

**Statement by Indian representative V. K. Krishna Menon in the UN
General Assembly on the Question of Tibet, 21 October 1959
(Extracts)**

While we did not support the inscription of this item, for reasons which I shall mention in a moment, we do not want in any way to put forward legalistic objections or seek to raise a procedural barrier.

Consideration of this problem must, first of all, have as its central theme the interests of the Tibetan people and of the Dalai Lama himself. So far as we are aware, there have been troubles in Tibet not only in the old days but in recent times also. This may well be part of the changes that are taking place in the world. But we should like to have these changes take place more peacefully with less cruelty, perhaps with less upset. Also, we do not subscribe to the view that these changes are merely the overthrow of certain feudal lords or otherwise. If these upsets have to come, they should come, so far as possible, with the least degree of violence. But, while we may wish that, we have no right to impose non-violence with violence. That is to say, we cannot argue non-interference by interfering. Therefore, all we can do is to express our point of view and, without violence to our foreign policy and without violence to our relations with other countries, unless there is justification for it, do what we can within our own capacities...

More recently, there have been disturbances in Tibet, for instance, the revolt of the Khampas. They themselves are not in Tibet proper; they are in the Chinese Province. They are Chinese themselves. However, the Tibetans joined them, and a very considerable revolt appears to have taken place. As a result, the Dalai Lama himself and some 12,000 or 13,000 of his followers came over to India. I think it would be right for us in this connexion, when considering the concern that parties and countries and peoples have in regard to human rights and humanitarian affairs, to point

out to the Assembly that, while we are not a Buddhist country, we alone of all countries in the world willingly undertook responsibilities in pursuit of human rights to give asylum to the Dalai Lama, as we had the right but not the obligation to do, and also to receive some 12,000 or 13,000 refugees... There are 12,000 refugees from Tibet who have crossed into India through the North Eastern Frontier Agency, which is Indian territory, and about 1,600 through Bhutan, through the Himalayan territory, and a few hundreds through Sikkim. These refugees are being cared for. But I should like to say in order to put the international position correctly, that we have disarmed these refugees on the border. And where there have been any instances of arms not being surrendered we have not allowed these refugees to come into our country. That is international law in regard to all political asylum, which we have carried out.

All this is done on the basis of broad policy. I would like to quote again the Prime Minister:

"Our broad policy was governed by three factors:

(1) the preservation of the security and integrity of India; (2) our desire to maintain friendly relations with China;

and

(3) our deep sympathy for the people of Tibet.

That policy we shall continue to follow, because we think that a correct policy not only for the present but even more so for the future;"

We stand by the Treaty of 1954. What is more, in regard to the 17-point agreement, to which reference has been made by many representatives in this Assembly, it is the view of the Government that that agreement still stands. It is quite true that some of its provisions have been broken, but that appears to be the case in many international treaties. If certain conditions are broken, we take whatever action is necessary, either party

concerned, taking a different view. But the 17-point agreement as a whole stands, and we have not had any difference of opinion on this, so far...

We have examined the draft resolution very carefully, so as my Government, and we therefore take the only position we can take, that, in the interests of reconciliation in the future and because it does not promote any constructive step at all, the draft resolution contained in document A/L.264 cannot have our support. We do not see a basis for it in the sense that if it is a question of human rights we must deal with people here who have subscribed to the Declaration, because the Declaration definitely states that it is the States' Parties whom it binds. Therefore, I have to state that this draft resolution cannot have our support. We will therefore abstain on every paragraph of it and on the resolution as a whole.

Our abstention, however, will be in no sense-I repeat, in no sense-a lack of concern or a lack of feeling in regard to the Tibetan people or any reflection upon our relations with China. It merely arises from the posture and policy which I have placed before the Assembly.

This also does not mean that we are unconcerned when the issue ~of human rights is raised before us.