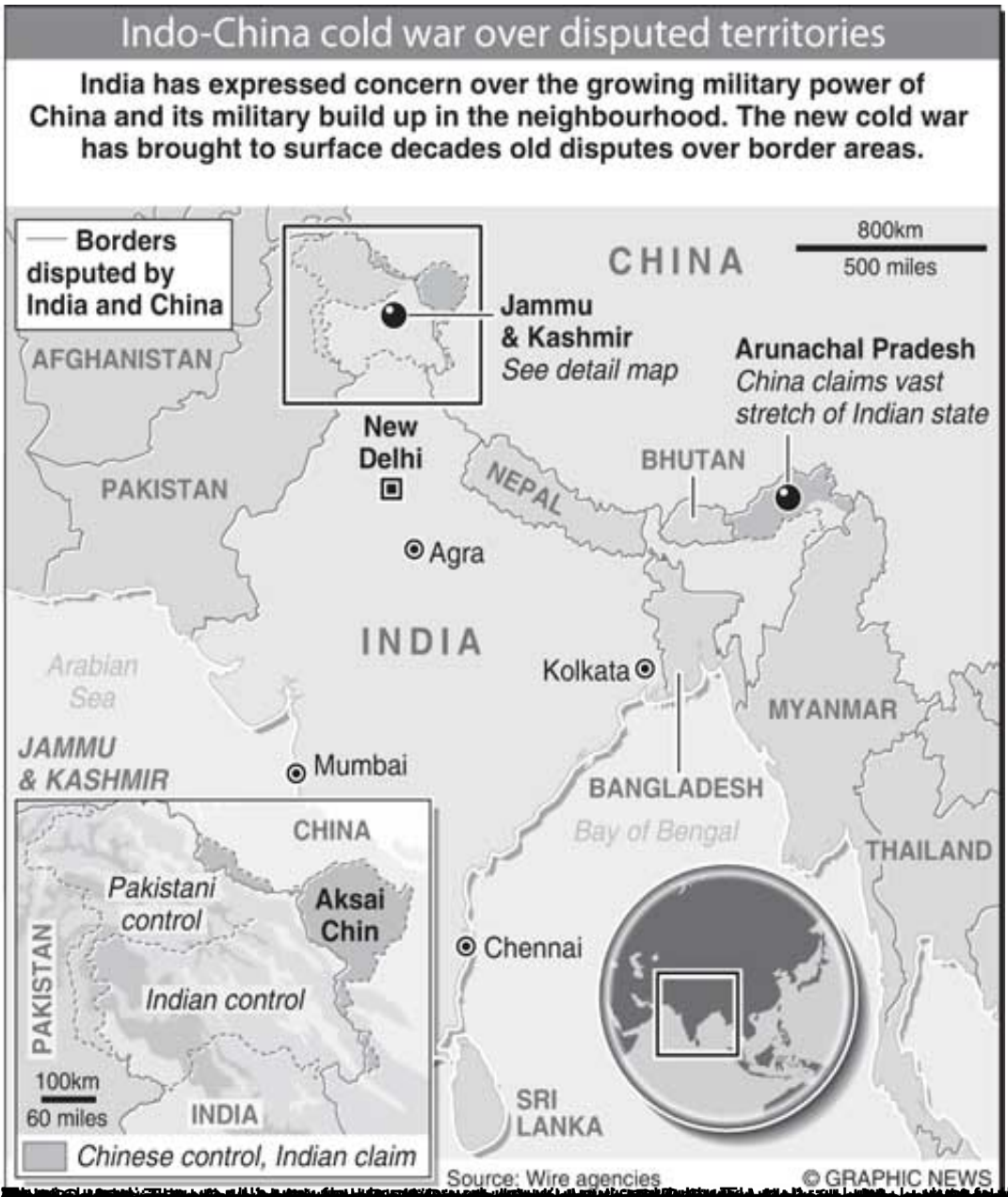


India has apparently lost its cold war with China, or at least the current phase of it. What is disturbing to India is not only China's superior military power and stronger economy, but also China's intrusion into what was once regarded as India's backyard.

The development has rendered the so-called Indira doctrine ineffective or obsolete. The doctrine, formulated during the Indira Gandhi premiership, made it clear to regional countries that they should seek help from within the region — meaning India — before they approached any outside power. In terms of the doctrine, India opposed the presence of superpowers in the Indian Ocean which it regarded as its backyard. Small countries in the region were punished for defying the doctrine. It happened to Sri Lanka in the early 1980s. India armed, trained and financed the Sri Lanka's separatist rebellion. In the late 1980s Nepal tried to defy the doctrine and was punished. New Delhi economically suffocated the land-locked Himalayan nation by closing down almost all the trade routes.

Today India may be much stronger than what it was three decades ago. But its power is confined within its borders. In contrast, China has been increasing its soft and hard power and making its presence felt in South Asia and also throughout the world in so subtle a manner that India could do almost nothing except make belated remarks. Recent statements made by Indian leaders resemble the screams of a man who suddenly wakes up from his slumber under a tree and finds his belongings are gone.



Japan-China boat dispute

China has warned Japan that ties between the two countries could suffer following Tokyo's seizure of a Chinese trawler which collided with two Japanese patrol boats in disputed waters



September 7: Collision took place near disputed island chain known as *Senkaku* by Japan and *Diaoyu* by China

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