

# Prime Minister Nehru's Letter to Premier Chou En-lai

(February 5, 1960)

New Delhi, February 5, 1960.

His Excellency Mr. Chou En-lai,  
Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China,  
Peking.

My dear Prime Minister,

My Government is sending you separately, through our Ambassador in Peking, a reply to the note of the Chinese Government which was handed to the Indian Embassy on the 26th December 1959.

I confess that I do not particularly like this long distance correspondence which consists of a reaffirmation of our respective views, and yet there is no escape from this when questions of far-reaching importance are raised between Governments and statements made which cannot be accepted.

You were good enough to suggest that we should meet to discuss these matters and, so far as we are concerned, it has been our consistent policy to welcome such meetings and informal approaches which sometimes lead to helpful results. But I found that the respective view-

oints of our two Governments, in regard to the matters under discussion, were so wide apart and opposed to each other that there was little ground left for useful talks. I suggested in my letter of November 16, 1959, certain preliminary steps which would have eased the situation and facilitated further discussions. Unfortunately you have not found yourself able to accept those proposals. I still hope that you will reconsider our decision in this matter.

In the latest note from the Government of the People's Republic of China, emphasis has been laid on our entire boundary never having been delimited. That is a statement which appears to us to be wholly incorrect, and we cannot accept it. On that basis there can be no negotiations.

It has pained me deeply that the relations between India and China which have in the past been so friendly and which we had endeavoured so much to strengthen, should have deteriorated rapidly and led to bitterness and resentment. That is a tragedy for both our countries as well as for the larger issues in the world. For my part, I have endeavoured and shall continue to endeavour to find a way to a peaceful settlement and restoration of friendly relations. But for the moment, I do not see any common ground between our respective viewpoints.

Nevertheless I think that we should make every effort to explore avenues which might lead to a peaceful settlement. Although any negotiations on the basis you have suggested are not possible, still I think it might be helpful for us to meet. I am afraid it is not possible for me to leave India during the next few months. The budget

session of our Parliament is beginning on February 8 and this will require my presence here. I would, however, be glad if you could take the trouble to come to Delhi for this purpose at a time convenient to you and us. You will be our honoured guest when you come here. I would suggest that some time in the second half of March might be fixed for this meeting, if it is convenient to you.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
**Jawaharlal Nehru**

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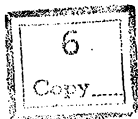
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