

## From New Delhi by Paul Zykofsky

### Chinese offers fall on deaf ears

*Peking is willing to give up some of the land it captured in 1962, while retaining strategic territory.*

**P**eking's efforts to woo India have failed to make a dent in the profound distrust and caution with which China is viewed in New Delhi. While Western press accounts have made much ado about the possibility of a Sino-Indian rapprochement, the mood in Delhi is decidedly less optimistic.

The Chinese gambit came in the form of a series of proposals to settle the outstanding border dispute which has been the leading issue of Sino-Indian contention since the early 1960s and the 1962 Sino-Indian War.

With the Chinese still holding a significant chunk of strategic territory in Kashmir and the northeast border region, the Indian government has consistently called for a settlement of this problem before any serious normalization of relations can take place.

Former Ambassador to China K.R. Narayanan summed up the feeling in Delhi in response to the Chinese "offers" at a recent public meeting here. The Chinese are experts at the "East Asian specialty of making very nice looking packages," he said. But when the package is undone, "there may be something there but not what you expected."

The intensification of high-level contacts between the United States, China and Britain has been carefully watched here, including the Carter-Hua meeting in Tokyo and the visit of the British naval chief to

Peking for talks with Chinese military leaders. Also noted was the itinerary of the British admiral after his Peking visit—stops in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The Chinese influence in Bangladesh and Pakistan is one major factor in Indian calculations on their policy toward Peking. The feeling in some circles is that the Chinese are carefully trying to "draw a net" around India.

These observations are given substance by the widely known role of China and Bangladesh in aiding tribal separatist movements in India's sensitive northeast region. One interpretation of this approach was given by Narayanan, who wondered whether China, like some other big powers, is viewing the Indian subcontinent as a "divisible" entity.

Within this context, the facts surrounding China's border offer have raised some skepticism here. It was only one or two days prior to the June arrival in Peking of Indian Foreign Secretary Eric Gonsalves for a preliminary round of talks that Chinese Vice Premier Deng Hsiaoping presented what was portrayed as a "new" major offer to resolve the outstanding border dispute in an interview here with a journalist known to be pro-Peking.

Deng's offer consisted of the following: China would accept the line of control in the eastern section—the MacMahon line drawn up in 1914 across from Nepal to

Burma—in exchange for India's acceptance of China's control over 40,000 square kilometers taken in the western sector during the 1962 India-China war. On the surface it would seem that China's willingness to give up its claim over 900,000 square kilometers on the eastern front would be an acceptable compromise solution—except for the fact that China's claims on the eastern front are entirely spurious.

As it has done with most of its neighbors, China simply redrew its maps to include a good chunk of Indian territory. Now, after it used that as a pretext for armed aggression against India in 1962 and takeover of territory in the western sector, it is willing to redraw its maps in exchange for keeping the 40,000 square kilometers of strategic territory in Aksai Chin (bordering Tibet and Sinkiang).

Less than two months after this first "offer" by Deng, the Chinese have released—through the same obscure journalist—a second interview, given two days earlier than Deng's, with Wang Ping-man, chairman of the Chinese Association for Friendship with Other Peoples. In it Wang tries to argue that an "historic document," recently discovered by an unnamed Indian scholar, disproves India's stand that the Simla Agreement of 1914 confirms the MacMahon line as the traditional Sino-Indian boundary in the east. The latest news in this story indicates that Peking knows this gambit will fail: the Chinese have announced the postponement of a scheduled visit this year by Foreign Minister Huang Hua, a visit that was to be the first by a top Chinese official since before the 1962 war.