

October 7, 1969

**Zhou Enlai's Talk at a Meeting of the Chinese
Delegation Attending the Sino-Soviet Border
Negotiation (Excerpt)**

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Chinese

Contents:

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Zhou Enlai: The governments of China and the Soviet Union have reached an agreement to begin negotiations on the border dispute on October 20.

(Zhou Enlai then announced the composition of the Chinese governmental delegation with Qiao Guanhua as the head, and Yu Zhan and Chai Chengwen as the deputy heads.)

Zhou Enlai: During the meeting of the heads of the two governments on September 11, the two sides agreed that they should not go to war because of the border dispute. I told Kosygin seriously and sincerely that we do not want to fight a war. We even cannot fully take care of our own business now, why should we go to a war? But we will never be scared by war threats, including nuclear war threats. In the statement issued by our government today, we publicly announced this attitude to the whole world. The negotiation can only be carried out smoothly without being placed under any threat. This is also one of the lessons we have learned from the 1964 negotiations. The understandings that were reached at the meeting at the airport were clearly defined and should be put into execution. However, when we followed the procedures that had been agreed upon by the two sides to list the understandings in writing on September 18 to get their confirmation, in their letter of reply, they only mentioned that they had issued the order to their border forces, without mentioning the mutual understandings that had been reached. Therefore, the number one task for this delegation is to reach an agreement on the temporary measures [to relax the border tension]. Otherwise, it is impossible for the situation to be relaxed.

(Concerning the Soviet government's statement on June 13) We have made it clear during the meeting by the heads of the two governments [on September 11] that we will respond to that statement. But, before beginning the border negotiation, we do not want to let this issue jeopardize the already tense atmosphere. Therefore, together with the Foreign Ministry, we have decided that the statement will be issued as a Foreign Ministry document, rather than a statement by the [Chinese] government. From a diplomatic perspective, this response is not made on an equal level; but from a political perspective, this is more reasonable and advantageous.

(Concerning the leadership of the negotiation delegation) It should be divided into the first, the second, and third lines. Qiao Guanhua and Chai Chengwen belong to the first line Ji Pengfei, Huang Yongsheng belong to the second line. The third line is the Party's Central Committee.

(Concerning the preparations for the negotiation:) All members of the delegation should put down all other work and be concentrated, and should go all out to prepare for the negotiation. They should first get familiar with the statements of, as well as notes, between the two governments. They should also get familiar with the history and current status of the [Sino-Soviet] border. The temporary measures, which should be solved as the first step in handling the negotiation, are closely related to the whole situation. You are not just negotiating to settle the border dispute; you are negotiating about the relationship between the two countries.