

The Vladivostok Curve: Subnational Intervention Into Russo-Chinese Border Agreements

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Introduction

Until the demise of the USSR in 1991, the almost 7,500km-long Sino-Soviet border was regarded by many as being the world's longest militarised border. Despite the profound changes which have occurred in the post-Cold War period, the 4,350km-long Russo-Chinese border remains the main strategic fault line in Northeast Asia.¹ Although several accords have been concluded between Beijing and Moscow concerning the boundary, their implementation is threatened by sub-national intervention on the part of Russia's borderlands periphery. This article aims to briefly review and critically appraise the latter factor.

On 25 April 1996 a *Joint Statement by the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation* was signed in Beijing. This document not only mentions, "remaining boundary issues on which the two sides have yet to reach agreement", but also points out complications in the implementation of the provisions of two outstanding bilateral border agreements concluded in May 1991 and September 1994 respectively. Specifically, the statement declares that, "the two sides are determined to complete, as soon as possible, the boundary survey and the erection of markers as stipulated" in the 1991 Agreement on the Eastern Section of the Boundary between the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the 1994 Agreement on the Western Section of the Boundary Between the PRC and the Russian Federation.²

The 1991 Agreement on the Eastern Sector

The 1991 Agreement was signed on 16 May in Moscow by the foreign ministers of the USSR and the PRC. The bilateral talks which led to the agreement were, however, conducted, on behalf of the USSR, by representatives of all the Union republics bordering China – Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The 1991 Agreement referred to the common border section traversing about 4,300km of which "3,700 fall on the border following rivers and 600 [fall on the border across] the dry land."³ The agreement was, however,

exclusively concerned with the eastern section of the Soviet-Chinese boundary which, from the demise of the USSR in December 1991, became part of the Sino-Russian boundary thus involving none of the other Soviet successor states (Figure 1).

The PRC recognised the Russian Federation on 27 December 1991. Two days earlier, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman issued a statement on the Chinese government's willingness, "to continue to fulfil its obligations set forth in all the treaties, agreements and relevant documents it signed with the former Soviet government."⁴ On 31 January 1992, a meeting between Li Peng, China's Premier, and the Russian Federation's President Boris Yeltsin was arranged in New York, during which both pledged to respect the 1991 Sino-Soviet communiqué, Article 6 of which hailed the signing of the 16 May 1991 agreement on the eastern border.⁵

It is worth noting that during his speech at the Russian Supreme Soviet on 13 February 1992, seeking the deputies' approval of the ratification of the 1991 Russo-Chinese border agreement, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev indicated that the "agreement for the first time ever specifies practically the whole border line between Russia and China", at the same time stressing that the, "agreement does not envisage any alterations of today's border line on land", and that "all in all the agreement [of May 1991] does not envisage any territorial concessions" from Russia.⁶

Thus, despite the demise of the USSR, the May 1991 border agreement was eventually ratified, without changes, by the Russian Supreme Soviet on 13 February 1992. Similarly, the Permanent Committee of the All-China Congress of People's Deputies ratified the border agreement later the same month.⁷ Subsequently, the foreign ministries of Russia and the PRC exchanged the instruments of ratification and signed certificates confirming the exchange in Beijing during Kozyrev's official visit

Figure 1



of 16-17 March. In the wake of Kozyrev's visit, the Russian ministry of foreign affairs stated that: "*the whole borderline between Russia and China...except for its western section and three islands in the eastern one*" was settled.⁸

The 1994 Agreement on the Western Sector

An agreement on the western sector of the Russo-Chinese boundary, a 54km wedge between the border tripoints with Mongolia and Kazakhstan, was signed in Moscow on 3 September 1994 by the two countries' Foreign Ministers – Andrei Kozyrev and Qian Qichen – during the PRC President Jiang Zemin's first official visit to Russia. Instruments of ratification were duly exchanged on 7 October the same year.

After the agreement had been signed, a senior Russian official commented that the territorial disputes between Russia and China were "*now 99% solved.*"⁹ As regards China's reaction, a foreign ministry spokesman stated in October 1995 that as the September 1994 agreement went into effect: "*the majority of border lines along the eastern and western sections between China and Russia*" were "*legally fixed.*"¹⁰

It is also worth noting that in the September 1994 joint statement signed by Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin both sides agreed to abide by the September 1991 boundary agreement. Both presidents also presided over the signing of a protocol on navigation regulations regarding the eastern border rivers, which, according to the Russian foreign ministry sources, had not been elaborated in the 1991 agreement.¹¹ Later, during Chinese Premier Li Peng's official visit to Russia on 25-28 June 1995, both Premiers – Russia's Viktor Chernomyrdin and Li Peng – also confirmed the validity of the 1991 eastern border agreement and promised to "*complete demarcation work on time.*"¹²

In late February-early March 1995 Kozyrev visited China, where, during his talks with Qian Qichen, he expressed optimism regarding Russian parliamentary approval of the bilateral western border demarcation accord.¹³ Furthermore, on 1 March, Kozyrev promised the Chinese side that "*the 1991 agreement would be implemented using all the terms of the agreement.*"¹⁴ The Russian State Duma ratified the September 1994 Agreement on 23 June 1995, while the All-China Congress of People's Deputies ratified it as early as 29 December 1994. In accordance with the provisions

of Article 8, the agreement therefore became effective from 17 October 1995.¹⁵

Demarcation Delays

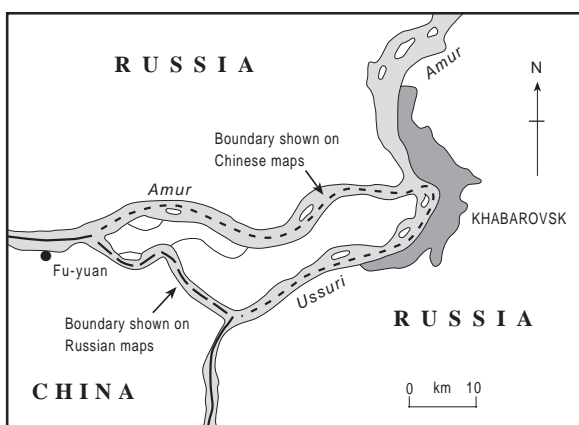
According to Yuriy Arkharov, former deputy head of the Joint Bilateral Demarcation Commission (JBDC), demarcation work on the Sino-Russian border started in early March 1993 and was scheduled to last "*not less than five years.*"¹⁶ However, while as of late April 1996 demarcation activities along the western section of the border were in preparation, serious delays had emerged in relation to the 4,300km-long eastern section.¹⁷ The Russian borderlands concerned, along the eastern section of the Sino-Russian border stretching from the Russia-China-Mongolia frontier junction towards that of Russia, China and North Korea (DPRK) are the Altai Territory, Chita Region, Jewish Autonomous Region, Khabarovsk Territory and Primorie Territory (Figure 1).¹⁸

This was confirmed by Colonel-General Aleksandr Golbakh, Commander of the Russian Federation Far Eastern Frontier Command (FEFC), which is charged with guarding the territorial fringes of three of Russia's 'subjects of federation': the Khabarovsk Territory, the Amur Region and the Jewish Autonomous Region. He noted that a distinctive feature of the FEFC is that its frontier stretches exclusively along rivers – specifically, 1,875km along the Amur River and 225km along the Ussuri River – where 1,177 Chinese and Russian islands are located. In August 1996 the FEFC commander referred to complications related to the, "*dragging on process of implementing the Russo-Chinese 1991 agreement*", hampering the "*completion of demarcation work.*" Golbakh stated that the reasons for these problems were rooted in "*mass media and public discussions*" regarding the issue of transferring a number of islands to China, in particular, "*five Amur River islands bordering the Jewish Autonomous Region*", the islands 'Bolshoi Ussuriisk' ('Hei-Hsia-Tzu' in Chinese, known as 'Bear Island' in English, see Figure 2) located a mere 2.5km away from Khabarovsk in the Fuyuan Delta at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri rivers, and 'Tarabarov' lying next to Bolshoi Ussuriisk towards the south-west.¹⁹

Overall, the Chinese are reportedly entitled to over 600km² of land under the eastern section settlement, with the Russian share being somewhat larger.²⁰ In the course of elaborating the 1991 border agreement, accord was reached between China and Russia to leave unresolved the issue of sovereignty

as it applies the islands Bolshoi Ussuriisk and Tarabarov (covering 350km² together) of the Khabarovsk Krai and of the island 'Bolshoi' (59km² area) situated in the upper reaches of the Argun River of the Chita Territory.²¹ Belonging to the 1% of thus far legally unresolved border issues, the status of these three islands is subject to further delicate bilateral negotiations, with the Russian jurisdictional *status quo* set to continue until the issue is finally settled.²² However, as regards the already legally settled border, as many as 33 boundary sectors originally incorporated into the territorial limits of the Russian Federation's Amur Region, Khabarovsk Territory and Primorie Territory yet due to be ceded to China are disputed by local Russian authorities.²³

Figure 2



One significant reason for local unrest is the dearth of trustworthy information on the contents of the 1991 Agreement.²⁴ It is, however, possible to deduce the contents of the separate articles of the 1991 Agreement by studying Russian media reports. Thus, judging from reported pronouncements made by Viktor Ishaev, the Khabarovsk Territory Governor, during a press conference held in May 1994, it becomes clear that Article 5 stipulates that river boundaries are to be drawn in the middle of the main navigable channel in navigable streams or the middle of the river in non-navigable streams. Further, the same source indicates that Article 4 obliges the Joint Demarcation Commission "to determine in accordance with Article 5 of this agreement the national status [*prinadlezhnost'*] of islands". Comparing Articles 4 and 5, Ishaev indicated the possibility of disagreements. During the press conference, he also reportedly demanded denouncement of the May 1991 bilateral agreement.²⁵ In fact, Article 5 reportedly envisions the emergence of disputable issues and instructs to resolve them "on the spot, involving efforts of both sides".²⁶ It appears, however, that significant differences have emerged in the course of demarcation activities.

Attempts to Accelerate Demarcation

On 21 February 1996 President Yeltsin issued an instruction entitled *On Measures Concerning Completion of Demarcation Activities Along the Eastern Section of the Russo-Chinese Border*, requiring the Russian delegation of the JBDC to: "complete demarcation work...in strict conformity with", the 1991 Agreement and, "without significant departure from the time fixed." In addition, the Heads of Administration (Governors) of all the border regions and territories were ordered, in particular, to:

*"render assistance to the federal organs to the utmost...as it applies to the completion of demarcation work in accordance with provisions of the Agreement [May 1991]", to "carry on active explanatory work among local residents regarding the necessity and perspectives of demarcation", and to "promote in every way possible the fulfilment of demarcation work in the time fixed."*²⁷

However, on 1 April 1996, President Yeltsin indicated that the boundary issue between Russia and China "had not been resolved" yet, adding: "We stand for accomplishing demarcation to

time".²⁸ In its turn, the Chinese side expressed the desirability of completing demarcation work "by the time fixed".²⁹ Subsequently, on 11 April 1996, Yeltsin in reference to his visit to China on 24-26 April stated that: "he had signed a decree aimed at speeding up demarcation of the [Russo-Chinese] border line".³⁰ The Chinese side welcomed this step as "having great importance in terms of strengthening confidence and the atmosphere of friendship and neighbourly relations between Russia and China".³¹ Evidently many in both China and Russia expected that demarcation of the eastern border would have been completed by the time Yeltsin had to visit China in April.³²

Resistance from Primorie Territory

On the eve of President Yeltsin's official visit to Beijing in April 1996, it was the Russian Federation's Primorie Territory, expected to transfer 1,500 hectares of land to China under the 1991 agreement, which offered the most considerable resistance to the demarcation plans of the federal centre.³³ Indeed, according to a Japanese press report, Primorie's intervention prevented the two sides from signing a planned Russo-Chinese border demarcation agreement.³⁴

Despite the Russian foreign minister's assurances in 1992 that the 1991 agreement did not "envisage any territorial concessions" from Russia, in particular concerning the dry land boundary rather than that along rivers where sovereignty over many islands must be clarified, it is exclusively on the basis of the 1991 Agreement that 2.6km² of territory along the land boundary is expected to be transferred to China in the Primorie Territory's Khankaiskiy district; 9.6km² in the Ussuriyskiy district and 2.7km² in the Khasanskiy district (Figure 3).³⁵

The Primorie Territory's Duma refuted President Yeltsin's instruction of 21 February 1996, which specifically mentioned the Primorie border sections in the Ussuriyskiy and Khasanskiy districts, as well as the islands of Popov, Savel'ev, Sazaniy, Sukhoi, Na-Stvorakh, Evrasikha and Nizhnepetrovskiy located along the Amur River in the Jewish Autonomous Region, stating that the order was: "not in keeping with Russia's national interests and infringing upon territorial, economic and political rights of the Primorie Territory as a subject of the [Russian] federation."³⁶

Moreover, the Primorie Duma termed the 13 February 1992 ratification of the 1991 Agreement by the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (RSFSR) Supreme Council "unconstitutional",

referring to the fact that Russia's national frontier may not be changed without conducting a national referendum.³⁷ Inquiring about the constitutional status of the RSFSR Supreme Council decision, the Duma appealed to the Russian Federation's Constitutional Court. The latter, however, refuted the appeal just prior to Yeltsin's trip to Beijing under the pretext of non-observance of the appeal procedure.³⁸

This was followed on 6 April 1996, by the resignation of Major-General Valeriy Rozov, the Russo-Chinese Demarcation Commission Head representing the Primorie Territory, primarily in protest against the transfer of 300 hectares of Primorie's Khasanskiy district to China. Primorie Territory Governor Evgeniy Nazdratenko had also threatened to leave his post in case Primorie land was transferred to China. However, in the wake of Yeltsin's February 1996 instruction, Nazdratenko, stressing that he had been elected, not appointed, Governor as of 17 December 1995, declared that he had no right to demonstratively leave his administrative post.

A few days before Rozov resigned, Nikolai Litvinov, Head of the United Administration of the Primorie Territory's Ussuriyskiy district, also refused to participate in demarcation work. Further, the 'Ataman' (Head) of the Ussuri Cossacks, Vitaliy Poluianov, immediately signed an order instructing the Cossacks to picket the disputed areas in Primorie Territory that were due to be transferred to China, mentioning that the government had no right to make decisions regarding disputed territory without considering the opinion of local residents. In his turn, Governor Nazdratenko appealed to all the officers engaged in demarcation work as members of acting demarcation groups to send in their resignations. The governor promised to secure employment for all of them, referring to Rozov as "a real Russian man."³⁹ Reportedly, to a "varying extent" Lieutenant-General Sedykh, Russian Federation Pacific Frontier Commander and the Pacific Fleet Commander, Admiral Igor Khmel'nov, currently the Russian Federation Navy Chief of Staff, exhibited their support for Nazdratenko's claims.⁴⁰

Yeltsin's April 1996 instruction reportedly ordering an acceleration in demarcation work immediately followed an 11 April claim on the part of Governor Nazdratenko Yeltsin had suspended demarcation of the disputed area in the Khasanskiy district until his return from China.⁴¹ The Russian President reportedly promptly termed Nazdratenko's statement "incomprehensible."⁴² On the eve of

Yeltsin's visit to Beijing President Jian Zemin also expressed displeasure with the unfavourable stance of the Primorie Territory.⁴³

While stopping on his way to Beijing in Khabarovsk on 23-24 April, Yeltsin, in response to demands of crowds in the streets, promised not to "give away" the three disputed islands of Bolshoi Ussuriyskiy, Tarabarov and Bolshoi.⁴⁴ Before boarding the Beijing-bound plane, Yeltsin addressed public representatives of the Amur area and regional leaders of the Far East, stressing that Russia would not "compromise" regarding the status of the three disputed islands. Having expressed satisfaction with the fact that Russia, "for the first time since the establishment of ties with China" had, "a practically completely legalised, juridically adjusted frontier with it", Yeltsin also indicated his concern about demarcation work in the Primorie Territory's Ussuriyskiy and Khasanskiy districts, where the border line measures 19km in toto, arguing that this could endanger the adjustment of the eastern border as a whole.⁴⁵

The Disputed Areas

Japanese media sources indicate seven Primorie sites where demarcation is allegedly expected.⁴⁶ Russian media sources single out only three disputed areas in the Primorie Territory.⁴⁷ While those supporting the transfer of the Primorie land to China refer in a sweeping manner to "several hectares of native bogs", their opponents emphasise the damage to be inflicted, citing, in particular, "the loss of the Ussuri taiga rich in protected cedar."⁴⁸

As regards the disputed area in Primorie's Khankaiskiy district, which is situated some 20km to the west from Turiy Rog passage (some 250km to the north of Vladivostok, see Figure 3), its physical features are unclear. On the one hand, the Russian press indicates that while Russia gains 0.9km² of "arable land", China allegedly receives 2.6km² of "poor soil." On the other hand, according to Akino Yutaka, Japan's Tsukuba University Russian affairs expert, who visited all the three disputed sites, of the 300 hectares of land due to be transferred to China, arable land forms as much as 200 hectares.⁴⁹

The largest disputed sector covers 968 hectares of Japanese cedar forested land located some 100km to the north of Vladivostok near Poltavka village, which is located west of the city of Ussuriysk (Figure 3). Poltavka's population amounts to around 4,000 residents. This disputed area sector due to be

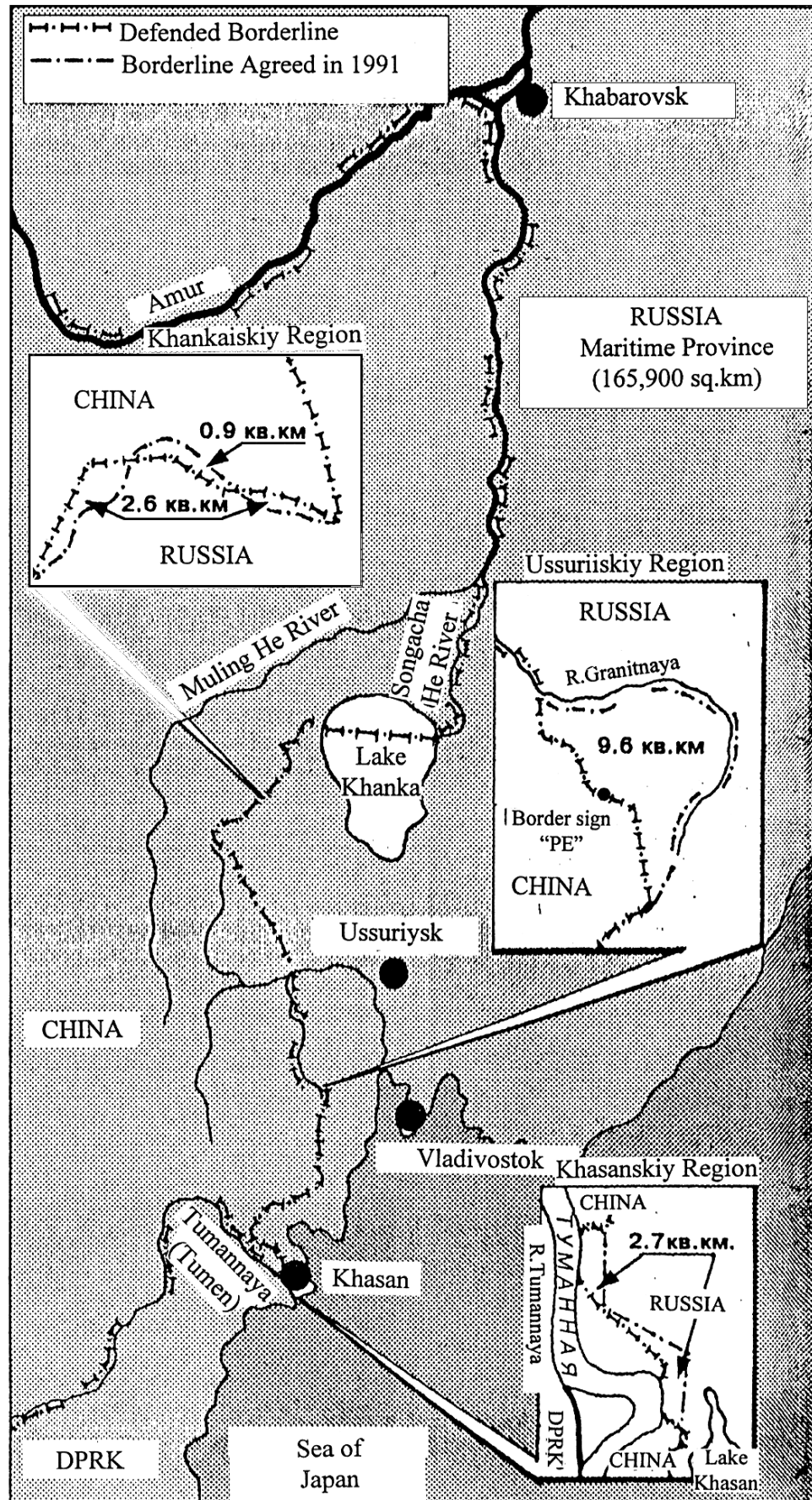
transferred to China belongs to the Ussuriiskii district and is particularly fit for hunting.⁵⁰

However, the key stumbling block of the dispute between the Russian ministry of foreign affairs and the Primorie Territory's administration is the border area in the Khasanskiy district (Figure 3).⁵¹ Located in a swampy zone at the mouth of the Tumen River, it lies at the frontier junction of China, Russia and North Korea, making up 300 hectares of land. The Tumen River ('Tumannaya' in Russian) is reportedly very shallow and narrow, flowing into the Zaliv Petra Velikogo Bay.⁵²

A variety of reports indicate that if the disputed area in the Khasanskiy district is indeed transferred to China, Beijing is prepared to secure access to the Sea of Japan by means of digging a channel and subsequently building a major oceanic port. Russian opponents of the transfer, including experts from the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, specifically refer to detrimental effects of China's project fearing the appearance of a mighty rival of Russia's Nakhodka and Vladivostok ports. Moreover, China is reportedly planning to build a Navy base in the transferred area.⁵³ The Russian press reported that the Chinese government had already appointed a director of the new port and was preparing for construction.⁵⁴

According to Akino, at the time of the conclusion of the 1991 bilateral border agreement, the Soviet side decided to concede 300 hectares of land in the Primorie Territory's Khasanskiy district, considering the Tumen River mouth to be unfit for navigation because it was too shallow.⁵⁵ However, today experts believe that China is capable of resolving the navigation issue by means of applying the appropriate technology, which, in particular, threatens to paralyse the activities of Russia's transportation centres at Zarubino and Posyet ports. Besides, Russian opponents of the Primorie land transfer are worried about pollution of the water of Lake Khasan by China in case of land transfer. In addition, they complain that a mass grave site in the

Figure 3



vicinity of Lake Khasan, with the remains of Soviet soldiers who in 1938 fought for Zaozernaia hill against Japanese army units, will cease to be Russian territory. The number of soldiers who perished during the hostilities amounts to 792 men.⁵⁶

Even if China were able to overcome the problems of navigation along the shallow Tumen River mouth, those in favour of transfer of Khasanskiy district's 300 hectares to China argue that China would not secure exit to the Sea of Japan, because prior to entering the Sea of Japan through the Tumen River mouth, *"the Chinese will have to pass along the 17km long water strip controlled by Russia and North Korea as well as our [Russian] 22km-wide territorial waters."* Consequently, they believe that, *"without permission of Russia and DPRK the Chinese won't be able to move even a step forward."* In addition it is asserted that all the mass graves of those who perished during the 1938 hostilities are going to be left on the Russian side after the land is transferred.⁵⁷

The course of events occurring in the Khasanskiy district also affects the progress of the Tumen River Area Development Project (TRADP), which involves China, DPRK, ROK, Russia and Mongolia. The initiation of TRADP operations was announced in October 1991 in New York by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The TRADP zone covers the triangular area where the Tumen River flows into the Sea of Japan. According to Ding Dou, a Chinese international relations specialist, the TRADP progress is slow because, among other factors, *"Chinese, Koreans and Russians all wish to place the Tumen River area around themselves, with major facilities built on their own territories."*⁵⁸

Akino suggests that China succeeded in securing concessions in the Tumen River area in Primorie's Khasanskiy district in exchange for an agreement to defer negotiations regarding the legal status of the Bolshoi Ussuriiskiy, Tarabarov and Bolshoi islands.⁵⁹ If this hypothesis is correct, then Yeltsin's aggressive populist pronouncements regarding the three disputed islands made during his stay in Khabarovsk and his equally strong appeals to resolve the Khasanskiy district demarcation issue in favour of China begins to make political sense.⁶⁰

Conclusions

Commenting on the future of Russo-Chinese relations in the wake of President Boris Yeltsin's official visit to China on 24-26 April 1996, Shi Ze, a senior research fellow at the China Institute for International Studies, while generally optimistic nevertheless indicates a number of *"undercurrents which, if unchecked, will hold back Sino-Russian cooperation"*, seeing the *"potential threat"* as related *"to the border."*⁶¹ Shi Ze classifies the border issues as belonging to two categories: either applying to the 1% of the border still being in dispute or to the remaining 99% of the border legally settled yet in danger of revision. The revisionist threat, he argues, is provoked by demands of *"some local Russian authorities"* challenging *"the two agreements on the eastern and western sections of the border."*⁶²

It can be argued that the swift ratification by the Russian Federation of the May 1991 Agreement between the former USSR and the PRC, in the context of the rapidly proceeding disintegration of Russia's federal structure, occurred without adequate regard for 'periphery' interests in Russia's borderlands. This in its turn could not but generate destructive 'centre-periphery' tensions. Indeed, Russian Federation State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Vladimir Lukin, while in Primorye in March 1995, remarked: *"It is a blunder that residents of the Primorie Territory [and] its administration were informed about the agreement with China [of May 1991] after it had been concluded [zadnim chislom]."*⁶³

Moreover, ratification of the 1991 agreement in February 1992 immediately preceded the period from summer 1992 to October 1993, when 'centre-periphery' problems heightened considerably as Russia's President Boris Yeltsin and his opponents in the Russian Supreme Soviet, *"began to manoeuvre between the local authorities, trying to outbid each other in their constitutional reform proposals in order to gain political support from regional leaders"*.⁶⁴

In a wider context, the Primorie Territory's intervention into the traditional sphere of activity of the central authorities reflects the growing desire of Russia's periphery to secure a greater degree of independence of Moscow. Such aspirations are particularly typical of the Russian Far East which occupies as much as 36.4% of Russia's territory.⁶⁵ For example, in a press interview of 29 November 1995, the Khabarovsk Territory Governor Ishaev, once a *"fierce opponent of even talking about the*

Far Eastern Republic”, pointed at its formation as one of the ways of coping with the task of searching for “new forms of organising the economy” and accused Moscow of provoking ‘separatism’ in Russia.⁶⁶

Primorie Territory’s opposition to Moscow is also rooted in the desire of the ruling elite in Russia’s periphery to reinforce their political standing and grip on power. In the context of an acute national economic crisis, local leaders have sought to bolster their popularity by adopting nationalistic and ‘patriotic’ stances, particularly in relation to boundary disputes.

In the case of Primorie Governor Evgeniy Nazdratenko this policy has proved a clear success. According to a ranking of Russia’s leading regional political figures published in ‘Rossiyskaia Gazeta’, a government-run newspaper, in February 1995 Nazdratenko ranked second out of a field of 89 and first among the ethnically Russian contenders. Furthermore, Nazdratenko was elected as Primorie’s governor on 17 December 1995 polling 657,472 (42.6%) of the 1,544,368 votes cast. Elections for the Russian Federation’s State Duma, held the same day, also illustrated the attitudes of the residents of Russia’s periphery with the nationalistic Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) headed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy ranked first, winning the support of 193,235 voters. 177,643 voters supported the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), while only 33,089 Primorie voters backed the Our Home Russia (NDR) movement headed by Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin.⁶⁷

A distinctive feature of Primorie’s geopolitical location is its vicinity to the ‘Kuril Islands’ disputed by Japan as well as its direct involvement in Russo-Chinese border contentions. It is in this context that Governor Nazdratenko’s territorial claims against the Russian Federation’s Sakhalin Region for the transfer of administrative control over the ‘Kuril Islands’ to Primorie put forward in July 1994 acquire significance.⁶⁸ The subnational intervention of the Primorie Territory into Russia’s territorial disputes with both China and Japan threatens, under certain circumstances, to undermine the balance of power in the Northeast Asia region.

The ability of regional leaders to play-off the various political forces of the centre competing for support from the ‘periphery’ is an important factor in this context. Similarly, it might be just as important not to underestimate the possibility of interaction between such Russian regional authorities with both the foreign ‘centres’ and the

foreign borderlands ‘periphery’. Indeed, according to the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Panov, “in China they watch closely” the evolving antagonism between Primorie and Moscow.⁶⁹

In terms of worldwide practice it is not uncommon for boundary demarcation not to follow promptly after delimitation. However, “ambiguities and inconsistencies contained in the text delimiting the boundary” may lead to passing the problem “back to diplomats”.⁷⁰ Given the tension between centre and periphery currently in evidence in Russia, this may well be the case with the Russo-Chinese border. It is worth noting in this regard that huge areas of the Russian Far East are traditionally regarded as historic Chinese territory by the Chinese.⁷¹ Moscow therefore has plenty of reasons to be extremely worried about the possible revival of China’s territorial demands if Primorie’s intervention leads to the collapse of the May 1991 border agreement.

Notes

- ¹ Kozyrev, A. (1995) *Preobrazhenie [Transformation]*, Moscow: 238.
- ² *Diplomatskiy Vestnik (DV)* Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 (May 1996), Moscow: 18; *Beijing Review (BR)* 39, 20 (13-19 May 1996), Beijing: 6.
- ³ *DV*, 4-5 (1992): 72.
- ⁴ *The China Quarterly (CQ)* 129 (March 1992): 284-285, Oxford University Press.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 130 (June 1992): 474; *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1991: 7.
- ⁶ *DV*, 4-5 (1992): 72-73.
- ⁷ Ginsburgs, G. (1993) ‘The End of Sino-Russian Territorial Disputes?’, *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 7, 1 (Winter/Spring): 263-265, Seoul.
- ⁸ *DV*, 7 (1992): 19-20.
- ⁹ *CQ*, 140 (December 1994): 1,234.
- ¹⁰ *BR*, 38, 45 (6-12 November 1995): 24.
- ¹¹ *CQ*, 140 (December 1994): 1,234; *BR*, 37, 37 (12-18 September): 4; *Izvestiya* newspaper, Moscow, 17 May 1994: 3.
- ¹² *Vladivostok* weekly newspaper, Vladivostok, 29 June 1995: 11.
- ¹³ *CQ*, 142 (June 1995): 658.
- ¹⁴ *Boundary and Security Bulletin*, 3, 1 (April 1995): 26, Durham: International Boundaries Research Unit.
- ¹⁵ China aktuell, Jahresindex 1995, March 1996, Hamburg: 902.
- ¹⁶ *Krasnaia Zvezda* daily newspaper, Moscow, 4 March 1993, Moscow: 3.
- ¹⁷ *Rossiyskaiya Gazeta (RG)* daily newspaper, Moscow, 20 April 1996: 3.

- ¹⁸ Russian names are rendered into English as they appear in *Konstitutsiya Rossiyskoi Federatsii/Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar [Constitution of the Russian Federation/Encyclopedic Dictionary]* Moscow, 1995: 393.
- ¹⁹ Interview with A. Golbakh, *RIA Novosti*, Russian Federation News Agency, Moscow, August 1996.
- ²⁰ Ginsburgs, 1993: 267; *Izvestiya*, 23 March 1992.
- ²¹ As stated by Kozyrev in his address to the Russian Supreme Council on 13 February 1992. See *DV*, 1992, 4-5: 73; Bolshoi island is also called 'No. 280'. See Akino, Y. (1995) 'Churo Kankei-no Kiro' [Crossroads of Sino-Russian Relations] series, *Sekai Shuho* weekly journal, 18 July: 16-18. Akino mentions that Bolshoi island provided facilities for securing water supplies for Krasnokamenskiy, the second largest city of the Chita Region, noting that up to 90% of the USSR uranium was produced in the Chita Region.
- ²² For Kozyrev's statements on further negotiations and the islands' status see *DV*, 1992, 4-5: 73.
- ²³ *Moskovskie Novosti (MN)* weekly newspaper, Moscow 15, 14-21 April 1996: 4.
- ²⁴ *Izvestiya*, 20 September 1995: 3.
- ²⁵ *Izvestiya*, 17 May 1994: 3; the currently common title 'Governor' standing for a regional or territorial 'Head of Administration' was initially arbitrarily introduced by Valentin Fedorov soon after he had been appointed Head of Administration of the Russian Federation's Sakhalin Region in 1991. Issuing a special resolution on 14 October 1991, Fedorov indicated in Article 2 that the "official name of the post of the 'Head of Administration' of the Sakhalin Region" was "Governor."
- ²⁶ *Literaturnaiya Gazeta (LG)* weekly newspaper, Moscow, 1 May 1996, 18-19 (5601): 9.
- ²⁷ *Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiyskoi Federatsii [Collected Legislation of the Russian Federation]* 10, 4 March 1996: 2,366-2,367.
- ²⁸ NTV TV Channel, 'Segodnia' regular news programme, Moscow, 1 April 1996.
- ²⁹ *RG*, 20 April 1996: 3.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16 April 1996: 1; OMRI Daily Digest, Part I, No.73, 12 April 1996.
- ³¹ *RG*, 16 April 1996: 1.
- ³² *Nezavisimoia Gazeta (NG)* daily newspaper, Moscow, 30 April 1996: 2; *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6; *Tokyo Shinbun* daily newspaper, Tokyo, 12 April 1996.
- ³³ See, for instance, *Izvestiya*, 4 April 1996: 3. The Primorie Territory is a part of the Russian Federation's Far Eastern economic district. As of 1995, its population amounted to 2,273,100 residents making up 1.5% of Russia's total. Primorie covers 165,900km² constituting, as of 1995, 1.0% of Russia's total land area. Vladivostok (637,000 residents) located 9,302km to the east of Moscow is Primorie's administrative centre. *Roshia-no Genkyo [Russia's Current Affairs]* (1996) Tokyo: Rajio Puresu Publications: 175-176. *LG*, 9 August 1995, 32 (5563): 14.
- ³⁴ *Tokyo Shinbun*, 12 April 1996.
- ³⁵ *DV*, 1992, 4-5: 73; *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6.
- ³⁶ *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ *Segodnia* daily newspaper, Moscow, 18 April 1996: 1.
- ³⁹ *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6; *NG*, 24 April 1996: 3; *Ibid.*, 6 April 1996: 2; *Moskovskie Novosti*, No.15, 1996: 4; *RG*, 16 April 1996: 1.
- ⁴⁰ *MN*, No. 15, 1996: 4.
- ⁴¹ *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6; *Mainichi Shinbun*, Tokyo, 13 April 1996; OMRI Daily Digest, Part I, No. 73, 12 April 1996.
- ⁴² OMRI Daily Digest, Part I, No. 73, 12 April 1996.
- ⁴³ *MN*, No. 16, 21-28 April 1996: 13.
- ⁴⁴ *NG*, 25 April 1996: 1; *Segodnia*, 25 April 1996: 2.
- ⁴⁵ *RG*, 25 April 1996: 1,
- ⁴⁶ *Mainichi Shinbun*, 13 April 1996.
- ⁴⁷ *MN*, No. 15, 1996: 4; *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6; *LG*, No. 32, 1995: 14.
- ⁴⁸ *Novoe Vremia*, No. 28, July 1996 (2657): 33; *LG*, No. 32, 1995: 14.
- ⁴⁹ *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6; Akino, Y. (1995) 'Churo Kankei', *Sekai Shuho*, 25 July: 26.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: 26-28; *MN*, No. 15, 1996: 4.
- ⁵¹ *MN*, No. 15, 1996: 4.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*; for topographic features see *Primorskiy Krai, Topograficheskaya Karta [Topographic Map]* 1994, Vladivostok: 97.
- ⁵³ *LG*, No. 32, 1995: 14; *MN*, No. 15, 1996: 4; Akino, Y. (1995) *Sekai Shuho*, 25 July: 28-29; *Mainichi Shinbun*, 13 April 1996.
- ⁵⁴ *MN*, No. 15, 1996: 4; *LG*, No. 32, 1995: 14.
- ⁵⁵ Akino, Y. (1995) *Sekai Shuho*, 25 July 1995: 28.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 28-29.
- ⁵⁷ *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6.
- ⁵⁸ *BR*, Vol. 39, No. 36, 2-8 September 1996: 10.
- ⁵⁹ Akino, Y. (1995) *Sekai Shuho*, 25 July: 28.
- ⁶⁰ Striving to attract the sympathies of Khabarovsk Territory residents, Yeltsin promised to put an end to its 'forgotten' and 'abandoned' status. The agreement on division of legal prerogatives between the federal centre and the Khabarovsk Territory administration was signed on the spot. *NG*, 25 April 1996: 1.
- ⁶¹ *BR*, Vol. 39, No. 18, 29 April-5 May 1996: 12.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*
- ⁶³ *LG*, No. 32, 9 August: 14. Kozyrev, however, mentioned in his 13 February 1992, address that, "in the process of negotiations with China, the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs...maintained contacts with local administrative authorities of the concerned territories and regions." See *DV*, 1992, No. 4-5: 73.
- ⁶⁴ Lapidus, G.W. and de Nevers, R. (1995) *Nationalism, Ethnic Identity and Conflict Management in Russia Today*, Stanford: 34-35.
- ⁶⁵ However, the Far East is sparsely populated, with 7,625,400 residents registered in 1995 which makes

up 5.1% of Russia's total. Moreover, population has been declining lately, with an average population growth figure for 1991-1995 period of minus 1.10%.

Roshia-no Genkyo: 170.

⁶⁶ *Izvestiya*, 29 November 1995: 1-2.

⁶⁷ *Vladivostok*, 23 December 1995: 1; due to a grave energy crisis in Primorie and its various resultant effects, on 23 August 1996, the Territorial Duma made an unprecedented decision to conduct on 22 September 1996, a referendum on confidence in Governor Nazdratenko (ORT TV, Channel 1, 'Vremia' regular news program, Moscow, 23 August 1996). However, on Nazdratenko's request the referendum was eventually cancelled.

⁶⁸ For a detailed description of the claims and relevant analysis see a future issue of the *Boundary and Security Bulletin*. Definition of the 'Kuril Islands' is a matter of both the bilateral and, in case of Japan, domestic political debates. See Berton, P. (1992) *The Japanese-Russian Territorial Dilemma: Historical background, Disputes, Issues, Questions, Solution Scenarios*, White Paper, Harvard University: 8-9.

⁶⁹ *Izvestiya*, 24 April 1996: 6.

⁷⁰ Prescott, J.R.V. (1987) *Political Frontiers and Boundaries*, London: Allen & Unwin: 75-76.

⁷¹ *NG*, 25 April 1996: 25; *LG*, No. 32, 1995: 14.

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