

**Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru
to the British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan¹**

Thank you for your personal message which was delivered to me by your High Commissioner.² I am grateful to you for the interesting account you have given of your recent discussions with President Eisenhower. As you know, I have welcomed the initiative you have taken, beginning with your visit to the Soviet Union, in securing agreement to the holding of effective high level negotiations to bring about a lessening of international tension. On the conclusion of the round of talks on which you have been engaged, I should like to congratulate you on the successful outcome of these talks. It is a matter of gratification that events are now gradually being so shaped as to hold out some promise of satisfactory results. I hope that it will be possible to fix a definite date for the Summit meeting. I agree with you that it would be unwise to delay this meeting too long.

2. I entirely agree with you that our thinking and approach in dealing with these difficult international issues should be flexible and that every avenue should be explored and an attempt made to understand each other's point of view. Such an attempt helps in creating a more favourable atmosphere for discussion and in lowering the barriers of suspicion.

3. Your impression of the attitude of President Eisenhower in this context is of particular interest. I am glad to learn that he retains his larger vision and receptivity to new ideas. I hope that his great influence will help in moderating the rigidity of the American official attitude.

¹ Message to Harold Macmillan, the British Prime Minister, New Delhi, 29 March 1959.

² Malcolm Macdonald.

4. I do not wish to offer any detailed comments on particular proposals. In regard to the Berlin issue, it seems to me that the two Germanys will have to be closely associated with matters which concern them both and are of common concern to the German people. I do not think any solution will be practicable if it is aimed at compelling the absorption of one part of Germany by the other. I have long been of opinion that the establishment of an area of disengagement in Central Europe would lead to a considerable lessening of tension and help towards reaching an agreement on Germany on problems of European security. Your suggestion of inspection and limitation of armaments in an agreed zone of Europe would certainly be helpful, but by itself it will not go far enough.

5. As you know, it has been our earnest wish that nuclear tests should be suspended indefinitely, both because their continuance is harmful to humanity and because this will also help in creating an atmosphere conducive to settlements. I trust that the Geneva Conference will lead to some understanding even though it might not give full satisfaction in regard to all the technical requirements.

6. The situation in Tibet has caused us much concern. I made a statement in our Parliament on the 23rd March. In case you have not seen it, I am asking our High Commissioner³ to send you a copy. Our information has been chiefly derived from reports from our Consul-General at Lhasa. He has been able to report only what he saw from his Consulate and does not know much about happenings outside Lhasa. In Lhasa itself fighting has died down, and the Chinese Government appears to be in full control. But it is not clear what is happening in other parts of Tibet. According to our information, a number of important buildings in Lhasa have suffered considerable damage as a

³ Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.

result of firing and shelling, and probably quite a number of Tibetans have been killed. Both sides are agreed that the 17-Point agreement reached in 1951 between the Central Government of China and the Tibetan representatives has broken down. The Tibetan local government has ceased to function, and the Chinese Military Control Mission has taken over charge of Lhasa. There is reason to believe that the Khampas have spread out in some strength in areas south and south-east of Lhasa.

7. Owing to the intimate contacts between India and Tibet and the long history of religious and cultural relations, there is naturally a great deal of sympathy for Tibet in India, and more particularly, there is concern about the Dalai Lama's safety, though it is recognised that it is not feasible for us to intervene in what is essentially an internal matter of China.