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THE SINO-INDIAN BOUNDARY QUESTION

II

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A Brief Account on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question

(Vice-Premier Chen Yi's Television Interview with Mr. Karlsson,
Correspondent of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation)

February 17, 1963

Mr. Karlsson: Your Excellency, Mr. Vice-Premier, I am greatly honoured to meet you during my visit to China, and particularly to be able to present you, as one of the leaders of the People's Republic of China, in the first television interview over the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation.

Vice-Premier Chen Yi: I welcome you on your visit to China. Relations between China and Sweden have always been good. Sweden pursues a policy of peace and neutrality and has contributed to world peace. On behalf of the Chinese people, I would like to convey greetings to the people of Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries through you and the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr. Karlsson: I will certainly do that. May I ask some questions now?

Vice-Premier Chen Yi: Please.

Question 1: The Sino-Indian boundary dispute is an old question. Why, in your opinion, did it develop into a military conflict during the last months of 1962?

Answer: All along, the Chinese Government has sought a friendly settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question through peaceful negotiations. China has shown the greatest forbearance and restraint in dealing with this dispute. India has refused to negotiate. Moreover, she stepped up her armed encroachment of Chinese territory, and ultimately went so far as to launch massive armed attacks along the border. The course of events was rather complicated, and I will try to explain it as briefly as possible.

India already occupied, around 1950, more than 90,000 square kilometres of Chinese territory in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian boundary, south of the illegal McMahon Line. The occupied area was three times the size of Belgium. The Chinese Government did not accept this encroachment, but in order to seek a peaceful settlement of the question, it restrained its frontier guards from crossing the illegal McMahon Line.

Then in 1959, India laid claim groundlessly to over 30,000 more square kilometres of Chinese territory in the western sector of the Sino-Indian boundary. Moreover, India provoked sanguinary conflicts on two occasions during that year, first in the eastern and then in the western sector of the boundary. As a result, tension rose daily along the border.

Question 2: Why didn't the Sino-Indian boundary dispute develop into a large-scale armed conflict in 1959?

Answer: The Chinese Government took every possible measure to prevent it. At that time, that is on November 7, 1959, we proposed that the armed forces of China and India should each withdraw 20 kilometres along the entire boundary and stop their patrol activities, so as to avoid conflicts. We also proposed to

the Indian Government that negotiations should be held to seek a peaceful settlement of the boundary question.

The Indian Government did not agree that the armed forces of both countries should withdraw 20 kilometres. Then China stopped its patrol activities unilaterally in the area 20 kilometres on its side of the border. Shortly afterwards, in April 1960, Premier Chou En-lai and I went to New Delhi for talks with Prime Minister Nehru of India. If the Indian side had shared our desire for a settlement of the boundary question through negotiations based on mutual understanding and mutual accommodations, the question would have been smoothly settled then and there, or even if it were not settled, it would not have developed into a large-scale military conflict. But our talks with Prime Minister Nehru proved fruitless. The Indian Government even refused to come to a temporary agreement for maintaining the status quo along the border.

Then, in the latter half of 1961 and particularly in the first half of 1962, India took advantage of China's unilateral cessation of patrol activities to change the status quo along the boundary by armed force. She set up 43 aggressive strongpoints on Chinese territory in the western sector of the Sino-Indian boundary and encroached upon China's Che Dong area north of the illegal McMahon Line in the eastern sector.

If you leaf through the Indian newspapers of May and June 1962, you will see how the Indian Government was recklessly pursuing a policy of aggression and provocation.

Nevertheless, we did not strike back. We limited ourselves to lodging protests with the Indian Government and demanding the withdrawal of Indian troops. We

continued to work for a settlement of the boundary question through negotiations. The Chinese Government proposed negotiations on three occasions between July and October, 1962. But unfortunately, our proposals were rejected by the Indian Government every time. Having made all kinds of war preparations in the meantime, Indian troops finally launched on October 20, 1962, massive attacks on the Chinese frontier guards. Thus, China struck back in self-defence only when she was pressed beyond the limits of forbearance and left with no room for retreat.

Question 3: You said that Indian troops launched massive attacks on the Chinese frontier guards. Could you please tell me why India should do so at that time?

Answer: In the first place, I think that the Indian Government drew the wrong conclusions from China's repeated forbearance and imagined that China would not strike back. Then, too, the Indian Government wrongly thought that China was faced with rather difficult economic conditions at home and was quite isolated internationally. Hence it attempted to use armed force to make China submit.

Question 4: The Indians say that China could not have fought on such a large scale without having made systematic preparations. What is your opinion about this?

Answer: China was prepared, because the Indian Government long ago publicly announced its intention to launch armed attacks. On three occasions between July and October 1962, the Indian Government rejected China's proposals for negotiations, and persisted in maintaining that it was legitimate to carry out armed aggression against China. All this was bound to put China

on guard. On the 5th of October 1962, the Defence Ministry of India announced the establishment of a new army corps under the Eastern Command for the sole purpose of dealing with China, and appointed Lt.-Gen. B.M. Kaul commander. On October 12, Prime Minister Nehru declared personally that he had issued instructions to clear out the Chinese frontier guards from what he termed invaded areas, which were in reality Chinese territory. On October 14, the then Indian Minister of Defence, Krishna Menon, called for a fight to the last man and the last gun against China. In these circumstances, how could China as a sovereign state fail to make the necessary preparations?

The large-scale armed conflict on the Sino-Indian border was provoked solely by India. The Chinese frontier guards were absolutely compelled to strike back in self-defence. It is a clumsy distortion of the facts to slander China as an aggressor simply because the Chinese frontier guards made great advances when they struck back in self-defence.

Question 5: Does China consider the boundary question so important that despite the principle of peaceful coexistence, there might be a military solution if negotiations should fail?

Answer: China and India together initiated the famous Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. China has always adhered to these principles in her relations with India. China stands for a friendly settlement of her boundary question with India through negotiations based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Pending a settlement, she stands for maintaining the status quo on the boundary and avoiding armed conflicts. The facts have demonstrated during the past

years that it was not China which acted counter to the principles of peaceful coexistence and which attempted a military solution of the boundary question. China decided to effect a ceasefire and to withdraw on her own initiative even though she had made great gains during the self-defensive counter-blow which she was forced to strike. If we believe in a military solution, is it conceivable that we would withdraw the Chinese frontier guards from large tracts of territory which was south of the illegal McMahon Line and which belonged to China in the first place?

Question 6: How does China regard the Indian reaction to the Chinese proposals for ceasefire and negotiations?

Answer: Frankly speaking, we are disappointed.

The Chinese side took many steps to facilitate an amicable settlement of the boundary question through negotiations. On October 24, the Chinese Government put forward three proposals for peace, namely, to stop the border conflict, to reopen peaceful negotiations and to settle the Sino-Indian boundary question. Moreover, on November 21, the Chinese Government announced a ceasefire and withdrawal on its own initiative, and proposed that officials of the two sides hold meetings immediately. China released more than 600 sick and wounded Indian military personnel. China also returned to the Indian side large stores of military equipment which had been captured in the fighting. This was something unprecedented. The Chinese frontier guards, in compliance with the Statement of the Chinese Government, are about to complete their withdrawal all along the line to positions 20 kilometres behind the line of actual control as it existed on November 7, 1959. It

must be evident to every unbiased person that all these actions taken by China created the necessary conditions for direct negotiations between China and India.

But what has India done in the meantime? Instead of responding positively to the ceasefire and withdrawal, undertaken on China's own initiative, the Indian side has from time to time been carrying out provocations. A de facto ceasefire has come into being on the border, thanks to the efforts of the Chinese side. Yet, the Indian Government has adopted measures to create an artificial war atmosphere. During the last two or three months, the Indian Government has been constantly whipping up hysteria against China and goading the Indian people on for what it calls a prolonged "war effort". Tearing up unilaterally the agreement for the mutual establishment of Consulates-General, the Indian Government closed down its consulates in China and compelled China to close down her consulates in India. The Indian Government groundlessly arrested and detained more than 2,000 Chinese nationals in India, putting them in concentration camps. It even went so far as to censor and detain all mail and telegrams, both private and official, between China and India. Everyone knows that these are measures taken only when a formal state of war has been declared between two countries. These acts of India have placed more and more difficulties in the way of a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question.

Question 7: It is said that China responded positively to the Colombo proposals; but some say that China has completely rejected them. What exactly is the attitude of the Chinese Government towards the Colombo proposals?

Answer: The Chinese Government's attitude is very clear. The Chinese Government has acclaimed and supported the efforts of the Colombo Conference to promote direct negotiations between China and India. The Chinese Government accepts the Colombo proposals in principle as a basis for meetings between Chinese and Indian officials. The Colombo proposals are ambiguous on some matters of detail, and the Chinese Government has its own interpretation, but it does not make acceptance of its own interpretation a pre-condition for starting the meetings between Chinese and Indian officials. Actually, the Indian Government has its own interpretations too. The Chinese Government hopes that the differences in interpretation will be resolved satisfactorily in the meetings between Chinese and Indian officials.

Question 8: The Indians claim that the clarifications of the Colombo proposals are an inseparable part of these proposals. How do you look at it?

Answer: The Chinese Government cannot agree with this view. The six nations which took part in the Colombo Conference merely adopted the Colombo proposals and never adopted what is called clarifications of these proposals. Madame Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, and Dr. Subandrio, Deputy Chief Minister of Indonesia, came to Peking to clarify the Colombo proposals for the Chinese Government. Later, the Ceylonese Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Sabry, Chairman of the Executive Council of Ministers of the U.A.R., and Mr. Ofori-Atta, Ghanaian Minister of Justice, went to New Delhi to clarify the Colombo proposals for the Indian Government. Actually, there is a great discrepancy between the two clarifications. Obviously, neither of them can be considered inseparable parts of the Colom-

bo proposals. We do not believe that the nations which participated in the Colombo Conference would agree with the view of the Indian Government either.

Question 9: The Indians say that China's maintaining two points of interpretation on the Colombo proposals is tantamount to a complete rejection of the proposals. Would you like to comment on this?

Answer: I consider such an assertion groundless. The Colombo proposals contained six points. The Chinese Government has put forward its own interpretation only in connection with item C of the Second point and with the Third point. We consider all the other points acceptable. Hence, even as to form, it cannot be said that China's two points of interpretation mean a complete rejection of the Colombo proposals.

Furthermore, China has done a great deal in response to the Colombo proposals:

1. The Chinese Government originally stood for a withdrawal of 20 kilometres by the armed forces of each side from the 1959 line of actual control to form a demilitarized area. Now, the Chinese Government has agreed for Chinese frontier guards unilaterally to withdraw 20 kilometres from the entire 1959 line of actual control, while Indian troops keep their existing military positions all along the line.

2. It would be quite natural for the Chinese Government to set up civilian check-posts in the area vacated by the Chinese frontier guards in their 20 kilometre withdrawal. Yet, in order to promote talks between officials of China and India, the Chinese Government has decided to leave vacant four places which are under dispute in the ceasefire arrangements and not even to set up civilian check-posts there. These four places are the

areas in the western sector where India once set up 43 strongpoints, Wuje in the middle sector and the Che Dong area and Longju in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian border.

Mr. Correspondent, you need only recall the three proposals put forward by the Chinese Government on October 24, 1962, and you will realize what great concessions the Chinese Government has made in response to the Colombo proposals.

Question 10: Why can't the Chinese Government accept the Colombo proposals without reservations?

Answer: The Colombo proposals contain contradictions and fallacies in logic. Moreover, they are ambiguous on some matters of detail. Prime Minister Nehru took advantage of this to interpret the Colombo proposals as being favourable to India's position in that it met the so-called Indian demand to restore the status of the boundary as it existed prior to September 8, 1962. In these circumstances, it was all the more impossible for China not to maintain its own interpretation, or not to have some reservations.

The whole purpose of the Colombo Conference was to promote direct negotiations between China and India. The Colombo Conference proposals are merely for the consideration for China and India; they are neither a command, nor an arbitration decision. The Chinese Government is not obliged to accept them *in toto*. Nor do the nations which participated in the Conference consider that China has to accept their proposals *in toto* before direct negotiations can begin between China and India.

China's positive response to the Colombo proposals has opened the door to direct negotiations between China

and India. Whether negotiations can be held soon depends entirely on the attitude of India.

Question 11: What are the prospects for direct negotiations between China and India in the near future?

Answer: It is our hope that the Indian Government will not persist in its unreasonable insistence that the Colombo proposals and the clarifications be accepted *in toto* before preliminary talks can begin and that they will thus make it possible for Chinese and Indian officials to meet immediately. But, frankly speaking, I am not at all sure this will happen. You know that the Chinese Government has been consistently seeking direct negotiations between China and India. But if it can't be done, the Chinese Government is willing to wait patiently.

Question 12: If talks between China and India should fail to materialize for the time being, would fighting break out again along the Sino-Indian border?

Answer: Regardless of whether negotiations can be held soon, a ceasefire has been effected along the border anyway, thanks to the efforts of the Chinese side. Chinese frontier guards are about to complete their planned withdrawal 20 kilometres from the 1959 line of actual control. The Chinese Government has even decided to refrain from setting up civilian check-posts in the places under dispute in the ceasefire arrangements. So long as the Indian side refrains from provocations and does not intrude into these disputed places, the relaxation along the Sino-Indian border will not give way to tension again. After all, Indian clamours for a fight is one thing and real fighting is another. As I see it, a fight along the Sino-Indian border is not likely for the time being. But judging from the present attitude of the In-

dian Government, provocative actions on the part of Indian troops will occur from time to time.

Question 13: How does China regard her long-term relations with India?

Answer: Historically, the Chinese and Indian peoples have always lived together in friendship. There is no fundamental conflict of interest between the two countries. Both China and India are great countries of Asia. We both face urgent tasks of reconstruction to transform the backward state of our economy. We both shoulder heavy responsibilities for consolidating Asian-African solidarity, safeguarding world peace and opposing imperialism. Despite the incessant anti-China clamour of the Indian Government, China has never considered India as her enemy. You, Mr. Correspondent, have visited quite a few places in China. Did you hear any war propaganda directed against India? Did you see any preparation for war against India? I don't believe you did, because it is a fact that nothing of the sort exists here in our country. The Chinese people are friends of the Indian people. The tense relations between China and India were artificially created by the Indian Government alone. This is a very unfortunate situation. But, we do not believe that this state of affairs which run counter to the desires of the Chinese and Indian people can endure for long. The dark clouds which hang now over China and India are bound to disappear. In the long view, the border dispute is only a brief episode in the history of Sino-Indian friendship.

Premier Chou En-lai's Letter to Prime Minister Nehru

April 20, 1963

Peking, April 20, 1963

His Excellency Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru,
Prime Minister of the Republic of India,
NEW DELHI

Your Excellency Respected Prime Minister,

I thank you for your letter of March 5, 1963. Much to my regret, after the Chinese Government made so many efforts towards reconciliation, you have once again rejected the Chinese Government's proposal for the two sides quickly to start direct negotiations on the stabilization of the cease-fire, disengagement and the peaceful settlement of the boundary question.

In your letter, you said that Sino-Indian talks can start only after the Chinese Government has, like the Indian Government, accepted *in toto* the Colombo proposals and the clarifications made by the Ceylonese Prime Minister in New Delhi. I cannot see why you have taken such an attitude which leaves no room for consultation.

Like me, you are aware that the main aim of the Colombo Conference was to promote direct negotiations

between China and India for a peaceful settlement of the boundary question; that the task of the Conference was to mediate, not arbitrate; and that the Conference proposals are merely a recommendation for the consideration of China and India, not a verdict or adjudication which China and India have to accept *in toto*. The Indian Government is, of course, free to accept the Colombo proposals, in part or *in toto*. But I cannot understand why talks cannot start until the Chinese Government, like the Indian Government, has accepted *in toto* the Colombo proposals.

The Colombo Conference did not adopt any document other than the six-point proposals. The clarifications made by the Ceylonese Prime Minister and her colleagues in Peking and New Delhi do not constitute an official document of the Colombo Conference. Therefore, the question of accepting these clarifications as a component of the Colombo proposals does not arise. As it has now been established that the clarifications produced in New Delhi are not even a document prepared by participating nations of the Colombo Conference, it is, all the more, out of the question that they must be accepted.

In your letter you said that it is because of the sincere desire of the Government of India to settle the boundary question peacefully that you accepted the Colombo proposals without any reservations, that is, you accepted *in toto* the Colombo proposals and the so-called clarifications produced in New Delhi, and no longer insisted on the position stated in your letter to me of December 1, 1962, which called for so-called restoration of the state of the boundary that prevailed prior to September 8, 1962. As far as the Chinese Government

is concerned, we would of course be glad if that were indeed the case. But unfortunately it is not so. You said in the Indian Parliament on January 23, 1963 that: "On full consideration of these matters as contained in the Colombo Conference resolutions and their clarifications, we came to the conclusion that these proposals fulfilled the essence of the demand made for the restoration of the status quo prior to 8th September." With regard to the western sector of the Sino-Indian border, you even said: "The Colombo Conference proposals have certain advantages over one which we had previously indicated, that is, the restoration of the 8th September position." At a meeting commemorating the 15th anniversary of the death of Gandhi on January 30, 1963, you said: "When India received the proposals of the Colombo powers we gave them most careful consideration, but we did not react immediately because some of the clauses were not clear," and that "since the clarifications brought the proposals close to India's demand for the restoration of September 8 position, India accepted them *in toto*." Thus, how can it be said that what India calls its unreserved acceptance of the Colombo proposals means that it has ceased to insist on its original stand for the so-called restoration of the state of the boundary prior to September 8? Indeed, is it not because the Indian Government, by exploiting the ambiguities of the Colombo proposals, had interpreted the proposals as conforming with the Indian stand that it ostensibly proclaimed its unreserved acceptance of the Colombo proposals?

It is the Indian Government's persistent demand for so-called restoration of the state of the boundary prior to September 8, 1962 that gave rise to the dispute con-

cerning certain areas in the ceasefire arrangement. But in your letter, you described this dispute between China and India concerning certain areas as one between the Chinese Government and the Colombo Conference nations. This attempt to cover up the fact of the Indian Government's holding to its unreasonable stand by means of such misrepresentations will not succeed. The Colombo proposals are a recommendation made by the six Asian and African countries to China and India to help our two countries settle our dispute through direct negotiations. China and India may each have its own view about the Colombo proposals. Taking an honest attitude, the Chinese Government accepted the Colombo proposals in principle as a basis for direct Sino-Indian negotiations, and at the same time presented its differing opinions as its own interpretation, but reserved them for discussion and resolution in the negotiations, without making acceptance of China's interpretation a precondition to the opening of direct Sino-Indian negotiations. The Colombo Conference nations deemed this to be the Chinese Government's positive response to the Colombo proposals. They did not hold that direct Sino-Indian negotiations can be started only when both China and India accept the Colombo proposals *in toto*. But the Indian Government, while trying to turn the Colombo proposals into an adjudication, attempts to present India's interpretation of them as clarifications by Colombo Conference participants, and to force it not only on the Colombo Conference nations, but also on China. This is a dishonest approach, which also shows that India has no intention whatever to hold negotiations.

You said in your letter that you were prepared, when time comes, to refer the Sino-Indian boundary dispute

to an international body like the International Court of Justice at the Hague. You further said that there could be no fairer and more reasonable approach than this proposal. The Chinese Government is of the opinion that complicated questions involving sovereignty, such as the Sino-Indian boundary question, can be settled only through direct negotiations between the two parties concerned, and absolutely not through any form of arbitration. The Chinese Government has never agreed to refer the Sino-Indian boundary dispute to international arbitration, nor will it ever do so. On August 7, 1961 you stated in the Indian Parliament that "arbitration was not considered a suitable method for settlement of the dispute over 51,000 square mile of Himalayan border land facing Tibet". After that you stated more than once that arbitration is not suitable for disputes over sovereignty. But now, when the Chinese Government has created conditions for direct negotiations between China and India and when all the countries and people concerned for Sino-Indian friendship are eager to see early negotiations between China and India, not only the Indian Government has prevented Sino-Indian negotiations by setting unreasonable pre-conditions but you have suddenly changed your attitude by describing arbitration as the most fair and reasonable approach. This sudden change of attitude is plainly an attempt to cover up the fact that the Indian Government refuses to negotiate.

The Chinese Government has made the most magnanimous efforts to promote a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question. On its own initiative, China has taken the measures of ceasefire and withdrawal, repatriated the sick and wounded captured In-

dian military personnel, returned the captured war materiel of the Indian troops, and vacated the areas where there is a dispute about the ceasefire arrangement and refrained from establishing civilian check-posts there. Of late, the Chinese Government on its own initiative has further decided, and begun, to release and repatriate all the three thousand and more captured Indian military personnel. I wish to remind Your Excellency once again that, as a result of the withdrawal of the Chinese frontier guards, they are now far behind their positions as of September 8, 1962. This is a great regard for India's dignity and self-respect. The Chinese Government has, of course, every right to set up civilian check-posts in the areas where there is a dispute about the ceasefire arrangement, however, in response to the Colombo proposals, it has decided to vacate these areas and refrain from establishing civilian check-posts there. This is another major effort made by the Chinese Government in regard for the dignity and self-respect of both sides, and above all of the Indian side. Anyone making a comparison between what the Chinese Government has done and the views set forth in its statement of October 24, 1962 will see what great concessions China has already made in order to promote a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question. But what has the Indian Government done? Far from making any positive response to the efforts China made on its own initiative, the Indian Government has become even more frenzied in its anti-China clamours, in seeking U.S. military aid and in making war preparations after the border situation was eased. India has continued to violate China's territory and air space along the Sino-Indian border. It has persecuted the Chinese

nationals in India and even gone so far as to throw more than two thousand of them into concentration camps — although part of them are being brought back by ships sent by the Chinese Government, many victimized Chinese nationals are still obstructed from returning to China. It has forced the termination of the Chinese Consulates-General in India. It has placed restrictions on the diplomatic activities of the Chinese Embassy in India. It has unjustifiably taken over the branch establishments of the Bank of China in India. It has applied censorship on mail and cables between China and India which is permissible only when there is a state of war. And it has more overtly instigated the fugitive Tibetan rebels in India to carry out criminal activities against their motherland. I believe that everyone who respects the facts will make a fair judgement as to who truly has the sincerity for a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question.

At present, the situation on the Sino-Indian border has already eased owing to the efforts made by China on its own initiative. Even if negotiations cannot be held for the time being, the Sino-Indian border situation will not become tense again provided the Indian side does not resume provocations. If, after obtaining large quantities of military aid from the United States and placing itself in the position of a country which is in effect aligned, India should again intrude into the areas vacated by the Chinese frontier guards' twenty-kilometre withdrawal on the Chinese side from the line of actual control of November 7, 1959, including the areas where there is a dispute about the ceasefire arrangement, and rekindle flames of war on the Sino-Indian

border, the people of the whole world will see the aggressive nature of such Indian activities even more clearly than before.

Your Excellency Respected Prime Minister! In asking that the Chinese Government, like the Indian Government, should accept *in toto* the Colombo proposals and the so-called clarifications produced in New Delhi as a pre-condition to negotiations, you are actually serving an ultimatum for China to accept the Indian Government's interpretation of the Colombo proposals. This absolutely will not do. In the past you always advised other countries to settle disputes peacefully through negotiations without setting any pre-conditions, why has the Indian Government taken a diametrically opposite attitude towards the Sino-Indian boundary negotiations? Although the Indian Government has taken such an attitude, I urge you once again to consider the proposal that the two sides accept in principle the Colombo proposals as the basis for negotiations and start negotiations immediately on the stabilization of the ceasefire, disengagement and the peaceful settlement of the boundary question, reserving their different interpretations of the Colombo proposals for settlement in the negotiations. This is the hope of the Chinese Government as well as of the people of the whole world. If the Indian Government, owing to its internal and external political requirements, is not prepared to hold negotiations for the time being, the Chinese Government is willing to wait with patience. If, under outside influence, the Indian Government should put blind faith in force and provoke fresh conflicts on the Sino-Indian border, that will be something which the Chinese Government does not want to see, and which will not be

excused by the Chinese and Indian peoples and the people of the whole world.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) **Chou En-lai**
Premier of the State Council of
the People's Republic of China

The Indian Government's Refusal of Negotiations Under the Smokescreen of "Acceptance of the Colombo Proposals *in toto*"

(*Renmin Ribao's* Editorial)

October 13, 1963

Following is a translation of the "Renmin Ribao" editorial published on October 13, 1963, under the title "The Indian Government Has No Sincere Wish at Present for Peaceful Negotiations." — Ed.

In a note to the Chinese Government dated September 6 the Indian Ministry of External Affairs reiterated the "constructive steps" for dealing with the Sino-Indian boundary question, as put forth in its note of April 3. It harped on the shop-worn theme that China "should accept, without reservations, the Colombo proposals".

Recently Prime Minister Nehru himself has also hypocritically said that his government was "keeping the door open for a peaceful settlement of the differences". He still clung, however, to the precondition that China must accept the Colombo proposals *in toto*.

It is clear that the Indian Government is trying to use its demand for "acceptance *in toto* of the Colombo proposals" as a smokescreen to confuse world opinion, so that it may go on refusing to enter into negotiations and create new tension along the Sino-Indian border.

In its reply dated October 9, the Chinese Foreign Ministry forcefully refuted the distortions and vilifications of the Chinese stand made by the Indian Government in its notes mentioned above, and exposed its hypocrisy about “acceptance *in toto* of the Colombo proposals” as well as its despicable aims.

The Indian Government is trying to give world public opinion the wrong impression that it accepts the Colombo proposals “*in toto*”, while the Chinese Government rejects the proposals completely, and that consequently, China, not India, is to blame for refusing to enter into negotiations. In doing so, the Indian Government believes that it has played a smart trick. But facts are facts and it is absolutely impossible to blind the people of the world by means of lies.

The whole world can see that the Chinese Government has consistently advocated the peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian border issue through negotiations. When the Chinese frontier guards hit back in self-defence, they did so because there was no alternative. After the Indian military attacks were beaten back, the Chinese Government promptly took major actions for peace in ordering, on its own initiative, a ceasefire and withdrawal, to help towards bringing the border conflict to an end, re-opening Sino-Indian negotiations and bringing about a peaceful settlement of the border issue.

Adhering to this unswerving stand for peace, the Chinese Government welcomed and supported the Colombo Conference of six Asian and African nations in its efforts to facilitate the holding of direct negotiations between China and India. The Chinese Government accepts in principle the Colombo proposals as the basis for direct negotiations with India in order to

stabilize the ceasefire, effect a disengagement and settle the border issue peacefully.

The Chinese Government has responded positively to the Colombo proposals not only in words, but in deeds. The measures so far taken by the Chinese Government have met and have, in some respects, even exceeded the requirements of the Colombo proposals.

Facts are the best evidence.

1. China effected a ceasefire on its own initiative. It was this ceasefire that provided the Colombo Conference with a basis for its good offices.

2. China withdrew its frontier guards 20 kilometres on its side from the line of actual control of November 7, 1959, not only in the western sector but also in the eastern and middle sectors. This exceeds the requirements of the Colombo proposals.

3. In response to the Colombo Conference efforts, China decided on its own initiative not to set up civilian posts in the disputed areas under the ceasefire arrangements. Thus it has kept the following areas vacated so that these disputes might be settled through negotiations. These areas are those in the western sector where invading Indian troops had established 43 aggressive strong-points, Wuje in the middle sector, and Che Dong and Longju in the eastern sector.

4. The Chinese Government released on its own initiative all the captured Indian officers and men.

5. China returned on its own initiative most of the arms, equipment and other combat materiel captured from the Indian troops.

What the Chinese Government has done greatly exceeds the requirements of the Colombo proposals. It only reserves its own interpretation of a portion of one

of the six articles of the proposals, namely Article II (c), which says about the western sector of the Sino-Indian border: "Pending a final solution of the border dispute, the area vacated by the Chinese military withdrawal will be a demilitarized zone to be administered by civilian posts of both sides to be agreed upon, without prejudice to the rights of the previous presence of both India and China in that area."

This provision is vague, and it would be hard to avoid different interpretations. In the western sector, all the areas vacated by Chinese troops are Chinese territory, including those places where the Indian troops had broken the status quo on the border and established 43 aggressive strong-points. It is unreasonable to assert that India has the right to set up civilian posts there simply because she had once invaded and occupied these places. This would be contrary to the principle acknowledged by all the countries participating in the Colombo Conference that the status quo on the border must not be changed by the use of force.

The Chinese Government has never concealed its own views. It has explained them to all the Colombo Conference countries. Not a single one of these countries considers that by making this reservation, the Chinese Government has rejected the Colombo proposals. On the contrary, they all consider the Chinese Government's attitude towards the Colombo proposals positive and co-operative.

Incontrovertible facts show that in order to seek a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question, the Chinese Government has realized most of the Colombo proposals by its actions. But what has been

done by the Indian Government which has been talking glibly about its “acceptance *in toto* of the Colombo proposals”?

Let us have a look at the facts.

Following the Chinese frontier guards’ ceasefire and withdrawal, the Indian troops again advanced and time and again intruded into Chinese territory by crossing the line of actual control in the western, middle and eastern sectors. As many as 30 cases of Indian encroachments and provocations have occurred since the Chinese side ceased fire on its own initiative. In addition, Indian aircraft have frequently intruded into China’s air space for reconnoitring and provocative activities.

At the same time, the Indian Government has taken a number of anti-China measures intended to exacerbate its relations with China. It has brutally persecuted law-abiding Chinese residents in India and compelled China to withdraw its Consulates-General in India. It has restricted the normal diplomatic activities of the Chinese Embassy in India, and taken over unwarrantedly a branch and an agency of the Bank of China in India. The Indian Government and Prime Minister Nehru himself have unceasingly mouthed big lies about Chinese “invasion” and “massing of troops”, for the purpose of keeping up a war atmosphere at home.

The Colombo Conference had the aim of stabilizing the ceasefire, bringing about a disengagement and facilitating the holding of direct Sino-Indian negotiations. What the Indian Government has been doing, however, has been to keep the ceasefire unstable and the armed forces in contact and to poison the atmosphere for direct negotiations. All this can only show that the Indian Government has no sincere wish at all

for a peaceful settlement through negotiations of the border issue with China.

The Indian Government now pretends that it has accepted the Colombo proposals without reservation and *in toto* and insists that China must do the same, otherwise there can be no negotiations. This position of the Indian Government is untenable and hypocritical.

Of course, the Indian Government has the right to accept the Colombo proposals *in toto*, but it is entirely unreasonable for the Indian Government to insist that China must accept the Colombo proposals *in toto* before any negotiations can be held. Of course, the Colombo Conference would like to see its proposals accepted completely by both China and India, but the conference countries have never maintained that the two sides can hold negotiations only when the conference proposals are accepted *in toto*. On the contrary, more than one Colombo Conference participant has expressed the view that even if the proposals were only partially accepted, the two countries could still begin negotiations. By insisting on China's total acceptance of the proposals, the Indian Government is trying to turn them into a kind of arbitral award given by an international court and purposely putting the Colombo Conference participants in the position of arbitrators, while in fact they are mediators and wish to remain as mediators only.

Moreover, has the Indian Government really accepted the Colombo proposals *in toto*? The fact is that it has not done so. The attitude of the Indian Government towards them is by no means one of unreserved total acceptance. After the proposals were adopted in Colombo on December 12, 1962, the Indian Government did not make known its attitude towards

them for a considerable length of time. It said that the proposals were not clear and needed clarification. Later, it once expressed acceptance of the proposals in principle. It was only when the Ceylonese Prime Minister and others visited New Delhi on January 14, 1963, and the so-called clarifications of the Colombo proposals were produced that the Indian Government expressed complete acceptance of them. In Nehru's own words, "when India received the proposals of the Colombo powers we gave them most careful consideration, but we did not react immediately because some of the clauses were not clear"; and, "since the clarifications brought the proposals close to India's demand for the restoration of the September 8 position India accepted them *in toto*." (Speech at a public meeting on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the death of Gandhi, January 30, 1963.)

The Indian Government's so-called acceptance of the Colombo proposals *in toto* actually means accepting the Colombo proposals plus the so-called clarifications produced in New Delhi. Herein lies the whole secret of the matter. The so-called clarifications produced in New Delhi were drafted by the Indian Government and written in its own words as a summary of the discussions in New Delhi. There is authoritative proof of this. Therefore, the so-called clarifications are in fact the Indian Government's own interpretation of the Colombo proposals, in particular, of Article II (c). The clarifications not only differ in substance from those made by the Prime Minister of Ceylon when she was in Peking, but also differ widely from the original provisions of the Colombo proposals. According to the Colombo proposals, the demilitarized zone in the western sector is "to be admin-

istered by civilian posts of both sides to be agreed upon.” This provision, though unreasonable, still leaves room for settlement between the two sides through negotiations. But the Indian Government has changed this provision through its own interpretation into one to the effect that the demilitarized zone in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border “will be administered by civilian posts of both sides”. Furthermore, it regards this arbitrary stipulation as “a substantive part of the Colombo Conference proposals. It is as to the location, the number of posts and their composition that there has to be an agreement between the two Governments of India and China”. Thus there is no longer any room for negotiation between the two sides. By insisting that the clarifications produced in New Delhi should be accepted as a legal document along with the Colombo proposals, the Indian Government is in fact trying to make the Colombo Conference countries partial to India. This can only be regarded as an attempt by the Indian Government to force its will on others.

There are differences between China and India regarding the Colombo proposals. But they are not in the least as the Indian Government has represented them to be, as if India had accepted the Colombo proposals *in toto* whereas China had rejected them *in toto*. On the contrary, both China and India have their own interpretations of the proposals. China reserves its own interpretation but does not insist on its acceptance by India as a precondition for the opening of negotiations. But India is passing off its own interpretation as a legal document of the Colombo Conference and insisting on its acceptance by China as a precondition for the opening of negotiations. We believe that so long as both sides

are sincere, the different interpretations regarding the Colombo proposals can be straightened out in a way fair and reasonable for both sides through negotiations. The Indian Government's insistence on China's accepting its own interpretation of the Colombo proposals shows that in fact it has no wish to negotiate whatsoever and is unwilling peacefully to settle the Sino-Indian border question through negotiations.

It is not true that the Indian Government has completely accepted the Colombo proposals. Its clamorous demand that China must completely accept the Colombo proposals is merely designed to cover up the fact that it rejects negotiations and continues to create tension on the Sino-Indian border. All people who are unbiased and respect the facts should be able to see through this clumsy trick of the Indian Government.

It is well known that the tension on the Sino-Indian border has long been relaxed thanks to China's peaceful measures in effecting ceasefire and withdrawal on its own initiative. At any rate, thanks to the efforts of the Chinese side, a separation belt has already appeared all along the Sino-Indian border disengaging the armed forces of both sides. This is an important guarantee for maintaining the relaxation of the border situation. China will never carry out military provocation on the border. Tension will never be created by the Chinese side. Obviously, there can be no tension along the Sino-Indian border so long as the Indian side refrains from making further military provocations.

But the Indian Government apparently has no intention to re-open Sino-Indian negotiations, but will continue its provocations and create new tension on the Sino-Indian border with a view to suppressing the

people at home, begging for aid from abroad and joining in the intensified anti-China campaign of U.S. imperialism and modern revisionism. Indian Defence Minister Chavan admitted in the Indian Parliament on September 9 that India was vigorously engaged in large-scale war preparations, that military supplies kept pouring into India from the United States and the Soviet Union and that the "new equipment" from abroad was "reaching the troops in the forward areas". These indications warrant vigilance against the possibility of the Indian Government launching fresh and still more serious military provocations on the Sino-Indian border.

The Government and people of China have not the least wish to see tension revived on the Sino-Indian border. We demand that the Indian side stop its border encroachments and provocations so that the border situation can remain relaxed. Should the Indian Government, under the instigation of the U.S. 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 of today is very different from what it was a year ago. We are convinced that any aggressive acts on the part of the Indian Government in rekindling border conflicts will be sternly condemned by world opinion.

The Chinese Government stands steadfastly for the peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian border question through negotiation. We are ready to sit down and negotiate with the Indian Government at any time. If the Indian Government is not yet willing to negotiate

at the moment, we will wait patiently. It is our belief that the Sino-Indian border question will eventually be settled peacefully no matter how long it may take. The people of China and India will certainly live together in peace.

Premier Chou En-lai's Talk on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question

(Excerpts of His Speech at the Cairo Press Conference)

December 20, 1963

Dealing with the efforts made by the U.A.R. and other Colombo Conference countries to promote Sino-Indian reconciliation, Premier Chou En-lai stated: Since the Colombo Conference, China has appreciated and supported the efforts made by the U.A.R. and other Colombo Conference countries to mediate in the Sino-Indian border dispute and bring about direct negotiations between China and India. China backs their continued efforts to bring about direct talks between China and India at an early date and to settle the border dispute peacefully.

A correspondent of an Indian paper asked whether China was ready to renounce its reservations about the Colombo proposals. Premier Chou En-lai replied that he did not think there was any question of renouncing reservations in this matter. This was because the Colombo proposals were recommendations put forward by the mediating countries and not an award given by arbitrating powers. This was what all the government heads of the six Colombo Conference countries had told him. He said that the attitude of the Chinese Govern-

ment is that in principle it accepts the Colombo proposals as the basis for direct Sino-Indian negotiations, and that China and India should come to the conference table to settle the border question peacefully without advancing any preconditions.

Premier Chou En-lai said: The measures taken by China on its own initiative since November last year have far exceeded the requirements set forth in the Colombo proposals. For instance, the proposals asked China to withdraw 20 kilometres from the western sector of the Sino-Indian boundary, while China, acting in accordance with its own statement, withdrew 20 kilometres along the whole line, in the western sector, the middle sector, and the eastern sector. This has enabled the Chinese frontier guards and civilian administrative personnel to disengage from the Indian side and to avoid further border clashes. That is why, generally speaking, the Sino-Indian border situation has been quiet in the past year and the tension has been eased.

He added: Another example is the further step taken by China in vacating the areas on the Chinese side of the 1959 line of actual control which had been occupied by India and also other areas disputed by the two sides in their ceasefire arrangements, without even setting up any civilian check-posts there, pending a negotiated settlement with India. These initiatives were taken to create a favourable atmosphere for direct negotiations between the two countries, to bring about a peaceful solution of the boundary question. In taking these steps, China has taken into consideration the dignity and prestige of both sides. China suggests that both sides sit down at the conference table without setting any preconditions, that during the negotiations either

side may put forward any proposals, and that the two sides may also discuss the specific details of the Colombo proposals as well as their interpretations of these proposals.

Statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China

October 9, 1964

Of late the Indian Prime Minister and the Indian Minister of External Affairs have made successive statements in Cairo attacking China on the Sino-Indian boundary question. The Chinese Government cannot but regret that the Indian leaders should have taken advantage of the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held in Cairo to make anti-Chinese clamours. The Chinese Government firmly believes that such a line of action taken by India runs diametrically counter to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the states to the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Chinese Government has already published a large amount of documents concerning the Sino-Indian boundary question and has no intention of repeating them here. It will only make the following statement in refutation of the distortions and slanders made by the Indian leaders.

1. The Indian Prime Minister's allegation that China has made no positive or friendly response to the Colombo proposals is a travesty of the facts. In order to promote a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question, the Chinese side adopted a series of measures such as the ceasefire and withdrawal effected on its own

initiative, which have far exceeded what was requested in the Colombo proposals. The Colombo Conference nations know, and the Indian Government is aware too, that had it not been for these measures all taken on China's own initiative, the Chinese frontier guards could not possibly have withdrawn in Chinese territory 20 kilometres from the line of actual control along the whole Sino-Indian border and the present relaxation on the Sino-Indian border could not have been achieved. While talking glibly about accepting the Colombo proposals *in toto*, the Indian Government has in fact not only done nothing to relax the border situation, but has incessantly intruded into Chinese territory for harassment and provocations in an attempt to create new tensions.

2. The Chinese Government has from the very outset stated that it accepted the Colombo proposals as a basis for direct Sino-Indian negotiations. The responsibility for the failure up to now to hold negotiations lies entirely with the Indian side. The Indian External Affairs Minister asserted that in taking the position as it does, China wanted to benefit from aggression. This is turning the truth upside down. On the contrary, the fact is that India is still illegally occupying more than 90,000 square kilometres of Chinese territory south of the so-called McMahon Line, whereas China has never occupied a single inch of India's territory. Is it not clear who has been committing aggression? As for India's demand for China's withdrawal from the seven civilian posts as a precondition for negotiations, it is utterly unreasonable. The land on which these civilian posts are situated has always been Chinese territory under effective jurisdiction of the Chinese Government,

and no Indian troops have ever been there. What right has India to ask China to withdraw? China will not withdraw from any of the seven civilian posts. On the contrary, China has every right to ask India to withdraw from the more than 90,000 square kilometres of China's territory south of the illegal McMahon Line. However, in order to seek a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question through negotiations, China has up to now not raised such a demand as a precondition for negotiations.

3. The Chinese Government always welcomes the efforts at impartial mediation on the part of the Colombo Conference nations in promoting direct negotiations between China and India without involving themselves in the dispute. And the Chinese Government has no objection to any new consultations by the Colombo Conference nations to this end. But as is well known, the consent of both interested parties must be obtained before there can be effective mediation. And any proposal put forward by the mediators can only be a recommendation for the consideration of both sides and must in no case be an arbitral award to be imposed on either side. At present, exploiting the opportunity of his participation in the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in Cairo, the Indian Prime Minister is making distortions and slanders about China over the Sino-Indian boundary question, and is doing his utmost to make use of the Colombo Conference nations to bring pressure to bear upon China. Moreover, the Indian Prime Minister is in Cairo while the Chinese Premier is not. The Chinese Government holds that in these circumstances to motivate consultations among the Colombo Conference nations behind China's back is unfair and therefore the

Chinese Government cannot agree. Such consultations not only cannot be of any help to the promotion of direct Sino-Indian negotiations, but will place more obstacles in their way, making it more difficult for the six Colombo Conference nations to conduct mediation in the future. Any substantive discussion about the Sino-Indian boundary question must be held with China present. Any mediation or any proposal made without the agreement and not in the presence of China will be unacceptable to the Chinese Government.

4. As a matter of fact, India does not really want to settle the Sino-Indian boundary question through negotiations. If it really has a desire for negotiations, it may raise in the course of the negotiations questions which it thinks necessary to raise, just as China may in the negotiations raise questions which it thinks necessary to raise. The Indian Government is fully aware that China will not agree to its unreasonable demand for China's withdrawal from the seven civilian posts as a precondition for negotiations. It also knows full well that the Colombo Conference nations will not agree that the Colombo proposals should be regarded as an arbitral award to be accepted by China *in toto*. And it knows equally well that China will never submit to any international pressure. In continuously calling for the acceptance of the Colombo proposals *in toto*, China's withdrawal from the seven civilian posts, etc., the Indian Government aims solely at opposing China, so as to divert the attention of the people at home, seek U.S. and Soviet military aid, and pursue its policy of double alignment under the cover of non-alignment. This practice of the Indian leaders is being seen through by more and more countries. The Sino-Indian border sit-

uation has on the whole eased. China does not feel threatened by India which has gained large quantities of foreign aid, it is the other neighbours of India that are really being threatened. The Chinese Government hereby declares once again that if the Indian Government really wishes to hold negotiations, the Chinese Government is ready to start them with the Indian Government at any time and at any place with the Colombo proposals as a basis. Otherwise, mere talk about reconciliation will be of no avail.

ANNEXURES:

Proposals of the Colombo Conference of Six Asian-African Nations

1. The Conference considers that the existing de facto ceasefire period is a good starting point for a peaceful settlement of the Indian Chinese conflict.

2. (a) With regard to the Western Sector, the Conference would like to make an appeal to the Chinese Government to carry out their 20 kilometres withdrawal of their military posts as has been proposed in the letter of Prime Minister Chou En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru of November 21 and November 28, 1962.

(b) The Conference would make an appeal to the Indian Government to keep their existing military position.

(c) Pending a final solution of the border dispute, the area vacated by the Chinese military withdrawal will be a demilitarized zone to be administered by civilian posts of both sides to be agreed upon, without prejudice to the rights of the previous presence of both India and China in that area.

3. With regard to the Eastern Sector, the Conference considers that the line of actual control in the areas recognized by both the Governments could serve as a ceasefire line to their respective positions. Remaining

areas in this sector can be settled in their future discussions.

4. With regard to the problems of the Middle Sector, the Conference suggests that they will be solved by peaceful means, without resorting to force.

5. The Conference believes that these proposals, which could help in consolidating the ceasefire, once implemented, should pave the way for discussions between representatives of both parties for the purpose of solving problems entailed in the ceasefire position.

6. The Conference would like to make it clear that a positive response for the proposed appeal will not prejudice the position of either of the two Governments as regards its conception of the final alignment of the boundaries.

The So-called Delhi Clarifications Drafted by the Indian Government

Western Sector:

1. The withdrawal of Chinese forces proposed by Colombo Conference will be 20 kilometre as proposed by Prime Minister Chou En-lai to Prime Minister Nehru in statement of Chinese Government dated November 21 and Prime Minister Chou En-lai's letter of November 28, 1962 i.e. from the line of actual control between the two sides as of November 7, 1959 as defined in maps 3 and 5 circulated by Chinese Government.
2. The existing military posts which forces of Government of India will keep to will be on and up to the line indicated in (1) above.
3. The demilitarized zone of 20 kilometres created by Chinese military withdrawals will be administered by civilian posts of both sides. This is a substantive part of the Colombo Conference proposal. It is as to the location, the number of posts and their composition that there has to be an agreement between the two Governments of India and China.

Eastern Sector:

The Indian forces can, in accordance with the Colombo Conference proposals, move right up to the south of

the line of actual control, that is the McMahon Line, except for the two areas on which there is difference of opinion between the Governments of India and China. The Chinese forces similarly can move right up to the north of the McMahon Line except for these two areas. The two areas referred to as the remaining areas in Colombo Conference proposals, arrangements in regard to which are to be settled between the Governments of India and China, according to the Colombo Conference proposals, are Chedong or the Thagla ridge area and the Longju area, in which cases there is a difference of opinion as to the line of actual control between the two Governments.

Middle Sector:

The Colombo Conference desired that the status quo in this sector should be maintained and neither side should do anything to disturb the status quo.

中印边界問題
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