

June 23, 1952

**Summary of Conversation between Chinese Premier
Zhou Enlai and Indian Commissioner T.N. Kaul**

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Summary:

Zhang Hanfu and K.M. Panikkar discuss the status of Tibet between China and India.

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Transcript - English

With regard to the relations between China and India in Tibet, China, Mr. Kaul, Charge d'Affaires, communicated the views of the Government of India on 23 June. These views referred to the conversation between His Excellency Premier Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai] and His Excellency Ambassador Panikkar. I hereby inform you of the necessary clarifications on some points in that conversation and the views of the Chinese Government on the subject as follows:

On 14 June, H.E. Premier Chou En-lai expressed to Ambassador Panikkar that for the purpose of settling the question about Sino-Indian relations in Tibet, China, the Chinese Government would like first of all to state a principle, and at the same time to solve a specific problem, and then to follow this up with the successive solutions of other specific problems.

Ambassador Panikkar then stated in reply that the seven points, which he presented to Vice-Minister Chang Han-fu [Zhang Hanfu] on 11 February 1952 and which he requested to be conveyed to H.E. the Premier, were only a report on the existing conditions, without implying that those conditions should be preserved. He said that on the contrary, the Government of India was very anxious to remove those conditions through negotiations; for example, the 200 Indian troops stationed at Yutung [Yadang], and the postal and telegraphic establishments of India in Lassa [Lhasa]. He further said that the Government of India would be willing to transfer these to the Chinese Government as soon as the latter was ready to take them over. He went on to say that what the Government of India was concerned about was ordinary trade and the problem of Indian nationals.

H.E. Premier Chou En-lai considered that to proceed in this manner was very proper, and felt that the existing situation of Sino-Indian relationship in Tibet, China, was a scar left by Britain in the course of her past aggression against China. For all of this, the new Government of India was not at all responsible. The privileges that arose from the unequal treaties between the British Government and the old Chinese Government were no longer in existence, and therefore, the relations between the new China and the new Government of India in Tibet, China should be built up anew through negotiations. He stated that this was the principle that should first of all be stated.

He went on to say that to settle the question of Sino-Indian relationship in Tibet, China, time and proper steps were required. Therefore, the Chinese Government proposed that the Indian mission, previously stationed in Lassa, be changed into an Indian Consulate General in Lassa. He said that this was a specific problem which could first of all be solved, and said that of course, other specific problems were still pending, as for instance, commercial intercourse, trade, Indian nationals, and the withdrawal of Indian troops -- all of which could be solved in steps through negotiations as soon as China was ready to do so. He said that otherwise, in some matters, such as post and telegraph, your withdrawal before our taking over would produce a vacuum.

H.E. Premier Chou En-lai, at the same time, intimated to H.E. Ambassador Panikkar that at the site of the local government of Tibet, there was a representative of the Central People's Government of China, and that under this representative an assistant for foreign affairs was appointed. He said that in the future, after the Indian Consulate General was set up, it could establish formal contact with the assistant, and that the Chinese and the Indian Governments would then have a formal relationship in Tibet, China.

With regard to the question of pilgrimage made by the Indian people to Tibet, H.E. Premier Chou En-lai stated that after the establishment of the Indian Consulate General in Lassa, ways might be found to settle this question. Ambassador Panikkar was of the opinion that the question of pilgrimage was one which could be settled

very easily. He said that the Chinese Government might set up gates at the border where passes might be issued to the pilgrims on their arrival, and where their arms might be temporarily held in custody. He continued that when the pilgrims departed from Tibet, the passes might be withdrawn and their arms returned to them. He went on to say that this was the procedure that the Government of India applied to pilgrims from outside, Premier Chou En-lai expressed our consent to Indian pilgrims coming to Tibet, for, on one hand it involved the religious belief of the people, and on the other it bespoke the intimate contact between the Chinese and Indian peoples.

In the course of his conversation with Ambassador Panikkar, H.E. Premier Chou En-lai stated that the Chinese Government would like to establish a Consulate General in Bombay.

From what Mr. Kaul, Charge d'Affaires, said during the conversation of 23 June, the Chinese Government learned that the Government of India accepted the proposal of the Chinese Government to establish an Indian Consulate General in Lassa as the first step toward the settlement of the question of Sino-Indian relations in Tibet, and that it also agreed to the establishment of a Consulate General in Bombay by the Chinese Government. The Chinese Government wishes to express the opinion that the establishment of Consulates General by both sides should be effected as soon as possible. As soon as the Indian Consulate General in Lassa is established, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese Government and the Indian Embassy to China may continue negotiations for the settlement of the question of Indian commercial agents in Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok, mentioned by Mr. Kaul, Charge d'Affaires, and other questions about Sino-Indian relations in Tibet, China.