

October 21, 1953

**Cable from Zhang Jingwu, 'On Issues of Relations
between China and India in Tibet'**

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Summary:

Zhang Jingwu reports on the Simla Accord and the McMahon line running between India and Tibet, and offers policy recommendations.

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On Issues of Relations between China and India in Tibet

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Your correspondence dated 7 October [1953] and the two types of Indian documents have been received. Research shows that the assumption that "India intends to capitalize on this opportunity to have some benefit in Tibet," as mentioned in your correspondence, is very accurate. Based on the information that we have at hand about Tibet, we still need Indian cooperation in some international issues. However, India is capitalizing on our temporary difficulties in Tibet, particularly our insufficient understanding of imperialist privileges in Tibet and the ideal solution to border disputes, as well as our need for India's cooperation in various areas, to gain benefits by offering a general solution to the Tibet issue.

As a matter of fact, there have always been disputes on some issues, e.g. commercial exchanges and representative offices, because we have always claimed our sovereignty over Tibet. Delaying the settlement of these issues is not good and therefore a solution to them is applauded. If such disputes continue to occur in the years to come, our relations with India may be aggravated with the instigations of some bad-willed nations. Therefore, it is correct to engage in negotiations with India as mentioned in your correspondence.

According to the Indian documents, they emphasize that "India and China have no territorial disputes" (Nehru, the Indian politician, also stated so during his speech in the Upper House of the Parliament). This is where the plot of India lies. Today, India occupies the Dawang [Tawang] Region according to the 1914 Simla Accord. However, it claimed the absence of territorial disputes just to force us into implicitly acknowledging and legitimizing their occupation. We must stay alert in this regard.

According to the information at hand and the results of negotiations with Ngapoi [Ngawang Jigme] and [Thupten Tharpa] Liushar, they reiterated that there were no public or secret treaties with foreign countries except for the Simla Accord. We assumed the Dalai [Lama] might have purchased arms from Britain and India but it is hard to make sure if they have signed any formal treaty. After its independence, India notified Tibet in July 1948 that it would succeed the privileges of Britain in Tibet. Tibet replied in October that signing a new treaty was acceptable but India must first return the lands occupied by Britain, e.g. Tawang, Bhutan, and Sikkim. In December, India replied and asked Tibet to promise to maintain the status quo then regarding India-Tibet relations before a new treaty was established (i.e. the old treaties should remain effective). Otherwise, trade between Tibet and India would be out of the question (the document has been delivered to me). This is the base of Tibet-India relations.

Other than some conventional practices, the so-called "status quo" is based on the Simla Accord among Britain, India, and China, the Tibet-Britain commercial treaties, and the Tibet-Britain declaration and attached maps (these documents have been delivered to me. Please refer to the correspondences dated 16 September for details). The accord includes eleven articles. It recognizes the effectiveness of the treaties established on 1809, 1904, and 1906 and repeals the two commercial treaties signed in 1893 and 1908. According to the discussions with Ngapoi and Liushar, such treaties were secretly signed and Xiazha (the signatory) did not know about the maps) when Tibet was forced to sign them. It is also said that "such treaties shall be abolished if India recognizes that Tibet is part of China." The so-called McMahon Line was established in the Simla Accord. However, Tibet later found that two holy mountains were located in the Indian territory land and raised its demurrals. Britain then agreed

to shift the line southward and have Sera as the border (some of the documents have been delivered to me). However, this line is already over Sera and reaches Tawang now.

According to the foregoing information, one of the main Tibet issues facing India involves these treaties and the bilateral borders, i.e. the Simla Accord and the so-called McMahon Line. We are of the opinion that:

1. We must declare abolishment of the old accord, i.e. the Simla Accord, which was not recognized by the former Chinese Government;
2. India must withdraw from Chinese Tawang and Lower Luoyu which it currently occupies;
3. China and India may discuss the dividing lines between both countries. It is impossible to fundamentally settle the issues regarding the accord and the border. It is in our interest to delay the settlement of these issues. However, we have to make further declarations. Otherwise, we would be deemed to have implicitly acknowledged the status quo and hence be put in a rather disadvantaged position.

Other than the issues of the accord and the border, we should negotiate with India to settle other issues as mentioned in the correspondences, e.g. trade, troops, pilgrimage (border entry and exit), and commercial representative facilities. These issues can and must be settled. According to the correspondences received from India last February, the two types of documents received recently, and the Indian propaganda in the newspapers, India intends to capitalize on the current situation to gain certain benefits, e.g. legitimization of three representative offices in Gyantse, free entry for pilgrimage, expansion of trade territories, withdrawal of Indian troops, and other issues. In addition to the proposals made on 24 March 1952, we have also come up with the following supplementary solutions according to the present conditions:

1. Indian troops and officials should be withdrawn.
2. Postal facilities shall be taken back. The local postal administration of the Tibetan Government has reached Pali. With our assistance, the postal services will not be a problem even after the Indian postal facilities are withdrawn.
3. Indian radio facilities shall also be withdrawn or transferred to us (at a reasonable price). Cabled facilities shall be transferred to us at a reasonable price. We have established our telecommunication facilities at Yadong, Gyantse, and Lhasa and international telecommunication services may also be established there. The telephones may be withdrawn by India or transferred to us.
4. All posthouses relating to posts and telecommunications shall be withdrawn.
5. The Xiasima administration shall also be withdrawn.
6. Commerce in Gartok cannot be stopped right now and shall be continued. The Indian commercial representative may acknowledge the conventional practice, i.e. conducting trade where designated during a certain period in the year. However, we must dispatch our commercial representative to Simla or Kalimpong in exchange.
7. As a consulate general already exists in Lhasa, the Indian commercial representatives in Yadong and Gyantse shall be cancelled. If India still asks to

maintain them, they may be converted into consulates although only Yadong may be allowed to accommodate them and we must have a consulate or formal commercial representative in Kalimpong in exchange. We believe having one representative facility in Kalimpong is to our benefit.

8. Regarding the radio stations that the Consulate General of India has in Lhasa and the possible establishment of radio stations by India's representative facilities at Yadong and Gartok in the future, we believe that our representative facilities in India must also set up radio stations in exchange. Otherwise, neither side shall set up radio facilities. We have a telecommunication bureau (Ngari Prefecture Government has dispatched personnel to the radio station) and we can send the telegraphs.

9. Trade locations: trade shall be conducted at Gartok and Puguanzong in Ngari Prefecture and in Yadong, Gyantse, or Lhasa. India proposes Kalimpong, Calcutta, Simla, Gandu, or Siliguri as its trading places.

10. Regarding frontier entry and exit for trading purposes, we are of the opinion that free entry and exit may be allowed on a mutually beneficial basis, without the need for any passport or visa. However, both countries shall issue a license to their respective merchants as evidence. When it becomes mature one or two years later, relevant rules on entry and exit visas may be established.

11. Taxation issue: we recommend following conventional practices one to two years before the Customs is established, i.e. no import and export taxes shall be levied.

12. Locations shall be designated for pilgrimage purpose: we designate Mt. Kailas and Lake Manasarovar in Ngari and India designates Lumbini (where Sakyamuni died) and Varanasi (where Sakyamuni recited sermons for the first time) for pilgrimage purposes. Both countries may further designate the routes of pilgrimage.

13. It is recommended that both countries establish relevant articles or agreements to replace historical treaties and accords regarding the foregoing issues.

Discussions have been held with Ngapoi and Liushar on the foregoing issues and they both expressed their agreement. In addition, the Foreign Office has collected some materials on Tibet's foreign relations, imperialist privileges in Tibet, and India's conditions in Yadong and Gyantse. The Tibetan government has submitted the Simla Accord and other documents as reference materials in the negotiations. We recommend that Yang Gongsu should take various types of materials and accords to Beijing for negotiations. After any new agreement is reached, he can also return to Tibet and make preparations according to the spirit and provisions of the agreement. It is expected to benefit the foreign affairs work of Tibet.

Please consider the abovementioned proposals and provide your feedback as soon as possible.

Zhang Jingwu
21 October 1953

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