

much stiffer than that used in the previous correspondence. It charged China with aggressive attitudes "reminiscent of old imperialist powers against whom both India and China struggled in the past". It rejected completely the Chinese version of the clash and the assertion that the territory concerned belonged to China. The note called upon the Chinese Government to remove its forces from Indian territory and to seek to resolve minor disputes by peaceful means.

A letter of November 4 from Premier Chou En-lai coincided with the Indian note concerning the clash in Ladakh. The Chinese Premier wrote:

In order to maintain effectively the *status quo* of the border between the two countries, to insure the tranquillity the border requires and to create a favorable atmosphere for a friendly settlement of the boundary question, the Chinese Government proposes that the armed forces of China and India each withdraw 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) at once from the so-called McMahon Line in the east, and from the line up to which each side exercises actual control in the west, and that the two sides undertake to refrain from again sending their armed personnel to be stationed in and patrol the zones from which they have evacuated their armed forces, but still maintain civil administration personnel and unarmed police there for the performance of administrative duties and maintenance of order . . . The Chinese Government has never had the intention of straining the border situation and the relations between the two countries. I believe that Your Excellency also wishes to see the present tension eased . . . The Chinese Government proposes that in order to discuss the boundary question and other questions in the relations between the two countries, the Prime Ministers of the two countries hold talks in the immediate future.

Acceptance of the Chou proposals was regarded immediately by the Indians as requiring territorial concessions on their part, since the withdrawal of forces some 12½ miles from the line of actual control in Ladakh would leave the Chinese still in possession of an appreciable portion of that area, including the Sinkiang-Tibet Highway. Despite the implication in the proposal for NEFA that China was prepared to accept the McMahon Line as a basis for negotiations, the Indians were reluctant to pull back from Longju and a boundary they felt was based soundly on agreement and usage.

Because of the disadvantages which the Indians saw in the Chinese proposals, and the aroused feeling throughout the country still expressed in the newspapers and public demonstrations, Mr. Nehru did not accept the Chinese proposals. While he agreed that the two governments should come to an arrangement without delay that would end the risk of border clashes and that the two prime ministers should meet soon to discuss the boundary and other issues, he suggested alternative proposals for handling the disputes in Ladakh and the NEFA. For Ladakh he suggested as an interim arrangement that India should pull back all her personnel to the west of the line which the Chinese claim as the boundary. Similarly, Chinese personnel should retire to the east of what India has said is the boundary. Since the two lines are separated by long distances, there should not be the slightest risk, Mr. Nehru felt, of border clashes and as the area is almost entirely uninhabited it would not be necessary to maintain administrative personnel. With regard to the McMahon Line, he pointed out that since it would be extremely difficult in practice to establish a new line of outposts to the rear of the boundary at any distance and since there was no doubt that Longju was on her side, India could not agree to any arrangement except Chinese withdrawal from Longju which on her side India would not re-occupy.