Post Script

The 1962 war was basically an anguish outburst by India out of frustration and it invited an equally anguish response from the Chinese. Thereby reflecting the fact that these two nations which harped on two thousand years old friendship between them were now finding it difficult to adjust each other. This is because neither side was willing to accept a solution which would lower its prestige. Such a thinking is due to lack of realisation of the fact that boundary dispute between two countries is the most difficult one to be solved and it should not be viewed from the angle of national prestige.

Following the declaration of ceasefire in November 1962, the conference of non aligned nations was convened by the Prime Minister of Srilanka Srimao Bandarnaike in Colombo to sort out the problems created by the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. This conference was attended by six leading members of the Afro-Asian group and proposals of this group were placed before the two countries, but China refused to accept it. Taking advantage of the Sino-Indian conflict, Pakistan moved closer towards China culminating in the signing of Sino-Pak Agreement in March 1963. According to this agreement Pakistan handed over to China nearly 2100 sq. miles of Pak occupied Kashmir. Encouraged by this agreement Pakistan in 1965 forced a war on India and China during this war sided with Pakistan wholeheartedly and also declared India as an aggressor and supported Kashmir’s right to self-determination. China even threatened to engage India from the eastern side, mainly with the aim of putting pressure on India so that Indian resources will not be diverted against Pakistan. Thus the Sino-Pak alliance has become an important factor in India’s security concern. Correspondingly Indo-Soviet relations were also getting strengthened at the expense of Sino Soviet relationship. China continued to openly support Pakistan against India and during the 1971 Indo-Pak war China openly denounced Indo-Soviet-collusion. On the signing of Indo-Soviet-Treaty in 1971
Chou En-lai told Neville Maxwell that this treaty was aimed against countries which were hostile to Soviet Union. The signing of Indo-Soviet Treaty made the chances of improvement in Sino-Indian relations further remote.

In 1976, Mrs. Gandhi, Indian Prime-Minister, took a bold initiative in attempting to improve relations with China by posting the present Vice-President of India Sri. K.R. Narayanan as the Ambassador to China. India had withdrawn her Ambassador in 1962 and the mission was headed by charge d' Affairs. The Chinese reciprocated by appointing Chen Chao Yuan as their Ambassador to India. Both the countries once again started reaffirming their age old historical ties and friendship. In 1977 when the new Government under late Morarji Desai came to power in India. It gave priority in promoting relations with India's immediate neighbours and the then External Affairs Minister Sri. A.B. Vajpai invoked the Principles of Panch Sheel and said it would be the basis to forge strong ties between India and China. In 1977 Indian businessmen were invited to Canton fair and a beginning was being made to improve trading relations with China. By 1977 Indian ships were permitted once again to call at Chinese ports. During Canton Fair India and China signed four agreements regarding commercial transactions between the two countries. According to these agreements India was to export goods worth 62 lakhs to China and in return import goods worth 80 lakhs. By August 1977 the trade agreement between India and China provided a ground which facilitated a meaningful Indian role in South East Asia. The Chinese Chairman in 1977 said, "there are questions pending between India and China. Nevertheless relations can be further improved provided serious efforts are made on both sides." In March 1978, a Chinese 'goodwill delegation' visited India. The delegation came to India on the invitation of Dr. Kotnis Memorial Committee of India. The leader of the delegation said that they had come to India for the purpose of promoting the friendship between the peoples of China and India. The members of this delegation reiterated that the Five Principles of peace ful co-existence remained valid.
as a basis for the discussion of the bilateral relations and further improvement of relations between the two countries. The delegation also conveyed an oral invitation from the Chinese Foreign minister Huang Hua to his Indian counterpart A.B. Vajpayee. The delegation also called on the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai and during this meeting it was emphasised that the border question should be solved through negotiation and peaceful means. Prime Minister Morarji Desai told the delegation very emphatically that full normalisation of relations between the two countries could be attained only after resolving the outstanding issue of the border dispute. The visit of the delegation to India clearly reflected the mutual desire to improve relations between India and China and such a desire was for the first time since the normal relations were snapped between the two countries in 1962.

Even when India and China were trying to normalise relations, the Chinese continued to strengthen their relations with Pakistan. In this context it can be said that with the aggravation of Sino-Indian crisis in 1961-62 Pakistan became an important factor in Sino-Indian Relations. In 1978 when attempts to normalise relations between India and China were going on the Karkoram Highway built up with Chinese assistance, passing through the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, linking Pakistan and China's Sinkiang was inaugurated on June 18, 1978 by Zia Hul Haq and the Chinese vice Premier Keng Piao.

India reacted to this development by lodging a formal protest. The envoys of China and Pakistan in New Delhi were called to the Ministry of External Affairs and appraised of Indian position on the "illegal construction" of the road. It was made clear to the two envoys that India could not acquiesce in the legal implications of the construction of the road as the road was built on Indian legal territory.

The opening of the Highway added a new strategic advantage to China.
The road not only connected the strategic regions of Tibet and Sinkiang with Pakistan but also enabled China to have a direct access to the Arabian sea through Pakistan. It would also help China to get a “back door” access to the troubled west Asia and Africa and a much quicker route to the west. The Chinese had not reacted to India’s nuclear explosion in 1974, but China supported Pakistan’s view of nuclear free zone for South Asia which is in direct opposition to India’s stand.

In October 1978 India’s Foreign Minister A.B. Vajpai met his Chinese counterpart Huang Hua and the Chinese Foreign Minister said that some of the bilateral problems between India and China have been left over by history and Peking was willing to solve them on the basis of Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Vajpai too told the Chinese Minister that “India would like to make a new beginning to solve all outstanding problems including the border question.” The coming of Janata party to power in India saw an improvement in relations between India and China. For the first time after the Sino-Indian crisis of 1962, the comprehensive foreign policy statement made in the General Assembly of United Nations in September 1977 China made no critical reference to India or on India’s relations with other countries. The Indian Government also tried to improve the relations with China by sending Indian Vice President on the occasion of the anniversary of the founding of China. This was the first time that the Government of India had been represented at such a high level at the Chinese National Day celebration since the break down of normal relations between the two countries in the early 1960s.

In February 1979 India’s Foreign Minister Vajpai was to visit China. Prior to his trip to China Vajpai said that his visit would present an opportunity for him to get to know the new leaders of China personally and also provide the two sides to acquaint themselves with each other’s outlook and thinking. At the same time Vajpai stated that the border dispute was the most important prob-
lem faced by India and China. Therefore he put forward two choices to solve the border dispute. In a press conference in Hyderabad in 1978 he said, “There are two course open to us. First to tell China that unless the issue is solved we will have nothing to do with you. Secondly, pending settlement of the issue we should normalise relations and see whether we are in a position to solve the issue or not. He further said "our Government had opted for the second course." Despite these efforts, there was no change in China’s attitude towards Indo-Pakistan relation. For example at a time when Vajpai was about to leave for Peking China renewed her support to Pakistan on the Kashmir question. On January 24, 1979, the Chinese Minister Li-tsien Nien declared in Rawalpindi that his country “supports the right of self-determination for Jammu & Kashmir.” China also continued to encourage insurgency movements in the north east India also

Vajpai arrived in Peking on 12th February 1979 on a “probing” mission and Indian and Chinese Foreign Ministers met at ministerial level for the first time after nineteen years. Vajpai during the talks was very strong on the border problem and made it clear to the Chinese that it continues to be the point at heart. The Chinese on the other hand were trying to put aside the border problem and giving emphasis on other points. The Chinese Foreign Minister was trying to skirt the border problem and giving emphasis on other points by stating that the border conflict was, “only a short episode in the long history of our friendly relation.” Vajpai during his meeting with the Chinese leader Deng Xiao Ping on February 1979, stressed India’s willingness to settle the border dispute but Deng Xiao Ping said that the Sino-Indian relation could develop independently of the border question. He said that both the countries should keep bilateral questions aside and work to improve that climate for tackling various problems.

Vajpai’s China visit was not able to achieve anything concrete and it
became clear that the unresolved border problem would continue to be the main obstruction in complete normalisation of relations between the two countries. Vajpayee also had to cut short his visit because of Chinese invasion of Vietnam on 17 February, 1979. Thus during the 1977-79 period the Government of India under the leadership of Morarji Desai tried to accelerate interaction with China which had remained frozen for long. The exchange of visits at the higher levels was the hallmark of this period.

In 1980 the Janata Government lost power and was succeeded by Congress Government with Mrs. Indira Gandhi once again becoming the Prime Minister of India. She gave a new turn to the Sino-Indian relations by showing keenness in sorting out the differences and her Government expressed willingness to discuss all the issues with China including the boundary question. In 1980, the leader of the Chinese People’s Committee for friendship with Foreign countries, made an appeal to India for normalisation of relations. The Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua in 1980 while referring to Sino-Indian Relations, observed that, "tense International situation places a greater obligation on both India and China to promote mutual understanding and co-operation." In March 1980 when the new Chinese Ambassador to India presented his credentials to the Indian President N. Sanjiva Reddy, he observed that, “this is not only in the fundamental interests of our two peoples but beneficial to peace in Asia and the world.” and expressed the hope that through joint efforts India - China relations would grow under the guidance of five principles. The Indian President too stated that if both India and China genuinely followed the five principles and if they have respect for each other’s legitimate interests there could be a meaningful dialogue to resolve all outstanding questions between the two countries. He said it was through such a dialogue that we should aim at giving concrete expressions to the aspirations of our governments and peoples.

By the middle of 1980 certain developments hastened the pace towards
the resumption of dialogue between India and China. These developments were Mrs. Gandhi’s meeting of Chinese Minister Huang Hua in Salisbury, her meeting with Hua Guo Feng in Belgrade and the Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping had suggested the package deal to solve the boundary problem.

Mrs. Gandhi’s meetings with Chinese leaders Hua Guo Feng and Huang Hua in April 1980 and May 1980 underlined the fact that for the peace and stability of Asia it is essential that India China relations should improve. It was also felt that bilateral problems could be solved only if they avoided confrontation and resorted to mutual consultations. The Chinese also stated that both countries should concentrate on the present and the future and put aside the past differences. It was at this time that Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping put forward his package deal to solve the border dispute between India and China. According to this package, which was a repetition of 1960 Chou En-lai formula in the Eastern Sector the Chinese would recognise the McManus line and in return India should accept the status quo in western sector. In other words India should in a way legitimise the area occupied by China in the Western sector since 1957, including 2,500 Square miles occupied as a result of the 1962 war. But India was cautious and showed restrain in its attitude towards this proposal. Following this proposal, Eric Gonsalves, Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs went to China as a part of an effort to remove the abnormal state of affairs between India and China. During this visit of Eric Gonsalves details of negotiations between the two countries for strengthening exchange and co-operation in the field of science and technology, culture and trade were discussed.

Following Eric Gonsalves trip to China, the then External Affairs Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao said that there could be other more effective ways of finding a solution to the Sino Indian problem and reaffirmed India’s hope to settle the problem in the spirit of Panchsheel consistent with the na-
tional honour and interest of the two sides and on the basis of equality. Even when this talk of establishing normal relations was going on, in July 1980 India recognized the pro-Vietnamese Hang Samrin Government of Kampuchea and decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Government of People’s Republic of Kampuchea. China regretted Indian action of recognizing the illegal Government of Phnom Penh and China also felt that India had lost its long established position of non-alignment absolutely. The Chinese reaction was not appreciated in India and suspicions on China were high within India.

In spite of high suspicions in June 1981 the Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua visited India. On the eve of Chinese Foreign Minister visit to India, the Chinese Prime Minister Zhao Ziyung said, “India and China were two big powers in Asia and must improve their relations.... A package solution to the boundary problems and it will be possible as long as there is mutual understanding and accomodation”. India welcomed the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister and hoped it would speed up the process of normalisation. On this occasion the Indian Prime Minister said that though the two countries has basic differences in their international ideologies such visits would help in solving problems through mutual discussion and would reduce tensions. The two leaders agreed that friendly and sincere talks would promote mutual understanding, reduce differences and increase the meeting points between the two countries. During Huang Hua’s visit in 1981, at a press conference, he called for a “fair, reasonable and comprehensive settlement” taking into account the historical background, the present actual situation and national feelings of the two peoples. In his talks with P.V. Narasimha Rao the bilateral problem was discussed and in the talk both sides adopted a forward looking attitude and agreed that disputes and differences should not become obstacles in the development of the relations between two countries. Mrs. Gandhi described Huang Hua’s visit to India as “a move forward towards normalisation of Sino-Indian relations.” The major achievement of the Chinese Foreign Minister’s visit was that it broke the
ice in India - China Relations.

The Chinese official news agency reported that Huang Hua’s talks with Indian leaders proved that increasing conversations were extremely helpful in deepening understanding and would minimize the differences between the two countries. It further commented that inspite of differences between Huang Hua and P.V. Narasimbha Rao both adopted a positive attitude in trying to solve the border problem. The Indian newspapers felt if the relations between India and China were normalised then they could make an invaluable contribution to world peace. In October at a symposium held in New Delhi on “India’s Security Perception and Sino-Indian normalisation” Jagajivan Ram Presented a paper in which he wanted the points of general agreement on major issues to be identified for normalisation of relations between India and China.

When Mrs. Gandhi had a meeting with Regan and Zhao - Ziang at Cancun in October 1981 she said, “as long as the people know that the door is not shut, there is hope for future” and told Zhao Ziang that, “We have problems to consider but if we create a climate of goodwill it can be solved.” In same year by December the Secretaries of the two countries held a meeting in Peking and reaffirmed their efforts to strengthen friendship and worked out programmes for further exchanges in other fields. In the first round of talks the progress on the border issue was not substantial but there were useful discussions on cultural and trade relations and it continued to be the take off point. The first round of talks covered various aspects but nothing substantial was attained as India did not want to hasten the speed of progress. The first round of talks reviewed good international reaction, the Chinese newspaper People’s daily commented on this reaction by stating, “Probably it is only those countries that seek to profit from discord between India and China that won’t be happy”.

There are mainly two factors which compelled India and China to attempt
to improve their relations a) both were faced with Security Threats - China from the Soviet Union and Soviet backed Vietnam. On the other hand India realised only through normalisation of relations with China, it will have sufficient room for manoeuvrability in disengaging Pakistan from an anti-India Peking Islamabad axis. b) The Chinese believed that a rapprochment with India was important to improve their credentials. From the recent experience they realised that India would not like to mar the friendship with the Soviet Union. This was very clear to China by India’s stance on Kampuchea and Indian refusal to condemn the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

In 1982 May second round of talks began at the official level. In this round, the two delegations split into four groups to discuss separately the border question, the trade and cultural relations and co-operation in science and technology. In this round of talks useful exchanges took place on all other issues except on the border question and it was not able to make any progress. One of the reasons why no progress was made on the border issue because the Chinese refused to advance from its offer of package deal. However India refused to accept the package deal and she continued to insist on sector by sector approach to solve the border dispute. The Chinese were not favourably inclined towards this problem. During the second round talks both sides came up with ten points which was to be the basis for solving the border issue. The Chinese side suggested 1) a line of actual control had come into existence with two countries exercising administrative control on the other respective sides 2) boundary dispute existed between India and China 3) in settling the boundary dispute certain geographical principles like watershed, river valleys and mountain passes should be taken into account 4) the settlement should take into account the national feelings of the two people 5) pending such a settlement two sides should adhere to the existing line of actual control and should refrain from advancing further territorial claims and 6) to ensure tranquility along the border both sides should refrain from patrolling it. In other words the Chinese
were suggesting friendly consultations based on equality, mutual understanding and mutual accommodation, a fair and a reasonable settlement and a comprehensive solution.

India responded by advancing following principles (i) a solution must be found as early as possible (ii) it should be a just solution taking into account the legitimate interests of both sides (iii) must find a commonly agreed approach, (iv) a basis for discussions and the proposals advanced by either side (v) it is necessary to consider steps to create a propitious atmosphere, (vi) and finally efforts should be made to settle the border issue in each sector taking into account the different aspects of the sector.

The third round of talks was held in January 1983 and in this round both the sides discussed the entire range of bilateral relations between India and China and special attention was paid to the boundary question. Both sides were earnest in exchange of ideas. But this round of talks too failed to produce any results on the boundary question. The whole exercise appeared to be going round and round mulberry bush. In the same year towards the end fourth round of talks were held. This round of talks was important because for the first time Chinese agreed to discuss the border question sector wise and India too agreed to consider the package plan proposed by Chinese. The Chinese had also agreed to examine the relevance of such factors as historical evidence, custom and tradition for the settlement of border problem. According to A.P. Venkateswaran who was a member of the Indian delegation in the fourth round of talks later wrote that during these talks a solution would have been possible to the border dispute based on the principles that served the interests of both countries. Mrs. Gandhi Indian Prime Minister was also inclined towards it but the then External Affairs Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao scuttled the proposal by asking Mrs. Gandhi to wait for general election before proceeding to conclude a treaty with China.
The fifth round of talks took place in September 1984 in Peking. The Indian delegation was led by Natwar Singh, Secretary, Ministry of External affairs and the Chinese were led by Gong Dafei, Adviser to the Foreign Ministry of China. In the plenary session itself the two sides agreed to form four groups to deal with boundary question, cultural co-operation, scientific and technical exchanges and questions on property and assets. In the fifth round, the two sides made progress so as to enable substantive discussion on the boundary question and they exchanged views on current international situation during which similarity of views on several topics emerged.

Inspite of these five round of talks that were held between the top officials of the two countries to iron out the differences on outstanding issues, nothing substantial could come out during these discussions on the border issue. Three more rounds of official level talks were held after 1984 but these talks too were not able to achieve anything substantial on the most contentious issue that is the boundary dispute. In fact in the 8th round of talks, the border dispute was not at all discussed and after the eighth round of talks in November 1987 nothing was done to bring this issue into the centre stage until the visit of them Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi in December 1988. Following Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to China in December 1988 it was decided to set up a Joint Working Group to resolve the boundary issue. Unfortunately the Joint Working Group exercises have turned to be no different from the protracted discussions of officials that had gone for last so many years. It continues to indulge in same restatements of positions, the same hair splitting on guiding principles and same shyness in approaching the core issue. The only positive point of the constitution of Joint Working Group was the institutionalisation of the arrangement for maintaining peace and tranquility on the border.

In the absence of political level mandate to Joint Working Group to settle the boundary question, it is necessary that a break through in the boundary
dispute can achieved only by upgrading these boundary talks to the political level. The possible reason why a solution at political level is not being worked is possibly due to fear on the Indian side that China may rebuff an Indian initiative and in India any initiative could become risky. A Chinese rebuff would be disastrous and Indian fears are fully justified in the light of Chinese stance on the border dispute in 1986. The Chinese in 1986 have gone a step backward from their earlier proposal of package deal which had suggested a settlement on the basis of line of actual control. This package deal has been modified and they are demanding that India must make concessions in Eastern Sector of the boundary in return for which China would be prepared to make concessions in the Western Sector of the boundary. At the sametime they have not spelt out what these concessions in the Eastern sector are and what concessions they are willing to make in the Western sector. At a time when this dismal situation was prevailing in the Sino - Indian relation that Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India accepted an invitation to visit Peking and it marked once again the start of the process of negotiations between the two countries which finally culminated in the signing of the Agreement on maintaining Peace and Tranquility in the border areas along the line of Actual Control by his successor P.V. Narasimha Rao in September 1993. This agreement commits both the countries to respect and observe the Line of Actual Control, when they are yet to fully agree on the alignments of the Line of Actual Control in every sector of 3000 mile border. Therefore it is clear that there is no mutual understanding on the precise location of Line of Actual Control. Thus a contradiction continues to exist between the two countries and it can be an obstacle to complete normalisation of relations between India and China.

The border problem is mired in complexity, arising out of both history and politics, not to mention the complicating factor of aroused nationalism on both sides following the 1962 crisis, therefore the first call on the leadership of both countries is to resolve the border dispute through acceptable principle of give
and take. There is no reason why these two countries cannot normalise their relations when the Super Powers have entered a phase of detente. The prospects of Sino-Indian relations can be promising only when two countries look to the future for the sake of welfare of their peoples, as the people, not the land, are of supreme value in politics.