

Chou En-lai's report on the Sino-Indian boundary question at the enlarged session of the NPC Standing Committee, 11 September 1959 (Extracts)

The recent tension on the Sino-Indian boundary question, had been entirely and deliberately created by some Indians who, with ulterior motives, had made use of some boundary disputes to launch a new anti-Chinese campaign, make vicious attacks on China and slander China as having committed 'aggression' against India. It was regrettable that the Indian Government, too, had made groundless charges against China and brought pressure to bear on her-military, diplomatic, and through public opinion-in an attempt to impose upon China its unilateral claims on the boundary question. For the sake of Sino-Indian friendship China had in the past few month's consistently exercised the greatest restraint and patience. This, however, had not met with the response it deserved from official Indian circles. Consequently, there was no alternative but to bring the Sino-Indian boundary question before the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and make an open reply to the unfriendly attacks from Indian quarters...

The Chinese Government had all along held that an overall settlement of the boundary question should be sought by both sides through friendly negotiations conducted in a well-prepared way step by step, taking into account the historical background and the present actual situation and in conformity with the five principles. Pending this, as a provisional measure, the two sides should maintain the status quo on the border which has existed for a long time, and not seek to change it by unilateral action, much less by force; as to some of the disputes, provisional agreements concerning individual places could be reached through negotiations to ensure the

tranquility of the border areas and uphold the friendship between the two countries...

The boundary line between the two countries, which is about two thousand kilometres long, had never been formally delimited, nor had negotiations or survey ever been carried out for an overall settlement of the boundary question. Therefore there was no reason whatsoever to demand that the Chinese Government accept the Indian Government's unilateral claims concerning the Sino-Indian boundary. The so-called McMahon Line was a product of British imperialist aggression against Tibet. It had never been recognized by any Central Government of China and thus had absolutely no validity in law.

Even if the boundary between China and India were not delimited, China and India could still coexist quite well in peace, as long as both countries maintained the long existing status quo of the border. This was borne out by events in the past ten year...

China and India are two big Asian countries with a total population of more than 1,000 million people and they have common interests and responsibilities in safeguarding world peace especially peace in Asia. Long and traditional friendly relations had always existed between the two countries which were the initiators of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

The differences, even some disputes, between the two countries on the boundary question should be resolved through friendly negotiations for a just and reasonable settlement, and not by measures that might lead to clashes.