

July 19, 1961

**Memorandum of Conversation: Deputy Foreign
Minister Geng Biao and Director Zhang Wenji with
Indian Ambassador to China Parthasarathy**

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Summary:

Chinese Foreign Minister Geng Biao and Zhang Wenji have a conversation with Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy discussing current border disputes between India and China.

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Translation - English

Memorandum of Conversation: Deputy Minister Geng, Director Zhang Wenji with Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy

1. Director Zhang reiterates the relevant key points of Premier Zhou's conversation with R.K. Nehru;
2. Indian ambassador emphasizes strong feelings about Kashmir and states that China should not discuss border issues with Pakistan. Geng and Zhang make rebuttal.

Time: 19 July 1961, evening

Location: Sichuan Hotel [Of the Foreign Ministry's Asian Affairs Department Number One]

[Additional] Chinese attendees: Deputy Minister Huang Zhen, Ge Buhai

[Additional] Indian attendees: Attaché Banerji

Interpreter and Recorder: Zhong Shukong

(Deputy Minister Geng Biao and his wife arranged an informal dinner for Indian Ambassador Parthasarathy and his wife as a farewell. When the meal was finished, the two sides had the following conversation)

Director Zhang Wenji: This time the Ambassador accompanied Secretary R.K. Nehru to Shanghai to meet with Premier Zhou and Vice-Premier Chen Yi. Premier Zhou gave a very sincere long talk, expounding on the Chinese government's position. What Premier Zhou said was very important; for the past two or three days I have also had a frank exchange of views with the Ambassador. Tomorrow you will leave your post, and I would like to reiterate to the Ambassador the four points that Premier Zhou raised concerning the Sino-Indian border: (1) China has never made territorial demands of India with regard to the Sino-Indian border. China's position has always been: [We] are willing to pursue a solution to the Sino-Indian border issue through friendly negotiation; but India itself has made territorial demands, then turned around and criticized China for making so-called territorial demands. (2) China has already, on its own initiative, stopped patrolling border areas; this was done in order to avoid potential clashes, but India continues to advance with armed patrols. (3) China's planes have never flown over Indian territory, but India has repeatedly made groundless criticisms of China. (4) Concerning the Sino-Indian officials' reports, India released them, and immediately affirmed the Indian side's argument; we did not take any similar action, or make rebuttals against India, in order to avoid upsetting the two countries' relations. Can it be said that India's ill-considered provocation of China is for the sake of friendliness between the two countries? As director of the department in charge, I wish to tell the Ambassador frankly that the aforementioned actions of the Indian government are hard to understand; they are not appropriate. Overall, I'm optimistic about the prospects for Sino-Indian relations; but on these specific issues, I cannot but be concerned by the Indian side's actions.

□Premier Zhou has already spoken very clearly concerning India's relations with Bhutan and Sikkim: China respects India's relations with Bhutan and Sikkim; problems between Bhutan, Sikkim and India are matters between you, Bhutan and Sikkim, and we will not interfere. You ask, "What does 'respect' mean?" You also say that Bhutan and Sikkim have treaty relations with India; fine, we respect the treaty relations between you. I can tell the Ambassador frankly that the way in which India brings up the issue of Bhutan and Sikkim with China - especially Mr. R.K. Nehru's way of raising the issue - gave me the impression that you want to use China to put pressure on Bhutan and Sikkim. I cannot but point out that Mr. R.K. Nehru's raising the issue of Bhutan and Sikkim was difficult to understand.

Indian Ambassador: Please allow me to interrupt a moment. It is absolutely not

India's intention to use China to put pressure on Bhutan and Sikkim. I don't know where Mr. Director got this impression?

Director Zhang: There are currently no problems with Bhutan and Sikkim's China borders, but the Indian side insists that China discuss these issues with India; [it] wants to create a situation where China "solves the issue of Bhutan and Sikkim's Chinese borders" with India, then have Bhutan and Sikkim accept it. Is the situation not plain enough?

□Third, regarding the Sino-Pakistani border issue. Premier Zhou has also spoken very clearly on this. Pakistan and China, in actuality, share borders; Pakistan proposes discussing borders with us, it's an independent nation that has diplomatic relations with China, it made the proposal, we can't very well say we're not going to consider it. Does India want to see relations between China and Pakistan get tense? This is a major issue, and we cannot do other than consider and research it; we have not yet started negotiations with Pakistan.

□Mr. R.K Nehru compares Kashmir to China's Taiwan; this is very inappropriate. India and Pakistan became two independent countries through partition, and both their governments are legal governments; Kashmir is an unresolved dispute left over from the time of Indo-Pakistani partition. Taiwan is a part of China's territory, how can it be compared to Kashmir? America's plot to [have] "two Chinas" is extremely unpopular, and something that the Chinese people firmly oppose; at the same time, we believe any nation that follows the American imperialists in their "two Chinas" plot will come to no good end. Taiwan is China's territory, the Chinese people must liberate Taiwan, and any form of "Two Chinas" plot is something the Chinese people resolutely oppose. The Ambassador has been in China three years; I believe you must be very clear about this unswerving position of the Chinese government and people. (Indian ambassador: Yes, I'm very clear.) Of course, no matter what tricks the U.S. uses in the "Two Chinas" plot, we are not afraid. The American government's policy of hostility toward China can never stop China's continued development. As a friend, I'm willing to share these inner thoughts and feelings frankly with the Ambassador.

Indian Ambassador: Thank you for sharing these frank words with me again. I want to discuss two issues. First, concerning Bhutan and Sikkim. As you know, Bhutan and Sikkim, as two sovereign nations, signed treaties with India; based on these treaty relations, India has a responsibility to manage Bhutan and Sikkim's diplomatic affairs on their behalf. If in saying "respect" just now you meant respect for India's treaty relations with Bhutan and Sikkim, I think that's a step forward in clarifying matters. Because in the past there was some confusion on this issue; you have two ways of putting things: one is "[we] respect India's relations with Bhutan and Sikkim," and the other is "[we] respect India's proper relations with Bhutan and Sikkim" - the explanation of the word "proper" has caused some confusion. So I've said that's a step forward in clarifying matters. Here there are two specific relevant issues. First, during the meeting between Chinese and Indian officials, you refused to discuss the question of [China's] Bhutan and Sikkim borders; your side's argument was that they are not borders between the two countries of China and India, and I have no objections to that argument. But when Bhutan has already mentioned, in accordance with the treaty, that it wishes to talk with China about movement across the border, [and] if there has been no such discussion in the past couple of meetings between Chinese and Indian officials, shouldn't India's Foreign Ministry act in accordance with the treaty and arrange with China's Foreign Ministry representatives on Bhutan's behalf for another discussion? I think it should. Secondly, when the Indian side handles some foreign affairs issues for Bhutan and Sikkim on the basis of the treaty - issues like sending couriers, etc - India raises them with China in diplomatic notes, but the Chinese side never gives an answer; the impression it gives us is: China does not recognize that India can manage diplomatic affairs on Bhutan and Sikkim's behalf. I don't wish to argue with Mr. Director, but hope you will do as Premier Zhou says -

put yourself in our place and consider this problem.

□Second, with regard to Kashmir. I wish to tell Mr. Director that there are strong feelings in all of India on this question. R.K. Nehru has said that the Indian people's feelings about Kashmir are as strong as the Chinese people's feelings about Taiwan. He also admits that it was not at all his intention to compare Kashmir to Taiwan. Certainly, the Indian people strongly resent Pakistan's occupation of the northern half of Kashmir. In India's view, Pakistan has no borders with China; to be frank, India thinks Pakistan and China cannot manage the borders of a third country. I hope Mr. Director will remember this point. We know about your dispatching sentinels to border areas, but if it goes beyond that, if you state that you are willing to consider negotiating borders with Pakistan, there will be a sharp reaction on India's part. Under those circumstances, India cannot be blamed for the consequences that occur. I have already said frankly to Mr. Director that India is dissatisfied with China's attitude toward Kashmir's legally becoming a part of India; the Soviet Union and many other countries acknowledged that Kashmir has already legally become part of India, and you have never acknowledged it. If China negotiates borders with Pakistan, it means that not only does China not recognize the fact that Kashmir has become part of India, it has, on the contrary, given recognition to Pakistan's illegal occupation of Kashmir. That would provoke an intense reaction from India.

□Just now while making toasts at the banquet table, I said I was optimistic about the prospects for Sino-Indian relations. But there are, after all, some thorny issues to be managed - it will require patience and time, and neither side can be anxious for quick results.

Deputy Minister Geng: I have listened to the conversation between the Ambassador and Director Zhang. Director Zhang, as head of the responsible department, reiterated the key points of Premier Zhou's words to R.K. Nehru in order to aid the Ambassador's recollection; Director Zhang's mood of concern for Sino-Indian relations is totally understandable. (Indian ambassador: Yes, it is.) The mood of Your Excellency, as India's ambassador to China, in saying [what you just did], is also totally understandable. Just now while toasting at the banquet table, I said that I appreciated something R.K. Nehru said this time, that China and India should both "reconsider" [the issues]. I believe that on the basis of reconsideration, as long as both sides work hard together, an amicable solution to the issues can gradually be reached. Our colleagues at the Foreign Ministry are optimistic about the prospects for Sino-Indian relations, and believe the dark clouds will be dispersed. What is crucial is that both sides work together. That is my overall view.

□Just now the ambassador said some things, and as a friend, I would like to talk a little about my opinion. First, concerning the issue of feelings. The Ambassador said that India has strong feelings about the Kashmir issue; I understand this situation. I hope that the Ambassador can understand the mood of the Chinese people. After the Tibetan rebellion the Dalai Lama went to India; several tens of thousands of rebel bandits also live in India, and conduct activities all over; the Chinese people are very unhappy and indignant about this. [I] ask the Ambassador to imagine for a moment, if one day a stream of anti-government armed forces or an anti-government figure from India led a bunch of people over here to China and the Chinese government sheltered them and let them engage in anti-Indian activities in areas close to India, what would be the mood of the Indian people? Of course, if one applies diplomatic language to these matters, saying it is giving [help] to political refugees, etc, one can make an eloquent argument; but the Chinese people know this is diplomatic language; the Chinese people feel very unhappy about this, and cannot help but wonder: What is the purpose of sheltering these rebel bandits? I hope the Ambassador will think this over from [our] point of view, and understand the Chinese people's mood on this.

□Secondly, regarding the issue of Kashmir. India and Pakistan were once one nation;

after Partition they became two sovereign nations, like twins, two brothers. As for Kashmir, that is a dispute the British deliberately left for India and Pakistan at the time of Partition; this is no secret. My personal opinion is that if it had been decided at the time that Kashmir would go to India, or to Pakistan, or one half to each, there would never have been the Kashmir dispute there is today. Since Britain has created this problem, what should be done to resolve it? We have always believed that it should be resolved through friendly negotiations between India and Pakistan, and foreign countries should not interfere. Of course, there are now some who want to use this dispute to reach their goal of interfering. But only negotiation between you two brother nations can resolve this issue. Just now the Ambassador spoke about the issue of the Indian side's feelings. I was ambassador to Pakistan for three and a half years; how are their feelings about the Kashmir dispute not strong? They demand that things be done this way or that. It's just that their story is different from yours. So, the best course of action is still for India and Pakistan to negotiate and resolve their differences of opinion, to negotiate and resolve this problem. This suggestion of ours is beneficial for resolving the Kashmir issue.

Thirdly, regarding the Sino-Pakistani border issue. China's set policy is that [it] is willing to establish friendly relations with all Asian and African nations on the basis of the Five Principles. Border issues have been left over [to us] by history; if [we] do not resolve them it's sometimes easy for problems to occur, which is not good for harmonious neighborly relations. So we are willing to resolve border issues with all concerned nations through friendly negotiation. The Sino-Burmese border issue has already been amicably resolved; we also wish to resolve things with India through friendly negotiation. Since Pakistan and China do border each other in some parts, and it proposed negotiating border issues with China, we must research and consider [the matter]. Whatever the views of the Indian government, the actual situation is: there is a border between China and Pakistan. On this side of the border there are Chinese people, and on that side are Pakistanis; to put it more precisely, on this side there are Chinese sentries and on that side are Pakistani sentries holding guns. How can we ignore these kinds of actual circumstances? Of course, we understand that the Sino-Pakistani border is a major issue; Pakistan raised it, and we have to research and consider it. Our position is clear. I was thinking these thoughts to myself, and I've told you all of them frankly.

Indian Ambassador: Thank you for Your Excellency's frank words.

Director Zhang: I'd like to add a few words more. I have two points of advice for the Ambassador on the Kashmir issue. First, when you bring up the Kashmir dispute, don't compare it to China's Taiwan, because these two issues are entirely different in nature, as explained earlier. This kind of comparison will only upset the Chinese people. Second, one cannot say that the whole world except for China supports India's position on the Kashmir issue. That is not at all the case. For example, the wording of the communiqué on talks between Kennedy and Ayub [Khan] a few days ago did not support India's position on the Kashmir issue; it cannot be said that America has a better attitude toward India on the Kashmir issue than China does. [I'm] just giving an example. We advocate the two countries of India and Pakistan resolving [the issue] through negotiation; this is beneficial for resolving the issue.

Indian Ambassador: Please excuse me for borrowing a saying from the philosopher Rousseau; America and China's attitudes toward the Kashmir issue are like Rousseau's "Two people at [opposite] extremes happened to coincide" [sic]. I'm making a joke. Frankly speaking, I just wish you to distinguish true from false on the Kashmir issue. That's all. I think our heart-to-heart chats over the last few days have been very helpful for communicating our views to each other; I've enjoyed it very much. I hope these kinds of contacts will continue after today.

Deputy Minister Geng: For the sake of friendship between the two great nations of China and India, our two sides should continue having contacts, putting problems on

the table and talking about them; this can increase mutual understanding. But it won't work if prerequisites are raised for the two sides' being in contact.

Director Zhang: Both sides should work hard together, first having contacts through diplomatic channels, not jumping into things all of a sudden, and our two sides can increase mutual understanding one step at a time. I also think the Ambassador's frank discussions with me the last few days have been very helpful to increasing mutual understanding.

Indian Ambassador: I am optimistic. At the same time, I also often say to myself, "It will take patience, one can't be anxious for quick results, it will take time." I would like to say the same thing to Mr. Director.

Deputy Minister Geng: Finally, I have a suggestion, about the newspaper issue. Chinese newspaper reports on India are all objective reflections [of the facts]; we never fling abuse at India. But Indian newspapers frequently fling abuse at and even vilify China. India will hold elections next year; if there are people in the National Congress Party who think they can win right-wing support by flinging abuse at China in the newspapers, I suggest the Ambassador tell them that even if this gets them a few more right-wing votes, they will lose the wider support of the center and left; it has no advantages for them.

Indian Ambassador: I would like to offer a purely personal view, which is: The era of using Sino-Indian relations issues as an election tactic is past. Sino-Indian relations issues may affect the internal unity of some political parties, but if someone uses Sino-Indian relations or abusing China as an election tactic, I must say that this kind of person does not understand their constituency or voters. We have spoken very candidly today; please allow me to take my leave.

Director Zhang: Mr. Attaché Banerji has just come to China, and has already participated in the beginning of these kind of candid conversations; after today we can be in touch more often.

Banerji: Thank you, I would like to exchange views with Mr. Director.