

August 18, 1963

**Cable from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the
General Department, and the General Staff
Department, 'Supplementary Report on Handling
the Bodies of the Indian Army along the Western
Sector of the Sino-Indian Border'**

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai's instructions regarding the clearing of bodies of Indian personnel and possible Indian provocative actions related to this issue.

Credits:

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To be examined and approved by Premier Zhou [Enlai]. (Xiao Hua and Gan Siqi of the General Political Department and Li Tianyou of the General Staff Department have already read it.)

Huang Zhen
18 August [1963]

Supplementary Report on Handling the Bodies of the Indian Army along the Western Sector of the Sino-Indian Border

(1)

According to the request for instructions from the Central Committee dated 9 August, we notified India and the six countries of the Colombo Conference before our policemen and our people clearing away the bodies entered the disputed areas. On 13 August, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified India of our arrangements in the form of a memorandum (the Red Cross Society of China notified the Red Cross Society of India by telegraph on the same day). India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied on 14 August in the form of a memorandum and proposed that the Red Cross Society of India would also immediately enter the region to clear away the bodies in order to identify the bodies and hold religious ceremonies. They also arbitrarily decided the time, place, and means of transportation for entering the region. The first two groups of people were to arrive at Demchok [Die-mu-chuo-ke] and Chushul [Chu-shu-lei] at 4:00 p.m. on 16 August. (The contents in the cable sent by the Red Cross Society of India are similar.)

In this regard, Premier Zhou [Enlai] convened a meeting on the afternoon of 15 August to study countermeasures. After Premier Zhou's examination, he pointed out that there were serious drawbacks in our original deployment. They were mainly reflected as follows: mentally, we were not fully prepared for India's provocations, so we did not develop countermeasures in advance and no reply was given for the last request for instructions. It shows that we are not vigilant enough against the rogue and cunning Indian reactionaries. Secondly, serious bureaucratism exists in internal work, and external work and internal work are disjointed. Although the Xinjiang Military District was somewhat prepared for clearing away the bodies, we did not complete a final check nor have a specific understanding of the situation. In addition, we did not complete a final study with respect to this issue before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified India.

(2)

In order to beat off India's attack and reverse the situation, Premier Zhou gave the following emergency instructions according to the current situation:

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will immediately send out a memorandum to point out that India's actions are intentionally provocative and we resolutely cannot agree [with them]; that we request India cease immediately and make a response; and, in consideration of India's unreasonable actions, we will temporarily suspend clearing away the bodies and we will take all things into consideration after India responds. (See Annex I for the full text of the memorandum)

2. The General Political Department and the General Staff Department will immediately issue instructions to suspend clearing away the bodies and for our people who entered the region to clear away the bodies to withdraw immediately. Those who have not entered shall remain in place for instructions.

The above two instructions were implemented.

(3)

It is estimated that India will continue to struggle with us after we take the above steps: 1. Diplomatically, India will slander and attack us, and reiterate that they will send people to clear away and burn the bodies; 2. On the ground, India may break in without our consent and make trouble and cause provocations under the pretext of clearing away and incinerating bodies; 3. India will attack us to reject the political influence of our lenient treatment towards the captured Indian soldiers at parliament, in newspapers, and at the 100th anniversary conference of the International Red Cross Society in Geneva.

We have come up with the following countermeasures toward the above actions that may be taken by India:

1. To continue the diplomatic struggle. We should refute all of India's unreasonable criticisms and claims in the spirit of an aggressive attack, point out that we have done everything we could, and that it is India which is wholly liable for suspending the clearing away of bodies.
2. Our border defense units should keep close surveillance on India breaking into Chinese territory. We should lodge a protest against India promptly after learning about the situation. According to the conditions, we may point out that we are unable to clear away the bodies of Indian soldiers because of India's sabotage.
3. If India produces anti-China propaganda, we will resolutely announce the truth through official spokespersons or other appropriate means and expose India's conspiracies.
4. Notify the six countries of the Colombo Conference at an appropriate time according to changes in the situation and offer a thorough explanation of the truth and the reasons.
5. We should make preparations for the debate at the conference of the International Red Cross Society.

Generally, the Indian bodies are in our territory, so clearing away and incinerating the bodies can only be completed by us. We promise to clear away and incinerate the bodies and we are willing to return the ashes and bodies, so we have shown extreme forbearance and we are in compliance with, and have even done more than, the provisions of the relevant international practices and the Geneva Convention. There is no legal basis for India's request to send people to clear away and incinerate the bodies. Although India attempts to mislead people under the pretext of humanitarianism and religious practices, we are sure to be able to expose India's conspiracies if we respond properly and effectively refute them.

A long time has passed since this case was handled and there have been many requests for instructions. The relevant documents are attached in two parts. The first part is largely appendices.

Please instruct whether the above is proper.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
General Political Department

General Staff Headquarters
18 August 1963

Part I: Main Appendices:

1. Memorandum from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 August and the cable from the Red Cross Society of China to the Red Cross Society of India on the same day;
2. Memorandum from India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 August and the cable from the Red Cross Society of India to the Red Cross Society of China on the same day;
3. Request for instructions dated 9 August submitted by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Political Department and General Staff Headquarters;
4. Memorandum from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 August; Notes from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the six countries of the Colombo Conference; and the cable from the Red Cross Society of China to the Red Cross Society of India on the same day;

Part II: Other Appendices:

1. Opinions on Dealing with the Bodies of Indian Soldiers in Chinese Territory (19 July 1963)
2. Opinions on Dealing with the Bodies of Indian Soldiers in Chinese Territory (5 July 1963)
3. Opinions on Dealing with the Bodies of Indian Soldiers along the Western Sector of the Sino-India Border (22 April 1963)
4. Request for Instructions on the Claim of the Red Cross Society of India to Collect the Bodies of Indian Soldiers (9 April 1963)