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THE
SINO-

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BORDER
DISPUTE

SECTION 2:1959-61

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CIA/RSS

REFERENCE TITLE POLO XVI

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THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

SECTION II. (1959-1961)

This is the second in a series of three working papers on the Sino-Indian border dispute. This Section II deals with the period from late 1959 to early 1961. Section III will cover the remainder of 1961 and most of 1962, through the Chinese attack of 20 October.

Useful comments by P. D. Davis and H. G. Hagerty of OCI have been incorporated. The DDI/RS would welcome comment, addressed either to the Chief or to the writer, Arthur Cohen, [redacted]

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SECTION II. (1959-1961)

Summary

By fall 1959 the Chinese leaders were convinced of the need for negotiations with Nehru, in order to prevent their international prestige--including their position in the world Communist movement--from deteriorating. Shortly after the August 1959 clashes they also recognized, or were made aware by Indian party boss Ghosh, that Nehru's advisers might use these skirmishes to push him and the entire government further to the "right"--i.e. towards a militant anti-China policy and a willingness to accept some degree of American support in this policy. The practical strategic danger such a development posed was that the arc of U.S. bases "encircling" China would be extended through India. They continued to see Nehru as still having a "good side" (anti-Western) as well as a "bad side" (anti-Chinese) and therefore as possibly still amenable to persuasion through personal diplomacy on the matter of a border settlement. This meshed well with their new-found concern with preventing the establishment of a military government in New Delhi.

As they moved toward negotiations, however, they took an irrational action which temporarily clouded the atmosphere for talks in New Delhi. The Chinese physically and mentally coerced the leader of a small Indian police party they had captured during a clash in October 1959, in order to secure a "confession" that the Indians had sparked the incident. When it became public knowledge that the Indian prisoner had been manipulated by Maoist methods used in forced confession, popular and official Indian resentment caused a reaction which hurt Peiping more than the charge that Chinese troops had fired first. Having learned the lesson, the Chinese have since made a special point of their "brotherly" concern for Indian prisoners.

By late fall, Chou began to press Nehru hard to begin talks with him. During an exchange of ministerial letters, Nehru raised certain pre-conditions for talks, stipulating on 16 November the requirement that the Chinese withdraw from Longju and that both sides withdraw from the disputed

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area in Ladakh. In the latter area, Indian troops would withdraw south and west to the line which Peiping claimed on its 1956 maps, and Chinese troops would withdraw north and east of the line claimed by India on its maps. In effect, Nehru's stipulation would be tantamount to a Chinese withdrawal from the Aksai Plain and the Sinkiang-Tibet road, and the Chinese said as much. Chou En-lai's reply of 17 December went right to the point of realpolitik, arguing from actual Chinese possession, complaining that Nehru's concession would be only "theoretical" as India had no personnel there to withdraw, and insisting on the area's importance for "it has been a traffic artery linking up the vast regions of Sinkiang and Tibet." The Indian leaders indicated some sensitivity on Chou's additional point that New Delhi was "utterly unaware" of Chinese roadbuilding in the area until September 1958--"proving" continuous Chinese jurisdiction--and informed their embassies to take the line that intrusions cannot give a neighboring country any legal right to an area "merely because such intrusions were not resisted by us or had not come to our notice earlier." Turning a conciliatory side, Chou in this 17 December letter stated that following the 21 October 1959 clash Peiping had stopped sending out patrols, and he requested a personal meeting with Nehru to establish "principles" for negotiating the dispute. Chou then hinted that Peiping would be willing to exchange its claim to the area south of the McMahon line for New Delhi's claim to the Aksai Plain. Nehru was reluctant to meet personally with Chou, and persisted in this attitude until January 1960, when, on the advice of his ambassadors and certain cabinet members, he agreed to drop his pre-conditions.

In this period, Khrushchev made several public statements in which he deplored the border dispute, clearly implying that Chinese military actions were jeopardizing Moscow's relations with New Delhi. In November, he described the dispute as a "sad and stupid story"--a remark which angered the Chinese leaders--and hinted that he favored a compromise. Soviet officials tried to create the impression among Indian diplomats that Khrushchev had intervened directly with Peiping on New Delhi's behalf, but, when pressed for explicit proof, scaled down their remarks to suggest that the Russians had merely urged talks on Peiping as soon as

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possible. The Russians, in fact, had no influence with the Chinese leaders. Foreign Secretary Dutt later told an American official that Khrushchev had been no help with the Chinese "at all," remaining just as neutral in private as in public and hoping that these two "friends" of the Soviet Union would settle their dispute. Although the Chinese leaders clearly viewed Khrushchev's public remarks as hostile to them, and Peiping subsequently claimed that Sino-Soviet polemics logically followed the September 1959 TASS statement of neutrality between China and India, the Soviet position on the Sino-Indian dispute in fact remained a peripheral issue in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

In January 1960, the Chinese moved quickly to bring the Burmese to Peiping for a Sino-Burmese border agreement, in order to provide an "example" of how a friendly country should settle its border problems with China. Prior to that time, the Chinese for several years had been parrying Burmese requests for a settlement, but, once the decision to bring Nehru to negotiations had been made (October-November 1959), the Chinese leaders apparently calculated that a speedy border agreement with Prime Minister Ne Win would make it more difficult for Nehru to reject similar talks. The Chinese also used the Sino-Burmese agreement against their critics in the Soviet bloc, and Ne Win speculated on 30 January that the Chinese leaders had been "quite anxious" to settle the border dispute with Burma prior to Khrushchev's stopover in New Delhi, trying thus to undercut Nehru's argument to the Soviet leader on the intransigence of the Chinese on the border issue.

Constantly under pressure from Parliament and the press not to take a soft line with Peiping, Nehru was compelled to make even an agreement "to meet" with Chou appear as part of a hard, anti-China policy. Nehru's 5 February 1960 letter to Chou agreed to a meeting but not to substantive negotiations, as the Chinese claim that the entire border had never been delimited was "incorrect...and on that basis there can be no negotiations." Nevertheless, he invited Chou to meet with him in New Delhi to explore every avenue for a settlement, and he defended this formal invitation in Parliament by calmly insisting that no policy change was involved: he had always said he was prepared

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"to meet" anybody, anywhere. It was Nehru's intention merely to determine what Chou "really wants"--as Foreign Secretary Dutt put it--and to probe Peiping's long-term intentions on the border. The firmness of Nehru's letter of invitation was intended partly to scotch rumors that he and his advisers were willing to exchange the Aksai Plain for formal Chinese recognition of the McMahon line--rumors fed by Krishna Menon's slip in a speech to the effect that India would not yield "...any part of our administered territory along the border," i.e. would remain silent on areas occupied by the Chinese. In February and early March, there were other indications that Nehru was looking for some way to accept Chinese use of the Sinkiang-Tibet road while retaining nominal Indian sovereignty over the Aksai Plain.

The Chinese leaders apparently read these early signs as tantamount to an invitation to further probe the apparent soft spot--relating to the Aksai Plain--in the Indian position, and prepared for substantive negotiations rather than meaningless "exploratory" talks. They attempted to make credible their expressed willingness to negotiate a settlement, not only by agreeing to send Chou to India in the face of two Nehru refusals to go to China but also by acting quickly to sign a border agreement with Nepal in March, just two months after Chou's success with the Burmese. But when Chou indicated to Nehru his intention to spend six days in New Delhi (despite Nehru's busy schedule) and to come at the head of a high-level delegation, Nehru and his advisers were taken aback. Nehru's advisers noted that whereas New Delhi was approaching the Chou-Nehru meeting merely in terms of improving relations, Chinese notes and Chou's acceptance letter had looked toward a concrete border "settlement." When asked what Chou would be doing in New Delhi for six days, Nehru replied that Chou was quite capable of talking steadily for three or four hours at a stretch. When Nehru in April contemplated and discussed the line to take during the anticipated bargaining Chou would conduct, the advice he received from all sides was to be adamant. Thus Chou, who in late April came with a business-like delegation and a real hope of gaining agreement in principle that the border was not delimited and was therefore subject to negotiation, was confronted by an Indian prime minister who had already rejected bargaining.

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In probing the presumed soft spot in the Indian position, Chou departed from diplomatic precedent, working over Nehru and his top advisers, including Krishna Menon, in separate, private, man-to-man sessions. In each session, Chou ran into a stone wall of opposition--even with his "old friend," Menon--and after three days of almost uninterrupted discussions, he had made no dent in the Indian position on Ladakh; in turn, he rejected Nehru's suggestion that Chinese troops be withdrawn from "occupied" areas. The most Chou was able to salvage from his near-total failure was to be able to give an impression that the talks would be continued. The Chinese clearly underestimated Nehru's adamancy in April 1960. They may have read the signs of compromise in New Delhi correctly in February and March, but they carried that estimate into late April, well after Nehru's back had been stiffened decisively by his advisers.

The April 1960 Chou-Nehru talks seem in retrospect to have been Peiping's last chance for a negotiated settlement with Nehru. Nehru rejected Chou's proposal that they meet again, and refused to agree formally either to a "line" of actual control or to stop sending out Indian patrols. Nehru agreed merely to a temporary, informal "understanding" to halt patrolling and to turn the issue over to subordinate officials, who were to meet to examine the historical and legal evidence of each side and draft a joint report, but who were not empowered to recommend a solution.

The border experts' talks in middle and late 1960 served as an instrument of the Chinese effort to perpetuate an impression of continuing negotiations, but they eventually proved detrimental to Peiping's historical and legal case. By the end of the third and final session in December 1960, the Indian experts were convinced that the vaunted Chinese case had proved to be in fact a weak one. The Indian case, owing much to the excellent and extensive administrative records the British had maintained in the India Office Library in London, and published in a detailed Report available to the general public, was impressive. It was argued adroitly on many points of fact (i.e. documentary evidence), logic, and international law, demonstrating that New Delhi could produce a respectable legal case

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when British-educated, first-class legal experts and historians were called on. However, New Delhi's ability to drive home effectively to laymen specially selected points was inferior to Peiping's, and Indian officials later commented that India's position in the dispute had not been understood in Southeast Asia, partly because "All-India Radio is no match for Peiping Radio." That the Chinese themselves were troubled and recognized that the Indian case was at least as strong as their own is suggested by their failing to publish the experts' reports, and by their limiting knowledge of the reports' contents to certain CCP members and deputies of the National People's Congress rather than distributing it to the general public and foreigners. (As of mid-1963, Peiping has not made generally available the texts of the separate Indian and Chinese experts' reports.)

Following the Chou-Nehru talks, the Chinese leaders apparently followed a two-fold policy of ceasing regular patrol activity along the border while on occasion sending out reconnaissance parties in the immediate vicinity of their border posts. The primary goal was to reduce further the possibility of armed clashes, clashes which had hurt them politically and had spoiled any chance they may have had of negotiating a settlement. The rationale of a policy of only limited reconnaissance was set forth in a captured Tibetan document of November 1960, which warned PLA personnel to remain cool, not to replace political policy with emotions, otherwise

We would not look to the larger situation and would not ask for orders or wait for directions from above before opening fire and striking back. In that case, we might gain a greater military victory, but politically we would fall into the trap of the other side and would cause only great injury to the party and state--the biggest mistake.

The document also suggested a Chinese estimate as of November 1960 that New Delhi did not intend to re-take large areas of Chinese-held border territory because the Indians did

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not have the military capability to do so. However, the cessation of regular forward patrolling did not mean an end to the cautious and surreptitious construction of certain new posts at specially selected points, particularly in the more inaccessible valleys in Ladakh. In addition to this stealthy forward movement of individual posts, the Chinese border experts gave the Indian experts in 1960 a new map of the Chinese-claimed "line"--a "line" which in 1960 was at points well to the west of the map-alignment of the same area which Chou had shown Nehru in 1956.

Regarding Indian protests in 1960 that Chinese planes were violating Indian airspace, Chou told Nehru in April that India need only shoot one of the planes down to see that these were not Chinese Communist aircraft. However, the Indian leaders continued to protest, reluctant to believe Peiping's claim that the planes belonged to the U.S., or reluctant to state publicly that they believed the claim.

As of January 1961, the Chinese strategy remained: to work for a rapprochement with New Delhi, to treat India as still nonaligned, and to avoid personal attacks on Nehru. The prospect of a major Sino-Indian war apparently was considered only as an unlikely eventuality, which, if it were to occur, would completely change the nature of the border struggle, then regarded as political. According to a Chinese Communist Foreign Ministry report of January 1961, it was Mao himself who provided the general principle of diplomatic forbearance for the period: "In 1960, Chairman Mao again instructed us repeatedly that in our struggle, some leeway must be provided /to the opponent/." This was conceived as the key part of Mao's dual policy of "unity and struggle" toward India, at times taking a hard line with New Delhi and at other times taking a soft line. The Chinese may have seen this dual policy as flexible, but to New Delhi China was becoming India's most important enemy and the policy of "unity and struggle" toward India meant nothing but "struggle." It may be, therefore, that the Chinese leaders, including Mao, by early 1961 believed that they had some room for future diplomatic maneuvering with New Delhi, when in fact such room no longer existed.

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THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

SECTION II. (1959-1961)

Prelude to Negotiations: Fall 1959 - January 1960

The Chinese leaders recognized, or were made aware,* shortly after the August 1959 clashes, that Nehru's advisers might use these skirmishes to push him and the entire government further to the "right"--i.e. towards a militant anti-China policy and a willingness to accept some degree of American support in this policy. The practical strategic danger such a development posed was that the arc of U.S. bases "encircling" China would be extended through India. Both Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi reportedly alluded to the danger in their talks with Indian party boss Ajoy Ghosh in Peiping in early October 1959. At the 8 October meeting with Ghosh, Liu reportedly stated:

We have taken very seriously the establishment of military rule in Pakistan. There is an entire game being planned by the U.S. imperialists to capture major Asian nations, especially the countries which are neighbors of China and the Soviet Union. Burma, Japan,

*The Indian Communist Party (CPI) Chairman, S.A. Dange, later stated that the Indian party had warned the CCP, in letters of 20 August and 13 September 1959, that border developments were providing the "right wing" with the opportunity "to pull India towards the Anglo-American camp," and that the 13 September letter had urged the Chinese to begin negotiations. (Dange: "Neither Revisionism Nor Dogmatism Is Our Guide," New Age, supplement, 21 April 1963. For an account of Soviet influence on Ghosh in connection with the content of these letters, see ESAU XVI-62: The Indian Communist Party and the Sino-Soviet Dispute.)

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Pakistan, Nepal, Ceylon, India and other countries like Indonesia are the major Asian countries by which the two great socialist countries, the Soviet Union and China, are being surrounded. In this way, by capturing the Asian countries, the U.S. imperialists want to encircle the socialist camp militarily.

In Pakistan and Burma, they have already succeeded, and they are still trying to repeat the same episode in Indonesia. After the successful coup in Pakistan, the Americans are now trying to make the same thing happen in India.

This persistent concern with "encirclement" by military regimes combined with General Thimayya's attempt to force Krishna Menon's removal as defense minister apparently raised real fears among the Chinese leaders (as it had among the Indian Communists) that India was on the brink and "must be snatched away from going into the U.S. imperialist camp" (Liu to Ghosh, 8 October meeting).

Regarding their appraisal of Nehru's political attitude, Mao is reported to have told Ghosh on 5 October that the Chinese recognize--as Ghosh did--a difference between Nehru and certain of his advisers. The latter, particularly those in the Ministry of External Affairs and including General Thimayya, were "rightists" who wanted to exploit the border dispute to help the U.S. "isolate China." According to Liu Shao-chi's remarks to Ghosh on 8 October, Nehru might decide in favor of these "rightists," but for the present all efforts should be directed toward preventing him from doing so. Regarding their appraisal of Nehru's "class background," Liu stated that the Chinese leaders see the Indian prime minister as "a reactionary and basically anti-Communist; he is not even like Sukarno, who has appreciated the Indonesian Communist Party." Despite this doctrinal characterization, they seem to have acted on the basis of political expediency, centering their attention on Nehru's political attitude within the Indian leadership --that is, on their view of him as still different from the

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Indian military figures such as Thimayya, who were unalterably "hard" on the matter of policy toward Peiping.

The Chinese prescription for preventing the establishment of a military dominated government in India, avoiding thereby a repetition of developments in Pakistan and Burma, was two-fold and seemed to exclude military pressure. According to Mao and Liu, there must be

- (1) CPI efforts to develop more support for Nehru against military "right-ists"; and
- (2) settlement of the entire border dispute through Sino-Indian negotiations--a course which would require first a "proper atmosphere" and then the "pressure of the masses" on Nehru to negotiate.

The first part of the prescription continued to impose on the Indian party, which was already split into a pro-Soviet and a pro-Chinese faction, the dilemma of trying to support Nehru's policy while avoiding anti-Chinese statements. The neutral stand taken by the Indian party on the border issue provided it only a temporary refuge, and on 14 November 1959, under the pressure of public opinion, the Communists finally came out in support of India's claim on the McMahon line. However, in its important resolution, the Indian party refrained from condemning Chinese military action on the border, equivocated on the matter of Ladakh, and insisted on "no pre-conditions" for talks.

The second part of the prescription required a major Chinese Communist diplomatic effort. However, Mao and Liu had told Ghosh of their desire not to appear "weak" in calling for negotiations. They were aware that some Indian troops had been moved up to border posts on the Indian side, and they apparently intended in October 1959 to have the PLA increase its own presence on the Chinese side. Chinese troops in October were directed to warn Indian border-post personnel to retire from the border area. Under these circumstances, an appeal from Peiping for immediate talks--along

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the lines requested by the CPI with Soviet encouragement-- would, in the Chinese view, embolden rather than discourage the Indian leaders in their effort to firm up their border posts. The Chinese leaders insisted to Ghosh that negotiations must await a "proper atmosphere" in India and that when circumstances were ripe for talks there must be no Indian "prior conditions."* They wanted to approach negotiations in a series of steps, in the course of which Sino-Indian tensions were expected to ease. When Chou finally wrote to Nehru on 19 October suggesting that Vice President Radhakrishnan visit Peiping, he indicated that such a visit "might serve as a starting point for negotiations." When the letter was delivered by the Chinese ambassador on 24 October, Nehru and the vice president were in an angry mood and Nehru turned the proposal down because Chinese troops had shot up a patrol of Indian border police on 21 October. This incident made it necessary for the Chinese to reconsider the step by step approach to talks.

In his 7 November letter to Nehru, Chou indicated that talks were now an urgent matter and requested that the Indian prime minister meet with him "in the immediate future" to discuss a border settlement. Chou also indicated his concern about the possibility of future clashes. He stated that the "most important duty" was for both sides to work for the complete elimination of the possibility "of any border clash in the future," and suggested that in order to create "a favorable atmosphere" for settlement of the border issue, both Indian and Chinese troops should withdraw 12½ miles from the McMahon line in the east and the line of actual control in the west. This suggestion, he

*They thus rejected Nehru's stipulation of 26 September that, before talks could begin, the Chinese must withdraw their troops "from a number of posts which you have opened in recent months at Spanggur, Mandal, and one or two other places in eastern Ladakh." Mao and Liu told Ghosh, however, that they were willing to exchange ownership of NEFA for part of Ladakh, accepting the de facto McMahon line with certain minor adjustments.

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asserted, was merely an extension to the entire border of an earlier Indian proposal (note of 10 September 1959) that neither side send its troops into Longju. Actually, Chou's suggestion that troops withdraw, leaving a demilitarized zone under "civil administrative personnel and unarmed police," was a refinement of his own 8 September proposal for a return to the "long-existing status quo" under which the Chinese accepted the McMahon line de facto while retaining unchallenged possession of northeastern Ladakh. Chou's view of military disengagement along the border included no real Chinese concessions. His letter indicated that a mutual, rather than a unilateral, withdrawal was necessary; Chou in this way tried to break the impasse created by Nehru's stipulation that Chinese troops must be pulled back from certain outposts in Ladakh before negotiations.

Chou's letter left Nehru with the choice of accepting the mutual withdrawal proposal or appearing the intransigent party. However, it was not an attempt to stall any further on the matter of beginning ministerial talks.

Nehru's first response indicated that the atmosphere in India was still not ripe for bargaining, nor were his advisers disposed to do so. Cabinet members at the 9 November Congress Working Committee meeting recorded their opinion that adequate steps should indeed be taken to prevent further clashes, but these steps should not affect India's security or involve any acceptance of "Chinese aggression." That is, Nehru's stipulation of 26 September, regarding Chinese withdrawals prior to negotiations, still held. However, the Indian leaders did not slam the door: they informed the press that Nehru on 9 November had stated that "the spirit of the Chinese letter is not bad."

At this time, when the Chinese leaders were moving toward negotiations, they indulged in a bit of irrational Maoist gaucherie which clouded rather than cleared the atmosphere. Through a Foreign Ministry note, the Chinese had informed the Indian ambassador on 12 November that Chinese "frontier guards" were prepared to turn over the 10 Indian "soldiers" (New Delhi insisted they were border police) captured by them and the bodies of the nine who had been killed. The Indians were handed over on 14 November

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near the Kongka Pass together with their arms and ammunition, 20 days after they had been captured. New Delhi's suspicion that the Chinese had been handling the captured police in a typical Maoist manner, attempting to coerce them into seeing things Peiping's way, was confirmed. At the prisoner-return ceremony, Karam Singh, the leader of the captured Indian group, waved goodbye to his Chinese "brothers," according to an NCNA dispatch, and according to the leftist president of the India-USSR Society for Cultural Relations, Baliga, who had had two long interviews with Chou En-lai in Peiping in early November, Chou claimed that Karam Singh had "confessed" that the Chinese troops had not used mortars in the 21 October clash as India had alleged. Baliga told American officials in Hong Kong on 11 November that he was convinced the release of the Indian prisoners had been delayed until the Chinese were certain their brainwashing had been completed. When it became publicly known* that they had been "interrogated" in a special Maoist way and that Karam Singh had been forced to "confess,"** a wave of anger swept Parliament and the Indian press, nullifying any propaganda gains the Chinese may have made or thought they had made by the "fraternal" release of the prisoners with their weapons.

*There was little public awareness of the matter in early November, but in mid-December, the full account of the Maoist treatment of the prisoners, when placed before Parliament, caused a sharp public reaction against Peiping.

**In view of their desire to create a "proper atmosphere" in India as a prelude to negotiations, the physical and mental coercion of the policeman, Karam Singh, was not completely rational. By this treatment they were seeking to dispel the widespread assumption of a localized, Chinese-initiated border skirmish, but by the "confession" of an obviously manipulated prisoner. Popular and official Indian resentment against this blatant manipulation became more important than the issue of which side had sparked the patrol clash.

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New Delhi's note of 4 November had provided the Chinese "interrogators" with a target. The note had stated that "The suggestion that the Indian police party, armed only with rifles, would attack a heavily armed Chinese force strongly entrenched on a hill-top above them, and equipped with mortars and grenades, cannot be accepted by any reasonable person." It was to this specific charge of heavy weapons that the Chinese had directed their forced-confession activity with the Indian prisoners. Both sides had been acting to support their version of the 21 October clash. When New Delhi announced on 1 November that the Indian Army would take over control of border posts in Ladakh, it stressed that hitherto these posts had been manned by police detachments armed only with rifles. For its part, Peiping (note of 26 December 1959) tried to counter the Indian assertion that the Chinese were stronger in number and arms by claiming that the "Chinese patrol numbered 14 only and carried light arms alone" while the Indians "carried light and heavy machine guns and other weapons." Regarding the troublesome fact that the Indians lost more men in the clash than the Chinese, Peiping had already "explained" (statement of 26 October) that just as in the August 1959 clash, the lighter losses of the Chinese "proves that on both occasions, the Chinese side was on the defensive." The chop-logic conclusion was that "Anybody with a little knowledge of military affairs knows that generally speaking the offensive side always suffers more casualties than the defensive side." []

After the release of the prisoners, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs issued a statement (17 November) complaining that preliminary reports from the prisoners, including Karam Singh, indicated that while in Chinese custody they were "kept under severe living conditions" and subjected to constant interrogation, pressure, and threats in an attempt to force them "to make statements desired by their captors." Karam Singh's personal account of how the Chinese compelled him to "confess" is contained in New Delhi's White Paper No. III on the border dispute, pages 10-22.

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The Indian leaders did not accept Chou's proposals for ministerial-level talks and a mutual troop pullback, and they countered by stipulating a new set of pre-conditions for negotiations. Nehru's answer to Chou's 7 November letter was drafted primarily by Home Minister Pant and reviewed by the Prime Minister before it was dispatched on 16 November. As preliminary stipulations for negotiations, it advanced the following proposals and for the following reasons:

(1) Chinese withdrawal from Longju, with India ensuring that it will not be re-occupied by Indian forces. (This was stipulated because it was in "our possession" and "our personnel were forcibly ousted by the Chinese...therefore they should withdraw," [redacted])

(2) Mutual Indian and Chinese withdrawal from the entire disputed area in Ladakh. Indian troops would withdraw south and west to the line which China claimed on its 1956 maps and Chinese troops would withdraw north and east to the line claimed by India on its maps. (This required the Chinese to withdraw from Aksai Plain, the area traversed by the Sinkiang-Tibet road, imposing a very small burden on the Indians, as they had not yet moved any regular army or additional police-administrative personnel into the area.)*

*By 11 November, Ministry of External Affairs officials had drafted the reply to Chou's 7 November letter, but it was subject to Nehru's approval upon his return to New Delhi after a 5-day trip. [redacted]

[redacted] the Indian officials had indicated in the draft that they were prepared to concede Chinese occupation of the Aksai Plain but by civil personnel only and on condition that New Delhi's version of a mutual withdrawal in Ladakh were accepted. In the letter as finally approved by Nehru and (continued on page 9)

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(3) Personal talks with Chou En-lai are acceptable, but "preliminary steps" should first be taken to reach an "interim understanding" to ease tensions quickly. (This was intended to sidestep a Chinese effort to rush Nehru into "summit" talks with Chou and to permit special representatives with detailed information to argue with the Chinese over specific claims.)

(4) A mutual 12½-mile withdrawal all along the border is unnecessary, as no clashes would occur if both sides refrained from sending out patrols. India has already halted patrolling. (This was intended to retain [redacted]

[redacted] all posts on the McMahon line, which are favorably situated on "high hill-tops" and are supplied by air, to prevent the 12½-mile proposed fallback from leaving new posts 5-days march from the NEFA border, and to retain a "large majority" of the passes which open from Tibet into India. If no settlement were reached, "it would be impossible for us to establish the status quo in all these places and easy for the Chinese to come down and occupy them.")

Foreign Secretary Dutt reportedly anticipated that the Chinese would attempt to compromise on these proposals by accepting the Longju stipulation, but insisting that New Delhi

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sent to Chou on 16 November, however, no reference was made to the idea of conceding any Chinese occupation of the Aksai Plain. It is possible that Nehru himself may have vetoed the suggestion or decided to hold it in reserve.

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in turn accept the status quo in Ladakh. The counterproposals provided Nehru with a policy which rejected any military action against the Chinese and established the border dispute as a long-term matter requiring cautious and adroit political maneuvering. He had moved effectively to disarm his critics among the press and in Parliament by not agreeing to withdrawals from Indian territory; on the contrary, he called for Chinese withdrawals from Longju and the Aksai Plain, indicating thereby that he was taking a firm line with Peiping. At the same time, he suggested to the Chinese that he was willing to consider the merits of their claim to the Aksai Plain despite the fact that they would be required to withdraw as a price for such consideration. On this point, he expected the stalemate to continue, which was an implicit assurance to Peiping that India would not attempt to retake the area by military action. If the final outcome of the exchange of letters in November were only an agreement to begin talks on a lower level, neither he nor Chou would be conceding anything important to the other and neither would lose face.

During the three-day debate in Parliament in late November, Nehru demonstrated a remarkable ability for maintaining an even keel. He spoke of the need to maintain India's nonalignment policy but conceded that it must necessarily become nonalignment "with a difference," the difference presumably being a new policy toward Peiping.* In reply to the Opposition's call for "action" to make the Chinese vacate Indian territory, Nehru said the border issue was simply part of a greater problem--i.e. the overall Chinese political and economic as well as a military challenge, which is a long-term matter--that the issue was not just one of war and peace between two countries, but one concerning the whole world, and there is no nation more anxious for peace than the Soviet Union and none which cares less for peace than Communist China. Following a

*This "difference," however, excluded any desire to accept aid from the West to meet Indian military requirements.

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concerted Opposition attack on Defense Minister Krishna Menon, Nehru intervened to stress the entire Cabinet's responsibility for India's defense policy. In his speech of 27 November, he vouched for Menon's patriotism and hoped the dispute sparked by Thimayya's threatened resignation would die down: we are working together satisfactorily and to continue the dispute "especially in present circumstances" would be "harmful." When the Opposition commented favorably on the possibility of a common defense arrangement with Pakistan, Nehru pointed to a recent statement by President Ayub, refusing to accept any Indian proposals affecting Ladakh's status, as an example of the difficulties involved in suggestions for common defense. As a result, by 28 November most of the press and Parliament appeared to be temporarily satisfied that Nehru's attitude toward Peiping had hardened and that his line would be firm and unyielding.*

A sign of Nehru's changed attitude toward the Chinese was his new view on the need to obtain better intelligence on the border areas. On 19 November he told Parliament that he could not confirm a report that the Chinese had built an airstrip in the Aksai Plain, but that he could not deny it either. He pointed out that inasmuch as the Chinese held the area it was difficult for Indian intelligence to obtain definite information, the only possible way being for Indian aircraft to conduct photo missions,

*Nehru's defense of his past actions in Parliament on 8 and 9 December was rather weak. He insisted that all along New Delhi had foreseen trouble with the Chinese but needed to play for time. Former Indian Ambassador to Peiping K. M. Panikkar, who also claimed New Delhi was aware of the real Chinese attitude since 1950, stated that India had been making defensive preparations since that date. However, the evidence Panikkar cited, such as the treaties with Nepal and Buhtan, were signed nine years prior to Chinese military action inside Tibet and along the border.

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which was a matter for the Indian military to consider. His attitude in November thus differed from his view prior to the October clash. When the question of aerial reconnaissance arose in connection with the existence of Chinese roads, Nehru had told Parliament on 12 September that India believed that photographing the areas was not feasible and he pointed to the danger to the aircraft from mountainous terrain and from being shot down.

Chou En-lai, replying on 17 December to Nehru's counterproposals of 16 November, reiterated Peiping's claim to the Aksai Plain more strongly than before. Chou went right to the point of realpolitik, arguing from actual possession. He first noted that the Indian press itself had viewed Nehru's 16 November proposal for a mutual withdrawal in Ladakh as only a "theoretical" concession because India had no personnel there to withdraw while China would have to withdraw from a territory of about 33,000 square-kilometers, "which has belonged to it, its military personnel guarding its frontier" as were its civil personnel. Chou then insisted that the area is of "great importance" to China and claimed that since the Ching Dynasty, "this area has been the traffic artery linking up the vast regions of Sinkiang and Tibet." After thus indicating the strategic importance of the Aksai Plain road to China, Chou described PLA use of the area to make "regular" supply runs into Tibet from Sinkiang since 1950 and the roadbuilding activity since March 1956. That New Delhi was "utterly unaware" of this activity until September 1958 was, Chou said, "eloquent proof that this area has indeed always been under Chinese jurisdiction and not under Indian jurisdiction."*

*The Indian leaders' reaction to this argument from actual control was to deny that Indian ignorance of Chinese "intrusions" justified Chou's claim of ownership. In a circular message of 21 December, they informed their embassies of Chou's letter and stated that:
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Chou made two proposals which the Indians apparently had not anticipated. (1) He agreed to the evacuation of Longju (occupied in August 1959) in the east, but only on condition that the Indians withdraw also from 10 other disputed outposts, most of which are in the west (occupied since 1954-55). (2) He made his proposal for a meeting with Nehru appear more urgent than before by naming a specific time--26 December--and place--either in China or in Rangoon--insisting that unless "some agreements on principles" were reached by the premiers, lower level talks on detailed border matters "may bog down in endless and fruitless debates." The Indians probably were prepared, however, for his statement that the Chinese had stopped sending out patrols from their posts. Chou added that this step had been taken immediately following the late October 1959 clash, pointing up the Chinese leaders' desire to try to prepare an atmosphere for negotiations.

Regarding the apparent Chinese willingness to exchange their claim to the NEFA for ownership of the Aksai Plain,

(footnote continued from page 12)

While the Aksai Plain was occupied by the Chinese in 1956, they have built a network of roads farther west in Ladakh during the last 12 months. Reconnaissance parties which were sent out last year and the year before had not seen these roads. As we have stated before, in this desolate wasteland we do not think it necessary to post administrative personnel. Intrusions by a neighbor country cannot give any right to that country merely because such intrusions were not resisted by us or had not come to our notice earlier.

This statement is further evidence of the poor state of Indian intelligence on the western sector prior to September 1958. It also suggests Indian apprehensions that Chou had scored effectively on this point.

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Chou rejected as "unfair" Nehru's proposal for a mutual withdrawal in Ladakh. He pointed out that the Chinese had made no corresponding demand on New Delhi to withdraw its forces from the Chinese-claimed area south of the McMahon line. Chou hinted more strongly than before that Peiping was willing to waive its claim to this area if New Delhi would do the same regarding the Aksai Plain. Thus regarding the McMahon line, Chou stated:

Your Excellency is aware that the so-called McMahon line...has never been recognized by past Chinese governments nor by the government of the People's Republic of China /PRC/, yet the government of the PRC has strictly abided by its statement of absolutely not allowing its armed personnel to cross this line in waiting for a friendly settlement of the boundary question.
/emphasis supplied/

In sum, the Chinese were anxious to begin negotiations on the ministerial level and to move step by step toward an overall settlement, but remained adamant on retaining the Aksai Plain. This left the dispute deadlocked.

The deadlock was affirmed by Nehru in his flat rejection on 21 December of Chou's claim to the Aksai Plain and of Chou's two proposals regarding Indian withdrawals from 10 outposts and a ministerial meeting on 26 December. Nehru advanced no new proposals, noting that Chou had found his "practical" suggestions unacceptable and had merely reiterated Peiping's claims, which were based on "recent /post-1956/ intrusions by Chinese personnel." He said he was willing to meet with Chou anywhere and anytime,* but saw no point in engaging in such high-level discussions of principles when the two sides had not yet agreed

*The Indian leaders apparently interpreted Chou's display of anxiety to reach agreements on principles immediately as entirely a propaganda effort directed toward other
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on the facts. Presumably, low-level talks, too, could not begin until the Chinese showed a willingness at least to withdraw from Longju.

Nehru's uncompromising official position had been reached in large part as a result of cabinet, Opposition, and public pressure, and it apparently was difficult for him to abandon this stand and simultaneously satisfy public opinion. He nevertheless ruled out military action and left the door open for future negotiations. When chided by an opponent in Parliament on 21 December regarding the desirability of any negotiations with the Chinese, Nehru angrily replied that there were only two choices, "war or negotiation." "I will always negotiate, negotiate, negotiate, right to the bitter end." On 22 December, he expressed surprise in Parliament at the idea of "police action," which, he insisted, is possible only against a very weak adversary. "Little wars," Nehru continued, do not take place between two great countries and any kind of warlike development would mean "indefinite" war because neither India nor China would ever give in and neither could conquer the other.

(Footnote continued from page 14)
countries. In its 21 December circular message, New Delhi informed its embassies that Chou "must have known that the Prime Minister could not proceed to Rangoon on a week's notice."

Chou was indeed trying to convince neutrals of Peiping's sincerity in seeking immediate talks (he was also trying to counter Soviet arguments), but he clearly desired those talks, and apparently hoped Nehru would consent without too much delay. Prime Minister Ne Win told the American ambassador on 21 December that the Chinese had asked him whether he would agree to have the Sino-Indian talks take place in Rangoon, and, in his 17 December letter to Nehru, Chou had indicated he would consider "any other date" Nehru might suggest. The Indian ambassador to Peiping later reported that Chou beyond doubt was anxious to get talks started quickly.

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During the deadlock, the Chinese continually tried to draw Nehru into a meeting with Chou. They seemed to believe that if such a meeting could be arranged without delay and Nehru were to agree (1) to the "principle" that the border was not delimited and (2) afterward, to subcommittee meetings of experts, the hard details of contradictory border claims could be argued over in the privacy of the conference room. In his letter of 17 December, Chou had left unanswered questions on details of border claims which the Indians had raised in Nehru's 26 September letter and New Delhi's 4 November note. The Indians persisted, asking for a Chinese answer on the matter of substantive claims. It was in response to these repeated requests that the Chinese Foreign Ministry sent its note of 26 December, declaring the Peiping "feels sorry" that it must go into detail, but it appears that "some arguing cannot be helped." The 26 December note referred to "the forthcoming meeting" between Chou and Nehru almost as though the Indians had already agreed to it. It suggested that the Chinese concern with first of all having the prime ministers meet reflected their aim of first obtaining the "necessary" acknowledgment in principle that the border had not been delimited, and that it is therefore "yet to be settled through negotiations."

In tone, the Chinese note was moderate. A special effort was made to allay the fears of all neighbor countries about alleged Chinese expansionism. It is "impossible, improper, and unnecessary" for China to aggress against countries on its borders. The note pointed to Chinese domestic problems and to Peiping's need for peace to obtain goals of "peaceful construction." It then pointed to Peiping's record of trying to avoid provocation and border incidents with India, placing the blame for the August and October 1959 clashes entirely on New Delhi. Finally, it linked Indian territorial claims to the British policy of "aggression and expansion," making the Indian argument seem in effect a continuation of British imperialism in Tibet.

The note then touched on Bhutan and Sikkim. Regarding Bhutan, it made the first formal Chinese statement regarding this sector of the border, claiming that there is

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"a certain discrepancy between the delineations on the maps of the two sides in the sector south of the so-called McMahon line," but the China-Bhutan border "has always been tranquil." Regarding Sikkim, the boundary "has long been formally delimited and there is neither any discrepancy between the maps nor any disputes in practice." Allegations, therefore, that China wants to "encroach on" Bhutan and Sikkim are "sheer nonsense." In this way, the Chinese sought to contradict persistent reports about Chinese subversive aims in these border states.

The Chinese note was hard on matters of substance. It gave a detailed legal and historical justification for Peiping's border claims, creating a massive case on the matters of (1) whether the border had ever been formally delimited and (2) where the "traditional customary" boundary line actually is. Regarding the Aksai Plain, it is the "only traffic artery linking Sinkiang and western Tibet." As for the McMahon line, Chinese Communist military and civil personnel were under orders "not to cross it," but Chou's references to it in his talks with Nehru in late 1956 "can by no means be interpreted as recognition of this line" by Peiping. The note then emphasized that the prerequisites for an overall settlement were recognition of the undelimited status of the border and a mutual withdrawal of 12½ miles or any distance jointly agreed on.

In sum, the note's early portions contained a clever refutation of Indian claims and its final portions sounded almost aggrieved that Nehru had so misjudged Chinese intentions. The massive case it presented on the matter of border delimitation and on the "traditional customary" boundary

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line constituted a direct contradiction of Nehru's official position that adjustments on small sectors along the border were negotiable but on the entire border line were not.*

Peiping's 26 December note thus confronted Nehru with several immediate courses of action: to begin substantive negotiations on the basis that the entire border remained to be delimited, to take no action allowing the Chinese to consolidate their holdings, or, as the note put it, to continue "arguing like this without end." Still under Opposition and public pressure, Nehru decided on the last alternative--i.e. to keep the Sino-Indian argument going on paper.

Nehru was aware [redacted] that the long-range Chinese goal was to accept the McMahon line in return for Indian acceptance of Peiping's claims in Ladakh. At the Cabinet's Foreign Affairs subcommittee meeting in the first week of January 1960, Nehru indicated that he nevertheless wanted explicit Chinese acceptance of the McMahon line--subject only to minor demarcation adjustments--as the price for starting negotiations "at any level." The Chinese note of 26 December had rejected his earlier contention that Chou's 1956 statements constituted recognition of the line. Nehru centered his attention on this

*This position was again set forth in the Ministry of External Affairs brochure of 12 January 1960, which, however, had been prepared long before receipt of Peiping's 26 December note. The main conclusions of the brochure were: (1) India's frontier is well known, being based on treaty agreements and custom, and no Chinese government has ever challenged it, (2) the present dispute arose because in Chou's 8 September 1959 letter Peiping for the first time laid claim to extensive areas of Indian territory, (3) border tension stems from Chinese action to assert their claims, and (4) negotiations on the basis that the entire border is not delimited are unacceptable to India, which is prepared to discuss only minor rectifications of the frontier.

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rejection, virtually ignoring the hint--by then standard with Peiping--that Chinese troops were under orders not to cross the McMahon line. At the early January meeting, Nehru indicated that the only possible Indian concession was a "pre-negotiation" agreement on continued "non-military" Chinese occupation of part of Ladakh, including the Aksai Plain road, but only if the McMahon line were first explicitly accepted as the eastern border.

Nehru's first public response to the Chinese note was made at a press conference on 8 January. He reaffirmed his willingness to meet and negotiate, but stated that the time of the meeting depended on "conditions" being such that good results would be produced. That he did not see conditions as favorable was implied in his remark that there was "a very big gap" between the Indian and Chinese positions and "there does not appear to be any meeting ground." Nehru characterized the Chinese note as "argumentative" and stated that a reply would be sent in due time. Nehru and his advisers apparently needed time to draft India's formal reply. The Indian ambassadors to Peiping and Moscow were summoned to New Delhi for consultations and Ministry of External Affairs officials were reported on 12 January to be marshalling evidence to refute the massive Chinese case.

Nehru Advised to Meet with Chou: January 1960

In their [redacted] briefings of Nehru, the two ambassadors are reliably reported to have advised the Prime Minister to moderate his position and work toward a settlement as quickly as possible. Each ambassador stated different grounds for such a course.

The ambassador to Peiping, Parthasarathy, gave Nehru his view of the Chinese threat to India as a long-term "non-military expansionist policy in Asia." He stated that it would be unwise for India to make too much of an essentially tactical issue which would divert its attention from the major "strategic" competition ahead. He then recommended that New Delhi not make things worse on the border issue

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by shouting about this long-range Sino-Indian competition and urged Nehru to begin talks with the Chinese as soon as possible. He told Nehru that in a mid-November talk with Chou, the Chinese premier had been "very earnest" about a personal meeting. Parthasarathy was reported to be a protege of Krishna Menon, with whom he had had several talks since his return from Peiping. Both were [REDACTED] expressing a view--directly opposed to the official Nehru-Ministry of External Affairs line--that the border incidents of August and October 1959 were probably accidental, and that the Chinese had had no intention of killing any Indians.

The ambassador to Moscow, K.P.S. Menon, advised Nehru that the Russians could not do much more than they already had done. The best that New Delhi could hope for was that the "advice" Khrushchev had given the Chinese leaders would have an effect on their policy. Menon went on to transmit the gist of Khrushchev's final remarks to him in Moscow in mid-January: we have exercised "what influence we could"; the Chinese are far too sensitive to world opinion to indicate immediately that they have "submitted" to our advice; and India should not make it too hard for the Chinese to come to an agreement. Menon then urged that everything be done to bring the border conflict to an end as soon as possible. It was apparent from this briefing that Khrushchev was well aware of his inability to change Peiping's position, but was trying to create the impression that he had sought to make the Chinese leaders more conciliatory. At the same time, he was seeking Indian cooperation.

In this period, Khrushchev had been attempting by public and private means to prevent the dispute from jeopardizing the Soviet Union's relations with India. Khrushchev made several public statements on the border conflict in October and November 1959. Speaking to the Supreme Soviet on 31 October, he had stated that the Soviet Union was "especially grieved by the fact that as a result of the recent incidents, casualties occurred on both sides...we would be glad if the incidents were not repeated and if the existing unsettled frontier questions could be solved by

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means of friendly negotiations."* He was less cautious at a Kremlin reception on 7 November, and after reiterating the remarks he had made to the Supreme Soviet, he made the following amplifications, according to a correspondent's account (published in New Age, 15 November 1959):

After a pause, he added that it was a sad and stupid story. Nobody knew where the border was, he declared, and agreed with my remark that practically no one lived in that area. Continuing, Khrushchev recalled that the Soviet Union had amicably settled differences over the border with Iran. "We gave up more than we gained," he said and added, "What were a few kilometers for a country like the Soviet Union?" /emphasis supplied/**

These remarks suggested that Khrushchev in November 1959 favored a Chinese concession, presumably in the form of a partial withdrawal from the Aksai Plain, and that he wanted New Delhi to be informed of his view. His agreement with the observation that the border area was sparsely populated

*Chinese Communist publications did not carry these remarks, merely reporting on 31 October that "Khrushchev" had discussed "the current international situation and the foreign policy of the Soviet Union."

**The Chinese explicitly charged Khrushchev with having made these remarks after Mao personally had explained the Chinese position to him in October 1959. According to the CCP letter of 10 September 1960, the September 1959 TASS statement was

...a clear condemnation of the CCP. Mao Tse-tung explained this to Khrushchev, but on 7 November 1959, in an interview given to an Indian Communist newspaper, Khrushchev said that the incident was "deplorable and stupid."

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(and, by implication, not worth a quarrel)* has been criticized by the Chinese on several occasions, the latest being in the Peiping People's Daily editorial of 5 March 1963. According to one version of Teng Hsiao-ping's closed-door speech in Moscow on 14 November 1960, Teng charged that Khrushchev's remarks to the newsman made Nehru "more adamant", preventing Chou from reaching a compromise with Nehru. The charge is a distortion of Khrushchev's preference for a compromise. As will be shown, Nehru's own advisers were largely responsible for his adamant stand.

Soviet diplomats in [redacted] talks with Indian officials tried to indicate Soviet intercession to bring the Chinese to a "reasonable" position. In mid-November, Soviet cultural counselor Efimov had told Indian officials that Chou En-lai's 7 November letter offering to negotiate the dispute was sent on Soviet advice. When pressed, however, on how his government had exerted itself, Efimov stated, "I would not say we have directly intervened, but we have made them more aware of real Indian feelings." The Russians had worked hard even in Peiping. The new Soviet ambassador, Chervonenko, who arrived in Peiping in early November, had impressed Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy as "friendly, warm-hearted, and helpful." Chervonenko told Parthasarathy that the Chinese did not appreciate the full implications of peaceful coexistence and characterized Chinese border claims as "tendentious history." On 22 November, Khrushchev transmitted an oral message to Nehru through the Indian ambassador in Moscow stating that the USSR had given "friendly advice" to Peiping to work out a negotiated settlement of the border dispute with India. Khrushchev stated that he would like to see negotiations begin "as soon as possible."

Partly as a result of these ambassadorial briefings, Nehru changed his early January position of no ministerial-

*Khrushchev may have been hinting to New Delhi, as well as Peiping, that a few kilometers of barren land were hardly worth a major dispute.

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level talks without Chinese withdrawal from Ladakh and explicit acceptance of the McMahon line. He was [] reported to have relaxed these preconditions and to have decided to meet with Chou En-lai. Foreign Secretary Dutt indicated on 23 January that Nehru was considering such a meeting for April, with Nehru inviting Chou to New Delhi. Dutt also indicated that the Indian government would merely acknowledge Peiping's 26 December note rather than reply in detail in order to avoid a "hardening of positions" on both sides.

Actually, Indian officials were hard put to come up on short notice with a detailed diplomatic reply systematically refuting the Chinese case on the legalities of ownership and the precise border alignment. A team of Indian historians, led by Dr. S. Gopal, who later in 1960 participated in the border experts' talks, had been sent to London to try to strengthen the documentation of India's claims.

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The Indians concentrated on drawing up a documented reply. Shortly after Khrushchev had indicated to Nehru his desire to stop over in New Delhi enroute to Djakarta, Nehru on 22 January reversed the initial Ministry of External Affairs decision not to provide a detailed reply to Peiping's 26 December note; he reversed this in order to have India's full legal position on the record before Khrushchev's arrival. As a first step in preparing public opinion for his shift of position on the matter of talks with Chou En-lai, the Ministry of External Affairs apparently leaked the information to the Times of India, which carried a feature article on 26 January on "An Early Nehru-Chou Meeting." The final draft of the Indian reply to Peiping's note was approved and the decision for a Nehru-Chou meeting was made at a Foreign Affairs subcommittee meeting on 2 February. When Nehru announced that he had decided to meet with Chou without

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prior Chinese acceptance of New Delhi's preconditions, Home Minister Pant alone objected. [redacted]

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Nehru replied along two lines: (1) there was no alternative. "If we do not meet, we will have another long letter from Peiping, and this will go on endlessly. Let us continue to maintain our case, but not avoid a meeting." (2) Nehru insisted that there was great pressure on India, which would appear to be the recalcitrant party if it were to reject a meeting. Nehru cited the Sino-Burmese border agreement and Burmese press opinion that India should negotiate. Actually, Nehru had decided on a meeting with Chou at least five days prior to the announcement of the 28 January Sino-Burmese border agreement.

The Sino-Burmese Border Agreement of 28 January 1960

The Sino-Burmese border agreement provided the Chinese leaders with their first "example" among accords with border countries to be used to pressure New Delhi into beginning negotiations. Prior to fall 1959, however, they had been moving very slowly and with reluctance toward the agreement. At an early date they had explored the advantages and disadvantages of giving the Burmese such an accord and apparently decided to hold the matter indefinitely in abeyance. So long as the Burmese prime minister was not stimulated to demand a settlement, the Chinese were anxious to avoid committing themselves to one. Chou En-lai declared in a joint communique with Prime Minister U Nu on 12 December 1954 that the undefined portions of the border should be settled "at an appropriate time through normal diplomatic channels." In November 1955, an armed clash occurred between Chinese and Burmese outpost units, and it was only on Burmese initiative that preliminary talks began in 1956, surfacing the fact of a Sino-Burmese border dispute three years before the one between China and India.

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Prior to October 1959, the Burmese side was the active side in pressing for a border settlement. In February 1956, the Burmese leaders began to press Chou En-lai vigorously for the establishment of a joint commission to define disputed sectors of Burma's 1,000-mile frontier with China. Chou took a stiff stand on all the substantive points at issue and indicated reluctance to negotiate for any overall settlement, leaving some Burmese to conclude that they could not hope for a favorable agreement in the near future.

The new prime minister, General Ba Swe, however, was unwilling to be put off. In summer 1956, a Burmese press campaign (attacking Chinese border "incursions"), which had been stimulated by the government, combined with Ba Swe's warnings of possible Burmese enmity, compelled the Chinese leaders to reconsider and agree to early border talks. Ba Swe sent a note on 22 August to Chou En-lai through his new ambassador to Peiping, Hla Maung, strongly urging the Chinese to accept the "1941 line" in the Wa States area and to withdraw their troops which were west of that line. "To do otherwise," Ba Swe warned, "would...open up the possibility of lasting enmity...between the two countries." Ba Swe also warned that he would be compelled to report officially on the presence of Chinese Communist troops on Burmese soil* when Parliament convened on 30 August and urged Chou to withdraw the troops before that date or, if this were physically impossible, give assurances by 30 August that they would go as soon as possible. Ba Swe rejected Chou's characterization of this portion of the border as "the southern undetermined section," insisting that the boundary demarcated in 1941 by Nationalist China and Britain should be accepted and requested that a joint commission be established to set up boundary markers along

*In his report to the National People's Congress (NPC) on 9 July 1957, Chou stated that Chinese Communist troops moved into the Wa States area west of the "1941 line...in 1952 when chasing after remnant Kuomintang troops."

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this section. This blunt language was unusual for a Burmese prime minister to use in communicating with Chou and apparently was taken by the Chinese as evidence that Ba Swe would persist in his demands for a Chinese troop withdrawal and acceptance of Rangoon's border claims.

General Ba Swe also moved to lay the groundwork for the intercession of other neutralist powers on Rangoon's behalf were his own efforts to fail in obtaining satisfaction from Chou. General Ne Win briefed Tito on 25 August on Chinese Communist border "incursions" and Ba Swe cabled Indonesian Prime Minister Ali and Nehru to withhold "temporarily" any action on Rangoon's behalf until the results of the new "intensive" phase of Sino-Burmese diplomatic exchanges were appraised. In late August, the Burmese ambassador in Peiping urged Rangoon to seek intervention by the Colombo powers only as a last resort. Chou had indicated considerable sensitivity to Ambassador Hla Maung's suggestions that Burma might appeal to the Colombo powers and was anxious that India and Indonesia be kept out of the dispute. (Nehru did, in fact, write to Chou in mid-September, suggesting that he agree to negotiate a settlement with the Burmese.) Hla Maung also requested that Rangoon moderate the anti-Chinese press campaign. He reported that Chou had been annoyed and angered by the press attacks --and the bad publicity for Peiping from them--and that the Chinese premier assumed that the Burmese government had inspired these attacks.

The vigorous effort of Premier Ba Swe to assert Burma's border claims was a clear-cut departure from the cautious policy of U Nu which had been motivated by a pervasive fear of antagonizing Peiping. U Nu was reliably reported to have tried in August and September 1956, without success, to restrain Ba Swe from challenging Chinese Communist claims and from warning Chinese leaders too openly and too forcibly.

Partly because of Ba Swe's adamancy and refusal to subside and partly because the Chinese were anxious that Nehru not be stimulated to question Peiping's intentions regarding the Sino-Indian border, Chou agreed to withdraw Chinese troops from the disputed Wa States area. In a

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message of 14 September to Peiping, Premier Ba Swe welcomed Chou's promise to withdraw the troops and agreed to keep Burmese troops out of the area. However, he insisted on the validity of the Wa States boundary as demarcated by Nationalist China and Britain in 1941 and on the validity of the Kachin State border farther north as a de facto line, and complained that Chinese troops had also crossed the border at the northern tip of the state and should be withdrawn. He then stated that Burma would accept the establishment of a joint boundary commission--actually an earlier Burmese proposal--which would examine the Kachin frontier and make "recommendations to the respective governments." On the suggestion of Hla Maung in Peiping, Chou En-lai--who was anxious to undercut Burmese press attacks--in early September invited U Nu to lead a delegation to China to discuss the dispute. The Burmese stressed, however, that U Nu would go only in an "unofficial" capacity and would not represent the government in discussions with Chou--i.e. his statements would not prejudice Ba Swe's firm position.

The Burmese hoped for informal proposals leading to an acceptable settlement and Chou fostered the impression that China was prepared to make them. During talks with the U Nu delegation in November 1956, Chou made a "proposal about principles" relating to three sections of the border still in dispute. (1) Regarding the "1941 line" in the Wa States area, Chou indicated readiness to withdraw Chinese troops and asked that "pending a final agreement on the line and the setting up of boundary markers," Burmese troops not enter the evacuated area. Chou and Ba Swe had in fact agreed privately on this matter in September. (2) Regarding the Namwan leased tract, Chou was prepared to negotiate so as to decide on concrete steps to abrogate the "perpetual lease." (3) Regarding the northern border, the section from the Izurazi Pass northward to the Diphu Pass was to be demarcated along the "traditional boundary line" and from the Izurazi Pass to the High Conical Peak was to be determined along the watershed. The Hpimaw tract of three villages--Hpimaw, Kangfang, and Gawlun--was to be "returned" to China, and Burmese troops in the area were to withdraw at the same time that Chinese troops were retiring from the "1941 line" farther south. In sum, Chou indicated that Peiping was prepared to withdraw in the Wa States and yield

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long-standing Chinese claims to parts of northern Burma--on the face of it, a reasonable position containing no loopholes. However, with regard to the seemingly small matter of the extent of China's claim to about 500 square miles around the three villages in the Hpimaw tract, Chou remained adamant.

Chou's discussions with U Nu in November 1956 fell short of producing an overall settlement and appear to have been intended as a holding operation. The withdrawal of Chinese troops from positions west of the "1941 line" in December effectively negated Rangoon's lively propaganda campaign about Chinese Communist border "incursions." At the same time, the Chinese began to act on their apparent decision to coast along on the momentum of their concession (troop withdrawals), which mollified the Burmese in December.

Throughout 1957, the Chinese continued to avoid a final overall settlement, their task having been made easier by the election of U Nu to the premiership in February. Prime Minister U Nu spent 11 days in China in March 1957, talking with Chou at Kunming without moving him toward a final agreement. U Nu stated on 9 April that his talks with the Chinese premier still left "two or three details which need to be ironed out" and that the border issue was "a big problem not amenable to easy solution." In late April, the Chinese used a second-rank official (the acting governor of Yunnan Province) to make a new demand for Burmese territory near the Namwan leased tract. The permanent secretary of the Burmese Foreign Office told the British ambassador in early May that in addition to the Namwan area, the Chinese had "recently" asked for a "readjustment" in their favor at the northern end of the "1941 line." The area claimed was small, and the claim was made ambiguously, further indicating that the Chinese had desired merely to keep the entire question of a border settlement open indefinitely. Chou's implicit refusal to go ahead with a settlement was a sharp disappointment to U Nu, who had desired an agreement to provide an auspicious beginning for his new term as premier. Prior to his Kunming visit, U Nu was reported to have stated privately that he considered Peiping "morally obligated" to live up to the tentative agreement he and Chou had reached in November 1956.

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Chou En-lai sought to blur the strong impression in Burma and elsewhere that Peiping was stalling. He told the National People's Congress (NPC) on 9 July 1957 that "a good start" had been made with U Nu for settlement of the dispute and that a "general agreement of views" had been reached. He added significantly, however, that a "comprehensive, fair, and reasonable settlement" would be reached when the views of both countries were brought into accord "through continued negotiations" on concrete "problems." Chou's statements were resented in Rangoon, as U Nu had told the press earlier that Chou was expected to submit the general agreement to the NPC for final approval prior to intergovernmental accords. On 22 July, the usually optimistic Ambassador Hla Maung in Peiping [REDACTED] had become convinced that the Chinese "are now going back on all of their words" in connection with the tentative border agreement reached between Chou and U Nu in November 1956. Hla Maung cited Chou's apparent questioning of the Burmese version of the northern sector of the boundary as the latest of a number of incidents which had led him to this conclusion. He commented sarcastically that on this portion of the border the Chinese had now challenged Burmese claims to land in the north and the east and that he "would not be surprised if they also mentioned the west, were there any land to the west."

U Nu received Chou En-lai's long-awaited letter containing Peiping's formal border proposals in late July and, according to the American embassy in Rangoon, they included a new demand for the cession of some 70 square miles of territory in the Lufang area of the Wa States. Taken together with a demand for more territory in the Hpimaw area, the new Chinese position on Lufang indicated to the American embassy a Chinese effort to create maximum problems for the Burmese government with various border peoples while still maintaining a pose of friendship and desire to reach a settlement. Thus while avoiding a settlement, Chou made it difficult for the Burmese leaders to accuse Peiping publicly of outright intransigence. After they dispatched Chief Justice U Myint Thein to China in the hope of ending Chinese stalling, Chou told Myint Thein on 28 September that he would have to take time to study the new Burmese proposals and that although the "1941 line" was "unjust," Peiping

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would accept it "out of feelings of friendship." Nevertheless, the Burmese considered Myint Thein's mission a failure and in late October, when Foreign Minister Sao Hkun Hkio spoke to the Australian ambassador, he stated that "negotiations might well take five or ten years."

The Chinese leaders continued to parry Burmese requests for a settlement in 1958. They began to invoke "Tibetan interests" in the border area as a device to prolong the deadlock. The Burmese ambassador in Peiping told Foreign Minister Chen Yi on 1 April that China's new argument was "difficult" for Rangoon to accept and stated that there are Tibetans living on the Burmese side who have been paying taxes to Burma "for generations." In reference to Peiping's claims regarding Tibetans living far to the south of the border, he protested that "a big portion" of northern Burma would have to be ceded to China.

The Chinese at this time apparently were trying out on the Burmese a claim they hoped later to use with the Indians, viz. that borderland peoples, and the territory in which they resided, traditionally had been Chinese. Since early 1950, the Chinese policy toward Himalayan border tribal peoples had centered on exploiting their ethnic and historical ties with Tibet. Chinese propaganda, disseminated through agents by word of mouth and published materials and through broadcasts by Lhasa Radio, had stressed the theme of "democratic reform and progress" in Tibet with the goal of directing the loyalties of these people more and more toward their ethnic homeland and away from Indian and Burmese influence.*

*The Tibetan revolt of March 1959, however, resulted in a major setback for this heretofore relatively successful Chinese policy, as the borderland peoples watched the spectacle of their ethnic brothers being butchered by PLA forces. The Chinese subsequently worked hard to recoup, attempting to differentiate most Tibetan and other border peoples from the "tiny group of rebels" in order to salvage some goodwill (continued on page 31)

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The Chinese indicated no desire to resume border talks until July, when the Burmese press began another major propaganda campaign, charging that Peiping was clearly stalling and guilty of bad faith. Again, as in summer 1956, the press campaign compelled the Chinese leaders to resume top-level talks. Chen Yi told the Burmese Ambassador at a banquet on 31 July that a letter soon to be sent from Chou En-lai to Premier U Nu would "eliminate" the argument of the Burmese press that the Chinese are unwilling to negotiate. Chen declared: "If we go on discussing, nobody will be able to make up stories"--an undiplomatic bit of outspokenness which led Hla Maung to report that Chen, who had revealed that the primary aim of the Chinese in resuming border talks was to keep Burmese newspapers "muzzled up," was "not so sharp" as Chou. At the same banquet, Chou took the line that the prevailing no-settlement situation favored Rangoon. Chou told Hla Maung that the present indefinite border arrangement

(Footnote continued from page 30)

and work toward rebuilding a degree of voluntary responsiveness to PLA border personnel and CCP cadres. New Delhi's effort to capitalize on the revolt and turn the loyalties of these peoples toward India became a source of considerable concern, as many in Tibetan areas near the border who continued to cross over to the Indian side, bringing firsthand accounts of PLA suppression, provided Indian news media with effective anti-Chinese material. In order to stem the flow and to regain some degree of influence, the Chinese leaders apparently directed the CCP-PLA authorities in Lhasa to draw up a policy guideline for all cadres. The policy, appearing in one part of a larger document on troop indoctrination issued in November 1960 for border forces, concentrated on displays of moderation: (1) permitting borderland peoples to continue seasonal moves across the border, (2) handling disputes with tribal peoples by local proxy, and (3) indoctrinating these peoples in CCP nationalities policy, while stressing to cadres the need for using "patience to dissuade" them from fleeing. However, because the Tibetan rebels remained active inside and outside Tibet, Chinese policy in Tibet and along the border was hampered by the continued Tibet-Han (Chinese) dichotomy in the clashes.

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was to Burma's advantage because Rangoon continued to administer small areas claimed by Peiping in the Kachin and Shan states. When Hla Maung countered by saying a definitive agreement would silence those who seek to drive a wedge between the two countries, Chou temperately advised that he not listen to "third parties" and reassured the envoy that Peiping would negotiate the border question within the framework of the five principles. The general implication of Chou's remarks was that Burma should rest content with the status quo.

The new prime minister, Ne Win, began to press the Chinese more vigorously than his predecessor, U Nu. Ne Win is [] reported to have told Burmese officials in January 1959 that the new ambassador to China would make a fresh approach to Peiping regarding the unresolved border dispute. The new prime minister may have been encouraged to order a new attempt to ascertain the Chinese leaders' position on a settlement because the Chinese were making aerial surveys of certain portions of the border. Ne Win indicated to the Chinese that he was prepared to confirm the concessions, made by U Nu informally to Chou En-lai in November 1956, of the three border villages in the Hpimaw area and the Namwan leased tract, but was unwilling to surrender any territory where the boundary had been formally established in the past. If the Chinese were to remain adamant on concluding an agreement, Ne Win stated in early May to Burmese officials, he would consider cancelling Chinese civil aviation rights in Burma. Ne Win subsequently proposed that Peiping accept a group of proposals as a package, but in June 1959, Chen Yi riposted by telling the new Burmese ambassador that the "package deal" had to be "studied" and hinted there might be no solution for some time, as interested racial minorities--primarily Tibetans--had to be "consulted" regarding any border settlement. Chen repeatedly stressed the need for cordial relations and stated that whether the question of "conceding a little portion here or there" is agreed upon or not, "it is the friendship that really counts." Ne Win apparently had anticipated further Chinese stalling and had informed the American ambassador in mid-May that his "package deal" would be withdrawn in December and that he would then proceed with a harder line in dealing with the Chinese.

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The August and October 1959 clashes between Chinese and Indian forces apparently led the Chinese leaders to review the advantages and disadvantages of granting the Burmese a border settlement. They apparently calculated that an agreement with Rangoon would make it more difficult for New Delhi to reject negotiations on the Sino-Indian border dispute. In October 1959, the Chinese ambassador in Rangoon characterized Ne Win's package proposal as being "very near the mark." Rangoon informed Peiping on 4 November that if the Chinese were indeed prepared to accept the package--containing the maximum concessions Burma was willing to make--Ne Win would personally come to China to formalize "an agreement in principle" on the border issue. The Burmese also indicated willingness to accept the Chinese suggestion that a treaty of friendship and nonaggression accompany the border accord. []

[] Chou invited Ne Win to Peiping to hold talks on "matters of principle on how to settle" the dispute. Chou promised that these talks would "promote concrete discussions and settlement" of the border issue. Chou's stress on reaching an agreement on principles first of all was similar to the line he was taking with Nehru--i.e. his letter of 17 December--that lower level talks would bog down unless "some agreements on principles" were reached by the premiers. Thus by December 1959, the Chinese seemed to be pressing the Burmese to begin serious talks for a final settlement. Diplomats from almost every East European mission in Peiping had approached the Burmese first secretary in December and suggested that the time was "opportune" for the Chinese to agree to a settlement, suggesting a new, concerted effort to arrange a quick agreement with Rangoon.

In January 1960, Chou moved adroitly to bring Prime Minister Ne Win quickly to Peiping. Ne Win had rejected Chou's invitation on 3 January, requesting that Peiping accept in advance Burma's June 1959 package proposals as the condition for coming to China and initialing a border agreement. In a letter of 12 January, Chou repeated his 22 December invitation and carefully avoided mentioning Ne Win's condition. Chou said he felt it would be "very useful" toward promoting a settlement if Ne Win were to give him the chance to explain the Chinese government's position

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and to discuss "matters of principle" for eliminating the remaining differences. Chou was also careful to minimize the points of disagreement between the two sides as "relatively small." Ne Win responded by dropping his condition of prior Chinese acceptance of the "package deal" and informed Chou that he could arrive on 23 January for three days--sufficient time, he hoped, "to eliminate the relatively small difference" between the positions. He arrived on 24 January []

[] The Burmese felt that the Chinese had made concessions and that the remaining differences could be referred to a "joint commission." On 28 January, four days after Ne Win arrived in Peiping, NCNA announced the signing of a border agreement and a treaty of friendship and mutual nonaggression.

Thus, in striking contrast with his footdragging since early 1956, Chou had moved with considerable speed in order to conclude an "agreement on principles." He apparently calculated that it would be seen by neutrals and New Delhi as analogous to the "agreement on principles" he was trying to obtain from Nehru and would help to promote similar negotiations with New Delhi. Chou seemed to believe that Nehru would find it difficult to maintain that talks on "principles" with the Chinese would serve no useful purpose before the "facts" were agreed on. That this is what Chou was driving at is indicated by the following sentence in the 29 January Peiping People's Daily editorial on the accord:

This agreement proves that on such a complicated question as the boundary issue, it is a practical and feasible means conducive to a speedy solution of the question for the premiers of two nations to reach, first of all, an agreement in principle and then to leave to the representatives of both parties to work out a concrete settlement.

This statement directly contradicted, and was intended to refute, Nehru's 21 December reply to Chou in which the Indian

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Prime Minister had maintained that such high-level discussions of principles were pointless when both sides had not yet agreed on the facts.

Following his return to Rangoon, Ne Win on 30 January told Burmese officials that the Rangoon-claimed "1941 line" in the Wa State area would not change except for an area of about five miles, that the Chinese also accepted Burma's position on the watershed boundary for the Kachin State--which would be formally determined by a joint border commission--and that the Chinese had backed off from their original demand of about 500 square miles regarding the Hpimaw area, asking instead for an area of between 50 and 100 square miles. In sum, Ne Win stated (with slight exaggeration) that the Chinese had been so eager to obtain a settlement that Burma could have received "anything" it demanded, and the Burmese Military Training Director concluded that Burma had done "quite well" with the Chinese.*

*In the 28 January accord, the Chinese had accepted, with two small exceptions, the traditional boundary, following the watershed in the north and the "1941 line" in the south--that is, the substance of Burma's position. The remaining but narrowed differences concerned the extent of village tracts in the Kachin and Wa states ceded to China and of the Namwan tract ceded to Burma.

The agreement set a precedent for defining the eastern end of the border between the NEFA and Tibet, with minor adjustments, on the basis of the McMahon line. The Indian ambassador in Rangoon told the American ambassador there on 27 January that he assumed Peiping would have to accept the "Indian portion" of the McMahon line if the Burmese portion were accepted. Ambassador Mehrotra then stated that the Chinese were really more interested in Ladakh: "if they could get even part of what they want there, they might not press the NEFA claim."

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As for the Chinese, they were not only better armed to press New Delhi for ministerial talks (on the Chou-Ne Win pattern), but also were in a tactically better position than they had been to undercut Nehru's likely line of argument with Khrushchev regarding Chinese intransigence. Ne Win speculated on 30 January that the Chinese had been "quite anxious" to settle the Sino-Burma border dispute prior to Khrushchev's stopover in New Delhi en route to Djakarta.*

The Chou-Nehru Talks: 19-25 April 1960

The Chinese extensively exploited the Sino-Burmese agreement to disarm the arguments of neutral critics and critics in the Soviet bloc that Peiping was unwilling to settle its border disputes amicably. They hoped it would

*The Chinese also seemed apprehensive that the Indonesians would provide Khrushchev with considerable concrete evidence of Chinese "nationalism" and pugnacity in relations with a neutral in the "peace zone," particularly regarding their crude handling of Foreign Minister Subandrio during his trip to China.

During his stopover in New Delhi on 11 February, Khrushchev spoke privately with Nehru for three hours but, apart from Nehru's brief remarks to Parliament, the details of the discussion have not been reported. The only apparent connection between Nehru's 5 February letter to Chou and Khrushchev's stopover was that the visit speeded up the Indian action to place their position on the record before the Soviet leader arrived, thus showing the independence of Nehru's initiative. In Parliament on 22 February, Nehru sought to underscore his own initiative, stating that his invitation to Chou had no relation to Khrushchev's visit. He said that he had briefly told Khrushchev of India's case in the context of a world survey. "I did not ask him to bring pressure to bear on China. It was for them to consider what they had to say or what they were going to do."

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provide them with an important propaganda instrument for promoting discussions with New Delhi.* Chinese anxiety in early 1960 to arrange a Chou-Nehru meeting and Nehru's tactical decision of late January not to appear intransigent prepared the way for ministerial-level talks. Ambassador Parthasarathy left for Peiping on 9 February, carrying a carefully drafted Indian note replying to the Chinese note of 26 December as well as Nehru's letter to Chou. []

[] the Indian note was drafted in such a way as to indicate that New Delhi was not opposed to a Chou-Nehru meeting. The note did not mention the earlier pre-conditions of Chinese withdrawal from Ladakh and explicit acceptance of the McMahon line. Nehru's 5 February letter to Chou also significantly omitted these stipulations.

Constantly under pressure from Parliament and the press not to take a soft line with Peiping, Nehru was compelled to make even an agreement "to meet" with Chou appear as part of a hard, anti-China policy. Prior to surfacing his invitation to Chou, Nehru on 12 February responded to opponents in Parliament in such a way as to create the impression that he was against even meeting with Chou. Actually, he had been careful to reject only "negotiations" but not a face-to-face meeting:

I see no ground whatever at present, no bridge between the Chinese position and ours....There is nothing to negotiate at present. Whether that will arise later I cannot say.

These remarks, carrying a hard tone and indicating a firm line of no negotiations, brought cheers from Parliament. However, parliamentary and press tempers were rekindled on 15 February, when the government released the texts of

*Thus the People's Daily on 1 February stated that: "Surely what has happened between China and Burma can take place between China and other countries."

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(1) Nehru's 5 February letter to Chou inviting him to a meeting in India and (2) the Indian 12 February reply to Peiping's 26 December note. The finesse of Ministry of External Affairs officials in handling the press by briefings had minimized adverse public reaction but did not stifle all criticism. On 16 February, the Times characterized Nehru's alleged reversal as "astonishing... nourishing dangerous illusions" and the Hindustan Standard referred to the whole matter as "insulting" to Parliament and the country. Nehru is reliably reported to have been disturbed by even this limited reaction and to have laid on a further "off-the-record" Ministry of External Affairs press briefing.

Nehru's 5 February letter to Chou agreed to a meeting but not to negotiations. Nehru restated his position (16 November 1959 letter to Chou) that the Chinese and Indian positions were so wide apart that there was little ground left for useful talks and that "certain preliminary steps"--the meeting of experts to discuss historical data and alignment--would have facilitated discussions. Nehru then flatly asserted that the Chinese claim that the entire border had never been delimited was "incorrect... on that basis there can be no negotiations." Nevertheless, in the interest of exploring every avenue for a settlement, Nehru finally agreed that "it might be helpful for us to meet," and thereupon issued his invitation for Chou to come to India some time after mid-March. Nehru defended this formal invitation in Parliament on 16 February, calmly insisting that no policy change was involved: he had always said he was prepared "to meet" anybody, anywhere, as this was ingrained from 40 years of training.

Nehru therefore apparently viewed a meeting as a tactic to appear amenable to a peaceful settlement and to

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probe Chinese long-term intentions, but he did not intend to make the concessions the Chinese considered necessary for a settlement of the border dispute.*

The Indian note of 12 February covered in greater detail the basic premise of Nehru's letter to Chou. It reiterated that New Delhi was prepared to discuss only specific disputes regarding the location of places on the border and to make minor border rectifications where agreed necessary. As for determining the entire border on a new basis, "such a basis for negotiations would ignore past history, custom, tradition, and international agreements, and is, therefore, entirely unacceptable to the Government of India." The note then argued in support of India's case for the watershed principle, complaining that Peiping "seems unaware that traditional boundaries in mountainous areas tend to follow the main watershed rather than any other natural feature.... That the alignment of the northern boundary of India throughout follows the major watershed supports the fact that this became the boundary through custom and tradition." After applying the watershed principle to Ladakh, the note stated that the line along this western sector of the border had been fixed and "well recognized" from the 17th century onward and that the Chinese complaint that this sector was not delimited was in fact supported by evidence which shows only that the boundary "was not demarcated on the ground."

The note's point-by-point rebuttal of the Chinese position as set forth on 26 December 1959 was accompanied by remarks designed to repair the damage done to the Sino-Indian relationship. It stressed the urgent need for an

*Foreign Secretary Dutt stated [] on 16 February that Nehru did not expect anything tangible to come out of a meeting with Chou, but hoped to determine (1) why the Chinese had behaved in such a hostile way and (2) what Chou "really wants." Dutt concluded that "at best" the meeting might provide a basis for further talks.

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interim understanding to avoid a further worsening of the situation--i.e more border clashes--and the need to do everything possible to remove misunderstanding and restore traditional friendship. This appeal for a more normal relationship was intended to provide a tone conducive to a Chou-Nehru meeting, after the attempt, in 14 pages, to destroy the Chinese case for defining the border anew.

The firmness of Nehru's letter and the Indian note on the unbridgeable gap between the Chinese and Indian positions was intended partly to scotch rumors that Nehru, Ministry of External Affairs officials, and the Indian military chiefs were willing to exchange the Aksai Plain for formal Chinese recognition of the McMahon line. Such rumors had been fed by Krishna Menon's slip in a speech which was brought to light by the Hindustan Times editor on 1 February. Menon apparently stated that India would not yield...any part of our administered territory along the border." There were other indications that the rumors had some basis in fact. []

[] Ministry of External Affairs officials had been considering in February a possible formula for Ladakh entailing some form of international status for the road traversing the Aksai Plain. Moreover, after receiving Chou's reply, Nehru reportedly told President Prasad on 29 February that in talking with Chou, he would adhere to the public policy set forth in New Delhi's notes, but would try to avoid appearing intransigent. If Chou remained adamant on Ladakh, he might agree to neutralizing the area occupied by the Chinese if an adequately supervised agreement could be reached whereby the road linking Sinkiang with Tibet could be used by both countries. From questions directed to him on 1 March by a Ministry of External Affairs official, regarding cases in international law where one country /China/ had access through a second country /India/ to a portion of its own territory which was cut off from the motherland by natural barriers, an American embassy officer gained the definite

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impression that the Indian leaders were searching for some sanction in international practice which would permit Nehru to propose Chinese use of the road while retaining nominal Indian sovereignty over the Aksai Plain.*

Chou's reply to Nehru's invitation was devoid of rancor and again indicated Peiping's desire for an early meeting. In contrast to his letters to Nehru since January 1959, Chou's 26 February 1960 letter accepting Nehru's invitation and setting April as the time avoided any discussion of substance on the border dispute--particularly the claim that the entire border was undelimited--and thus appeared accommodating to Nehru's refusal to negotiate on this basis. Chou described Sino-Indian differences as "temporary," implying a willingness to compromise, and characterized the border clashes of fall 1959 as "unfortunate and unexpected," implying Peiping had not planned them and even regretted them. Chou was also prepared to relinquish some "face" by coming to New Delhi, reversing the implication of his 17 December 1959 letter that India was not a suitable site for talks because of "activities hostile to Sino-Indian friendship." Nehru had twice refused Chou's invitation, and Chou's acceptance despite this record was

*However, according to Ministry of External Affairs deputy secretary Mehta's remarks to an American official on 9 March, the acid test for a real compromise solution was not Chinese willingness to accept the McMahon line--as they had already accepted the line "in fact"--but willingness to withdraw from the Aksai Plain. That is, Chinese acceptance of the Aksai Plain as Indian territory and retraction of their demand that this part of Ladakh be considered at least disputed land. Peiping indicated, through a discussion by its military attache in East Germany with a Western journalist on 2 March, that China might agree to a demilitarized zone in "certain portions" of Ladakh. However, such agreement was conditional on Indian acceptance of the principle that Ladakh was disputed territory. The attache then made it clear that "under no circumstances" would the Chinese withdraw from the road.

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another small concession of "face," evidencing Peiping's urgent desire to mollify the Indians* and work toward an overall border settlement.

The Chinese acted to create an impression of confidence that the meeting would bring satisfactory results. Ambassador Parthasarathy reported his impression from Peiping on 7 March that the Chinese were prepared to compromise. At the same time, Deputy Foreign Secretary Mehta had noted that whereas New Delhi was approaching the meeting in terms of improving relations, Chinese notes and Chou's latest letter had stressed a border "settlement." [redacted]

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The Chinese tried to make the impression of their willingness to negotiate a settlement even more credible by acting quickly to sign a border agreement with Nepal. Nepalese Prime Minister Koirala arrived in China on 11 March at Chou En-lai's invitation, apprehensive that the Chinese intended to take a hard line with him. However, his discussions with Chou apparently went along without a major hitch--although the Chinese tabled a claim to Mt. Everest--and on 29 March Koirala signed with Chou a Sino-Nepalese border agreement calling for the entire boundary to be delineated and demarcated "on the basis of the traditional customary line." As with the Sino-Burmese border agreement of 28 January, the Sino-Nepalese accord

*Chou's letter had a marked salutary effect on some Indian opinion. It was described by New Delhi's English-language press as "cordial and conciliatory," "couched in friendly terms," and "very friendly language." When Nehru indicated to Parliament on 29 February that April was satisfactory to him and expressed the hope in Parliament that India would receive her guest with courtesy and hospitality, Congress Party and Communist ranks both burst into applause.

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established a joint commission to discuss and solve various questions of detail, conduct border surveys, erect boundary markers, and draft a border "treaty." Thus the Nepalese were used in roughly the same manner as the Burmese; that is, they were persuaded to settle their border differences with China in a two-step process, first agreeing to principles and the establishment of a joint commission and then working out a final treaty. The 21 March agreement provided for the mutual cessation of armed patrolling within a 12½ mile zone from the border--a proposal for a quasi-demilitarized zone similar to one made by Chou earlier and rejected by Nehru for the Sino-Indian border. It also called for determining the border line in accordance with terrain features and the "actual jurisdiction" by each side, and, where actual jurisdiction was disputed, teams dispatched by the joint commission were to ascertain actual control "on the spot." The Peiping People's Daily stressed on 25 March that all border disputes between China and its neighbors could be solved by taking into account the historical background and the "present actual conditions" and by maintaining the status quo, citing the agreement with Burma as well as Nepal. Shortly after Koirala arrived in Peiping, the chief editor of a Hong Kong Communist newspaper told his staff that Peiping hoped the cordiality of the talks between the Nepalese and Chinese prime ministers would be noted by India,* and later at an "exclusive interview with

*Actually, the Indian and Nepalese border issues were not comparable. The Chinese had occupied a large area of Indian-claimed territory but had not done so with Nepalese territory. Nevertheless, Indian leaders were disturbed by the propaganda implications of Chou's use of Koirala to sign an agreement which seemed to be a relevant precedent for the Sino-Indian border dispute. Moreover, they feared a Chinese effort to detach Nepal from its military arrangement with India, and New Delhi on 1 April directed its ambassador in Katmandu to warn the Nepalese that Chou's proposal for a non-aggression treaty would affect the present India-Nepal "defense understanding."

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NCNA" in Hong Kong on 25 March, Koirala was quoted as follows:

I think the present unhappy condition between China and India should be ended and I hope the coming talks between Premier Chou and Premier Nehru will be successful.

Chinese maneuvering prior to the Chou-Nehru meeting was incessant. For example, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials informed the Burmese ambassador in late March that Chou planned a stopover in Rangoon from 16 to 18 April with "nothing particular in mind" except that he hoped the instruments of ratification of the Sino-Burma border agreement could be exchanged during his stay. On 7 April, the Burmese were [] reported rushing preparations to ratify the border agreement and friendship treaty. Rangoon's Director of Military Training, Maung Maung, [] conceded that these two accords were being used as propaganda weapons by Peiping, but Burma "had to look out for itself."

The Chinese indicated that they were coming to engage in more than a mere exchange of generalities and historical arguments and that they expected positive concrete results. When, in late March, Chou (through the Indian ambassador) indicated to Nehru his intention to spend six days in New Delhi--despite Nehru's busy schedule--and that he would come at the head of a high-level delegation to arrive 30-strong in three aircraft, Nehru and his Ministry of External Affairs advisers were somewhat taken aback. They had seen nothing in the substance of Peiping's notes that would necessitate a business-like delegation and a long visit. When asked at an off-the-record news conference on 5 April what Chou would be doing for six days in New Delhi, Nehru replied that Chou was quite capable of talking steadily for three or four hours at a stretch, but did not further elaborate. On the same day, Nehru informed the cabinet Foreign Affairs Subcommittee that Peiping's 3 April note merely reiterated earlier Chinese positions--including a denial that the entire boundary follows the Indian-cited

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watershed--and Nehru expressed total pessimism on the possible outcome of his meeting with Chou: "I may have to break off the talks in two days."*

As Nehru contemplated and discussed the line to take with Chou, the advice he received from various quarters was to be adamant. During discussions in New Delhi in early April, Nasir urged him to resist Chinese territorial demands, and Sukarno warned that "Any weakening on your part will have a strongly adverse effect on Asian resistance to Communism." President Prasad repeatedly counselled Nehru not to make any concessions to Chou, and on 13 April wrote to the Prime Minister in order to ensure that future generations would have no cause to blame those who took part in the freedom struggle for any "capitulation" now. Ambassador Parthasarathy implied to American officials in Hong Kong on 12 April that he was concerned that Nehru might be taken in by Chou and, on arriving in New Delhi, he suggested to Nehru that Indian's policy can only be to reject firmly all Chinese territorial claims. In addition, the press and Opposition leaders--the latter in a 4 April letter--admonished Nehru not to concede any Indian territory.

Thus Chou, who came with a real hope** of gaining agreement in principle that the border was not delimited and therefore subject to negotiation, was confronted by an

*Nehru is [] reported to have made the following comment to Kingsley Martin in early April: "In certain circumstances I would not have minded giving away a little bit of Ladakh [presumably the Aksai Plain], but I do not want the Chinese to take me for a sucker. Chou En-lai has lied to me so often that I do not feel like trusting him any more."

**The business-like Chinese delegation indicated that the Chinese premier had come--as he said on arrival on 19 April-- "this time...with the sincere desire to settle questions." Chou apparently believed that Nehru's statements in fall 1959 regarding the "unimportance" of the Aksai Plain and India's record of having had no administration in that "barren, uninhabited place" indicated Nehru's real position--viz. willingness to accept Chinese presence in the Plain, virtually writing it off. He was aware--and, in trying to prove Peiping's case on jurisdiction, Chinese border experts later pointed out--that Nehru had told Parliament on 10 September 1959 that the Aksai Plain "has not been under any kind of administration" and on 23 November that under British rule, (continued on page 46)

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Indian prime minister who was more adamant than anticipated. Nehru's plan was to reject substantive negotiations pending Chinese withdrawal from the Askai Plain. His tactic was to exclude advisers from the talks as long as possible in order "to have it out personally" with Chou for two or three days.

From the very start of Chou's visit, Nehru used unusually direct language. At the airport on 19 April, Nehru stated that since Chou's last visit in 1956 events had placed a great strain on Sino-Indian friendship and had shocked India, imperilling the relationship at present and in the future. On 20 April, Nehru spent most of his first two-hour talks with Chou lecturing the latter on "ancient history" of the border. After Chou responded by maintaining that the Aksai Plain belonged to China and that Chinese engineers, having found no administration in the area, simply had gone ahead with building the road, Nehru decided to give Chou more "lectures." Chou ran into a stone wall even with his old friend, Defense Minister Krishna Menon, whom Nehru conspicuously had excluded, for domestic political reasons, from his advisory entourage but whom Chou requested* to see "to thank him for support in the UN." Menon reportedly told Chou on 20 April that no part of Indian territory would be yielded and that the Chinese should take advantage of the fact that Nehru's government was more friendly to China than any subsequent Indian government could be, implying that Chou should make some concession.

On 21 April, Chou continued to depart from diplomatic precedent by resuming his effort to influence Indian leaders in separate, private talks--a tactic Nehru had not

(footnote continued from page 45)

as far as I know, this area was neither inhabited by any people, nor were there any outposts." In fact, however, Nehru's wavering between ultimate cession of the Plain and demands for a Chinese withdrawal had come to an end during the April consultations with his advisers.

* [] Menon stimulated the interview by asking Ambassador Parthasarathy to ask Chou to request of Nehru that Menon be permitted to visit with him. Nehru later defended Menon's meeting with Chou before the Chinese premier met with the officially designated cabinet ministers by stating that he had authorized the meeting.

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anticipated but did not try to block. Chou's separate talk with Home Minister Pant on 21 April was essentially another lecture, as Pant spoke bluntly and with some heat on the theme of "We feel betrayed." Finance Minister Desai did not mince words when he took his turn with Chou on 22 April. When Chou was stimulated to criticizing New Delhi for granting asylum to the Dalai Lama, Desai was [REDACTED] reported to have replied: "You should be the last person to object to political asylum. Where would you be today if political asylum had not been given to Lenin?" On the same day, when Chou told Vice President Radhakrishnan--also at a separate talk--that he could not convince "the Chinese people" that Ladakh and the Aksai Plain in particular did not belong to them because of the legends going back to the 12th century which supported Chinese claims, the vice president reportedly replied that on such a basis India could claim Kandahar, Kabul, and many other areas including parts of China. Radhakrishnan went on to nettle Chou with the comment that "You have hurt us deeply, and it is surprising you don't know it!" Thus at the end of three days of almost uninterrupted discussions with Nehru and top officials, Chou had not made a dent in the Indian position on Ladakh and had shown no willingness to agree to Nehru's suggestion that Chinese troops be withdrawn from "occupied" areas.

Chou's public and private remarks made it clear that the Chinese had tried to gain from Indian officials an exchange of the NEFA for Chinese-occupied Ladakh. The 27 April circular message to Indian embassies stated that the Chinese "throughout the discussions had invariably linked Ladakh with the NEFA and stressed that the same principles of settling the boundary must govern both areas. It was also obvious that if we accepted the line claimed by China in Ladakh, they would accept the McMahon line." At one point in their long conversations, Chou reportedly had offered to withdraw Chinese troops from Longju as a friendly gesture, and Nehru had responded by offering a withdrawal of some Indian forces at one point in Ladakh, but during the final drafting of the communique, Chou was again adamant and dropped his original offer. Regarding a future meeting, Chou proposed that a statement to that effect be included in the communique as well as the phrase,

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"and we hope this border dispute will be solved forever;" Nehru rejected both proposals and agreed only orally to meet with Chou on condition that the talks to be held by subordinate officials produced concrete progress.* At his 25 April press conference--reportedly held despite official Indian disapproval--Chou professed willingness to come again to New Delhi if necessary for Sino-Indian amity. Thus the most Chou was able to salvage from the total deadlock was some leeway to give an impression of partial success and the impression also that the talks would be continued.

The failure of Chou's probe for a soft spot in the position of Nehru and his advisers** was clearly indicated in the 25 April communique he issued with Nehru. The talks had led to a "better" understanding of opposing views but "did not resolve the differences that had arisen." Nehru rejected Chou's proposal to include in the communique that he would meet again with Chou. All that Nehru did agree to was to turn the issue over to subordinate officials of both countries, who were to meet from June to September to

*In advancing this condition, Nehru was aware that the lower level talks would come to nothing, and several cabinet ministers stated just that. In addition to remarks on the matter made by Finance Minister Desai on 26 April, Foreign Secretary Dutt told the American charge on 28 April that the officials would "certainly not" come to any agreement, as each would merely state his country's claims and report back to the cabinet. Dutt added that he personally would not want to be one of them.

**Chou even arranged a separate meeting with former ambassador to Peiping, R. K. Nehru, on 22 April, who later stated that the Indian position was too rigid and that some accommodation should be made to Chinese claims to the Aksai Plain--the only break in an otherwise solid Indian diplomatic front. The only difference reported in the Chinese delegation was that Chou was less gruff than Chen Yi in maintaining the same Chinese position with monotonous regularity.

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examine, check, and study the historical evidence of each side and draft a joint report on points of "agreement and disagreement" but they were not empowered to recommend a solution. Failure was also reflected in Chou's formal statement to a press conference in New Delhi on 25 April, when he conceded there were "still distances" between the two countries on six points "of proximity" including the matter of patrolling along the border. After reading this prepared statement, Chou answered questions and made a comment about the border, drawing distinctions between the three sectors. The differences (1) in the central sector were "small...and only on particular areas," (2) in the eastern sector were minor because the Chinese would not cross the so-called McMahon line and "we have not set forth any territorial claims," and (3) in the western sector were "bigger" because the Chinese asked New Delhi to take a similar stand--i.e. in return for Chinese acceptance of the NEFA status quo, "India was asked not to cross the line which appears on Chinese maps" in Ladakh--but New Delhi "has not entirely agreed."* Regarding Longju, Chou insisted to the journalists that it was Chinese territory and north of the McMahon line. Trying to salvage a modicum of goodwill, Chou referred to his formal statement that the dispute is only "temporary" and invited Nehru to come to Peiping when convenient for further talks and "to promote friendly relations." An Indian circular message of 27 April summed up the results of Chou's visit in terse language--"The views of the two governments remain as far apart as before"--and directed Indian embassies to rebutt the final impression Chou sought to create at his surprise news conference (at which he issued what was, in effect, a unilateral communique) that each side now appreciated the other's point of view better or that there was a prospect for a "settlement."

*Foreign Secretary Dutt told the American charge on 28 April that Indian officials did not agree with Chou not to press claims to territory north and east of the Karakoram, though in effect their agreement to avoid incidents would keep them from doing so.

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When Chou and his delegation had left for Katmandu, Nehru apparently decided to insist publicly that the "wrong" must be undone--that is, that the Chinese vacate their "aggression." During his talks with Chou, his attitude had been that the dispute could not be settled by bargaining or by an exchange but rather by Chinese withdrawals in Ladakh. Chou's position was that if they were to withdraw, nothing would be left to negotiate about. Nehru told Parliament on 26 April that India's entire argument was based on "Chinese forces having come into our territory." Returning from Nepal--where he had signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship (not a non-aggression pact as Chou had proposed in March in Peiping) and had tried to sooth tempers aroused by Peiping's claim to Mt. Everest during his March 1960 talks with Koirala--Chou on 29 April stated in Calcutta with faintly concealed pique that Nehru had never mentioned aggression during their New Delhi talks and that such an accusation after the Chinese departure was "unfriendly." The Chou-Nehru relationship had fallen to its lowest point ever.

The Chou-Nehru "Understanding" on Border Patrolling

Chou did not gain from Nehru an explicit, formal agreement to stop sending out Indian patrols. He believed, nevertheless, that an informal mutual understanding had been reached to suspend forward patrolling. The Chinese premier had indicated in his 25 April formal statement in New Delhi that both sides had agreed that "all efforts" should be made to avoid clashes. However, this had not been written into the 25 April communique. Chou also stated at his press conference that there were "still distances" between the two sides on the matter of "refraining from patrolling all along the border." Nevertheless, that some form of a verbal mutual understanding had been reached was suggested by the fact that Nehru in Parliament on 29 April did not contradict an opponent who claimed that Nehru had agreed with Chou to stop sending out patrols. The Indian Director of Military Intelligence had told the American military attache on 26 April that Chinese forward patrolling had ceased and that the Indians would take no action which

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might provoke border incidents. [redacted]

The apparent informal oral understanding temporarily to cease sending out forward patrols did not affect New Delhi's program of reinforcement in Ladakh. Nehru reportedly told President Prasad on 25 April that regardless of the outcome of his talks with Chou, police constabulary units would be replaced by regular army units and that the government would press forward with the development of the entire border area and with the construction of communication lines and new roads. At the opening of the National Defense College on 27 April, Nehru described the border situation as "an entirely new danger" which required an overall defense strategy based on "realistic and not idealistic grounds." However, regarding the important matter of acquiring military aid from the West, as suggested by some newspapers and members of Parliament, Nehru on 29 April vigorously reiterated his national go-it alone policy of "non-alignment."

On 3 June, a Chinese patrol of about 25 men crossed into Indian-claimed territory in the Kameng Division of the NEFA and penetrated to Taksang Monastery about 4.5 miles south of the McMahon line. [redacted]

It was not until 29 July that New Delhi formally protested the Chinese incursion and not until 12 August that the matter was made public in Parliament. In reporting the incident, deputy minister of External Affairs Mrs. Lakshmi Menon stated that the Chinese patrol withdrew "when the attention of the local people was drawn to their presence." Nehru himself, attempting to counter questions from the Opposition, stressed that the Chinese had come and gone stealthily--"like thieves in the night avoiding places where they might be seen." Nehru in effect conceded that

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there had been a "provisional understanding" with Chou to cease forward patrolling, by stating that Peiping had committed "a breach of the understanding."*

Actually, the Chou-Nehru "understanding" had not resulted in a complete suspension of patrol activity but rather in certain restrictions on the scope of such activity. As explained to an American official on 19 August by a senior Ministry of External Affairs official, the understanding between the two prime ministers had been not to send out forward patrols beyond the point of "actual control." Patrols apparently continued to operate within the border area up to the line of actual control as interpreted by each side. The Indian official admitted that there were

*When Menon asked Nehru in early June to adopt a more aggressive policy of forward patrolling, Nehru reportedly told the defense minister that he did not want such action "for the time being" and would await developments before making a positive decision. Indian patrolling may have been increased following the 3 June incident.

By April 1960, when the Sino-Soviet dispute erupted into a bitter polemic, Krishna Menon's attitude toward Peiping had hardened decisively. One month earlier, Menon apparently had been willing to hint publicly about Indian acceptance of Chinese control of the Aksai Plain, but in late April--following Peiping's publication of its Long Live Leninism diatribe against Khrushchev's policies--he took a no-compromise line with Chou En-lai, and by June, Menon was more anti-Chinese than he ever had been.

Menon, who has often appeared to be a willing Soviet supporter, is the dominant influence in the paper, Link. Link is supported by Soviet funds and, in turn, supports Soviet policies, taking a clear pro-Moscow line in the continuing Moscow-Peiping dispute.

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no boundary markings, making it easy for a patrol to cross the watershed without realizing it.* Nevertheless, he believed that the Chinese were engaged in probing actions to extend their area of control.

Chinese Patrolling Policy: 1960

Following the Chou-Nehru talks, the Chinese leaders in summer and fall 1960 apparently employed a two-fold policy of (1) ceasing regular patrol activity in their self-imposed demilitarized zones along the border, while (2) on occasion sending out reconnaissance parties in the immediate vicinity of their border posts. The primary goal was to reduce further the possibility of armed clashes, clashes which had hurt them politically.

The first part of the policy was directed toward this goal. According to a captured Chinese Communist document which had been issued by the Tibet Military Region Command Headquarters of the PLA on 14 November 1960, all border troops were to exercise extreme restraint. The document, which was used for troop indoctrination on border policy, quoted from the Border Defense Principles for the Southwest Regions--a high-level policy guide which had been "approved by the party Central Committee and Chairman Mao"--on the need to maintain command discipline:

*Following the Chinese reply to India's protest of the 3 June intrusion, New Delhi on 24 October sent a note to Peiping rejecting the Chinese version as fatuous. The note stated that the Indian government doubted that the incident was a "mistake" made by nine Chinese "local working personnel" who had lost their way while "felling bamboo" --because the number observed was 25, they carried arms slung from the shoulder, and there is no bamboo in the Himalayas or elsewhere at elevations of 12,000 to 15,000 feet above sea level. Nevertheless, the Chinese reply had been very close to a formal apology.

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...within a certain distance on our side of the border, patrols are not permitted. At the same time, when armed personnel from the neighboring country create provocations and begin to attack, they must be warned to halt their attack and to withdraw within their own boundary. Even though the warning proves ineffective, it is uniformly forbidden to counterattack before receiving orders from higher levels... /emphasis supplied/

This stipulation apparently had stirred some of the PLA rank and file to question its feasibility in tactical situations. The document charged that "some people" agree with the party's overall border policy, but find it very difficult to carry out. They complain, and, in fact, "do not have enough faith in the border struggle policy." One of the complaints cited was the following:

If the armed personnel of the neighboring country do not listen to our warnings and with great bombast and arrogance carry out aggression, what should we do? If they cannot be trusted and, on the contrary, surround us, blocking our way, what then?

The answer missed the mark, cautioning troops first not to "speculate" about what might occur, then rejecting as a probability large-scale attacks, and finally begging the question of what to do if confrontations did occur. It concluded merely by reiterating a blanket political directive

*The document provides considerable evidence that many PLA cadres disliked their assignment to Tibet and were simply waiting to complete their stint and return to areas of more favorable living conditions.

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to await orders from "higher levels," of which the highest turned out to be the party central committee. Presumably, military moves against the Indian border forces were to be taken on even the smallest scale only on direct order from the Tibet Region Command Headquarters, which may have acted only, even in tactical situations, on instructions from Peiping. Although the regional headquarters may have had some tactical command autonomy, the patrols seem to have had virtually none:

Matters concerning border defense, whether large or small, must be accurately reported to higher levels and instructions requested. We cannot be negligent or get big ideas. Even less can we handle things on our own.

As for military action against the Tibetan rebels, it was to take place well within Tibet's borders: "no combat near the borders...these rebels would be lured into deep penetration" and then annihilated.

The second part of the policy called for maintaining accurate intelligence on Indian and Tibetan-rebel military moves through some reconnaissance activity. The captured document stated:

If we just sit at our posts and know nothing of conditions, we will be unable to prevent or expose the provocations and attacks of the reactionaries or to make preparations to meet an actual development. The regulation calling for cessation of patrols along the border does not mean that reconnaissance and the understanding of conditions are prohibited. The strengthening of vigilance and caution at the various posts and the use of reconnaissance to observe the local situation is still necessary.

Reconnaissance activity apparently was restricted to the area in the immediate locale of the border posts. There were, of course, other means of collecting military intelligence on Indian and Tibetan-rebel positions and movements.

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These included the use of border tribal people, primarily Tibetans. In discussing reasons for maintaining the good will of border peoples, the documents made the following comment:

Strong points [or, camps] can be set up only on passes that overlook the routes and highways. It is impossible to establish defenses at points all along the border. Thus there will be a great expanse of empty ground, and, under these conditions, we have to depend on the broad masses of the people to plug these gaps and prevent penetration by the enemy and bad elements. If the enemy does penetrate, he can be detected readily and his progress made difficult. In order to prevent border penetrations by armed personnel of the neighboring state and to firmly, deliberately, and fiercely attack returning rebels, we must have timely collection of various kinds of intelligence and immediate knowledge of and reaction to the enemy's moves...

Partly to meet this military-intelligence requirement, the "mass line" of the PLA in Tibet was to be implemented rigorously. However, it clashed directly with the policy of annihilating the Tibetan rebels, many of whose relatives and friends were the very same "masses" the Chinese were trying to use. The reference to great gaps in the defense line--which was not really a "line" but rather a series of widely separated posts--suggests that even if there had been an active and extensive patrol policy in fall 1960, the Chinese would have been unable to cover the entire border.

The imposition of more stringent limitations on patrolling despite Indian moves up to the border and Tibetan raids across it apparently led to grumbling among the PLA rank and file. The captured document tried to provide a rationale for defensiveness and caution. It insisted that the whole border struggle was primarily a political, foreign policy matter and only secondarily a military matter.

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Repeatedly, it stressed that a restrained patrol policy was "absolutely not a show of weakness," but rather a display of "the scope of our political vision." It cuttingly attacked the "purely military" viewpoint of certain unnamed PLA personnel:

We absolutely cannot view the provocations and attacks of the neighboring country on our border merely from the pure military standpoint. We must not replace policies with emotions and erroneously regard the struggle strategy of avoiding armed clashes as an indication that we are weaker than the neighboring country, or that this strategy means that the military has abandoned its duty of protecting the fatherland. If we view things in this way, we will not be able to remain cool when we encounter the armed personnel of the neighboring country carrying out provocations and creating confusion. Our emotions would overwhelm us and we would be unable to refrain from striking out. We would not look to the larger situation and would not ask for orders or wait for directions from above before opening fire and striking back. In that case, we might gain a greater military victory, but politically we would fall into the trap of the other side and would cause only great injury to the party and state --the biggest mistake. /emphasis supplied/

The detrimental consequences of a "purely military" viewpoint were described for PLA border personnel by drawing on the foreign policy repercussions of the Sino-Nepalese clash of 28 June near Mustang.* The document referred to

*The Sino-Indian clashes of August and October 1959, however, were not cited as PLA mistakes but rather as Indian "attacks." This position complied with the document's line that Nepal and Burma were friendly neighbors and that they should therefore be seen as "different from" India.

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the 1960 incident as providing a "painful lesson," the results of which should be seen as harmful to China's foreign policy effort:

Imperialism and foreign reactionaries used this incident to slander us, create an atmosphere of crisis, and stir up trouble in our relations with Nepal, plotting to start another anti-Chinese movement to put us politically on the defensive. Our country not only paid an indemnity, but Premier Chou En-lai made a formal apology on behalf of our government to the government of Nepal.

We can see from this that the military can only serve the political struggle. If we ignore our political duties and simply fight for the sake of fighting, we not only miss the point about fighting, but also inevitably make mistakes and cause losses to the fatherland. We must, therefore, solemnly accept the painful lesson of the Keli Pass incident and take it as a warning... We must have strict discipline and resolutely and unswervingly implement the policies and regulations of the party.

On 29 June, one day after the incident, Katmandu had protested officially to Peiping, charging that the Chinese had killed a Nepalese checkpost officer and had arrested 15 Nepalese nationals. The Nepalese complained that the attack had been unprovoked and constituted a violation of the agreement reached in March 1960 demilitarizing the Sino-Nepalese border. Prime Minister Koirala continued to press Chou through letters for an explanation, and on 11 July sent a third letter to the Chinese premier, demanding that Chinese troops be pulled back 12½ miles from the border as agreed on in March and threatening to delay the start of the Sino-Nepalese joint commission talks on border demarcation. Starting on 30 June, Chou reportedly sent a total of four letters in reply, trying to mollify the angered Nepalese. Chou admitted that the incident was the result

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of Chinese "carelessness," expressed regret, and accepted Nepalese demands for compensation--all this in an effort to prevent the Nepalese from extensively publicizing the Chinese military action and thereby providing New Delhi with an exploitable event. Chou reportedly offered "profuse apologies" for the action of Chinese troops in extracting "confessions" from the Nepalese villagers captured during the incident, and then stated that Chinese troops had been withdrawn from the Sino-Nepalese demilitarized zone. The only thing Chou failed to do in this almost abject apology was to admit that Chinese troops had entered Nepalese territory. To have done so would have been tantamount to admitting that China had committed aggression.

The captured document suggests that the Mustang incident damaged Peiping's "foreign policy struggle" sufficiently to have stimulated the Chinese leaders to order the Tibet Military Region Command Headquarters to intensify troop indoctrination on the matter of avoiding border fire-fights. The primary purpose of the document seems, therefore, to have been to provide the basic rationale for a border policy of restraint. The document stated that the objective of indoctrination was to make PLA units "correctly understand the great significance of avoiding armed clashes and to make them understand that the regulations...are not a show of weakness...or a compromise of principle, but rather a policy which is active and has initiative." The basic rationale was developed in steps. It was centered on the proposition that "defense along the Tibet border is, at present, primarily a political struggle and a struggle in foreign relations." The argument then proceeded to define New Delhi's foreign policy motives and its major goal:

The main objective of the reactionary and expansionist elements of the neighboring country in provoking and attacking us is not to occupy more big chunks of our land, or to provoke a large-scale war. Their objective is to attempt to use the border confusion to create a situation of crisis along the border, develop pretexts, write many articles, and thus whip up anti-Chinese

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and anti-Communist sentiment, attack the lofty prestige of our country, destroy the influence of socialism, force us to accept their unreasonable demands, and plot to remain in vast areas of our territory indefinitely. [emphasis supplied]

This part of the argument apparently contained the Chinese leaders' probable estimate, in fall 1960, of Indian tactics. From this discussion of motives, the rationale moved to its conclusion, i.e. the need "to expose" New Delhi's plots by exercising military restraint. This larger significance of restraint was presented as providing Peiping with a definite foreign policy advantage:

By doing our utmost to avoid armed clashes with them, we make their provocations and tricks politically unfeasible... Thus, in the political and foreign policy struggle, we will be in the position of initiative, reason, and advantage from beginning to end.

In sum, the document suggests that, by fall 1960, the Chinese leaders were trying to prevent further Indian and Soviet bloc criticism of their aggressiveness by reducing the number of regular border patrols and intensifying the indoctrination of PLA border forces on the matter of military caution. However, some reconnaissance was to continue in the immediate vicinity of Chinese border posts. They stressed to these forces the detrimental political effects of border skirmishes--even if "a great military victory" were attained--and probably estimated that New Delhi did not intend to re-take large areas of Chinese-held border territory because the Indians did not have the military capability to do so.

Two Chinese "Lines" of Actual Control: 1956 and 1960

The cessation of regular forward patrolling not only did not mean the end of limited reconnaissance near existing

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Chinese posts, but also did not mean the end of surreptitious construction of new posts at specially selected points. Although new posts had been established earlier, it was primarily as a result of the Tibetan revolt of March 1959 that the Chinese moved stealthily to establish even more posts at scattered points in Ladakh, particularly in the more inaccessible valleys. The 21 October 1959 clash was a clear indication that the Chinese had moved forward on the western sector, as the clash occurred near Hot Spring, southwest of their previous Kongka Pass positions. These thinly scattered posts may have been set up even beyond the "line" of actual control claimed by Chou En-lai in 1956 and confirmed by him in November and December 1959.

The 1956 Chinese-claimed "line" had been confirmed by Chou in his letter to Nehru on 17 December 1959. Chou had stated that, "As a matter of fact, the Chinese map published in 1956, to which Your Excellency referred, correctly shows the traditional boundary between the two countries in this /western/ sector." However, in late 1960, the Indian border experts noted that in their talks with the Chinese experts, Peiping was claiming a new "line." The Indian Report stated:

But the map given to the Indian side by the Chinese side under Item One differed considerably from the map of 1956 which Premier Chou En-lai had declared to be correct. For instance, the map given to the Indian side showed the alignment from the Karakoram Pass to the Chang Chenmo valley to the west of the alignment shown in the 1956 map; and it cut Pangong Lake to the west of where it was cut in the 1956 map. There was divergence, therefore, not merely among Chinese official maps but between the alignment confirmed by Premier Chou En-lai last year and that claimed by the Chinese side this year at these meetings. /emphasis supplied/

This charge was soon to prove embarrassing to Peiping, and the Indian citation of this cartographic legerdemain probably helped convince the Chinese leaders that it would be politically foolish to publish the border experts report.

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Thus, despite Peiping's anxiety to avoid patrol clashes, the Chinese continued to inch forward in the western sector. They pushed their map claim westward, beyond their 1956 claims, taking in more Indian territory than ever before since 1949.

Chinese Deny Violating Indian Airspace: 1960

Despite the fact that aerial reconnaissance was infrequently used against India by PLA forces in Tibet and Sinkiang, New Delhi in late 1959 began to protest alleged Chinese Communist overflights of Indian territory. The Ministry of External Affairs first protested the "violation of Indian airspace" in a note of 5 December 1959, claiming that "violations" had occurred "in the last two months" along the entire border. The Ministry again sent a note of protest on 4 April 1960 concerning "violations" by Chinese planes "in the previous three months." The Chinese remained silent, avoiding any reply until Nehru took the matter up personally with Chou En-lai in their private talks on 25 April. Nehru later told Mayor Willy Brandt that in reply, Chou merely suggested that India shoot one of the planes down, and that Nehru would then see that these planes were not Chinese Communist. After such a shutdown, Chou concluded, Nehru would see that no Peiping-New Delhi incident would ensue.

The Indian leaders apparently did not accept Chou's denial that the planes were Peiping's, and on 22 August 1960, the Ministry of External Affairs sent another note, protesting 52 "violations" of Indian airspace since March 1960 by Chinese planes coming from Tibet. On 16 September, Peiping finally responded with a note rejecting New Delhi's protest on the grounds that after investigations it was found that "no entry of Chinese aircraft into Indian airspace had occurred at all." On the next day, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman was instructed to set forth the "real facts," which he did as follows:

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In the early days of April 1960, the Indian government informed the Chinese government that aircraft had been discovered flying over the Sino-Indian border area. During his visit to India in April, Premier Chou En-lai told Prime Minister Nehru in their talks on April 25 that it had been found through investigations by the Chinese government that these were U.S. aircraft. They took off from Bangkok, passed over Burma and China, and crossed the Sino-Indian border to penetrate deep into China's interior to parachute Chinese secret agents, weapons, supplies, and wireless sets, and then flew back to Bangkok, again passing over the Sino-Indian border.

Premier Chou En-lai assured Prime Minister Nehru at the time that the Chinese government would never allow its aircraft to fly over the border, and said that the Chinese government had sent a note to the Burmese government stating that should Burma discover any unidentified aircraft in its airspace, it was fully entitled to take any countermeasure, either force them to land or shoot them down. China would do likewise should it discover such aircraft in its own airspace.

The note went on to describe continued Indian protests, in the face of Chou's earlier clarification, as "a very unfriendly act" toward Peiping. However, Peiping's contention that the aircraft involved were in fact U.S. planes was rejected by New Delhi in another note (26 October), which was followed by more protests on 13 February and 29 April 1961, and 10 March, 24 March, and 25 July 1962, the last violation allegedly occurring over Chushul. The Chinese practice generally has been not to reply to the allegations, apparently reluctant to continue to admit deep penetration of its airspace and satisfied that their 17 September 1960 statement was sufficiently clear to stand as a permanent position.

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The Border Experts Talks: 15 June - 12 December 1960

It was Chou who had insisted--and Nehru who had reluctantly agreed--that political contact be continued by meetings of border experts rather than completely broken off. After his frustrating talks with Nehru and his top advisers, Chou had cleverly devised six points of "common ground" or "close proximity" which he presented in his formal statement of 25 April, trying to create the impression that there was sufficient accord (even after the dismal failure of the Chou-Nehru talks) for negotiation:

1. There exist disputes with regard to the boundary between the two sides.
2. There exists between the two countries a line of actual control up to which each side exercises administrative jurisdiction.
3. In determining the boundary between the two countries, certain geographical principles, such as watersheds, river valleys and mountain passes, should be equally applicable to all sectors of the boundary.
4. A settlement of the boundary question between the two countries should take into account the national feelings of the two peoples towards the Himalayas and the Karakoram Mountains.
5. Pending a settlement of the boundary question between the two countries through discussions, both sides should keep to the line of actual control and should not put forward territorial claims as pre-conditions, but individual adjustments may be made.

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6. In order to ensure tranquility on the border so as to facilitate the discussion, both sides should continue to refrain from patrolling along all sectors of the boundary.

Nehru had refused to confirm any of these points, indicating New Delhi was unwilling formally to accept a "line" of actual control or even the fact that the boundary was a matter for discussion. The Indians calculated that to accept such a "line" would be in effect to accept the border status quo, freezing the Indian position in Ladakh and acquiescing in Chinese occupation.

The Indians recognized that the Chinese saw their big push for substantive negotiations as having failed and that Chou was merely trying to demonstrate some progress and a continuing process of discussion. But Nehru acquiesced apparently to avoid the appearance of unreasonable intransigence and because at the time the military alternative was unacceptable for India. From the start, therefore, the talks served as a political buffer for both sides and as an instrument of the Chinese policy to perpetuate the impression of continuing negotiations. Both sides also recognized their political importance, the stakes being a propaganda advantage for the side with the better historical and legal case. At the end of the first session,*

*There were three sessions held over a six-month period, the first in Peiping from 15 June to 25 July, the second in New Delhi from 19 August to 5 October, and the third in Rangoon from 7 November to 12 December. The Chinese reverted to the basic issue of delimitation, insisting that it was not merely relevant but crucial to the entire border dispute, instead of adhering to the Chou-Nehru agreement that they merely examine, check, and study the historical evidence submitted by each side. Thus in the border experts' talks, as in the Chou-Nehru discussions, the Chinese attempted (unsuccessfully) to budge the Indians from their position that the border for many years has been delimited and that this had in fact been accepted by Peiping.

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officials of the Indian team told American officials in Hong Kong on 1 August that no progress toward a settlement had been made, none had been expected, and none had been desired. New Delhi's position was described by them as being that the border was already defined, while Peiping hoped to portray it as still under negotiation.

Negotiation, in the Chinese view, actually meant a simple procedure whereby Nehru would agree to accept Chou's formula of an Aksai Plain-for-NEFA exchange. The Indian officials reported to New Delhi that at their parting reception given in late July by Foreign Minister Chen Yi, Chen explicitly stated that the Chinese were ready "to negotiate" on the basis of Chou's formula, and added that Chou would be willing to visit India again to sign an agreement to such a formula "if Nehru had no time" to come to Peiping. A similar message was later conveyed by Burmese Prime Minister U Nu in talks with President Prasad in New Delhi on 14 November. U Nu is [] reported to have been told by Chou En-lai that he was prepared to give up China's claim to the NEFA in return for India's acceptance of the status quo in Ladakh, even though this would mean giving up "vast territories that historically belonged to Tibet." When Prasad discussed U Nu's statement with Nehru, the latter --according to Prasad--commented:

Chou's suggestion for solving the dispute has some merit, for if they /i.e. the Chinese/ can prove that historically Ladakh belongs to them, what is the reason for us to keep it?

Angered, Prasad reportedly told Nehru that it was his duty to keep India's borders intact, to which Nehru replied, in a tone of reassurance, that for the time being there were many practical difficulties in the way of any settlement. This [] reported exchange points up the apparent inconsistency in Nehru's "hard line" thinking on Peiping and his personal inclination to vacillate, keeping alive the hope of a way out through compromise. It also underscores the influence of his associates in sustaining at crucial times an adamant official attitude.

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By 5 October, the date on which the second series of experts talks ended in New Delhi, Indian officials believed that their case was proving to be stronger than Peiping's. Members of the Indian team were reported jubilant in early October, attributing the strength of their case to the excellent administrative records that the British had maintained on the border areas. On the crucial issue of Ladakh, when the Chinese presented old documents, the Indians tabled more and older manuscripts, some of which went back six or seven centuries, to show that Ladakh had been a separate entity from Tibet. [redacted]

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[redacted] Moreover, according to team chief, J. S. Mehta, the Chinese case "objectively speaking" was riddled with "theoretical and factual contradictions," not really as strong as it had appeared before the experts talks began.

The Indian case, published in a detailed report (February 1961) of the border experts talks following the last--the Rangoon--session (December 1960), was impressive. It was argued adroitly on many points of fact (i.e. historical documentary evidence), logic, and international law. The final report was highly professional and precise where precision was crucial, avoiding irrelevancies for the most part and meeting many Chinese arguments head-on. It demonstrated that New Delhi could produce a respectable legal case when British-educated, first-class legal experts and historians were called on. However, New Delhi's ability to drive home effectively to laymen specially selected points

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seems to be inferior to Peiping's.* The Chinese use their professional propaganda machine to good advantage, having learned well the receptivity of various international audiences--particularly in south and southeast Asia--to certain types of argument and having always available the ad hominem charge of "British imperialism" to pillory the common historical culprit.

In collecting materials for their case, the Indian historians had the assistance of British officials in the Commonwealth Relations Office and the use of the extensive India Office library in London.** British assistance apparently was centered on strengthening New Delhi's documentation, but may have included an exchange of views on validity and relevance of certain lines of argumentation. Officials in the British Foreign Office's Far Eastern Department, discussing the Indian case on 25 January with an American embassy officer, regarded the relative strength of the Indian and Chinese historical claims to much of the area along the McMahon line as "probably a standoff." The

*This contrast in Chinese and Indian propaganda capability was striking in 1960 and 1961, and it still is today. Indian diplomatic officials themselves have commented on the matter. During the late May 1963 conference of heads of mission in southeast Asia, the mission heads agreed that India's position in the Sino-Indian dispute had not been understood in southeast Asia. They attributed this fact partly to the ineffective Indian propaganda services, claiming that "All-India Radio is no match for Peiping Radio."

**In addition to documents available in Peiping, the Chinese apparently recovered some Tibetan materials relevant to their claims in Lhasa. They also tried to acquire documents from local Tibetans, as is indicated by a Tibet PLA troop indoctrination brochure of November 1960: "If mass work is effective, the people will trust us and bring out all kinds of historical proof to show that Tibet is under China's sovereignty."

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conflicting claims in Ladakh were viewed as even more difficult to sort out legally. However, the head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Commonwealth Relations Office differed with the Foreign Office appraisal of India's claim to the McMahon line, viewing it as a fairly strong case. Dr. Gopal and the other Indian historians had expressed considerable satisfaction with the mass of documents they had found in the India Office library. Later, in their February 1961 report on the border experts talks, the Indians repeatedly stressed not only the quality (authenticity, relevance, and precision) of these historical documents but also the quantity, which exceeded by far what the Chinese were able to present.*

L. C. Green, lecturer in International Law at University College, London, has written a brief account of the respective cases which mainly favors India's.**

Regarding Ladakh, Green maintained that the watershed, or "height of land," principle as the basis for a boundary

*The Indian team caught the Chinese in several apparent falsifications of the content of Chinese-tabled documents. For example, according to the Indian final report, "There were other cases where the translation and examination of the photostats supplied by the Chinese side showed that the passages cited...and said to be taken from specified documents actually were not to be found in the full texts contained in the photostats." (Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, February 1961, p. 260.) The Indians also exposed the sophistry of the Chinese claim that Sino-Indian correspondence in 1950 indicated Peiping accepted only the Indian "border" rather than the "boundary." (Ibid., p. 275.)

**"Legal Aspects of the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," The China Quarterly, July-September 1960, pp. 42-58.

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claim favors the Indian case, as the principle is firmly established in international law. He viewed the Indian case on this point as further strengthened by the fact that the Chinese accept the watershed principle for the middle sector. The Chinese, however, complained at the talks that the Indian alignment in Ladakh is inconsistent, as it "jumps from the Karakoram Mountains /i.e., the Chinese-claimed line/ to the Kun Lun Mountains," rather than following the higher Karakoram crests southeastward from the Karakoram Pass. The Chinese also argued that if the line is to run along the higher Himalayas in the east--i.e., roughly along the McMahon line, as India claims--"then why should the western sector of this boundary not also run along the crest of the Himalayas /the Karakoram/, rather than along the...Kun Luns /the Lower range/ as contended by the Indian side..."* While oversimplified, the Chinese logic here seems valid, and points up the relatively stronger Indian case in the eastern sector in contrast to the western sector. The historical documentation tabled by the Indian team for traditional ownership of Ladakh, however, was not decisively countered by the Chinese team. Actually, the Chinese case on Ladakh derives its force from the matter of actual control.

Regarding the McMahon line, Green maintained that the line may have been the written confirmation of what was already accepted as the frontier de facto and that almost half a century has elapsed since the Simla Conference of 1914, "during which Chinese practice /of keeping north of the line/ may have created an effective estoppel to Chinese denial of the validity of the line." The Chinese, in a counter to this argument, merely pointed to their claim that prior to 1949, China and Britain had many "exchanges" on the question of the boundary, and that after 1949, China had stated that the boundary had not been "delimited."** However, the Chinese did not argue the point

*Report...., op. cit., CR-4 & 5.

**Ibid., CR-29.

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with the same vigor as they argued their case on the western sector, and they hinted again in October 1960, when the Sino-Burma border treaty was formally signed, that they would accept the watershed as the traditional boundary as they had with the Burmese.*

The position of the teams remained diametrically opposed on 12 December at the final session in Rangoon, and the writing (on Chinese demand) of separate reports, rather than a joint one, as envisaged in the Chou-Nehru April 1960 communique, formalized the disparity. [redacted]

[redacted] the Indian leaders in January 1961 were doubtful about the political wisdom of publishing the reports. Their doubts did not stem from any view that New Delhi's case had been weak. They felt compelled to satisfy public opinion and members of Parliament by publication, but were concerned that the reports would disclose further instances of Chinese deception and new Chinese claims, thereby further inflaming Indian feeling against Peiping and resulting in more parliamentary and public pressure on the government for forceful "action." Following Indian publication of the respective team reports, the Chinese team's pointed insistence that the Bhutan and Sikkim border matter was beyond the scope of the talks bolstered the widespread impression in India that Peiping viewed these areas as not

*However, not every section of the mutually accepted Sino-Burmese line followed the traditional alignment of the McMahon line. Attempting to maintain a consistent position on the traditional alignment, the Indians on 20 December protested to Peiping over a Sino-Burmese map showing the western terminus of the Burma-China border as five miles below the tripartite junction which India claims is the traditional China-Burma-Indian meeting point.

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within India's responsibility.* The Chinese position on Kashmir during the talks was also intended to create difficulties for Nehru, in India as well as in Pakistan. According to the Indian report, the Chinese team refused to discuss the Ladakh issue except on the basis that Kashmir does not belong to India--that is, on the basis that Kashmir is disputed territory between Pakistan and India.**

As the border experts talks wore on, the Chinese leaders apparently had to recognize the fact that the Indian

*In mid-1961, according to the Bhutanese Maharaja's political agent in India Jigme Dorji, the Chinese approached the Bhutanese with an offer to negotiate a border agreement; also, to recognize Bhutan's sovereignty, to extend diplomatic recognition, and to provide technical aid. In roughly the same period, the Chinese reportedly advanced a proposal for a Confederation of Himalayan States to some Sikkimese political figures.

**The report states that: "The Chinese refusal to discuss the segment of the boundary west of the Karakoram Pass was tantamount to questioning the legality of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India..." (Ibid., p. 269.) (The Indians privately interpreted the Chinese position to mean that India was an illegal occupation power in the area west of the Pass. (For the Chinese refusal to discuss the area, see ibid., CR-156.)

The Chinese later used the Pakistanis to demonstrate that although India could not negotiate a border agreement with any of its neighbors, China could, even with a government aligned with the West. When, on 10 May 1962, New Delhi protested Sino-Pakistani border negotiations, Peiping replied on 31 May that China has a right to negotiate with Pakistan on boundary matters because (1) Peiping never accepted Indian sovereignty over Kashmir, (2) the negotiations with Pakistan do not involve the question of ownership of Kashmir, and (3) after the India-Pakistan dispute is settled, both governments will reopen negotiations with China on the question of the Kashmir boundary.

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case had proven to be strong--stronger than anticipated, and at least as good as Peiping's. They were, therefore, careful not to publish the texts of the border experts reports, as New Delhi had done. Despite badgering from the Indians, for a long time thereafter--16 months--they avoided even acknowledging the existence of the reports. When they finally did "publish" the December 1960 reports on 13 April 1962, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement indicated specifically that they had been distributed to deputies of the National People's Congress but did not indicate whether they had been made available outside this puppet group to the general public and to foreigners. Moreover, the Chinese leaders deliberately restricted public knowledge of the content of the reports to a cryptic and highly propagandistic version of the Chinese case. The full texts were never published; in their place, the Peiping People's Daily carried only a garbled and truncated "brief account" of the Chinese position. Thus the Chinese leaders were compelled to conceal the real Indian case and the weak points of their own, relying on their effective propaganda machine to provide the smokescreen for this defeat.

When Nehru defended his border policy at the Governors' Conference held on 8 and 9 November, he insisted that the Indian team had proven the better, submitting data which the Chinese found they were unable effectively to counter. This was the private, and soon became the public, position of New Delhi on the border experts talks. Nehru went on to tell the governors that Peiping, rather than New Delhi, had been set back by the border dispute. He pointed to Khrushchev's criticism of the Chinese at Bucharest in June

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1960,* and stated that the Chinese had protested the sale of Soviet helicopters to India as a violation of the principle of "proletarian internationalism,"** The Chinese were also said to have asked for a joint commission to demarcate the boundaries of Sinkiang and Mongolia, the

*For an account of Khrushchev's criticism, see ESAU XVI-62: The Indian Communist Party and the Sino-Soviet Dispute.

However, New Delhi was unable to exploit Sino-Soviet differences during the border experts talks. That is, the Russians refused to intercede directly on India's behalf, maintaining the position established in September 1959. Shortly after the Chou-Nehru discussions, Foreign Secretary Dutt told the American charge on 28 April that Khrushchev had been "no help at all," remaining just as neutral in private as in public and hoping that both these "friends" of the Soviet Union would settle their dispute.

**The Soviets apparently first offered helicopters to the Indians in June 1960. In July the Indians tested one MI-4 copter, in August they decided to buy several of these, and by fall they had discussed the purchase of other transport aircraft. A Soviet-Indian agreement for the sale of military transport aircraft to India was signed in March 1961

Whether Chinese criticism of Khrushchev's policies or Khrushchev's desire to maintain Indian goodwill was the primary factor in the Soviet decision to provide these aircraft is conjectural. In any case, Sino-Soviet polemics were particularly bitter in April and May 1960, and Khrushchev probably was furious with Chinese opposition. Ambassador Parthasarathy reported that Soviet Ambassador Chervonenko went to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to protest Mao's 14 May statement, just before the Paris "summit" meeting, that "some people had described Eisenhower as a man who loved peace very much." Parthasarathy reported that the Russians had taken this remark as a personal rebuke to Khrushchev.

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areas the Chinese claimed on their maps being somewhat greater than they actually controlled.* The contents of Nehru's remarks reportedly were passed to Chinese embassy personnel in New Delhi on 11 November by an Indian Communist. The Chinese, as a result, were probably further impelled to attack Khrushchev for defending a non-Communist country in a dispute with a Communist one.

Peiping's Estimate of Indian Intentions and Capabilities:
Late 1960 - Early 1961

At the end of 1960, the Chinese leaders continued to view a hostile India as a prospect to be avoided. They recognized that border clashes had made this prospect a real one, requiring therefore an avoidance of such clashes and a major effort "to recover" some of the Indian good will that had marked the brighter days of the early Chou-Nehru relationship. They apparently viewed India as a military power they could handle, but were concerned lest Nehru, a man of international prestige, continue to undercut Peiping's

*By spring 1962, Sino-Mongolian differences regarding the boundary apparently had intensified, owing to an incident in which Chinese personnel shifted some markers and the Mongolians moved them back, bringing up a detachment of Mongolian troops to end the shifting back and forth. The Mongolian ambassador in Peiping reportedly stated that in August 1962, negotiations to define the border were under way. No public mention was made of these talks until 23 December 1962, when the Chinese announced that Premier Tsendenbal was coming to Peiping to sign a Sino-Mongolian border treaty. When, on 26 December, the treaty was signed, the Chinese stressed that discussions had gone smoothly and agreement was reached "quickly," implying a contrast with the protracted and fruitless Sino-Indian discussions. The Chinese seem to have made the greater part of the concessions where their claims differed from those of Ulan Bator.

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international image with complaints of Chinese "aggression." They were careful to sustain the public position that India was still on balance a neutral state, squaring this line with the doctrinal analysis of Nehru as a "bourgeois" leader by maintaining that many "bourgeois nationalist" leaders in near-by countries have a dual nature, of which one side is indeed friendly to China. Furthermore, India was still held to be a state in the "peace zone" between the two major camps and an object of the East-West struggle. The captured Tibetan troop indoctrination document on border policy of mid-November 1960 presented Mao's opportunistic doctrinal formulation on the dual nature of bourgeois-led near-by states as follows:

Because they are two-faced and ruled by the bourgeoisie, they are the in-between powers--between the socialist camp and the imperialist camps....They are the objects of struggle between us and the imperialists. The aim of the imperialists is to pull them into the military aggressive bloc. Our aim is to win them over as allies of socialism against imperialism. Therefore, toward these countries, we have adopted a two-sided revolutionary policy of unity as well as struggle...

We should remember that the ruling clique of the neighboring country has a side that is unfriendly to us, but they also advocate peace and neutrality and desire our friendship. /emphasis supplied/

It went on to state the case for avoiding border skirmishes by using a simple formula that "to make a friend is to lose an enemy." There is little doubt that the Chinese leaders by the end of 1960 were under no illusions about New Delhi's desire for Chinese "friendship." Yet it was politically necessary to maintain publicly--and for PLA troops--the position that a calm frontier together with negotiations would eventually point the way back to a Sino-Indian rapprochement. This was in fact not a Indian desire but a Chinese one.

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The Chinese desire for some form of rapprochement, or at least to find some way to neutralize New Delhi's antipathy, apparently did not result from a fear of India's military capability. The Tibetan troop-indoctrination document stated flatly that the Indians "do not have the strength openly to declare war on us and attack us militarily on a large scale." As for New Delhi's intentions, the document stated that the real, primary aim was to reduce China's "lofty prestige" and "force unreasonable demands on us" by creating minor skirmishes. The prospect of a major Sino-Indian war was discussed only as an unlikely eventuality, which, if it were to take place, would crucially change Peiping's border policy of restraint:

Of course, there is the possibility that the reactionaries of the neighboring country, in connection with the scheming and planning of the imperialists, might carry out large-scale violations of our territory. However, if this were to occur, the nature of the border struggle would change completely, and it would no longer remain within the sphere of the present policy.

The document was elliptical on this point, failing to state precisely what was meant by the phrase "large-scale violations of our territory." It was, however, sufficiently broad to cover the possibility of a series of Indian crossings of the "line" of actual control and establishment of

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posts on the Chinese-claimed side.* That the Chinese might unilaterally move forward the entire "line" themselves by establishing new posts, was not even hinted, of course.

As of January 1961, the Chinese strategy remained: to work for a rapprochement with New Delhi, to consider India as still nonaligned, and to avoid personal attacks on Nehru. To this end, the border was to remain calm and Chinese initiatives were to be diplomatic, directed toward discouraging the Indians from moving across the Chinese-defined "line" of actual control. Following a review of 1960, a Chinese Foreign Ministry report, issued in January 1961, outlined Peiping's prospective policy toward India, centering on the need to mollify New Delhi:

We will strive to have better relations with India and influence India into assuming a passive position on the border problem. This is important.

The Ministry report went on to envisage an invitation to Nehru to visit China "at an opportune moment" and a call for another conference of border experts. However, it

*The Chinese drew the "line" so that several posts, on the location of which both sides had constantly disagreed, were north of it. Longju was an important case in point. When, in December 1960, Indian aircraft confirmed that the Chinese had withdrawn from Longju--leaving over 100 dead bodies in the area as a result of an epidemic--Nehru was [redacted] reported as favoring Indian reoccupation of the post. The Army, however, reportedly dissuaded him, on the grounds that logistic support facilities were inadequate to sustain Indian occupation of Longju.

Nehru's willingness to send Indian troops into Longju points up a significant change in his attitude, inasmuch as New Delhi's notes of 10 September and 16 November 1959--more than a year earlier--had proposed that neither side send its troops into the outpost.

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warned diplomatic personnel to be prepared for another anti-China wave which might be started in India and placed that country in a category different from Burma, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Cambodia, with whom China has "friendly" relations.

The Chinese leaders in January 1961 would have their diplomatic officials view Peiping's 1960 policies as reflecting considerable "tactical flexibility." With the exception of a possible mid-June clash, there were no Sino-Indian border skirmishes, Indian propaganda was countered in 1960 but New Delhi was still considered to be nonaligned, and Nehru was not singled out for vituperative criticism. This was said to be part of Mao's policy of "unity as well as struggle with India and other national states." According to the January 1961 foreign ministry report, "the struggle against India shows how we...used the tactic of flexibility:"

India started an anti-China movement, and this we opposed with determination. Then, after opposing it, the Premier went to New Delhi to negotiate with Nehru. The two chiefs of state met. At the border, clashes were avoided. Thus the relations between the two countries again calmed down temporarily.

It was in this context (and in connection with a discussion of tactics toward newly independent African countries still having diplomatic relations with Taipei) that Mao was cited as providing the general principle of diplomatic forbearance: "In 1960, Chairman Mao again instructed us repeatedly that in our struggles, some leeway must be provided." The practical conclusion which flowed from this principle and the view of the U.S. as the main enemy was that

...our struggle against India should be subordinated to the struggle against /U.S./ imperialism. Our struggle against India should not go beyond this limit.

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The order of priorities which the document outlined for Chinese diplomatic officials indicates that restraint toward India was to be a relative matter, a matter of degree. While the U.S. was Peiping's major world enemy, India was second on the list, i.e. the "main target in Southeast Asia," as the document put it. In turn, the Chinese campaign against India could (and did) exceed in scope and intensity the campaign against Indonesia. Given this order of intensity, the Chinese leaders may have missed the point that, although they were "harder" on the U.S. and "softer" on Indonesia relative to India, the Indian leaders saw no such scale of intensity and were provoked by even the smallest degree of Chinese animosity. To New Delhi, China was becoming India's most important enemy and the Maoist policy of "unity and struggle" toward India meant nothing but "struggle."* The possibility exists, therefore, that the Chinese leaders, including Mao himself, by early 1961 believed they had sufficient room for future diplomatic maneuvering with New Delhi when in fact such room no longer existed.

*This Maoist policy had been commented on by Teng Hsiao-ping in his speech in Moscow on 14 November 1960 at the meeting of world Communist parties. Teng reportedly stated that a dual policy was required to handle Nehru: "We must follow a prudent policy of both struggle and friendship." "If one were to adapt oneself solely to the progressive aspect of Nehru's policy and evade the necessary struggle against him, this would only inflate his reactionary arrogance." What Teng failed to say was that the "necessary struggle" against Nehru would counter only his military "arrogance" while it would almost inevitably increase his political "arrogance."

Teng's effort was primarily a defensive maneuver against Khrushchev's charge at Bucharest on 26 June 1960 that the Chinese way of handling the dispute was a "tactical error" and a clear sign of "Chinese nationalism." Khrushchev had gone on to say that if the USSR used Chinese logic, "war would have been declared on Iran on more than one occasion, since some soldiers had been killed and others might also be killed."

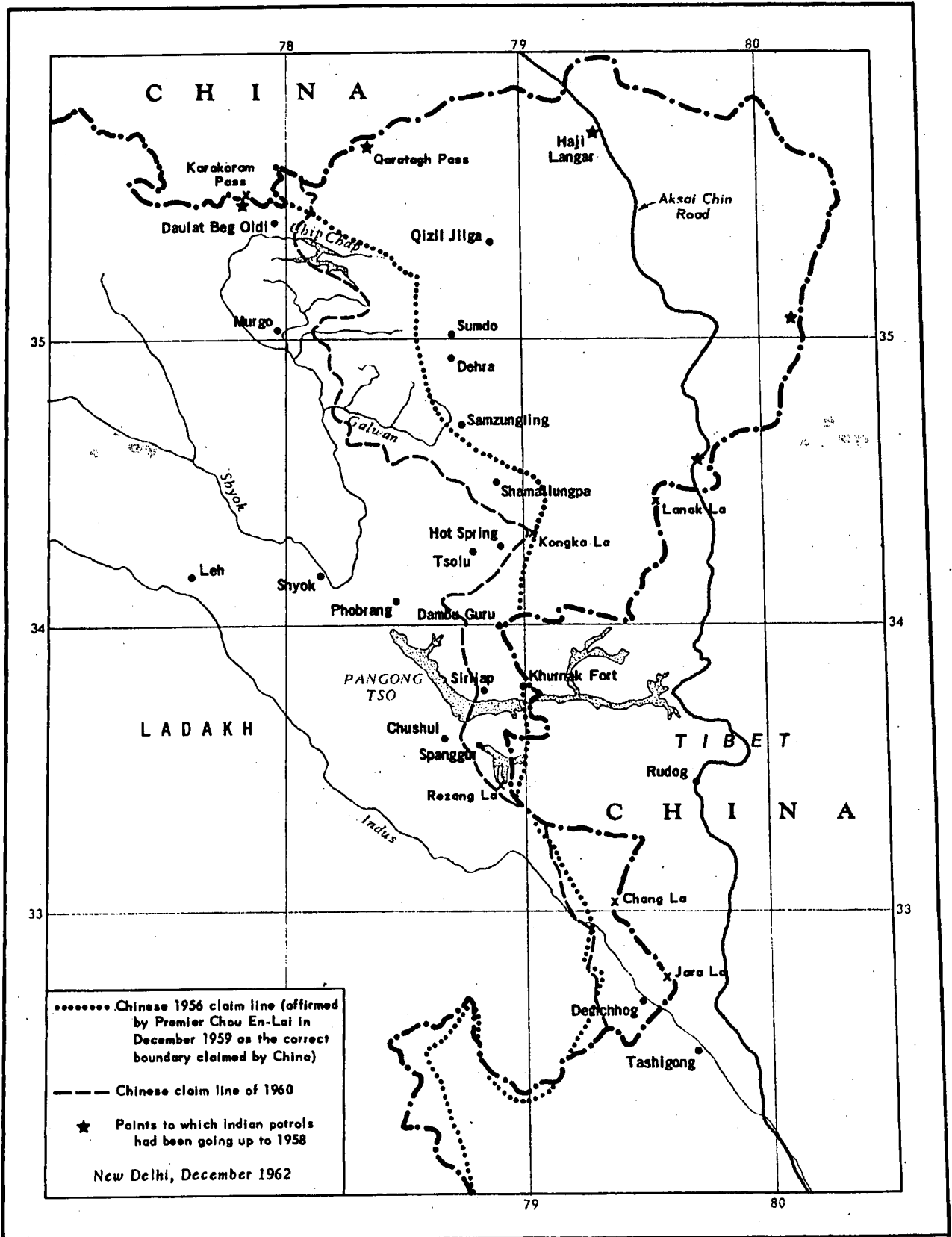
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SINO-INDIAN BORDER

Chinese Claim 'Lines' of 1956 and 1960 in the Western Sector



CHINA-INDIA FRONTIER

