

September 18, 1969 Letter, Zhou Enlai to Alexei Kosygin

Citation:

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Summary:

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

- English Translation

Chairman Alexei Kosygin

The Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union

On 11 September 1969, our two sides agreed during our meeting at the Beijing airport: that the long-existing Sino-Soviet border disputes should be settled through peaceful negotiation without threats of any kind; and that before the settlement has been reached the two sides should take temporary measures to maintain the status quo of the borders and to avoid armed conflict. The two sides have also exchanged opinions upon the measures that should be taken. They are as follows:

I. The two sides agree that until the border dispute is settled, the status quo of the border should be strictly maintained.

1. Taking the maps exchanged in the 1964 Sino-Soviet border negotiations as the basis, in the sections of the border where the two sides have identical opinions on the maps, the two sides promise to observe strictly the border line as set up by the treaty, and will not cross the border line.

2. In the sections of the border where the two sides have different opinions on the map, that is, the areas under dispute, the two sides promise: the residents of the two sides should live, conduct productive activity (including plowing, digging irrigation ditches, grazing, cutting grass, and cutting firewood both on land and on island, and fishing in the river), and pass through, only in the area where they used to live, conduct productive activity, and pass through. Neither side should advance into the other side's area, or should interfere with each other. In the area where no one lived, conducted productive activity, or passed through in the past, neither side should enter now.

The coverage of the above (1) and (2) areas should be defined by the border administrations of the two sides through discussion and negotiation, and should be defined in one decision, saving the need to inform the other side repeatedly in the future. This agreement will be in effect until the border dispute is settled.

II. The two sides agree to avoid armed conflict.

1. The two sides promise that the armed forces of each side, including nuclear forces, will not attack and open fire on the other side.

2. The two sides promise that the planes of each side will not violate the air space of the other side.

3. The two sides promise that the military ships and vessels and other ships and vessels, while navigating in the main channel of a border river, should strictly observe the existing navigation rules, and should not hinder the normal navigation of the ships of the other side and menace the safety of the ships of the other side.

III. The armed forces of the two sides should be separated from direct contact in the border area under dispute.

1. All armed forces of the two sides should withdraw from, or should not enter, all border areas under dispute, so that they will be separated from direct contact.

2. In the areas where the armed forces of the two sides have been separated from direct dispute, if there are existing places of residence, necessary unarmed civil service personnel may be maintained.

IV. The two sides agree that in case a dispute occurs on the border, the relative agencies of the two sides should follow a spirit of equality and mutual respect to pursue reasonable solution through discussion. If a solution cannot be reached, each side should report to its superior to pursue solution by discussion through diplomatic channels.

V. The two sides agree that the above temporary measures are designed to maintain the status quo of the border and to avoid armed conflict, and that they do not change each side's stand toward the border, as well as toward the sovereignty of the area under dispute.

If you confirm the above temporary measures in writing, I will treat them as the agreement between the governments of China and the Soviet Union. These measures thus will be effective immediately, and should be put into execution.

It is my belief that this agreement, if it can be reached, will contribute to the relaxation of the situation on the border between our two countries, as well as the convening of Sino-Soviet border negotiations.

With Respect
Zhou Enlai

Premier of the State Council
The People's Republic of China