

# Aksai Chin

**Aksai Chin** (also spelled **Aksayqin**) is the easternmost portion of the [Kashmir](#) region and has been the subject of a territorial dispute between [China](#) and [India](#) since 1959.<sup>[2]</sup> China administers the region and claims it as part of the [Xinjiang](#)<sup>[a]</sup> and [Tibet autonomous regions](#).<sup>[b][1][3]</sup> [India](#) meanwhile claims it as part of [Leh district](#) in the [union territory](#) of [Ladakh](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

## Name

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Aksai Chin was first mentioned by Muhammad Amin, the [Yarkandi](#) guide of the [Schlagintweit brothers](#), who were contracted in 1854 by the British [East India Company](#) to explore Central Asia. Amin explained its meaning as "the great white sand desert".<sup>[5]</sup> Linguist [George van Driem](#) states that the name intended by Amin was *Aqsai Chöl* ([Uyghur](#): ئاقساي چۆل; [Cyrillic](#): аксай чөл) which could mean "white ravine desert" or "white coomb desert". The word *chöl* for desert seems to have been corrupted in English transliteration into "chin".<sup>[5]</sup>

Some sources have interpreted *Aksai* to have the [Uyghur](#) meaning "white stone desert", including several British colonial,<sup>[6][7]</sup> modern Western,<sup>[8][9][10][11]</sup> Chinese,<sup>[3][12]</sup> and Indian sources.<sup>[13][14]</sup> Some modern sources interpret it to mean "white brook" instead.<sup>[15][16]</sup> At least one source interprets *Aksai* to mean "eastern" in the [Yarkandi Uyghur dialect](#).<sup>[17]</sup>

The word "Chin" was taken to mean "[China](#)" by some Chinese,<sup>[3][12][18]</sup> Western,<sup>[6][10]</sup> and Indian sources.<sup>[17]</sup> At least one source takes it to mean "pass".<sup>[15]</sup> Other sources omit "Chin" in their interpretations.<sup>[7][8][9][11][13][14]</sup> Van Driem states that there is no Uyghur word resembling "chin" for China.<sup>[5]</sup>

Amin's Aksai Chin was not a defined region, stretching indefinitely east into Tibet south of the [Kunlun Mountains](#).<sup>[19][20]</sup> In 1895, the British envoy to [Kashgar](#) told the Chinese Taotai that Aksai Chin was a "loose name for an ill-defined, elevated tableland", part of which lay in Indian and part in Chinese territory.<sup>[21]</sup>

The current meaning of the term is the area under dispute between India and China, having evolved in repeated usage since Indian independence in 1947.

# History



Boundary of Kashmir in the 1888 [Survey of India](#) map of India. The undefined boundary shown in dashed line runs through [Malubiting](#), [Raskam](#), [Aktagh](#) and the [Karakash River bend](#).

Because of its 5,000-metre (16,000 ft) elevation, the desolation of Aksai Chin meant that it had no human importance.<sup>[22]</sup> For military campaigns, the region held great importance, as it was on the only route from the [Tarim Basin](#) to Tibet that was passable all year round.<sup>[23]</sup>

[Ladakh](#) was conquered in 1842 by the armies of Raja [Gulab Singh](#) (Dogra) under the suzerainty of the [Sikh Empire](#).<sup>[24][25]</sup> The [British defeat of the Sikhs in 1846](#) resulted in the transfer of the [Jammu and Kashmir](#) region including Ladakh to the British, who then installed Gulab Singh as the Maharaja under their suzerainty. The British appointed a boundary commission headed by Alexander Cunningham to determine the boundaries of the state. Chinese and Tibetan officials were invited to jointly demarcate the border, but they did not show any interest.<sup>[26]</sup> The British boundary commissioners fixed the southern part of the boundary up to the [Chang Chenmo Valley](#), but regarded the area north of it as *terra incognita*.<sup>[27]</sup>

## Aksai Chin

### Aksayqin

#### Territory administered by China



Sign of a [PLAGF](#) service station in [Tianshuihai](#), Aksai Chin



A map of the disputed [Kashmir](#) region showing the Chinese-administered territory of Aksai Chin in brown<sup>[1]</sup>



Interactive map of Aksai Chin

Coordinates: [35.0°N 79.0°E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Aksai_Chin&params=35.0_N_79.0_E_type:city_region:CN) ([https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Aksai\\_Chin&params=35.0\\_N\\_79.0\\_E\\_type:city\\_region:CN](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Aksai_Chin&params=35.0_N_79.0_E_type:city_region:CN))

# The Johnson Line



Map of Central Asia (1873) by T. Douglas Forsyth. The border claimed by the British for India is shown in the two-toned purple and pink band with Shahidulla and the Kilik, Kilian and Sanju passes north of the border.

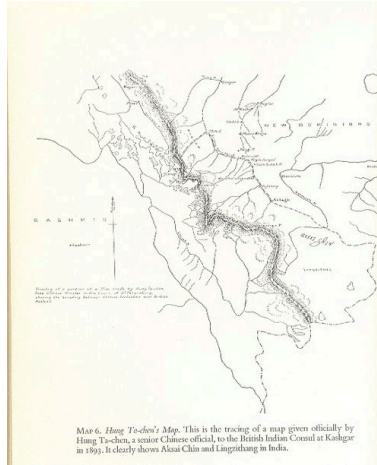
William Johnson, a civil servant with the Survey of India proposed the "Johnson Line" in 1865, which put Aksai Chin in Kashmir. This was the time of the Dungan revolt, when China did not control most of Xinjiang, so this line was never presented to the Chinese. Johnson presented this line to the Maharaja of Kashmir, who then claimed the 18,000 square kilometres contained within,<sup>[28]</sup> and by some accounts territory further north as far as the Sanju Pass in the Kun Lun Mountains. The Maharajah of Kashmir constructed a fort at Shahidulla (modern-day Xaidulla), and had troops stationed there for some years to protect caravans.<sup>[29]</sup> Eventually, most sources placed Shahidulla and the upper Karakash River firmly within the territory of Xinjiang (see accompanying map). According to Francis Younghusband, who explored the region in the late 1880s, there was only an abandoned fort and not one inhabited house at Shahidulla when he was there – it was just a convenient staging post and a convenient headquarters for the nomadic Kirghiz.<sup>[30]</sup> The abandoned fort had apparently been built a few years earlier by the Kashmiris.<sup>[31]</sup> In 1878 the Chinese had reconquered Xinjiang, and by 1890 they already had Shahidulla before the issue was decided.<sup>[28]</sup> By 1892, China had erected boundary markers at Karakoram Pass.<sup>[32]</sup>

In 1897, a British military officer, Sir John Ardagh, proposed a boundary line along the crest of the Kun Lun Mountains north of the Yarkand River.<sup>[29]</sup> At that time, Britain was concerned about the danger of Russian expansion as China weakened, and Ardagh argued that his line was more

Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>People's Republic of China (administered by)</li><li>India (claimed by)</li></ul>
County or District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>He'an County, Hekang County, and Hotan County in Hotan Prefecture, Xinjiang</li><li>Rutog County in Ngari Prefecture, Tibet</li><li>Leh district in Ladakh (claimed)</li></ul>
Area	
• Total	38,000 km <sup>2</sup> (15,000 sq mi)

defensible. The Ardagh line was effectively a modification of the Johnson line, and became known as the "Johnson-Ardagh Line".

## The Macartney–Macdonald Line



The map given by Hung Ta-chen to the British consul at Kashgar in 1893. The boundary, marked with a thin dot-dashed line, matches the Johnson line.<sup>[33]</sup>pp. 73, 78

In 1893, Hung Ta-chen, a senior Chinese official at [St. Petersburg](#), gave maps of the region to [George Macartney](#), the British consul general at Kashgar, which coincided in broad details.<sup>[33]</sup> In 1899, Britain proposed a revised boundary, initially suggested by Macartney and developed by the Governor General of India [Lord Elgin](#). This boundary placed the Lingzi Tang plains, which are south of the Lakhsang range, in India, and Aksai Chin proper, which is north of the Lakhsang range, in China. This border, along the [Karakoram Mountains](#), was proposed and supported by British officials for a number of reasons. The Karakoram Mountains formed a natural boundary, which would set the British borders up to the [Indus River watershed](#) while leaving the [Tarim River](#) watershed in Chinese control, and Chinese control of this tract would present a further obstacle to Russian advance in Central Asia.<sup>[34]</sup> The British presented this line, known as the [Macartney–MacDonald Line](#), to the Chinese in 1899 in a note by Sir [Claude MacDonald](#). The Qing government did not respond to the note.<sup>[35]</sup> According to some commentators, China believed that this had been the accepted boundary.<sup>[36]</sup>

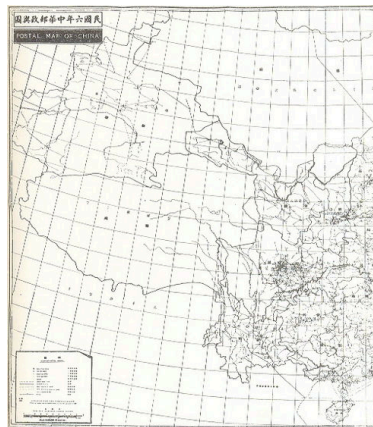


## McMahon line

The line is named after [Henry McMahon](#), foreign secretary of [British India](#) and the chief British negotiator of the conference at Simla. The bilateral agreement between Tibet and Britain was signed by McMahon on behalf of the British government and [Lonchen Shatra](#) on behalf of the Tibetan government.<sup>[37]</sup>

## 1899 to 1947

Both the Johnson-Ardagh and the Macartney-MacDonald lines were used on British maps of India.<sup>[28]</sup> Until at least 1908, the British took the Macdonald line to be the boundary,<sup>[38]</sup> but in 1911, the [Xinhai Revolution](#) resulted in the collapse of central power in China, and by the end of [World War I](#), the British officially used the Johnson Line. However they took no steps to establish outposts or assert actual control on the ground.<sup>[32]</sup> In 1927, the line was adjusted again as the government of British India abandoned the Johnson line in favor of a line along the Karakoram range further south.<sup>[32]</sup> However, the maps were not updated and still showed the Johnson Line.<sup>[32]</sup>



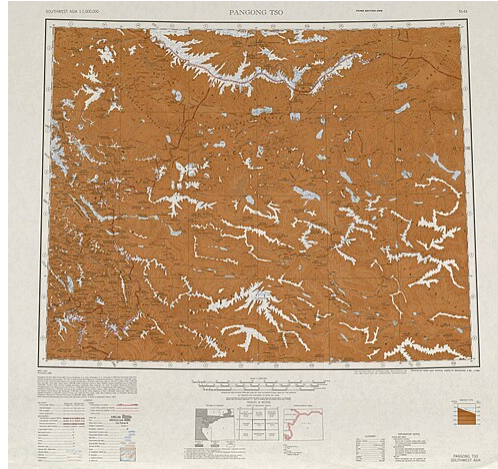
Map 7. *Postal Map of China*. A Map published by the Government of China in Peking in 1917. It shows the whole northern boundary of India more or less according to the traditional Indian alignment.

Postal map of China published by the [Republic of China](#) in 1917. The boundary in Aksai Chin is as per the Johnson line.

From 1917 to 1933, the *Postal Atlas of China*, published by the Government of China in Peking had shown the boundary in Aksai Chin as per the Johnson line, which runs along the [Kunlun Mountains](#).<sup>[33][36]</sup> The *Peking University Atlas*, published in 1925, also put the Aksai Chin in India.<sup>[39]</sup> When British officials learned of Soviet officials surveying the Aksai Chin for [Sheng Shih-tsai](#), warlord of [Xinjiang](#) in 1940–1941, they again advocated the Johnson Line. At this point the British had still made no attempts to establish outposts or control over the Aksai Chin, nor was the issue

ever discussed with the governments of China or Tibet, and the boundary remained undemarcated at India's independence.<sup>[32][40]</sup>

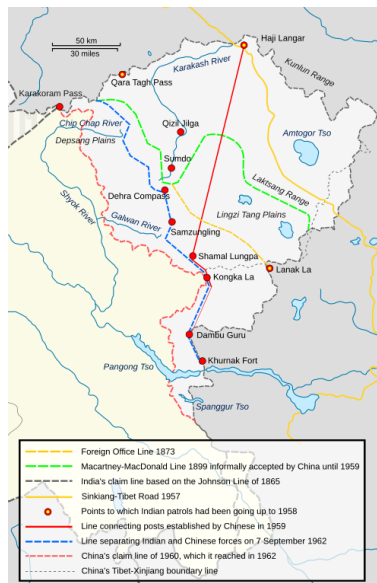
## Since 1947



Map including the Aksai Chin region (AMS, 1950)

After [Jammu and Kashmir acceded](#) to the newly independent India in October 1947, the government of India used the Johnson Line as the basis for its official boundary in the west, which included the Aksai Chin.<sup>[32]</sup> From the Karakoram Pass (which is not under dispute), the Indian claim line extends northeast of the Karakoram Mountains through the salt flats of the Aksai Chin, to set a boundary at the [Kunlun Mountains](#), and incorporating part of the [Karakash River](#) and [Yarkand River](#) watersheds. From there, it runs east along the Kunlun Mountains, before turning southwest through the Aksai Chin salt flats, through the Karakoram Mountains, and then to [Panggong Lake](#).<sup>[22]</sup>

On 1 July 1954, Prime Minister [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) wrote a memo directing that the maps of India be revised to show definite boundaries on all frontiers. Up to this point, the boundary in the Aksai Chin sector, based on the Johnson Line, had been described as "undemarcated."<sup>[34]</sup>



Map showing Chinese and Indian claims over Aksai Chin, the Macartney-MacDonald line, the Foreign Office Line, as well as the progress of Chinese forces as they occupied areas during the Sino-Indian War

Despite this region being nearly uninhabitable and having no resources, it remains strategically important for China as it connects Tibet and Xinjiang. During the 1950s, the [People's Republic of China](#) built a 1,200 km (750 mi) [China National Highway 219](#) connecting Xinjiang and western [Tibet](#), of which 179 km (112 mi) ran south of the Johnson Line through the Aksai Chin region claimed by India.<sup>[22][32]</sup> Aksai Chin was easily accessible to the Chinese, but was more difficult for the Indians on the other side of the Karakoram to reach.<sup>[22]</sup> The Indians did not learn of the existence of the road until 1957, which was confirmed when the road was shown in Chinese maps published in 1958.<sup>[41]</sup> The construction of this highway was one of the triggers for the [Sino-Indian War](#) of 1962.<sup>[42]</sup>

The Indian position, as stated by Prime Minister Nehru, was that the Aksai Chin was "part of the Ladakh region of India for centuries" and that this northern border was a "firm and definite one which was not open to discussion with anybody".<sup>[22]</sup>

The Chinese premier [Zhou Enlai](#) argued that the western border had never been delimited, that the Macartney-MacDonald Line, which left the Aksai Chin within Chinese borders was the only line ever proposed to a Chinese government, and that the Aksai Chin was already under Chinese jurisdiction, and that negotiations should take into account the status quo.<sup>[22]</sup>

In June 2006, [satellite imagery](#) on the [Google Earth](#) service revealed a 1:500<sup>[43]</sup> scale terrain model of eastern Aksai Chin and adjacent [Tibet](#), built near the town of [Huangyangtan](#), about 35 kilometres

(22 mi) southwest of [Yinchuan](#), the capital of the autonomous region of [Ningxia](#) in China.<sup>[44]</sup> A visual side-by-side comparison shows a very detailed duplication of Aksai Chin in the camp.<sup>[45]</sup> The 900 m × 700 m (3,000 ft × 2,300 ft) model was surrounded by a substantial facility, with rows of red-roofed buildings, scores of olive-coloured trucks and a large compound with elevated lookout posts and a large communications tower. Such terrain models are known to be used in military training and simulation, although usually on a much smaller scale.

Local authorities in [Ningxia](#) claim that their model of Aksai Chin is part of a tank training ground, built in 1998 or 1999.<sup>[43]</sup>

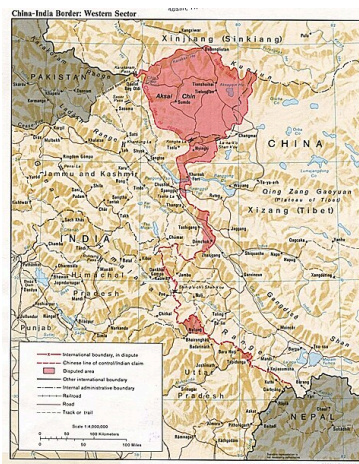
In August 2017, Indian and Chinese forces near [Pangong Tso](#) threw rocks at each other.<sup>[46][47]</sup>

On 11 September 2019, [People's Liberation Army](#) troops confronted Indian troops on the northern bank of [Pangong Lake](#).<sup>[48][49]</sup>

A continued face-off in the [2020 China–India skirmishes](#) of May and June 2020 between Indian and Chinese troops near Pangong Tso Lake culminated in a violent clash on 16 June 2020, with at least 20 deaths from the Indian side and no official reported deaths from the Chinese side. In 2021, Chinese state media reported 4 Chinese deaths.<sup>[50]</sup> Both sides claimed provocation from the other.<sup>[51][52][46][53][54][55][56]</sup>

## Geography

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A 1988 [CIA](#)-made topographical map of the western China-India border, showing Aksai Chin and other contested territories





2008 map of the Tarim River Basin



Northern plains of Aksai Chin looking towards Qitai Daban (Khitai Dawan)



A view of Aksai Chin

Aksai Chin is one of the two large disputed border areas between India and China. India claims Aksai Chin as the easternmost part of the union territory of [Ladakh](#). China claims that Aksai Chin is part of the [Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region](#) and [Tibet Autonomous Region](#). The line that separates Indian-administered areas of [Ladakh](#) from Aksai Chin is known as the [Line of Actual Control](#) (LAC) and is concurrent with the Chinese Aksai Chin claim line.

The Aksai region is a [sparsely populated region](#) with few settlements such as [Heweitan](#), [Khurnak Fort](#), [Tianshuihai](#) and [Dahongliutan](#) and [Kangxiwar](#) which lays north of it, with the latter being the forward headquarters of the Xinjiang Military Command during the [1962 Sino-Indian War](#).

Aksai Chin covers an area of approximately 38,000 square kilometres (15,000 sq mi).<sup>[57]</sup> The area is largely a vast high-altitude [desert](#) with a low point (on the [Karakash River](#)) at about 4,300 m (14,100 ft) above sea level. In the southwest, mountains up to 7,000 m (23,000 ft) extending

southeast from the [Depsang Plains](#) form the *de facto* border (Line of Actual Control) between Aksai Chin and Indian-controlled Kashmir.

In the north, the [Kunlun Range](#) separates Aksai Chin from the [Tarim Basin](#), where the rest of Hotan County is situated. According to a recent detailed Chinese map, no roads cross the Kunlun Range within Hotan Prefecture, and only one track does so, over the [Hindutash](#) Pass.<sup>[58]</sup>

Aksai Chin area has number of [endorheic basins](#) with many salt or [soda lakes](#). The major salt lakes are [Surigh Yilganing Kol](#), [Tso Tang](#), [Aksai Chin Lake](#), [Hongshan Lake](#), etc. Much of the northern part of Aksai Chin is referred to as the Soda Plains, located near Aksai Chin's largest river, the Karakash, which receives meltwater from a number of glaciers, crosses the Kunlun farther northwest, in [Pishan County](#) and enters the Tarim Basin, where it serves as one of the main sources of water for [Karakax](#) and Hotan Counties.

The western part of Aksai Chin region is drained by the Tarim River. The eastern part of the region contains several small [endorheic](#) basins. The largest of them is that of the [Aksai Chin Lake](#), which is fed by the river of the same name. The region as a whole receives little precipitation as the [Himalayas](#) and the [Karakoram](#) block the rains from the Indian [monsoon](#).

The nearby [Trans-Karakoram Tract](#) is also the subject of ongoing dispute between China and India in the [Kashmir dispute](#).<sup>[59][22]</sup>

## Demographics and economics

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Prior to 1950, the visitors of Aksai Chin were, for the most part, the occasional explorers, hunters, and nomads who passed through the area.<sup>[60][61][62][63]</sup>

Prior to European exploration in the 1860s, there were some jade mining operations on the Xinjiang side of Aksai Chin.<sup>[62][64]</sup> They were abandoned by the time European explorers reached the area.<sup>[64]</sup> In the 1860s to 1870s, in order to facilitate trade between the [Indian subcontinent](#) and [Tarim Basin](#), the British attempted to promote a caravan route via the western side of Aksai Chin as an alternative to the difficult and tariffed [Karakoram Pass](#).<sup>[65]</sup> The route, referred to as the Chang Chenmo line after the starting point in [Chang Chenmo River](#) valley, was discussed in the [House of Commons](#) in 1874.<sup>[66]</sup> In addition of being longer and higher elevation than Karakoram Pass, it also goes through the desolate desert of Aksai Chin.<sup>[65][66]</sup> By 1890s, traders had mostly given up on this route.<sup>[67]</sup>

In the 1950s, India collected salt from various lakes in Aksai Chin to study the economic feasibility of [salt mining](#) operations in the area.<sup>[68][69]</sup>

By the end of the 1950s, in addition to having constructed a road, numerous [PLA Ground Force](#) outposts were constructed in a few locations, including at [Tianwendian](#),<sup>[70]</sup> [Kongka Pass](#),<sup>[71]</sup> [Heweitan](#)<sup>[72]</sup> and [Tianshuihai](#).<sup>[73]</sup> The road was later upgraded to the [China National Highway 219](#). In the modern day, there are a few businesses along the highway serving motorists.<sup>[74]</sup>

In the 2010s, geological surveys were conducted in the Western Kunlun region, which Aksai Chin is part of.<sup>[75]</sup> [Huoshaoyun](#), a major lead-zinc deposit, and numerous smaller deposits were discovered in the region.<sup>[75]</sup> Huoshaoyun is a mountain located in Aksai Chin near the Tibetan border.<sup>[76]</sup> The [mining development](#) for Huoshaoyun started in 2017.<sup>[77][78]</sup>

## Transportation

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[China National Highway 219](#) runs through Aksai Chin connecting [Tibet](#) ([Ngari Prefecture](#)) and [Xinjiang](#) ([Hotan Prefecture](#)).

In July 2022, [Ministry of Transport of China](#) published updated *[China National Highway Network Plan](#)* that includes [China National Highway 695](#) which will go from [Lhünzê Town](#), [Lhünzê County](#), Tibet to [Mazar Township](#), [Yining County](#), Xinjiang travelling through Aksai Chin.<sup>[79][80]</sup>

## See also

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- [Annexation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China](#)
- [Arunachal Pradesh](#)
- [Changtang](#)
- [Demchok sector](#)
- [Depsang Plains](#)
- [Ladakh](#)
- [List of locations in Aksai Chin](#)
- [Nelang](#)
- [Rutog County](#)
- [Shaksgam Valley](#)
- [Trans-Karakoram Tract](#)
- [2013 Depsang standoff](#)

# Notes

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- a. Specifically the [counties](#) of [He'an](#), [Hekang](#), and [Hotan](#) in [Hotan Prefecture](#).
- b. Specifically [Rutog County](#) in [Ngari Prefecture](#).

## References

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1. The application of the term "administered" to the various regions of [Kashmir](#) and a mention of the Kashmir dispute is supported by the [tertiary sources](#) (a) through (e), reflecting [due weight](#) in the coverage. Although "controlled" and "held" are also applied neutrally to the names of the disputants or to the regions administered by them, as evidenced in sources (h) through (i) below, "held" is also considered politicized usage, as is the term "occupied," (see (j) below).
  - (a) [Kashmir, region Indian subcontinent](https://www.britannica.com/place/Kashmir-region-Indian-subcontinent) (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Kashmir-region-Indian-subcontinent>) , Encyclopaedia Britannica, retrieved 15 August 2019 (subscription required) Quote: "Kashmir, region of the northwestern Indian subcontinent ... has been the subject of dispute between India and Pakistan since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The northern and western portions are administered by Pakistan and comprise three areas: Azad Kashmir, Gilgit, and Baltistan, the last two being part of a territory called the Northern Areas. Administered by India are the southern and southeastern portions, which constitute the state of Jammu and Kashmir but are slated to be split into two union territories.";
  - (b) Pletcher, Kenneth, [Aksai Chin, Plateau Region, Asia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Aksai-Chin) (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Aksai-Chin>) , Encyclopaedia Britannica, retrieved 16 August 2019 (subscription required) Quote: "Aksai Chin, Chinese (Pinyin) Aksayqin, portion of the Kashmir region, at the northernmost extent of the Indian subcontinent in south-central Asia. It constitutes nearly all the territory of the Chinese-administered sector of Kashmir that is claimed by India to be part of the Ladakh area of Jammu and Kashmir state.";
  - (c) "Kashmir", [Encyclopedia Americana](https://books.google.com/books?id=L_cWAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA328) ([https://books.google.com/books?id=L\\_cWAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA328](https://books.google.com/books?id=L_cWAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA328)) , Scholastic Library Publishing, 2006, p. 328, [ISBN 978-0-7172-0139-6](#) C. E Bosworth, University of Manchester Quote: "KASHMIR, kash'mer, the northernmost region of the Indian subcontinent, administered partly by India, partly by Pakistan, and partly by China. The region has been the subject of a bitter dispute between India and Pakistan since they became independent in 1947";
  - (d) Osmańczyk, Edmund Jan (2003), [Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements: G to M](https://books.google.com/books?id=fSIMXHmDfkkC&pg=PA1191) (<https://books.google.com/books?id=fSIMXHmDfkkC&pg=PA1191>) , Taylor & Francis, pp. 1191–, [ISBN 978-0-415-93922-5](#) Quote: "Jammu and Kashmir: Territory in northwestern India, subject to a dispute between India and Pakistan. It has borders with



Pakistan and China."

(e) Talbot, Ian (2016), *A History of Modern South Asia: Politics, States, Diasporas* ([https://books.google.com/books?id=eNg\\_CwAAQBAJ&pg=PA28](https://books.google.com/books?id=eNg_CwAAQBAJ&pg=PA28)) , Yale University Press, pp. 28–29, ISBN 978-0-300-19694-8 Quote: "We move from a disputed international border to a dotted line on the map that represents a military border not recognized in international law. The line of control separates the Indian and Pakistani administered areas of the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.";

(f) Skutsch, Carl (2015) [2007], "China: Border War with India, 1962", in Ciment, James (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II* (2nd ed.), London and New York: Routledge, p. 573, ISBN 978-0-7656-8005-1, "The situation between the two nations was complicated by the 1957–1959 uprising by Tibetans against Chinese rule. Refugees poured across the Indian border, and the Indian public was outraged. Any compromise with China on the border issue became impossible. Similarly, China was offended that India had given political asylum to the Dalai Lama when he fled across the border in March 1959. In late 1959, there were shots fired between border patrols operating along both the ill-defined McMahon Line and in the Aksai Chin."

(g) Clary, Christopher (2022), *The Difficult Politics of Peace: Rivalry in Modern South Asia*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, p. 109, ISBN 9780197638408, "Territorial Dispute: The situation along the Sino-Indian frontier continued to worsen. In late July (1959), an Indian reconnaissance patrol was blocked, "apprehended," and eventually expelled after three weeks in custody at the hands of a larger Chinese force near Khurnak Fort in Aksai Chin. ... Circumstances worsened further in October 1959, when a major clash at Kongka Pass in eastern Ladakh led to nine dead and ten captured Indian border personnel, making it by far the most serious Sino-Indian clash since India's independence."

(h) Bose, Sumantra (2009), *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=3ACMe9WBdNAC&pg=PA294>) , Harvard University Press, pp. 294, 291, 293, ISBN 978-0-674-02855-5 Quote: "J&K: Jammu and Kashmir. The former princely state that is the subject of the Kashmir dispute. Besides IJK (Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir. The larger and more populous part of the former princely state. It has a population of slightly over 10 million, and comprises three regions: Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and Ladakh.) and AJK ('Azad' (Free) Jammu and Kashmir. The more populous part of Pakistani-controlled J&K, with a population of approximately 2.5 million.), it includes the sparsely populated "Northern Areas" of Gilgit and Baltistan, remote mountainous regions which are directly administered, unlike AJK, by the Pakistani central authorities, and some high-altitude uninhabitable tracts under Chinese control."

(i) Fisher, Michael H. (2018), *An Environmental History of India: From Earliest Times to the Twenty-First Century* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=kZVuDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA166>) ,

Cambridge University Press, p. 166, [ISBN 978-1-107-11162-2](#) Quote: "Kashmir's identity remains hotly disputed with a UN-supervised "Line of Control" still separating Pakistani-held Azad ("Free") Kashmir from Indian-held Kashmir.";

(j) Snedden, Christopher (2015), *Understanding Kashmir and Kashmiris* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=5amKCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA10>) , Oxford University Press, p. 10, [ISBN 978-1-84904-621-3](#) Quote:"Some politicised terms also are used to describe parts of J&K. These terms include the words 'occupied' and 'held'."

2. Pletcher, Kenneth. "Aksai Chin | History, Conflict, & Map" (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Aksai-Chin>) . *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. Retrieved 24 July 2025. "Aksai Chin, portion of the Kashmir region, at the northernmost extent of the Indian subcontinent in south-central Asia. It constitutes nearly all the territory of the Chinese-administered sector of Kashmir that is claimed by India to be part of Ladakh union territory."
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63. Lamb, Alastair (1964). *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=GfgNAQAAMAAJ>) . Chatham House Online Archive. Oxford University Press. p. 112. "From 1927 to 1950, of course, Aksai Chin was a region of absolutely absolutely no importance. [...] no one visited it except the occasional explorer, big-game hunter and nomad."
64. Robert Shaw (1871). *Visits to High Tartary, Yârkand, and Kâshgar (formerly Chinese Tartary): And Return Journey Over the Karakoram Pass* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=QHpCAAAIAAJ>) . J. Murray. p. 98. "[Oct 29] beginning of the soda-plain [Oct 30] Karakash River [Nov 3] At a corner on the south side there is a piece of path with a bit of wall built up to support it, and yesterday we passed a group of stone huts: all signs that this road was once in use. (We found afterwards that this valley had formerly been frequented by the Chinese, who objected jade from hence. This industry is now extinct, as the Mussulmans of Tookistan have no taste for ornaments of this stone.) [Nov 5] plains full of salt craters"

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