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# THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

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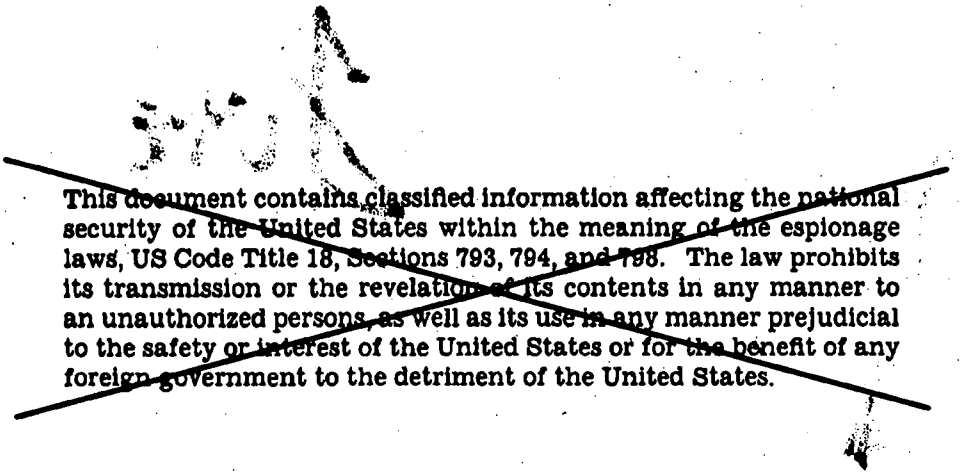

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# THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

This is a working paper, the first of three on the Sino-Indian border dispute. This paper traces the political factors which led initially to the dispute and later to the attack of 20 October 1962.

In focusing on the motivation of the Chinese and Indian leaders, the paper offers only a cursory exposition of the historical case each side has developed for its border claims, and it does not attempt to judge the legality of the respective claims.

The Sino-Indian dispute, as we see it, did not arise as a function of the Sino-Soviet dispute and has not been conducted primarily with a view to its effect on that dispute. It has become, however, an issue in that dispute, and this paper touches on that aspect at various points.

The dispute will be discussed in a rough chronological scheme in three sections. This Section I covers the period 1950 to fall 1959; Section II will deal with the period from late 1959 through 1961; and Section III will cover 1962. Developments in 1963 will be referred to where they are relevant.

The DDI/RS would welcome comment, addressed either to the Chief or to Arthur Cohen [redacted]

SECTION I. (1950-1959)

## Summary

Developments between late 1950 and late 1959 were marked by Chinese military superiority which, combined with cunning diplomatic deceit, contributed for nine years to New Delhi's reluctance to change its policy from friendship to open hostility toward the Peiping regime. It emerges that above all others Nehru himself--with his view that the Chinese Communist leaders were amenable to gentlemanly persuasion--refused to change this policy until long after Peiping's basic hostility to him and his government was apparent. When finally he did re-think his China policy, Nehru continued to see a border war as a futile and reckless course for India. His answer to Peiping was to call for a strengthening of the Indian economy to provide a national power base capable of effectively resisting an eventual Chinese military attack. In the context of the immediate situation on the border, where Chinese troops had occupied the Aksai Plain in Ladakh, this was not an answer at all but rather an implicit affirmation that India did not have the military capability to dislodge the Chinese.

The border dispute itself in this period centered largely on Chinese occupation of the Aksai Plain which, combined with minor armed clashes added the important dimension of an affronted national prestige on both sides. Behind the interminable exchange of letters and notes carrying territorial claims and counterclaims lies the view of the Indian leaders that Peiping surreptitiously had deprived India of a large corner of Ladakh and ever since has been trying to compel New Delhi to acquiesce in this encroachment. Not to acquiesce has become primarily a matter of national prestige, as the Aksai Plain is not really of strategic value--or was not held publicly to be of strategic value--to India. For a while in fall 1959 Nehru seemed to be preparing the Indian public for cession of the Aksai Plain to the Chinese in exchange for Indian ownership of the NEFA, but this was opposed by some leaders in the Congress Party.

In the Chinese view, the area is strategically important primarily because it provides a land link between Sinkiang and Tibet. To agree to give it back would be viewed as a major Chinese defeat, and in this way considerations of national prestige also enter into the calculations of the Chinese leaders. In occupying the area, they probably believed that just as Indian forces moved up into the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the early 1950s and established a military presence in the Chinese-claimed eastern sector, so too they could with equal justification move gradually into the Aksai Plain in the mid-1950s to establish a military presence in the West.

It was basic Chinese policy early in Peiping's relations with New Delhi not to claim territory in writing or orally, but only on the basis of maps. Thus the Chinese claim to NEFA appeared only as a line on Chinese maps dipping at points about 100 miles south of the McMahon line. Chou En-lai, in talks with Nehru in 1954 and 1956, treated the Chinese maps not as representing Peiping's "claim" but, on the contrary, as old maps handed down from the previous mainland regime which had "not yet" been corrected. This provided the Chinese premier with a means for concealing Peiping's long-range intention of surfacing Chinese claims at some time in the future (when there would be no longer any necessity to be deceptive about them) while avoiding a dispute with the Indian Prime Minister in the present.

As Peiping and New Delhi were generally cordial to each other in these early years, the Chinese had not wanted to change their policy toward Nehru and thereby lose the benefit of an important champion of Peiping's cause in international affairs.* They had not wanted to alert the Indian leaders to their move on the road until such time as the Indians could do nothing about it. They apparently believed that like China's other borders, the Sino-Indian border need not be delimited and that the matter could remain in limbo. Whether they foresaw a time when they could persuade Nehru or a successor to

*The Korean war and the need for maintaining good relations with governments that had recognized the Peiping regime made Mao's policy toward New Delhi less belligerent than that of the Indian Communists from 1950 to 1958.

accept China's claims is conjectural, but they seem to have decided at an early date that their short-term policy should be one of not alerting Nehru to the wide gap between Chinese and Indian claims. In practice, this meant they would have to lie about Chinese maps, and they did.

The course of the dispute points up a curious suspicion which developed in the Chinese leaders' thinking about Nehru's intentions and the forces at work on him. Their early actions reflected an awareness that Nehru was more conciliatory toward them than the Opposition, the press, and even some members of his cabinet. By late April 1959, however, they turned on Nehru himself, and suspected him of having abetted some of the anti-Chinese criticism regarding the Tibetan revolt.

It emerges from the developed Chinese Communist view that leaders are leaders--i.e. they can control and direct the opinions of the masses and paltry political opponents. More importantly, Nehru is Nehru--i.e. his prestige is so great in India that the masses in crisis situations merely follow his lead. That the masses and the political opposition could push a great political leader, Nehru, into a harder China policy against his will apparently was a concept which the Chinese had considered but in late April 1959 rejected as not being a complete political appraisal. A great political leader with Nehru's enormous prestige could prevent vigorous anti-China outbursts if he so desired. And if he could not prevent sharp outbursts, he could certainly control them once they took place. Similarly, the press was not really an independent institution, but rather a big "propaganda machine" at Nehru's disposal (People's Daily, 6 May 1959), used by him for reasons of state.

Finally, the Chinese recognized the independence from the Congress Party and Nehru of Opposition parties in Parliament, but in late April 1959 they underestimated the influence of the Opposition, through public opinion, in driving Nehru toward a "harder" China policy. They apparently could not believe that the opposition was capable of creating a perceptible shift in Nehru's policy and actions, and were therefore reluctant to accept the fact that their charges of Indian "expansionism" as well as the Tibetan revolt and, later, the border clashes were providing the Parlimentary Opposition and the press with the very weapons to turn Nehru away from a conciliatory course. Their fear was that Nehru and his Congress Party advisers would use the public uproars against them, but they believed that he could not become captive of the outbursts.

Their basic view seems to have been: if Nehru has become less conciliatory and moved to the "right," the real political cause is a voluntary shift by Nehru himself (or by his own top advisers) which has been encouraged by the U.S. Even if the alternate possibility seriously suggested itself--e.g. that Chinese political and military actions caused the change in Nehru's thinking about Peiping's intentions--it seems to have been rejected. For it is logically neater, less complex, indeed more inwardly self-assuring to reject their actions as the cause and see Nehru as the arch enemy because of his own change in attitude toward China.

As for considering India as a major military threat, the Chinese leaders seem to have acted throughout the period as though it were not, and as though they could handle it when it became one. They may have had temporary misgivings, feeling at times that he might swing India unequivocally toward the West and into the U.S. "camp", but Nehru's forceful reaffirmations of his policy of non-alignment may have dispelled these fears. Nevertheless, his growing distrust of the Chinese leaders led them in turn to view him as a "two-faced" neutral --one who professes neutralism generally but is anti-Chinese on key issues, the definition of a real neutral being one who opposes no Chinese policies, like Sihanouk. Nehru, therefore, was no longer China's "friend." He was, of course, still better than the "rightist" leaders in India, and the Chinese hoped that by calling for negotiations on the border dispute they could pull him back from the swing to the right.

By fall 1959, the Chinese leaders had decided to switch from a policy of no negotiations on an overall border settlement, coasting along on the basis of the existing status quo, to one of preliminary discussions with a view to an eventual overall settlement. The respective Chinese and Indian positions regarding such a prospective settlement and the preliminary discussions which took place in 1960 will be discussed in Section II of this paper.

## Pre-Dispute Atmosphere: 1950-1959

From the start, the Chinese leaders seem to have recognized that India was neither by temperament nor capability a military threat to their border. The first clear indication that they need not fear Indian military action on the border came in fall 1950. PLA troops entered eastern Tibet and began fighting Tibetans at Changtu on 7 October 1950. New Delhi drew Peiping's attention to the harmful effects of this "deplorable" move, viz. postponement of admission to the UN and unrest on India's borders--21 October. Peiping blasted back that New Delhi was affected by foreign influences "hostile to China and Tibet"--30 October. New Delhi promptly subsided, expressing "surprise" at the Chinese allegation and stating that India "only wished for a peaceful settlement" of the Tibet problem --1 November.

The Chinese promised New Delhi--according to a member of the Indian UN delegation--that their occupation of Tibet would be "peaceful," that their forces under Chang Kuo-hua and Tan Kuan-san would remain at Changtu and not march on Lhasa, and that therefore India should not feel concern over the fate of Tibet. The Indian UN delegation, acting on the basis of Peiping's no-use-of-force assurance, blocked consideration of a censure of the Chinese in the UN, and Nehru in December 1950 publicly supported the Chinese position on the grounds that Tibet should be handled only by the parties concerned--Peiping and Lhasa. But the Chinese went back on their promise and, following the May 1951 agreement with Tibetan representatives, directed PLA forces at Changtu to "liberate the whole of Tibet," which they did, entering Lhasa on 26 October 1951. Apparently

at no time during these PLA operations in Tibet did the Chinese leaders fear that Indian troops would be used to open a "second front" against them because Nehru had not been antagonized--indeed relations were friendly--and because the Indian military establishment was weak.*

The Chinese leaders' attitude toward the disparity between Chinese and Indian maps had been to avoid making the matter a dispute. This meant that Nehru was not to be irritated and that Indian public was to be cut out of information pertaining to border matters. The Chinese (and Nehru) saw the use of diplomatic channels as the safest way to exclude the Indian public, press, and Parliament, and they used these channels effectively for several years.

The Chinese diplomatic effort was a five-year masterpiece of guile, executed--and probably planned in large part--by Chou En-lai. Chou played on Nehru's Asian, anti-imperialist mental attitude, his proclivity to temporize, and his sincere desire for an amicable Sino-Indian relationship. Chou's strategy was to avoid making explicit, in conversations and communications with Nehru, any Chinese border claims, while avoiding any retraction of those claims which would require changing Chinese maps. Chou took the line with Nehru in Peiping in October 1954 that Communist China "had as yet had no time to revise" the Kuomintang maps, leaving the implication but not the explicit

*The movement of some Indian forces into the NEFA and the establishment of a few scattered checkposts on the McMahon line after 1951 was tolerated by the Chinese apparently because they hoped to maintain a smooth Sino-Indian relationship and because the number of Indian personnel involved was militarily insignificant. Peiping's assertion (People's Daily, 27 October 1962) that this action was allowed to go unchallenged because "New China had no time to attend to the Sino-Indian border" and China's security "was seriously threatened" by the Korean hostilities is largely a post facto rationalization designed to magnify the military and aggressive nature of the Indian move in "forcibly pushing" the boundary up to the McMahon line. Chang Kuo-hua employs a different argument, claiming that "the Indian army took advantage of our peaceful liberation of Tibet" to occupy the NEFA; he does not mention Korean hostilities and places his emphasis on "this aggressive act of the Indian army." (People's Daily, 25 October 1962)

promise that they would be revised. In New Delhi in November-December 1956, Chou sought to create the impression with Nehru that Peiping would accept the McMahon line, but again his language was equivocal, and what he conceded with his left hand, he retrieved with his right. He is quoted by Nehru as having said that

> ...the Chinese Government is of the opinion that they /Peiping/ should give recognition to the McMahon line. They had, however, not consulted the Tibetan authorities about it yet. They proposed to do so. (Cited from Nehru's letter to Chou, 14 December 1958)

In accepting this explanation for conditional recognition of the McMahon line, Nehru in December 1956 appeared to have retained his unquestioning--or rather, unsuspicious--attitude

regarding Chou's discussion of the border.* He seems to have placed some faith--or at least accepted at face value--Chou's implied assurances that extensive claims on Chinese maps would be revised. Nehru is reported to have dismissed a letter he received in 1958 from former Burmese Premier Ba Swe warning him to be "cautious" in dealing with Chou on the Sino-Indian border issue. Nehru is said to have replied by declaring Chou to be "an honorable man," who could be trusted. The Indians later complained, in pathetic terms, of the Chinese

*Nehru did not explore the Sino-Indian border situation in detail with Chou until the latter referred to the Sino-Burma border problem. Despite his wish not to become involved with Sino-Burmese differences, Nehru had written to Chou on behalf of Premier Ba Swe in mid-September 1956, suggesting that both countries settle the dispute "peacefully" and according to the Five Principles. Chou is said to have acknowledged Nehru's letter in a general way and promised to discuss the question "later." It was after Chou brought the matter of the Sino-Burma borde. into the December 1956 discussions that he mentioned the McMahon line. Nehru agreed with Chou that the name "McMahon line" was not a good one to use: it was only a matter of facility of reference. Chou then reportedly stated that China accepted this line as the border with Burma and proposed to recognize this border with India as well. Thus Chou left Nehru with the implied assurance that there was really no dispute between Peiping and New Delhi over the line. As for Tibet, Chou reportedly stated he desired that it remain autonomous.

No Chou-Nehru communique was issued after their talks because of differences on other international problems.

[redacted] their talks were devoted primarily to discussions of U.S. foreign policy and Soviet policy in Eastern Europe during the Hungarian revolt. Nehru differed with Chou on both issues, insisting that U.S. policy had changed (when Chou said it had not changed toward China) and that the revolt was a genuine expression of majority opinion in Hungary (when Chou said it was the counterrevolutionary activity of a minority).

practice of deceit:

> When discrepancies between Indian and Chinese maps were brought to the notice of the Chinese Government, they replied that their maps were based on old maps of the Kuomintang period and they did not assert any claims on the basis of these maps. Nor did they challenge the official Indian maps which were showing the traditional alignment. /emphasis supplied/ (Cited from Ministry of External Affairs Brochure, issued 12 January 1960)

The Chinese leaders apparently believed that if the impression of old maps to be revised were to be reinforced in Nehru's thinking, the question of an overall settlement of Indian and Chinese border claims would not arise: the border, according to this impression, would agree with the Indian version and the Chinese would respect the Indian maps.

Nehru was, therefore, not alert to the Chinese advances in Ladakh. He was not alert in particular to the construction--started in March 1956--through the Indian-claimed Aksai Plain of the Sinkiang-Tibet road. At first, the Chinese had been deceptively vague. Peiping's first public reports regarding the road were not made until March 1957--one year after construction had started and was well underway--and contained little information other than the names of the terminals in Sinkiang and Tibet and an intermediate location, Shahidulla Mazar (Saitula; 78 03 E - 36 25 N). New Delhi could have inferred from the Chinese reference to Shahidulla Mazar that the new road would follow the traditional caravan route across the Aksai Plain through Indian-claimed territory but apparently was not stimulated to inquire. When, on 2 September 1957, Peiping announced that the road would be completed in October and People's Daily on the same day published a sketch map showing that the road in fact followed an alignment across the northeast corner of Ladakh, the Indian embassy reported to New Delhi that the road "apparently passes through the Aksai Plain, which is Kashmir territory." New Delhi did not protest to Peiping because, Nehru claimed later, he was not certain:

> Our attention was drawn to a very small-scale map about two and one-quarter by three-quarters inches published in a

Chinese newspaper indicating a rough alignment of the road. It was not possible to find out from this small map whether this road crossed Indian territory, although it looked as if it did so. It was decided, therefore, to send reconnaissance parties the following summer to find the location of this road. (Nehru to Parliament, 31 August 1959)

Actually, it was not until April 1958 that Nehru decided to dispatch two military reconnaissance patrols to determine the alignment and check on Chinese military post locations in the Aksai Plain. Nehru's personal guidance to the patrols included the order to capture and bring back to Leh any "small" group of Chinese encountered and, if a "large" force were encountered, to inform the Chinese troops that they were in Indian territory and "ask them to leave." The Indian patrols started out in June; one was "detained" by the Chinese on the road in early September 1958. Peiping's 3 November 1958 note to New Delhi, which stated that the patrol members would be released, insisted that both patrols had "clearly intruded into Chinese territory." The Indians took this statement as a formal claim to the Aksai Plain, noting on 8 November that it is "now clear that the Chinese Government also claim this area as their territory." Thus by the time the full meaning of the Chinese gradual advance into the Aksai Plain had been borne home to him, Nehru was confronted by a military fait accompli: Chinese forces exercised actual control along the road.*

*The Chinese leaders have seized upon Indian ignorance of the road prior to 2 September 1957--the date of the Chinese "nearing completion" announcement--to support their case of prior presence--and, therefore, actual possession--in the Aksai Plain. Nehru conceded in Parliament (on 31 August 1959) that the raod had been built "without our knowledge" and that New Delhi had not complained to Peiping until 18 October 1958. The Indian failure to protest before October 1958 made Foreign Minister Chen Yi's deliberate extension by many months of the period of New Delhi's ignorance of the road seem plausible. Chen told a Swiss correspondent in Geneva (on 19 July 1962) that "up to 1959" the Indian government "knew nothing about it and never mentioned it." He tried to convey the impression that New Delhi became aware of the road only after the outbreak of the Tibetan revolt in March 1959, when India "interfered in the revolt. Premier Chou En-lai spoke (4 November 1962 letter to Nehru) of the road as involving "gigantic engineering work" in 1956 and 1957, implying that construction of such a scale could hardly have gone undetected by the Indians if indeed their forces had been anywhere in the Aksai Plain at the time.

Chinese claims in late 1958 regarding the Sinkiang-Tibet road (and the territory which it traversed) and the capture of the Indian patrol on the road did not lead immediately to general public awareness of the border dispute or the embitterment of the Chou-Nehru personal relationship. These claims did not force a breach in this relationship but rather contributed to a gradual cooling of attitudes already occurring Signs that Chinese and Indian relations had begun to cool appeared earlier in 1958, particularly when the Chinese in summer postponed indefinitely Nehru's proposed trip to Tibet and in fall waited three weeks before granting visas to him and his party to cross a small portion of Tibet--where they were subsequently snubbed by the Chinese--on their way to Bhutan. Nehru, however, still refrained from making public attacks on such Chinese actions--including minor border incursions*--which

*Minor border crossings and patrol encounters since at least 1954 had not created really serious anxiety in New Delhi, as no exchange of fire took place. The closest both sides came to an armed clash was the September 1956 incident at Shipki Pass when a 10-man Chinese patrol threw stones at an Indian patrol trying to advance and threatened to use grenades. It seems that patrols of both sides were under instructions not to use their weapons except in self-defense.

Nehru, however, was anxious to settle by common agreement with the Chinese the ownership of small points along the border at which Indian and Chinese patrols occasionally met. The Chinese were not at first receptive to his approaches because they apparently believed that Nehru would use joint discussions to raise the issue of Chinese map-claims in definitive terms. The Chinese procrastined since June 1956 on Indian requests for a joint investigation of the dispute over Bara Hoti (which the Chinese refer to as Wu-je). Nehru informed Parliament in a brief statement on 5 September 1957 that although Peiping had agreed to discuss ownership of Bara Hoti, the Chinese had not yet mentioned a firm date for a meeting. Nehru added, "We have again reminded them." The Chinese finally agreed to send a delegation to New Delhi and both sides agreed on 19 April 1958 not to send troops into the area. The Chinese in this way avoided any settlement on the matter of ownership--which Nehru had orginally sought--and again prevented Sino-Indian discussions on ownership of larger and more important areas claimed by both sides.

would stir up Indian opinion and damage his relationship with Chou. Despite the formal protest (18 October 1958) to Peiping regarding the capture of the Indian patrol on the road, Nehru was reliably reported at the time anxious to keep this and other recent border incidents from public knowledge.

The Dispute Acknowledged: January 1959

Questions in Parliament regarding the Chinese map claims forced Nehru to press Peiping for revisions. Nehru had "recognized the force" of Chou's October 1954 statement that Peiping had had no time to revise old Chinese maps, but the publication in a Chinese magazine (China Pictorial, No. 95, July 1958) of a map showing large areas of Indian-claimed territory still depicted as Chinese compelled him to request--in a Ministry of External Affairs note, 21 August 1958--that "necessary corrections in the Chinese maps should not be delayed further." (Nehru added, in a personal letter to Chou on 14 December 1958, that "questions were asked in our Parliament" about the map contained in the magazine article, implying that Chinese failure to revise the maps finally had become a public matter reflecting adversely on him personally.) The Chinese response of 3 November 1958 clearly indicated that no revisions would be made, but sought to soften the blow by proposing surveys of the border. That the Chinese hoped to procrastinate, to put Nehru off indefinitely if possible, and thereby to avoid making the issue of claims a Sino-Indian dispute is suggested by the language used in their 3 November note:

> The Chinese Government believes that with the elapse of time, and after consultations with the various neighboring countries and a survey of the border regions, a new way of drawing the boundary of China will be decided in accordance with the results of the consultations and the survey.

The statement that consultations and surveys were necessary was not a proposal for immediate Sino-Indian talks. Border negotiations with New Delhi were still something which Peiping hoped to avoid. Even when Nehru in December 1958 pressed Chou on the matter of Chinese maps, Chou did not raise Sino-Indian negotiations as an immediate necessity but rather called for a continuation of the status quo on the border.

Ever since his meeting with Nehru in October 1954, Chou seems to have taken the position that there really was no overall border dispute. He had never denied that--as Nehru put it in December 1958--there were only certain "very minor border problems" and "petty issues" which could be settled by meetings of officials on lower levels. However, when pressed by Nehru (letter of 14 December 1958) regarding maps in the July 1958 issue of a Peiping magazine, Chou admitted (letter of 23 January 1959) that developments "in the past few years...show that border disputes do exist between China and India."

Nehru had stated in his December 1958 letter that he was "puzzled" by the Chinese desire (expressed in Peiping's note of 3 November 1958) to conduct surveys to find a "new way of drawing the boundary of China," because "I had thought that there was no major boundary dispute between China and India." Nehru was telling Chou by implication that the Chinese premier was breaking a tacit--or gentlemen's--agreement regarding the border.

Nehru's letter to Chou was the first he had sent on the Sino-Indian border dispute and was intended to convey to Chou the seriousness with which New Delhi now viewed Peiping's map claims. Chou recognized that a critical juncture had been reached on the border issue and that Nehru seemed determined to force the issue. In his January 1959 letter of reply, Chou conceded that the border issue was not raised in his talks with Nehru in 1954, but gave as the reason for this the view that "conditions were not yet ripe for its settlement"--a hint that Chou in 1954 had been trying to avoid injecting a contentious issue into the young and cordial Sino-Indian friendship. He reminded Nehru that "questions" had been kept in "diplomatic channels," and implied that he preferred this practice to continue.

Chou then made a significant reversal of the entire Chinese position on the border issue. Chou (1) implied that the old maps were accurate at most points, (2) stated that there would be "difficulties" in changing them, and (3) alluded to the Chinese people's" objection to Indian maps claiming the western sector. By thus surfacing the real Chinese position regarding the border maps, Chou indicated he did not believe "questions in Parliament" had caused Nehru to raise the issue of the maps. Chou suspected Nehru of using a transparent and implausible justification for pressing him on the map issue: popular

pressure. Chou replied:

> Our people, too, have expressed surprise at the way the Sino-Indian boundary, particularly its western section, is drawn on maps published in India. They have asked our government to take up this matter with the Indian government. Yet we have not done so, but have explained to them the actual situation of the Sino-Indian boundary.

The implication was that the Chinese leaders believed that Nehru would have found no difficulty in "explaining" the border situation to the people and Parliament but chose not to, acting on his own and not really under pressure from Parliament.

This apparent misreading of the forces at work on Nehru was a feature of subsequent Chinese thinking. Combined with a developing appraisal of Nehru as basically anti-Chinese and thus not really neutral in foreign policy, this kind of thinking apparently convinced the Chinese that Nehru would remain anti-Chinese whether they surfaced the fact of an overall border dispute on claims or not. Moreover, since Nehru had pressed them strongly on the matter of maps, they had no alternative but to suggest that the Chinese maps were by and large accurate. Chou's January 1959 letter was therefore a reflection of Peiping's basic reappraisal of Nehru as a "friend" which had been developing for at least a year.

However, the Chinese leaders wanted to avoid border clashes. Chou appealed to Nehru to temporarily maintain the present state of the entire boundary until it was surveyed and "formally delimited"--i.e. indefinitely:

> Our government would like to propose to the Indian Government that, as a provisional measure, the two sides temporarily maintain the status quo, that is to say, each side keep for the time being the border areas at present under its jurisdiction and not go beyond them.

This position meant that the Chinese would continue to occupy the Aksai Plain. The Chinese leaders probably anticipated a

sharp reaction from Nehru and his advisers and perhaps even more active Indian patrolling into Chinese-claimed territory. Nehru's reply, expressing shock at the Chinese definitive position,* was delivered in a letter to Chou (22 March 1959) after the outbreak of the Tibetan revolt. His letter conveyed the impression of a troubled friend, enlarged on previous Indian documentary support for New Delhi's border claims, and ended with a hint that the border issue might adversely affect Sino-Indian relations.

The Tibetan Revolt: March 1959

The December 1958 - March 1959 exchange of letters between Chou and Nehru engendered strains which were deepened into bitterness by the Tibetan revolt, which broke out on 10 March 1959. The revolt made it even more difficult than before to keep all aspects of the border dispute in diplomatic channels, under wraps. Chinese military action against the rebels drew the attention of the Indian press, public, and Nehru's Parliament Opposition to developments along the border in a manner which made it virtually impossible for Nehru to employ the tactic of understatement in order to conceal, or minimize, the facts of the overall border dispute and the gradual cooling of Sino-Indian relations.

Shortly before the revolt began, Indian government officials had indicated in conversations with Western diplomats that the private New Delhi view of China definitely was changing. The Indian commercial counselor in Peiping told an American official in Hong Kong on 13 January 1959 that "India is taking a second look at Communist China," and expressed New Delhi's growing disenchantment with the Chinese. He stated that the Chinese had become extremely arrogant, occasionally did not even acknowledge notes from the Indian embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and were careful not to put down on paper their verbal

*Nehru conceded that the frontier "has not been demarcated on the ground in all sectors but I am somewhat surprised to know that this frontier was not accepted at any time by the Government of China."

comments that the "old" Kuomintang maps did not really represent Peiping's position. He concluded, however, with the remark that New Delhi would find it very difficult to give public notice of its cooling attitude toward Peiping. Nehru continued to cling to the hope that Sino-Indian relations could be kept from further deteriorating and that Indian officials should avoid antagonizing the Chinese. In mid-February, Nehru personally scolded Indian demographer Chandrasekhar for articles he had written in January attacking the communes as places where "human beings are reduced to the level of inmates in a zoo" --articles which drew a formal protest from Peiping and which, Nehru said, proved detrimental to Sino-Indian relations. Nehru conceded to Chandrasekhar, however, that he did not doubt the accuracy of the articles, suggesting that he (Nehru) was as much disturbed by unpalatable truths regarding China as he was by the diplomatic consequences of publishing such truths.

It seems that when Nehru realized he must revise his thinking concerning Chinese Communist policy toward India and internal developments on the mainland, he was reluctant to engage in such a painful process. Partly for reasons of state and partly because of this reluctance--a reluctance to admit to himself a fact that was becoming clear to other Indian officials,* namely that the Chinese were exploiting his tolerant attitude--Nehru's actions appeared equivocal in handling Sino-Indian relations after the eruption of the Tibetan revolt.

On the one hand, he moved with care to support the Tibetan rebels in public only inferentially. The Dalai Lama fled Lhasa on 17 March and requested asylum in India through the Indian consul general in Lhasa. Nehru's immediate concern was with the possibility of serious clashes in the event Chinese troops pursued Tibetan rebels into Indian territory. He instructed frontier checkposts to deny admission to any rebels fleeing Tibet; later, rebels were admitted but were disarmed and told by Indian military personnel to "relax." Nehru gave secret assurances to resistance leaders in India that he would provide

*Indian officials in Peiping are reliably reported in late March 1959 to have expressed open distaste for and fear of the Chinese attitude toward the suppression of the rebels and laxness of the Sino-Indian border issue. They disagreed with Nehru's attitude of "saintliness, gentlemanliness, and too much reliance on ethics" toward the Chinese, hoping that the Chinese would eventually "appreciate" such an attitude shown for Peiping and its cause.

asylum for the Dalai Lama and his staff, but officially maintained a policy of noninterference in the Tibetan situation. His promise to the Dalai Lama's brother that he would take up the Tibetan issue with Peiping and urge that Tibet be granted full autonomy was more a gesture to the rebels than an indication of firm intention to really pressure the Chinese leaders.* Nehru also moved circumspectly in handling the Dalai Lama shortly after he entered India at Towang on 31 March, attempting (with some initial success) to isolate him from the press and restrict his political activity in order to avoid further provoking the Chinese leaders.

On the other hand, he treated the Chinese with a new coolness. Shortly after the start of the revolt, he refused to see the Chinese ambassador and Indian Ministry of External Affairs officials were directed to reject sharply the ambassador's complaints about the Indian consul general's activities in Lhasa.

*Nehru adhered to his policy of noninterference in his statement to Parliament on 23 March. The first Peiping comment on the Tibetan revolt, published in the form of a New China News Agency (NCNA) "news communique" on 28 March, "welcomed" Nehru's 23 March statement on nonintervention "in China's internal affiars." The Chinese leaders apparently were encouraged to believe that they could indirectly intimidate Nehru into declining to defend the rebels in word and deed. The communique went on to state that "Chinese government quarters...consider this statement to be friendly," but hinted that discussion of the Tibetan revolt in India's Parliament would be "impolite and improper." In his statement before Parliament on 30 March, Nehru continued to hew to noninterference, balancing his expression of "sympathy" for the rebels--in his view, the least offensive statement regarding them--with a reaffirmation of India's desire for friendly relations with Peiping. He rejected, of course, Peiping's arrogant allegation that discussion of Tibet in Parliament would be improper.

The Chinese continued to warn against interference (Peiping People's Daily, 31 March), having complained (28 March) that Kalimpong was a "command center of the rebellion." They did not as yet attack Nehru, however, hoping that he would act to restrain Indian commentary.

On balance, however, he still hoped to salvage at least a diplomatically correct relationship with the Chinese leaders, particularly with Chou En-lai.

By early April, many Asian neutrals were bewildered regarding the extent to which the Chinese leaders had destroyed the spirit of the Chou-Nehru five principles of peaceful coexistence--a spirit they, particularly Chou, had attempted to create and sustain since 1954. For the Chinese leaders, however, first priority was given to crushing the revolt while trying to prevent their drastic military actions from irreparably antagonizing Nehru. Crushing the rebels and conciliating Nehru, they seemed to believe, might prove to be compatible goals if it were made clear to Nehru that China would under no circumstances accept Indian interference and that it was therefore not in India's interest to go to war with China "over a handful of rebels."

Chou hammered at this point in his report to the National People's Congress on 18 April 1959. Chou and subsequent speakers at the congress stressed the futility of any Indian aid to the rebels, as they had "already met with ignominious defeat." That is, the revolt had been crushed (actually, scattered rebel forces continued to harass the PLA) and Nehru would do best to acquiesce in the fait accompli.

The Chinese leaders were speaking and acting from a position of strength: their military superiority (and will to fight) over the Indians was enormous. Thus just as in 1951 when the PLA occupied Tibet and left it with an anomolous autonomy and the Dalai Lama with a small armed force, so too in 1959 India lacked the military power (and will) to stop them. In this situation of military inferiority, India's voice carried no weight with the Chinese leaders. In their eyes, Nehru was reduced to letting Peiping know how Indians "feel" about PLA actions in Tibet--the moralizing of a bourgeois-leaning national leader who, for reasons of state, had been led to believe in 1956 that a solid guarantee of Tibet's autonomy was given

him, but who had not been made aware of the deceitful language.* While moving militarily against the rebels, the Chinese leaders attempted to undercut any representations Nehru might make to Peiping on behalf of theTibetans not by completely rejecting autonomy but rather by claiming that it still is in force in a special "administrative" way. A Chinese Communist foreign ministry official informed the Indian ambassador in Peiping in early April that the 1951 autonomy agreement between Chinese Communist and Tibetan authorities would continue to be respected, but only "as the basis for the administration of Tibet." To the Indians, however, this meant that Tibet would thereafter be not even a little bit more autonomous (as it had been until March 1959) than any of the other autonomous regions and chou's in Communist China. It was clear to Nehru that the Chinese had won the Tibet issue on the power level by May 1959, but he seemed to feel--and certainly wanted to believe--that India had come out ahead on the moral level. In any case, Nehru told the American ambassador in May that he was fully conscious of the insecurity of India's borders, as he knew the military power he was up against as far as the Chinese were concerned. He hinted at this publicly when he stated at a press conference on 14 May that whatever Indian jurists may say about the legal status of Tibet and Chinese suzerainty "the question is really decided by the strength of the nation."

Despite the exchange of insinuations between members of India's Parliament and speakers at China's National People's Congress in late April, both Nehru and Chou avoided statements which could be taken by either as a gross offense or unpardonable insult. Both premiers were keenly aware of the political importance of keeping their personal relationship intact. Chou on 18 April spoke approvingly of the references

*Nehru declared (in Parlaiment speech on 4 September 1959) that PLA actions in Tibet caused India to be "pained" and "upset." He went on to assert that when he talked with Chou Enlai in New Delhi in 1956, the Chinese premier, on his own initiative, told Nehru that Peiping wanted to respect Tibet's autonomy, but added that China would not tolerate rebellion or foreign interference. Regarding autonomy, Nehru conceded that in fact Chou did not give a guarantee to which he could be "held to account."

to noninterference and friendship in the statements of "Prime Minister Nehru of our great friendly neighbor India." Nehru's statements were made in a tone of sorrow not anger. Speaking for the weaker country, Nehru used "moral jujitsu" (as he put it privately at the time), drawing on gentle phrases expressed in almost biblical tones for eight sessions of Parliment between 17 March and 4 May. He tried to absolve India of responsibility for any action that could have offended Peiping. His statements implied--indeed, were intended to convey the impression to the Chinese leaders--that he realized India's security and friendship for China were two interrelated goals, outweighing by far New Delhi's sympathy for Tibet and the Dalai Lama.

He reaffirmed his policy of working for Peiping's admission to the UN and of non-alignment and declared that although there was a desire to settle India's troubles with Pakistan, he had no plans for a military alignment with any country come what may. He explicitly ruled out any sort of common defense agreement with Pakistan. Regarding charges of collusion between Indian officials and the Dalai Lama in India, he asserted that he was shocked "beyond measure...It would have been wrong on political, humanitarian, and other grounds not to give asylum to the Dalai Lama." For Nehru, who on the one hand was compelled by the presence on Indian soil of the Dalai to defend him and who on the other hand was reluctant to further strain Sino-Indian relations, asylum and sympathy constituted the practical limit of his support for the Dalai at Mussorie. He told the Tibetan leader to limit his activities in India to "religious affairs," and Indian officials were probably reflecting Nehru's real anxiety when they stated privately that the government would not be sorry to see the Dalai leave the country.

The Chinese Appraise Nehru's "Philosophy": May 1959

From the start of the Tibet revolt on 10 March, to the release of the Dalai Lama's "statement" on 18 April, the Chinese leaders maintained a policy of relative public restraint toward India. Despite numerous Indian press and Parliamentary anti-Chinese sallies, they counterattacked by referring only to unnamed "Indian expansionists" and avoided criticism of Nehru in the press. They still had some hope of keeping the Chou-Nehru relationship intact and of salvaging a degree of cordiality

with him. They chose to level their attacks at Nehru's political opponents in the Praja Socialist Party and the Jan Sangh Party as well as others and to remain silent about caricature's of Mao and Chou in the Indian press.

On 18 April, the day when Chou had spoken to the NPC approvingly of Nehru's personal policy of non-interference in Tibet, the Dalai Lama issued a "statement" at Tezpur, contradicting Peiping's claims that he was being held under duress and that the Chinese had not violated the Sino-Tibet autonomy agreement, and calling for Tibetan "independence." The statement had been issued with the reluctant consent of the Ministry of External Affairs, whose representative, P. N. Menon helped draft it and tone it down. The Chinese reacted sharply, and apparently felt that Nehru had been playing a double game with them. On 21 April, NCNA noted that now Nehru himself was planning to meet with the Dalai Lama, and that Foreign Secretary Dutt was about to arrive beforehand to make "arrangements" with the Dalai. They hinted at their appraisal that Nehru himself had deceitfully conspired to have the Dalai make the 18 April "statement". NCNA on 21 April singled out a Reuters dispatch from New Delhi and quoted the following portion:

> The Dalai Lama's statement can have come as no surprise to the Indian Government. It was drafted after several long meetings with Prime Minister Nehru's envoy /sic/, Mr. P. N. Menon at Bomdila earlier, during which its political implications must have been discussed. /Emphasis supplied/

They seemed to feel that Nehru was using the Dalai to appeal for Tibet's independence, while repeating publicly that as prime minister, he had promised that the Dalai's activities would be restricted to religious affairs. NCNA on 21 April quoted a New Delhi AFP dispatch as follows:

> The "statement" was issued apparently with the approval of the Indian government. Some observers here felt that the Indian government, in approving the Dalai Lama's "statement", wished to say indirectly certain things it would be difficult to say itself directly.

The Chinese leaders struck on 22 April, using speakers at the NPC to call down "the wrath of the entire Chinese nation" against the Dalai's "statement." The Chinese speakers criticized the Indian Ministry of External Affairs explicitly for having distributed the "statement." Nehru was not yet attacked directly, but Peiping was coming close. Thus speaker Huang Yen-pei asked why the Indian government had permitted the Dalai to engage in "political" activities after "Prime Minister Nehru" himself had declared that such activities would not be permitted. On 23 April, People's Daily commented that "certain influential figures in India" take the view that "China is weak" and "the time has come to exert pressure on China." People's Daily then warned:

> There can be no greater tragedy for a statesman than miscalculation of a situation!
>
> If the Indian expansionists are seeking to pressure China, they have picked the wrong customer.

It is difficult to determine whether the Chinese were unaware of the decisive fact that Ministry of External Affairs officials had been trying to restrain the Dalai, to presuade him not to say anything "political" and offensive regarding suppression of the Tibet revolt, and, failing that, at the last minute to tone down the anti-Chinese parts of his 18 April "statement." (It was of course virtually impossible for a leader who had fled his native land not to say anything of a "political" nature regarding the suppression of his countrymen, and this was particularly difficult in the case of Tibet because a "religious" statement about the country invariably had political significance.) In any event, the "statement" had been made and had to be countered.

On 25 April, an article in the Peiping Kuang-ming Jih-pao pointed to the role played in the release of the Dalai's "statement" by an "official of the Indian foreign ministry and a special envoy sent to the Dalai Lama." The Chinese then reprinted in People's Daily on 27 April cartoons depicting Mao and Chou as cavemen and Mao as the "abominable snowman" which had appeared earlier (in the Times of India on 25 March and the Mail on 1 April), and denounced the "insults." On 28 April, People's Daily claimed that the "Indian authorities had connived" in publishing the cartoons, and in the same issue

stated that the "sympathy for Tibet" expressed by some Indian "statesmen" was similar to British imperialist logic.

The Indian response to this Chinese propaganda attack included the handing of a note to the Chinese ambassador on 26 April from the Indian Government. Foreign Secretary Dutt gave Ambassador Pan Tzu-li the note, which recapitulated certain facts, viz. the grant of asylum to the Dalai, the dispatch of P. N. Menon to Mussorie to receive the Dalai, and the Tibetan leader's residency at Mussorie at his own request. The key point was that the Dalai's Tezpur statement was "entirely his own." The note then expressed "great regret" at the attitude taken by the Peiping newspapers and the NPC speakers which clearly challenged India's motives as being "suspect." On 27 April, Nehru, speaking in Parliament, said that the basis of the Tibet revolt must have been "a strong feeling of nationalism," that the Chinese had greatly "simplified" the facts, that India has a "feeling of kinship with the Tibetan people...and is greatly distressed at their hapless plight," and that above all "we hope the present fighting and killing will cease." The note, viewed in the context of Nehru's speech, did not deflect the Chinese leaders from their course of countering the Dalai's statement and warning Nehru to restrain the Dalai and other Chinese critics.

The Chinese leaders indicated privately that it was Nehru's responsibility to quiet continuing Indian criticism of Peiping and to restrain himself. On 26 April, Foreign Minister Chen Yi told the Indonesian ambassador that neutrals might suggest to Nehru that he restrain Indian comment. On the same day, Deputy Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei gave the Indian ambassador Peiping's first official protest since the start of the Tibet revolt by means of an "oral statement." Chi charged that although Peiping recognized that the Indian press worked differently from the press in China, it was clear that the government of India had made no effort to control or tone it down. It was then, Chi continued, that Peiping had to begin "counterblows" to show that it did not accept Indian charges and that China would not "weakly submit" to these attacks. The Indian ambassador reported Chi's remarks to New Delhi, requesting the Ministry of External Affairs to recognize that the Chinese Communists held the view that the outbursts in the press and various public demonstrations were encouraged by the Indian government.

Nehru's 27 April speech in Parliament apparently was taken by the Chinese as another sign that Nehru was basically sympathetic toward the statements of the Dalai and those Indian political figures who were calling for real Tibetan autonomy. They planned a systematic reply, the intention of which was to warn Nehru to drop the matter in his public statements. That is, they recognized that Nehru could not, even if--as he reiterated--he wanted to, avoid discussing the political aspect of the revolt, as any statement about its "religious" aspect was necessarily a political matter. Nehru was to stop talking about all aspects of Tibet.

On 29 April, the Panchen Lama stated in Peiping that Nehru's remarks about India having no political goal in Tibet "cannot explain" the words and deeds of "certain political figures in India." On 30 April, the full text of Nehru's 27 April Parliament speech was reprinted in Peiping newspapers, and on 1 May People's Daily called on the party and the populace to "study" Nehru's speech. It was then that the Chinese sharpened their criticism of Nehru. A commentator of the Peiping Ta Kung Pao writing on 1 May referred to his speech as "interference" in China's affairs and a "misrepresentation of the situation in Tibet...It is regrettable that Prime Minister Nehru seemed to feel in speaking on 27 April that he does not have to respect the view that Tibet is an inalienable part of China." The commentator continued:

> Obviously, Prime Minister Nehru tried to cover up with the flag of "nationalism" the crimes committed by a handful of Tibetan rebels...Nehru is trying to shield the disgraceful activities of certain Indian political circles in supporting the Tibetan rebels...Even Prime Minister Nehru himself made political statements regarding Tibet... When the Chinese people could not bear it any longer and began to hit back /starting 22 April/ at the Indian expansionists, what reason does Prime Minister Nehru have for accusing the Chinese people of "using language of the cold war?" ...The fact is that leaders of the National Congress Party and some Indian Government officials have insulted and attacked the Chinese people.

By 3 May the Chinese had broadened their direct criticism of Nehru to include the matter of whether he was still a neutral. On 3 May, People's Daily stated that it was irrelevant whether the U.S. and Britain had begun to view Nehru in a more favorable light or whether Nehru "is coming closer to them," as the point is the change means an "abandonment of neutrality." On 6 May, the Chinese issued their first point-by-point rebuttal of Nehru's speech, professing distress at being "forced to argue" with him, but "as people whose affairs Nehru is discussing" deemed it necessary to point out his "errors."

The lengthy Chinese article--"The Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy," attributed to the editorial department of the People's Daily and printed in that paper on 6 May--was a tour de force which did not really deal with Nehru's "philosophy" but rather with his views on Tibet's "autonomy." Adroit but at the same time sarcastic, the article warned Nehru to tend only his own store while the PLA went about its mop-up work against the Tibetan rebels: China and India "are busy enough minding our own business, and why should either of us poke his nose into the other's business?" At the same time, it took a long step toward establishing in print the developing Chinese Communist view that Nehru was drifting into the Western camp.

This view was hinted at in stages. "Certain bourgeois elements" in India, the article asserted, control big propaganda machines and "line up with the imperialists" on the matter of Tibet. This first blow was followed by the condescending remark that the political attitude of such bourgeois leaders was different from that of the out-and-out reactionary leaders (Rhee, Diem, Chiang, etc.) Nehru was not named at this point but as he was later on in the article identified as, in his own words of 1935,* "a typical bourgeois,"

*The authors of the article insert Nehru's views on politics only to damn him with his own words. For example, the article cites his 1935 autobiographical statement that "classes and groups...a governing and privileged class" cannot be converted or persuaded into forsaking political power, and then charges that "now"--in his 27 April speech to the Indian Parliament--"Nehru blames us for not having been able to convert the privileged ruling class in Tibet and forsaking power." The article crassly suggests that Nehru never was a socialist, for either he has rejected the views he once expressed, "or else he really did not understand the scientific Marxist methods which he had thought he understood."

the reader was led to draw the conclusion that Nehru was indeed the intended target. The article then made a more precise and pointed distinction: "Well-intentioned" Nehru is not one of these reactionaries, but he has "involuntarily been pushed" into "an important role in their 'sympathy with Tibet' movement." Nehru is indirectly identified as a member of India's "big bourgeoisie" which on the one hand has profound "contradictions" with imperialist forces but, on the other hand, has an urge for outward expansion and therefore "consciously or unconsciously" reflects the imperialist policy of intervention.

The burden of the article's remarks on Nehru suggested that perhaps Nehru had not been "involuntarily" or "unconsciously" pushed into an alliance with China's enemies. It attacked "Nehru's logic," "Nehru's attempt...to write off a class analysis" of Tibetan social strata, and "Nehru's...indirect charge" that Peiping has not won the Tibetans to friendly cooperation. It then stated:

> A group of Indians, now unfortunately including Mr. Nehru, insist that we do things according to their opinions...In his 27 April speech, Prime Minister Nehru mentioned only "mutual respect regarding the Five Principles...but did not mention "mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty"...We hope this was only an oversight.

Repeatedly, the article charged that Nehru's words on non-interference had not been matched by deeds. It accused him of a "concerted attack" on China, and asserted:

> Prime Minister Nehru in his 27 April speech rightly censured certain Indian statements and actions intended to undermine the friendly relations between China and India. Unfortunately, he followed this up with a concerted attack on the Chinese declaration against interference.

Regarding intervention, the article complains that "the head of the Indian Government has never pursued a clear-cut hands-off policy," in this way charging Nehru personally with the responsibility for the view of other Indian officials that

Tibet is a "country." India's definition of "autonomy" for Tibet--"a kind of semi-independent status" according to the article--is rejected as is the parallel drawn by "certain political figures in India" between India's suzerainty over Bhutan and Sikkim and China's "suzerainty" over Tibet:*

*Actually, the terms "dependency" and "colony" would accurately describe one aspect of Tibet's anomolous relationship with the Peiping regime between May 1951--the date on which the Sino-Tibetan autonomous agreement was signed--and March 1959. Throughout the period, the Chinese colonizers permitted, parallel with the Tibetan Preparatory Committee--the Chinese administration--a Tibetan government at Lhasa to remain intact, to have its own army and currency, and its own native rulers, who were Tibetans loyal to a native leader, the Dalai Lama. These native rulers loyal to the Dalai Lama were handled with care by the Chinese and were designated "upper-strata reactionaries" only after the March 1959 revolt. The 28 April 1959 NPC resolution on Tibet was very defensive on this final point, for it was an un-Leninist and ultra-opportunist policy which Peiping had pursued in "not looking into the past misdeeds" of these Tibetan serf-owners and in not reforming Tibetan society. According to [redacted] Mao Tse-tung's February 1957 "liberalization" speech, when the Dalai Lama refused to return to Tibet during a trip to India in 1956, "Premier Chou had to promise the Dalai that we would not proceed with the democratic reform of Tibet during the period of the second five-year plan /1958-1962/..." The March 1959 revolt changed all that, however.

New Delhi recognized Peiping's control over Tibet's foreign relations in September 1952 when it formally agreed with Chinese authorities--rather than Tibetans--to change the status of its Mission in Lhasa to that of a Consulate General. This formally ended India's direct relations with Tibetan authorities. Direct relations with the Government of the Dalai Lama had been established by the British Government of India in 1904-05 following the Younghusband Expedition and had been formalized in treaties executed in 1906 and 1910. This relationship with Tibet was maintained by the Government of India following British withdrawal in 1947, with an Indian Commissioner replacing the British Commissioner at Lhasa. Regarding India's special rights in Tibet, these were formally ended in April 1954 when New Delhi agreed to withdraw approximately 200 troops from two towns and turned over the telegraph lines. The Indian Consulate General in Lhasa was closed down in 1962.

> Tibet is definitely no protectorate--neither a Chinese protectorate, nor an Indian protectorate, nor a joint Chinese-Indian protectorate, nor a so-called buffer state between China and India. The People's Republic of China enjoys full sovereignty over the Tibet region. /emphasis supplied/

Summing up in this angry vein, the article went on to make one point "absolutely clear:" "if establishment of such a buffer zone were pressed for, it would indeed create a truly deplorable conflict where none existed before." Having administered this veiled threat of a military clash, the authors of the article subsided into praise for Nehru's general good will for China and an assurance that the argument over Tibet "will not result in feelings of hostility."

The overall appraisal of Nehru's foreign policy was that it was "generally" favorable toward "China, the Soviet Union, and other socialist states," and that "in general" Nehru advocates Sino-Indian friendship.*

This appraisal reflected the Chinese leaders' view that Nehru was not really the neutral he said he was. Regarding the border issue, New Delhi in summer 1958 had charged the Chinese with entering Indian-claimed territory at the Khunark Fort in the western sector and had sent two patrols onto the Chinese-built road in the Aksai Plain. Regarding Chinese foreign policy, Nehru had shown his disapproval of Chinese attacks on Tito in spring and summer 1958 and the Chinese military actions against the offshore islands in fall 1958. By that time--October 1958--the Chinese leaders apparently had come to the conclusion that Nehru was not "neutral" on key

*The word, "generally," was a deliberate and significant qualification, for it implied that just as a small boy can be "generally" good even if he is occasionally bad, so Nehru's policy was "generally" favorable to China but occasionally unfavorable. And Tibet demonstrated that it was becoming increasingly unfavorable, that his policy of nonalignment had not meant noninvolvement in China's affairs.

issues which pertained directly to Chinese policy. The measure of a neutral leader, in their eyes, was that he agree with all major Chinese foreign policies, or at least refrain from any criticism of them. In the Chinese view, Sihanouk is a fine example of a neutral,* while Nasir, who has challenged several of Peiping's policies, is not. Almost like Nasir, Nehru in 1958 had been challenging "the wisdom" of Chinese policies or had refused to support them. Reflecting the increasing suspicion of Nehru's attitude toward China, Chinese Communist authors at the Tashkent Writers' Conference in October 1958 had bitterly criticized India for "drifting into the Western camp," and stated that New Delhi's neutralism was a "spineless, do-nothing" policy to avoid commitments on any of the world's outstanding issues. Nehru's publicly expressed sympathy for the Tibetans strongly reinforced these suspicions and drove the Chinese leaders into their first public attack on him in the 6 May article.

The Tibetan revolt thus led to the first open exchange between China and India--an exchange in which Nehru was deeply involved and whose "moral" leadership in Afro-Asian countries probably as a result was tarnished, as considerations of national self-interest imposed restraints on him.

Regarding the border issue, Nehru was constantly constrained to keep press and Parliamentary tempers cool in order to avoid bitter criticism of the Chinese from permanently affecting, adversely, the prospect for a border settlement. He tried to keep the real extent of Sino-Indian disagreement --i.e. that the whole border was at issue with the Chinese-- from public knowledge. When asked in Parliament on 22 April 1959 whether there was any dispute about border territory, Nehru had said "we have discussed one or two minor frontier

*Following Sihanouk's trip in February 1963 to China, where the Chinese leaders tried to use him to support their position on the border dispute, the Cambodian premier stated on 28 February that:

> Mr. Liu Shao-chi said that China had observed the Cambodian friend for years to see whether the latter was sincere, whether he behaved well, and whether he deserved to be considered a friend...we have been highly appreciated because of our sincerity toward China.

The Red Flag editorial of 4 March 1963 made room for Sihanouk (and other princely friends) by expanding Mao's anti-imperialist united front formula for the first time to include not only the national bourgeoisie but "even some patriotic princes and aristocrats"--an opportunistic doctrinal formulation Peiping undoubtedly would have labeled "unMarxist" if the Russians were to have devised it.

disputes which comprise tiny tracts of terr'tory" a mile this way or that in uninhabitated high mountains but no settlement has been reached. Nehru had declined to discuss the border issue further. In this way, he concealed the ominous import of Chou En-lai's January 1959 letter, which had indicated that there was a major dispute regarding the entire border and not just one or two tiny tracts of territory.

Mutual public Sino-Indian recriminations began to fade by late May as appeals from all sides were made--loudest by the Indian Communists who were trying to avoid an outburst of domestic indignation against the party--for maintaining Sino-Indian friendship.* Nehru had achieved considerable sucess in preventing the presence of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders in India from converting the country into a cold war battleground. Despite Nehru's restrained handling of the situation, Chou did not communicate with him directly. The Chinese leaders apparently felt that during the Tibetan developments nothing could be gained by Chou-Nehru talks or written exchanges. On the contrary, the Chou-Nehru relationship might be permanently undercut, for the only subject of real importance they could discuss would have been the Tibetan revolt, which was unacceptable, inasmuch as that was entirely a Chinese matter. Rather than make any further overtures to

*As for the Russians, their attitude toward Tibetan developments was one of "hands-off": no public defense of either side but private assurances to the Indians that Moscow had "consideration and understanding" of New Delhi's difficulties with the Chinese. At the same time, Russian plans for carrying out aid to India continued unabated.

Nehru, they apparently chose to pursue a policy of returning to silence--after having administered public warmings against interference in April and May--and remain quiet while PLA mop-up operations continued and until Indian tempers were cooled.

Although the Sino-Indian relationship gradually began to assume a surface normality, the Indian leaders were profoundly affected when confronted with the realities of Chinese military power. Foreign Secretary Dutt told Ambassador Bunker on 27 April that it was impossible for India to fight the Chinese over Tibet. If the West with all its arms and logistical depth had been unable to fight over Hungary, he asserted, "certainly India could not fight over Tibet which it is practically impossible for Indians even to reach." Dutt said that India had only sufficient military resources to resist attacks against its own territory. This realization of military helplessness--or, unpreparedness--appears to have introduced an element of fear into official Indian thinking regarding the Chinese.

The Chinese nevertheless kept a close watch on the Dalai Lama's appeals for independence. On 22 June a Chinese official handed the Indian ambassador in Peiping a formal protest regarding the Dalai Lama's 20 June press conference and in this way stimulated an official Indian disavowal of complicity on 30 June. In order to avoid a revival of Peiping's anti-India propaganda campaign, Indian officials opposed the plan of Tibetan refugee leaders to send the Dalai Lama to the UN to reopen the issue of Tibet's independence.

The Indian leaders were also profoundly affected by the realities of Chinese political opportunism. That is, they were struck by the fact that the Chinese sentiment of "friendship" for India does not run deep beneath the surface, that it was in fact not a sentiment at all but merely a cultivated outward display used for foreign policy purposes. After Peiping had been officially informed on 26 April that New Delhi was not holding the Dalai Lama "under duress," the Chinese ambassador handed an official reply to Foreign Secretary Dutt on 13 May which was couched in rude language and reiterated the Chinese charge. [redacted] the concluding part of the Chinese reply stressed that China had enemies toward the east, and it would be foolish for Peiping to antagonize the U.S. in the east and India in the west; that is, China did not want a two-front war. The impression this bit of insensate Chinese diplomacy left on top-level Indian officials, particularly on Nehru personally, was that the application of the Chou-Nehru Five Principles is, in Nehru's words, "a matter of convenience" to Peiping and the Chinese were not acting from feelings of goodwill.

The Tibetan revolt led to a large-scale effort by the Chinese to seal the border with more PLA troops than have ever before been ranged along the Sino-Indian frontier. The overall picture of establishing a greatly increased troop presence was one of moving from a policy of maintaining a few widely scattered checkposts to a policy of dotting the entire border with heavily-armed "frontier guards"--probably including, or at least directly assisted by, regular PLA units.* By mid-June

*In July and August 1959, Chinese troops seized all arms, ammunition, and ponies belonging to Bhutanese infantry units stationed at enclaves inside Tibet, centered on Tarchen (80-20E, 30-55N). Bhutan requested that New Delhi protest this violation of "traditional Bhutanese rights and authority," which New Delhi did in mid-August. [redacted] this protest on behalf of Bhutan was intended to establish New Delhi's right to act on foreign policy matters pertaining to the tiny state. Nehru declared in Parliament on 25 August that India had a treaty obligation (1951) to defend Bhutan and Sikkim in the event of any infringement of their sovereignty, which, however, he could not "imagine any foreign country doing."

1959, reports indicated a sharp drop in the flow of Tibetans reaching India, suggesting that by that time thePLA was effectively blocking almost all border passes. The overall picture of road-building emerging from the Indian reports in summer 1959 was one of intensive Chinese activity to improve their communications by making jeepable roads to the main passes all along the border and by improving existing mule and pony tracks. In mid-June, the Indians showed particular anxiety over a report that the Chinese had nearly completed the Lhasa-Yatung road, which extended the road system to the Indian border. In June it was reported to be passable to jeeps and was later--within three years--to be made usable to heavy vehicles. Rough estimates of troop dispositions on each side of the border indicated that by late summer, Chinese troops outnumbered the Indians in all sectors, and that at least in one sector were faced not by regular Indian army personnel but rather by lightly armed Indian border police. A major task of Indian armed border police and regular army personnel was to intercept Tibetan rebels coming down into Indian territory and disarm them.

The increased Chinese and Indian military presence along the border made Sino-Indian clashes almost inevitable. By mid-June, Indian patrols repeatedly reported border penetrations of more than one mile by Chinese troops in search of Tibetans, but the immediate withdrawal of the intruding troops added to New Delhi's reluctance to formally protest. The first reported Chinese border incursion occured on 15 June in the eastern sector when a group of Tibetan refugees were caught trying to cross the border into India and shot up by Chinese troops. The first serious encounter between Chinese and Indian troops was indicated in Peiping's note of 23 June charging that over 200 Indian troops had intruded into, shelled, and occupied the "Migyitun area" in Chinese territory on the eastern sector and had entered into "collusion with the Tibetan rebel bandits" entrenched there. New Delhi denied the charges on 26 June, insisting that all Tibetan refugees "were disarmed as soon as they entered Indian territory" and in any case India was in no way responsible for rebel activities in the Migyitun area. Nevertheless, the Chinese believed that the Indians were assisting some of the rebels in re-crossing into Tibet as Indian patrols became more active along the border. Two minor encounters followed: on the western sector, a six-man party of Indian police was disarmed and taken into custody by a 25-man Chinese PLA detachment near Pangong Lake on 28 July, but they were released on 18 August for the sake of "friendship"

following a formal Indian protest; on the eastern sector, a Chinese force of 200 crossed into Indian-claimed territory at Khinzemane and forced back an Indian patrol in the area on 7 August. New Delhi pointed to the Thagla Ridge in its reply of 11 August, complaining that the Chinese troops had crossed into Indian territory "as the boundary runs along the Thagla Ridge"--a claim which became a bone of contention in 1962.

The August 1959 Clash

The first armed class in the history of the Sino-Indian border dispute occured shortly thereafter. On 25 August, a Chinese troop detachment exchanged fire with a 12-man Indian picket in the area south of Migyitun, capturing four and on 26 August, a Chinese force outflanked Longju, opened fire, and forced Indian troops to abandon the post. New Delhi's protest of 28 August characterized these Chinese actions as "deliberate aggression," pointed out that "until now" New Delhi had observed a "discreet reticence" about them, but they constitute a matter "which is bound to rouse popular feelings in India." The last remark indicated that Nehru saw the August actions as the last straw and envisaged a public outburst. Until the very latest incident--the 25-26 August firefight--Nehru had maintained a position as unprovocative to the Chinese as possible. For example, on 20 August he told Ambassador Bunker that India's UN delegation would not condemn China for action in Tibet and would continue to sponsor Peiping's case for UN representation. On 25 August he told Parliament that he did not "think" any Chinese soldier had crossed into Indian territory in pursuit of Tibetans--giving Peiping the benefit of the doubt despite many reports of Chinese border crossings to capture rebels. However, the 25-26 August skirmish could not be played down and could hardly be tossed off as a minor harassment unworthy of public indignation or serious official concern. To do so would have been an unpardonable display of official callousness and of political ineptitude.

Nehru's first sally in his speech to a tense and excited Parliament on 28 August was to caution against being "alarmist" and indulging in shouting and strong talk. Parliament members, however, were not subdued as they expressed their anxiety over the incidents and Chinese intentions along the entire border. A senior member of the Congress Party asked whether bombs could

be dropped to chase the Chinese out of the NEFA. Another asked: if India failed to defend its own territory, what would be the fate of small Asian countries which look to India for guidance? Nehru was calm: he reaffimred the Indian position that any aggression against Bhutan and Sikkim will be considered aggression against India, detailed a number of earlier border incidents, and in response to a suggestion, indicated willingness to issue a "White Paper" on Chinese border violations. Nehru in this way succeeded in keeping down violent condemnations of Peiping, but the explosive temper of Parliament and the press spread and pervaded non-official Indian thinking.

Nehru found himself under heavy pressure to make good on the government's pledge to resist Chinese intrusions along the Tibetan frontier.

Why did the Chinese outrage Indian opinion and, more importantly, undercut Nehru, who had concealed earlier patrol encounters, by firing on Indian troops south of Migyitun and at Longju? Even if we assume* that the 25-26 August skirmishes were provoked by the Chinese, they seem to have stemmed largely from an increased Indian presence along the eastern sector of the border, along which the Indians had 8 checkposts. As noted earlier in this paper, the Chinese also suspected the Indians (and others) of providing some support to Tibetan rebels using

*We assume Chinese provocation partly because the Chinese used an enormously superior force--200 Chinese to 12 Indians--which is typical of Mao's doctrine on armed attack. Furthermore, there was a crucial change in Peiping's subsequent account. Despite the contention in the Chinese note on 2 September that Chinese troops did not cross for a single step into Longju, Foreign Minister Chen Yi admitted in a speech at Peiping on 13 September that Chinese troops now occupied Longju and there could be no question of a withdrawal.

Indian soil as a sanctuary,* and on 23 June had delivered a strong protest over the forceful Indian "occupation" of the Migyitun area and aid given the rebels from that post. Following the revolt, Indian personnel had moved up into some posts--the Chinese claimed they moved into 10--including several on Chinese territory. Inasmuch as the Indians conceded that Migyitun is on the Chinese-side of the McMahon line, it seems probable that the Chinese felt on firm political ground in starting the action to sweep the area "south of Migyitun" including Longju free of Tibetans. At the same time, the Chinese recaptured Lonju itself--the action which established a precedent for later recapture of Indian-occupied border posts. More importantly, the late August clashes point up a mode of thought which has remained an ingredient in the Chinese leaders' calculations on the border dispute: when the Indians show a temperament to advance on the ground, we must alter their frame of mind by letting military action take command over political caution. Besides, the military risk itself is negligible, because we are the stronger side.

It is this temporary subordination of the political risk involved--that is, the risk of hardening Indian opinion against them--that has seemed stupid to Western observers. To the Chinese leaders, however, Nehru is Nehru: he will always temporize rather than fight, so Peiping's loss is not a big one and is not permanent.

The August incidents had the effect of once again reminding the Indians of their military inferiority. [redacted] although Indian army officers indicated they welcomed Nehru's bringing the clashes into the open, there prevailed among them a feeling of frustration due to the Chinese advantage in lateral roads and available troop strength. The Director of Military Intelligence stated that the border posts of the Assam Rifles in the NEFA would be strengthened under army control, but indicated some trouble in immediate placement of troops due to a shortage of men acclimated to operations at high altitudes. Kashmir was the only source of reinforcements and there was some reluctance

*Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi told Indian Communist party boss Ghosh on 6 October that reliable Chinese sources had reported that the Tibetan rebels had been aided by the Indians.

to reduce the strength of forces facing Pakistan. Once again, as in March and April 1959, the Indians appear to have had a real fear of engaging the Chinese in any major actions. Foreign Secretary Dutt told deputy chief of mission Brown on 5 September that India's UN delegation would not indulge in strong words against the Chinese. India, he continued, is prepared to be firm on certain points, but "We have to be friends with the powerful country with whom we have a border of 2680 miles."

As India could not--and Nehru was disinclined to--restrain the Chinese by launching attacks at border posts, Nehru tried to restrain them politically. He moved in two directions: (1) he informed the Russians of his predicament with the Chinese and (2) appealed to any desire in Peiping for negotiating "small" border issues.

(1) Nehru had taken note of Khrushchev's silence on the PLA's crushing of the Tibetan revolt and had commented to the U.S. ambassador on 20 August that the Russians were being "very quiet." Apparently in the hope that Khrushchev would restrain the Chinese from further border attacks, New Delhi instructed the Indian ambassador in Moscow [redacted] to explain the Indian position to Khrushchev personally. Khrushchev was to be informed that a large number of notes sent to Peiping have gone unanswered and that "the Chinese have started an insidious propaganda against India among socialist and nonaligned countries." In early September, Indian Foreign Secretary Dutt formally notified the Soviet and Polish ambassadors of New Delhi's serious concern over Chinese border incursions. Dutt privately warned the ambassadors that if the incidents were to continue, New Delhi would be forced to reappraise its policy of nonalignment.

These appeals and Khrushchev's apparent concern for the USSR's whole India policy combined to spur the Russians into an effort to dissociate Moscow from Peiping's actions against India. Dutt told the American charge on 5 September that Soviet representatives in "various capitals" have been quietly indicating they deplored the recent Chinese moves.

The Soviet press carried no comment on the dispute until the TASS statement of 9 September, which established Soviet neutrality in print* and the Soviet precedent for not supporting a bloc country in a dispute with a non-bloc country. As an indication of growing Peiping-Moscow frictions, it implicitly accused the Chinese of trying to disrupt the forthcoming Khrushchev-Eisenhower meeting.

(2) Nehru's appeal to the Chinese for negotiations was conveyed in statements to Parliament on 31 August and 4 September. On 31 August he rejected suggestions for strong action against the Chinese on the ground that a "big country could not behave as though at war and hit out all around," was more conciliatory than on 2[illegible] August, and emphasized India's desire for settlement through discussion of "small border disputes" of about "a mile or two" of territory. He told one questioner that India would not try to reoccupy the Aksai Plain by force or bomb the Sinkiang-Tibet road, but would send another request that New Delhi's 8 November 1958 protest note be answered. India, he continued would seek a settlement through talks. Nehru stated that the Chinese-held Aksai Plain was all "barren land." This line--i.e., that this corner of Ladakh was after all just wasteland and not worth fighting for--was to be repeated publicly and privately, partly to minimize the importance of its loss and partly to prepare Indian opinion for eventual negotiations regarding ownership.

*The TASS statement dissociating Moscow from Peiping's India policy went far toward preserving Indian goodwill toward the Soviet Union. Discussing the TASS report in Parliament on 12 September, Nehru described it as "more or less objective" and declined to direct the Sino-Indian dispute into "wrong channels," i.e. into Soviet-Indian relations. This is how Khrushchev preferred it to be: no direct Soviet involvement but private assurances to the Indians that Moscow did not support Peiping. Following his meeting on 12 September with Khrushchev, the Indian ambassador in Moscow told the American charge there that Khrushchev took a balanced approach, did not support Peiping, and did not offer to mediate. Regarding possible Soviet mediation, Nehru told his Cabinet that in mid-October the Soviet Union had informed him that the Russians had done "as much as they were able to" in cautioning the Chinese to exercise restraint--that is, Nehru explained, the Russians were clearly not in a position to dictate to Peiping.

The Indian Prime Minister's motivation for taking an on-balance conciliatory line apparently was, just as in April, his fear of stirring up the Chinese. He told Parliament on 4 September that the security of India was one of the factors precluding action taken in anger and that in spite of the August provocations, India's objective is friendship with China. Nehru appealed by implication to the Chinese leaders to be reasonable and to realize that friendship cannot exist "between weak and strong, between a country trying to bully and the other who accepts bullying." He concluded by saying India was willing to discuss the "interpretation" of the McMahon line and the Ladakh border as well.

The Chinese at first responded by attempting to disarm New Delhi's claims that India was the victim of aggression. Foreign Minister Chen Yi on 2 September denied in a speech that China had ever encroached on the territory of another country and insisted China advocates "peaceful negotiations" to settle international disputes, and a Chinese foreign ministry note of 3 September repudiated Indian charges of aggression, accusing India in turn of "some aggression."

The next Chinese move indicated a major decision. The Chinese acted to establish in writing a definitive border position with the apparent goal of compelling Nehru to accept it. They probably estimated that his consistently conciliatory responses to their military action reflected his unwillingness to risk armed conflict. He had, moreover, indicated in his 4 September speech to Parliament that he wanted to avoid drifting toward a "recourse to arms" and preferred negotiations. If, as the Chinese probably assumed, the dispute would move to the stage of negotiations, they could, by remaining adamant, convince Nehru that the only recourse was to accept Peiping's definition of the border.

Chou En-lai began to put this plan into operation. On 8 September, one day after Nehru had submitted to Parliament a "white paper" on the Sino-Indian exchanges of recent years,

Chou sent a personal, long-delayed* letter, replying to Nehru's March letter. Chou began by professing surprise that there was a "fundamental difference" on the border issue (but not denying it), repeated his January 1959 suggestion to maintain the status quo, and called for step by step preparations for an "over-all settlement" on the basis of this status quo. He then presented a definitive, "further explanation" of the Chinese position, the basic premise being that the border "has never been formally delimited."

The gist of this position, as Chou presented it, is as follows: (1) Peiping does not recognize the McMahon line in the eastern sector. It had been secretly formalized by British and Tibetan representatives and surreptitiously attached to the Simla Treaty in 1914, which was never ratified by a Chinese government. Nevertheless, for the sake of amity along the border and "to facilitate" negotiations and a settlement of the border issue, "Chinese troops have never crossed that line." (2) The border in the middle sector--i.e., the Tibet-Uttar Pradesh border--has never been delimited ("you also agree" that this is so). (3) In the western sector--i.e. the Ladakh border with Sinkiang and Tibet--Peiping recognizes the "traditional customary line" as the boundary. This "traditional customary line" has been "derived from historical traditions" and "Chinese maps have always drawn the boundary" in accordance with this line. (4) China's border with Sikkim and Bhutan is a question beyond the scope of the immediate Sino-Indian issue and China has always respected the "proper" relations between them and India. Chou's statement that Chinese troops had never crossed the McMahon line because Peiping desired "to facilitate" negotiations and a settlement constituted an official hint that Peiping would be willing to exchange its map claim to the NEFA for Indian agreement to Chinese possession of the Aksai Plain in Ladakh. This hint of a swap was

*Nehru had complained privately in early September that he had received no reply from the "dozen or more personal letters" he had sent to Chou, according to a high Indian official. He reportedly was "deeply hurt" by this--again suggesting Nehru's recurring reluctance to accept as real the Chinese leaders' animosity and, most of all, the fact that Chou was hardboiled and not amenable to gentlemanly reason or a personal appeal.

repeated in an NCNA release of "Data on the Sino-India Border Question" of 10 September and was given added point by the claim that Indian maps on the western sector extend Indian territory "38,000 square kilometers deep into Chinese territory."

The remaining portion of the letter was an attempt to reverse Indian charges of Chinese military initiatives in August. Armed attacks launched by Indian troops on Chinese "frontier guards" at Migyitun had left these "frontier guards no room but to fire in self-defense." "This was the first instance of armed clash along the Sino-Indian border." Chinese "guard units" had been despatched to the border "merely for the purpose of preventing remanent armed Tibetan rebels from crossing the border back and forth." Chou concluded by urging Nehru to withdraw "trespassing" Indian troops and restore "long-existing state of the boundary" in order to ease the "temporary tension" between China and India. This line of "self-defense" was to be repeated on several occasions thereafter, most importantly after the 20 October 1962 Chinese attack.

Nehru's response in Parliament on 10 September indicated his further disillusionment with Chou En-lai and recognition of a more rigid Chinese policy toward him. He stated that he was beginning to doubt that the two countries spoke the same language, that "pride" is one of the factors involved in the border dispute, and that India would not submit to "bullying." Chou's letter, Nehru continued, is either a disavowal or a show of indifference to the Chinese Premier's assurances

regarding the McMahon line "three times" in their 1956 discussions.* By disavowing or ignoring these assurances, Chou had undermined "faith" so essential to friendly relations and Chinese actions now indicated Peiping "values Indian friendship to a low extent." Nehru used even stronger language in Parliament on 13 September, when he stated that Chinese military actions were a display of "pride and arrogance of a great and powerful nation." Nehru concluded by saying India would not yield on the matter of the McMahon line but was willing to discuss disagreement over "minor" border alignments. Following Foreign Minister Chen Yi's public statement in Peiping on 13 September 1959 that neutralism was a "two-faced" policy

*In his letter of 14 December 1958, Nehru stated that he had written down a "minute" immediately after his talk with Chou in India in late 1956 for a personal and confidential record. He quoted from the "minute" as follows:

> Premier Chou referred to the McMahon line and again said that he had never heard of this before though of course the Chinese Government had dealt with this matter and not accepted that line. He had gone into this matter in connection with the border dispute with Burma. Although he thought that this line, established by British Imperialists, was not fair, nevertheless, because it was an accomplished fact and because of the friendly relations which existed between China and the countries concerned, namely, India and Burma, the Chinese Government were of the opinion that they should give recognition to this McMahon line. They had, however, not consulted the Tibetan authorities about it yet. They proposed to do so. /emphasis supplied/

Nehru did not use the phrase of assurances given "three times," but stated that with regard to the McMahon line, "I remember discussing this matter with you at some considerable length. You were good enough to make this quite clear."

in general and that India, in particular, had always used "two-faced tactics," Nehru told the American Ambassador (24 September) that he recognized the Chinese had always had an "aggressive nature" which was usually manifested when they felt themselves powerful, that as people of the "Middle Kingdom" they considered themselves above everyone else, and that India was included in a "second-class" category by them. His attitude toward Chou was one of polite sarcasm: he would answer Chou's letter within a few days but need not hurry himself.

Nehru's 26 September letter to Chou and attached note established the definitive Indian position on the entire border issue and was noteworthy for its demand that the pre-condition for negotiations was Chinese evacuation of certain border posts. While India maintained its claim to the Aksai Plain of Ladakh, Nehru's letter was ambiguous on whether the Aksai Plain must also be evacuated before any talks could be held. Nehru called for evacuation of posts opened by the Chinese in "recent months," leaving room for interpretation that the ownership of the Aksai Plain, occupied in 1956-57, would still be open to settlement by negotiations. As for his personal opinion of Chou, Nehru's reappraisal is apparent. The letter abounds with such statements as "I entirely disagree with your view," "it is incorrect to say," "needless to say, such an allegation is entirely baseless," marking the end of the five-year pact of cordiality between the two premiers--a "gentlemen's agreement" never since revived by either man.

The attached note revealed for the first time that the captured leader of the Indian patrol which scouted the Aksai Plain road in mid-1958 had been placed in solitary confinement by the Chinese. Nehru's decision to surface this fact and earlier Chinese border intrusions as well as his remark that the government was legitimately criticized for having withheld all the facts reflected his estimate that it was impossible to further conceal these facts and, even if they could be concealed, this would not improve Peiping's attitude. Finally, he expressed the hope that reported large-scale movements of Chinese forces in the Tibetan border area did not signify a new policy of actively probing into Indian territory along the whole length of the border--a hint that New Delhi suspected Peiping of trying to build a military presence step by step south of the Himalayas.

To sum up, the developments of August and September 1959 led the Chinese to show their hand, to outline their "real-politik" in handling the Tibetans and Indian troops along the border, and to indicate to Nehru that they did not consider him a neutral--but rather "two-faced"--and would hereafter be even more vigilant regarding his drift to the "right." As for Nehru, he cast aside some of the illusions he had had regarding the intentions of the Chinese leaders toward India and, although maintaining his preference to temporize rather than fight, decided to indirectly warn the Chinese against any attempt to put their forces south of the border and to threaten Bhutan and Sikkim.

The October 1959 Clash

This was not the Chinese intention, which fell considerably short of an overall advance into Indian territory. The Chinese goal was two-fold: (1) probe New Delhi's willingness to begin preliminary negotiations on an overall border agreement and (2) establish a military presence along the entire border.

(1) In discussions on 5 and 6 October, Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi reportedly told Indian Communist leader Ghosh that they wanted a border settlement, were prepared to exchange NEFA for their claim in Ladakh--that is, the Aksai Plain where they had built the road connecting Sinkiang and Tibet--and would put pressure on India to negotiate. They did not make clear what they meant by "pressure." As for the McMahon line, Mao and Liu stated that they would accept it de facto with minor adjustments. They then told Ghosh that it would be necessary to develop a "proper atmosphere" especially in India before negotiations could begin. In early October, Foreign Minister Chen Yi had moved to develop such an atmosphere, informally proposing to the Indian ambassador that the "first step" would be a visit by the Vice President. On 19 October, Chou wrote a personal letter to Nehru, suggesting that Vice President Radhakrishnan visit Peiping and that this "might serve as a starting point for negotiations." Nehru was reportedly at the time encouraged that the Chinese seemed willing to talk. When the letter was finally delivered by the Chinese ambassador on 24 October, Nehru and Radhakrishnan turned the proposal down, as on 21 October Chinese military forces had clashed with a patrol of Indian border police near the Kongka Pass in southern Ladakh, capturing ten and killing nine.

(2) The Chinese apparently combined their diplomatic approach with moves to establish a military presence in disputed areas prior to negotiations, which they insisted must be centered on actual possession of territory. The Indians had, according to a People's Daily editorial of 16 September, "dispatched troops to cross the border and occupy more than 10 places belonging to China." The editorial suggested that New Delhi "withdraw its troops quickly from the Chinese territory they occupied recently:--that is, since the Tibetan revolt. By October, Chinese troops along the border apparently were operating under orders to tell Indian units to withdraw. The Indian Director of Military Intelligence stated privately on 14 October that Chinese troops came to the Indian outpost at Khinzemane in the NEFA during the period between 9 and 11 October to warn elements of the Assam Rifles for the "last and 17th time" to vacate or be pushed out "in a few days." He also stated that the Chinese had sent a warning to New Delhi, and threatened border posts in Bhutan and Sikkim.

A moveup of Indian troops to the border had been indicated by Foreign Secretary Dutt, who [redacted] stated [redacted] on 12 October that although Nehru is afraid of and dead against military action, the Indian army brought pressure on him and placed crack Indian troops along the NEFA-Tibet border: Jats, Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Rajputs. The 21 October clash did not, however, involve regular Indian army troops (despite Peiping's deliberately misleading characterization of them as "soldiers") but rather lightly equipped border police in Ladakh.

The onesided defeat inflicted on the Indian policemen near the Kongka Pass--nine killed and ten captured--suggests that the Chinese had superior numbers or firepower, or both.

According to the Chinese version (23 October NCNA release), Chinese "frontier guards" on 21 October had been "compelled" to fire in self-defense on Indian "armed personnel more than 70 in number, "after disarming three Indians on 20 October." According to the Indian version (24 October statement of the External Affairs Ministry), Chinese troops entrenched on a hill-top position opened sudden and heavy fire, using grenades and mortar, on the border police party searching for two constables and a porter, who had failed to return from patrol on 20 October. Although the Indian police fired back, they were "overwhelmed" by Chinese strength in numbers and arms.

According to the Ministry statement, the Chinese entered the southern Ladakh area near the Kongka Pass in "considerable strength" following New Delhi's 13 August claim to the territory; India was said to have no troops in the area, only police parties.*

When Nehru discussed the clash at a public meeting on 25 October, he seemed to be aware of the military handicaps under which India operated along the border in Ladakh. His approach was to temporize and warn against the "brave talk" of Indians who called for a counterattack on the Chinese. But Parliament and the press insisted on some form of Indian military action: the Hindustan Times called for limited reprisals in order to avoid demoralizing Indians and permit the feeling of helplessness to continue, and the Indian Express stated that New Delhi should now accept aid from non-Communist countries "without qualms." Nehru rejected any idea of India's abandoning its non-alignment policy at a 1 November public meeting, claiming that military aid from abroad would jeopardize India's freedom and shatter India's place in the world. India, he continued, was the one country in Asia which did not join alliances but which walked "with its head held high not bowing to anyone." He could not give an assurance that the Chinese would not cross the border, but India would defend the border "with all her might." Nehru declined to comment on the strategic measures being taken to deal with the border situation, but sought to explain why the Ladakh border was not protected by forces in larger numbers: "we thought that the Chinese would not resort to force in the Ladakh area." In addition, if India had placed a "large army" in Ladakh, it might have been cut off and could not have been shifted easily in the event of an emergency elsewhere on the border.

*The size of the Chinese force is not known. An Indian official privately stated shortly after the clash that they had no prior information regarding the presence of Chinese troops in the Kongka Pass area and that after the clash they were really in "no better position to know" just what the Chinese were doing in Ladakh.

How much of what Nehru said about New Delhi's reasons for not stationing more troops in Ladakh represented actual Indian military thinking is uncertain. A different reason was provided by Army Chief of Staff General Thimayya at the Governors' Conference on the border dispute convened by Nehru in late October. Thimayya [redacted] told President Prasad and Finance Minister Desai that he had proposed taking the "necessary military steps" against the Chinese after it was discovered that they had built a road through the Aksai Plain, but Defense Minister Krishna Menon had turned down his proposals on the ground that the "main military danger" is on the India-Pakistan border: "we cannot afford to reduce or divert any of our strength from that sector." Thimayya stated that he had Menon's rejection "in writing."

Thimayya's statements establish a link between Krishna Menon's and Nehru's apparent strategic estimate that the Pakistanis were more of a direct military danger than the Chinese--an estimate almost certainly reflecting the deep religious and parochial animosities involved in the entire Kashmir dispute. The Kashmir dispute had engendered in Nehru's thinking more intense feelings of anger and resentment than had the Sino-Indian border dispute. Thus Nehru and Menon had shown a greater inclination to hate the non-Communist Pakistanis than the Communist Chinese.

The main military problem faced by the Indians in late October was to determine the extent to which troops could be moved from the frontier with West Pakista without drastically weakening Indian forces there. Despite the understanding reached on the East Pakistan border problems and the conciliatory overall Pakistani posture,* the Indians--including Thimayya--

*Ayub and Nehru met for the first time in September 1959 and agreed on the need to reduce tensions between Karachi and New Delhi and to plan their relations on a "rational" basis. The direct outcome of this meeting was a conference in October at which both sides agreed to certain adjustments of the border between India and East Pakistan and established "ground rules" to prevent new incidents.

felt they could not strip the Pakistan border to man the entire border with China. The decision was made to reduce the reserve forces in the Punjab without reducing major deployments in Jammu- Kashmir. The first division-level redeployment of Indian troops into the border area following the October 1959 clash was reported to be the transfer of the 4th Division, stationed in reserve at Ambala (Punjab) to Missamari in the Kameng division of the NEFA, with headquarters apparently at Tezpur. The Division's assignment was to man present and "additional" posts on the western half of the NEFA border. However, the Indians set about immediately to raise a new division (the 17th) in Ambala, so great was their concern regarding Pakistan.

The alternative courses of military action apparently considered by the Indians in late October 1959 were (1) to prepare to initiate action to recapture India-claimed territory in Ladakh held by the Chinese or (2) to concentrate on preventing penetration of the rest of the border while accepting the Chinese presence in Ladakh, virtually writing it off. They apparently decided on (2).

Nehru was responsible for the decision, and began to prepare Indian public opinion for the cession of Chinese-occupied sections of Ladakh. The procedure used was simply to reassert the line that most of Ladakh was wasteland. Nehru is reliably reported to have stated in late October sessions of the External Affairs subcommittee that he was willing to begin open negotiations on the determination of the Ladakh border. He emphasized that the disputed area of Ladakh is of "very little importance--uninhabitable, rocky, not a blade of grass"--and went on to imply that he would not be averse to the ultimate cession of that part of eastern Ladakh claimed by the Chinese. In conversations at the time with army and government officials, members of the American embassy staff were told that the Aksai Plain is not regarded as strategically important or useful to India. The Indians stated repeatedly that it is a "barren place where not a blade of grass grows." Both Foreign Secretary Dutt and Vice President Radhakrishnan complained bitterly that Nehru was on the way to selling out the Aksai Plain.

The developing line about the strategic insignificance of the Aksai Plain was strengthened by the Indian military estimate that the Plain was indefensible anyway. [redacted] General Thimayya's estimate was that the ridge line of the Karakoram Range is the only defensible frontier

in the entire Ladakh area. Thimayya stated that therefore part of the Tibet Plateau east of the ridge line shown as Indian territory on New Delhi's maps was "militarily indefensible," and by implication there was really no strategic reason for recapturing it from Chinese troops even if it were possible to do so in the face of "preponderant Chinese military power." This view provided Nehru with another rationalization for his talk rather than fight decision. He also stated privately that the entire border in Ladakh is undefined, that few Indians live in the area, that there has never been any real administration there, and that therefore he is not sure that all the territory claimed in Ladakh belongs to India.

However, Indian officials were well ahead of Nehru in the desire to take a harder line with the Chinese. When, on 29 October, Nehru was informed by telegram that the Chinese had told the Indian ambassador that their troops were merely occupying Chinese territory and there could be no question of withdrawals prior to negotiations, Nehru drafted a reply which President Prasad disliked on the grounds that it "lacked firmness." Only after this objection did Nehru strengthen the language in his note of 4 November.*

In this note, New Delhi avoided the line which Nehru had been developing regarding the strategic insignificance of the Aksai Plain. The Aksai Plain was specifically declared to be Indian territory. Peiping was warned that incursions south of the McMahon line would be considered "a deliberate violation"

*Nehru had a long way to go to catch up with the public mood in India as well. All American consulates general in India by 4 November had reported press and public condemnation of the Chinese and continued criticism of Nehru's soft line of late October. As part of the "Throwback the Aggressors Day" (4 November), several thousand students demonstrated in front of the Chinese Communist embassy in New Delhi and later went to Nehru's office with a memo requesting immediate military action. The students reportedly were encouraged by former Indian Army Commander-in-Chief Cairappa, who told the students to go ahead, and appealed to all Indians to be men of "guts and action," not just "men of words."

of Indian territory. The August and October clashes were said to be "reminiscent of the activities of the old imperial powers," and an annexed report gave the view of the senior surviving Indian police officer to the effect that October clash was initiated by the Chinese, who fired first "using heavy weapons." Despite the note's implication that only "minor frontier disputes" were negotiable, it did not make Peiping's recognition of Indian claims to the Aksai Plain a pre-requisite for talks.

Had it not been Nehru, but rather a more military-minded man who occupied the post of prime minister in late October 1959, a priority program to prepare India eventually to fight would have been started. In the course of two months, India had been humiliated by two military defeats and the public and government officials had been aroused to anger against the nation's enemy as never before in its short history. But Nehru insisted that war with China was out of the question, and apparently did not think the challenge justified the economic burden of increased military spending. A man of different temperament and background, no less aware of the hard facts of Indian military inferiority, might nevertheless have felt that the country must be mobilized to prepare for long-due military revenge against the Chinese at all costs. Guts and action, not words, was the military man's attitude in late October. This was not Nehru's way, however, and his authority and prestige in the country (although questioned more extensively than ever before) were still sufficiently great to reject preparedness for an eventual recourse to arms.

At an emergency cabinet meeting in late October Nehru indicated that border fighting did not constitute a threat to India. The strategic Chinese threat, he maintained, lies in the rapidly increasing industrial power base of China as well as the building of military bases in Tibet. The only Indian answer, he continued, is the most rapid possible development of the Indian economy to provide a national power base capable of resisting a possible eventual Chinese Communist military move. Nehru seemed to believe that the Chinese could not sustain any major drive across the "great land barrier" and that the Chinese threat was only a long-term one.

Nehru's statements along the line that the Chinese military threat was not immediate but long-range may have reflected the strategic assessment made by his military leaders. The problem of logistics was so enormous, in their view, that the

Chinese would find it "impossible" to initiate and sustain a major offensive into and through Ladakh and the NEFA. Thimayya's estimate was that the Karakoram Range crest-line in the west and the crests of the Himalayan main range in the east provide effective land barriers against a major Chinese military push. Thimayya [redacted] held the view in late October that any Chinese venture in force into the Ladakh area would be reckless "in view of Chinese supply and transport problems" and that the defensive capabilities of even limited Indian armed forces in this terrain would be formidable.

To what extent these views reflected a mere rationale for New Delhi's failure to strike back at Chinese forces on the border is conjectural. Certainly Nehru's idea of first building a national economic base is a platitude in the context of the border dispute. The idea that the Chinese would face insurmountable logistics problems in the event of a major drive south, however, seemed to be firmly fixed in Indian military thinking. On balance, Indian estimates of Chinese capabilities and intentions along the border supported Nehru's policy of no-war and a negotiated settlement.

19 JGUST 1963

~~TOP SECRET~~

COPY NO.

# THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

## SECTION 2:1959-61

DD/I STAFF STUDY

CIA/RSS

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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]

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

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

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

"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.

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

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

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.

# 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 Spetember 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.)

> 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

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 "rightists"; 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

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.

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

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 goodby 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.

(continued on page 7)

(footnote continued from page 6)

[redacted]

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." [7]

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.

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,"

(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. 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 )

(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 premit 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] 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

(footnote continued from page 8)
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.

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.

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.

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:
(continued on page 13)

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.

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

(continued on page 15)

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.

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" acknolwedgment 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

"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

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.

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

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

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."

(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.

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.

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

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

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."

this section. This blunt langauge 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 Manng'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

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

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.

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

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)

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 first-hand 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.

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 [redacted] 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.

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

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 [redacted] 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

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."

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 Feburary, 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 showdng 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."

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. [redacted] 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."

(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 distrubed 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

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 [redacted] 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.

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. [redacted] 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

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.

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]

[redacted]

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.

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."

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 [redacted] reported rushing preparations to ratify the border agreement and friendship treaty. Rangoon's Director of Military Training, Maung Maung, [redacted] 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

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 [redacted] 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 Parliamenton 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)

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.

* [redacted] 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.

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 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,

"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 accomodation 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.

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 Karakorams, though in effect their agreement to avoid incidents would keep them from doing so.

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

might provoke border incidents.

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.

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

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.

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 ther 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.

> ...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.

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 viligance 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.

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.

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.

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

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 firefights. 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

> 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

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.

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 shootdown, 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 Augusut 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:

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.

## 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.

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.

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 Foredgn 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 [redacted] 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 [redacted] 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.

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.

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

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 Aisa--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. Thay 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."

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.

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 Karakorams/, 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.

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] 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.

within India's responsibility.* The Chinese position on Kashmir during the talks was also intended to create difficultires 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.

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

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.

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.

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 claim 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.

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

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 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.

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.

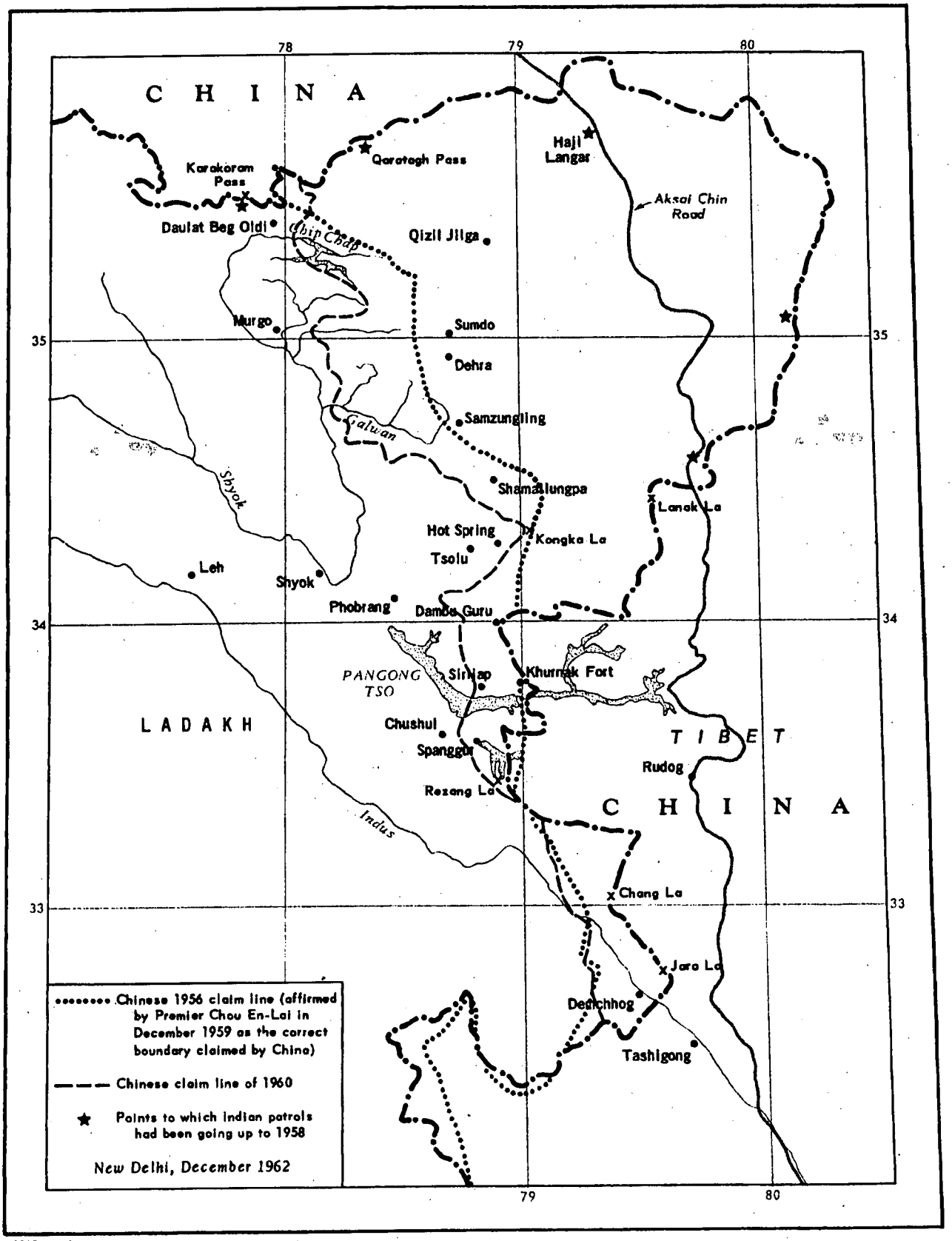
The order of priorities which the document outlined for Chinese diplomatic officials indicates that restraint toward India was to be a relative matter, a matter of degree. While the U.S. was Peiping's major world enemy, India was second on the list, i.e. the "main target in Southeast Asia," as the document 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."

## SINO-INDIAN BORDER

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

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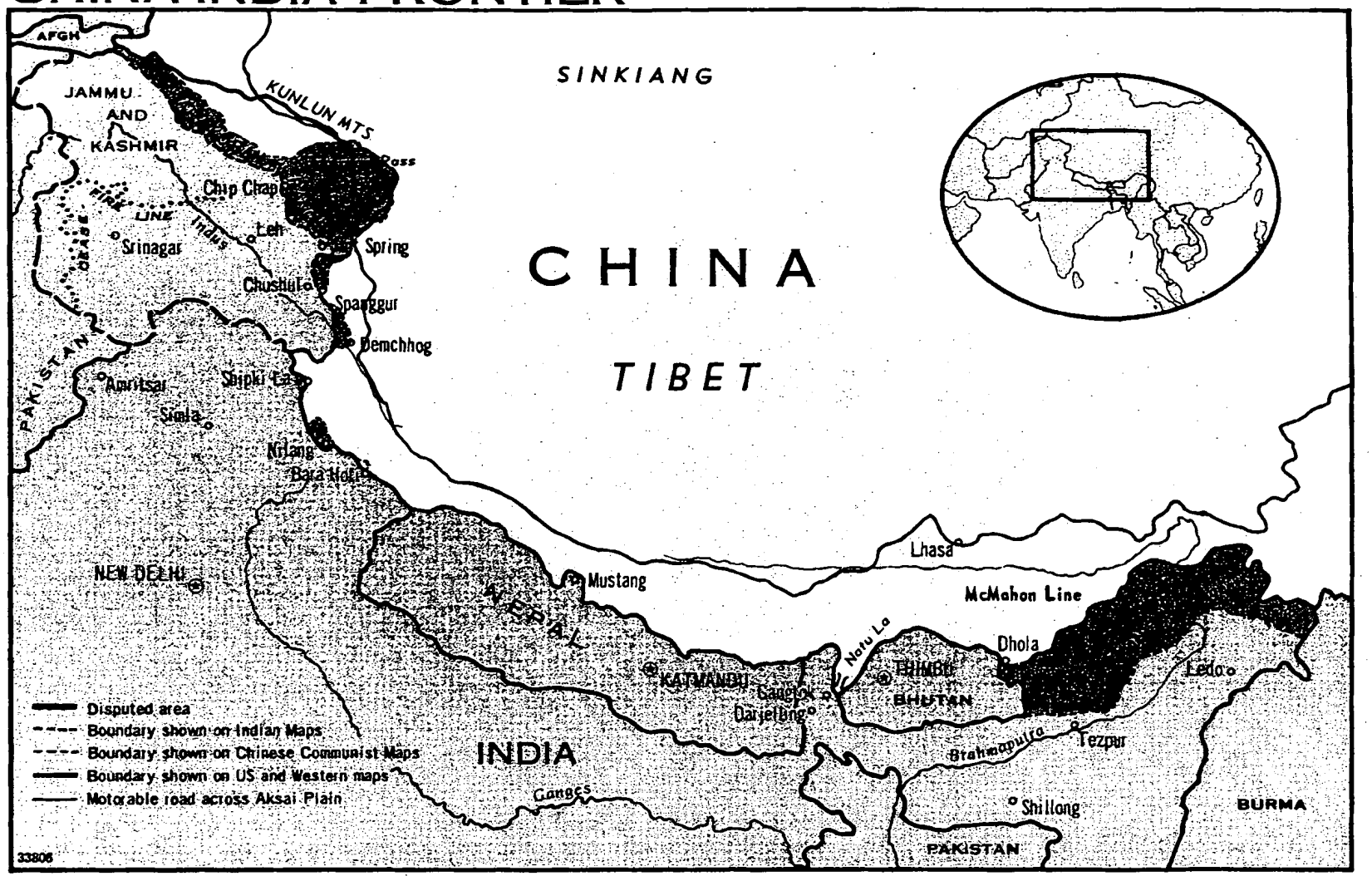
# CHINA-INDIA FRONTIER



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# THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

## SECTION 3 : 1961-62

DD/I STAFF STUDY

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# THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

## SECTION III. (1961-1962)

This is the third in a series of three working papers on the Sino-Indian border dispute. This Section III deals with the period from early 1961 through the time of the most serious clashes in autumn 1962. An appendix discusses Sino-Pakistani border negotiations from 1960 to 1963.

We have had a useful review of this paper by P. D. Davis of OCI. The DDI/RS would welcome additional comment, addressed either to the Chief or to the writer, Arthur A. Cohen

# THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

## SECTION III. (1961-1962)

### SUMMARY

Chinese policy toward India in 1961 operated on contradictory assumptions, namely, that it was necessary to "unite" with Nehru and simultaneously to "struggle" against him. The Chinese hoped that an opening for negotiations would appear, but, at the same time, they noted that Nehru would talk only about a Chinese withdrawal from the Aksai Plain. They apparently believed that they had some room for diplomatic maneuvering with him, when in fact such room no longer existed.

The Chinese tried to persuade Nehru to drop his precondition of withdrawal. In April 1961, they probed informally in New Delhi for any willingness to accept "arbitration," and in May they asked the Burmese to induce Nehru to negotiate on the China-Burma-India trijunction point; they were turned down in both attempts. They absorbed a continuous volley of Indian insults and rebuffs without striking back publicly, calculating that a public riposte would compel Nehru to leave the dispute open indefinitely. They wanted it closed: it was creating deep anti-Chinese feeling in India and was providing Khrushchev with an issue with which to lobby among other Communists for support against the "adventurist" CCP.

Anxious to get Nehru to talk and to refute Khrushchev, they moved beyond Mongolia, Burma, and Nepal in early 1961 to suggest border talks with the Pakistanis. This maneuver rekindled Indian anger. It pointed up the self-defeating aspect of the Chinese policy to press Nehru in various clever ways but to offer him no concessions. That is, the Chinese had rejected the carrot-and-the-stick as a policy because the only carrot acceptable to Nehru was the entire Plain. They were, therefore, left with sticks of various sizes, and when they used even a small one the Indians winced.

Their adamant stand against withdrawal made political probes--by certain Indian civilian leaders--futile exercises. (The Indian army leaders preferred an unbending hard

line, including military moves against Chinese posts.) The MEA Secretary General, R.K. Nehru, was scolded like a small boy by Liu Shao-chi in July 1961 for coming to China only to demand Chinese withdrawal and to insist that the border had been delimited. As a result of the angry rebuke, relations further deteriorated. Even Nehru indicated he had no choice but to adopt a tougher attitude toward the Chinese. The Chinese response was to treat him as an implacable foe, at first letting his own words (reprinted without comment) in September 1961 "prove" that he was not only anti-Chinese but also anti-Soviet, and then attacking him openly in November and December. During the intervening month--October--the Chinese formally protested that Nehru was engaged in "dishonest dealing." But such Maoist shock treatment conflicted with their effort to attain a political settlement; the "struggle" aspect of Chinese policy had once again consumed the "unity" aspect.

Nehru was constantly pulled in two directions. His inclination was to work for a political settlement; however, Chinese adamancy made him vulnerable in Parliament and consequently more susceptible than ever to the argument of army leaders that the Chinese should be pushed back by force. He accepted their view that flanking moves against Chinese posts would provide a form of safe pressure. Beginning in April 1961 and continuing throughout the year, Lt. General Kaul directed all three Indian army commands to increase the strength of their forces along the border. But the Chinese were alert to the ensuing moveups; the Indians could not move forward in 1961, as the Chinese had done from 1957 to 1960, without detection. Beset, on the one hand, by Chinese protests regarding Indian moveups, and compelled, on the other, to pledge to Parliament a "forward" border policy, Nehru spoke in tones of striking belligerency. He promised publicly in November that new posts would be set up so that territory held by the Chinese could be "recovered." "Half a dozen new posts" already had been established, he said, and more would be set up.

Chinese charges of Indian responsibility for the initial provocation--i.e., new posts in spring 1961--seem to be valid. Although the Indian countercharge complained of a new Chinese post set up at the same time, they admitted

privately that (1) this post was within the Chinese claim line of 1960 and (2) it had been set up after the Indian posts had been established.

The Chinese tried to deter Nehru by first indicating awareness of Indian moveups. They then warned Nehru that they would not remain passive observers; they put teeth into this warning by declaring (in a note of 30 November 1961) that, if the Indians professed to be moving merely into territory claimed on Indian maps in the west, Chinese maps showed claims too: "the Chinese government would have every reason to send troops to cross the so-called McMahon Line" in the east. The warnings failed to deter Nehru; on the contrary, they enabled his opponents to press for an even harder anti-China line.

In early 1962, the Chinese temporarily eased their warnings and tried a smaller stick. They used the Burmese to convey to Nehru their formula for a settlement: China would drop its map claims in the west and retain "only" the area Chinese troops held on the ground--i.e., the Aksai Plain. The Indians insisted on "recovering" the Plain. The deadlock persisted, and the Indians decided to apply more military pressure on Chinese posts in the Aksai Plain. The defense ministry in early April 1962 ordered the Indian army to flank several Chinese posts and induce a withdrawal. The Chinese responded by stepping up patrolling and reinforcement activity in the west. Nehru stated publicly on 2 May that he would not be deterred by these moves from his new "forward" military policy. The border dispute was in this way transformed by the Indians from a primarily political quarrel into a serious military confrontation.

Evidence suggests that in June 1962 Indian advances behind PLA border posts convinced the Chinese leaders that they should prepare for a major operation to clear out the new enemy positions. In early July, when they felt safe--because American assurances had dispelled their fears of a Chinese Nationalist invasion--the Chinese made their first countermove against Indian advance posts in the west, encircling a new post in the Galwan River Valley. The move was primarily intended to convince Nehru that they were prepared to fight to stop his "recovery" plan.

The Chinese use of this big stick enabled Indian military leaders to renew their demands on Nehru. In late July, Nehru reluctantly agreed to Kaul's request that Indian troops on the border be given the discretion to open fire.

Convinced that a calamitous defeat on the border--an increasing probability--would end his political career, Defense Minister Krishna Menon worked to establish a flexible policy. He gained Nehru's temporary acquiescence to drop the withdrawal precondition for Sino-Indian negotiations. However, the deeply suspicdous Chinese inflexibly insisted on an explicit Indian rejection of the precondition. By thus refusing to make even a token conciliatory gesture, the Chinese helped Indian army leaders and amateur policy-makers (i.e., journalists and certain Opposition Parliamentarians) to discredit Menon's flexible line. And the Chinese felt confirmed in their suspicions when, on 22 August, Nehru stated in Parliament that India intended to make gains on the border by military as well as political pressure.

The Chinese acted vigorously to warn Nehru that retaliation against further advances in the west would not be confined to that sector. PLA troops in September flanked the Indian post in the eastern sector at Dhola (Che Dong). This move spurred Indian army leaders to press Nehru for authority to clear the Chinese from the Dhola area by a major operation. Nehru agreed, and a new special corps under Kaul was established in early October to direct the "squeeze" against Chinese troops. By mid-October, Nehru had agreed to extend active pressure on the Chinese to Ladakh. The long-range plan was to be carried out over two or three years, the flanking of forward posts constituting only a beginning. Both army and civilian leaders--with the notable exception of Krishna Menon--discounted the probability of significant Chinese retaliatory action even after the 10 October firefight left 33 Chinese dead near Dhola.

Chinese warnings had such a long history that their impact on Indian thinking was reduced in September and October--the final phase of Chinese preparation for attack. When the Chinese began to use significantly stronger language, the Indians viewed the threats as more of the same.

The Chinese apparently were motivated to attack by one primary consideration--their determination to retain the ground on which PLA forces stood in 1962 and to punish the Indians for trying to take that ground. In general terms, they tried to show the Indians once and for all that China would not acquiesce in a military "reoccupation" policy. The secondary reasons for the attack, which had made it desirable but not necessary, included a desire (1) to damage Nehru's prestige by exposing Indian weakness and (2) to expose as traitorous Khrushchev's policy of supporting Nehru against a Communist country. They attained almost unqualified success with the first objective, but attained the second only with respect to parties already in their camp.

As for Chinese calculations of risk, Peiping seems to have viewed its political and military vulnerabilities as insignificant. On the military level, the Chinese apparently calculated that they could beat the Indians handily and that their opponents would fight alone; they were right on both points. However, they were taken aback by the sharpness of the Indian turn toward the U.S. and UK for equipment and supplies. On the political level, they saw nothing left to lose in their relationships with the Indians and the Soviets; both had run their course to open enmity. By summer 1962, the Chinese and the Russians were both on the offensive against non-Communist countries, but so bitter was the mutual antagonism that there was no mutual support. When, therefore, Khrushchev in mid-October sought Peiping's support during his Cuban missile venture, the Chinese not only were stinting in their support, but also implicitly criticized him for encouraging the Indians even before he had "capitulated" on Cuba.

The border dispute had a momentum of its own. The Chinese attack would almost certainly have been made even if there had been no Cuban crisis and even if there had been no Sino-Soviet dispute. Whether the Chinese would have attacked precisely when they did if there had been no Cuban missile crisis is conjectural, but the Soviet charge that the Chinese attacked because of the opportunity provided them at that time is overstated.

It seems likely that the continuing deadlock on the border will lead eventually to renewed clashes, at a time when the Indians have restored their spirits and forces. A political settlement, which could not be negotiated when relations were still to some degree amiable, will be even less likely in the prevailing condition of completely antagonistic relations.

SECTION III. (1961 - 1962)

As of January 1961, the Chinese strategy toward India was, to use Mao's phrase, one of "unity as well as struggle"--"unity" meaning renewed efforts to reach a rapprochement with New Delhi. The Chinese leaders apparently viewed this strategy as having "tactical flexibility," leaving "some leeway" (again Mao's phrase) for Nehru--to see, that is, if he would come round to changing his anti-China attitude. A Chinese Foreign Ministry report issued in January 1961 depicted Peiping's prospective policy toward India as containing the following major elements: an effort would be made to mollify India and maneuver Nehru into assuming a "passive position" on the border dispute, an invitation would be sent to him requesting that he visit China at "an opportune moment," another border experts' conference would be held, and the Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet would be revised rather than permitted to lapse. The report viewed the Sino-Indian struggle as necessarily "subservient to the struggle against imperialism," and advised that India should not be made the primary enemy. However, all of this was qualified by the warning to guard against another anti-China wave.

Chinese policy toward India, therefore, operated on two contradictory assumptions in the first half of 1961. On the one hand, the Chinese leaders continued to entertain a hope, although a shrinking one, that some opening for talks would appear. On the other hand, they read Indian statements and actions as clear signs that Nehru wanted to talk only about a Chinese withdrawal. Regarding the hope, they were willing to negotiate and tried to prod Nehru into a similar attitude. Regarding Indian intentions, they began to act politically and to build a rationale based on the assumption that Nehru already had become a lackey of imperialism; for this reason he opposed border talks. China was therefore "justified" in maneuvering to isolate him.

Chinese Feelers for Negotiations: January - June 1961

The Chinese tried publicly and privately to persuade Nehru to drop his withdrawal precondition and to convince him of their desire to attain an overall

settlement. They conveyed their message publicly by requiring of New Delhi a "mutual accommodation"--apparently an exchange of claims to the NEFA and the Aksai Plain--and cited the examples of Burma (Chou En-lai's speech of 6 January)* and Nepal (Chou's speech of 9 February). This public position provided them with some room for private overtures.

Seizing upon the unpublicized Indian protest note (30 December 1960), the Chinese once again broached the matter of negotiations. The Indian note had complained that the tri-junction shown on the map attached to the 1960 Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty was at the Diphu Pass, five miles below the traditional junction point and that this implied Peiping had rejected the watershed principle on the eastern sector. In their reply (note of 21 February 1961), the Chinese first denied that the Treaty map showed the Diphu Pass as the tri-junction point and stressed the indefinite aspect of the Treaty text which resulted from the failure to date of China and India to delimit formally the boundary. The Chinese then declared that the Sino-Indian boundary dispute involved not the question of individual points but "large tracts of territory" and that Peiping hoped to seek a settlement through talks on the basis of "mutual accommodation." Such an accommodation, they urged, would settle the "entire" boundary question as well as the minor matter of the tri-junction.

Neutrals were enlisted in their effort. Foreign Minister Chen Yi discussed the matter with Sukarno on 31 March in Djakarta, insisting that China did not want "disturbed" relations with India, would prefer that New Delhi stopped quarreling about "snowy mountainous territory that is probably inhabited only by animals," and would rather "discuss" the existing map claims. Chinese officials in Peiping asked the Burmese border expert, Brigadier

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* The Sino-Burmese boundary "agreement on principles" had been concluded in January 1960 and the "treaty" had been signed in October 1960. The exchange of instruments on 2 January 1961 merely formalized the legal procedure and was the occasion for Chou's visit to Rangoon and his speech there. A "boundary protocol," which set out in detail the agreed alignment of the entire boundary was signed in Peiping on 13 October 1961 by Chou and U Nu, constituting the final act in the settlement.

Aung Ghyi, in early May to induce New Delhi to negotiate with China on the tri-junction issue. They made this approach despite India's formal refusal to negotiate (note of 30 March) and continued to press forward with the tri-junction proposal. While replying (note of 4 May) that New Delhi's refusal in effect meant rejection of a border settlement, they reiterated their willingness "to define jointly with the governments of Burma and India the exact location of the tri-junction"--Peiping's first and last formal proposal for a three-way conference on the Indian border issue.

The Chinese had extended feelers in New Delhi too, but of a less formal kind. The "cultural" counsellor in the Chinese Embassy there, Yeh Cheng-chang, reportedly asked the chairman of the All-India Peace Council on 1 April if he thought the Indian leaders would support a Chinese move to appoint an "arbitrator" to adjudicate the border issue. Yeh stated that because China's disputes with Burma and Indonesia had been settled, he believed it likely Peiping was prepared for arbitration. Yeh continued to probe, asking a local employee of the embassy's "cultural" office on 7 April if he felt that the government would accept either U Nu or Sukarno to arbitrate the dispute, inasmuch as China was "seriously considering proposing arbitration." Within two weeks after J. Narayan, a critic of Nehru's foreign policy, stated publicly on 18 April that "the dispute with China was a fit case for arbitration," Yeh again approached an Indian employee in the embassy to propose that the Indian leaders take up Narayan's suggestion. Yeh's approaches were all informal and on this occasion he insisted that although Peiping desired arbitration, the first move must be made by New Delhi. These probes apparently were intended to provide the Chinese leaders with some insight into Nehru's thinking about any alternative to his stand of no negotiations without a prior Chinese troop withdrawal in the Aksai Plain.

Nehru's attitude was relayed to Yeh in late April and transmitted to Peiping by him. Nehru declared privately that he would not accept arbitration and that any formal effort to settle the border dispute must be preceded by a Chinese "assurance" that their troops would vacate the Aksai Plain. His attitude was more formally indicated in New Delhi's note of 16 June which repeated the charge that the Sino-Burmese boundary map had shown the tri-junction point

incorrectly to be at the Diphu Pass and which scored the Chinese for seeking to drag India into talks:

> The Government of China seem to be exploiting the opportunity offered by the China-Burma Boundary Treaty to support their unwarranted claim for negotiating the question of the India-China boundary. As the Chinese Government are aware, the Government of India have pointed out repeatedly and in clear and unmistakable terms that this boundary is well known and well recognized and has been so for centuries and cannot be a subject of any negotiations. /emphasis supplied/

This rejection came at a time when continuing private Chinese probes also were rebuffed by the Indians. Krishna Menon is reported to have said that when he arrived in Geneva on 6 June for the international conference on Laos, Chinese officials in Chen Yi's delegation indicated that Chen might be interested in discussing the border dispute with him. At several private meetings with Menon, Chen avoided any discussion of the dispute and Menon surmised that the Chinese wanted him to broach the matter first. He did not, as he was under instructions from Nehru to avoid taking the initiative, leaving the Chinese with the impression that Nehru was unwilling to show any flexibility.

That the Chinese leaders had persisted in probing for talks, at any level, in the face of clear signs of Indian intransigence reflected concern that the dispute conflicted with their basic interests in south Asia and significantly undercut their position as "nonadventurist" Communists in the Sino-Soviet dispute. They had persisted even in the face of New Delhi's threat to "bring about the vacation of aggression" as made in the January 1961 Resolution of the Congress Party--a resolution drafted by Menon, providing further evidence of his swing away from Chinese positions ever since the Sino-Soviet dispute sharpened in April 1960.*

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* Chen Yi told a bloc diplomat in Geneva in early June that Menon is a good example of "how little trust" one can have for Indian leaders. Chen said "badly informed imperialists" consider him, mistakenly, to be a man of the extreme left, and went on to depict him as a completely loyal instrument of Nehru, capable of wearing

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They had not stopped trying even after Nehru stated (20 February speech in Parliament) that the Chinese were wrong in occupying Indian territory, that "there can be no question of horse trading in this matter--that you take this and we take that--that we halve it," and that he could go to Peiping "only when what we say about this matter is broadly acknowledged by the Chinese government." ** In short, they absorbed a continuous volley of Indian insults and rebuffs without striking back politically or militarily, apparently aware that either kind of riposte would compel Nehru to leave the dispute open indefinitely. They desperately wanted it closed. Any delay worked against them as it was creating an enemy state on China's southern frontier. There was, however, another compelling reason--the Sino-Soviet dispute.

The failure of the Chinese to settle the border quarrel was being used by the CPSU to substantiate Khrushchev's charges that the Chinese leaders were warlike, "adventurist," and determined to drive India into the West's camp. They viewed the situation as providing Khrushchev with an effective weapon in his lobbying among other parties for support against the

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various faces but in the final analysis "a servant of reactionary interests."

Subsequently, however, as a result of Menon's efforts to impel Nehru in July 1962 to begin talks with the Chinese, Peiping considered encouragement of his attitude as tactically useful. The Chinese apparently saw him as still close to Nehru even after his removal from the post of defense minister. Chou En-lai is reported to have sent a letter to Menon in early January 1963 through the Ceylonese official, Felix Bandaranaike, expressing regret that the border dispute has led the Indian government to "sacrifice" him. Chou went on to say he hoped Menon would continue to use his good offices with Nehru, particularly in the context of the Colombo Proposals for a border settlement.

** NCNA did not report Nehru's remarks, avoiding all reference to them until Peiping attacked Nehru personally in late 1961.

CCP. The border quarrel had placed them on the defensive: they asked the Russians to understand their position which would be undercut if Moscow published the 9 September 1959 TASS statement, blanched at Khrushchev's 30 September public rebuke regarding China's urge to "test by force the stability of the capitalist system" (which they later said was an "insinuation" referring to Taiwan and the Indian border), personally briefed Khrushchev on 2 October about Indian provocations but were told by him that in any case it was wrong to shoot people dead, blanched again at Khrushchev's public digs on 31 October and 7 November, and tried to change the Soviet "neutral" position in six talks with the Soviet ambassador between 10 December and 30 January 1960. At this point, they apparently feared that Khrushchev might score heavily against them on this issue among foreign Communists, thereby detracting from their gains against him on the matter of revisionism. As Khrushchev's campaign developed, they attempted to demonstrate, in an irrefutable way, that the responsibility for the quarrel and clashes was entirely India's. They suggested that border settlements had been achieved with Burma and Nepal because these countries, unlike India, were acting in good faith. Chou En-lai used the occasion of border treaty ceremonies in Rangoon on 6 January 1960 to advise the Russians that the treaty with Burma proved, as would future border pacts, that China desired all border disputes to be settled peacefully. Chou said:

> As for those who, for the time being, do not understand our position and policy, we are willing to wait patiently and welcome them to observe and study our position and policy on the basis of the development of events. We believe that with the passage of time, they will eventually admit that China's position and policy are in the interests of world peace and friendship between peoples...

Chou was speaking at a time when his colleagues in Peiping were briefing the Soviet ambassador, relaying through him their request to Khrushchev that he stop supporting Nehru and accusing China of "adventurist" folly.

Anxious to exploit Chinese embarrassment rather than ease it, the Russian leaders responded to this

request in the CPSU's 6 February 1960 letter. They denied charges of Indian provocation and accused the Chinese of "narrow nationalism" and a desire to hamper Soviet foreign policy moves toward the US. Khrushchev struck again on 22 June at the Bucharest meeting of Communist parties, declaring that "Indians were killed; this means that China attacked India."

Peiping - New Delhi Relations Worsen: January - June 1961

Throughout the period of probing for a possible Indian desire to negotiate, the Chinese tried to refute Khrushchev's position that Nehru was still nonaligned. They depicted his policies as being pro-US and opposed to specific Soviet policies as well as general bloc interests.* The procedure of quoting his remarks without comment provided them with more flexibility than a direct propaganda campaign to discredit him completely as a "class" enemy--a course adopted in late 1961.

However, the Chinese expatiated bitterly on Nehru in private conversations. A Chinese embassy official in New Delhi told an Indian Communist confidant on 26 February that Nehru's decision to send troops to the Congo confirmed the Chinese view that his policy is basically pro-US. He complained that Nehru desired "to drag out" the border dispute in order to win votes for the Congress Party in the 1960 elections. Behind the scenes at the World Peace Council (WPC) meeting in

* The New China News Agency (NCNA), for example, reported that (1) on the Congo issue, Nehru had turned down Khrushchev's 22 February letter calling for withdrawal of UN forces and that Nehru had kept "in close contact with the US" on the issue (2 March); (2) on Laos, after Secretary Harriman met with Nehru, the Secretary had stated that President Kennedy and Nehru "see eye to eye" (25 March); and (3) on Cuba, US papers said Nehru had tempered his statement on the US role in the Bay of Pigs attack because the prime minister did not want public opinion opposed to the US (4 May). These NCNA reports carried no commentary; each was sufficiently pointed to convey an impression of Nehru as a tool of the new US administration and opponent of Moscow.

New Delhi in late March, China's chief delegate, Liu Ning-i, pressed for a resolution condemning India's Congo policy and "Nehru's pacifist attitude"; although written into an original draft, this criticism was removed from the final version on the insistence of the Indian delegate. Nehru was accused of being "Kennedy's lawyer" by a Chinese embassy official on 31 March, and by June, Chen Yi himself began to disparage Nehru in private talks. Chen told a bloc official in Geneva on 2 June that Nehru was determined to fulfill "with no excessive modesty" the role of spokesman for India's big bourgeoisie and claimed that this fact "explains" his unfriendly attitude toward China and India's instigation of border incidents. Chen moved beyond this doctrinal remark to draw the only "logical" conclusion: China's impression was one of "an increasing closeness of relations between Washington and New Delhi." Finally, he cast aspersions on Khrushchev by implication for having been duped by Nehru for several years. Nehru was aligned--with the US.

Sino-Indian relations continued to worsen as each side mistreated nationals of the other. Starting with a crude attempt to embarrass the Indian ambassador and a personal aide in late November 1960, the Chinese took a series of steps to harass Indian personnel on the mainland. By early May 1961, petty harassment of the Indian ambassador and his staff in Peiping had so nettled New Delhi that L. Menon, deputy Minister of External Affairs (MEA) recommended that a new ambassador not be sent to China until relations improved; Nehru, however, did not agree. He seemed aware that the annoyances had been motivated by Peiping's desire to retaliate for New Delhi's rough handling of Chinese nationals in India. He viewed Peiping's protests as more moderate than anticipated. When earlier (on 21 October 1960) a Chinese official had made a verbal complaint to the Indian ambassador concerning the "quit India" orders given in Calcutta and Kalimpong to more than 30 Chinese, the accusation was directed only against "local authorities" rather than the central Indian government. Although subsequent expulsions drew protests through diplomatic channels, the Chinese leaders were at pains to avoid sustained publicity on the matter and did not denounce

India's action in a major propaganda campaign.* Reflecting their desire to keep the issue of mistreatment of nationals below the boiling point, NCNA's report on 22 May of the deportation "under armed escort" of two Chinese was couched in relatively mild language and frequently made the point that only "local authorities" were responsible.

The Chinese in fact made no public statement during the first half of 1961 regarding their basic position on the border question. There were several reasons for this reticence. They calculated that an open argument on any aspect of the border issue would further harden Nehru's attitude, or the attitude of his advisers, against them. Further, they viewed the border experts' Report issued by New Delhi on 14 February 1961 as detrimental to their case and decided not to acknowledge it (at least in China); a public dispute over the Report would bury both sides in recriminations over details at a time when the Chinese were trying to stress points of common agreement. Beyond that, they were anxious not to provide Khrushchev with more ammunition to feed his drumfire complaints that Peiping's position was driving Nehru to the right; the Chinese privately insisted that Nehru was in effect his own driver.

Determined to refute Khrushchev and to pressure Nehru to negotiate, the Chinese moved laterally beyond Mongolia, Burma, and Nepal--all states willing to settle border discrepancies--to Pakistan. They suggested border talks with Karachi in December 1960, and by January 1961 they had gained concurrence to negotiate a preliminary agreement. This maneuver rekindled official Indian suspicions of the Pakistanis and confirmed their view of the Chinese as anti-India political opportunists. (See APPENDIX)

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* Indian Home Minister Shastri stated on 15 March that as of 31 September 1960, 12,474 Chinese were registered in India and that expulsion notices had been served on 69, of whom 8 had been expelled forcibly and 26 arrested to face prosecution for anti-Indian activities. The Chinese leaders almost certainly recognized that the "local authorities" in West Bengal were acting under the Home Ministry's policy of deporting anti-Nehru Chinese, but sustained the local-national distinction for tactical reasons.

The move toward Pakistan pointed up the contradictory aspect of Chinese policy. They desired and talked about the need for negotiations but made no concession to attain them; on the contrary, their political moves drove the Indians away from the "proper" mental attitude. At the same time that the Chinese approach succeeded in exacerbating India-Pakistan relations, it embittered Indian officials all the more against China.

The Chinese leaders were willing to accept the consequences of probable failure of pressure tactics against the Indians because they had no alternative to these tactics. Significant concessions before negotiations were ruled out. India, they felt, would view concessions as a sign of weakness and insist on greater concessions--i.e. complete withdrawal of Chinese forces from the Aksai Plain. Stated differently, the Chinese rejected the carrot-and-the-stick as a policy because the only carrot acceptable to New Delhi was the entire Plain. They were, therefore, left with sticks of various sizes, and when they used even a small one, the Indians winced.

R. K. Nehru's Probe: July 1961

Prime Minister Nehru's rejection in the first half of 1961 of Chinese overtures for negotiating on Peiping's terms--that is, his refusal to accept occupation of the Aksai Plain--did not end Sino-Indian contacts. His rejection was followed by a one-man probe intended to determine whether the Chinese might reconsider and soften their position regarding the Plain.

Chinese willingness to withdraw troops at least partially was in the Indian view a sine qua non for the start of any talks. From the Chinese viewpoint, however, negotiations after an assurance had been given to withdraw would be superfluous; nothing would be left to talk about except the procedure of the Chinese pullback. In other words, Nehru would negotiate only after the Chinese showed a willingness to accept this occupation. Because of this impasse, the Indian attitude had been, both shortly before the Chou-Nehru talks of April 1960 and consistently thereafter, that the only policy was to wait and hope for Chinese agreement to pull back, or to consider compelling them to pull back.

However, the Sino-Soviet dispute led some Indian leaders to believe that the Chinese might decide to soften their stand and even consider a partial withdrawal of their forces from the Plain. They felt that New Delhi should examine the possibility. The chief proponent of this view was the MEA Secretary General, R. K. Nehru, who was supported in it by Krishna Menon. R. K. Nehru was provided with the occasion to initiate a probe of the Chinese position by the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Mongolian People's Republic (July 1921) which he was scheduled to attend. The Chinese ambassador in Cairo, Chen Chia-kang, had arranged for Secretary General Nehru to meet with the Chinese leaders, having discussed the trip with the Secretary General in Cairo during the June preparatory meeting of the Non-Aligned Nations Conference. R. K. Nehru, Chen stated, had mentioned his forthcoming trip to Ulan Bator but was reluctant to transit China unless permitted to meet with the Chinese leaders. Chen had assumed R. K. Nehru wanted to discuss the border issue and conveyed his remarks to Peiping, whereupon arrangements for the visit were made.

The probe idea was sanctioned by not enthusiastically encouraged by Prime Minister Nehru.* the Secretary General's stopover was approved by the Prime Minister in a scribbled note: "Can't do much harm; may do some good." However, it was opposed by Foreign Secretary Desai, who felt that R. K. Nehru had been influenced by Menon in this course and that, in any case, Menon was interfering too much in MEA policy formulation.

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* One month earlier, Nehru had instructed Krishna Menon not to take the initiative in broaching the border dispute with Chen Yi at Geneva. Nehru felt then that such an initiative might be construed as a sign of weakness and willingness to accept a compromise settlement. Nehru's public and private statements made after the failure of the Secretary General's trip were post facto justifications for the policy initiative of his MEA chief.

prime minister, compelled to defend his subordinate's prospective visit at a press conference on 30 June, stated that R. K. Nehru had no instructions to negotiate;

The Chinese leaders, however, apparently anticipated a bargaining gambit or an indication of willingness to negotiate. This is suggested by the top level attention given R. K. Nehru when he arrived in Peiping on 13 July and held discussions with Liu Shao-chi the next morning, and again by the more extensive talks with Chou En-lai and Chen Yi in Shanghai on 16 July. More importantly, it is suggested by the outrage of the Chinese leaders when they learned that India's foreign policy chief had come with no negotiating offer.

When, on the contrary, they were aksed by R. K. Nehru if they were prepared to retreat, they were aroused and lashed out angrily at the Indian. In reply to the Secretary General's demand that the Chinese withdraw from the Aksai Plain, Liu shot back furiously that it was "ridiculous" for Nehru to make such a long trip in order simply to restate a position which China had previously indicated was "unreasonable, unjust, and unacceptable." He told the Secretary General that if New Delhi wanted the Plain vacated before starting negotiations, the Indians must vacate the NEFA, and this was the "only" condition on which China would consider even talking about the Plain. Liu's counter-demand was in fact later incorporated in the bitter Chinese note of 30 November 1961.

His response to R. K. Nehru's demand and Chinese refusal to grant the Indian an interview with Mao was interpreted in New Delhi by Krishna Menon--a supporter of the visit--as another example of the "intolerable arrogance" of the Chinese leaders. Nehru met with a somewhat more tactful but equally solid rebuff when he raised the obrder issue with Chou En-lai and Chen Yi in Shanghai on 16 July during a six-hour exchange. Chou repeated Peiping's position that the border is not defined and therefore should be a matter for negotiation. When, at one point, Nehru complained that the border experts' Report had been published by India but not China, Chou replied that India had been in "too much of a hurry" to publish it and that

by "unilaterally" publishing it, India had "tried to make propaganda gains." Chou's remarks on this matter are further evidence that the Chinese viewed their legal case as somewhat weaker than India's. When R. K. Nehru left Shanghai on 17 July, followed three days later by recalled Ambassador Parthasarathy, he left Sino-Indian high level contacts in a state of abeyance which lasted until discussions were held in Geneva in March 1962.

Animosity had been deepened on both sides. The Chinese leaders were personally affronted by the visit. The "cultural" counsellor of the Chinese embassy in New Delhi privately commented to an Indian employee on 24 July that R. K. Nehru's trip had been a great disappointment to Peiping; the Chinese government was surprised that a high-level Indian official would travel to China merely to "repeat demands and adhere to positions" which already had been rejected. (Liu had taken virtually the same line with R. K. Nehru personally.) The counsellor concluded that Sino-Indian relations were going from "bad to worse." In the Indian camp, even the moderates were hardened against Peiping. The Chinese had not even hinted at a concession (that is, a carrot), but had used instead a nasty lecture (that is, a stick). Prime Minister Nehru commented privately on 21 July that the Chinese were in no mood to settle the border dispute, relations would further deteriorate, and he had no choice but to adopt a "very stiff" attitude toward Peiping.

Chinese Harden Treatment of Nehru: July-September 1961

For the ensuing period of several months, the Chinese dropped the assumption that the Indian prime minister could be prodded into negotiations. They decided to treat him as an implacable foe. Constantly plagued by Soviet criticism, however, they continued to cover their flank by letting Nehru hang himself with his own words, particularly those words which were directed against Moscow's moves. They highlighted every public statement of Nehru's which could be construed as anti-Soviet.*

* NCNA, for example, reported that (1) Nehru had refused to comment on a "recent warlike" speech of

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In September, the Chinese took a step toward slandering Nehru openly in their commentary. After citing Indonesian and Burmese press criticism of Nehru by name, the Chinese attacked him by implication for his moderate remarks on colonialism (People's Daily editorial, 9 September): "Somebody at the Non-Aligned Nations Conference advanced the argument that the era of classical colonialism is gone and dead...contrary to facts." This was a distortion of Nehru's remarks but appeared close enough to be credible. On the same day, Chen Yi referred to Nehru by implication at the Bulgarian embassy reception: "Those who attempted to deny histroy, ignore reality, and distort the truth and who attempted to divert the Conference from its important objective failed to gain support and were isolated." On 10 September, they dropped all circumlocutions and criticized him by name in a China Youth article and NCNA report--the first time in almost two years that they had commented extensively on the prime minister.

The formal Indian riposte led to an exchange of recriminations which further demonstrated the animosity impelling the Chinese to disparage Nehru and thereby to contradict their policy of attaining a border settlement. Foreign Secretary Desai protested to Ambassador Pan Tzu-li on 14 September and the Indian charge in Peiping made a verbal demarche to

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* (Continued)

President Kennedy (25 July), (2) Ambassador Bowles in New Delhi had praised Nehru for "generous support" on the Congo crisis (10 August), (3) Nehru had told Parliament that "The present tension in Berlin is due to the Soviet Union's declaration it would sign a peace treaty with East Germany" (23 August), (4) Nehru publicly had "ignored facts" and disparaged the Berlin Wall as "absurd" (29 August), and (5) Nehru had attacked the Soviet Union for resuming nuclear weapons tests (7 and 10 November). Interspersed in this reporting were allusions to the Chinese leaders' real complaint, namely, that on 23 August, 9 October, and 6 November, Nehru had "slandered China for 'illegally occupying Indian territory.'"

the Chinese Foreign Ministry on the same day, complaining of distortion in Peiping's comment on Nehru's Belgrade speech. The Chinese response to these protests, conveyed to the Indian charge by Deputy Foreign Minister Keng Piao on 24 October, went well beyond a denial of distortion; Keng opened a personal attack on Nehru and his aides. The Indians (note of 10 November) gave the following account of Keng's abusive remarks:

> The Vice Foreign Minister...indulged in personal attacks on Prime Minister Nehru, Defense Minister Krishna Menon, and Secretary General R.K. Nehru....He accused the Secretary General of making an 'incorrect and untrue statement' to the press on his return from Mongolia via China....The Secretary General was charged with prevarication and abuse of Chinese hospitality.
>
> Not concent with this attack on the Secretary General, Vice Foreign Minister Keng Piao has discourteously charged the Prime Minister of India with 'dishonest dealing.' Such accusations and offensive remarks are not conducive to high level contacts between two Governments.

The Indians asserted further that Keng's abuse was "calculated to cause offense." This seems indeed to have been the major Chinese calculation. They used Keng primarily to convey their contempt for what they felt had been Nehru's doubledealing in sending R.K. Nehru only to harangue them in their own offices as aggressors.

This Chinese action was hardly cool, calculated diplomacy. It was instead an outpouring of their animus against the Indian leaders, and if any other calculation existed, the intention probably was just as self-defeating, namely, to shock the Indians into a more submissive attitude. Such Maoist shock treatment directly conflicted with their effort to attain a border settlement. The "struggle" aspect of Chinese policy had once again consumed the "unity" aspect.

Indian Moveups and Repercussions: April - December 1961

Nehru, too, was pulled by contradictory forces. His natural inclination was to work for a political settlement. However, Chinese refusal to withdraw from the Aksai Plain and Opposition demands that they be compelled to withdraw made him more susceptible than ever before to the army argument that the Chinese would not move back unless pushed by Indian troops.

By early 1961, the problem had become one of just how to push them. Nehru's rejection in January of action to oust the Chinese "by force if necessary," and in February of "any move to push the Chinese from Indian soil," ruled out a large-scale Indian offensive operation. However, it had not had ruled out the establishment of new Indian posts in areas claimed by the Chinese (particularly in Ladakh) by a process of moving closer to and between existing Chinese posts. The process would require a series of small-scale advances, in order to avoid provoking firefights, and flanking moves, in order to press Chinese forces to abandon forward posts. Direct assaults apparently would not be required.

The rationale for this process stemmed from the view held by certain civilian and army advisers that stealthy Chinese advances from 1957 to 1960 provided justification for stealthy Indian moveups in 1961. Nehru himself gradually accepted this simple logic of retaliation.

He agreed to act in April 1961. In order to "bolster the regular strength" of Indian army units on the border, the Chief of the Army General Staff, Lt. General B.M. Kaul, sent an order in early April to all three Indian army commands to furnish 10 percent of their current troop strength for service with border units. In a clarifying statement to the army commands, Kaul stated that the intention was not to introduce "entire units" but to "augment" army units already along the border in such a way as not to give the Chinese cause for increasing their own troop strength. (Kaul was also anxious to avoid giving the press the impression that the army was "massing" troops on the border.) The

Indians were wary of the Chinese military intelligence effort, particularly after confirming through interrogation that a Chinese soldier arrested in Bhutan in March had had the mission of contacting individual Indian military personnel to obtain order of battle information. Nehru showed some anxiety in June that the Chinese were preparing to respond to Indian moves by a major attack, but was relieved of this worry in July and August by reports that the Chinese were merely improving their border posts and communications.*

Nevertheless, the Chinese were alert to increased Indian border activity. The Indians could not move forward in 1961 (as the Chinese had done from 1957 to 1960) without detection. Following their bitter exchanges with R.K. Nehru, the Chinese leaders decided to protest any Indian patrolling across China's 1960 "line of actual control."

They made their first formal protests in August against Indian advances begun under Kaul's order of early April. In addition to charges of air reconnaissance carried out over Chinese-claimed territory in May and June, their first note in the series (12 August 1961) complained that:

1. "since last April," Indian troops began to push further into China's Demchong area,

2. in May, Indian troops set up a checkpost at nearby Oga,

3. in July, 30 heavily armed Indian troops conducted two patrols as far as Charding La,

* He and his aides had been particularly concerned about a possible major Chinese buildup north of the Sikkim border. Kaul himself reported in early July that Indian press reports and rumors had been wrong. The Maharajkumar of Sikkim told an American official in mid-October that there was only a brigade of Chinese troops on the border and that a Chinese patrol was seen only every two or three months; he implied that if the Chinese were doing the type of patrolling which the Sikkimese and Indians were doing, they would have been seen more frequently.

4. again in July, troops patrolled well past the Thaga Pass, and

5. in June, a detachment of Indian official personnel established themselves at Wuje (Bara Hoti).

These actions, the note declared, had once again caused "tension" on the border; India should immediately withdraw all troops and other official personnel "who have crossed the border."* The Chinese in effect demanded that the Indians stop moving up.

New Delhi's formal response and Nehru's public statements were expanded into the bitterest open Sino-Indian exchange since 1959.

The Indian response was primarily intended to justify their continuing advances on the border. New Delhi's note of 31 October rejected the Chinese complaint as in effect accusing Indian troops of moving on Indian soil. It deliberately ignored both Peiping's 1956 and 1960 lines of actual control, noting only that patrolling within the "traditional" line--that is, not the actual existing one--was India's right. Thus, regarding the new Indian post at Oga (32° 50' N - 79° 26' E) in the Demchog area, the note stated:

> The MEA do not see why the Government of China should have any concern with measures India adopts inside her territory... As regards partrolling up to Kargo and Charding La, while Kargo is well within Indian territory, Charding La is on the /traditional/ border, and has been under Indian control for several years. /emphasis supplied/

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* When recapitulating military moves of spring and summer 1961, the Indians (note of 30 April 1962) stated that Chinese activities had compelled them to take "additional measures" to protect Indian territory. However, they were careful not to specify that these measures included forward moves on the ground in the western and middle sectors.

In order to counter Chinese charges more forcefully, the note raised a complaint of Chinese incursions. It insisted that since 1960, "aggression has been added to aggression" and instanced intrusions and the establishment of new checkposts "even beyond the Chinese claim line of 1956." These "fresh Chinese violations" were given in the note as a post at Nyagzu, Dambuguru, and at a point 33° 19' N - 78° 12' E. The Chinese, however, responded by focusing on Indian advances, not Indian arguments. They insisted (note of 2 November) that Indian troops were still pressing forward on "China's border" and warned of "very serious" consequences.

The war of notes became open when Nehru on 20 November tabled in Parliament excerpts of the Indian 31 October note. The fifth Indian white paper was also issued, delineating Sino-Indian exchanges regarding the border. Nehru stated that "in recent weeks" some new checkposts had been built by the Chinese beyond their 1956 claim line but within their 1960 line. The storm that broke in the Indian press over the surfacing of these "new" Chinese incursions was directed against the prime minister's policy of "playing down the border question" and his unwillingness to take military action.

Attempting to impede further criticism of his "soft" policy, Nehru spoke in tones of striking belligerency. The military situation on the border, he began, had changed progressively in India's favor because of recently strengthened defenses. He then promised:

> We will continue to build these things up so that ultimately we may be in a position to take effective action to recover such territory as is in their possession.

This was the most explicit public statement that Nehru had made regarding an intention to take military action to regain land held by Chinese forces. The Chinese for good reason later cited it to demonstrate Indian responsibility for border clashes. Nehru went on to give an account of India's "hard" moves. Although the Chinese had established three "new" posts in Ladakh, he said, India had set up

six, including one at Daulat Beg Oldi near the Karakoram Pass. He also cited a steady buildup of Indian forces and noted that 500 to 1,000 men were required to provide logistic support for one 50-man post.*

Compelled in this way to demonstrate Indian military aggressiveness, Nehru at times spoke about outposts in detail, exposing his and his aides' confusion about certain crucial facts. Regarding the time three "new" posts were established, Nehru stated in Parliament on 20 November that it had been "in recent weeks" and, on 28 November, that it had been "during the last two years" or, on second consideration, "during last summer." Regarding location, he stated on the 28th that "two...are practically on the international frontier between Tibet and Ladakh" but, on second consideration, "we are not quite certain whether they are a mile or two on this side or on that side." When a member of Parliament claimed that "then, they must be on this /India's/ side; if there is any doubt, they are obviously on this side," Nehru agreed:

> Let us presume that. We have presumed that. But I am merely saying that they are near the international frontier.

Nehru's ambiguity and uncertainty suggests that the Indian charge that the three Chinese posts were "new" may not have been accurate.**

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* Reflecting the Indian propensity for swagger at the time, the Director of Artillery told the American army attache in late November that his forces had the firepower in Ladakh to make the Chinese posts "untenable."

** His remarks at the very least reflect MEA incompetence in handling the charges. The MEA 31 October note had incorrectly given one of the coordinates for a "new" post as 33° 19' N, placing it ridiculously deep--100 miles deep--within Indian territory; it should have been given as 35° 19' N, placing it within Peiping's 1960 claim line. The error was not recognized by the Indians; it was privately pointed out to a MEA official by an American embassy official, and the MEA was obliged to send a note of correction on the 23rd. The note of correction was not included in the white paper tabled on the 28th or in Nehru's remarks of that date.

The Chinese denied the posts were new. They stated (note of 30 November) that the places cited "are within Chinese territory," two of the posts--at Nyagzu and 35° 19' N - 78° 12' E--"have long been in existence, and no checkpost has ever been established at Dambuguru." The MEA's China Division director later (on 8 December) conceded privately that Dambuguru and Nyagzu were not new, having been set up in 1960. (The Chinese apparently were correct in their assertion regarding Dambuguru at 33° 58' N - 78° 52' E; it had remained unoccupied until Indian troops moved into it sometime between 5 and 9 May 1962.) However, the MEA official insisted that the third post--at 35° 19' N - 78° 12' E on the Chip Chap River--had been set up in spring 1961. The Indians later (in their note of 22 February 1962) changed the date to September 1961 for this Chip Chap River post, and they did not claim that it was beyond the 1960 Chinese claim line. In short, their claim that Indian advances in spring and summer 1961 had been made precisely to counter "new" Chinese posts cannot be substantiated. The Chinese apparently viewed this claim as part of an Indian tactic to cover Kaul's policy of advances.

Nehru's public remarks and the uproar in Parliament and the press spurred the Chinese into releasing their notes and launching a major propaganda campaign directed against Nehru personally. The line they took in the onslaught suggests that by late November 1961, the Chinese leaders were convinced that Nehru had decided to intensify India's military plan to recover territory in the western sector. They tried to deter him.

They led off by making it clear they were alert to the plan. They pointed out (Foreign Ministry statement of 6 December) that four Chinese notes had been sent since August 1961 because, starting in mid-May, Indian troops began to "overstep" the line of actual control in the western and middle sectors. They then depicted Indian statements in November as "tantamount to professing openly that India intends to change unilaterally the status quo on the border and is preparing to futher invade Chinese territory."* This was interpreted as meaning

* They supported this charge by citing Nehru's 28 November statement in Parliament: "India...is now building up a system of roads and building

in effect that Nehru had switched over from refusal to settle the border dispute by talks to using force. They concluded with a warning:

> Should the Indian Government, going it alone obstinately, continue to push forward into Chinese territory and extend its unlawful occupation, it must bear full responsibility for the resulting new tension. /Emphasis supplied/
>
> This policy...is extremely dangerous... under no circumstances will the Chinese Government be cowed by war clamor and military threat.

They put teeth into their warning by turning to a discussion of a hypothetical situation in which Chinese troops would be compelled to retaliate. Seizing on the argument that Indian troops were simply advancing into territory claimed on Indian maps, they declared (note of 30 November) that the Chinese, too, had extensive map claims and, were they to use New Delhi's logic, would be justified in moving on the ground into territory claimed on Chinese maps. This threat was conveyed to the Indian leaders as follows:

> Such logic of the Indian Government is untenable and also most dangerous. The Indian Government must be aware that the Chinese and the Indian Governments do not hold identical views concerning the boundary between the two countries. Taking the case of the eastern sector of the boundary, the Chinese Government has always held that this sector lies along the southern foot of the Himalayas and that the so-called "McMahon Line" is totally illegal. If the Indian Government's above logic should be followed,

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bases at suitable places for our armed forces" in the west; "forward posts" have been dispatched totalling "more than half a dozen new posts;" India must be prepared "to recover" its territory. They also cited a Times of India article from the same date; clashes will "now" be hard to avoid, "especially since the army has instructions to proceed with its plan of extending its checkposts."

> the Chinese Government would have every reason to send troops to cross the so-called "McMahon Line," and enter the vast area between the crest of the Himalayas and their southern foot. But the Chinese Government has never done so and all Chinese military and administrative personnel, acting on orders, have not crossed the so-called "McMahon Line." /emphasis supplied/

This was not the first time that the Chinese had pointed to the consequences of the Indian argument. They had said essentially the same thing in their statement of 26 October 1959. However, they appraised the Indian forward movement in late 1961 as far more ambitious than that of summer 1959 and used the threat of retaliation in the east as part of their effort to deter Nehru from advances in the west.

The warnings failed to deter Nehru.* On the contrary, when publicized, they enabled his opponents to call for an even harder line. When, therefore, Nehru referred to the warnings in Parliament on 5 December, he was compelled to concede that non-diplomatic--that is, military--methods would not be ruled out to settle the border dispute.** But by late 1961, such a policy was already being implemented; the Chinese stick had the effect of creating greater internal pressures on Nehru to press forward even more vigorously.

* For example, New Delhi's response (note of 9 December), stated in effect that what the Chinese had done since 1956 in Ladakh, the Indians could do better in 1961.

** He said: "While pursuing diplomatic and other peaceful means, India is also preparing the ground for other methods to be employed....The statement that the government had issued orders to Indian army personnel not to fire unless fired upon is absolutely wrong. There are military orders to defend or attack, whichever the situation might demand." The Chinese later cited his remark on using "other methods" to demonstrate that New Delhi had switched over to a policy of military aggression.

Chinese Suggest Settlement "Formula": January - March 1962

Having refuted charges of "new" Chinese advances, demonstrated their awareness of Indian advances, and threatened retaliation, the Chinese leaders dropped their intense anti-Nehru propaganda assault. They once again tried to indicate to Nehru they had not slammed the door on a political settlement. Such a renewed approach apparently was motivated by the calculation that an overture might attain two goals; it might

(1) dilute Nehru's determination to forge ahead with an aggressive forward-post policy by introducing an element of indecision into Indian thinking and

(2) offset Soviet criticism of the CCP for antagonizing India at a time when Peiping was having some success in using the issue of Soviet "dictation" to turn against Khrushchev's anti-Albanian tirade at the 22nd CPSU congress.

They may also have been convinced that Nehru found it advantageous for his domestic and foreign policy to leave the border dispute "open...and to drag it out" (People's Daily editorial, 7 December 1961).

In January 1962, the Chinese suggested to the Burmese* their terms for a settlement. The Indians also indicated their position. In February, Chinese embassy officials in New Delhi informed leftist journalists of a "formula" which included joint Sino-Indian use of the Aksai Plain road, formation of a joint commission to demarcate the Ladakh border, and recognition of China of the McMahon Line. Responding to the Chinese probes, Indian leaders insisted on various forms of Chinese withdrawals.

* Home Minister Shastri indicated [redacted] that U Nu had been acting as "the middleman" in Sino-Indian exchanges on the matter of a formula for settlement. The Burmese premier had visited India in January.

Nehru told President Prasad on 10 March that Peiping must meet three conditions before negotiations can be started: (1) agree to vacate posts found to be in Indian-claimed territory after the December 1960 border experts' meeting, (2) admit that the Aksai Plain road traverses Indian territory in Ladakh and agree to construct an alternate route, and (3) publish the full text of the border experts' Report. Nehru said that these conditions had been communicated to the Chinese through informal diplomatic channels, and that he included in his formula permission for the Chinese to use the road "temporarily." Later in March, Foreign Secretary Desai responded to a Chinese overture made at the Geneva conference on Laos by repeating Nehru's demand that the Chinese withdraw from the Plain.

As a gesture to show some amenability to compromise, the Chinese at Geneva had added a new proposal to their formula. They had told Foreign Secretary Desai there that in addition to giving up their map claim to the NEFA, they might give up the map claim to part of Ladakh, retaining "only" the Aksai Plain--i.e., the area they occupied on the ground. Some Indian's apparently viewed this proposal as merely an opening gambit which reflected a basic Chinese willingness to accede to Nehru's demand for a significant pullback in Ladakh. When the new Chinese formula was reported to R. K. Nehru, he stated privately that by standing firm, the Indians would be able to compel the Chinese to cede some of the ground they held, enabling the prime minister to save face with the Opposition, the press, and the public.

However, the Chinese refused to withdraw from any territory on which their forces already stood. That is, they refused to accept Nehru's sine qua non for the start of negotiations. By 24 April, Desai reported that the Chinese, waiting for a reply, had made no further overtures in Geneva. By that time, the Chinese were compelled to make a new complaint--namely, that Indian checkposts recently had been established behind Chinese posts. Viewing this as the final Indian response to their "formula," they apparently abandoned the effort to wean Nehru away from a forward border policy.

Indians Flank Chinese Posts: April - July 1962

Criticism of Nehru's "soft" China policy in November 1961 and the Chinese propaganda attack on him made Nehru amenable to a new and bolder Indian army strategy--namely, moves around and behind Chinese forward posts in the west. The army intended to induce the Chinese to abandon the posts by isolating them from their bases. A direct assault on the posts was ruled out as risky.

Formulated in December 1961, the army plan envisaged operations in Ladakh by spring when weather conditions improved. The plan called for the establishment of five new Indian posts of 80-100 men each behind nine existing forward Chinese posts in Ladakh west of the 1956 Chinese claim line; the posts were to be manned all year round. Krishna Menon instructed the Indian air force to prepare a report on its capability to sustain a major air supply effort. (Two of the posts were to be set up close to the western part of the Aksai Plain road, but the Indians were unable to move anywhere near it in subsequent encounters.) Briefing cabinet subcommittee officials on the Nehru-approved plan in late December, Krishna Menon stated that the new posts would be positioned to cut off the supply lines of targeted Chinese posts; they were to cause the "starving out" of the Chinese, who would thereafter be replaced by Indian troops in the posts. These points would serve as advanced bases for Indian patrols assigned to probe close to the road.

Alert to the possibility of new Indian moves, the Chinese in late 1961 had warned the Indians to maintain the border status quo. Privately in January 1962, they began to threaten armed counteraction. The Chinese ambassador in Cambodia told his Burmese colleague in late January (at a time when Peiping was again probing for negotiations) that China still desired Chou-Nehru talks, but if India wanted to "bully, pressure, or fight" the Chinese about the disputed area, the Chinese would prove to be tough adversaries and were "quite willing to use troops to resist attack." This threat was communicated to the Indian ambassador in Phnom Penh, who apparently informed New Delhi. Together with the publicized warnings, it may have

contributed to Indian concern over a possible major Chinese military counteraction. The Indian High Commissioner in Karachi told an American embassy officer there on 2 February that although India "now" had military forces in Ladakh adequate to defeat Chinese troops in the area, they did not want to provoke a countermove which would result in a major war. India must be sure, he said, that all military moves in Ladakh must be "localized;" if the new operations could be "limited strictly to Ladakh," he concluded, the Chinese would find it difficult to reinforce their advanced units.

Acting on the assumption that moveups would not provoke a major clash, the Ministry of Defense ordered the army in early April to flank Chinese forward posts and induce a withdrawal to the 1954 line agreed to by implication in the Sino-Indian trade agreement. Two Indian battalions were ordered to move around and eventually "retake" the Chinese post at 35° 19' N - 78° 12' E in the Chip Chap River area--the post which they inconsistently claimed had been established either in spring or September 1961 and which the Chinese insisted had been in existence for a much longer time.

The first planned Indian flanking operation against a Chinese post was directed against this disputed post in mid-April. By 30 April, the Chinese formally charged that in the period from the 11th to the 27th, Indian troops had set up two posts, one southwest and one northwest of their post, and had maneuvered around it in groups numbering up to 120 men at times.*

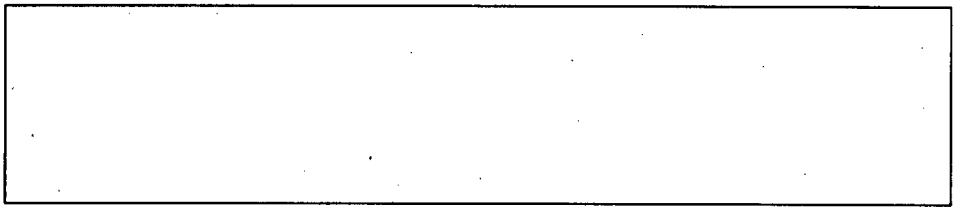
The Indian operation was confirmed by the American military attaché in New Delhi. He reported on 29 April that the Indian army had been ordered to use two battalions to take the Chinese

* The Chinese later charged (note of 28 May) that this flanking operation included the establishment of a third post approximately five miles southwest of their post as well as aggressive patrolling in areas immediately west, northwest, and southwest.

post "as soon as possible;" he commented that lack of additional information indicated exceptional Indian security measures concerning the move.

The Chinese reacted by ordering their troops to resume patrolling along the Aksai Plain border sector from the Karakoram Pass to the Kongka Pass. They warned that the operation might provoke their forces to fight. When an American embassy official on 2 May asked the director of the MEA's China Division precisely what had motivated the threatening Chinese note of 30 April, the latter disingenuously replied that perhaps it related to "present Pakistani pressure on India in the Security Council." However, in attempting to calm public fears regarding a possible Chinese offensive, Nehru declared in Parliament on 3 May that there really was "nothing alarming" in the Chinese note because it had been evoked by an Indian initiative: India had established a number of posts, some of which were "behind" the Chinese post, causing the Chinese some "annoyance"--"Hence their note." The Chinese leaders were provided with a further indication of Nehru's gradually increasing militancy when he stated publicly on 2 May that the Chinese note would not deter him from supporting the forward policy. "We will stay where we are" and are "prepared for them if they step up patrolling."

The border dispute was in this way transformed by the Indians from a primarily political quarrel to a serious military confrontation.



The Indians decided to go ahead despite Peiping's 30 April warning. On 1 May, Indian army headquarters with Nehru's approval ordered the immediate dispatch of 1800 troops to Ladakh from the Srinagar Command to serve as a supporting force in any fighting resulting from the Chip Chap operation; they were given a "fight-to-the-death" speech by Kaul and dispatched on 2 May. At the same time, Kaul wired instructions to those Indian border posts which were tactically well-positioned to "retaliate immediately" if the Chinese wipe out any of the new Indian forward posts.* Starting on 5 May, Indian troops began to move into the post at Dambuguru and on 6 May, active patrolling by troops of both sides was reported to American officials by the Chief of the General Staff, General Thapar.

More ominously than in April, the Chinese threatened to fight back. On 6 May, the Chinese chargé in New Delhi told an Indian contact that China, "shocked" by India's advances and establishment of new posts "at places deep within China's territory," has no alternative but to resist:

> I hope the Government of India realizes the consequences that are bound to follow. China wants no trouble, but if trouble is forced upon it, it will respond forcefully.

On 19 May, the chargé stated privately that Indian troops, moving into Chinese territory, sometimes in full view of Chinese border forces, seem to be "spoiling for a fight." He warned that Peiping

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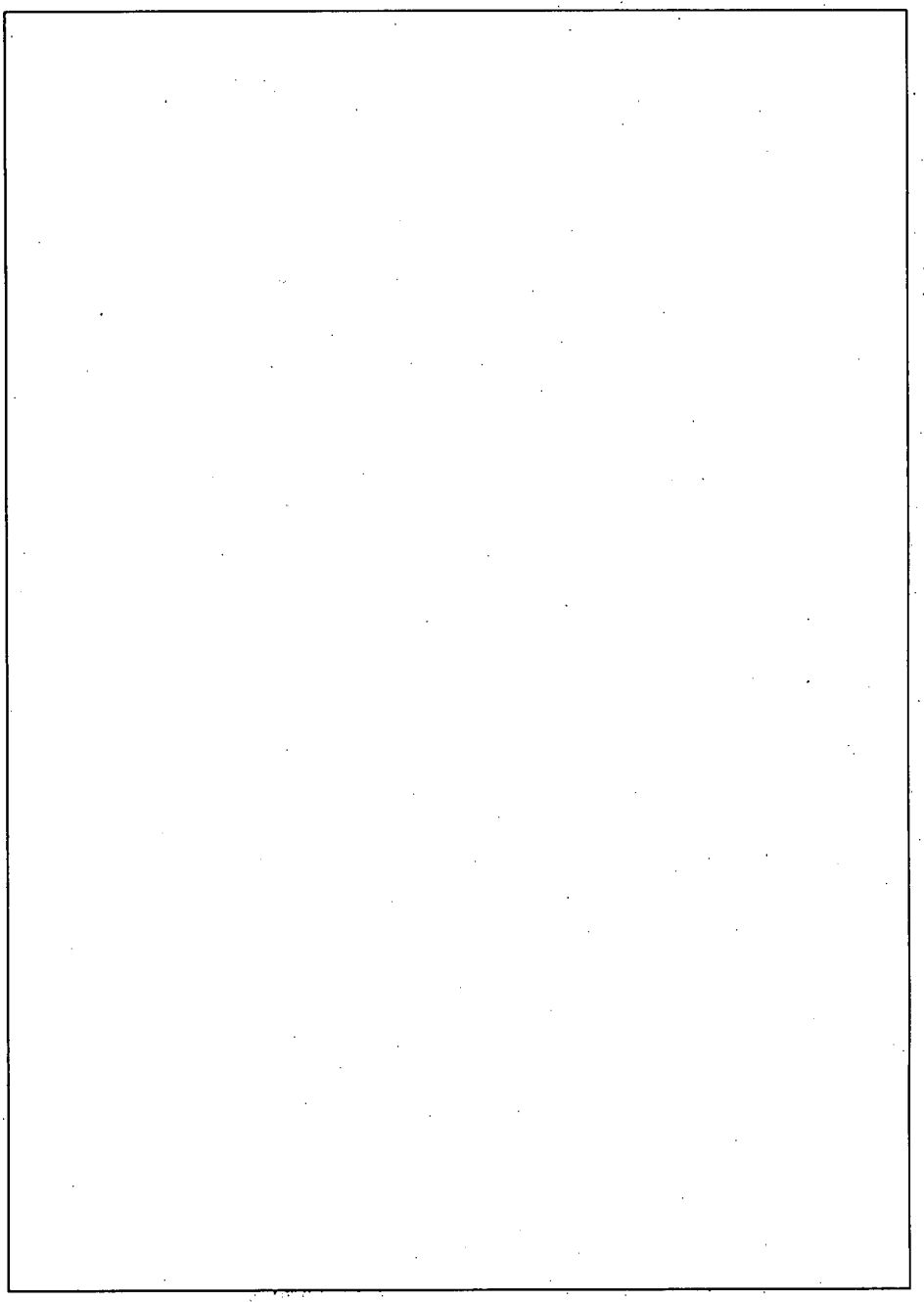
* The existence of Kaul's strike-back instructions was indirectly confirmed on 15 June by the MEA's China Division director when he informed an American embassy officer that if the Chinese were to push Indian troops from any post, Indian forces in other positions would retaliate at Indian strong points.

was aware New Delhi was preparing a major military drive. The Chinese had already protested formally (note of 11 May) that Indian troops on 2 May had set up another new post in the area south of Spanggur Lake approximately 2.5 miles from the Chinese post at Jechiung (Jechitung), that two Indian soldiers had fired at the Chinese post on 5 May, and that "very serious consequences" would have resulted if Chinese troops had not been alert, cool-headed, and restrained. This Chinese note was the first since late August 1959 in which they had charged one of their posts had been fired upon. On 19 May, the Chinese demanded that Indian troops which had moved across the McMahon Line into Longju in late April must be withdrawn, warning that "otherwise the Chinese Government will not stand idly by." They refused to view Nehru's proposal (14 May) for a mutual withdrawal in Ladakh on the basis of each other's map claims as anything but a diversionary political move; they warned him (note of 2 June) that it was unacceptable, requiring a one-sided (Chinese) withdrawal and in fact intended to conceal India's continuing drive "in setting up military strong points on Chinese territory...a border clash may touch off at any moment." That is, they indicated they would be guided in their decisions by Indian military advances more than by Indian political statements.

Possibly in May and probably in June, Indian advances convinced the Chinese leaders that they should begin planning for a major action to clear out the new Indian positions. There is some evidence that active planning in June resulted in practical steps taken in preparation for eventual military action.



Throughout June, however, the Chinese avoided moving against any of the new Indian posts, They apparently desired no clash with Indian forces at the time despite clear indications of New Delhi's intentions.

Chinese Encircle Galwan Post: July 1962

Chinese "self-restraint," repeatedly expressed in notes with increasing frequency since the mid-April Indian moveups, was motivated throughout May and June primarily by Peiping's fear of a Chinese Nationalist invasion across the Taiwan Strait. Chen Yi reflected the Chinese leaders' anxiety regarding the "threat of aggression" by the Nationalists in his 29 May interview with Japanese newsmen; this anxiety was reflected in other ways, including the appraisal of the Chinese Communist ambassador in Stockholm who informed his embassy staff in mid-June that if the Nationalists attacked at the same time as the Indians, China would be in a "bad situation." Statements made at the Sino-American talks in Warsaw to Ambassador Wang Ping-nan on 23 June and by President Kennedy to newsmen on the 27th apparently dispelled these fears. Security precautions in the Canton area were eased in early July and on 19 July, Chen Yi, during an interview in Geneva, three times referred to the American "assurance" given to Wang Ping-nan that the US would not support a Nationalist assault against the mainland, describing the assurance as "not bad." He did not comment on Khrushchev's 2 July statement.*

The Chinese leaders, no longer rattled by the prospect of a two-front war, turned with restored confidence to counter the Indian advances. Their first major move of 1962 was in direct response to a new Indian move in Ladakh. They formally charged (memorandum of 8 July) that about 20 Indian troops on 6 July moved into the Galwan River Valley, attempting to establish "a new strong-point" and "to cut off the only rear route" of a Chinese post

* During the first ten days of July, the Chinese leaders tried publicly to suggest a definite Soviet commitment to assist them militarily in the event of a Nationalist attack, but their actual estimate of Khrushchev's intention in making his 2 July statement was that the Soviet leader hoped to make a political gain (among foreign Communists) without making a military commitment. At least one Chinese official later indicated privately that Khrushchev's hypocrisy was decisively proven by his failure to comment until after American assurances had been given to Peiping.

located at the lower reaches of the river. On 9 July, they displayed considerable pique, complaining (People's Daily editorial) that Nehru three times in late June had "boasted" in Parliament about India's new posts set up behind Chinese positions and that Indian officials are "triumphantly bragging about the aggressive activities of Indian troops nibbling away at China's borders." Implying that they would deny the Indians any further opportunity to continue flanking moves with impunity, the editorial warned:

> It seems that the Indian Government has taken China's restraint as weakness. But the Indian authorities are committing a big blunder if they think that the Chinese border units will submit to the armed Indian advance, that they will renounce their sacred duty of defending their fatherland and give up the right of self-defense when subjected to unprovoked attacks....
>
> It is still not too late to rein in on the brink of the precipice. The Indian authorities had better think three times about this matter.

The Chinese followed up their warning with a note (10 July), detailing a series of Indian flanking moves against six Chinese posts and citing Nehru's 20 June statement in Parliament as proof of Indian provocation.* At the same time, they moved on the ground. On the morning of 10 July, Chinese troops began to advance on a small Indian unit at 78° 38' E - 34° 40' N from the east, south, and west, positioning

* In their note, the Chinese selected Nehru's remarks which most strikingly supported their argument: "In his speech in Parliament on June 20, 1962, Nehru unwittingly let out the truth. He stated that to say that China had made 'a fresh intrusion' was 'hardly correct' and that it was due to the Indian movements 'sometimes going behind Chinese positions' and 'largely due to the movements on our (Indian) side that the Chinese had also to make movements.'"

themselves at a distance of 20 yeards from the new post. According to Krishna Menon's report to the Cabinet Defense Subcommittee on 12 July, the 20-man Indian unit had been ordered to open fire if the Chinese advanced any closer. Nevertheless, the Chinese had the superior force and could have destroyed the post without much trouble.

This three-sided encirclement apparently reflected the decision of the Chinese leaders to impress Nehru that they would now fight to stop his forward policy. Reluctance to fight, they apparently believed, had encouraged the Indians to make new advances and new public boasts; the Indians had not been deterred and China's prestige was being damaged. Verbal warnings had to be made real warnings by moving troops on the ground. Actually, the Chinese stopped short of launching an attack. They apparently calculated that flanking pressure at points of their own choosing would not be a risky policy. Chinese superiority in men and arms would be ensured, and pressure provided them with more control over the situation than an outright attack. They apparently believed that the numerically inferior Indian force would be withdrawn from the Galwan Valley post.

However, the Indian leaders viewed a pull-back under the circumstances as detrimental, providing the Chinese with a bloodless victory. They began to supply the post by air and moved more troops into the valley. They had no other plan of action for breaking the Chinese encirclement. Ambassador Galbraith received the impression from the MEA's China Division Director, S. Sinha, on 13 July that the "strategy" of the Indian leaders was to hope that the Chinese would go away. Displaying some anxiety, Sinha stated that if Indian troops opened fire, many Indian posts in the western sector would also be vulnerable to Chinese retaliatory action. The Chinese tried to induce a withdrawal on 13 July by pulling their encircling force back 200 yards from the post, opening a line of retreat along the supply trail. At the same time (on the evening of the 13th), they threatened the Indians with the consequences of any rash action: the Indian government should give "serious consideration to the danger of the situation and not play with fire; he who plays with fire will burn himself."

Within the Indian leadership, the views of the military prevailed with increasing vigor over those of the civilian chiefs. Nehru and his political advisers found themselves under stronger pressure than before to stand pat at Galwan and to continue the policy of advances elsewhere in the western sector.

Indian army leaders planned to continue the moveups throughout the summer, calculating that the Chinese would not react on a large scale and that any small-scale reaction could be localized. Thus Chinese encirclement of the Galwan post did not change Indian strategy; on the contrary, Kaul privately expressed confidence that the Chinese were not operating from strength. He told Ambassador Galbraith on 16 July that the Indian army viewed the Chinese as set in a "mood" of weakness and that Indian policy was to take maximum advantage of this mood by establishing even more new posts. In contrast to the policy "ambiguities" of a year or two ago, Kaul continued, the Indian army "is not now in a mood to be pushed around." His remark about "ambiguities" was directed implicitly against Krishna Menon, who had never been enthusiastic about a forward policy and was only driven to concur with the moves of spring-summer 1962 under threat of being called "soft" on the Chinese as a result of his early contacts with them. Menon was made even more vulnerable to criticism after an Indian advance in the Chip Chap River area resulted in a sharp firefight on 21 July; Nehru himself was in effect compelled to approve Kaul's request that Indian troops on the border be given the discretion to open fire. Prior to the incident, border units had been instructed to fire only in self-defense, although Kaul and the army staff had been seeking such approval from Nehru and Menon for several months.

The failure of the Galwan encirclement to deter the Indians from their forward policy was indicated to the Chinese leaders in several ways, the most open being a 17 July Times of India article. Displaying lofty disregard for Chinese sensibilities, it stated in cavalier tones:

> What has happened in the Galwan Valley is the consequence of the firm policy decision by India nearly ten months ago. The process of extending our physical presence on what we

regard as our territory was begun after due consideration of the risk involved. Even at a much earlier stage than last week, the Chinese should have realized that physical confrontation between troops from either side was inevitable. We intend to go ahead with this process. If the Chinese accept this unpleasant fact, there may yet be a way out through negotiations after mutual withdrawal from the disputed area in Ladakh. /emphasis supplied/

This was tantamount to asking the Chinese leaders to permit Indian troops to push back PLA border forces. The Chinese maintained their positions around the Galwan Valley post and moved elsewhere in the western sector beyond the 1956 claim line up to the line they had shown Indian border experts in 1960. They warned New Delhi against making "a fatal mistake if it should think China is flabby and can be bullied" (note of 16 July) and "a wrong assessment of the situation," gambling with the possibility of "a war on two fronts facing China" (People's Daily article, 21 July). In short, their actions and warnings in July were more ominous than previously as they improved their tactical positions and as the threat from Taiwan receded.

Civilian Leaders Revive Negotiations Probe: July 1962

The Galwan Valley encirclement pointed up the logistic capability and the tactical facility with which the PLA could move to hold Indian posts as hostages. The encirclement had frightened certain key Indian civilian leaders, particularly R. K. Nehru and Krishna Menon. They worried about the vulnerability of all Indian border posts; as defense minister, Menon worried about his position and prestige. A successful Chinese attack against even one of the posts would inflame the border area and create new opportunities for Menon's domestic opponents to bring him down.

[redacted]

Even before the Galwan Valley incident, these Indian civilian officials had begun to recognize that the Chinese had established their forces in the Aksai Plain so securely that the army could not realistically expect them to evacuate holdings there as a prerequisite for talks.* R. K. Nehru had approached the Chinese chargé in New Delhi on 29 and 30 June and was advised by him that China would prefer that preliminary talks take place in Geneva, using the 14-nation conference on Laos as a "cover" for talks. The Indian Secretary General was also reported in early July to have been pressing the prime minister with memoranda on the matter of an overall border settlement; at the same time, Menon was working with the Secretary General in trying to prod other civilian officials into concurring in an effort to seek such a settlement.

There was no real duplicity in the Chinese action of responding to R. K. Nehru's initiative at a time when their forces were primed to move against the new Indian post in the Galwan Valley. Ever since the Chou-Nehru talks of April 1960, the Chinese leaders without exception had been receptive to any high-level Indian exploratory approach to talks. Only after they had ascertained that the Indian representative was stating the same old position--that is, Chinese withdrawal as a precondition for negotiations--did they act to reject an Indian overture. Thus in early July, the Chinese responded by returning Ambassador Pan Tzu-li, who had been in Peiping since January, to New Delhi to make a personal determination of Nehru's willingness to begin talks. Nehru advised the Cabinet Defense Subcommittee meeting on 12 July that during his meeting with Pan, the latter had suggested Sino-Indian talks be initiated. Nehru told the meeting

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* Such a precondition had been raised in New Delhi's note of 13 March 1962 in the following manner: "The withdrawal of Chinese from Indian territory, into which they have intruded since 1957, in order to restore the status quo, shall be an essential step for the creation of a favorable climate for any negotiations between the two governments..." The Chinese viewed this stipulation as "in fact tantamount to the summary rejection of negotiations" (note of 22 March).

that this suggestion would be turned down because the Chinese were capable of making further border advances under the guise of talks. President Radhakrishnan concurred, maintaining that no grounds for talks existed as long as the Chinese persisted in their refusal to withdraw first. Home Minister Shastri urged continuation of a "firm" policy: territory not actually in Chinese possession, he said, should now be occupied by Indian troops. The only dissenter, Menon, replied that the Chinese were complaining of Indian flanking moves precisely because of the "firm" policy. He informed the Subcommittee that Ambassador Pan Tzu-li had discussed the matter of talks privately with him as well as Nehru and that he, Menon, saw no harm in beginning discussions with Chinese officials.

Cooperating with R. K. Nehru, Krishna Menon continued to act on his own initiative and without majority cabinet concurrence. The talks he began with Chen Yi in Geneva in late July had not been discussed with the prime minister prior to Menon's departure for the conference, according to a reliable source. Only after arriving in Geneva did Menon cable Nehru; he received only reluctant approval to talk with Chen coupled with a warning to make no commitments to the Chinese foreign minister.*

The approach to Chen Yi was doomed to failure because Menon had no authority to present a new Indian position. He repeated New Delhi's view on Chinese "occupation" of Indian territory, refusing to say whether talks could begin prior to Chinese withdrawals. Chen made no concession, but finally suggested that neither country should call the other an "aggressor." Menon refused to comply on the grounds that he had no authority to issue a joint communique. Chen then took a tough line with Menon; he was reliably reported to have been "threatening," and Menon was "somewhat shaken" by this display of anger. The Indian defense minister persisted in his efforts despite this setback of 24 July. He tried to persuade High Commissioner Malcolm MacDonald in Geneva to

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*Later, on 29 July, Nehru characteristically accepted responsiblity for the actions of his long-time friend, publicly claiming that he had personally asked Menon to meet with Chen.

"mediate" the dispute on the latter's trip to Peiping in the fall; MacDonald refused. Following his return to New Delhi on the 25th, Menon recommended that India's 26 July note to China avoid raising the withdrawal precondition for talks. The note in fact avoided the precondition and stated only that "as soon as tensions have eased and an appropriate climate is created," India would be ready to negotiate.

Thus despite internal opposition, Menon in effect had established a flexible line.* He had advised cabinet members at a meeting on 25 July not only to repudiate the withdrawal precondition as unrealistic, but also to seek a settlement based on the Chinese claim line of 1956--the only way toward a peaceful solution. This view corresponded precisely with the Chinese position. Menon had persuaded Nehru to accept this view prior to dispatching the 26 July letter to the Chinese.

For a period of about three weeks, Nehru defended Menon's line. However, he viewed it less as a real step toward a settlement than as a device to

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* The Times of India on 31 July carried an article suggesting that Menon's desire for a negotiated settlement was no longer an MEA secret, the country was ready for such negotiations, Menon had been "encouraged" by his talk with Chen Yi in Geneva, and "further probes" to find a mutually acceptable formula were underway. As indicated earlier, Menon had not been "encouraged" but rather frightened by Chen's threats at Geneva during their 24 July meeting. However, when he returned to New Delhi on the 25th, he exploited the intransigence of Chen to strengthen his own argument that India should modify its withdrawal precondition.

The Minister of State for External Affairs, Lakshmi Menon, complained privately on 12 August that the government had "reversed" its tough line on the border dispute and that "our wonderful Minister Menon is behind the change."

buy time to gain a military standstill on the ground in Ladakh which would reduce the risk of clashes; meanwhile, India would be able over the next five years to strengthen its positions in Ladakh. Trying to buttress his argument for a peaceful settlement, Menon reported at a full cabinet meeting on 1 August that the Indian military position in Ladakh was "untenable," that the army had already pushed its plan of establishing new posts beyond the limits of military safety, that the Chinese were steadily bringing up supplies and equipment, and that the Indians would never establish a supply line in the Aksai Plain even roughly comparable to China's. He then made a striking estimate regarding the consequences of a major border clash: Indian forward posts would be wiped out immediately and the Chinese could, if they desired, push the Indians far beyond their 1960 claim without serious resistance. Menon's sobering remarks prompted the prime minister--whose ignorance of military matters made him dependent on Menon's estimate--to state that it was necessary "now" for India "to change" diplomatic tactics and to seek a de facto military truce based on the current border situation. Nehru called for "a complete military disengagement" so that fighting could not possibly begin--a line Chou En-lai had been insisting on since late 1959. Once this was accomplished, "discussions" on demarcation of the border could go on "for five or six years." Regarding the matter of domestic criticism such a drastic policy change would provoke, Nehru declared that it would be nothing compared to that which would be unleashed following a military catastrophe. In short, he and Menon showed considerable foresight by not underestimating Chinese military capabilities on the border.

This sober estimate was not shared by Indian army leaders. The Chief of the Army General Staff, Thapar, denied privately on 4 August that the army had given Menon such an alarming estimate of the military situation. Thapar said the army report merely called the Indian position "over-extended" and cautioned against setting up new forward posts "until" logistic support could be assured, but did not predict a military disaster if fighting should break out. General Kaul made almost precisely the same criticism of Menon's presentation on 5 August. He and other army leaders apparently continued to believe that the Chinese were in a "mood" of weakness and that the forward border policy should be sustained.

Despite such opposition, Nehru tried to press forward along Menon's line favoring negotiations, but the Chinese, too, made his progress difficult. They were willing to begin negotiations but, unfortunately for Nehru, they were obsessively concerned with the possibility of Indian duplicity and with avoiding any impression of weakness. They insisted publicly and without equivocation that there should be no preconditions.* Such explicitness on the part of the Chinese in effect nullified their call for discussions "as soon as possible" (note of 4 August) and made meaningless their lateral move in early August to persuade a top Burmese foreign office official to gain New Delhi's accession to Burma as a meeting place for immediate Chou-Nehru talks. Nehru had been waiting for a straw to grasp--i.e., a modest Chinese conciliatory gesture indicating a small degree of willingness to make a concession to the Indian position; he did not find one, nor did the Chinese indicate privately to him that one could be found. At the very least, the Chinese could have refrained from insisting on "no preconditions," remaining as silent on the point as the Indian note of 26 July. That they refused to make even this gesture suggests either (1) they were unaware of the civilian-army policy dichotomy in the Indian leadership or (2) they chose to appraise it as irrelevant so long as Indian troops continued to move across the Chinese claim line. They concentrated their attention on the latter consideration. That is, the fact that Indian troops were still positioned to cross, and were in fact crossing, the Chinese line implied an Indian intention to compel the Chinese to make a concession; as viewed by the Chinese leaders, such compulsion had to be explicitly criticized, and the worst response would have been to appear conciliatory. Since Nehru found no softening of the Chinese position in Peiping's note of 4 August, he had no choice (given domestic pressure on him) but to note that its tone was "rather disappointing" (speech to Parliament on 6 August).

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*Chen Yi stated publicly on 3 August that, regarding a Chinese withdrawal from Ladakh, "no force in the world could oblige us to do something of this kind" and Peiping declared (note of 4 August) that preconditions must be dropped.

As word of Menon's new flexible line spread in Parliament and among journalists, Nehru was forced into a series of retreats in a last effort to defend it. Speaking to Parliament on 13 August, Nehru tried to conceal the fact that the Menon-originated 26 July note had used language which implied an Indian willingness eventually to accept the 1956 claim line; on 14 August, he tried to justify talks with the Chinese by asserting it was "childish" to insist on a withdrawal precondition and went on to take refuge in the distinction between "talks" and "negotiations," saying that "talks" were an essential preliminary to negotiations. On the same day, he demanded Parliamentary approval for "freedom of action" so that "we may--I do not say we will--have some talks." The Opposition in Parliament at the time had no real alternative to giving Nehru this "freedom of action," as their earlier advice to evict Chinese troops "by force" was based on an unrealistic view of India's military capability. Yet uncertainty regarding Menon's motivations and uneasiness fed by suspicions that civilian foreign policy advisers might cede a large part of Ladakh continued increasingly to operate as factors restricting the prime minister's maneuverability. The small group of journalists and Parliamentarians who professed to be specialists on India's China policy gradually compelled Nehru to retreat further; on 22 August, he hinted in Parliament that talks with the Chinese now would be formally conditioned on his earlier withdrawal stipulation. An MEA official later told an American embassy officer in New Delhi that certain "intended ambiguities," which had been written into India's 26 July note in order to induce preliminary talks, had to be "elaborated" in Part Two of the 22 August note; one such elaboration was the raising again of the withdrawal precondition. Domestic politicians and journalists in effect had assisted the army leaders in destroying Menon's flexible line.*

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* His friend, Nehru, finally had been compelled to act on the proposition that it was more important (as prime minister) to be realistic about domestic politics than Sino-Indian politics. When, in mid-August, R. K. Nehru wrote a memorandum to Nehru urging him to offer publicly to go to Peiping to begin talks with Chou En-lai, Nehru told his foreign policy adviser that the proposal did not make sense in the current domestic political scene. Nehru complained that the Indian

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In retrospect, R. K. Nehru's and Menon's increasing awareness that Indian posts could not be moved any farther forward and were in fact highly vulnerable to Chinese attack spurred them to press the prime minister for negotiations. They recognized that a military catastrophe was probable and that such a development would hurt them politically. Nehru, too, apparently was convinced that a policy of military disengagement rather than military advance was essential for the security of Indian posts, but he could not argue convincingly for a flexible policy. He was driven back toward the position favored by army leaders by the pressure of domestic reaction; as he fell back, he was given no comfort by the Chinese who refused to make even a token concession by employing new--or avoiding the same old--language in their 4 August note. Mao and his lieutenants had drawn on their favorite colors--black and white--in appraising the 26 July Indian note and, against a background of Indian advances, they could see only the black.

If the civilian leaders had been permitted to pursue their course, the border dispute might have been turned away in August 1962 from a military clash and toward a political settlement. However, in addition to Chinese intrasigence and domestic opposition, a majaor military development on the border in the east at last locked the door which had just been closed on such a settlement.

The Dhola (Che Dong) - Thagla Ridge Incident: September - October 1962

As Indian advances continued, the Chinese leaders apparently were confirmed in their appraisal of Indian notes as merely diplomatic devices providing cover for a military policy. They viewed the civilian leaders' approach increasingly as motivated entirely by duplicity rather than any sincerity for talks. Distrust of the civilian leaders was deepened by what they considered a deliberate effort to conceal Indian advances under a cover of MEA distortions of developments on the border; they specified (note of 27 August) New Delhi's attempt

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press had to a "considerable extent" tied the hands of Indian diplomats in dealing with the Chinese. Nehru concluded that he wanted a military disengagement but differed with R. K. Nehru who was insisting it was urgent to begin negotiations for a settlement immediately.

to cover up the fact that three Indian patrols had encircled a Chinese post at Pangong Lake by claiming the Chinese troops were "located close to the supply line of the Indian post." Their suspicion of Indian duplicity clearly had been confirmed by Nehru's own admission (in Parliament on 22 August) that on the border question, India was following a "dual policy," intending to make gains "by political pressure, military pressure, or other pressures."

Prior to September, Chinese counteraction to Indian advances in 1961 and 1962 had taken place with few exceptions in the western sector.* They had held strong counteraction in the eastern sector in reserve, as their basic negotiating position was premised on Chinese de facto acceptance of the McMahon Line. With the exception of Indian moves into Longju in June 1962, they did not protest the establishment of new Indian positions in the east until the incident at Dhola (Che Dong) in early September.

For the first time since November 1960, the Chinese engaged an Indian military detachment on the eastern sector when, on 8 and 9 September, approximately 300 Chinese took positions opposite the Dhola (Che Dong) post manned by about 50 Assam Rifles. The matter of just when the Indians had established the Dhola post is important. The Chinese were remarkably vague (note of 16 September), stating that the Indians had moved into the area "recently," and later backed

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* By far the greater part of Chinese and Indian moves between 1961 and 1962 had occurred in the west. The Chinese had established new posts in this sector in July and August 1962 to block the Indians; their posts proliferated almost in the same measure as those of their opponents to the south. In July, the Chinese had insisted that "since spring 1962," 15 Indian posts had been set up across the claim line in the west, and they pinpointed these on a published map (in People's Daily, 14 July); for their part, however, in September the Indians pointed to new Chinese holdings, the number of which was minimized by Krishna Menon (in Parliament on 3 September) as merely "tactical dispositions" constituting a "distribution of personnel into one, two, three or four posts" which indicated "no further advance into our territory," but was expanded by his critic, Lakshmi Menon, to "30...since May 1962" (in Parliament on the



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away from this position, conceding (note of 3 October) that the Indians had entered as early as "last June." Thus, although the Indians apparently had set up the post in June, the Chinese did not decide to move against it until 8 September. This suggests that the original Indian move had not provoked the Chinese, but rather had provided them with a pretext to be used at some time in the future to warn the Indians that continued advances in the west would be met by Chinese action in the east. That is, the Chinese may have intended their September move against the Dhola post as a clear sign that China could play the game in the east which India was playing in the west.**

Indian establishment of the Dhola post was part of a major planned advance in the east laid on by army leaders in the spring of 1962. On 14 May, the Director of Military Operations had ordered the Eastern Command of the army to establish 25 additional posts along the McMahon Line. Indian army troops had moved into many of these posts in June, including the post at Dhola. Considerable anger was generated on both sides after the Chinese insisted in September that the post was north of the McMahon Line and the Indians declared it was south of their version of the Line. The original 1914 map, upon which McMahon had drawn his line and which the Chinese used to support their case, was very small in scale and imprecise on the matter of the Tibet-Bhutan-NEFA trijunction where Dhola was located. Responding to Chinese charges, the Indians (note of 17 September) claimed that Dhola was on the southern side of the Line; subsequently, the dispute centered on pinpointing the exact location of the trijunction area Line.

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same day). The scene of greatest military activity between the two sides in the west had been the Chip Chap and Galwan areas.

** The Chinese had threatened to play just such a game earlier. The Peiping People's Daily "Observer" commented on 21 July:

> If the Indian troops, according to the logic of the Indian side, could launch at will large-scale invasion of Chinese territory, occupy what they regard as their territory and change by force the status quo along the border, then, it may be asked, have not the Chinese troops every reason to enter

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The Chinese rejected the Indian attempt to insert the watershed principle as the determining factor in the case. They stated (note of 6 October) that according to both the map on which McMahon had drawn his line originally in 1914 and the Indian official map of 1959, Dhola would be north of the Line. They also declared that Indian border experts in 1960 had agreed that the Line's western extremity was 27° 57' N - 91° 40' E, placing Dhola well north of the Line. The Indians, on the other hand, centered their case on the Thagla Ridge in the trijunction area. In their view, the Line should in fact correspond with the Ridge line, and because the Chinese had come down across the Ridge, it followed that they had come down across the McMahon Line simultaneously. They reminded Peiping (note of 10 October) that the Indian border experts in 1960 had urged the Chinese experts to exchange maps "on a very large scale" in order to provide the fullest details and that this proposal had been rejected by the Chinese, who provided a map on the "diminutive scale of 1" = 80 miles." Peiping's reluctance to accept this proposal, the Indian note declared, indicated satisfaction that the boundary "ran along the ridge." As the quarrel developed, no fewer than three versions of the border near the trijunction were posited, two by the Chinese (depicted in People's Daily, 8 and 11 October) and one by the Indians (note of 10 October). Actually, Dhola was north of the McMahon Line by at least 400 yards as claimed by the Chinese and it was only by using the watershed principle--that is, the crest of the Thagla Ridge as the natural boundary--that the Indians could argue the matter credibly.

The Indian leaders, convinced that the Chinese military force had crossed the Thagla Ridge to encircle the advanced post at Dhola, decided that the Chinese should be compelled to pull back regardless of all risks. Home Minister Shastri, acting head of the government in the absence of the prime minister and the finance minister, told Ambassador Galbraith on 13 September that the Chinese would have to be "thrown out." He repeated this statement publicly on 16 September. On 17 September, Indian troops threatened to open fire on Chinese troops at the Che Jao Bridge south of the

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and station themselves on the Chinese territory south of the McMahon Line which is now under India's forcible occupation?

Thagla Ridge near the post, and on 20 and 21 September, they attacked the Chinese, apparently killing one officer at the Bridge and surrounding a small detachment in the vicinity. The situation worsened as the Chinese hit back on the 22nd; the Indians attacked again on the 24th. Foreign Secretary Desai told Ambassador Galbraith on 25 September that troops under the Eastern Command were now under orders to shoot when necessary; accordingly, he continued, they have been shooting and the Chinese have been "responding," leaving a handful of dead and wounded on both sides. Firing subsided by 29 September, when an MEA official claimed the Chinese had been completely cleared from the Che Jao Bridge. By that time, however, Indian advocates of the policy of expulsion had become dominant in the leadership and Krishna Menon, who had opposed the policy prior to his departure for New York on 17 September, left with the premonition that full-scale fighting would contribute to the cause of those Indians who desired his political death.* Nevertheless, he had no practical recourse but to join other Indian leaders who were denouncing Chinese actions openly.

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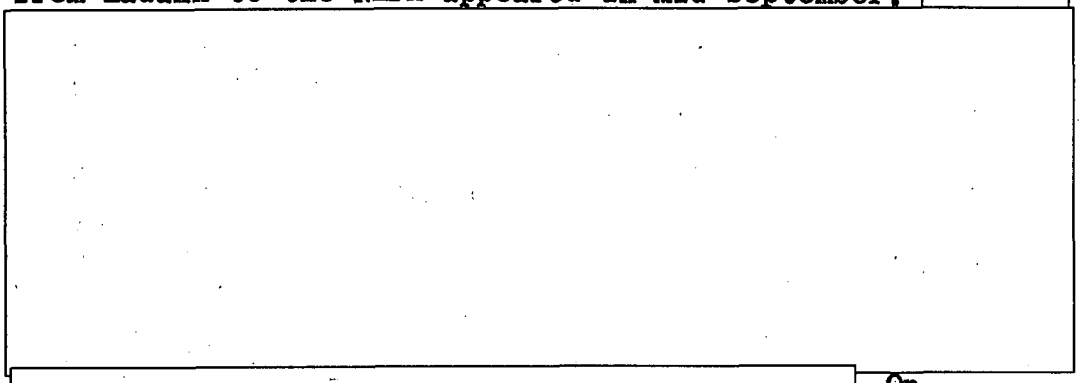
* Menon apparently was aware that he was approaching a morass in which his political prestige would stand or fall on the ability of Indian troops to beat Chinese troops--a morass he had tried for months to stay clear of because he was convinced that a major Chinese assault would in fact wipe out advanced Indian posts and, as a political reverberation, destroy him as the "guilty defense minister." Lakshmi Menon quoted him as saying in a state of anguish in mid-September that "Now my enemies will attack me, but I cannot reply because Nehru was personally responsible for all decisions regarding the NEFA and had refused to concentrate as much force there as in Ladakh." Such was his fury that he hit out even at his old friend.

Chinese preparations for major operations against Indian posts apparently were stepped up. The first hint of a general shift in emphasis of military activity from Ladakh to the NEFA appeared in mid-September.



On 29 September, air transport flights to Lhasa and Hotien were started and continued on almost a daily basis. Eight transports eventually were involved in this operation that probably served to resupply forward elements with certain critical items.

The Chinese continued to prepare the Tibetan populace for a Sino-Indian clash. Tibetans were being told by the Chinese in the period from 17-23 September that Indian troops had unlawfully intruded in Tibet at many points and that they (the Chinese) would recover them soon. Indian troops were said to be no match for the Chinese army. The Indians also reported on 24 September that a large number of vehicles carrying stores and equipment continued to arrive at forward posts in the western sector, but interpreted these moves as indicating the Chinese were stocking their posts "for the winter."

Chinese warnings increasingly implied that they would be compelled to use force following the firefight near Dhola in early September. New Delhi was warned that "shooting and even shelling are no child's play; he who plays with fire eventually will be consumed by fire" (note of 13 September) and "flames of war may break out" at Dhola where "Chinese troops will necessarily defend themselves resolutely" (note of 21 September). To defend against Indian "nibbling of Chinese territory," Chinese border forces were ordered to resume patrolling and set up new military posts in the middle and eastern sectors (note of 21 September).

The Chinese at this time began to cite certain Indian acts which later served as justification for attack. For example, for the first time in several years they declared that one of their officers had been killed (note of 21 September). This was a significant admission, as Peiping had avoided mentioning that four Chinese soldiers had been killed in the firefight in the Chip Chap area earlier in September. The Chinese also introduced the line that the Chinese people were burning with "great indignation" over the Indian actions on the border and that New Delhi "cannot now say that warning was not served in advance" (People's Daily, 22 September). Moving to arouse a warlike attitude among Tibetans and PLA forces, Chinese authorities in Lhasa on 29 September held a memorial service for their casualties--the "five martyrs" of the Dhola fighting. The political commissar for the Tibet Military Region, Tan Kuansan, declared that fighting was continuing, the situation was worsening, and predicted that Tibetans and all officers and men of the frontier guard units "will shed blood in order to defend the sacred territory of the motherland."

The Dhola confrontation stimulated Indian army leaders to press Nehru to approve an increase in strength and to bring pressure on the Chinese in the eastern sector. A new special corps was established on 4 October and its new commander, Lt. Gen. Kaul, departed for Tezpur headquarters on the 5th to direct operations against the Chinese. Following creation of the special corps--a move under active consideration ever since the early September incident--Nehru and Menon on 6 October approved an army headquarters plan for encircling Chinese troops in the Dhola area. The plan was reliably reported to have been conceived as a flanking operation, providing for a slow forward movement of Indian troops over a period of weeks and for crossing into the Chinese side of the McMahon Line, if necessary.* In the

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* The army planned to make no official admission of this as policy, and so far as possible, any crossing by Indian troops of the Line was to be denied. The Indian air force had already violated the Line a number of times, and it was reportedly under orders to continue to do so when necessary.

army's view, India was "now" committed to fight the Chinese all the way even if this meant full-scale war. Foreign Secretary Desai told an American embassy officer on 6 October that a steadily mounting "squeeze" was being applied by the Indian troops to the Chinese at Dhola and emphasized that the Chinese must be ousted.* The immediate result of this Indian initiative was the 9-10 October clash near the Che Jao Bridge, during which, the Chinese claimed, 33 Chinese and 6 Indian soldiers were killed--the biggest and bloodiest clash on the Sino-Indian border as of that date. The Chinese declared that another one of their "frontier guards" was killed in a renewed firefight in the area on 16 October.

Army officers continued to insist on a more forceful policy. Krishna Menon on 16 October finally accepted a proposal, long pushed by the Indian army, particularly by Kaul, that it should be official government policy to evict the Chinese from the Aksai Plain as well as the NEFA. Menon agreed to present this proposal personally to Nehru on the 17th and, upon the prime minister's approval, the Indian army general staff would be permitted, he concluded, to formalize its operational plan for the entire border. Nehru apparently agreed; he informed Ambassador Galbraith on the 18th that the Indian intention to keep steady pressure on the Chinese now extends to Ladakh. The army general staff estimated that two or three years would be required for the army to implement fully this long-range operational plan; the forward posts constituted only a beginning. Nehru may well have had Indian army officers as well as Parliamentarians in mind when he informed the Ambassador of his discontent with those who had described efforts to avoid a real war as appeasement. Nehru and Menon apparently continued to refuse to permit the army to

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* The Indians preferred to move the Chinese out with threats rather than force. The Director of the China Section, MEA, told an American embassy officer on 11 October that the Indian leaders were trying to give minimum publicity to developments while applying military pressure in order to provide the Chinese with the opportunity to withdraw "without loss of face." He deplored press headlining of military developments, as such publicity undercut this government policy.

use tactical air support for ground operations because they feared this would provoke the counter-use of Chinese aircraft and thus increase the tempo of the fighting and extend its scope.* As late as 19 October, just before the Chinese attack, Indian army headquarters is reliably reported to have opposed Menon's decision to tentatively pull army units out of the Galwan Valley, complaining that the defense minister was really motivated by a desire for appeasement rather than by any military considerations.

The caution some Indian army officers and many Indian civilian officials had shown in spring and summer 1962 seemed to have fallen away by fall. In speaking of moving against Chinese forces in the Dhola area, army and civilian officials in October discounted the probability of retaliatory action on any significant scale. For example, when, on 13 October, Foreign Secretary Desai confirmed to Ambassador Galbraith the army plan to "evict the Chinese from the NEFA," Desai stated that he did not believe the Chinese would attempt to reinforce heavily their troops on the Thagla Ridge in the face of "determined" Indian action, as the Chinese had commitments elsewhere along the border. Moreover, Desai continued, there would be no extensive Chinese reaction because of their fear of the US--"It is you they really fear." This increasing confidence that the Chinese would continue to play the game of flanking and counter-flanking maneuvers with relatively small units apparently contributed to the reluctance of important Indian leaders to take seriously Chinese warnings of full-scale war.

## Chinese Prepare for October 1962 Attack: Final Phase

In retrospect, the Chinese seem to have moved in stages toward their October 1962 attack, the early stages having been more of a defensive nature intended

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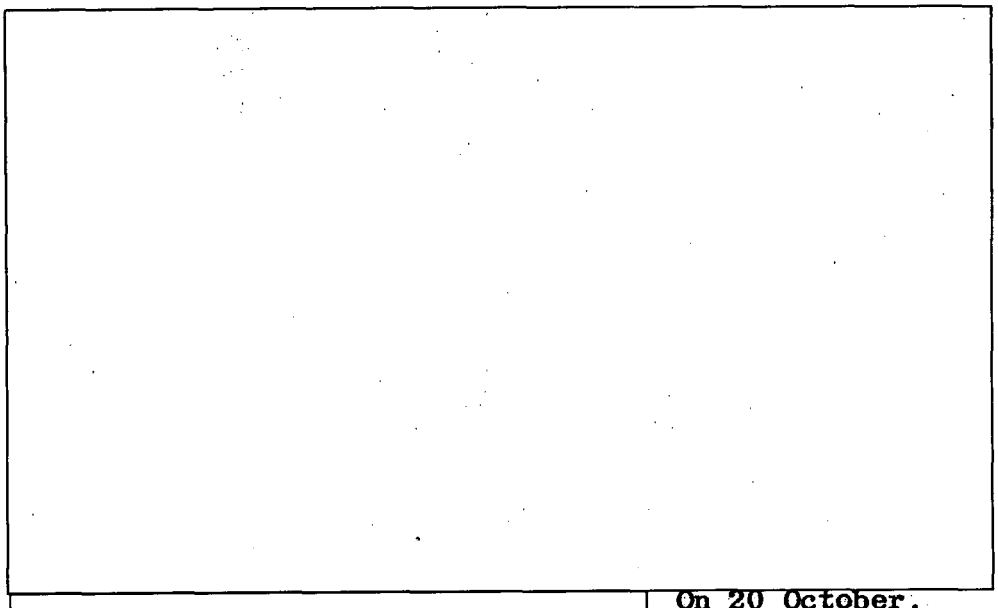
* Even if permission had been given, the use of tactical air against Chinese patrols in mountainous terrain, where ridges and spines are 13,000 feet, would have confronted the Indians with considerable difficulties. Even their air resupply effort was proving to be a failure, as the loss figure for air drops in the Dhola area was as high as 85 percent.

to strengthen their border positions in the event that early Indian move-ups developed into a major Indian military operation.

The Chinese had been alert to Indian move-ups in the spring of 1961 and had appraised Nehru's 28 November 1961 statement on establishing border posts to "recover" Indian territory as clear evidence that New Delhi had switched over to a new policy of force. It was probably at this time that the Chinese leaders began to move actively to buttress their border defenses, simultaneously warning New Delhi that its policy was "extremely dangerous" and that Indian moves in Ladakh could lead to Chinese moves across the McMahon Line into the NEFA.

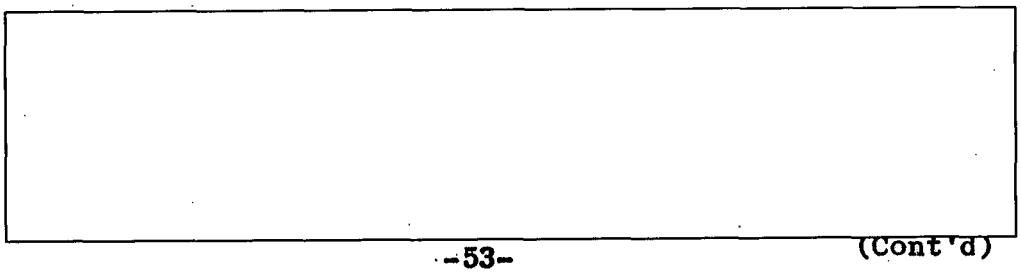
Shortly after their diplomatic effort designed to negotiate an overall border settlement in early 1962 was frustrated by Indian demands for Chinese withdrawals, they were alerted to a new Indian initiative in April 1962, when Indian troops began to move up between and even behind certain Chinese posts. This new Indian policy of encirclement and pressure on the posts indicated to the Chinese leaders the military nature of a long-range basic Indian plan and New Delhi's determination to use force. This new policy apparently impelled the Chinese leaders not only to intensify defensive preparations and increase patrol activity (which had been reduced but never completely halted), but also to prepare step-by-step for a military action to push the Indians back from their new positions. As noted earlier in this paper, the Chinese were deeply worried about their security in June. Based on personal contacts with Chou En-lai and Chen Yi, [redacted] in late June 1962 that the Chinese leaders expected the Chinese Nationalists and the Indians to launch simultaneous military actions against China "anytime" between June and mid-summer. However, assured in late June that the Nationalists would not attack, they turned their attention to planning for a major clearing action against Indian posts. By early July, they began to insert sharper warnings into their notes and public statements.

Preparations continued during the relative lull in August. The firefights at Dhola in September, resulting in dead and wounded soldiers on both sides helped transform the matter of a political settlement into a purely hypothetical proposition. The establishment of a new special corps under Kaul in early October and the killing of 33 Chinese soldiers near the Che Jao Bridge at Chih Tung on the 9th and 10th precipitated the final phase of Chinese preparations.



On 20 October, simultaneous attacks were launched in the Ladakh and NEFA areas.

The Chinese stepped up their effort to stimulate anti-Indian attitudes among Tibetans and a combat attitude among their troops. On 11 October, one day after the most serious firefight in the Dhola area (specifically, near the Che Jao Bridge at Chih Tung where the Chinese suffered 33 casualties), an Indian MEA official informed an American embassy officer



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that he had just received a telegram from the Indian Consul General in Lhasa reporting a series of anti-India demonstrations had taken place in front of the Consulate. The telegram also indicated that a Tibet-wide campaign had been launched to attribute local food shortages to Indian aggressiveness and that vigorous anti-Indian propaganda had been carried out within PLA forces in Tibet.

The final phase of Chinese preparations for the attack was marked by a series of belligerent notes which in effect warned of imminent retaliation. "Resulting casualties" would be India's responsibility to bear if Indian troops did not stop moving forward near Dhola (note of 11 October) was typical. The People's Daily editorial of 14 October was at once a call to arms to the Chinese and a final warning to the Indians:

> So it seems that Mr. Nehru has made up his mind to attack the Chinese frontier guards on an even bigger scale....It is high time to shout to Mr. Nehru that the heroic Chinese troops, with the glorious tradition of resisting foreign aggression, can never be cleared by anyone from their own territory.... If there are still some maniacs who are reckless enough to ignore our well-intentioned advice and insist on having another try, well, let them do so. History will pronounce its inexorable verdict.
>
> All comrade commanders and fighters of the PLA guarding the Sino-Indian border: heighten your vigilance hundredfold. The Indian troops may carry out at any time Nehru's instructions to get rid of you. You must be well prepared. Your sacred task now is to defend our territory and be ever-ready to deal resolute counterblows at any invaders....
>
> At this critical moment...we still want to appeal once more to Mr. Nehru: better rein in at the edge of the precipice and do not use the

lives of Indian troops as stakes in your gamble.

The editorial confined itself to implying retaliation in the east. That is, in referring to the imminence of an Indian thrust, it referred only to a pending "massive invasion of Chinese territory by Indian troops in the eastern sector." This was deceptive, as the Chinese attack on the 20th was opened on the western sector as well, surprising Indian forces in the relatively less active area.*

To sum up, indicators of an imminent Chinese offensive did not begin to appear until mid-October, when the Chinese apparently were already in their final phase of preparation. Earlier indicators suggest--in retrospect--that preparations for an attack probably began in late June 1962. As for

* Indian plans were grossly distored in Peiping's note of 20 October: "The Chinese Government received successive urgent reports from the Chinese frontier guards on October 20th to the effect that Indian troops had launched massive general attacks against Chinese frontier guards in both Eastern and Western sectors of the Sino-Indian border simultaneously." Thus the Chinese seized upon public Indian statements indicating an action against troops in the Dhola area and exaggerrated them to mean the Indians were planning and had started a general offensive.

The Chinese later had no difficulty in compiling a public record of Indian statements--the most convincing kind of record--regarding India's plans for a general offensive by merely clipping and collating Indian press reports of October and twisting them into the context of a hypothetical two-front Indian attack. Such a record was printed in Current Events Handbook of 6 November 1962; Chen Yi told a Swedish correspondent oh 17 February 1963 that he could demonstrate Indian aggressiveness by "leafing through the Indian newspapers of May and June 1962." Chen was at great pains to deny that the "great advances" made by PLA forces southward after 20 October 1962 in any way proved that the Chinese attack was more than a mere counter-attack against Indian action in the localized Dhola area. He tried to lend credibility to his lie by conceding that of course China had "prepared"--but had prepared only a defense.

Chinese threats and warnings, they had been made over such a long time period (beginning in November 1961) that their impact was diluted in Western and certainly in Indian thinking. As a result, in the crucial warning period from mid-September to mid-October 1962, when the Chinese began to use stronger language, the Indians viewed Peiping's threats as more of the same.*

Reasons for the Chinese Attack of 20 October

The Chinese leaders seem to have been motivated by one primary consideration and several secondary ones in their decision to attack Indian forces. Their determination to retain the ground on which their border forces stood in 1962 apparently was more important than all other considerations and sufficient by itself to explain their action. That is, it was necessary to attack for only one primary reason, although desirable for several secondary reasons.

The primary reason reflected their view that the Indian leaders had to be shown once and for all that China would not tolerate any strategy to "recover" border territory. In clearing away Indian border posts and routing Indian troops in two key sectors, the Chinese conducted what has been called a "punitive" expedition to chastize the Indian leaders for past and intended moveups. They tried

* New Delhi's note of 25 September alluded disparingly to the number of warnings and reasserted India's determination not to be "deterred" by them from moving against the Chinese. American officials in Hong Kong predicted in mid-October that the loss of 33 soldiers near Dhola would compel the Chinese to hit back in force. However, at the same time, on 13 October, Indian officials were still discounting to American officials in New Delhi the possibility of any extensive Chinese military reaction to Indian operations in the Dhola area.

to weaken Indian capabilities and discourage Indian hopes for future advances. They apparently were convinced that only a radical deflation of New Delhi's military pretensions could establish an Indian attitude of forebearance. Direct diplomatic appeals and indirect political moves--such as border agreements with other neighbors--had failed to induce such an attitude. The Indians had to be taught a lesson, which meant simply that they must begin to recognize realistically their military inferiority. Chen Yi is reliably reported to have told Hong Kong Communist newsmen on 6 October in Peiping that border clashes would continue "until such time as India comes to recognize the power of China." A more vigorous statement of this view was made well after the Chinese attack by Liu Shao-chi during his discussion with the Swedish ambassador in late February 1963. Liu, becoming highly incensed as he began to discuss India, stated that the attack had taught India a lesson and that for the future, Nehru and the Indians must be taught that they cannot change the border status quo by force.*

The aggressive Indian attitude reflected in October in the army's forward border policy--which culminated in the 9-10 October firefight, leaving 33 Chinese dead--would in itself have compelled the Chinese leaders to hit back even if an overall plan had not been laid on earlier. Failure to deliver a strong riposte after absorbing such a humiliating defeat would have encouraged the Indian military planners to conduct similarly aggressive operations at other border points. The civilian leaders would again boast of an Indian "victory" in Parliament to improve the government's domestic political prestige. Beyond that, a natural desire for retribution, combined with rational military and political considerations, became an overarching emotional factor impelling the Chinese leaders to

* Liu also told Colombo conference representatives in early January 1963 that the Chinese had to show the Indians that China was a great power and, for this reason, had to "punish" India once.

view a policy of restraint as the worst way to handle the bombastic Indians.*

Among the secondary reasons for attacking, a desire to damage Nehru's prestige by exposing India's weakness apparently ranked high in the Chinese leaders' order of priority. Nehru's prestige was considerable in Asia; it was being used by New Delhi to compete with Peiping for influence among leaders of the emerging nations. New Delhi's publicly expressed contempt for the "great power" status of China and the disrespectful behavior of a militarily inferior power (India) was more intolerable to the Chinese leaders than that of a militarily superior power (the US). Chen Yi's above mentioned remark of 6 October reflects a degree of injured national pride. Liu Shao-chi had included in his January 1963 discussion with Colombo representatives the remark that "China really cannot accept India's attitude"

* Clear signs of Indian bombast were available to the Chinese leaders not only in reports from their own intelligence sources, but also, in a more galling way, from the Indian press. Several of these are cited here: on 5 October, Lt. General Kaul was made a commander of a new special corps to be used exclusively against Chinese forces, and after obtaining authority from Nehru to "take limited offensive action," he flew to the front to give personal direction to military forces moving north of Towang; on 9 October, the Indian air force was said to be in an emergency condition and prepared to operate in the NEFA; on 12 October, Nehru declared that he had ordered the Indian army to "clear Indian territory in the NEFA of Chinese invaders" and personally met with Kaul, issuing instructions to him; on 16 October, Nehru held a long conference with Menon and other senior military officers and ordered all arsenals to step up production in order to cope with the "threat of large-scale war;" on 17 October, after meeting with Nehru, Menon hurried to the new special corps headquarters to hold emergency talks with Kaul; and on 18 October, defense ministry officials declared that the Chinese had to be "driven back two miles."

which he described as "a feeling of superiority to the Chinese."

The animus aroused among the Chinese leaders by India's public boasts and taunts had been building up for several months prior to the 20 October attack, making them emotionally keen to humiliate their humiliators. Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, and Chen Yi have been reported on various occasions after the attack to have made disparaging remarks about the training and ability of Indian officers and men to foreigners and to Chinese cadres.* The blow that Chinese forces dealt Nehru's prestige simultaneously increased that of Mao's; in August 1963, General Hsiao Hua publicly attributed PLA success in the attack to the fact that Chinese troops had been indoctrinated intensively in the political aspects of the "thought of Mao Tse-tung."

* Chen indicated to Nepal's Special Ambassador, R. Shaha, in December 1962 his great contempt for the Indian army, and especially for Indian generals. He also stated that the Chinese had released many Indian prisoners because they didn't want to have to feed them--a half-truth which concealed the Chinese aim of soothing New Delhi's anxiety to acquire outside military aid. Chou reportedly told a meeting in Shanghai in late January 1963 that the Indians were not even qualified to be called "beancurd" soldiers--Mao's term--and recounted the alleged occasion when one Chinese platoon captured two Indian battalions along with all their equipment. Liu told the Swedish ambassador in late February that Indian military leaders were not very good and that even American arms did not really increase the Indian military capability. However, the Chinese military attaché in New Delhi was reliably reported in August to have shown considerable concern about the increase in this capability through US aid.

Morale in China, which had slipped to a low point after several years of embarrassing economic setbacks, was given a considerable boost, and doubts about the fighting elan of PLA officers and men were largely dispelled.*

Another secondary reason was the Chinese leaders' desire to expose as traitorous Khrushchev's policy of supporting Nehru, a bourgeois leader, against them, a Communist leadership. The Chinese indirectly, and the Albanians openly, in summer and fall 1962 had criticized Khrushchev for supplying military aid to India. The Albanians had pressed forward along the line that the action of "N. Khrushchev and his group" was a betrayal of the rights of a "socialist" country and was intended to advance his narrow aims of rapprochement with imperialism and bourgeois governments (Zeri I Popullit, two-part article, 19-20 September 1962). This merely made explicit the euphemistic criticism the Chinese had directed at Khrushchev earlier (People's Daily, 17 and 18 September). That the 20 October border war did in fact confront Khrushchev with an embarrassing choice between supporting "socialist" China and "bourgeois-nationalist" India is indicated by Pravda's swing toward and later away from Peiping's position--temporarily criticizing certain CPI members and later acquiescing in their Indian-nationalist

* The British chargé in Peiping told American officials in Hong Kong on 3 April 1963 that the Chinese leaders were in a very "priggish" mood [redacted] because they had gained their objectives of exposing Indian weakness and abasing Nehru. Liu Shao-chi had told the Swedish ambassador earlier that after the clash, great self-confidence had permeated the Chinese forces. That there may have been doubts regarding the will-to-fight of Chinese troops is suggested by the curious line Chen Yi took on 28 September 1962 in a speech to Overseas Chinese in Peiping. Chen repeatedly made the point that the PLA had been "ready" to fight Nationalist forces earlier (in June), insisted that "not a single one" had balked, and that China was not "worried" about war--she could endure it.

stand--and by statements made privately by Soviet diplomats. His anguish was very apparent.

The Chinese were able temporarily to tarnish Moscow's image in the eyes of Indian leaders. Soviet shifts on the matter of MIG-21 delivery to India were so frequent, so opportunistic, and so obviously related to Sino-Soviet relations, and Pravda was so equivocal in its support of India--at one time it veered to the Chinese position--that some Indian leaders gained the distinct impression from these evasions that India could not look for any vigorous support from the Russians in the event of possible future Sino-Indian border clashes. Moreover, the Indians did not take kindly to Soviet suggestions that they agree to negotiate with the Chinese immediately and that they keep the 20 October attack out of the UN lest Moscow be compelled "to support China."

However, if a secondary aim of the Chinese had been to sour completely and irrevocably Soviet-Indian relations, they failed in their attempt. Indian leaders are still indulgent of many Soviet policies.

As for their attempt to depict Khrushchev as a traitor in the eyes of foreign Communists, the Chinese probably made the point stick only with parties who were already in their camp. The Albanians directly, and the Koreans indirectly, condemned Soviet aid to the Indians as unMarxist. The Indonesians provided them with unique support. PKI party boss Aidit, acting in their cause but probably on his party's initiative, cabled Khrushchev in early November, saying

> I cannot restrain the joy of all members of the Indonesian Communist party and myself with regard to your government's decision to cancel the dispatch of MIG aircraft to India.

By imputing a decision to Khrushchev which he had not made, Aidit may have been trying to sour Soviet-Indian relations and create Communist pressure on Khrushchev to make such a decision. News of Aidit's cable fanned some anti-Soviet sentiment in India but its effect on the Soviet leader may have been,

contrary to expectation, to drive him into subsequent reassurances to New Delhi that MIGs would indeed be dispatched.

Chinese Calculations of Risk

The necessary condition for the 20 October attack apparently was, in the Chinese leaders' view, that no major risk should be involved. Thus they made their first move--in July, against Indian forces at Galwan--only after they had received American assurances that the Chinese Nationalists would not attack from Taiwan; this relieved them of worry about a two-front war. When they made their final move--on 20 October--they apparently believed that (1) they could win against Indian forces with the advantage of surprise and numbers and (2) the Indians would fight alone. They were right on both points.

However, they apparently did not anticipate that the Indians would fold so quickly.* Further, they apparently had not estimated that the Indians would turn to the US and UK for military aid; they were obviously taken aback by the sharpness of this turn. Following the success of their major assault of 20 October, they soon recognized that "only the US imperialists would benefit from it /the clash/" (People's Daily editorial, 8 November). Their concern that the US might decide to "intervene" and "enlarge" the fighting during the second

* Sihanouk told a Western journalist in late April 1963 that Chou En-lai in the course of a long, wearisome briefing (on 10 February) had stated that the Chinese leaders were "surprised" at the feeble resistance of the Indian army and its quick retreat. According to Sihanouk, Chou said that before the Chinese realized it, their troops were "inside India" with an embarrassingly successful "counterattack" on their hands. Chou apparently was referring only to the 20 October attack, as the second Chinese thrust--a deep ripose to Indian probes in mid-November--had been pushed more than 100 miles "inside India."

assault--in mid-November--was reflected in Chou En-lai's letter to Sekou Toure of 13 November. Further, the US supply mission in India may have been seen by the Chinese as the first US move to "poke in its hand and develop the present unfortunate border conflict into a war..." (Chinese government statement, 21 November). This consideration was probably decisive in shaping the Chinese decision to announce a unilateral PLA withdrawal. They seem to have believed that only such a drastic move--backward--on the ground would alleviate the anxiety driving the Indians toward acquiring US arms and establishing a US supply mission.

An effort had been made earlier to dispel the impression that China desired general war or large-scale fighting. Within one week of the 20 October attack, a Bank of China official, who had been briefed on the attack in Canton in late October, stated that three points were to be stressed in Hong Kong Communist newspapers regarding the nature of the border fighting:

1. On no account was the border fighting to be described as "war." In discussions, only such words as "conflict, fighting, and dispute" indicating a localized engagement were to be used;

2. New Delhi should be depicted as the aggressor, accused of attempting to spread its influence into Tibet and Sinkiang; and

3. New Delhi's charges should be refuted by saying that India does not need more modern arms and equipment. This should be demonstrated by noting that the arms captured by the "frontier guards" were not all out of date and that the Chinese had not used heavy weapons. Further, the Indians initially committed an enormous number of troops to the fighting--"30,000" by Chinese estimates.

The third point in part suggests a Chinese fear that the Indians, in turning to the US and UK, would begin a crash program to modernize Indian divisions

and mold them into a force capable of eventually striking back effectively at the PLA. Chou En-lai and Chen Yi plied Malcom MacDonald on 29 October in Peiping with the line that the "conflict" was really a localized affair and that a major "war" between China and India was inconceivable.* They handled the crucial matter of British arms with considerable delicacy: they professed to "understand" fully British support for India as a fellow member of the Commonwealth and, although regretting British action in supplying arms, they "understand" and "do not intend to protest." They both stressed their desire that Nehru negotiate, apparently with the intention of spurring MacDonald to use his influence with the Indian prime minister.

But the PLA had inflicted such a degrading defeat on Indian forces that Nehru was more than ever before unable to consider negotiations as a real course because such a course would have been viewed as surrender after the battle. Nehru later told Senator Mansfield that apart from his own convictions, he could not stay in office one week if he negotiated with the Chinese. His prestige was not restored by Peiping's 21 November announcement of a unilateral Chinese withdrawal. Yet the Chinese leaders continued to insist--apparently minimizing the pressures at work on Nehru--on a "quick positive response" as though they believed

* A striking instance of Chinese downplaying of the border fighting appeared in Peiping newspapers after the 20 October attack. The Sino-Indian clash was largely eclipsed by the Cuban developments. Reports indicated that this disparate treatment of the two situations was carried over into all mainland propaganda. For example, [redacted] Chinese students who had enthusiastically urged reinforcement to PLA border troops during the fighting were cautioned by party cadres that the Chinese leadership desired disengagement and a peaceful solution.

it might be forthcoming from the prime minister. If they believed, even for a short period, that Nehru would talk because he knew now that he could not fight, they were radically wrong.* Their military attack had precisely the effect of ensuring that he would be forever their political enemy.

The Chinese military attack, therefore, opened them to a political risk. Their apparent calculation on this matter was to deny that it was a risk in the sense that something would be lost. The Indians were in their view no longer amenable to political manipulation, and as relations had deteriorated drastically by summer 1962, there was nothing left in the Sino-Indian political relationship worth preserving. That is, they apparently believed that nothing existed to risk. The Chou-Nehru relationship was dead; Mao's struggle-and-unity formula had become all struggle.

The Chinese leaders probably made a similar calculation regarding the political risk of damaging Sino-Soviet relations. There simply was nothing left to risk in the relationship with Khrushchev. Khrushchev for several years had been exaggerating the seriousness of Sino-Indian border clashes and using the situation hypocritically--by

* The Chinese professed a desire for talks to start on a low level. Thus Chou, in his letter to Nehru of 4 November 1962, stated: "China and India can quickly designate officials to negotiate matters relating to the disengagement....When these negotiations have yielded results and the results have been acted on, the prime ministers of the two countries can then hold talks."

After several months, they fell back into a more realistic public appraisal of Nehru's attitude, declaring that they could "also wait patiently" for negotiations. That is, they took the position openly that Nehru would not respond to further suggestions of a political settlement.

imputing unwillingness on the Chinese side to negotiate--against them in the world Communist movement. The Chinese were prepared to attack the Indians regardless of the political sniping their military attack would evoke from Khrushchev. In fact, they now had an issue--betrayal of a "socialist" country during wartime--to use against him. When, therefore, in the final phase of their preparations, the Chinese leaders were offered a pledge of support from Khrushchev, they viewed it with considerable suspicion. They saw it as at the most helpful in isolating Nehru but not essential to their planned operation. Soviet support was not necessary, as the Chinese had acted on the border without it in July and September 1962.

That it was not solicited is suggested by the unwillingness of the Chinese leaders to reciprocate and provide Khrushchev with the support he desperately desired during the Cuban crisis. The Chinese leaders acted throughout the overlapping periods of their military attack and Khrushchev's showdown with the US on the assumption that they owed the hostile Soviet leader nothing by way of support and would not give him any support until, or unless, he unequivocally repudiated his past policy by openly and fully supporting the Chinese position in the border conflict.

The following evidence suggests that the Chinese desired Khrushchev's complete capitulation and would not accept minor concessions:

1. As the Cuban missile crisis developed, the Soviet leader decided to offer the Chinese a degree of support on the Sino-Indian border dispute in exchange for full Chinese support of his Cuban venture. Khrushchev received Ambassador Liu Hsiao on 15 October, after having snubbed him for more than a month.* (The Chinese version established

* Khrushchev's personal snubs were deliberate. Thus early in September, Liu Hsiao had been received by Kozlov rather than Khrushchev for his farewell interview. However, Khrushchev was reported by British officials to have found time to receive not only the retiring West German ambassador but an American official and an American poet, a Saudi Arabian, and, after his return to Moscow from his Black Sea resort, the Austrian Vice Chancellor. (Liu left in late September to attend the CCP's 10th plenum but returned unexpectedly to Moscow for the (cont'd)

13 October as the first Khrushchev-Liu meeting.) On the 16th, when Khrushchev entertained him at a state banquet, Chinese diplomats were reported as saying that the Russians would shortly "drop their facade of neutrality" on the Sino-Indian dispute. That Khrushchev had suggested he would change his position is also indicated by the published Chinese version (People's Daily, 1 November 1963). According to the Chinese:

> On 13 and 14 October 1962, Khrushchev told the Chinese ambassador the following: Their information on Indian preparations to attack China was similar to China's. If they were in China's position, they would have taken the same measures. A neutral attitude on the Sino-Indian boundary question was impossible. If anyone attacked China and they /the Soviets/ said they were neutral, it would be an act of betrayal.

Liu apparently had briefed the Soviet leader on the 10 October firefight at the Che Jao Bridge and on Indian plans to push forward in the Dhola area. He probably indicated the Chinese leaders' decision to hit back if necessary. This briefing seems to have provided Khrushchev with the opportunity to offer his support and request Mao's in return. He almost certainly informed Ambassador Liu Hsiao sometime between 13 and 16 October of his Cuban missile venture and seems to have requested that he ask Mao to forget the past:

> In the autumn of last year, before the departure from Moscow of the former ambassador on the Chinese People's Republic in the Soviet Union, Comrade Liu Hsiao, members of the Presidium of the CPSU central committee had a long talk with him. During this conversation, the members of the Presidium once again displayed initiative in the matter of strengthening Chinese-Soviet friendship. Comrade N. S. Khrushchev asked Comrade Liu Hsiao to forward

Chinese 1 October celebration.)

to Comrade Mao Tse-tung our proposal: "to put aside all disputes and differences, not to try to establish who is right and who is wrong, not to rake up the past, but to start our relations with a clear page." But we have not even received an answer to this sincere call. (CPSU "open letter," Pravda, 13 July 1963)

Mao's refusal to respond was probably based on his calculation that Khrushchev was in real trouble and was expediently maneuvering to buy him off by offering support for China's border policy.

2. Mao's price was high. He apparently felt that Khrushchev should make a clearcut public statement, criticizing Nehru's border policy. At the very least, Khrushchev should direct his top aides and Pravda's editors to make such a statement as a token of Soviet sincerity. Mao seems to have planned to continue attacking Khrushchev's moves, treating the Soviet leader's personal bid with contempt, until such time as this reversal of Soviet policy was forthcoming. The Chinese press did not report the effusive references to Sino-Soviet friendship on the occasion of Khrushchev's meetings with Liu Hsiao. People's Daily reported only the fact that Liu had been received at banquets given by various Soviet leaders. It avoided all mention of Soviet press tributes, which had included the statement that Liu's series of "warm, sincere" conversations with top Soviet officials ended on 23 October with "a comradely discussion" with Mikoyan. (Liu left Moscow on 24 October.) On the contrary, People's Daily and other Chinese newspapers maintained a continuous anti-Soviet drumfire not only immediately after the Khrushchev-Liu meetings, but even after Pravda on 25 October took the Chinese position on the "notorious" McMahon Line, Sino-Indian talks, and certain "chauvinist" CPI members. People's Daily reprinted this Pravda peace offering on the 26th but did not use it for any follow-up commentary. When, therefore, on the 27th People's Daily "explained" Nehru's anti-China policy as basically a matter of his class position, Khrushchev was implicitly attacked for "shielding and supporting" Nehru and for trying to play "a pacifying role in relation to China." Khrushchev's attempt at conciliation was rejected well before he backed down on Cuba.

All the Soviet leader gained from his unilateral concessions had been to sour temporarily his relationship with Nehru and to suffer a diplomatic defeat at the hands of his formal ally, Mao Tse-tung. For his part, the Chinese leader gained an admission from the CPSU (Pravda editorial of 25 October) that he had been right on the matter of the McMahon Line and on his insistence on no preconditions for talks. Only after the Soviet leader began (CPSU "open letter" of 13 July 1963) publicly to attack the Chinese for their display of "narrow nationalism" in the Sino-Indian dispute was he able to drive home effectively a political point against his Chinese adversary on the border issue.

The Soviet charge, made along the lines of CPI leader Dange's article (New Age, 21 April 1963, supplement), that the Chinese attacked because of the opportunity provided them by the Cuban missile crisis, is declamatory history. The Chinese attack would have been made even if there had been no Cuban crisis (and even if there had been no Sino-Soviet dispute). The border dispute had a momentun of its own. The important historical fact is that both China and the USSR had been engaged in an increasingly bitter argument at a time when they both, independently, decided months earlier to go on the offensive against non-Communist countries. Further, neither of these allies gave the other more than restrained support at a time when each sought all-out support--a commentary on the state of the Sino-Soviet alliance in fall 1962.

## The Prospect

The Sino-Indian dispute probably will remain unsettled for many years, primarily because the Indians will continue to insist that the Chinese withdraw from the Aksai Plain. The Chinese will not withdraw. They have made it clear that they will retain the ground their troops stand on and the road their troops defend between Sinkiang and Tibet. The decisive implication of Liu Shao-chi's statement to R. K. Nehru in July 1961 is that China has as much right to retain the Plain occupied since 1956 as India has to the NEFA occupied since 1951. Even in the best case--that is, a complete Indian withdrawal from the NEFA--Liu implied that China would only "consider" a pullback from the Plain.

The Chinese are left with only a hope that a future Indian leadership will decide to negotiate rather than fight. Peiping has indicated that China would not initiate an attack in the future. However, Chinese concern that the Indians will be emboldened to try again is reflected in their decision to insert a third party--i.e., the Colombo powers--into the border dispute to impede a new Indian border venture.* The miserably beaten Indians may try again eventually when their forces and spirits have been refurbished. Although the Chinese attack in fall 1962 deflated Indian military pretensions, it so intensely humiliated the Indian leaders and so vitally affronted the pride of the nation that the deep desire for ultimate vindication--that is, to fight with new weapons and more troops, and win--may well prevail over the more sober calculation that the safest way out of the deadlock is a political settlement on Chinese terms.

* The Chinese decision to apply a restraint on the Indians was indicated by the following passage in People's Daily of 13 October 1963: "Should the Indian Government, under the instigation of the US imperialists and modern revisionists, pin blind faith on the use of force and deliberately rekindle border conflicts, the Chinese Government would first of all inform the Colombo conference countries of this situation, requesting them to put a stop to it. The situation today is very different from that of a year ago." Chou En-lai had stated earlier (on 11 October to Reuters correspondents) that the Colombo powers can "play the role of dissuading India...should India create tension on the border again."

The Chinese have also taken the precaution to point out to the Indian leaders that four areas are sensitive, that is, are closed to Indian forces. They have implicitly warned that any effort to establish an Indian military presence in any of the four would meet with PLA counteraction. They have also implicitly warned that should checkposts again be set up anywhere else at the line of actual control, or on the Chinese side of it, they would inform the Colombo powers and retain the option to wipe them out. (See attached map)

The Indians have been clearcut and unequivocal in stating that they will not accept Chinese terms. When Chou En-lai sought to demonstrate to Nehru (and to various neutral leaders) that the Chinese would return to their positions and had not attacked in order to seize territory (letter to Nehru of 4 November 1962),* the Indian prime minister responded sarcastically that Chou was merely making a "magnanimous offer of retaining the gains of the earlier /1957-1960/ aggression" (letter to Chou of 14 November). This was, Nehru concluded

> ...an assumption of the attitude of a victor. /The demand for India to accept the Chinese 1959 line/ is a demand to which India will never submit whatever the consequences and however long and hard the struggle may be.

Nehru had not been deterred from his rejection of the Chinese version of the line by Chou's trifling concession made on a map sent to heads of state (appended to Chou's 15 November letter).* The Indian position was stated privately by the MEA China Division Director, Menon, to an American embassy officer on 31 December 1962. Menon asserted that although it was not necessary that

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* To use Chou's words: "The fact that the Chinese Government's proposal has taken as its basis the 1959 line of actual control and not the present line of actual control between the armed forces of the two sides is full proof that the Chinese side has not tried to force any unilateral demand on the Indian side on account of the advances gained in the recent counterattacks in self-defense."

** Chou sent various neutral heads of state the map published in the People's Daily on 8 November, depiciting the new, proposed Chinese base line (1962) and the old Chinese claim line (1959). The two lines coincided except at five points, at each of which the 1962 base line deviated eastward and northeastward, making small enclaves into Chinese territory. The Chinese position allows for the move of Indian troops roughly to the vicinity of this base line but not into four sensitive areas.

India be permitted to re-establish every post lost since 8 September, nevertheless, for the sake of the principle of not sanctioning acquisition of territory seized through military means, India "must" re-establish its presence in territory lost during the attacks of October and November.

A political settlement, which could not be negotiated when Sino-Indian relations were still to some degree friendly, will be even less likely now that relations are completely antagonistic. The deadlock will remain, and it seems probable that border clashes will recur at some future time when the Indians regain their confidence.

## APPENDIX

## SINO-PAKISTANI BORDER NEGOTIATIONS: 1960-1963

Combined with their effort to demonstrate that Nehru had gone over to the American camp, the Chinese tried to pressure and embarrass the Indians by approaching the Pakistanis in 1960 for negotiations on their common border in the northern area of Kashmir.

This overture required a degree of opportunistic maneuvering by the Chinese, who had been maintaining that they were more Leninist and ideologically purer than the Russian leaders. They began to move toward the Pakistanis despite the fact that the Communist movement had held Pakistan to be an obviously reactionary regime, a member of the "imperialist military bloc," and led by a strong-man who had none of the socialist pretensions of certain neutralist leaders. The Chinese had been warning other Communists to reject cooperation with all but truly socialist leaders or at least truly neutral neutrals. President Ahyub was neither, nor could he reasonably be depicted as a member of the anti-imperialist "national bourgeoisie." Yet Peiping began in 1960 to seek a major accord with Pakistan.

Unlike the Russians, the Chinese ever since 1950 had kept open an avenue of approach to the Pakistanis on the Kashmir issue. The Chinese position had been to equivocate, which meant refusal to recognize Indian sovereignty over the area. For example, Chou En-lai took an equivocal public position on Kashmir when pressed on the matter during a news conference in Karachi on 24 December 1956. Chou said he had not "studied" the matter and suggested that India and Pakistan settle it by negotiations outside the UN. This position was significantly different from Moscow's, as the Russians had recognized the juridical accession of Kashmir to India. Privately, the Chinese had indicated considerable concern that Pakistani-held Kashmir might be converted into a missile base, and their ambassador in Karachi, Keng Piao, had informed the Swedish ambassador in mid-April 1957 that Peiping preferred that the "status quo" in Kashmir be maintained. During the border experts talks with the Indians in 1960, the Chinese experts consistently refused to discuss the segment of boundary west of the Karakoram Pass, as such action would have implied Chinese recognition of Indian ownership of that segment of territory.

For their part, the Pakistanis saw the value of CENTO and SEATO decrease as the US began to show a willingness to tolerate India's nonalignment policy and as the US refused to make these alliances into defense arrangements against the threat from India. The Pakistanis in late 1960 turned more and more away from a close relationship with the US and toward a new, improved relationship with the Chinese and the Russians. Increased American and British military aid to India deeply troubled the Pakistanis and further impelled them into a rapproachement with the Chinese, who were later willing to hint that China would provide Pakistan with protection in the event of an attack from India. Thus, as China in 1959-60 became the enemy of India, and the US gradually became India's best friend, the Pakistanis looked to a closer political relationship with the Chinese against a common enemy.*

The Chinese did not turn directly toward the Pakistanis until the complete collapse of Sino-Indian negotiations in December 1960. They began to move from a position of holding in abeyance a border settlement with Pakistan to one of active overtures for high-level negotiations. The Chinese ambassador to Pakistan reportedly suggested in December 1960 that talks be started over the Hunza area and such other regions along the border as Pakistan might wish to discuss. By January 1961, the Pakistani foreign minister indicated that a "preliminary" boundary agreement was being discussed with the Chinese. The Chinese procedural plan seemed to be similar to the one they had used with success in handling the Burmese and Nepalese, e.g. a step-by-step advance, beginning with an accord "in principle" recognizing the need to negotiate a definitive boundary, the formation of a joint committee to discuss the details of surveys and demarcation on the ground, and the drafting of a formal border treaty.

* The Director of Pakistan's Ministry of External Affairs, Mohammed Yunis, told an American official in Karachi on 4 February 1962 that regarding his government's policy toward Peiping, the principle of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" applies.

The Chinese maneuver was not lost on the Indian leaders. They reportedly protested to Peiping in January 1961, insisting that India was sovereign over all of Kashmir and that Pakistan therefore had no common frontier with China. Foreign Secretary Dutt told the American ambassador in New Delhi on 24 January that the Sino-Pakistani agreement "in principle" to negotiate the boundary demarcation made Peiping's policy very clear: "to isolate India and cast her in an intransigent role." Dutt speculated that to accomplish this the Chinese might even concede all the Pakistani claims involving some 6,000 square miles of territory--a guess which depicted the Chinese leaders as being more generous than they actually proved to be, but captured the spirit of the Chinese attitude. Dutt reflected Indian concern by pointing to other signs of Chinese efforts to isolate India: China's nonaggression pact with Afghanistan, continuing approaches to Nepal, near-completion of the Sino-Nepalese boundary treaty,* the Sino-Burmese boundary treaty and Chou En-lai's early January elaborate visit to Rangoon, and Chinese official statements suggesting China would regard

* The Sino-Nepalese boundary treaty (which used the "traditional boundary" and split the difference on ownership of Mt. Everest) was signed in Peiping on 4 October 1961 shortly after Liu Shao-chi implicitly criticized the Indians by praising Nepal for having resisted "foreign aggression and pressure." This treaty, and the accords on Chinese economic assistance as well as on a Chinese-constructed road from Tibet to Katmandu, represented a major diplomatic defeat for New Delhi and opened the door for the spread of Chinese influence. The Chinese have tried to keep this door open through flattery of Nepalese officials and assurances of support against Indian pressure. The British High Commissioner in New Delhi reported to his government on 16 February 1962 that the predominating position in Nepal which the British bequeathed to India in 1947 should have provided India with a strong bastion. But New Delhi's "neglect and disdain" of Nepal, followed by attempts at interference and later still by indiscreet speeches and support for refugee politicians had given the Chinese an opening which they had been quick to exploit. He saw no prospect for the development of relations of real confidence with the Mahendra regime.

(Cont'd)

Bhutan and Sikkim like any other independent South Asian countries. Ambassador Bunker felt that Dutt's initiative in broaching the matter was in the nature of "an unexpressed hope" that the US would discourage the Pakistanis from any rapprochement with either the Chinese or the Russians.

After moving rapidly in late 1960 and early 1961 to gain an initial agreement in principle to negotiate the Sino-Pakistani border matter, the Chinese leaders, having attained the agreement, were compelled to mark time. They exchanged notes thereafter on occasion with the Pakistanis, who had begun to drag their feet, but were unable to bring them to "preliminary talks" until March 1962, when the Indians were preparing to outflank Chinese posts. The Chinese pressed Karachi for full-scale substantive negotiations soon after the October 1962 attack on Indian positions. Chou En-lai was reported to have invited Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali to Peiping in late November, and on 26 December, Karachi announced that complete agreement in principle had been reached with Peiping on the "alignment" of their common border. The announcement of this agreement on alignment, intended by the Pakistanis to put pressure on the Indians to reach an agreement on Kashmir at a time when the Indian negotiating team was arriving in Karachi for talks on the disputed area, also served the Chinese purpose of convincing the Ceylonese prime minister (then on her way as Colombo Power courier to Peiping) that the Chinese were willing to reach frontier accommodations. To this end, the Chinese also had announced their border accord with Mongolia in December. Beyond this, the Chinese apparently calculated that their agreement with the Pakistanis on an area claimed by India would stiffen

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* (continued)

Chinese exploitation of the Indian policy failure in Nepal included a formal charge that India had engaged in "great nation chauvinism." In its note to India of 31 May 1962, Peiping cited a New Delhi statement that the border runs from the trijunction of the boundaries of India, China and Afghanistan to the India, Burma, China trijunction in the east, and then asked: "Pray, what kind of assertion is that? ...Nepal no longer exists, Sikkim no longer exists, and Bhutan no longer exists. This is out-and-out great power chauvinism."

Nehru's resistance to making any concessions to Pakistan, thereby exacerbating already strained India-Pakistan relations.

The Chinese in January 1963 temporarily dragged their feet in talks with Pakistan, hoping for talks with the Indians on the basis of the Colombo Proposals. Failing to gain Indian responsiveness, they resumed their move toward Pakistan. The Chinese formally concluded the border agreement with Pakistan on 2 March 1963, announcing simultaneously that border negotiations with Afghanistan would soon begin.* They stressed the speed and ease with which the final agreement on the border alignment had been reached, leaving a joint commission to survey the China-Pakistan border for demarcation and to erect pillars. Chinese anxiety to furnish new "proof" that India was the recalcitrant side in the Sino-Indian dispute provided the Pakistanis with an opportunity to achieve a favorable border settlement. The Chinese apparently did not attempt to persuade the Pakistanis to give up any territory they already controlled and even conceded several hundred miles of valley grazing land on the Chinese side of the watershed. Although a major Chinese motive was to increase India-Pakistan "contradictions," the Chinese were careful to deny this publicly in a People's Daily editorial on 4 March. The editorial stated in effect that the Chinese wanted to be fair about the matter: China takes the position of "non-intervention and impartiality toward both sides." After the Kashmir dispute was settled, it went on, either of the disputants would have the right "to reopen negotiations with the Chinese Government on the boundary treaty to replace the agreement." Privately, however, the Chinese tried to justify their moves in the direction of a "reactionary" Pakistan as indeed an attempt merely to split them from the Indians. An official of the Chinese Communist Bank of China in Hong Kong defensively asked the bank staff on 7 September 1963 a rhetorical question: "Would it be good if Pakistan and India had joined together to

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* When, on 22 November 1963, the Chinese signed the boundary treaty with the Afghans, politburo member Peng Chen implicitly underscored New Delhi's recalcitrance by noting that four countries on China's south and southwestern borders had adopted an attitude of "active cooperation"--Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

fight us?" He went on to "explain" the Sino-Pakistani air flights agreement as based on the consideration of isolating the Indians.*

The Russians moved to expose the hypocrisy of Chinese pretensions to be pure and principled Communists. The Chinese reportedly took the line with Moscow that talks with Karachi were a "first step" towards leading Pakistan out of the Western alliance.** But following the outbreak of open polemics in mid-July 1963, the Russians bore down hard in public statements on Chinese opportunism not only in connection with Peiping's support of the anti-Communist Iraqi Bathists, but also regarding the Chinese effort toward Pakistan. The Russians ignored Indian intransigence and emphasized Chinese deals with "reactionaries" at the expense of neutrals. Pointing to the nationalistic motivation of the Chinese leaders, an 8 September Moscow broadcast noted that the Chinese understand very well that Pakistan is a member of the "aggressive CENTO and SEATO pacts." Moscow's 21-22 September 1963 government statement attacking Chinese opposition to the partial test ban treaty also contained a caustic remark about Peiping's actions:

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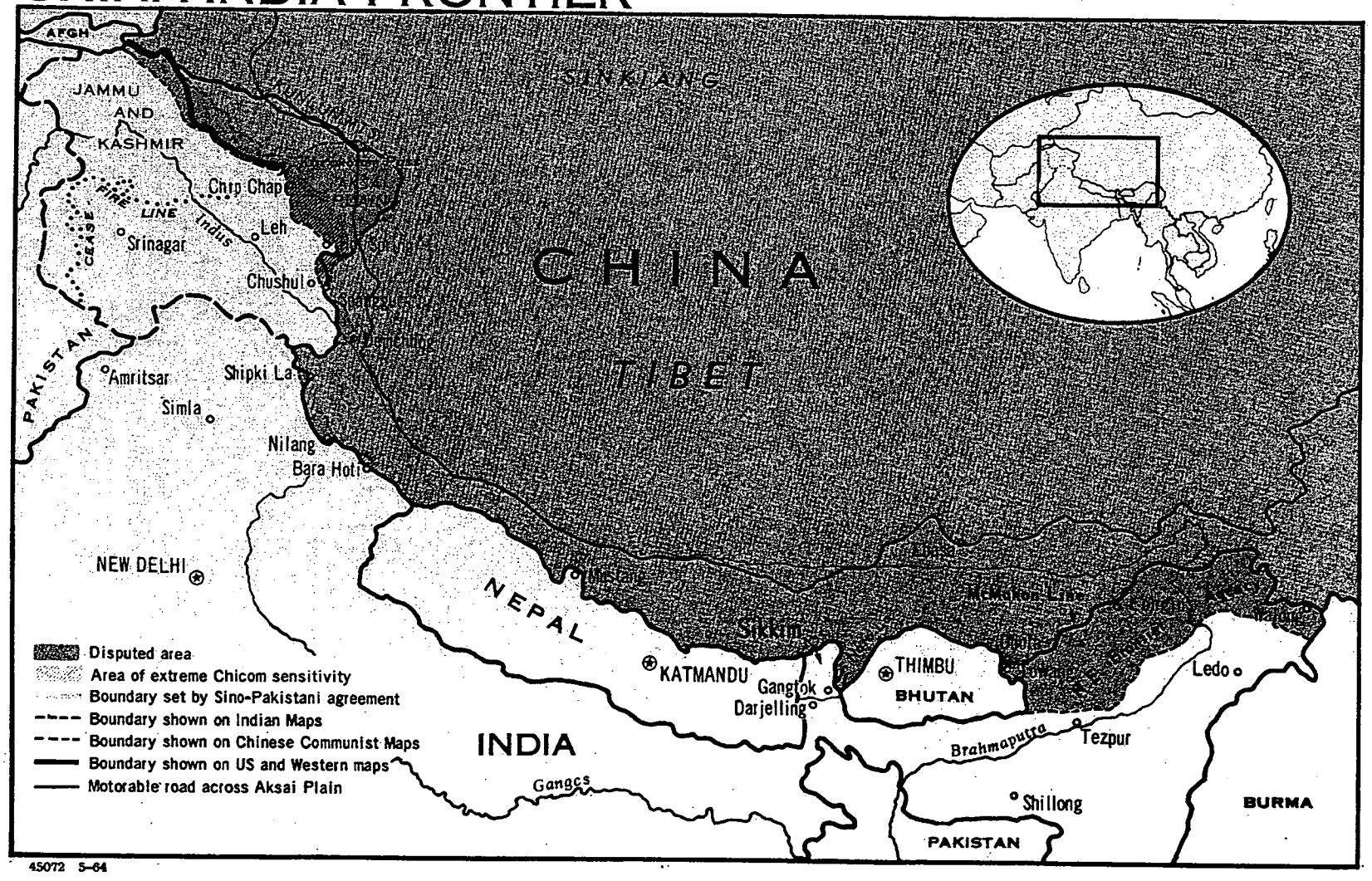
* Chou En-lai was also defensive on the matter of China's move toward a pro-Western regime. Chou conceded in an interview on 31 March that there is a "certain contradiction" between Pakistan's signing a border agreement with China and its membership in SEATO, but, in doing so, he cleverly placed the onus on the Pakistanis for departing from principle and international alignment.

** In a conversation with an American official on 15 June 1962, the MEA China Division Director, S. Sinha, stated he had information that this had been Peiping's position in justifying the move to Moscow.

> Such an attitude to a neutralist country /i.e., India/ is all the more unclear in view of the fact that the Chinese Government had in every way been making overtures to the obviously reactionary regimes in Asia and Africa, including the countries belonging to imperialist military blocs.

On the day this statement was published, Soviet Aeroflot representatives were scheduled to arrive in Karachi to negotiate landing rights in Pakistan; an air link agreement was signed in October.

# CHINA-INDIA FRONTIER

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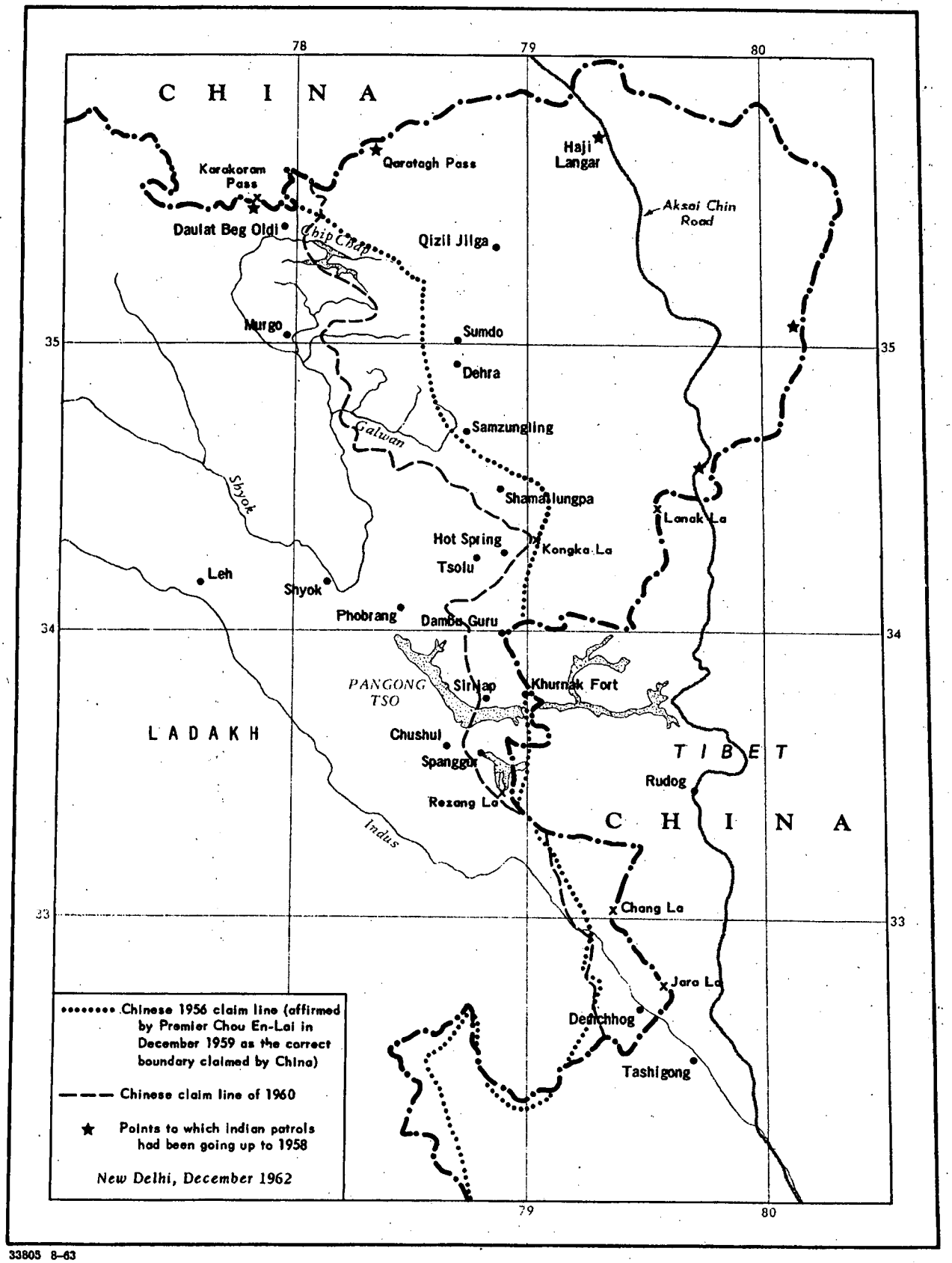
# SINO-INDIAN BORDER

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

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