

November 27, 1962

Cable from Yao Zhongming, 'The Sino-Indian Boundary Issue'

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Summary:

Subandrio expressed his support for China in the dispute with India, going as far as saying that "India deserved to be taught a lesson". He went on to offer his view on how to solve the conflict through negotiations. Subandrio also discussed Indonesian involvement in the upcoming Six-Nation Conference which would concern the Sino-Indian Conflict as well as the preparation for a Second Asian-African Conference.

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The Sino-Indian Boundary Issue

[To] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Subandrio met with me this morning. He first discussed the intentions of the Indonesian government. His talk is summarized as follows:

(1) It is time to promote negotiations over the Sino-Indian boundary issue. Now is the most opportune time and the conditions have already become ripe. It was impossible for India to negotiate before the Indian Army was defeated at the border by the Chinese army. The Indonesian government deems that China's defeat of India is of great significance: on one hand, it facilitates the possibility of settling the Sino-Indian boundary issue through negotiations; on the other hand, it teaches India a lesson. The Indonesian government has clearly expressed to the Indian government that "it is impossible to settle the Sino-Indian boundary issue by relying on massive military support from the United Kingdom and the United States. Although China made some sacrifices during this battle, India believes that such sacrifices will not be in vain. This battle teaches India a lesson and India must consider the importance of Asian-African solidarity. The Sino-Indian boundary issue must be settled with the help of Asian and African countries, rather than the western imperialist countries. The imperialist countries are still conspiring to sow dissension in Asia and Africa and we should be alert against such activities. Indonesia believes that most Asian and African countries will be grateful to China in some time because China awakened India. After China defeated the Indian Army, China took the initiative to unilaterally cease fire and withdraw its army to north of the Line of Actual Control. It is estimated that India will make compromises under such circumstances and India has remarked that it can consider not insisting upon the original requirements. Now the main problem is to seek a common basis for negotiations and this requires the assistance of third countries because it is impossible to achieve satisfactory results only with the efforts of China and India. The Indonesian government thinks that negotiations will be feasible if China no longer insists on the boundary of 7 November 1959 and India no longer insists on the boundary of 8 September, a third party proposes a demarcation line through a compromise in line with the actual situation, and the boundary proposed by the third party is deemed to be the basis of the negotiations. Through negotiations, the two countries will determine how far their armies will retreat behind the agreed upon line. The demarcation line will not be the boundary but the basis for negotiations. The beginning of the negotiations does not mean that the problem has been settled. The Indian government believes that the negotiation should be directly between China and India; at this stage, third countries only play the role of promoting and facilitating the stands and viewpoints of the two countries. With respect to whether the negotiations will be effective, it is up to the efforts of India and China.

The settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary issue will not only be beneficial to both China and India, but will also further promote the unity of Asian and African countries. China took the measure of a unilateral ceasefire and withdrawal, which enhances its prestige among Asian and African countries; if such measures will lead to the settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary issue, China's prestige and position will increase to a larger extent. We should maintain Asian-African solidarity, praise China's efforts in respect to this matter, and we hope that India will do so. If India is unwilling, we will let it go.

(2) The Six-Nation Conference Proposed by Ceylon

This conference will start at the beginning of December and the Indonesian government has decided to attend. If President Sukarno cannot attend the conference by himself, he will dispatch Subandrio as the representative. Indonesia has two views of the Six-Nation Conference in Colombo:

1. Attending the conference will play an important role in influencing other participating countries and promoting the settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary issue;

2. This conference can serve as a forum for preparing for the Second Asian-African Conference.

In order to adequately explain the stand of the Chinese government at the conference, Subandrio requested that we provide him with enough information and tell him our "bottom line" in settling the Sino-Indian boundary issue, which plans are acceptable to China, and which are absolutely unacceptable to China so that he can know how to respond properly. He also suggested that the Chinese Embassy in Colombo assign several experts on the Sino-Indian boundary issue from China, so that he can understand some situations from us and have close contact. He also asked if a plan with respect to the Sino-Indian boundary issue is agreed upon at the Six-Nation Conference in Colombo and if Indonesia and the other participating countries think that the plan is acceptable to both China and India, and that it is decided at the conference that China and India dispatch representatives to meet in Colombo, will the Chinese government accept? Of course, if it is decided at the conference that China and India should dispatch representatives to meet in Colombo, the plan will be submitted to China and India for consideration. After the two countries agree to the plan in principle, the conference will send official invitations.

The Indonesian government believes that Indonesia will influence other participating countries at this conference. This is not a subjective opinion of Indonesia. Australia's ambassador in India also remarked that Indonesia is not afraid of Ceylon, the United Arab Republic, Myanmar, or Cambodia because it can influence such countries, but India is not afraid of Indonesia and it has dared to confront with Indonesia publicly. However, opinions will surely differ at this conference and maybe there will be no mutually agreed plan, so it may just call on China and India for peaceful negotiations. He said, with respect to increasing the number of countries participating at the Colombo Conference, Mrs. [Sirimavo] Bandaranaike asked for Indonesia's opinion. Indonesia said it was up to Mrs. Bandaranaike, but Indonesia had not prepared to increase the number of participating countries. That is because, if Indonesia requested to increase the number of participating countries, other countries such as the United Arab Republic would also request to do the same, and even countries such as Malaysia would participate. It will make things more difficult and delay the convening of the conference, which is harmful to the settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary issue. The Indonesian government hopes that the Chinese government will understand it in this respect.

Yao Zhongming
27 December 1962