

Nehru's statement in Rajya Sabha, 8 December 1959 (Extracts)

Apart from the obvious responsibilities of defending India and Indian territory, our responsibilities undoubtedly extend to the neighbouring countries, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. We have to stand by them whatever the consequences. Each one of them stands on a separate footing, and let us not mix them up. Nepal of course, is an independent country just as India is independent and whatever it chooses to do in the exercise of that independence, we cannot come in the way. But, If I mentioned Nepal on the last occasion, it was because over nine years ago, there was a clear understanding between the Governments on Nepal and India on this point. It was no military alliance. It was a dear understanding which has advantages for both. In order to remove any doubts from hon. Members minds, I shall read out the words of that understanding. This treaty between India and Nepal, a treaty of peace and friendship, was signed on July 31, 1950. I shall read the first two articles.

Article 1 states

That the two Governments agree to acknowledge and respect the complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of each other.

Article 2 states

that the two Governments hereby undertake to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighbouring State likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations existing between the two Governments.

Now, apart from the treaty-but as an essential, operative part of that-there was an exchange of letters between the two Governments in identical language; as is the custom. In these letters there is this sentence:

Neither Government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat, the two

Governments shall consult with each other and devise effective,
counter-measures...

this understanding has nothing to do with any kind of unilateral action on our part. We cannot do it; we will not do it. It is for the Government of Nepal to decide but it is in mutual interest-as stated in these letters and the treaty-for us to associate, ourselves, first of all in knowledge as to what is happening and, secondly in the counter-measures that might have to be taken.