

January 28, 1970

Telegram from Indian Embassy in China on Sino-Soviet Border Negotiations

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Summary:

The India embassy in Beijing reports on recent developments in the Sino-Soviet border negotiations. The lead Soviet negotiator, Kuznetsov, had become increasingly open about the progress of the ongoing talks due to political maneuvering by China. The negotiator claimed that "the talks have not progressed because the Chinese have adopted a [sic] uncompromising attitude on reaching agreement on maintenance of [the] status quo."

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O.T.C.

Telegram

SECRET

CCB NO.01268

From: Indembassy, Peking
 To: Foreign, New Delhi
 Reptd: Indembassy, Moscow (Foreign New Delhi please pass)

DTG JAN 281815
 DTR JAN 290655
 Year 1970

IMMEDIATE

No.20

Secretary (East) from MISHRA:

Sino-Soviet border talks. In the last few days KUZNETSOV has been more forthcoming than before. He has now begun to feel that maintenance of complete secrecy on his part while Chinese have twice used the services of TA KUNG PAO of Hongkong to disseminate their view point has hurt the Soviet image. He has therefore broadened his contacts with diplomats in Peking meeting them at various social functions. He had dinner with me last week. In the course of various conversations the following has emerged as the Soviet side of the story:

(1) By twice using TA KUNG PAO to put out distorted versions of the truth Chinese have broken agreement to maintain secrecy. The agreement, it is hinted, was in writing. (Soviets are also guilty - two stories were given to P.T.I. and another rather comprehensive one to London Observer published on 18th January).

(2) There has been no progress in the talks. However KUZNETSOV keeps on saying that he remains hopeful. The talks will continue for a long time although he himself will return to Moscow. (My assessment is that KUZNETSOV puts on a brave face by continuous expression of hope. Nevertheless the Chinese cannot afford to break off the talks because the Soviets will once again put overt military pressure. Further complete breakdown will weaken China's already weak position in Warsaw talks with America. Soviets face a similar* dilemma in relation to their negotiations with the Americans and West Germans.)

(3) The talks have not progressed because the Chinese have adopted a uncompromising attitude on reaching agreement on maintenance of status quo and on disengagement from disputed areas. There never was an understanding on these points between KOSYGIN and CHOU EN-LAI as alleged by TA KUNG PAO on 9th January. The only agreement* was to

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SECRET

instruct the armed forces of the two countries to avoid armed clashes. Chinese are trying to achieve at the very beginning of the talks what (disengagement and withdrawal) can only come about as a result of the settlement of the border question! Further maintenance of status quo and disengagement are contradictory. (Soviet point of view here is correct. Even October 7 Chinese statement indirectly acknowledges that there was no understanding between the Premiers, only a proposal by CHOU (last but two paragraphs of statement). Please also see item (6) of my telegram No.211 of October 8, 1969 to Foreign Secretary. It is interesting to us, moreover, that whereas to us Chinese propose preservation of actual line of control, Soviets are asked to get out of disputed areas!)

*By ch.

(4) While Chinese recognise the old treaties as the basis for border adjustment in the north and east they deny it in the west i.e. Pamir region. Thus they covet large Soviet territory in that sector. (This point is cleverly put by KUZNETSOV. He forgets to mention* that there is a dispute on whether the 1884 protocol is the basis as the Chinese claim or the notes exchanged in 1894 as claimed by Soviets).

(5) Soviets themselves have been constructive. They have proposed that both sides should first enumerate and agree upon areas where there is no dispute. (This implies that (a) in 1964 there was no agreement at all and (b) now that old treaties have been agreed as basis Soviets want to take quick advantage.) Then boundary Commissions or Committees should visit the disputed areas to see the physical situation and settle them taking into account the interests of the local population. (It is in this context that the Soviets might have offered to give up most of the islands as reported by Indembassy, Moscow).

2. Shall keep* you informed of further developments.

SECY TO THE PRESIDENT: PRIME MINISTER: SECY TO PM: DIR PM
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DIR AFR: DIR PER: DIR NAGA: DIR XI: OSD WANA: OSD EA(2):
CABINET SECY(2): US NGO(2).

Note by CCB: The above telegram has been repeated to Indembassy, Moscow on 29-1-70.

D.S./37cs.
29-1-1970

SECRET

K.S. Ramamurthy
SUPERINTENDENT CCB

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