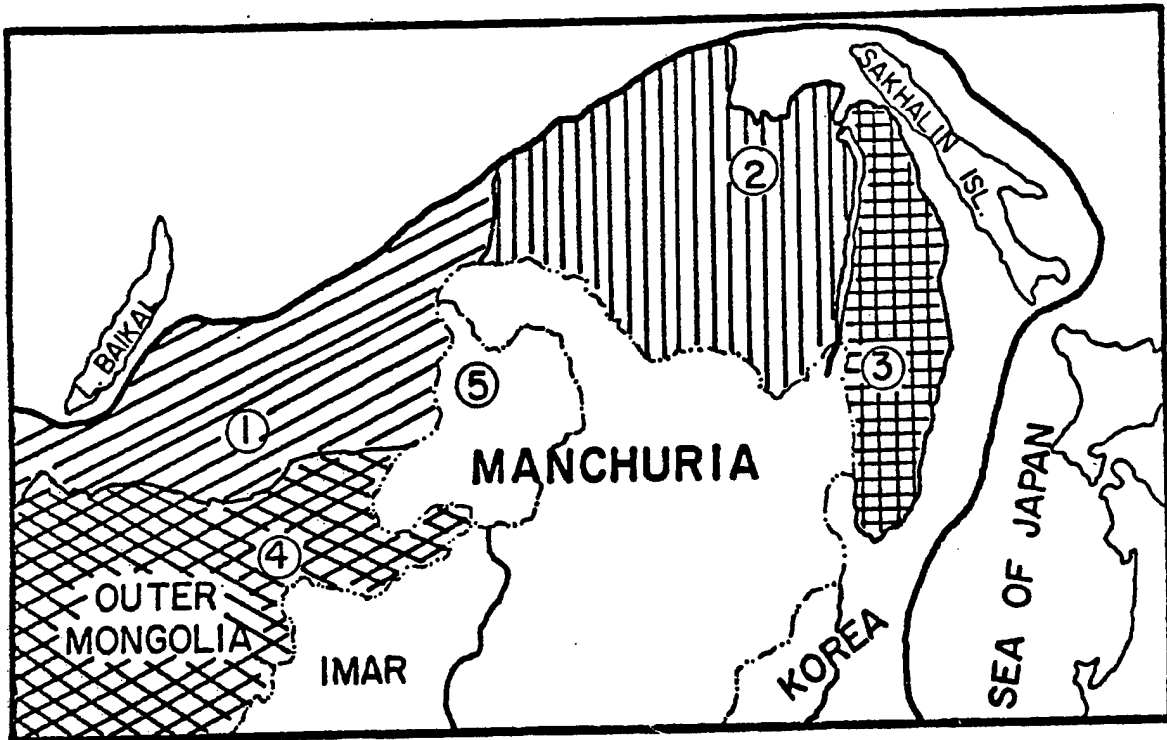
⁸ Spathary's letter to the Tsar, 18 July 1675, trans. and quoted by Baddeley in Vol. II, p. 257. All of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia are north of the Great Wall.

⁹ Semyonov, p. 104. Golovin's Mission left Moscow in 1685 and took two years to travel through Siberia (Semyonov, p. 115).

disadvantage, having only 2,000 men behind them in Nerchinsk. The Manchu ambassador, Songgotu, was backed by a force of 12,000 or more men with barges and cannon.¹⁰ A further problem to the Russians was a Chinese-supported hostile force of about 4,000 Mongols wandering about to the Russian rear.¹¹ As a result, the Amur was not made the boundary between the Chinese and Russian empires as Golovin demanded. The compromise of the Treaty of Nerchinsk established the boundary which leads along the Argun River, up the Gorbitza, and along the crest of the Stanovoi Mountains, which are about 170 miles (274 kilometers) north of the Amur River (Map 8). The boundary through the Ud River Valley was left to be decided in future negotiations. All Russian posts along the Amur, including Albazin, were to be destroyed, and no Russian colonists were to be permitted on the Chinese side of the boundary. Thus by the Treaty of Nerchinsk, signed in August 1689, the Chinese or Manchus effectively gave up claim to 93,000 square miles (240,870 square

¹⁰ Russian Foreign Office Archives, Kitaiski Diela (Chinese Affairs), trans. and quoted in Baddeley, Vol. II, p. 345. Semyonov, p. 116, states that, at the decisive moment, Songgotu must have had about 15,000 men. Semyonov, p. 121, mentions 2,000 Buryats (Mongols) joining the Chinese forces just before Golovin signified his agreement.

¹¹ Semyonov, pp. 118-119.



— Original boundary of China (Ch'ing or Manchu Dynasty).

- - - Present boundary of China.

... Limit of Hulunbuir.

① China gave up claim or ceded by Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689).

② Ceded by Treaty of Aigun (1858).

③ Ceded by Peking Convention (1860).

④ Autonomous June 1915. Soviet satellite 1921. Boundary delimited by CPR-MPR Boundary Treaty (1962).

⑤ Returned to Chinese administration (Nov 1915).

Map 8.--Development of the Border (Redrawn from Chang-chu Kao, Pien-chiang Yü Kuo-fang (Frontiers and National Defense; Taipei, Taiwan: Commission on Mongolia and Tibet, 1961), Map 3).

kilometers) of land.¹²

Aside from the concrete agreements embodied in it, the Treaty of Nerchinsk was significant in other respects. It was the first Chinese treaty executed with a European or Christian state, and halted the eastward movement of the Russian Empire for over 150 years.¹³ The Treaty of Nerchinsk is also the first agreement establishing a Sino-Russian border. A note on a map in Baddeley's Russia, Mongolia, China states that, prior to the Treaty of Nerchinsk, the Manchus claimed the Khingan Range as the boundary.¹⁴ China had no neighbors west of the Khingan Range, other than local nomadic tribes, until the Russians occupied the area, after which the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk established a boundary. On the other hand, when Jackson states that China ceded 93,000 square miles of territory, it should be remembered that the Chinese or Manchu claim to this "lost" area was based primarily on the vassalage of Mongol chieftains in the territory rather than on a properly

¹²W. A. Douglas Jackson, The Russo-Chinese Borderlands (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1962), pp. 111-112. Semyonov, p. 121. Chang-chu Kao (ed.), Pien-chiang Yü Kuo-fang (Frontiers and National Defense; Taipei, Taiwan: Commission on Mongolia and Tibet, 1961), Map 3, states that the loss was over 232,000 square kilometers.

¹³Semyonov, p. 122.

¹⁴Baddeley, p. 285 (Sketch Map of Spathary's Journey).

delimited and demarcated border.¹⁵ Thus, it can be said that before the Treaty of Nerchinsk the Khingan Range boundary was more of a self-imposed limitation, like that of the Roman Empire, rather than a border delimited by mutual agreement between two powers, which it became after the signing of the treaty.¹⁶

During the years that followed, little was accomplished between Russia and China other than the dispatch of two Russian embassies by Peter the Great. Since the Russians were interested in trade, while the Chinese were interested in the Siberia-Mongolia border and the return of Mongol refugees in Russia, no progress was made.¹⁷ In 1724, however, K'ang-hsi's successor arranged to negotiate with the Russians. The Russians sent Count Sava Vladislavich-Ragusinsky to Peking to negotiate. The resulting Treaty of Kyakhta was one of a series which gradually whittled away the territory claimed by the Manchus and Chinese by moving the boundary eastward and southward. Besides providing for matters of trade, the treaty defined the border between Siberia and Mongolia, and recognized Chinese sovereignty over

¹⁵ Harry Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins, and Commissars (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1964) p. 35.

¹⁶ Samuel Whittemore Boggs, International Boundaries; a Study of Boundary Functions and Problems (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940) p. 7.

¹⁷ Semyonov, p. 123. Schwartz, p. 40.

Mongolia. This treaty cost the Chinese tenure to about 40,000 square miles (103,600 square kilometers) of land, which included the land between the upper Irtysh River and the Sayan Mountains, and the area south and southwest of Lake Baikal.¹⁸ The Siberia-Mongolia Boundary was thus fixed from the Sayan Mountains and Sapintabakha (Shaban-Dabeg) Pass on the west to the Argun River on the east.¹⁹ The border included a line later indicated by 63 markers erected from Kyakhta in the west to Abagaytuy in the east. Some of these markers still delineate a part of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East.²⁰ These stone markers resembled many of the cairns found in the area and later became a source of error and misunderstanding. In addition, the markers could be moved with relative ease. One thing that the Treaty of Kyakhta did not do was settle the northern boundary from the Yablonoi Mountains to the Sea of Okhotsk. While the treaty reflected a renunciation by Russia of designs on Mongolia, it left advanced posts on the Shilka River which could be used as

¹⁸ Jackson, p. 112. Schwartz, p. 41. Kao, p. 15, cites the loss as 100,000 square kilometers.

¹⁹ Jackson, p. 112.

²⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria (Referred to hereafter as J.S.M.), Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956), Map 6. Also see Chapter II and Map 4 of this thesis.

springboards for future moves in the border area.²¹ Russia utilized the long period of peace created by the treaty, however, to develop the sparsely populated and undefended Siberia. China was left with the Mongolian powderkeg.

The policy of peaceful development and consolidation of Russian gains was enunciated by Count Sava after the Treaty of Kyakhta in his secret memorandum of 1731. The substance of his "China Doctrine" was to maintain good relations with China and thus to provide Russia the security to organize the machinery of government in Siberia. It also provided time for Russia to build roads, develop river traffic, and negotiate trade agreements with China that facilitated the development of Siberia. Count Sava contrasted the advantages of security and trade with the consequences of war with China. He felt that war with China would result in sacrifices of men, time, and money, requiring a hundred years for recovery. He also mentioned that such a war would incur the lasting enmity of China.²²

Later in the eighteenth century, during the reign of Catherine the Great, there was some so-called revisionism in Russia regarding Count Sava's China Doctrine. The so-called

²¹ Semyonov, pp. 125-126.

²² Ibid., pp. 124-125.

Jakobi portion of the Myatlev-Soimonov Plan, proposed assembling troops in the Nerchinsk-Selinginsk area to support negotiations for Russian possession of the left bank of the Amur.²³ In a secret memorandum compiled for the throne in 1763, G. F. Muller, a German professor in the Russian service, presented his view of a desirable Russian boundary with China, exclusive of the Ussuri region. If we consider Outer Mongolia as a part of Russia, this boundary is almost identical to the post-1944 Sino-Soviet boundary, which includes Tannu Tuva in the USSR.²⁴

Nicholas Muraviev, a later governor of Siberia, was one of the able revisionists of Count Sava's policy. He sidetracked a survey mission sent by the Foreign Minister, Count Nesselrode, to survey and fix the boundary along the Stanovoi Range. Muraviev had also sent Lieutenant Nevelskoi on an exploration voyage to find the mouth of the Amur, about which little was known. In 1849, Nevelskoi found the mouth of the Amur, which gave access to the Sea of Okhotsk to the north and to the Sea of Japan through De Castries Bay to the south.²⁵ He was later

²³ Ibid., p. 252.

²⁴ Ibid. Reasons for considering Outer Mongolia a part of Russia were given in Chapter I of this thesis.

²⁵ Semyonov, pp. 256-258.

sent back to establish a trading post for the Russian American Company on the Coast of the Sea of Okhotsk and to gather information of the Amur, but was forbidden by his government to enter the Amur estuary. Interpreting these orders loosely, however, Nevelskoi established Camp Nikolayevsk about 16 miles from the mouth of the Amur on the north or left bank.²⁶ Despite repercussions back in Petersburg, Muraviev gained the support of the heir to the Russian throne (later Tsar Alexander II) for the Muraviev policy of expanding toward the Amur and for Nevelskoi's actions which supported that policy. The Chinese government was informed in 1850 that the post on the Amur was necessary to protect the area from occupation by a third power.²⁷

By 1857, Russia had a line of bases along the Amur, which she justified by pointing to the hostile intentions of England and France. She also used as an excuse the Far Eastern battles related to the Crimean War (1854-1856).²⁸ China was in the throes of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) and was too pre-occupied with subduing this internal threat to oppose the

²⁶ Ibid., p. 259.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 260.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 268-272. Nikolayevsk and Petropavlovsk were reinforced by way of the Amur.

Russians.²⁹ Since the Russians were determined to fix the eastern border in their favor and secure rights to the Amur for themselves, and the Chinese lacked strength in the area to resist, negotiations were begun. The Russians negotiated from a position of strength. There were 20,000 troops, artillery, and gunboats close at hand to support the demands of the Russians, who did not hesitate to remind the Chinese of the confrontation at Nerchinsk nearly 170 years before. Faced with such a situation, the Chinese signed the Treaty of Aigun in May 1858.³⁰ In this treaty, the territory on the left bank (north and east) of the Amur from the Argun to the Ussuri went to Russia, while the territory on the right bank remained Chinese. The land to the east of the Ussuri was to be owned by China and Russia in common until a future date.³¹ Only Chinese and Russian shipping could navigate the Amur and the Ussuri.³² Under the provisions of this treaty, the Chinese

²⁹ William L. Langer, (ed.) An Encyclopedia of World History (Rev. ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952) p. 879.

³⁰ Semyonov, pp. 274-275. J.S.M. Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 13-19. Schwartz, p. 52.

³¹ Jackson, p. 113. Shao-ming K'e et al, Ch'ing Shih Kao (Draft History of the Ch'ing Dynasty, referred to hereafter as Draft Ch'ing History; 2 vols., Hongkong: Literary Research Institute, 1928), Vol. I, p. 561 does not refer to a future date with regard to the common ownership of the area east of the Ussuri.

³² Semyonov, p. 275.

gave up 185,000 square miles (479,150 square kilometers) of land and Russia gained relatively easy access to the Pacific Ocean and Kamchatka from Siberia.³³ The Sino-Russian border in the Far East had approached the state in which the Sino-Soviet border exists today.

The next step in Russia's march to the Pacific and its continued "fishing in troubled waters" came in 1860. As a reward for Russian Ambassador Ignatiev's interceding with the allied armies and saving Peking from allied bombardment, Prince Kung, younger brother of the Manchu Emperor and acting regent in his absence, signed the Peking Convention (also called the Treaty of Peking) with Russia in November 1860. That portion of the treaty pertaining to Manchuria provided that the border should run from the confluence of the Shilka and Argun Rivers to the junction with the Ussuri, with all the territory to the north becoming Russian, and that to the south remaining Chinese. South of this junction, the Ussuri and the Sungacha Rivers were to be the border, the land to the east being Russian, and that to the west being Chinese. From the source of the Sungacha River, the border was to cross Lake Hanka, and run to the Paileng River, then along the mountain range to the Huput'u River, and

³³ Jackson, p. 113. Kao, Map 3, estimates 480,000 square kilometers.

from its mouth along the mountain range between the Hunchun River and the sea to the mouth of the Tumen River, with the land on the east belonging to Russia and that on the west to China. Finally, the treaty specified that delegates would meet to map the frontier from Lake Hanka to the Tumen River and certify the border.³⁴ The effect of this treaty was that China lost another 133,000 square miles (344,470 square kilometers) of land--the entire area between the Ussuri River and the Pacific Ocean.³⁵

The most significant action taken by Russia to help consolidate the new gains and provide for maximum benefit from the new territories was the building of the Trans-Siberian Railroad to link eastern Russia with its Far Eastern provinces. While there were many reasons for building such a railroad, the military ones included the movement of troops and military supplies to and from the Far East area, particularly the border area discussed in this thesis, and putting a good line of communication to such Far Eastern ports as Vladivostok and Port Arthur.³⁶

³⁴Treaties Between Russia and China, 1682-1881 (Russian, Latin, Manchu, and Chinese. Petersburg 1889; Stanford, Calif: Hoover Institute on War, Revolution, and Peace; microfilm.) pp. 174-187.

³⁵Jackson, p. 113.

³⁶Semyonov, pp. 326, 369. See Leo Heiman, "Military Background of the New Soviet Leaders," Military Review, Vol. XLV, No. 4, Apr 1965, p. 47, regarding movement of Mongolian and Far Eastern Divisions to European Russia in 1941. See Chapter V for a view of railroads as an indication of the importance of a frontier

Russia came into competition with Japan by extending branches of the railroad into Manchuria. An example of such branches of the Trans-Siberian Railway was the Chinese Eastern Railway. Nominally shared by Russia and China, this railway provided Russia with a shortcut to Vladivostok by entering Manchuria at Manchouli in the northwest and crossing the border in the southeast after leaving Suifenhö. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Russia maneuvered Japan out of part of the fruits of her victory--the lease of the Liaotung Peninsula. Later, in 1897, Russia extracted the same privilege from the Chinese in Manchuria for herself.³⁷

In 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion, Chinese attacked the Chinese Eastern Railway which was under construction. Chinese troops attacked Russian ships on the Amur River and bombarded Blagoveshchensk on the Russian side.³⁸ The Russians immediately seized on this pretext to launch a four-pronged invasion from the north and east, overcome quickly the Chinese resistance and practically occupy Manchuria.³⁹ The invasion routes--via Hunchun and Ningkut'a in the southeast, via Sanhsing (Ilan) in the northeast and via Aihun in the north across the

³⁷ Schwartz, pp. 67-68.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 73.

³⁹ Draft Ch'ing History, Vol. I, p. 564.

Amur River--matched closely three invasion routes followed by Soviet forces in their offensive against Japanese forces in Manchuria in 1945. The failure to withdraw Russian troops in Manchuria, coupled with other machinations and rivalry with Japan, led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. The defeat of Russia left Japan dominant in Manchuria, but also left the Trans-Siberian Railway unimpaired and Russia's Far Eastern possessions intact. One exception was that Russia was forced to extend the railway on Russian territory north along the Amur River to Khabarovsk and south to Vladivostok.⁴⁰ This war, fought on Chinese soil by two foreign powers for special privileges, had no direct relation to the Sino-Russian border, but did prove to be the opening battle in nearly a half-century of Russo-Japanese struggle, much of which took place along the Sino-Russian frontier in the Far East.

Although the river boundary and southeastern land boundary mentioned in Chapter II had been established and demarcated by 1886, the western land boundary, or border of China with Outer Mongolia, remained to be settled. Russian influence in Outer Mongolia was strong, as might be indicated by the Russo-Chinese-Mongolian Tripartite Agreement. Signed on 7 June 1915,

⁴⁰ Paul E. Lydolph, Geography of the U.S.S.R. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 252.

this agreement expressed the boundary in purely theoretical fashion and specified that formal delimitation would take place within two years (Appendix A). World War I, the Russian Revolution, internal problems in China, the Japanese seizure of Manchuria, World War II, and the communist take-over in China all intervened and the border was not delimited until December 1962. One act which influenced the location of the western land boundary discussed in this thesis was the return of the Hulunbuir area to Chinese administration, as a separate province. The Hulunbuir Plateau is that area between the Greater Khingan Range and what is now the border between China and Outer Mongolia (Map 8 and Appendix A). After World War I and the Russian revolution, during the period from 1921 to 1930, the USSR established a protectorate over the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) which had been formed under Soviet auspices. This was done in violation of the Soviet-Chinese agreement of 31 May 1924, which recognized China's sovereignty over Outer Mongolia and promised withdrawal of Soviet troops.⁴¹ The subsequent seizure of Manchuria, and the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo by Japan, set the stage for a

⁴¹ Gerard M. Friters, Outer Mongolia and its International Position (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), pp. 351, 352. China did recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia, however, on 5 Jan 1946. Friters, p. 354.

series of border incidents, protests, skirmishes, and battles which occurred at different times in practically every incident-prone or conflict-susceptible area along the border.

A preview of what was in store came in the form of the Sino-Soviet conflict of 1929 which arose from attempts of Chang Hsueh-liang, the Chinese war lord of Manchuria, to seize the Soviet-controlled Chinese Eastern Railway. After numerous clashes on both the eastern and western border of Manchuria, Outer Mongolian troops supported by Soviet air forces attacked in the vicinity of Manchouli and penetrated as far as Hailar, soundly defeating Chang Hsueh-liang's troops. In the northeast, Soviet land, sea and air forces destroyed the Chinese Sungari River fleet and captured T'ungchiang (Tungkiang) on the Sungari. This resulted in the signing of the Khabarovsk Protocol in December 1929 by the Chinese and the Soviets, substantially restoring the original status of the Railway.⁴² The routes followed by the invading Soviet and Outer Mongolian forces were to be used almost identically in 1945 for two of the Soviet offensives against the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria.

At the end of the 280 years which followed the first clash

⁴² Schwartz, pp. 110-111.

of Russian expansion with Manchu or Chinese resistance, the river boundary between the Soviet Union and China had been fixed by the year 1860. The southeastern land boundary had been delimited and demarcated by 1886. Progress had been made up to a point in developing the western land boundary, which existed in theory, but had never been delimited or demarcated.

The early period of the development of the border--the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries--was one of Chinese strength and Russian weakness. The Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 established the first agreed-upon Sino-Russian border--the Gorbitza and Argun Rivers running in a north-to-south direction and the Stanovoy Mountains from west to east. The Treaty of Kyakhta established the border between Siberia on one side and Mongolia and northwest Manchuria on the other. These treaties were concluded on a basis of equality or from Chinese strength. Although Russian ambitions in the area were great, Russia chose to adopt a peaceful "China Doctrine." This allowed time to organize and develop newly won territories as a prelude to further expansion when the opportunity presented itself. China's preoccupation internally with the Taiping Rebellion and externally with initial clashes with such powers as France and England gave Russia the desired

opening to push toward a stable river boundary and outlets on the Pacific Ocean. By the Treaty of Aigun of 1858 and the Peking Convention of 1860, Russia attained the present river boundaries--stable, easily distinguished, good waterways, and excellent obstacles to unauthorized crossings or invasion by land forces. Vladivostok, a good substitute for a warm-water port, since it could be kept open by icebreakers in the winter, was also in the new territories acquired in 1860. Russia began building the Trans-Siberian Railway, and continued to press into Manchuria for a shortcut for the railway to Vladivostok, as well as for the warm-water ports of Port Arthur and Ta-lien (Dalny or Dairen). This brought Russia into contact and war with Japan, a new force on the scene.

After a period of Russian preoccupation with Europe, World War I, and the Russian Revolution, the new Soviet Union assumed the position of Tsarist Russia in the Far East, and reestablished Russian influence in Outer Mongolia. Although the river boundary and southeastern land boundaries had been fixed for decades, certain Sino-Russian and Sino-Soviet clashes had already directed attention to areas which would prove more incident-prone in the years to come. Aihun on the river boundary and Hunchun and Ningkut'a near the southeastern land boundary had been invasion routes for Russian forces in 1900.

The Sungari Valley, which could be reached only by crossing the river boundary, was the scene of the Russian capture of Sanhsing in 1900 and T'ungchiang in 1929. The western land boundary, undelimited, undemarcated, and a good invasion route, was shown to be an excellent potential battleground by the Soviet-Mongol offensive of 1929. With these precedents and potential trouble-spots as a background, the scene changed and the USSR and Japan faced each other along the 3000-mile Manchurian border.

CHAPTER IV

SOVIET-JAPANESE CONFLICT

In 1931 a new era began in the history of Manchuria and its border relations with the USSR. Japan not only seized Manchuria, to give the Soviets a new neighbor, but also began large-scale industrial development of the area. The Soviet Union took no more kindly to Japan, who was now her chief rival on the Mainland of Asia, than she had China, and border disputes and incidents continued. The events leading up to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 had sown the seeds of this rivalry, which had grown in importance after the Russian revolution. In 1918, Japan had landed troops at Vladivostok and driven along the Trans-Siberian Railway as far as Lake Baikal.¹ When the Japanese troops withdrew after four years of occupation, the Soviet Union could have had little doubt as to Japanese designs in the Far East. The rivalry and distrust was reflected in the pattern of friction and incidents which severely tested the functions of the border between Manchuria and the Soviet Far East.

¹Yurii Nikolaevich Semyonov, Siberia; its Conquest and Development, trans. J. R. Foster (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963), p. 373.

Japan's actions on the Mainland of Asia, which brought her into conflict with the USSR, are often cited as following the blueprint of the so-called Tanaka Memorial. Baron Giichi Tanaka, to whom the memorial is attributed, had been Minister of War, Prime Minister of Japan, and an advocate of the so-called positive policy. The memorial is purported to have been a confidential memorandum to the Emperor setting forth the recommendations resulting from an eleven-day conference among Japanese officials in Mukden in 1927. When the Chinese published the purported text, the Japanese naturally denied the existence of the memorial. The fact remains, however, that the Japanese did follow the alleged memorial's guidelines until World War II.² For this reason, a brief outline of the steps set forth in the memorial as Japan's route to world conquest will be useful. The actions to be taken pursuant to the memorial were to be a logical sequel to the acquisition of Taiwan and Korea by Japan (1895 and 1910). The first step was the take-over of Manchuria as a bridgehead on the mainland and a source of raw material. The railroads previously built by Japan in Manchuria were to serve as a foothold prior to the take-over and as military and commercial assets after the seizure of the

² Carl Crow, Japan's Dream of World Empire: The Tanka Memorial (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942), pp. 19-21.

area. From Manchuria, Japan was to expand into Mongolia and China and dominate Asia and the South Sea Islands. Then the Japanese Empire was to embark on world conquest.³

Japan looked upon Manchuria as a source of food for her population, raw material for her growing industries, and as a market for her industrial output.⁴ Manchuria was also valuable to Japan strategically in that it adjoined Korea, "the dagger pointed at Japan's heart," which was conversely Japan's bridge or route to the Asian mainland via Manchuria.⁵ On the eve of the Manchurian Incident, as the Japanese called it, the leaders of the Japanese Kwantung Army (K.T.A.) noted the defeat inflicted by Soviet forces on Chinese troops in the vicinity of Manchouli in 1929.⁶ The spark that set the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in motion was the dynamiting of a section of railroad track of the Japanese-owned South Manchuria Railway. The Japanese K.T.A. claimed that fighting broke out when railway guards caught some Chinese soldiers dynamiting the railroad track at Liutiaohu, near Mukden. The Chinese offered evidence that the Japanese had faked the explosion, pointing out that a

³Ibid., p. 62.

⁴Henry W. Kinney, Manchuria Today (Osaka, Japan: Hanada Printing Co., 1930), p. 30.

⁵Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁶Saburo Hayashi and Alvin D. Coox, Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War (Quantico: The Marine Corps Association, 1959), p. 3.

train had passed over the supposedly damaged section an hour after the explosion had allegedly occurred.⁷

In Tokyo, the Japanese government decided to localize the incident but the K.T.A. in Manchuria rapidly expanded operations. Within the next five months, the K.T.A. had seized most of the principal Manchurian cities and towns.⁸ On 18 February 1932, Manchuria, or the four Chinese provinces of Heilungchiang, Kirin, Liaoning, and Jehol, declared its independence. Henry Pu-yi, the last emperor of the Manchu dynasty in China, was installed as Emperor of Manchukuo.⁹ With this, the Soviet Union and its satellite, Outer Mongolia, faced Japan and its puppet, Manchuria, across the border. Practically every possible type of border incident or conflict occurred during the next fourteen years of the Japanese occupation, including ambushes, kidnappings, overflights, physical occupation of disputed territory, and corps-size operations. Japanese sources state that over 1000 incidents involving

⁷ Claude A. Buss, The Far East (New York: Macmillan Co., 1955), p. 217. The League of Nations' Lytton Commission later found that the Japanese had planned and carried out the explosion and all subsequent operations (Joseph C. Grew, Ten Years in Japan (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), pp. 61-62).

⁸ Hayashi and Coox, p. 4.

⁹ David J. Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 5. "Manchukuo" can best be translated as "Manchurian Nation" or "Nation of the Land of the Mans."

Manchurian borders with Outer Mongolia and the Soviet Union occurred between 1932 and 1945.¹⁰ Soviet sources, on the other hand, accused the Japanese of 1850 violations (321 from 1932 to 1937 and 1529 from 1938 to 1945).¹¹ Most of the disputes originated in disagreements dating back to tribal times or to the development of the border. Related to this and the decades-old rivalry of Japan and Russia was the Japanese Army's "Forward Strategy" which regarded Manchuria, and consequently its borders, as the front line of Japan's defense.¹²

The intensity and frequency of border incidents seemed to ebb and rise with the degree to which problems in other areas of the world occupied the USSR, Japan, or both.¹³ Nevertheless,

¹⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria (Referred to hereafter as J.S.M.), Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 April 1956), p. 39.

¹¹ The Soviet Union also charged the Japanese with 1350 trespasses into Soviet territorial waters, 789 violations of air space, and 3,666 cases of "smuggling spies." This evidence was based on a report of the Frontier Corps Department, People's Commissariat of Home Affairs, USSR, 20 Feb 1946; prosecution Document No. 1953, Exhibit No. 750, International Military Tribunal of the Far East (I.M.T.F.E. or "Far East War Crimes Trials"), Transcript, 15 Oct 1946, pp. 7,744-7,747. There is reason to believe that Soviet data equate individuals with separate incidents. This may exaggerate the arithmetical total of alleged violations, I.M.T.F.E. Transcript, 15 Oct 1946, p. 7,746, cited in J.S.M., Vol XI, Part 1, p. 39, n. 1.

¹² Hayashi and Coox, pp. 2-3.

¹³ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 44.

the variety of incidents between 1931 and 1945 fall into a chronological pattern of five distinct periods.

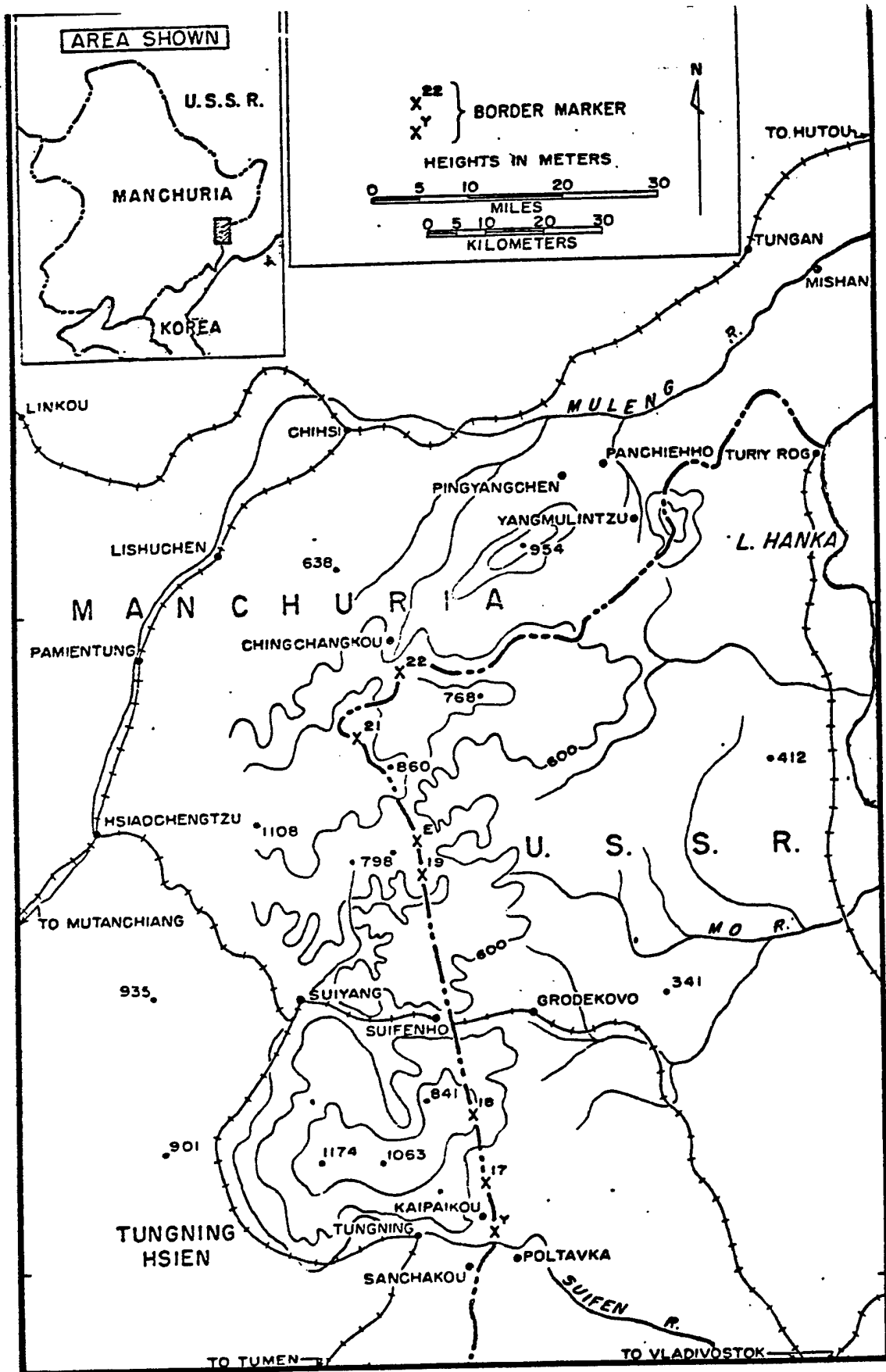
The first period (1931-1934) saw Japan consolidating her newly won territory and concentrating on its development and security. There were no large-scale clashes. Border incidents were confined to kidnappings, border-crossings, overflights, and disputes over river navigation rights. During this period the southeastern land boundary area was the main incident-prone locality (Map 5). The Japanese also reported the moving of border markers westward (into Manchurian territory) in the northern portion of the southeastern land boundary (Map 9).¹⁴ Only six minor incidents were reported along the river boundary.¹⁵ The Japanese claimed that 152 border incidents occurred from 1932 to 1934, while the Soviets cited 15 border violations, 6 air-space violations, and no cases of "spy smuggling" in 1933.¹⁶

In the second period (1935-1936), the Soviet buildup of forces which had started during the preceding period reached sizable proportions. Japanese sources claimed that the Soviet

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Exhibit No. 750, I.M.T.F.E., Transcript, 15 Oct 1946, p. 7747, cited in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 40.



Map 9.--Northern portion of the southeastern land boundary (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956), Map 9).

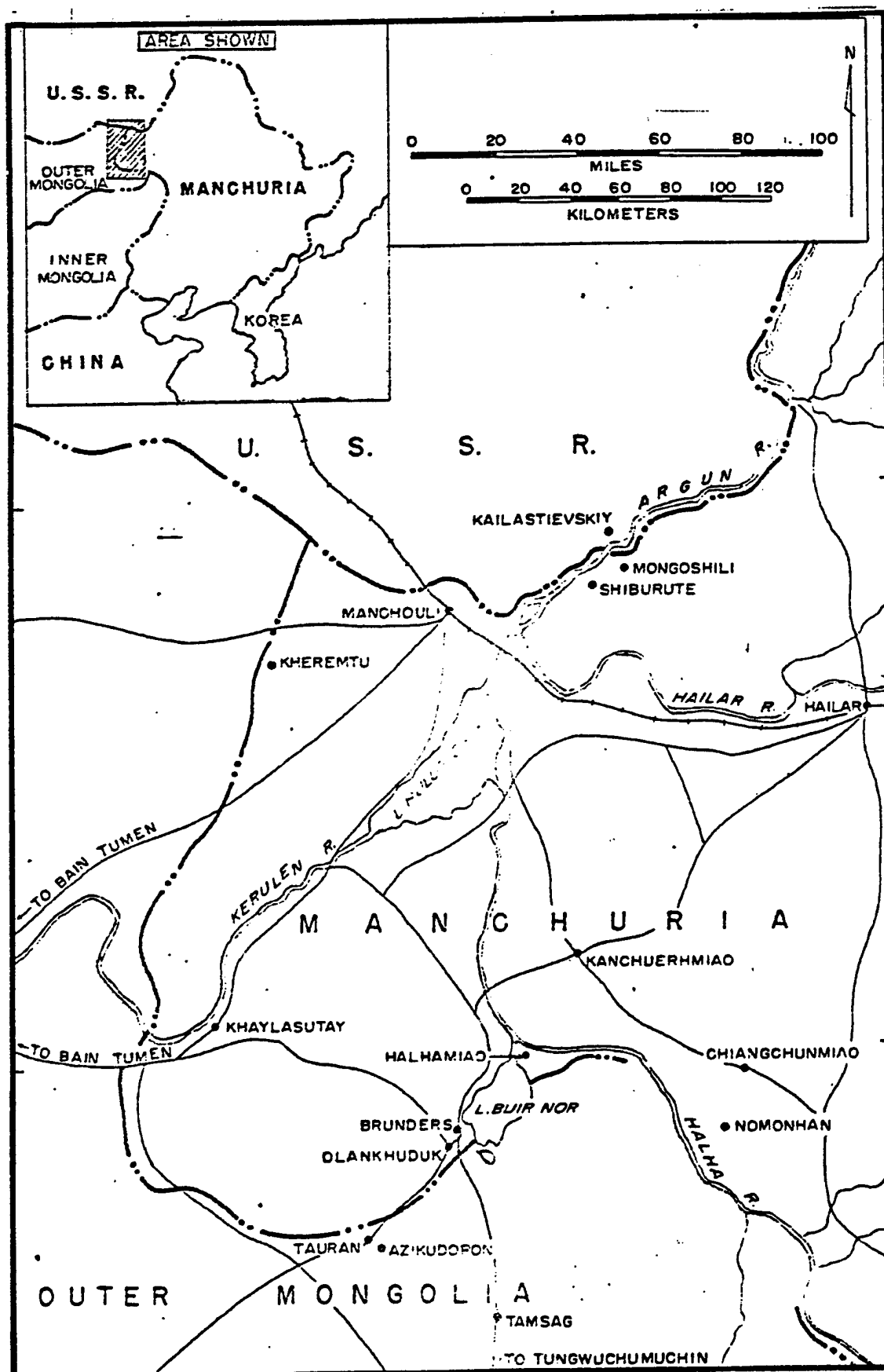
Union had 19 divisions, 1200 aircraft, and 1200 tanks in the Far East.¹⁷ Japan's interest in the area continued as evidenced by her move into Inner Mongolia (1933-1935) and her invasion of north China in 1935.¹⁸ Soviet-Japanese incidents increased in both number and scale and included ambushes, exchanges of fire, and air attacks. The clashes also involved the western land border of Manchuria, most of which is the border with Outer Mongolia, bringing Outer Mongolian as well as Soviet troops in the skirmishes (Map 10). The largest forces involved in any of the 328 incidents reported by the Japanese were battalion-sized units. During this period the Soviet Union signed a mutual assistance protocol with Outer Mongolia (Mongolian People's Republic or MPR), giving either party permission to station troops in the other's territory. This treaty was considered a warning to Japan against meddling with the border with the MPR.¹⁹

From 1937 to 1940, the third period, Soviet forces in the Far East, had increased, according to the Japanese, to 23 divisions, 1500 aircraft, and 1500 tanks, accompanied by the

¹⁷ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 55-66.

¹⁸ Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, p. 25.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 27.



Map 10.--Incident areas along the western land boundary (U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956), Map 11).

construction of permanently fortified positions.²⁰ The Japanese had followed suit in the building of fortifications. It was at this same time, 1937, that the Japanese attempt to subjugate China began. The China campaign progressively absorbed more of Japan's strength as Chinese resistance continued, thus reducing the number of troops available in Manchuria to face the Soviet and MPR forces. Japanese sources claimed that 625 border incidents occurred.²¹ The incidents occurring during this period included engagements of up to corps-size units, with mechanized, artillery, and air support. The locales of the major incidents were the western land boundary, the river boundary, and the southeastern land boundary of Manchuria. The Japanese considered that the border incidents during this period were mainly the result of a Soviet attempt to divert Japanese attention from China.²² From the Soviet point of

²⁰ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 62. Soviet construction began in 1933 (Hayashi and Coox, pp. 7, 195).

²¹ Ibid., p. 41, Table 2. Soviet data cite 1754 cases of "spy smuggling" in 1938; and 387 "Japanese border violations" and 83 air violations in 1939 (Exhibit No. 750, I.M.T.F.E., Transcript, 15 Oct 1946, p. 7,747, cited in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 41). Soviet data cite 59 Japanese violations and 56 air violations during 1940 (I.M.T.F.E., Transcript, 2 Jun 1947, pp. 23,406-23,407, cited in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 41).

²² J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 65.

view, however, the Soviet aim had been to support and encourage China in order to keep the Japanese occupied and divert their attention from the USSR.²³ Toward the end of the period, the USSR had signed a pact with Nazi Germany and was apparently concentrating on preparations for the coming war in Europe.

The fourth period, from 1941 to midsummer 1944, was one characterized by minor incidents. Japan and the Soviet Union were preoccupied with major wars. In April 1941, Japan and the Soviet Union actually signed a nonaggression pact which was to be effective for five years.²⁴ To reinforce or replace troops lost in the Pacific, Japan withdrew trained units from the K.T.A. and replaced them with green units when they were available. Since the USSR was also using its Far Eastern armies as a replacement source for the Soviet forces in Europe, the Manchurian border was relatively calm. Japanese sources note that there were 156 incidents during 1941 and 1942, the only war years for which such statistics are

²³ Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, pp. 35-37.

²⁴ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 72.

available.²⁵

In the final period, from midsummer 1944 to August 1945, the Soviet Union was victorious in Europe, denounced the non-aggression pact of April 1941, and prepared for war against the Japanese.²⁶ After reinforcing her armies in the Far East, the USSR invaded and occupied all of Manchuria.

This resumé¹ establishes the timing and general pattern of the border encounters between Japan and the USSR. For a more detailed discussion of the major or critical incidents, the border will be examined in three distinct areas: the western land boundary, the river boundary, and the southeastern land boundary (Map 5).

The first portion of incident-prone boundary for discussion is the western land boundary (Map 10). The northern leg of this boundary is a geometric land boundary following a

²⁵ Ibid., p. 42, Table 2. This table also notes that Soviet Russia accused the Japanese of causing 414 border incidents in 1943--allegedly the record since 1932. On the other hand, the fact that Japanese forces in Manchuria were weak during this period, plus the policy that the K.T.A. established in 1939 regarding special efforts to avoid incidents along the border, do not appear consistent with a more aggressive policy, to say nothing of a record number of incidents created. See (Japanese) Imperial Army General Headquarters, Army Order No. 578, 3 December 1941, quoted in Appendix B, J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 103-104. Also see Hayashi and Coox, p. 15.

²⁶ Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, pp. 188-189.

section of the line of stone markers (Numbers 58 to 63) running from Kyakhta to Abagaytuy (See chapter II and Map 4). On the west, except where it corresponds with a small river or lake, it is a geometric and compound land boundary. The main characteristic of this boundary is that it provides no physical barrier between the powers occupying both sides of it, and the stone markers are movable. The deliberate removal of markers was ascribed to the Russians by the Japanese.²⁷

In 1734 the Ch'ing (Manchu) Dynasty, to halt intertribal strife over grazing rights, fixed a boundary between the Eastern Mongols of the Hulun Buir (Hulunbuir) plains (in present Manchuria) and the Mongols who live in Outer Mongolia, but disputes continued.²⁸ Two major incidents took place along the western land boundary before World War II. One was first and the other third in size of forces engaged among the thousand-odd incidents which occurred during the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. Each of the two incidents was really a series of incidents or conflicts spanning several months. Between December 1935 and April 1936, the Tauran incidents were merely an overture to the violent Nomonhan conflict of 1939. Tauran, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) southwest of Buir Nor (Lake),

²⁷ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 36-37.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

was in the same general area, with similar terrain, as Nomonhan, which lies about 90 kilometers (56 miles) to the east-northeast (Map 10). In this area, the claims of Japan and Manchukuo on one hand and the USSR and MPR on the other overlapped in two places by as much as 30 kilometers (19 miles).²⁹ According to Japanese accounts, K.T.A. and Manchukuo forces reconnoitering projected border garrison outpost locations in the vicinity of Tauran were attacked by Outer Mongolian troops. This led to three skirmishes which grew in magnitude. Finally, on 31 March Japanese-Manchukuo troops engaged a battalion-sized Outer Mongolian force which had artillery and light bomber support.

The Nomonhan conflict of May-September 1939 dwarfed the Tauran incidents in magnitude and, true to form, each side insisted that the other had started the fight. One problem however, was that the border had never been checked, agreed upon, and reduced to writing by the powers occupying both sides. The Japanese claimed that the Halha (Khalkha or Halhain) River or Khalkhin-Gol was the natural boundary

²⁹ Herbert Mueller, Map of All Mongolia, scale 1:3,000,000 (Peking: Dr. Herbert Mueller, 1939).

and that Buir Nor was in Manchukuo.³⁰ The MPR, on the other hand, claimed that the boundary belonged about 20-22 kilometers to the east of the Halha River.³¹ In view of this, the MPR accused the Japanese of crossing the frontier on 11 May 1939, pressing back MPR frontier units, and starting an offensive supported by armor and aircraft. They further claimed that the Japanese had occupied Nomanhon-Bure-Obo (Nomonhan-Burd-Obo, Nomonhan, or Nomenkhan).³² On the other hand, the Japanese considered the Nomonhan territory a part of Manchukuo and claimed that a 700-man Outer Mongolian force crossed the border early on 12 May and attacked Manchukuo border garrison units.³³ The clashes grew from the original

³⁰ Chuzo Yoshimura, "The Mongol Border Dispute. Maps at Variance," Japan Chronicle (Kobe), 28 Mar 1935, cited by Gerard M. Friters, Outer Mongolia and its International Position (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), p. 235. An idea of the Japanese view can be gathered from the following quotation: ". . . With the establishment of Manchukuo, the Halha River was selected as the natural boundary separating the Outer Mongolian plains from western Manchuria, but border disputes became ever more frequent with the strengthening of Soviet military power in the Far East. . . ." (J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 37). This indicates no agreement with anyone, so apparently it was Manchukuo, or the Japanese, who selected the "natural boundary."

³¹ J.S.M., Vol XI, Part 3, Book B, "The Nomonhan Incident," 5 Sep 1956, p. 188.

³² Soviet Monitor, 25 Oct 1946, quoted in Friters, pp. 293-295, Marshal Choibalsang's message to the Chairman of the Far Eastern Commission.

³³ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 70.

battalion-size operations to reinforced division or corps-size operations. The 498 tanks committed by the Russians and the 120 tanks committed by the Japanese in the final battles (see Chapter V) made this possibly the biggest armor engagement prior to World War II.³⁴ By the time the armistice was signed in Moscow on 16 September 1939, the USSR needed freedom of action to prepare for the coming war in Europe. On the other side, the Japanese had realized the Soviet superiority in fire-power and mechanized forces as well as in the logistical field, and were evidently deterred from attempting to challenge the USSR in a war without extensive preparation.³⁵ Exercises, such as the "Kwantung Army Special Maneuvers" of 1940, increased the KTA strength from 400,000 to 700,000. These maneuvers, undertaken as tests and as preparation for a possible offensive against Russia if German's war in Europe went well, were also preparations for the contingency of war in the Pacific. The Imperial Conference of 2 July 1941 had already resolved that war should not be avoided with the United States and Britain in order to carry out the Japanese policies

³⁴ S. N. Shishkin, Colonel, Soviet Army, Khalkhin-Gol (Moscow: Military Publishing House, Ministry of Defense, 1954), Table 3, trans. and quoted in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 3, Book C, "The Nomonhan Incident (Conclusion)" 5 Nov 1956, p. 394, Table 22.

³⁵ Hayashi and Coox, pp. 15, 19-20.

in the southern regions.³⁶

According to the Japanese, the conflict occurred because the Soviet Union was attempting to hamper Japan's prosecution of the war in China.³⁷ The K.T.A. also felt that Russia and the MPR were concerned because the Japanese had commenced to build a railway extension to link Wangyehmiao in southwest Manchuria to Hailar in the northwest. Such a railway would have been a strategic asset to Japanese forces in the event of fighting in the border area.

Another action impelled by the conflict as well as by guidance from Imperial General Headquarters (I.G.H.Q.) in Tokyo, was positive action to preclude further border clashes. This amounted to almost total repudiation of the aggressive policy for dealing with border clashes which had been promulgated by the K.T.A. after the Changkufeng conflict of 1938. The K.T.A. created a voluntary unilateral buffer zone with a secret picket line well within Japanese-Manchukuo territory. The employment of weapons within the buffer zone was prohibited without proper authority. Counterattacks against border violations or intrusions were to be launched only on authority of the Commanding General of the K.T.A. This policy was in

³⁶Ibid., pp. 20-21.

³⁷J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 3, Book B, p. 171.

force until the Soviet Union declared war in 1945.³⁸

There were two delayed-action sequels to the Nomonhan conflict. The first was the use of the conflict and other border incidents by the MPR as justification for demanding a share of reparations exacted from Japan after World War II. The second was that the Japanese High Command was held responsible for the conflict by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (I.M.T.F.E.).³⁹

The second area to be considered along the border follows the river boundary formed by the Argun and Amur Rivers on the north and the Ussuri and Sungacha Rivers in the east. Inasmuch as river boundaries generally constitute good physical barriers and are readily identifiable, the incidents occurring along the river boundary were of a different nature and did not approach those on the two land boundaries in magnitude or significance. Of the four river incidents discussed below, three appear to have been aimed at increasing control over navigation on the river and limiting close observation

³⁸ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 103-104, 109-110, 111-127. Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces Far East, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, January 1943-Aug 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 138 (Referred to hereafter as J.M. 138; Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, November 1953), pp. 87-89.

³⁹ I.M.T.F.E., Judgment, pp. 49,401-49,403, quoted in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 70, n. 11.

of the Soviet borders, and two of these had to be settled at ambassador level. One, the Mongoshile incident or series of incidents, appeared to be significant only in connection with a preceding incident or by coincidence with a route used in the invasions of 1945.

The Sino-Russian Treaty of Aigun (1858) provided that the area north of the Amur River would be Russian, while the area to the south of the Amur would be Chinese. The Peking Convention (1860) provided that the land to the east of the Ussuri would be Russian and that to the west of it, Chinese (Appendex A). Neither agreement, however, provided for islands eroded in the vicinity of river junctions such as Heihsiatzu, 46 kilometers (29 miles) long and located at the junction of the Amur and the Ussuri. According to the Japanese, the USSR claimed that the main course of the Amur flowed west of Heihsiatzu Island through the Kazakevich (Kazakivicheva or Suiyuan) Channel. On the other hand, the Japanese claimed that Heihsiatzu was south of the Amur and west of the Ussuri, the main course of which flowed to the east of the island.⁴⁰ The Soviets occupied the island, fortified it, and remained there despite a Manchukuo protest to Moscow in 1936.⁴¹ The

⁴⁰ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part I, pp. 27-31.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.31.

fact that the eastern tip of Heihsiatzu is less than 10 kilometers (six miles) from the Trans-Siberian Railway may have caused Soviet concern.

In June 1937, a more serious incident occurred over Kanchatzu (Bolshoi) Island, which lies in the Amur River southeast of Blagoveshchensk and north of the Manchurian city of Kanchatzu. The Soviets fortified Kanchatzu when they occupied it along with several smaller islands including Chinamuhotao (Sennufa). The Japanese accused the Soviets of kidnapping Manchurians from Kanchatzu, evicting others, moving navigational beacons and firing on Manchurian police.⁴² Firing also occurred between Soviet river gunboats and Japanese troops on the Manchurian shore.⁴³ After a round of protests and negotiations in Moscow, Soviet troops withdrew from the islets in the Amur. Japanese and Manchukuo troops in turn occupied the islands as soon as the Soviets left.⁴⁴

On 5 October 1944, Soviet soldiers occupied Kuangfengtao, just west of the island of Heihsiatzu (Map 6) and barred navigation to the north of the islet until 14 October of that year.⁴⁵

⁴² Ibid., pp. 65-66.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 66-67.

⁴⁴ Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, p. 28.

⁴⁵ J.S.M., Vol. XI., Part 1, p. 76.

The only significance that can be ascribed to this tiny islet is its position in the center of the mouth of the Suiyuan Channel west of Heihsiatzu Island and its proximity to the Manchurian bank of the river.

The Mongoshili (Mongoshile) incident, which was really a series of incidents involving small patrol crossings of the Argun River at Mongoshili, about 96 kilometers (60 miles) northeast of Manchouli, occurred between 1 and 10 August 1944 and was the last comparatively serious river boundary incident. The incidents were confined to small patrols of two to 12 men, firing at border police, and reconnaissance by a single aircraft. The Japanese felt that these were primarily an "intimidatory reconnaissance" conducted as followup to an earlier relatively minor border incident (Wuchiatzu, 29 July 1944).⁴⁶ The fact that none of these incidents approached those along the land boundaries in magnitude gives an indication of the functioning of a stable river boundary.

The third area to be examined lies along the southeastern land border which was mainly geometric and had been established by the Peking Convention of 1860, the Lake Hanka Border Pact of

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J.M. 138, pp. 84-87. The Wuchiatzu incident occurred when Soviet troops removed Japanese barbed wire entanglements and fired on Japanese troops attempting to replace the wire (J.M. 138, pp. 82-84).

1861, and the Hunchun Border Pact of 1881. On 31 May 1924, the Soviet-Chinese Treaty of Peiping nullified all previous agreements, and promised to substitute new pacts based on equality, reciprocity and justice. Pending redemarcation of boundaries, the boundaries were to be maintained. The USSR also separately negotiated the Mukden Agreement on 20 September 1924 with representatives of Chang Tso-lin, the Manchurian warlord.⁴⁷ After the establishment of Manchukuo, Moscow did not settle the boundary with the Japanese successors of Chang. This, the dearth of markers, and the decay of those that had been erected, resulted in many border clashes, three of which are of importance.

The first significant clash occurred on 3 June 1935 in the vicinity of Yangmulintzu, west of Lake Hanka (Map 9). The Japanese version of this incident is that a Japanese patrol was fired on by NKVD troops and returned fire, killing one Soviet soldier. This was the first time in the history of Manchukuo that Japanese and Soviet troops had exchanged fire and suffered casualties.⁴⁸

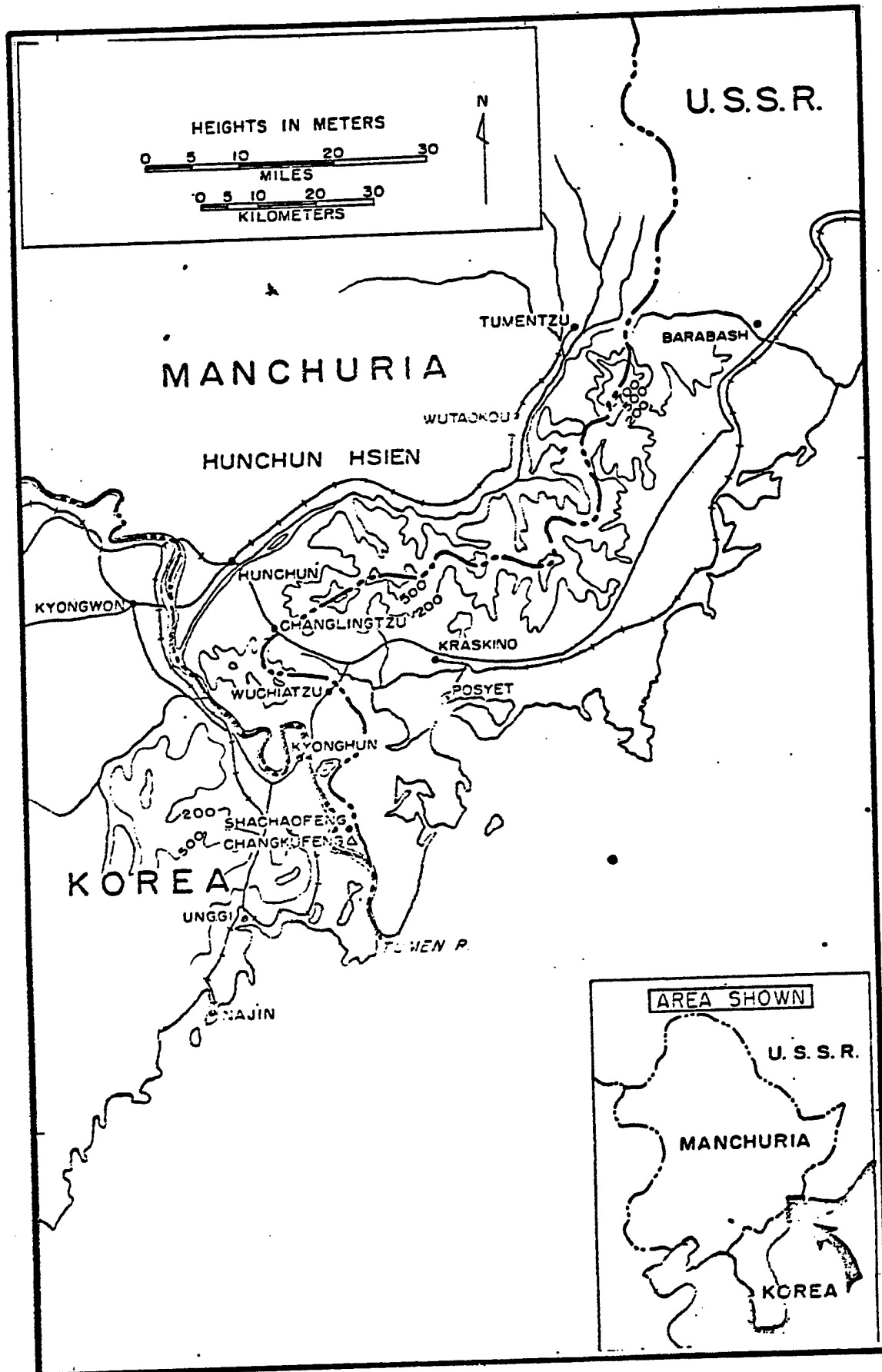
⁴⁷ C. Walter Young, The International Relations of Manchuria (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), Appendix G, pp. 283-292, 299.

⁴⁸ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 56.

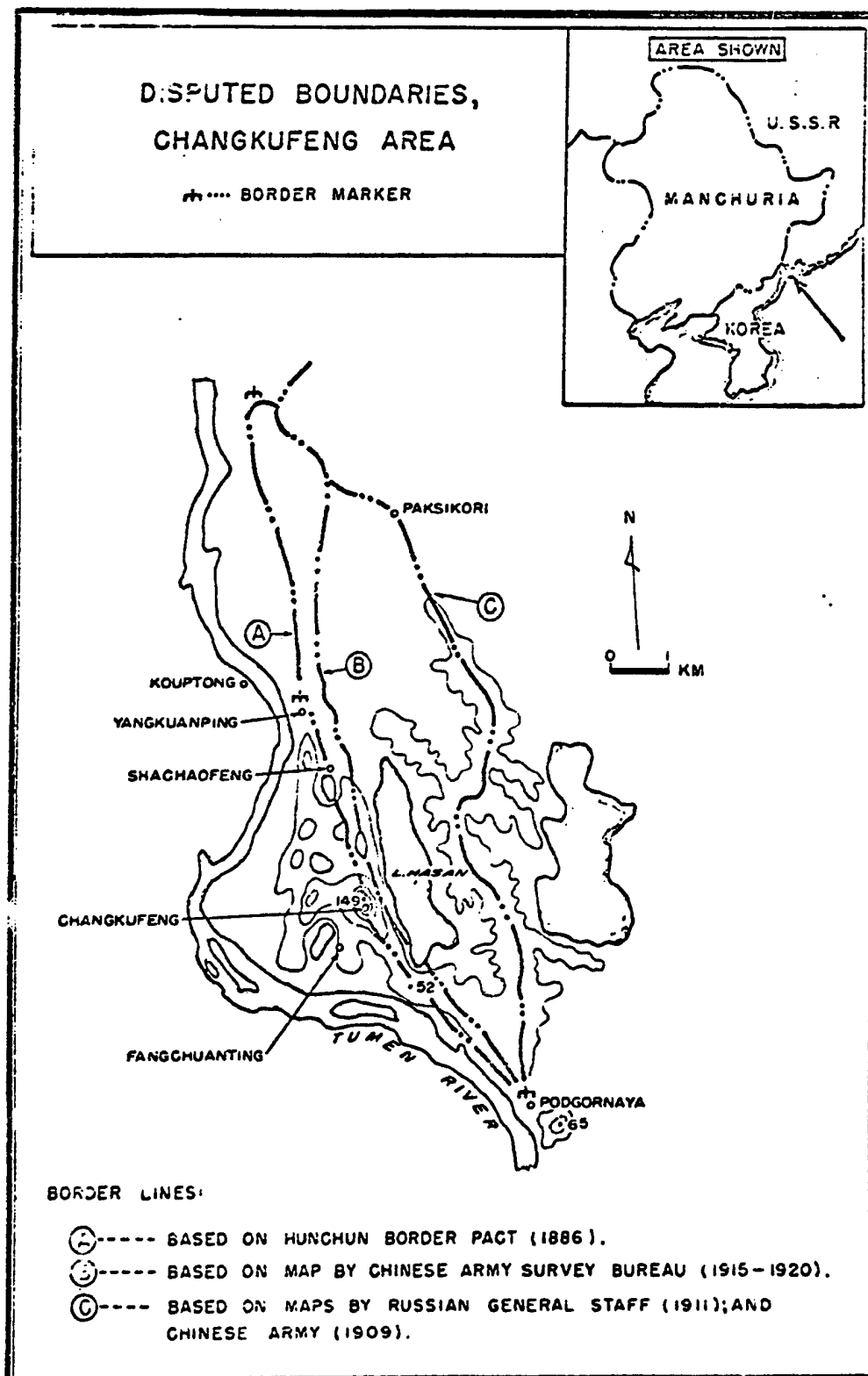
The Changlingtzu Incident occurred southeast of Hunchun, near the Soviet-Korean and Korean-Manchurian borders, on 25 March 1936 (Map 11). An ambush of a K.T.A. border guard investigating party initiated the clash. Then both sides reinforced their elements to company size, but ceased firing and withdrew at nightfall.⁴⁹ This was the first time that company-size units had been employed in this area, although battalion-size elements clashed in the Tauran area on the western land boundary about the same time.

The Changkufeng (Lake Hasan or Khassan) Incident, the second largest clash between Soviet and Japanese forces during the Japanese occupation began 12 July and lasted until 11 August 1938. Changkufeng (Hill 149) was on or very close to the Sino-Russian border demarcated under the provisions of the Lake Hanka Border Pact of 1861, and checked and re-marked in 1886 under the Hunchun Border Pact of 1886 (Map 7). While the Hunchun Border Pact remained the only intergovernmental agreement up to 1938, an element of confusion was introduced by the purported existence of two other maps (Map 12) and by disputes over the correct positions of border markers. Changkufeng was of value in that it dominated the Fangchuanqing-Yangkuanping road and overlooked the coast in its area, including Posiet

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-58.



Map 11.--Southern portion of the southeastern land boundary (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956),



Map 12.--Disputed Boundaries, Changkufeng Area (Headquarters U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI, Part 3, Book A, "The Changkufeng Incident" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 9 Jul 1956), Map 1).

Bay.⁵⁰ The USSR had begun the construction of a submarine and air base in the latter location in 1938.⁵¹ The actual fighting also involved Shaochaofeng (Bezmyannaya or "No-name-hill" in Russian) and the border between it and Changkufeng (Zaozernaya in Russian). Shaochaofeng is another hill located about 2.5 kilometers (1.5 miles) north of Changkufeng.

While both sides claimed that the other had started or set off the fighting, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East held the Japanese responsible for initiating the fighting.⁵² Before the truce was negotiated in Moscow and the cease-fire became effective on 11 August 1938, the border clash had become a division-size engagement.⁵³

This incident, besides being the largest border clash up until 1938, illustrated the incident-prone nature of a poorly marked boundary, particularly in a strategically significant portion of a border. In this case the strategic location of Changkufeng was apparently the critical element.

⁵⁰ J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 3, Book A, The Changkufeng Incident (July 1956), Map 2.

⁵¹ Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, p. 38.

⁵² I.M.T.F.E., Judgment, p. 49395 (10 Nov 1948), quoted in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 68-69. Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, p. 38.

⁵³ Actual or estimated strengths committed will be discussed in Chapter V.

The Changkufeng clash also resulted in K.T.A. orders that included the following guidance from the K.T.A. to its frontline units with reference to border disputes or violations: units should never invade nor permit invasions, invaders should be annihilated, and area commanders should designate boundaries where the existing ones are ill-defined and advise frontline units as well as K.T.A. headquarters of such action. The guidance further specified that local units should emphasize positive action in dealing with border incidents, and that higher headquarters would assume responsibility for the consequences of such positive action.⁵⁴

Another view of the significance of the Manchurian border during the Japanese occupation is presented by the "conflicts that never took place." They were the Japanese operational plans for offensives against Russia in case of war. These are covered in great detail in the Japanese Monographs and Japanese Studies on Manchuria, reflect certain features of the border, and indicate the reasons for some of the actions taken by the Japanese in Manchuria.

In his previously cited International Boundaries, Boggs mentioned that one method of determining the significance of

⁵⁴ Kwantung Army Operations Section, Principles for the Settlement of Soviet-Manchurian Border Disputes, Order No. 1488 (April 1939), quoted in Appendix A, J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 99-102.

a border was to look at the construction of fortifications and strategic railroads. While such construction may depend upon the objectives of the nation which constructs the railroads and fortifications; it can also depend upon what that nation expects or fears of the other country. A route across a border into enemy territory can also be a route from enemy territory into friendly territory. Thus fortifications can indicate the importance placed on border areas, particularly by a nation which distrusts its neighbor. The same applies to railroads since they will generally lead in the direction of the fortifications or link fortified areas, particularly if road nets are poor.

A look at Japanese fortification efforts in Manchuria in the light of their operational plans in effect during the various periods of the occupation reflected changes in the international situation; that is, Japanese military commitments in other areas and changes in priorities regarding potential adversaries. The Japanese fortification effort which had started in 1935 had to compete with other demands for material. Having started in 1933, the Soviet fortification effort was far ahead of the Japanese effort.⁵⁵

In 1934, the Japanese operational plans to be used in

⁵⁵ Hayashi and Coox, pp. 7, 195.

case of war with the USSR embodied an initial offensive to the east from Manchuria, then an attack to the north with the Lake Baikal area as the objective. Japanese fortifications emphasized key terrain. They were designed to cover K.T.A. concentration for offensives, and for economy of force along inactive fronts. The Japanese accounts of plans, maneuvers, and training reflect this concept.⁵⁶ Offensives across the southeastern land frontier and the river boundary in the east indicated the need for skill in marshland and mountainous forest operations. Forces to attack across the river boundary in the north and northeast would need skill in river-crossing, mountainous forest, and winter operations. Finally, the western frontier area required knowledge of desert and winter warfare.

The 1937 operational plans resembled those of 1934 in the initial offensives, but after the initial offensives, the K.T.A. was to consolidate along the Khingan Range in preparation for subsequent operations.⁵⁷ Again in 1940 through 1944,

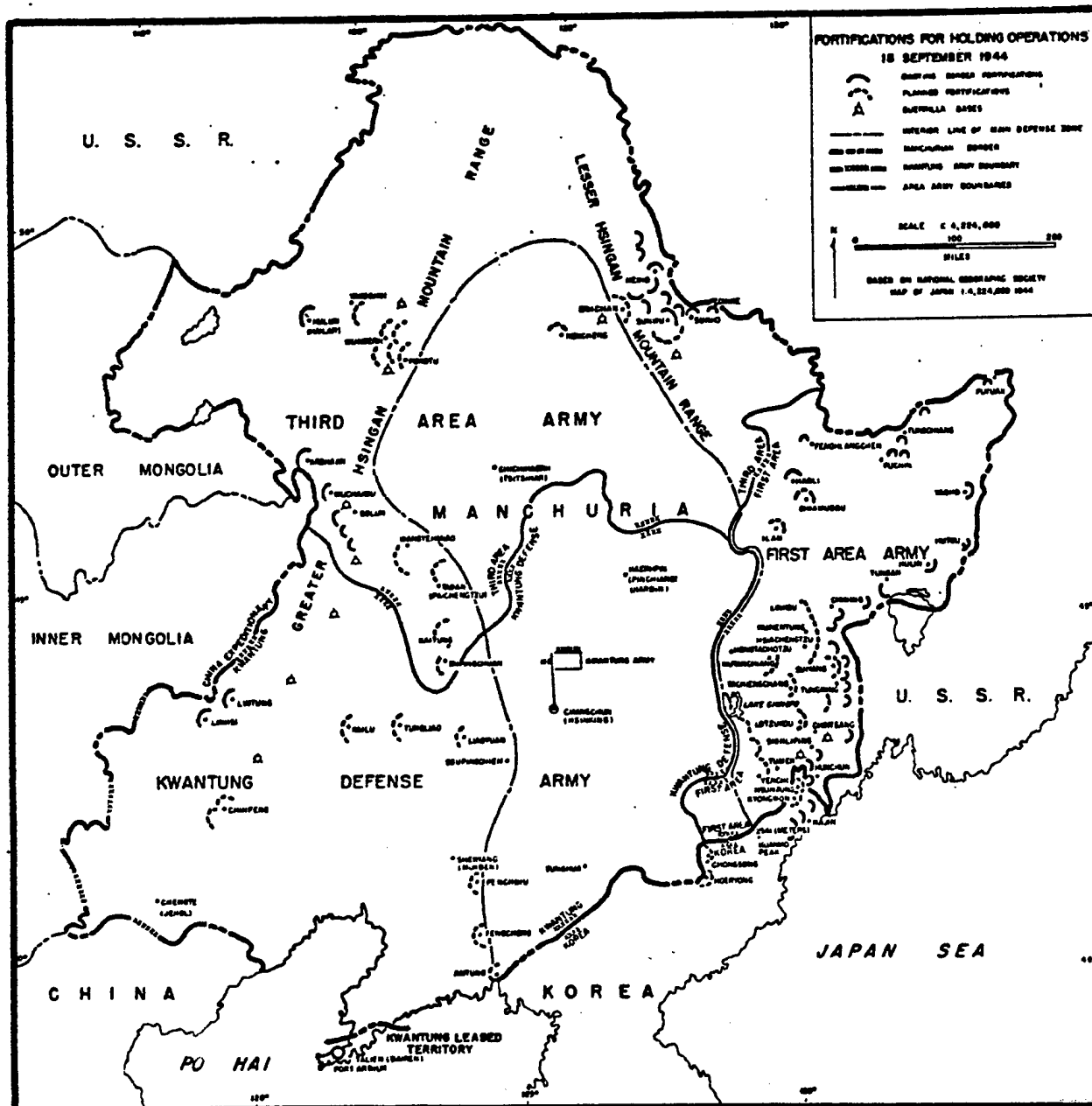
⁵⁶ Japan. Reports and Statistical Section, First Demobilization Bureau, Military Studies on Manchuria, Part VIII, Book IV, Historical Observations of Various Types of Operations in Manchuria, Chapter 4, Operations in Various Types of Terrain (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, August 1952).

⁵⁷ Hayashi and Coox, p. 8.

the operational plans had the same general concepts as the preceding ones, but attempts were made to increase the number of fortifications to include low-lying terrain as well as key terrain. This was coupled with an increase in garrison strength.

In 1944 and 1945, approximately 14 seasoned, well-trained Japanese divisions with armament were transferred to the Pacific and the homeland. These were replaced with newly mobilized personnel, if available. With the resulting reduction in available effective fire-power of the K.T.A. from one-half to one-third, emphasis was shifted completely from offense to defense in May 1945.⁵⁸ Both border fortifications and key inland positions were to be used to hold and weaken enemy offensives in an effort to gain time for a counter-offensive from prearranged strategic defense lines. The importance of border defenses was reduced in favor of nationwide (Manchuria-wide) defense (Map 13). The plan was finally changed to include an all-out defense of a redoubt area in the southeast to be located on both sides of the central portion of the Korea-Manchuria border. The defense of the redoubt was to be preceded by delaying actions from the borders back to the redoubt area. The net result of

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 171.



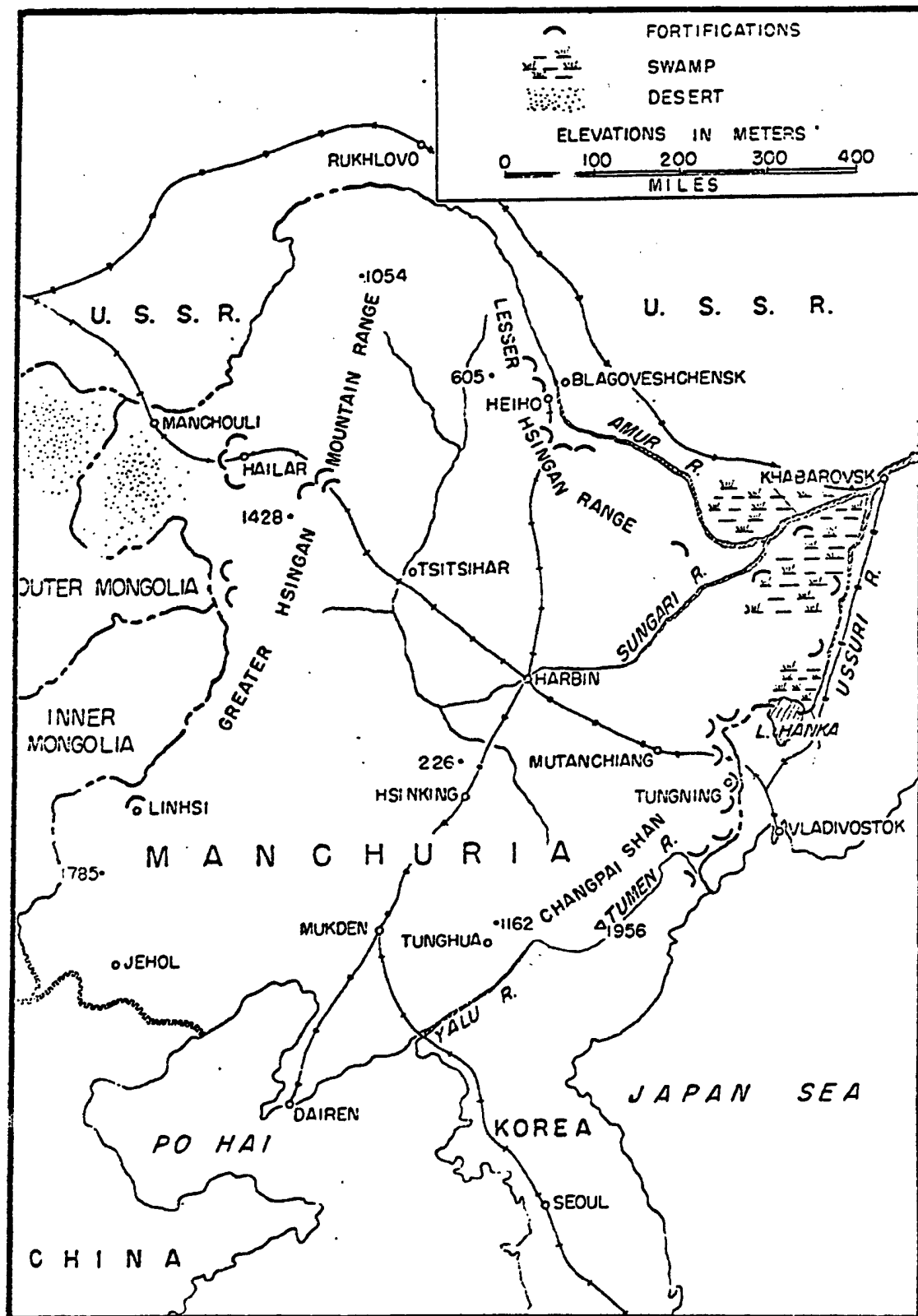
Map 13.--Fortifications for Holding Operations (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, Jan 1943-Aug 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 138 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Nov 1953), Map 2).

the final change in operational plans was a severe reduction in the importance of the frontier in the scheme of maneuver.

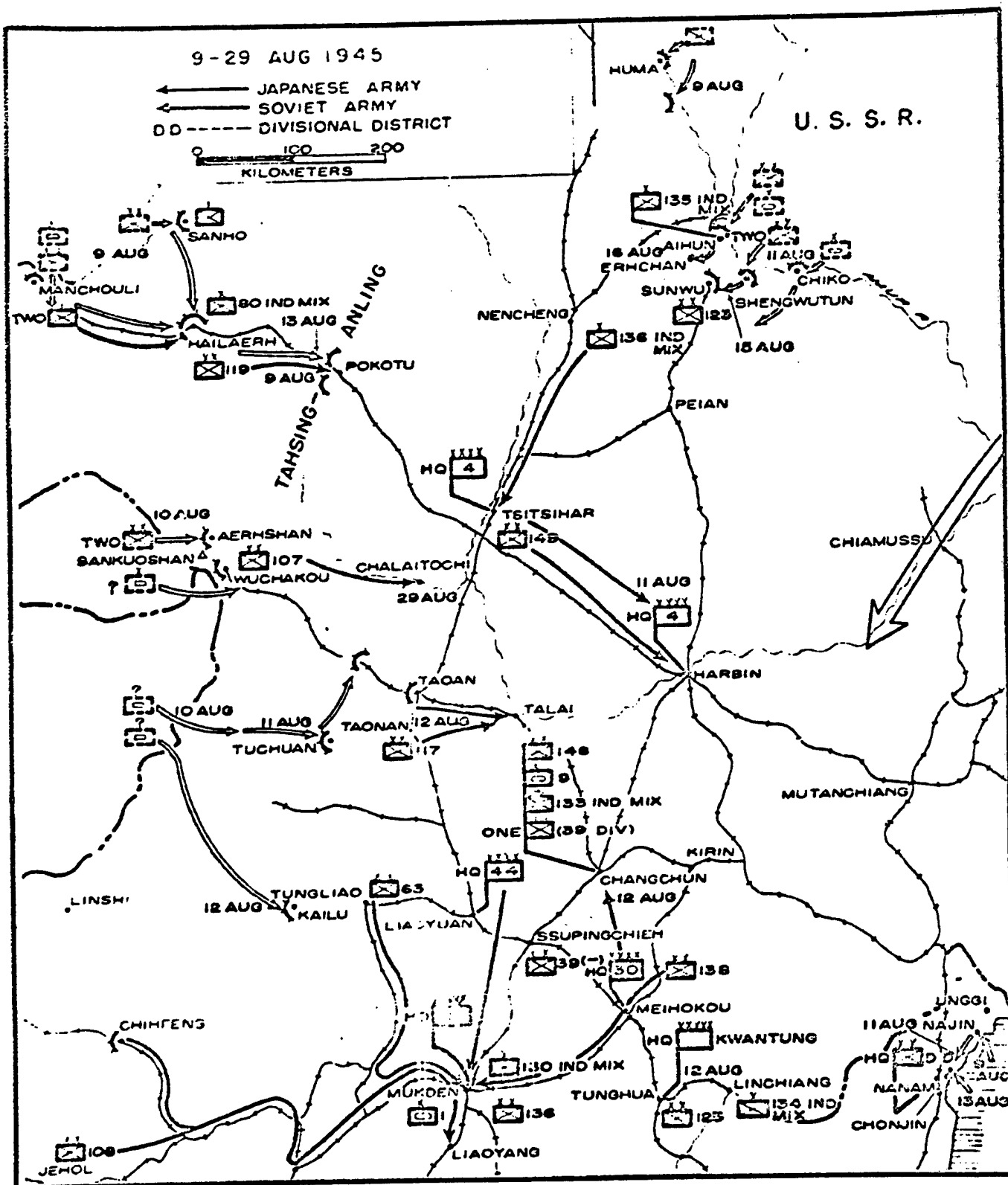
The final Japanese scheme of fortifications reflected their plans, as well as what they expected of the Soviets in case of war. They expected the Soviets to launch simultaneous converging offensives from the east, north, and west, and priority fortifications constructed by the Japanese corresponded with the major incident-prone areas (Maps 5 and 14), and, within those areas, where advances could best be expected.⁵⁹ The actual Soviet offensives of 1945 matched Japanese expectations with respect to direction, but moved much faster than expected. The speed and areas emphasized in the Soviet offensives reflected the terrain they had to cross to get into Manchuria. In the west, the moving Soviet columns attained speeds of 100 kilometers per day (Map 15).⁶⁰ There they followed the Manchouli-Hailar-Pok'ot'u axis which Soviet and MPR forces used during the Soviet-MPR Manchouli-Hailar offensive in the Sino-Soviet "semi-war" of 1929. This was also the locale of the Mongoshile incidents. To the south, the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁰ Alvin D. Coox, Soviet Armor in Action Against the Japanese Kwantung Army, August 1945, Technical Memorandum ORO-T-38(FEC) (Headquarters, Far East Command: Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University, 25 Sep 1952), p. 17.



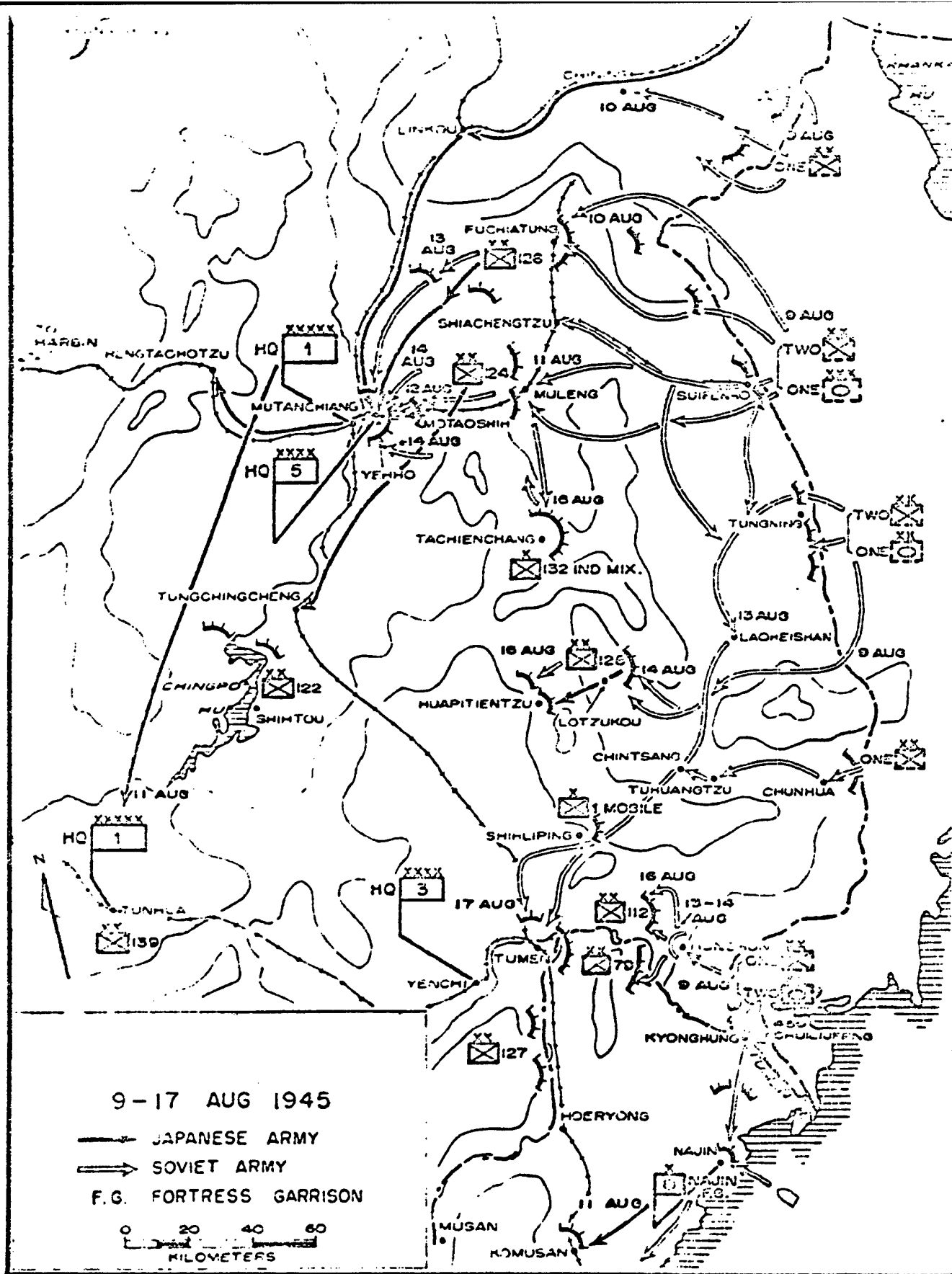
Map 14.--Fortifications in Manchuria in relation to natural terrain features (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, Jan 1943-August 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 138, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Nov 1953), Chart 5).



Map 15.--Soviet Offensives across western land boundary and river boundary (Adapted from U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. II, "Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria, 1894-1945" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 8 July 1959), Map 11).

Aershan-Chalaitochi or Wuchakou-Chalaitochi axis corresponded with the area of the Tauran and Nomonhan incidents. The Tungning-Suifenhao area along the southeastern land boundary, with its hills and woods southwest of Lake Hanka, was the same area of the Yangmulintzu and Changkufeng incidents previously discussed (Map 16). The offensive which made the least progress came from the north across the Amur River in the area of the Kanchatzu islet incident. This lack of celerity here attests to the effectiveness of the river as a boundary. There was one exception, however, to the effectiveness of a river boundary and that was the main attack launched from the vicinity of Khabarovsk. The main attack forces crossed the Amur River, and used the Sungari River as the axis of advance. The Soviet forces in this area thus advanced rapidly from the northeast into Manchuria.

During the fourteen-year period from 1931 to 1945, border incidents between Japan and the USSR varied in size, intensity, in locale, in causation, and in relation to outside events. Nevertheless, despite this diversity, four main points stand out. First, border incidents occurred in all three border areas--along the western land boundary, the river boundary, and the southeastern land boundary. Secondly, incidents along the river boundary did not approach in scope or significance



Map 16.--Soviet offensive across southeastern land boundary (Adapted from U.S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. II, "Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria, 1894-1945" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 8 Jul 1959, Map 10)

those occurring along the two land boundaries, even though one land boundary had been delimited and demarcated. The two most violent conflicts took place on the two land boundaries. In short, the most significant incidents or conflicts occurred where the boundary was a poor barrier or not properly demarcated. Thirdly, the incident-prone areas were found to correspond closely with the invasion routes used by the Soviets in 1945. Finally, the fortifications built by the Japanese K.T.A. in support of their invasion plans corresponded closely with incident-prone or militarily vulnerable areas. The incident-prone areas were the western land boundary in the Manchouli and Tauran-Nomonhan areas; the river boundary in the vicinity of Heihsiatzu and Kanchatzu Islands; and the southeastern land frontier at Yangmulintzu, Changlingtzu, and Changkufeng.

In the next chapter the incidents so far isolated and discussed will be compared with incidents and conflicts occurring in other periods, including the present, to determine whether incident-prone areas have been or will continue to be significant.

CHAPTER V

THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER IN THE FAR EAST

The Border From 1945 to 1964

The preceding chapters described the three areas of the present Sino-Soviet border in the Far East--the western land boundary, the river boundary and the southeastern land boundary--and the development of the border through periods of Sino-Russian, Russo-Japanese, Sino-Soviet, and Soviet-Japanese conflicts. When Japan seized control of the territory on the Chinese side, the border, with the exception of the western land boundary, had already been demarcated and agreed upon through a series of treaties. The new masters of the Manchurian side of the boundary--the Japanese--had old rivalries with the USSR dating back to the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). This rivalry continued during the 14 years of Japanese rule of Manchuria in the form of incidents and battles until the massive Soviet offensives of August 1945 ended Japan's tenure. After the short-lived Chinese Nationalist reoccupation of part of Manchuria from 1945 to 1948, Communist China became the Soviet Union's neighbor in the area. Considering that the

two governments supported the same ideology, that most of the border had been demarcated to mutual satisfaction, and that the much-vaunted comradeship of the "fraternal Communist Parties" was supposed to be above national interests, one might expect that, insofar as the border was concerned, the millennium had arrived. Information on border disputes during this period was practically nonexistent until 1963. Discrepancies appeared, however, in differences between Chinese Communist and Soviet maps with reference to the borders of Communist China and the Mongolian People's Republic (MPR) or the western land boundary, and to the ownership of Heihsiatzu Island on the river boundary.¹ The lack of statements on the borders or frontiers persisted despite evidence of Communist bloc disunity which became apparent in 1956 and came vociferously into the open in the fall of 1962.² In 1950 and 1957, agreements between Communist China and the USSR had been signed regarding navigation on the river boundary (Appendix A). From 1950 to 1957, agreements were reached between the two countries to return to the Chinese the Chinese Changchun

¹
Theodore Shabad, "Soviet and China Disagree on Maps," New York Times, 26 Feb 1961, p. 20. Also see Chapter IV of this thesis.

²
U. S. Information Agency, Recent Developments in the Sino-Soviet Dispute with a Chronology, Research Reference Service Report No. R-65-63(AF) (Washington, D.C.: United States Information Agency, 16 Apr 1963), p. 1.

Railway (formerly Chinese Eastern Railway), Talien (Dairen), and Port Arthur. At the same time other agreements covering technical and scientific cooperation, trade, aid, loans, and similar subjects were signed by Communist China and the Soviet Union.³ On 26 December 1962, Communist China and the MPR delimited their boundary--the western land boundary described in this thesis.⁴ Communist Chinese maps up to that time had shown the boundary as indefinite but following the Halha River, as did the Japanese-Manchukuo version until 1945.⁵ On the other hand, Soviet maps placed the boundary to the east of Nomonhan.⁶ In the treaty of 1962 the boundary passes through Nomonhan,

³ Robert M. Slusser and Jan F. Triska, A Calendar of Soviet Treaties, 1917-1957 (Hoover Institution Documentary Series, No. 4; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1959), pp. 469-471.

⁴ The full text of the Boundary Treaty Between the Chinese People's Republic and the Mongolian People's Republic (Referred to hereafter as CPR-MPR Boundary Treaty), 26 Dec 1962, was printed in Jen-min Jih-pao (People's Daily, Peking), 26 Mar 1963, p. 3. The Joint Sino-Mongolian Border Demarcation Committee has held its first meeting, which ended 20 May 1963 (Jen-Min Jih-Pao (Peking), 21 May 1963), p. 3).

⁵ Chung-hua Jen-min Kung-ho Kuo Ti-Tu (Map of the Chinese People's Republic), scale 1:5,600,000 (12th ed; Peking: Map Publishing Agency, 1962).

⁶ Atlas SSSR (Atlas of the USSR; Moscow: Main Directorate of Geodesy and Cartography, Ministry of Geology and Conservation, 1962), pp. 54-55.

apparently in the nature of a compromise.⁷ Ostensibly there was harmony along the previously turbulent border. In 1963, however, in a reply to a Soviet criticism regarding Communist China's failure to agitate for the return of Hongkong and Macao, Communist China rebutted by citing nine treaties that had been imposed on the Chinese and which the Chinese considered unequal and not permanent. Among these were the Treaty of Aigun (1858) and the Treaty of Peking (Peking Convention of 1860), under the terms of which Chinese territory had been ceded to Tsarist Russia.⁸ The strident statements of Communist China were a direct threat to demand revision of Sino-Soviet borders.⁹ The fact that China had been under considerable duress when the Sino-Russian Treaties of Aigun and Peking were signed is also significant to current Communist Chinese thinking since it may provide justification in their minds for renegotiation or revision of such treaties. Later in 1963, the USSR accused Communist China of committing 5100 border violations since 1960 with the objective of regaining territory once claimed as belonging to China. A Soviet statement also

⁷ CPR-MPR Boundary Treaty, Art. 1, par. 25.

⁸ Peking Review, Nos. 10 and 11, 1963, p. 61. Quoted by Harry Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins, and Commissars (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1964), pp. 194-195.

⁹ Schwartz, p. 195.

referred to Chinese fishermen who had invaded Soviet Islands on the Amur River and refused to depart when so ordered by Soviet border guards. The statement further cited numerous Soviet appeals to Communist China to arrange demarcation talks to preclude misunderstanding, but that Communist China refused to hold conferences and continued to violate the border. Included in the statements were threats of "resolute counterblows by the Soviet people against such flagrant hostile acts."¹⁰ According to a recent news magazine article, nine of the estimated 35 Chinese Communist armies are located in Manchuria, with five of the nine located in or near northwest Manchuria near the western boundary.¹¹

To determine whether the truculent statements of Communist Chinese and Soviet leaders may rekindle old rivalries or cause new conflicts on the border under investigation, certain questions must be asked regarding the border in the Far East. The first of these is, "Is the area on both sides of the border a cause of conflict or susceptible to incidents which may lead to armed conflict?" The second, "Is

¹⁰ Reuter's dispatch from Moscow, 21 Sep 1963, and United Press dispatch from Moscow, 21 Sep 1963, quoted in Hsing-tao Jih-pao (Hsing-tao Daily, Hongkong), 22 Sep 1963, p. 1. Note that the number of violations compares favorably with the statistics of violations from Soviet sources cited in Chapter IV of this thesis.

¹¹ "Red China: An Insistent Presence," Newsweek, 15 Mar 1965, p. 37.

the area involved of sufficient value to the nations on either side to impel them toward large-scale military operations?" The third, "Is the frontier suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent?" To properly evaluate the military significance of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East, each of the three sections of the border already described--the western land boundary, the river boundary, and the southeastern land boundary--will be analyzed with reference to these three main questions. This analysis will be performed in three major steps. The first step will be to explain the technique of analysis. This step discusses the components of each of the three main questions--the criteria or "subquestions" within each question. The next step will be to analyze each section of the border--western land boundary, river boundary, and southeastern land boundary--with reference to each of the three main questions and the component parts of those questions. The final step of the analysis will consist of a summary of the significance of the border in terms of the answers to the three main questions.

Technique of Analysis

First Question: ("Is the area on both sides of the border a cause of conflict or susceptible to incidents which may lead to armed conflict?")

The susceptibility of a boundary or border to incidents is related to the function of the boundary and how well it performs that function.¹² Judging from history and treaties, the main function of the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East has been that of delineation or delimitation of national territory. Judging from the actions of the powers which have been on both sides of the border, the boundary is, or should be, a military barrier, to use Boggs' words, to block access or check invasions. To carry this a step farther, fortifications and railroads have been considered important in insuring that aggression did not occur along a boundary meant as a barrier or defensive partition between contiguous states, and to prevent trespass or illegal expansion into the territory

¹² Samuel Whittemore Boggs, International Boundaries; a Study of Boundary Functions and Problems (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. 21-22, states ". . . The common-sense view, therefore, is simply that a good boundary is one which serves the particular purpose for which it is designed, with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of friction. On the principle that a good boundary is one which functions well and a bad boundary is one which functions poorly, a scientific study of boundary principles should be based upon the actual working of all types of boundaries, and should correlate all geographic factors with the actual purpose which the boundaries serve and the degree of success with which they function . . ." On page 11, he also states that international boundaries are intended to serve protective functions of various kinds.

on either side.¹³ Fortifications can be a gauge of the importance placed on an area by the nation fortifying the area. This is true regardless of whether the objectives of the fortifying nation are primarily for offensive or defensive action. The time, expense, and effort used on fortifications indicate that the builder places value on the area, feels vulnerable in the area, or ascribes aggressive intent to the nation on the opposite side of the border. Railroads are important in logistics and troop movement, particularly where road networks are inadequate.

In answering the first question, then, the functioning of the border as a limiting line and military barrier will be examined. This will be done by relating the Soviet-Japanese incidents covered in Chapter IV to the border's development as described in Chapter III, as well as to some current indications available on the border situation. This examination or correlation performed on the three sections of the border will first involve the actual and planned (if known) construction of fortifications in the area. Then the construction or presence of railroads within the area will be noted and the occurrence of significant incidents will be examined. This

¹³ Colonel Sir Thomas Hungerford Holdich, Political Frontiers and Boundary Making (London: Macmillan & Co., 1916), p. 128, quoted by Boggs, pp. 11-12.

will include routes or axes used by the Soviet armies in 1945 as well as those intended for use by the Japanese. Although the Japanese occupation period was not the only period providing a test of the boundary's functions, it did provide the most exacting test. Besides being the best-documented, the test was imposed under modern conditions of economic and military development. It must be understood, however, that the fact that incidents occurred during the Japanese occupation cannot be construed to mean that such incidents will occur under the present circumstances, nor that they will occur in the future between the present occupiers of the two sides of the border. On the other hand, it is true that many of the border incidents during the Japanese occupation had roots not solely in Russo-Japanese rivalry, but also in the manner in which border treaties had been executed between the predecessors of Imperial Japan and the USSR. These predecessors were, of course, Imperial and Republican or Nationalist China on one side and Tsarist Russia and the early USSR on the other. For this reason, disputes and incidents occurring in periods previous or subsequent to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria will be discussed with reference to the occupation.

Second Question: ("Is the area involved of sufficient value to the nations on either side to impel them toward large-scale military operations?")

This part of the analysis of each section of the border will deal with the value of the hinterland of that section of the border and its accessibility from that section. The question can be stated another way, "Is the area, or a certain part of it, worth fighting for?" To answer this question, the value of the area will be examined from three aspects: economic, nationalistic, and strategic. In doing this, the potential value of the area to both Communist China and the Soviet Union will be considered.

The economic value of the area to either side will be discussed in the broad sense, such as sources of wealth in the forms of mineral resources and agricultural produce, as an industrial base, and as an area for settlement. The economic aspect can sometimes affect the strategic value as well.

The value from the standpoint of nationalism or irredentism will be discussed in terms of some current indications inherent in the utterances or actions of both Communist China and the USSR. The effect of history on them will also be discussed briefly. This particular psychological value can have a strong influence on a power or its people. Such slogans as "Recover the lost territory" and "Give back what belongs to us"

can make desolate land seem valuable. Thus the psychological value of any land can be completely out of proportion to its true value.

The strategic value may be either positive or negative. The former includes salients into another's territory, or buffer zones to separate one nation from another. The negative value or vulnerability of a border includes re-entrants into friendly territory, which expose vital areas or targets. Another notion of negative value exists when one nation's territory prevents easy access within a nation or between parts of it. An example of this was Poland's Danzig corridor prior to World War II, which in effect precluded physical contact between two parts of Germany.

Regardless of which section of the border is discussed, Manchuria's economic value lies mainly in areas back from the border, that is in such areas as the Manchurian Plain. For this reason, the value of the hinterland on the Chinese side of the border will be reviewed briefly in the discussion of the western land boundary. The economic value of Manchuria will not be discussed when the river boundary and south-eastern land boundary are discussed, except in cases where the river and southeastern land boundaries provide special access to the hinterland. For similar reasons, since the

Soviet Far East is actually a region in its own right, its economic value will be discussed in the same manner as that of Manchuria. In addition, those nationalistic and strategic facets of Manchuria and the Soviet Far East as entities will be discussed in connection with the western land boundary where applicable.

Third Question: ("Is the frontier suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent?")

This question may appear to have been answered if only the Soviet offensives of 1945 were cited. It is true also that, in modern warfare, military operations can be undertaken almost anywhere, but that some places are more suitable than others. Areas comparatively unsuited for operations may deter potential combatants. A detailed determination of the suitability of an area for military operations by a force of a given size would in itself be the subject of a major study. For the purposes of this thesis, the citing of a few significant historical precedents in addition to the Soviet offensives of 1945 will be adequate to determine the general suitability of an area for military operations and the size of the units the area will accommodate.

With the component parts and qualifications of the three main questions established, these questions will next be applied to each section of the Sino-Soviet border previously discussed.

The Western Land Boundary

The northern leg of the western land boundary is of the geometric type, marked only by a section of the line of markers or obo which extends from Abagaytuy to Kyakhta (see Chapter II). Generally this type of boundary is ineffective and remains stable only so long as neither side attempts to shift the markers. It does not constitute a military barrier to prevent, slow or stop incursions. The boundary in the west between Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, or officially between China's Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR) and the MPR, which was delimited in the treaty signed on 26 December 1962, is geometric and compound.¹⁴ The area in Manchuria from the Greater Khingan Range west to this border, the Hulunbuir Plateau or Plain, is geographically a part of the eastern Mongolian Plateau. Manchurian Mongols are most numerous in the Hulunbuir Plateau area of Manchuria. A logical geographical boundary would be one using the Greater Khingan Range as the demarcation line and barrier. This high range has only four significant routes through it (Map 17).

Boundary or territorial disputes in this area have extended back over 200 years into history. The Japanese Studies on Manchuria cite disputes in the Nomonhan area between the

¹⁴ CPR-MPR Boundary Treaty.

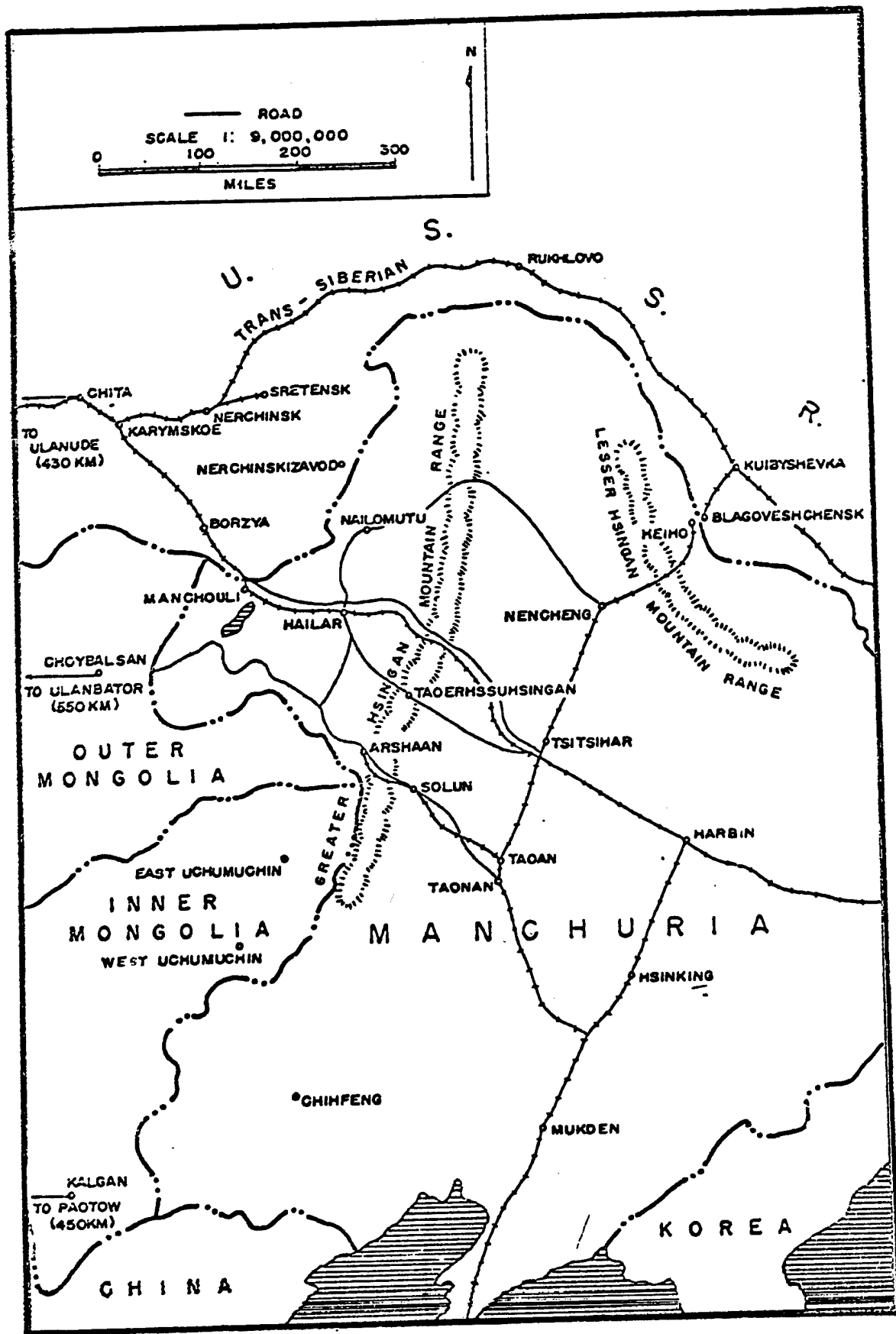
Mongols in the east (Manchurian side) and the Mongols on the west (Outer Mongolian side) over grazing lands before the year 1734.¹⁵

First Question: ("Is the area on both sides of the border a cause of conflict or susceptible to incidents which may lead to armed conflict?")

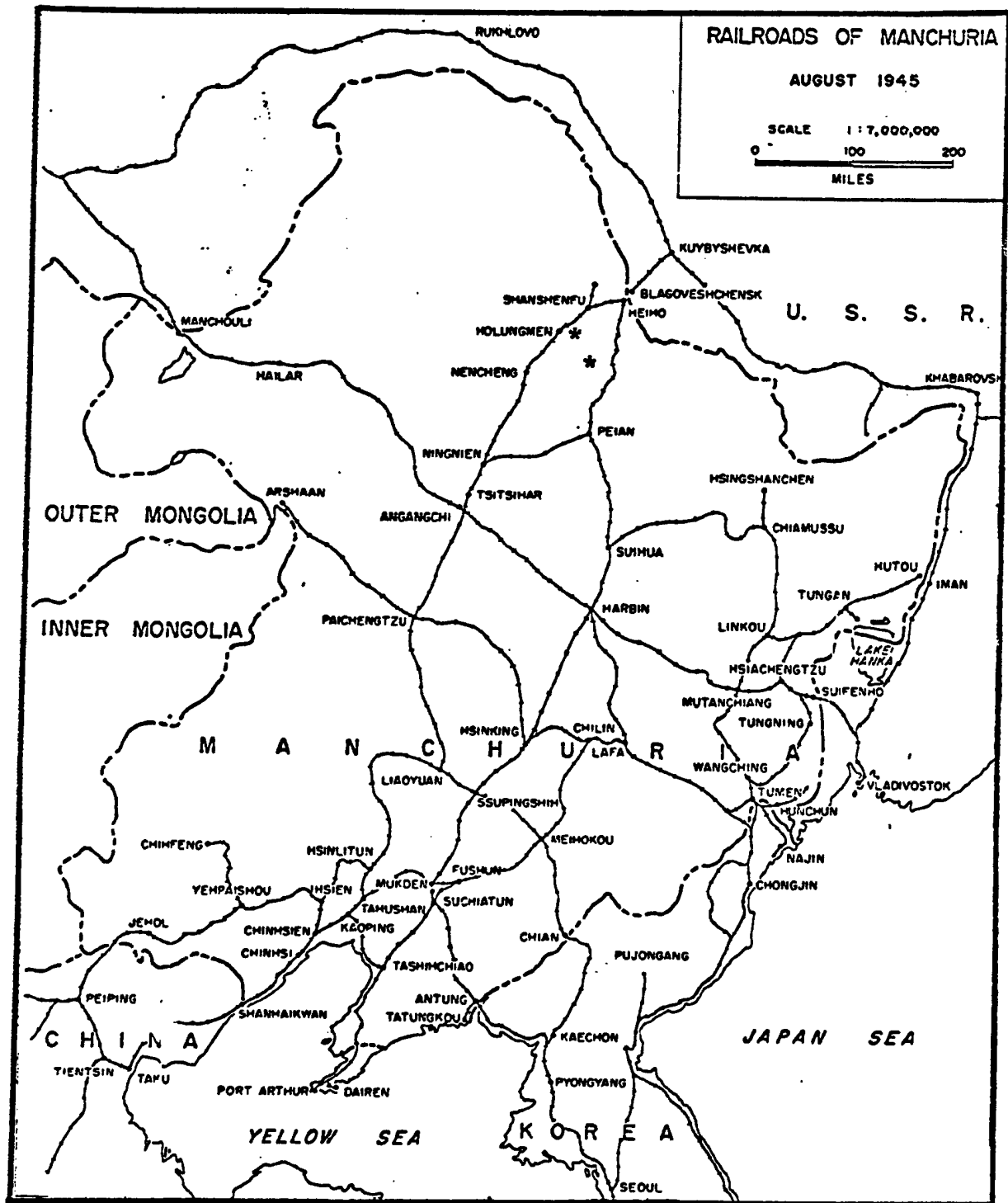
The four significant routes across the Greater Khingan Range from this area are the Nailomutu-Nencheng road in the north, the Hailar-Tsitsihar road and the railway, the Hailar-Taoerhssuhsingan road, and the Arshan-Solun road and railway to the south (Map 17). The Manchouli-Tsitsihar-Harbin axis is the strategic route into Manchuria from the northwest and contains the Hailar-Tsitsihar road and railway (Harbin-Manchouli Railway). The Harbin-Manchouli Railway connects at Manchouli with a branch railway from the Soviet side of the border. This branch railway in turn leads northwest to Borzuya, and from there on to the Trans-Siberian railway (Maps 3 and 18).¹⁶

¹⁵ Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria (Referred to hereafter as J.S.M.), Vol XI, Part 1, "Small Wars and Border Problems" (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 30 Apr 1956), p. 37. Also see Chapter IV of this thesis.

¹⁶ Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia on Northern and Western Fronts of Manchuria, and in Northern Korea (August 1945), Japanese Monograph 155 (Referred to hereafter as J.M. 155; Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Sep 1954), pp. 173-174.



Map 17.--Major Routes through the Greater Khingan (Hsingan) Range (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. I, "Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR," (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, March 1955), Sketch 7.)



*Status uncertain

Map 18.--Railroads of Manchuria (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, Jan 43-Aug 45, Japanese Monograph No. 138 (Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Nov 1953), Map 9).

The Hailar-Taoerhssuhsingan road leads southeast to the vicinity of Tsitsihar. The Solun-Arshan road and railway extends southeast to Taonan, with connections to a railway leading to Tsitsihar, Changchun, and Mukden. On the Soviet side, a railway joins Borzya with Choibalsan to the south in Outer Mongolia. Another railway joins Choibalsan and Tamsag Bulag to the east. The road and railroad nets in the area are both limited, but Soviet mechanized operations proved that the desert environment was well-suited to mobile operations.

Fortifications prepared or planned by the Japanese were generally located to block critical areas or passes through the Greater Khingan Range. Examples of these were the fortifications from Hailar to Pok'ot'u which blocked the Manchouli-Tsitsihar-Harbin axis, and the fortifications between Arshan and Solun, which blocked the Arshan-Solun axis (Ma' 14).

Incidents occurring along the western land boundary before the Japanese-Manchukuo period included the old tribal grazing land disputes mentioned previously and the Sino-Soviet conflict of 1929 in which Soviet forces advanced along the Manchuouli-Hailar axis toward Hailar. During the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and prior to the Soviet offensives of August 1945, the Nomonhan conflict was by far the most violent.

Japanese offensive plans for this area in case of war considered a thrust along the Hailar-Manchouli axis to Lake Baikal in Siberia.¹⁷ This would have been a modification of a Japanese thrust into Siberia in 1918, which started at Vladivostok and ended at Lake Baikal (Chapter IV).

The Soviet offensives of 1945 in the northwest reversed the direction of the planned Japanese advance and closely paralleled Soviet routes used in 1929 against China (Map 15). A one-division force crossed the Argun River at Sanho, northeast of Manchouli and in the vicinity of the Mongoshile incidents of 1944. The force then turned south toward Hailar. A division-and-brigade-sized force crossed the border in a southerly direction in the vicinity of Manchouli and turned east toward Hailar. Then both of these forces continued eastward along the road and railroad toward Pok'ot'u (Map 15). In connection with this offensive, the Japanese 119th Division evacuated Hailar by railroad. The last trainload left just as Soviet tanks entered the outskirts of the city.¹⁸

¹⁷Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, Jan 1943-August 1945, Japanese Monograph No. 138 (Referred to hereafter as J.M. 138; Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Nov 1953).

¹⁸Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia, Eastern Front (August 1945), Japanese Monograph No. 154 (Referred to hereafter as J.M. 154; Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 6 Apr 1954), pp. 9-10.

This incident proved the value of a properly located railroad, provided it is not destroyed. On the western border, but farther south, a two-division thrust was made at Arshan along the Arshan-Solun axis (Map 15). An attack by a unit of unknown size, probably a brigade, was made on Wuchakou. These last two attacks were close to the locality of the Tauran Incidents of 1935-1936 and the Nomonhan conflict of 1939 (Maps 10 and 15). Offensives on other routes farther south across the Inner Mongolian border are not within the scope of this thesis. The Soviet offensives of 1945 in the western and northwestern portions of this western land boundary were well-executed desert operations of mechanized and cavalry units. The greatest advances made by the Soviets in 1945, up to 100 kilometers (63 miles) per day, were made by the columns entering Manchuria across the western land boundary.¹⁹

Second Question: ("Is the area involved of sufficient value to the nations on either side to impel them toward large-scale military operations?")

Manchuria is definitely an economic asset to China, be it for resources, as an industrial base, or as an area for settlement for expanding population.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 15. Also based on actions of Japanese 119th Division (J.M. 155, p. 185 and Map 1, opposite p. 173).

Manchuria's products and resources include gold, coal, shale oil, iron, beans, millet, wheat and rice.²⁰ All of these are valuable to make machines, pay for them, provide fuel and raw material for them, or to feed the workers or farmers. The state farms in Manchuria are the most widely developed in Communist China. There are 20 major mechanized state farms here as compared with 10 in North China, three in East China and one in the Northwest.²¹

The fertile land which provides such agricultural wealth is also an attraction for farmers from less fertile or famine-stricken areas in other parts of China. Also, it is an area for the absorption of surplus population. One estimate of the population of Manchuria in 1929 was about 29 million.²² The 1964 estimate is 58 million, or a 100 percent increase over 1929.²³ It currently has a population density of 187 persons per square mile compared with the estimated density of 192 persons per square mile for all China.²⁴ While this

²⁰ See Chapter II.

²¹ A. Doak Barnett, Communist China, the Early Years, 1949-1955 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 184-185.

²² Henry W. Kinney, Manchuria Today (Osaka, Japan: Hanada Printing Co., 1930), pp. 20-21.

²³ Rand McNally Cosmopolitan World Atlas (Referred to hereafter as Rand McNally Atlas; New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1964), p. 164.

²⁴ Ibid.

population density may nearly equal the national average, it does not approach the densities of such areas as the eastern coastal regions or the North China Plain.²⁵

Despite the Soviet stripping of Manchurian industrial facilities immediately after World War II, Manchuria is apparently still considered China's main industrial base.²⁶ Coal production is being increased at Fushun and Fushin. Efforts have been made to restore Anshan, the "steel capital." Fushun's output of aluminum, shale oil, and heavy machinery was being expanded in 1955. Briefly, Barnett states that Manchuria will continue to be vital to China.²⁷

The value of the border area to the Chinese in terms of nationalism is less tangible than the economic value, but no less important. This has been one subject on which both

²⁵Based on the 1953 census of Communist China, Liaoning, most densely populated Manchurian province, had a population density of 136 persons per sq km (352 per sq mi); Shantung, in North China, had a population density of 219 persons per sq km (567 per sq mi); and Chekiang, a coastal province, had a population density of 271 persons per sq km (702 per sq mi). S. I. Bruk, Peoples of China, Mongolian People's Republic, and Korea (Explanatory notes to Map of Peoples; Moscow: Publishing House of Academy of Sciences, USSR, 1959), trans. under contract, U. S. Joint Publications Research Service, as JPRS 3710 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, Photoduplication Service, 16 Aug 1960) p. 8.

²⁶Albert C. Wedemeyer, Wedemeyer Reports (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1959), p. 347.

²⁷Barnett, p. 242.

the Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese Communists agree. A Republic of China (Nationalist) publication on frontiers traces acrimoniously the history of the whittling away of frontier territories by foreign powers, particularly Russia.²⁸ The Chinese Communists have indicated that they may call for an account of territory ceded to Russia during the development of the border.²⁹ The area to which the Chinese lay claim encompasses 1,500,000 square kilometers (over 500,000 square miles). Such statements or claims may portend serious developments if the present Chinese Communist government intends to follow the pattern of previous strong Chinese dynasties which, after attaining internal stability, have sought to extend their influence or reconquer territory previously dominated. Such future developments, however, cannot be surmised with accuracy.

Should the irredentist and nationalistic views of the Chinese Communists lead to conflict with the Soviet Union, Manchuria would have considerable positive strategic value. In addition to giving physical access to the Trans-Siberian Railway which lies close to the border, Manchuria provides a

²⁸Chang-chu Kao (ed), Pien-chiang yü Kuo-fang (Frontiers and National Defense; Taipei, Taiwan: Commission on Mongolia and Tibet, 1961), pp. 15-16.

²⁹See Chapter I of this thesis. Harry Schwartz, "Communist Split: As both Sides See It," New York Times, 14 Mar 1965.

salient from which it would be easy to isolate the USSR from its year-round ports on the Pacific--Vladivostok and Nakhodka, to say nothing of Posiet Bay near the scene of the Changkufeng Incident. Along the same lines, Manchuria could be used as a base from which to recover territory China considers rightfully Chinese. Taking the western land boundary as an example, should a drive to the northwest to the Trans-Siberian Railway and Lake Baikal be undertaken, a good route is available in the area. This portion of the border also outflanks Outer Mongolia and could be used as the route for a Chinese invasion of Outer Mongolia if such an invasion were felt necessary. The recent delimitation of the boundary between Communist China and Outer Mongolia, however, appears to render an invasion of Outer Mongolia unlikely in the near future.

The positive advantage of the salient is conversely a disadvantage--Manchuria is vulnerable to the same kind of offensives launched by the Soviet Union in 1945 from the east, north, and west toward the Manchurian Plain. The western land boundary zone in particular provides an easy route for speedy movement into the heart of the Manchurian Plain, especially if the four main routes over the Greater Khingan Range are not blocked (Map 17).

On the other side of the border, Outer Mongolia, with limited agricultural potential and an extremely sparse population, has location as its greatest asset. This location is significant with reference to the Trans-Siberian Railway and on the west flank of Manchuria. The Soviet Far East, however, is of considerable economic value to the Soviet Union. Soviet efforts to develop an industrial base have been continuing in recent years. With the coal, iron ore, and gold of Siberia and the Far East; the fertile Zeya-Bureya Plain, and the potential of the Ussuri-Khanka Lowlands; and the industrial development in the area since World War II, the region has considerable value to the Soviets. Rural population in the Soviet Far East registered a 70 per cent increase between 1939 and 1959.³⁰ In spite of this, the highest population density exclusive of cities in the area immediately surrounding Manchuria is one to twenty-five persons per square mile.³¹ By comparison with most of European Russia (25 to 125 persons per square mile) or with Manchuria (187 persons per square mile), the fertile areas of the Soviet Far East are still underpopulated and thus provide area for settlement. From

³⁰ Paul E. Lydolph, Geography of the U.S.S.R. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 274.

³¹ Ibid., Fig. 13-6, p. 272.

the viewpoint of Soviet nationalism, the recent activity mentioned in Chapter II, such as the building of the two thermal-electric power plants, indicates that the USSR probably has no intention of surrendering territory or slackening the development of Siberia or the Far East. With reference to Soviet intentions to stay in the Far East, there is another indication of Soviet opposition to any Communist Chinese demand for the return of such territories. The Soviet rejoinder in Pravda to Mao Tse-tung's previously cited statement on the lost territory was:

Do those who question the Soviet Union's possession of a territory of more than 1,500,000 square kilometers, think how these claims will be taken by Soviet people who have been living and working on this land for several generations and consider it their homeland?³²

The positive strategic value to Russia of having a friendly but weak Manchuria or a Manchuria in the possession of a friendly or weak China can be compared with one version of the reason for continued Soviet influence in Outer Mongolia. This version of Outer Mongolia's position is that it belonged strategically to a chain of strong points from the Kuriles to Outer Mongolia by which the USSR wanted to guard its Far Eastern territory and to neutralize as far as possible the

³²

South China Morning Post (Hongkong), 10 Sep 64, p. 10.

presence of American power in Japan, Korea and China.³³ Although the United States had some forces in China at the time of this comment, it is an example of the Soviet desire for a friendly buffer zone between it and other major powers. A friendly or weak China or Manchuria would definitely make Russia feel more secure regarding the Trans-Siberian Railway and Far Eastern Russia. Between 1950 and 1953, a friendly Manchuria in the hands of Communist China provided an easy and secure land route from Russia into the territory of its satellite, North Korea. Had Manchuria been anti-communist at the time, in view of the United Nations' command of the sea and air, Soviet support of North Korea would have been more difficult.

From the negative viewpoint to the Soviets of the strategic significance of the border, its very location makes the Trans-Siberian Railway vulnerable, although this is true to a lesser degree along the western land boundary. In the line of speed and convenience, there is the potential shortcut for the Trans-Siberian Railway through Manchuria,

³³ John C. Campbell, *The United States in World Affairs, 1945-1947*, (New York: 1947), p. 248, quoted in Gerard M. Friters, *The International Position of Outer Mongolia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), p. 150. There has been no U. S. representation on the mainland of China since 1949.

which depends on the attitude of the power which holds Manchuria.³⁴ As previously discussed, when Japan seized Manchuria, the USSR was forced to sell this shortcut route to Japan. Manchuria's proximity also provides a threat to the Soviet airfields in the area. An example of the consequences of such vulnerability occurred in the case of the Japanese air raid on the Tamsag Bulag airfield in Outer Mongolia during the Nomonhan conflict. While Manchuria is surrounded on three sides by Outer Mongolia and the Soviet Far East, Outer Mongolia, Russia's satellite, in turn has Manchuria, Chinese Inner Mongolia, and Sinkiang on its east, south, and west.³⁵ In addition to this, China's possession of Manchuria denies the USSR the possession of an ice-free port on the Pacific, since both Vladivostok and Nakhodka have to be kept open by use of icebreakers during the winter months. Russia's action in the nineteenth century had given her an ice-free port--Port Arthur, which she lost after the Russo-Japanese War. From 1945 to 1949, she regained it partially

³⁴ The shortcut involves entering Manchuria via the rail center of Manchouli in northwest Manchuria and moving south-eastward along the railway and recrossing the border at Suifenho. Also see Map 18.

³⁵ Inner Mongolia, as discussed here, excludes that (northern) part of the present Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region (IMAR) which this thesis treats as part of Manchuria.

by the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 14 August 1945, which specified that it be operated as a joint naval base.³⁶ It was given up again by the Soviet Union after the Chinese Communist victory in China.

Third Question: ("Is the frontier suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent?")

The history of the western land boundary area leaves little doubt as to its suitability for military operations. The Nomonhan conflict of 1939 involved forces exceeding division-size. The lowest estimates for the Japanese forces committed during the biggest battle (23-26 August 1939) cite 13 infantry battalions (under one division headquarters), 112 field and antitank guns, and about 70 tanks.³⁷ The Soviet Army figures for 20 August 1939 show the Soviet and Outer Mongolian strength as 35 infantry battalions, 20 cavalry

³⁶ William L. Langer, ed., An Encyclopedia of World History (Rev. ed.,; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), p. 1215.

³⁷ J.S.M., Vol. XI, "Small Wars and Border Problems," Part 3, Book B, "The Nomonhan Incident," (5 Sep 1956), p. 262. J.S.M., Vol. XI "Small Wars and Border Problems," Part 3, Book C, "The Nomonhan Incident (Conclusion)," (5 Nov 1956), p. 387, Map No. 23, shows eight Japanese or Manchukuo regiment-sized units including two cavalry regiments or groups. Saburo Hayashi and Alvin D. Coox, Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War (Quantico: Marine Corps Association, 1959), p. 14, estimate the numerical strength of the 23rd Division (reinforced) as 15,140 men.

squadrons, 498 tanks, and 502 guns of all types.³⁸ The Soviet account identified the First Army Corps, consisting of two Outer Mongolian cavalry divisions, three Soviet infantry divisions, two Soviet armored brigades, and one Soviet infantry brigade.³⁹ Both sides also had air and artillery support. From this it can be readily seen that, under modern conditions, the area is suitable for at least division and corps-size operations.

The western land boundary lies across a strategic approach into Manchuria's hinterland which is rich in natural resources and possessed high industrial potential. Conversely, it is the gateway out of Manchuria into Soviet Eastern Siberia and the Soviet Far East. The boundary has been unstable and has not functioned well as a limiting line or as a military barrier. Should conflict arise, this border, as proved by the Nomonhan incident during the Japanese occupation and by the swift-moving Soviet offensives of 1945, would be suitable for mechanized operations of corps and division size.

³⁸ S. N. Shishkin, Colonel, Soviet Army, Khalkhin-Gol (Moscow: Military Publishing House, Ministry of Defense, 1954), Table 3, trans. and quoted in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 3, Book C, p. 394, Table 22.

³⁹ Ibid., Appendix H, p. 600.

The River Boundary

The river boundary is formed by four rivers--the Argun in the northwest, the Amur in the north and northeast, and the Ussuri and Sungacha in the east. This physical boundary evolved through four Sino-Russian agreements--the Treaty of Nerchinsk, of 1689, the Treaty of Aigun of 1858, the Peking Convention of 1860, and the Lake Hanka Border Pact of 1861. Although the Argun and Sungacha Rivers do not match the Amur and Ussuri in size, the river boundary is too wide and deep to be mistaken for anything but a limiting line. This boundary, consisting mostly of unfordable rivers, presents an effective military barrier. In the north, the Amur River obstacle is backed up by the Lesser Khingan Range on the Chinese side. In the northwest, the Argun River is backed up at a greater distance by the Greater Khingan Range. In the northeast, particularly along the Ussuri River, the marshes add to the obstacle value of the river.

First Question: ("Is the area on both sides of the border a cause of conflict or susceptible to incidents which may lead to armed conflict?")

The railroad to Heiho on the Manchurian side (opposite Blagoveshchensk) from Tsitsihar (Tsitsikar) follows the Nenchiang (Nonni or Nen River) valley. Another route to Heiho from Harbin by way of Peian follows one of the northern

tributaries of the Sungari River.⁴⁰ These lines link up with the Trans-Siberian Railway through Blagoveshchensk and the spur linking Blagoveshchensk to the Trans-Siberian. On the Soviet side, the Trans-Siberian Railway is the line of communication to Soviet provinces east of the Ussuri River. The Trans-Siberian Railway, being only 50 to 100 kilometers from the border, impelled the Soviet Union to start work on a railway--the Baikal-Amur or BAM line. This line branches off the Trans-Siberian at Taishet, east of Krasnoyarsk. It then passes north of Lake Baikal about 200 kilometers north of the Trans-Siberian, and goes on to Komsomolsk and Sovetskaya Gavan on the Sea of Japan. The construction of this railroad was abandoned (after 1941) once the Soviet Union confirmed that Japan could not attack north. Only the stretch from

40

None of the Chinese maps or atlases available (See Bibliography) shows the railroads reaching Heiho or Aihun except for the Tsui-hsin Chung-kuo Fen-sheng Ti-tu (Latest Provincial Atlas of China; Hongkong: Ta Chung Book Co., n.d.). David J. Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 40; J.M. 155, Map 1 opposite p. 173; and J.M. 155, pp. 173-174, show and mention the railroads as reaching Heiho or Aihun. Edgar Snow, The Other Side of the River: Red China Today (New York: Random House, 1961), map inside cover shows these railroads as under construction or planned.

Komsomolsk to Sovetskaya Gavan in the east was completed in 1945.⁴¹ Further Sino-Soviet tension may indicate a need to complete this alternate railroad to the Trans-Siberian Railway.

During the period that Japan occupied Manchuria, the Japanese planned and constructed fortifications on the Amur positioned to block expected thrusts down the axes following the Nenchiang and Sungari Rivers.⁴² The Soviet Union constructed the same type of defenses on the other side of the river. The earliest fortifications built were the posts or ostrogs constructed along the Amur when Russia began to expand eastward in the nineteenth century. The purpose of these outposts was to protect Russian interests and personnel in the area.

Major incidents in this area occurred between the Russians and Chinese early in 1900, as a side-issue of the Boxer Rebellion; specifically, when Russian troops seized Aihun (Aigun) as part of a four-pronged invasion to occupy Manchuria (Chapter III). As part of the same invasion, the Russians seized Sanhsing on the Sungari River between

⁴¹ Letter from Prof. John A. Morrison, University of Pittsburgh, 14 Mar 1965. Prof. Morrison also mentioned seeing an article by an Irkutsk planner urging completion of the line for economic reasons. Also see Lydolph, p. 252.

⁴² J.M. 138, Map 2, opposite p. 110.

Chiamussu and Fangcheng (Maps 3 and 5). The Heihsiatzu, Kanchatzu, and Kuangfeng Island incidents which occurred during the Japanese occupation related to navigation rights and the denial thereof, or stemmed from the desire to limit close observation of one or the other side's activities. The ownership of these islands is still in dispute.⁴³ The only significant incident departing from this pattern was the Mongoshile incident. Japanese offensive plans for this area included crossing in the vicinity of Heiho (Aigun) to interdict the Trans-Siberian Railway, and cut off the enemy retreat from Voroshilov (Ussurisk) in the south.⁴⁴ The Japanese also felt that the Soviet Union, to defend its exposed railway, would have to take the offensive in this area to seize at least a line running through Peian and Nencheng. When it materialized, the Soviet offensive involved three major crossings southeast of Blagoveshchensk--at Aihun, Shengwutun, and Chiko (Map 15). The drive was directed down the railway and road axis from Aihun to Erhchan to Nencheng and on to Tsitsihar.⁴⁵ Smaller forces were committed, an

⁴³ New York Times, 26 Feb 1961, p. 20.

⁴⁴ J.S.M., Vol. I, "Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR" (Mar 1955), p. 103. J.M. 138, Chart 4b following p. 49.

⁴⁵ J.M. 155, p. 183 and Map 2 opposite p. 179.

estimated three infantry divisions and two mechanized brigades, as compared to about 14 divisions on the eastern border. Here also, the rate of progress was not so great--about 35 miles (56 kilometers) in 6 days (9-15 August 1945).⁴⁶ Another Soviet drive directed down the Sungari River Valley covered about 200 miles (322 kilometers) from 9 to 15 August, reaching a point between Chiamussu and Fangcheng.⁴⁷ This route coincided with that taken by one Russian force in 1900.

Second Question: ("Is the area involved of sufficient value to the nations on either side to impel them toward large-scale military operations?")

The positive strategic value of the location of this border to the Chinese is that it is no more than 44 miles (70 kilometers) from the Trans-Siberian Railway for about 1200 miles of its length. From the eastern tip of the Island of Heihsiatzu it is less than 10 kilometers (6 miles) to the Trans-Siberian Railway. This positive value is in turn negative to the USSR.

⁴⁶ The average rate of advance from the east was about 20 miles (32 km) per day. J.M. 154, Map 1, following p. 19.

⁴⁷ J.M. 154, pp. 61, 70. This has also been described as the main effort of Purkayev's 2d Far Eastern Army Group (Alvin D. Coox, Soviet Armor in Action Against the Japanese Kwantung Army, Manchuria, Aug 1945, Technical Memorandum ORO-T-38 (FEC) (Headquarters, Far East Command: Operations Research Office, Johns Hopkins University, 25 Dec 1952), p. 27).

The positive value of the boundary to the Soviet Union is that two reasonably good approaches to it and the Manchurian Plain beyond are available. There is the approach from the Zeya-Bureya Plain to the Amur, in the Blagoveshchensk-Heiho-Aihun area; and beyond it, on the Chinese side, the Lesser Khingan Range is narrower and less rugged. To the east, once the Amur is crossed, the Sungari River valley provides a good avenue of approach directly into the Manchurian Plain. The latter approach has been used for operations by significant forces at least three times: in the Russian offensive of 1900 (Chapter III); the Sino-Soviet undeclared war of 1929 (Chapter III); and the Soviet offensive against the Japanese Kwantung Army in 1945.

Third Question: ("Is the frontier suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent?")

To provide historic examples to determine the suitability of the river boundary area for military operations, perhaps the earliest major Sino-Russian clash in the area was the siege of the ostrog of Albazin by the Manchus in the spring of 1655. According to Semyonov, 10,000 men, with 15 cannon, besieged the ostrog, which was defended by 500 cossacks.⁴⁸ The Soviet operation across this boundary in 1945

⁴⁸ Yuri Nikolaevich Semyonov, Siberia; its Conquest and Development, trans. J. R. Foster (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1963), p. 101.

involved corps-sized offensives, which did not achieve the speed or success of those across the two land boundaries of Manchuria.

Although the repeated use of the same axes of advance for offensives directed at the heart of Manchuria may be misleading, the river boundary has performed its function well. The peacetime incidents have been comparatively insignificant and concerned more with the use of the river than any ulterior motives. There have been no border incidents or clashes to approach those of Nomonhan or Changkufeng. When hostilities have broken out, the invasion axes used so consistently have been limited to comparatively small areas --the Sungari River valley and the crossing in the Blagoveshchensk-Heiho-Aihun area.

The river boundary has, since its establishment, functioned effectively as an easily distinguished limiting line. Its value as a military barrier has been increased by the added obstacle presented by mountain ranges along most of its length as well as marshes along the river where the banks are low. The strategic value as a salient of the land enclosed by the river has been vitiated by those features. Incidents have been comparatively minor, and, while the boundary is suitable for large-scale military operations,

major river crossings and operations in marshlands may be necessary. This may limit the value of the area as an invasion route.

The Southeastern Land Boundary

The last section of the boundary to be examined is the geometric and compound southeastern land boundary which starts at the northwest corner of Lake Hanka and ends at the Korean border. This border was established by the Peking Convention executed with Russia in 1860 as recompense for the Russian Ambassador's saving the Chinese capital from bombardment by the allied armies. Being geometric and a land boundary, this section of the border, like the western boundary, has had to rely on terrain features and markers for identification. Thus it has the same handicaps as does the western land boundary despite the advantage of having been delimited earlier.

First Question: ("Is the area on both sides of the border a cause of conflict or susceptible to incidents which may lead to armed conflict?")

The value placed on the border or its hinterland by both the Japanese and the Soviets can be judged by the fortification effort. According to Hayashi and Coox, the Soviet forces began to erect pillboxes along the frontier in the summer of 1933.⁴⁹ The Japanese followed suit in 1935,

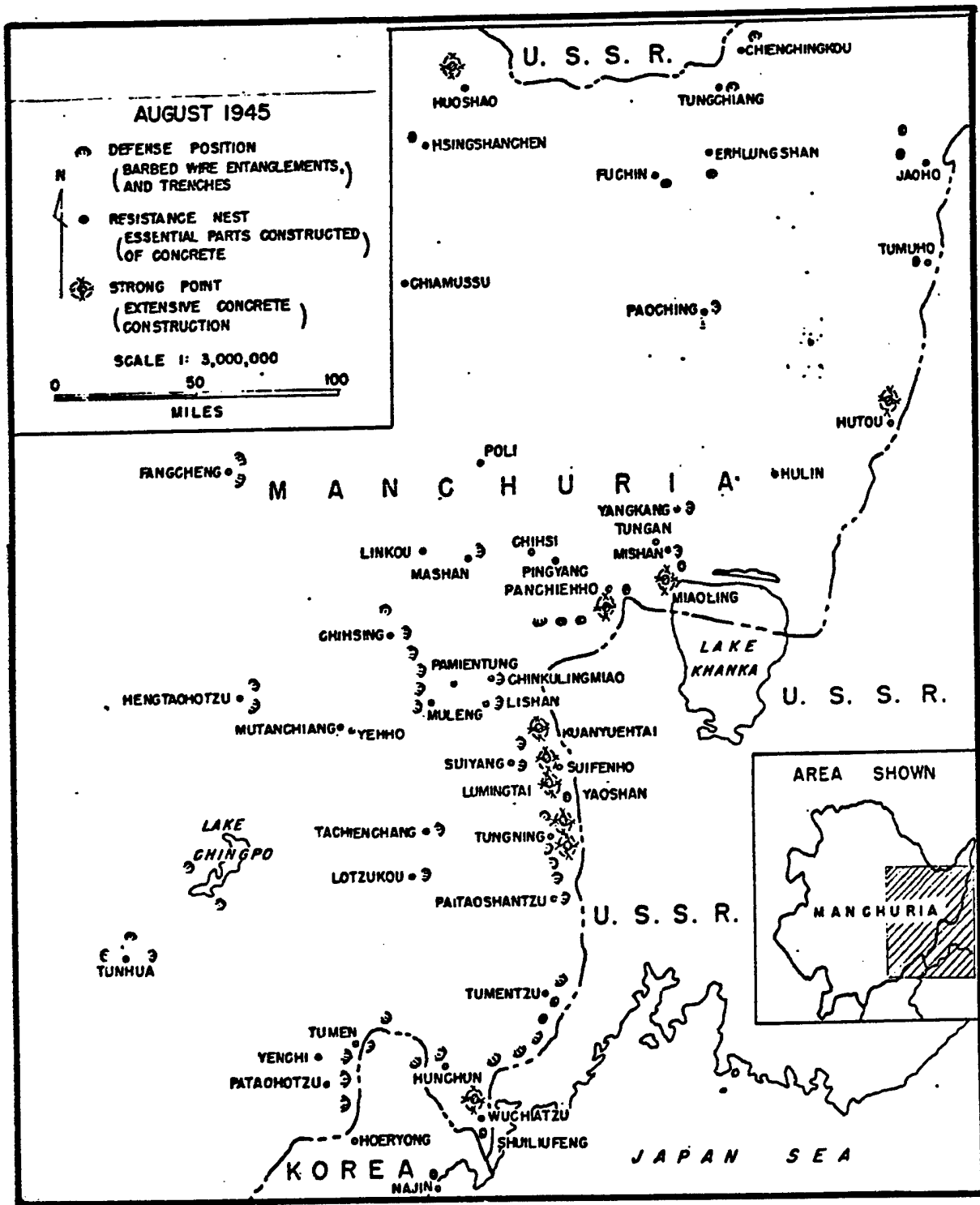
⁴⁹ Hayashi and Coox, p. 7.

building two major fortified areas totalling over 165 kilometers in length. The belts and positions of these areas extended from the vicinity of Hunchun north to the Tungan and Hutou areas (Map 19).⁵⁰

A lateral railroad was available to the west of the area from Tumen in the south to Hutou in the north as well as back to Changchun and Harbin in the west. The railway route to Harbin was originally part of the Soviet-operated Chinese-Eastern Railway (C.E.R.), originally a shortcut for the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Soviet interest in the C.E.R. had been sold to Japan's puppet Manchukuo in 1935. After this the portion of the railroad beyond Suifenhao and up to the Soviet-Manchurian border was taken up by the Japanese, while the portion beyond the Soviet-Manchurian border was not. On the Soviet side, the Trans-Siberian railroad runs within 50 kilometers (32 miles) of the border. An idea of the value the USSR placed on the railroad can be deduced by the indignant reply printed in Izvestiya in 1935 when the Japanese proposed establishment of a border buffer zone by withdrawing all troops a specified distance from the border.⁵¹

⁵⁰J.M. 154, p. 29

⁵¹Izvestiya, 18 June 1936, quoted in Dallin, Soviet Russia and the Far East, p. 23, and described as probably written by Maxim Litvinov, then Foreign Minister of the USSR.



Map 19.--Japanese fortifications along southeastern land boundary and eastern portion of river boundary (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia, Eastern Front (August 1945), Japanese Monograph No. 154 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 6 April 1954), Sketch 2, opposite p. 29).

Behind our line of defense there runs a railroad, which in many places is less than 50 kilometers from the border. . . The Japanese military suggest to us the annihilation of our line of defense. Why don't the Japanese generals demand, as proof of our sincerity, that we build them a route of approach to our truck line?

One part of the Russian invasion of 1900, the seizure of Hunchun and Ningkut'a, took place in this southeastern area.⁵² The Changlingtzu Incident of 1936 and the Changkufeng conflict of 1938 also occurred here.⁵³ A relatively minor incident occurred at Wuchiatzu near Hunchun in July 1944, when Soviet troops removed Japanese barbed wire entanglements and fired on Japanese troops attempting to replace them.⁵⁴ Japanese offensive plans developed in 1944 contemplated drives southeastward from the vicinity of Tungning toward Vladivostok.⁵⁵

The Soviet offensive in this area in 1945 was a major thrust to the west through Tungning and Suifenhao in the direction of Mutanchiang and Changchun. About ten Soviet divisions penetrated in the area immediately south and west of Lake Hanka as compared with about three divisions spread

⁵² Chapter III. Schwartz, p. 73.

⁵³ Chapter IV.

⁵⁴ J.M. 138, pp. 82-84.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Chart 4-b, following page 49.

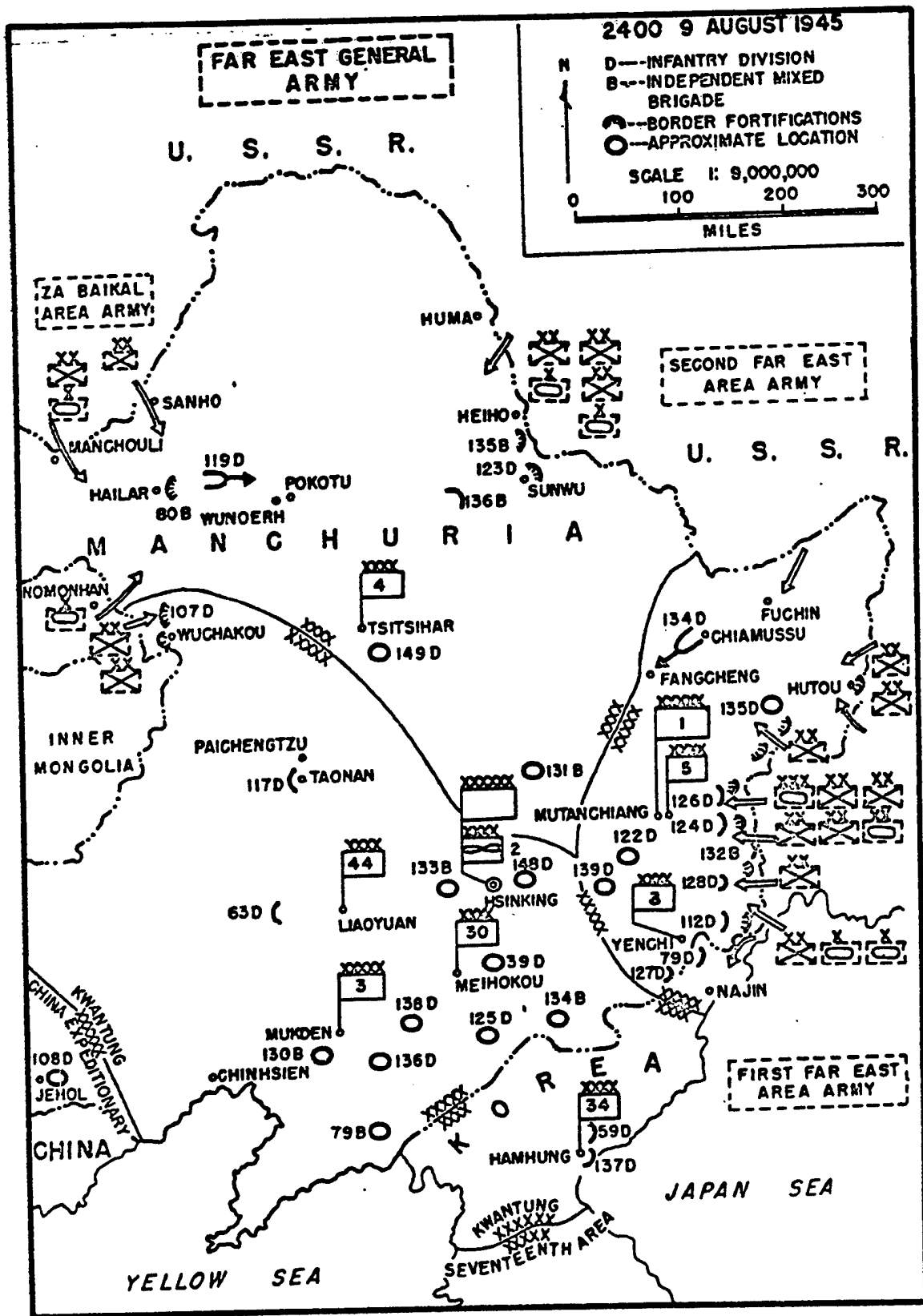
over the entire remaining area of the eastern boundary (Map 20). A portion of the forces turned south into Korea after crossing the border in the vicinity of the scene of the Wuchiatzu incident.⁵⁶ This Soviet attack was nearly a reverse in direction of the attack the Japanese had planned to execute.

Second Question: ("Is the area involved of sufficient value to the nations on either side to impel them toward large-scale military operations?")

Looking eastward from Manchuria the significance of the southeastern land boundary appears to be based on three points. The first is access to the Trans-Siberian Railway --the Soviet Union's lifeline to the landward side of its Far Eastern ports. The second is access to the cities and such ports as Ussurisk (Voroshilov), Vladivostok, and Nakhodka. The third is that the mere occupation of such a strategic hill as Changkufeng would permit the occupier to dominate Posiet Bay. In the event of war, the proximity of these areas to the Manchurian border might, as in the case of the motives imputed to the Soviet Union by the Japanese with reference to the Aihun area, cause the Soviet Union to take the offensive to secure its ports, railway, and Posiet Bay.

Looking westward across the southeastern land boundary

⁵⁶J.M. 154, p. 60. Also see Chapter IV of this thesis.



Map 20.--Japanese and Soviet operations, 9 August 1945 (Headquarters, U. S. Army Forces, Far East, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia, Eastern Front (August 1945), Japanese Monograph No. 154 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 6 Apr 1954), Map 2).

from the Soviet Far East's coastal region, there are three reasons why offensive routes across this boundary would be important. The first is that the routes would provide easy access to the Tungning-Mutanchiang or Suifenhö-Mutanchiang routes leading to Harbin or Changchun. The second reason is that access would be gained to the fertile, well-settled southern portion of the Manchurian Plain. The third reason is that access would also be gained to the warm-water ports of Port Arthur and Ta-lien (Dairen) on the Liaotung Peninsula. An advantage to invasion routes south and west of Lake Hanka is that they all avoid major river crossings at the border.

Third Question: ("Is the frontier suitable for military operations, and if so, to what extent?")

The strategic nature of the southeastern land frontier and its hinterland, have made both the scene of several major military operations. Both the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 involved hundreds of thousands of men organized into corps and armies, and were fought in Liaoning Province about 460 kilometers (224 miles) southwest of the southeastern land boundary.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ J.S.M., Vol. II, "Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria, 1894-1945" (8 Jul 1959), pp. 4-6. W. D. Bird, Lectures on the Strategy of the Russo-Japanese War (London: Hugh Rees, Ltd., 1909), pp. 98, 100.

During the Japanese occupation, the Changkufeng incident of July and August 1938 involved division-size forces on both the Soviet and Japanese sides. The Japanese had committed 12 infantry battalions with an estimated 8,000 infantry and 1,000 artillery troops, while Japanese intelligence estimated that the Soviets committed a total of nine infantry regiments and supporting troops, or about 30,000 men.⁵⁸

Figures quoted from the Red Army General Staff's Journal of Battle Actions for 31 August 1938 for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (I.M.T.F.E. or "Far East War Crimes Trials") identified as committed one company of the 118th Rifle Regiment, with attached tanks, operating from the direction of Podgornaya, and "(?) battalions, 119th Rifle Regiment, with tank company (occupying Hill 68.8)."⁵⁹

The commander of the Soviet border guard unit in the area testified as having under his operational control in the locale of the fighting, as of 31 July 1938, 92 border guards, one Soviet Army infantry company and a platoon of three tanks

⁵⁸ J.S.M., Vol. XI, "Small Wars and Border Problems," Part 3, Book A, "The Changkufeng Incident," (9 July 1956), pp. 28, 30.

⁵⁹ I.M.T.F.E., Transcript, 15 Oct 1946, pp. 7814-7815, cited in J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 3, Book A, pp. 29-30.

which arrived with the rifle company.⁶⁰ Taken by themselves, the Soviet figures indicate that about one regiment was committed. It should be remembered, however, that the fighting did not cease until 11 August, and that reinforcements probably arrived later. Assuming that the answer regarding Soviet strength is somewhere between the Japanese and Soviet figures, it would indicate that the Changkufeng conflict was a division-sized operation.

The southeastern land boundary, although ostensibly settled since the Chinese Communist take-over, has historically functioned poorly. This is related both to its nature as a geometric and complex land boundary and to its strategic location. It is located the farthest south of any of the three sections of the border discussed, which gives it easy access to the most sensitive hinterlands on both sides of the border. The Hunchun and Tungning areas might be isolated as the most incident-prone, but incidents of a significant nature have occurred at different localities all along this section of the border. A greater concentration of significant incidents and conflicts has occurred in the Hunchun-Changkufeng-Wuchiatzu-Changlingtzu area in the south.

⁶⁰ I.M.T.F.E., Transcript, 26 Jan 1948, pp. 284-318, cited in J.S.M. Vol. XI, Part 3, Book A, p. 29.

The southeastern land boundary was the best-fortified section of the border on the Japanese side during the Japanese occupation, and also had the greatest number of Soviet divisions committed across it in 1945.

Summary

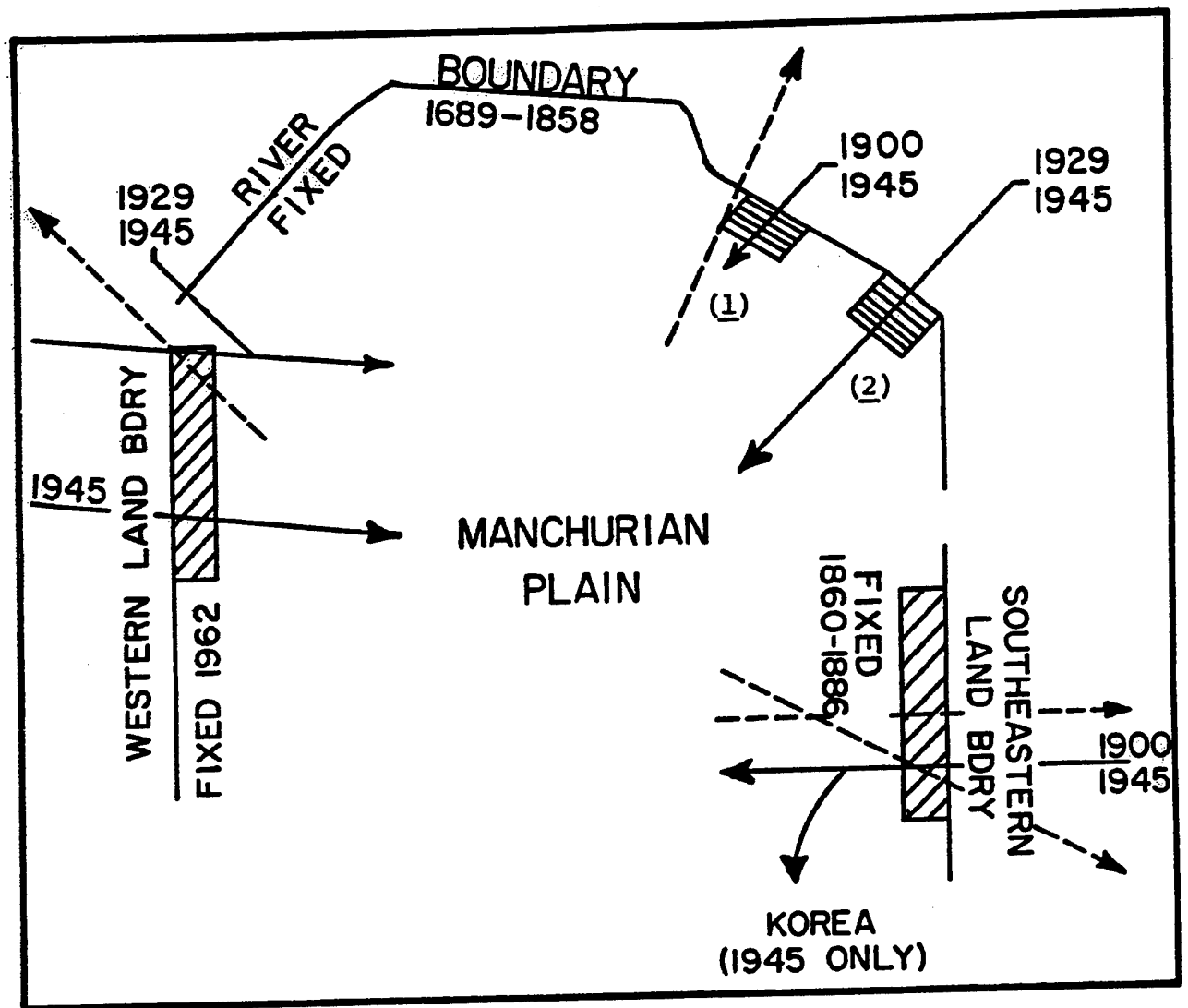
Since 1945, the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East has been ostensibly settled with the exception of minor differences between Soviet and Chinese Communist maps. These differences have mainly involved possession of river islands. For the first time in China's history the border with Outer Mongolia was completely delimited. Since 1963, however, the increased Communist Chinese stridency over territory previously given up by China in "unequal treaties," indicates that there may still be disagreement over borders. Whether from economic, nationalistic, or strategic viewpoints, neither Communist China nor the Soviet Union feels that it can or should give up any of the territory it now holds. All three of the sections of the border--the western land boundary, the river boundary, and the southeastern land boundary--have proved to be susceptible to incidents and conflicts. The least incident-prone section of the border is the river boundary. It has functioned well and its peacetime incidents have been limited to disputes over

the possession of islets and navigation rights. Two general areas along the river boundary can be viewed as the most incident-prone. They have also provided routes repeatedly used for invasions of Manchuria (Fig. 1). The first of these areas extends northwest and southeast of Blagoveshchensk and Aihun (1). The second area extends from the confluence of the Sungari and Amur Rivers to the confluence of the Ussuri and Amur Rivers (2). Although these routes have been used twice in the first half of the twentieth century, their use stems from the fact that they have good approaches from the Soviet side and provide good avenues of approach leading to the Manchurian Plain on the Chinese side.

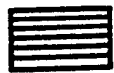
The western boundary has proved incident-prone, with the bloodiest conflict in the area before World War II being fought at Nomonhan. Nomonhan was also on the route of one of the Soviet offensives at the end of World War II. The Manchouli area has proved incident-prone, besides being a major invasion route twice in 16 years.

The southeastern land boundary has also shown itself to be incident-prone, with the two main areas being the Hunchun area and the area extending from Tungning northward.

All three boundary areas as well as most of the Manchurian hinterland have been proved historically to be suitable for



Major incidents



Minor incidents



Actual Russian or Soviet offensives



Planned Japanese offensives

Fig. 1.--Schematic showing relation between locations of border incidents, planned Japanese offensives, and actual Russian offensives.

division, corps, or larger unit operations. The western land boundary zone has proved particularly suitable for large-scale mechanized operations.

Figure 1 summarizes schematically the incident-prone areas of the three sections of the border and depicts planned and actual offensives and invasion routes used.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

With reference to the military significance of the Sino-Soviet Border in the Far East, this thesis has illustrated three points. The first is that the frontier and its hinterlands on both sides are regarded by Communist China and the Soviet Union as being of sufficient value to warrant armed conflict. The second point is that, should conflict arise, the area is suitable for operations by divisions, corps, or larger units. The third point is that the border has been and can be a cause for armed conflict; the area is susceptible to incidents or clashes which could lead to armed conflict. In connection with this point, six areas have been isolated as susceptible to significant incidents or conflicts, and may prove to be the trouble-spots to watch should future border clashes prove likely. Two of these areas lie along the river boundary, one along the Amur River generally from Huma in the northwest to Chiko, southeast of Blagoveshchensk, and the other between the confluences of the Amur River and the Sungari and Ussuri Rivers. Although these two areas have been the sites of major river crossings of the Amur, and

thrusts at or into the vitals of Manchuria, such major thrusts have occurred only during wartime or in periods of undeclared war. The main reason for the repeated use of these areas as invasion routes has been that they have good approaches from the Soviet side and good routes into the heart of Manchuria on the Chinese side. The actual peacetime functioning of the river boundary has been excellent--all incidents have been minor ones.

The remaining four incident-prone areas lie along the two land boundaries. From a theoretical standpoint, these two boundaries have features in common which make them incident-prone. The land boundaries are geometric, complex, and depend on man-made markers rather than physical features as limiting lines. They provide no real obstacle to border-crossings, and have discharged their functions poorly in the past.

Along the western land boundary, the two incident-prone areas are in the vicinity of Manchouli, on the strategic route into Manchuria from the northwest, and in the vicinity of Nomonhan, where the route generally parallels the route through Manchouli.

On the southeastern land boundary, one incident-prone area extends from Tungning northward, and the other is in the

area around Hunchun. Although this portion of the border was fixed by 1861, it has functioned poorly through the years. The Hunchun area was an invasion route in 1900 and 1945. The proximity and sensitive nature of the hinterlands on both sides of the southeastern land boundary made it extremely susceptible to major incidents. It was also the locale of a major Soviet offensive in 1929.

Should clashes again flare up along the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East, the most likely portions of the border at which incidents could occur are, from the historical point of view, along the western and southeastern land boundaries. Should such clashes or other disputes lead to all-out hostilities, major battles are likely to occur in the vicinity of all six of the trouble-spots cited.

APPENDIX

AGREEMENTS PERTAINING TO THE BORDER

Title, Date & Parties	Provisions	References*
Treaty of Nerchinsk 27 Aug 1689 China & Russia	Sino-Russian boundary to be Argun and Gorbitza Rivers, Outer Khingan Mts., i.e., along Yablonovoi and Stanovoi Mts. Boundary through Ud Valley undecided. Russian posts on Amur to be destroyed. China gave up about 93,000 sq. miles of territory.	Jackson, pp. 111-112 Schwartz, p. 36.
Treaty of Kyakhta 21 Oct 1727 China & Russia	Sino-Russian boundary fixed between Siberia and Outer Mongolia Boundary to run from Shaban-Dabeg Pass in Sayan Mountains in the west to Argun River in the east. Russia recognized China's sovereignty over Mongolia. Line of 63 stone markers from Kyakhta to Abagaytuy resulted from this treaty. China ceded about 40,000 sq. miles of territory between upper Irtysh and the Sayan Mountains	Jackson p. 112. Schwartz, p. 41. J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 31, and Map 6.
Treaty of Aigun (Aihun) 28 May 1858 China & Russia	Area to north of Amur River to be Russian. Area to south of Amur River to be Chinese. Navigation on Amur restricted to China and Russia. China surrendered about 185,000 sq. miles of territory	Jackson, p. 113. Draft Ch'ing History, p. 561. Schwartz, p. 52.

*All references are listed in Bibliography.

APPENDIX -- Continued

Title, Date & Parties	Provisions	References
Peking Convention (Treaty of Peking) 14 Nov 1860 China & Russia	Area to east of Ussuri River to be Russian. Area to west of Ussuri to be Chinese. Eastern border along Ussuri and Sungacha Rivers, north end of Lake Hanka, and line of hills to Tumen River. Delegations to demarcate border later. China ceded 133,500 sq. miles of territory to Russia.	Jackson, pp. 113-114. Schwartz, p. 54. Treaties between Russia and China 1682-1881, pp. 174-187.
Lake Hanka Border Pact 1861 China & Russia	Demarcated border delimited by Peking Convention.	J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 19. Draft Ch'ing History, p. 561.
Hunchun Border Pact 3 Jun 1886 China & Russia	Redemarcated that portion of border demarcated by Lake Hanka Border Pact. Certifies refurbishing, adding, replacement, and plotting of positions of markers.	J.S.M., Vol. XI, Part 3, Book A, App. B, pp. 133-137. Draft Ch'ing History p. 563.
Russo-Chinese-Mongolian Tripartite Agreement 7 Jun 1915 China, Outer Mongolia & Russia	Chinese suzerainty over Outer Mongolia recognized. No international treaties of political or territorial nature to be concluded by Mongolia. Outer Mongolia to comprise regions under jurisdiction of Chinese Amban at Urga, Tartar-General at Uliassutai, and Chinese Amban at Kobdo. Formal delimitation within two years by delegates from all three parties.	Dallin, <u>Rise of Russia in Asia</u>, p. 132. Jackson, pp. 114-115.

APPENDIX -- Continued

Title, Date & Parties	Provisions	References
Agreement Concerning Hulunbuir (Barga) 6 Nov 1915 China & Russia	Hulunbuir region separated from Outer Mongolia and transformed into special province under Chinese administration.	Pavlovsky, p. 65. Young, p. 157, n. 50.
Agreement on General Principles for the Settlement of Questions Between the Republic of China and the USSR 31 May 1924 China & USSR	Supersedes previous agreements. Boundaries to be redemarcated in one month. Existing boundaries maintained pending redemarcation. USSR recognized Chinese sovereignty over Outer Mongolia. USSR to withdraw troops from Outer Mongolia.	Young, pp. 283-285.
Agreement Between Government of Autonomous Three Eastern Provinces of the Republic of China and the Government of the USSR 20 Sep 1924 USSR & representatives of Manchurian warlord	To redemarcate boundaries and to maintain current boundaries pending redemarcation.	Young, pp. 295, 299.
Khabarovsk Protocol Dec 1929 China (Manchuria) & USSR	Ended Sino-Soviet undeclared war of 1929. Restored status quo ante of Soviet-controlled Chinese-Eastern Railway.	Schwartz, p. 111.

APPENDIX -- Continued

Title, Date & Parties	Provisions	References
Agreement concerning Navigation Procedure on Border Rivers 2 Jan 1951 Communist China & USSR	Establishes conditions for navigation on Amur, Ussuri and Sungacha Rivers and Lake Hanka.	Slusser and Triska, p. 279.
Agreement Concerning Regime of Commercial Navigation on Border Waterways and Tributaries, Streams and Lakes 21 Dec 1957 Communist China & USSR	Navigation on the Amur River and its tributaries.	Slusser and Triska, p. 471. Schwartz p. 163.
Boundary Treaty Between the Chinese People's Republic and the Mongolian People's Republic 26 Dec 1962 Communist China & MPR	China-MPR boundary delimited in detail. Boundary generally follows Numergen and Halha Rivers, passes through Nomonhan-Burdobo, returns to Halha River, follows Halha to Buir Nor, crosses Buir Nor near north shore. Supersedes all previous agreements relating to this border.	Jen-min Jih-pao 26 Mar 1963

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Map 3.--Northeastern Asia, Scale 1:5,000,000
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