

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series 2,

Volume 52

September 1-31, 1959

China

81. In the Rajya Sabha: China at Sikkim Border and in Ladakh¹

"Reference to the Reported Advance of the Chinese army near Sikkim border and Infiltration of the Chinese in Ladakh"

Shri Ganga Sharan Sinha:² Sir, with your permission, may I draw the attention of the Prime Minister to the news published in to-day's papers regarding the advance of the Chinese army near our Sikkim border and infiltration of Chinese in Ladakh? I would request him to inform this House and place the real situation before the House and let us know what is happening there. The second thing I would like to know is whether any reply or any communication has been received from the Chinese Government regarding these things and what is the nature and content of that.

Shri V.K. Dhage: Sir, it appeared in the newspapers that the Prime Minister has written to the Three Powers, apprising them of the situation with regard to the Chinese border. Also there is a report in the press that the Chinese Foreign Minister³ has come out with a statement to say that he has not

¹ Reply to questions, 4 September 1959. Rajya Sabha Debates, Vol. XXVI, cols 2916-2920

² PSP, MP from Bihar

³ Lu Cheng Hsiang

committed any aggression or has not occupied any land not belonging to them. Would the Prime Minister be able to throw some light on this aspect that has appeared in the press as this thing seems to cause great anxiety to the people here?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes, yesterday evening in fact we received a reply from the Chinese Government to the protest we have made to them.⁴ We received it through our Embassy in Peking. It is a fairly long reply and we are examining it fully. But broadly speaking the reply says that they have not committed any aggression, and in fact they have accused us of some aggression on that border and have asked us to withdraw from one or two areas which they claim to be Chinese territory. The rest is an argument but this is the main purport of the reply. We are having that fully examined. As for what the Chinese Foreign Minister said, I believe he did say something to that effect; that is, he more or less supported the line taken up in the reply they have sent us; that is, they have not committed any aggression and in one or two places our patrols have gone into Tibetan Chinese territory.

As for Mr. Ganga Sharan's question as to what is happening on the other side of our border in Sikkim or elsewhere, it is difficult for me to say with any precision. Broadly speaking, there are very considerable numbers of troops, Chinese troops, in Tibet spread out and in the last few weeks or more, many of them were stationed on the Sikkim-India border, originally I think, with the intention perhaps of preventing the refugees from coming into India. So they are there. I cannot say in what numbers they are there. Then there was a reference to certain regions in Ladakh. It is rather difficult for me to make any accurate statement about that. But so far as the corner of the Aksai Chin area is concerned, that is the area across which the

⁴ See Appendix 2, pp. 304-307

Chinese built a road two years ago or more, a road from Gangtok to Yarkand, which passes through that area, that has been and is claimed by the Chinese as their territory and I believe in their maps too, not the new maps but the old maps, that is shown as their territory.⁵ That is disputed and there are two view points about that. I do not know how many Chinese are there. I cannot say because so far as we are concerned, we have no representative, we can have none. It is not an inhabited area so far as area goes. It is at an average of 16,000 to 17,000 feet altitude and treeless, grassless almost or hardly of any kind, without any living thing there. It is frightfully cold. So I cannot give any information as to how many Chinese may be in that particular' comer of Ladakh-Aksai Chin area.

Shrimati Yashoda Reddy:⁶ The Chinese have come into our border and have built air-fields. The Chinese have sent a reply to our protest that we are more on the offensive than they are and even the other day the Russian Minister speaking in the Inter-Parliamentary Union said that they believed that India was on the offensive and not the Chinese.⁷ Such statements by the Chinese and the Russians do cause us concern. Has the Prime Minister taken any objection to the statement made by the Russian Minister in a discussion in the Inter-Parliamentary Union saying that India was in the wrong and not China?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: No, Sir, because we have no particular report of that or the context of it. Even the report that has appeared in the press is that that matter was raised at the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Russian representative said that it appeared from the reports he had that India was

⁵ See SWJN/SS/48/pp.465-471

⁶ Congress, MP from Andhra Pradesh

⁷ The 48th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was held in Warsaw from 27 August to 4 September 1959

more at fault than China. Some such phrase appeared. Naturally he must have received reports from China or wherever it is. There is no question of our objecting to every statement that a person makes.

Shri Y.K. Dhage: I did ask another question as to whether the Prime Minister has apprised the three Great Powers with regard to the situation in this regard?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Well, Sir, not directly but as is usual with us, whenever any important matter occurs, we inform our various Missions abroad, we send them a report of the facts and the steps we are taking and we ask them wherever necessary to inform the Government concerned there. That is what we have done and in pursuance of that, I suppose some of our Ambassadors abroad brought these matters to the attention of the Governments concerned but there was no direct message from us to the Governments concerned.

Shri Ganga Sharan Sinha: Does the reply given by the Chinese authorities tally with our facts? Is it true that our people have encroached or infiltrated into their territory or something like that?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It does not tally with our version of the facts. Obviously that is why we are arguing and we are having this detailed reply and they have mentioned many things in it-names of places about which we have no information. We are trying to get information. In the next two or three days we will probably get more information so as to be able to reply to them as we propose to do in the course of a few days. May I mention to this House that we are preparing a kind of a White Paper which will contain the correspondence between the Government of India and the

Government of China in the last 4 or 5 years, ever since our Tibetan Treaty.⁸ That may not be cent per cent upto date in the sense that if I get a message today, it may not be in it but it will be fairly up-to-date till the last ten days or so. As soon as it is ready, I hope before the Parliament adjourns, it will be placed on the Table of the House.

Shri Ganga Sharan Sinha: Regarding the information that is being collected, may I request him to place before this House as soon as the information is available because we do not know how many Chinese have come there. Just now he gave some information that in that place there is no habitation.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes, but I am afraid I cannot do so because I cannot get any information. It is totally-I will not say totally-but it is not within our reach. It will take, if I sent a party of explorers with exploring kit, about a month to get there.

Shri Jaswant Singh: Sir, there are also reports in the press that along our Ladakh and Tibetan borders, the Chinese are establishing some bases. Is there any truth in them? Has the Government got any information in regard to that aspect of the matter?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: In Tibet?

Mr. Chairman: On Ladakh and Tibetan borders, he says.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Which side of the border? In their territory or our territory?

⁸ See, White Paper!, pp. 98-101.

Shri Jaswant Singh:⁹ In our territory.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Certainly not, there is no truth in them.

Shri Y.K. Dhage: I welcome the move of the Prime Minister to have a White Paper published on this matter and placed on the Table of the House. Would he also consider the possibility of having a discussion on that White Paper before Parliament adjourns?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I don't know: it depends on many factors, on the time available and on the desirability of it. I don't know. Once the House sees the White Paper and knows what we are doing, then it will be time enough to consider what further steps should be taken.

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82. To V.R. Krishna Iyer: China Visit¹⁰

September 6, 1959

My dear Krishna Iyer,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 28th August. Should you wish to go to China, I have no objection to it. The Chinese Government seems to me to be suffering from a pathological outlook.¹¹ They have been

⁹ Independent, MP from Rajasthan

¹⁰ Letter to V.R. Krishna Iyer, Advocate, Valanjambalam, Ernakulam and Law Minister in the former Communist Ministry of Kerala.

¹¹ In a press statement which appears to be an extract of the letter which he had written to Nehru, published in The Hindustan Times on 20 October 1959, Iyer said: "China had certainly to keep to the MacMahon Line as the boundary of the two countries whether it had imperialist background or not. It is unfortunate that the People's Republic of China should show signs of pathological conditions, use strong and violent language and trespass

very unfair to us. But, as I have said above, I have no objection to your going there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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83. To MPs: Border Disputes¹²

"P.M. does not see Major Conflict"

New Delhi,
Sept. 7.

Prime Minister Nehru is reported to have expressed his belief at a meeting of the consultative committee of members of Parliament on external affairs today that China would not risk a world war by embarking on a major conflict with India.

He told the committee that he thought a war with India by China might spread into a global conflict.

He made these remarks in reply to questions after he surveyed the situation regarding the Chinese incursions for about fifty minutes. For the most part Pandit Nehru is understood to have given the historical background of the conflict of claims in respect of border areas. He is stated to have reiterated his willingness to have talks with China on conciliatory or mediatory processes to make border adjustments without amplifying his earlier statement. He conveyed the impression that any such attempt could

into Indian territory or even doubtful border areas. If China refuses to accept the MacMahon Line and establishes new boundary through a progress of military might, the duty of every Indian leaves no doubt in my mind." He added: "He will be constrained to resist force by force but reciprocate friendliness by friendliness."

¹² Report of remarks made at a meeting of Consultative Committee of Parliament on external affairs, 7 September 1959. From the National Herald, 8 October 1959

be fruitful only in a cordial atmosphere. He said, however, that the Chinese Government had developed a cold attitude towards India. This was largely because they wrongly suspected that India had a hand in the Tibetan rebellion.

Some members are reported to have urged strong and urgent measures to clear the Chinese from Indian points occupied by them. He said this was largely a question of a correct correlation of political and military tactics. India surely would not take aggressive tactics by the Chinese lying down. His attention was drawn to a statement by a former British Governor of Assam that the MacMahon Line did not exist and that some parts of NEFA were Tibetan in character.¹³ Pandit Nehru is reported to have expressed surprise that anybody could say the MacMahon Line did not exist at all. As for the Tibetan character of NEFA parts, he said it was true there were people there of Tibetan origin but this did not mean that the region was not within India.

Replying to a question on Bhutan, he wondered if it would be realistic for anybody to say that Bhutan should develop its own special relations with other countries and not India and seek their help in her present difficulties.

* * *

84. In the Lok Sabha: The White Paper¹⁴

¹³ Sir Henry Twynam, who in 1939 was acting British governor of Assam, wrote in The Times of 2 September 1959: "The McMahon Line does not exist and never did". He suggested that the McMahon Line should be modified to run through Se La, a towering pass, a few miles to the South East of Tawang so that the Tawang monastery would be left to Tibet.

¹⁴ Statement, 7 September 1959. Lok Sabha Debates, Second Series, Vol. XXXIV, cols 6694-6698

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Permit me, Sir, before I lay this paper on the Table, just to make a brief statement and to clarify some misapprehensions. I find that in newspapers, news appears which, if true, would naturally be a matter of concern to the House. But, it is not always true. For instance, in one of today's newspapers, there is a report about something happening on the Punjab-Spiti border - that the Chinese have entered there and arrested some people and all that. I have not heard of it at all. I immediately got in touch, by telephone, with the Punjab Government. They had not heard any such thing. In fact, they said that it had not happened.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Does he mean to say because the Punjab Government have not heard, "it had not happened"?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Their report is that, according to their information, it is not true. I cannot say more than what they have told me. They have definitely said on the telephone that there has been no violation of their territory in Spiti in that particular place.

Then again, there was another report that in Chini in Himachal Pradesh, some traders were arrested. We immediately got in touch with the Himachal Pradesh Government and we have not been able to get a detailed account. But we have had no such report from them.

Then again, there was a report in the papers about some firing by Pakistani forces somewhere in the east. Again, we have had no report. I enquired from the Defence people as they get daily reports. Till last night-no last evening they had no report.

Shri Hem Barua:¹⁵ The Assam Government has lodged a strong protest.

¹⁵ PSP, MP from Gauhati, Assam

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It may be some trivial thing-something which is not important.

Shri Hem Barua: Strong protests have been lodged by the Assam Government.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Protests may be lodged. I am merely saying that my information is that according to our Defence Ministry's account which comes in daily, they do not think it important enough to inform me. Minor things may have happened. I just wanted to clear this up; perhaps these are doubts and apprehensions in the minds of the hon. Members.

I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the White Paper containing Notes, Memoranda and letters exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China, 1954-59.

I had promised to do so sometime back, and we are placing these papers. They are fairly up-to-date, but they do not contain the last documents received in the course of the last week. Before that they are up-to-date and I take it that the copies of hon. Members would be available in the Notice Office or somewhere.

Shri Vajpayee: Sir, may we know whether we would be given an opportunity to discuss the White Paper?

Shri Mahanty:¹⁶ Sir, the hon. Prime Minister assured us a few days back that further developments concerning the Chinese incursions into Indian territory will be laid on the Table of the House and the House would be kept informed. There are two things that I would like to blow from the hon. Prime Minister. We are not concerned with the foreign policy matter. We

¹⁶ Surendra Mahanty, Utkal Congress, MP from Dhenkanal, Orissa.

are concerned more with the defence matter. We want to know what steps are being taken to defend this area as we have taken in the NEFA area. We despatched Assam Rifles and military to Subamiri Division. I would like to know what steps have been taken by the Government to defend the sacrosanctity of the Indian territory in Ladakh.

Secondly, we are not merely interested in information. Our information may be right or wrong, we come here to be corrected. I would like to know if the hon. Prime Minister is going to afford us any opportunity to discuss this subject in the House.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The hon. Member says I had promised to lay the developments on the Table of the House. I do not know how I can lay any development on the Table.

Shri Mahanty: Information about developments.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I said that I shall keep the House informed of any developments. So far as the NEFA border is concerned, there has been no development of note which I can bring to the notice of the House; at any rate, that has not come to our knowledge yet. So far as the defence of that area is concerned, the House knows that the matter has been put in charge of our Armed Forces and the Defence Authorities.

Shri Vajpayee: What about Ladakh?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The House will not expect me to tell them exactly what steps they take; that would not be proper for them or for the House. But they are in charge and, no doubt, they will take adequate steps. They will not, I take it, just rush about up and down the border, but they will

take steps at proper points which they consider right places for them to hold (Interruption).

Shri Mahanty: Sir, I rise on a point of order. We have been circulated a pamphlet by your Secretariat showing what portfolios belong to which Minister. The hon. Prime Minister is talking on food, on language, on all possible things on the face of the earth. What about the Defence Minister we would like to know.

I am not saying this in any partisan spirit but in all seriousness. We would like to know from the Defence Minister what steps have been taken. The hon. Prime Minister says he does not know. (Interruption).

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not understand, Sir, how the Defence Minister can come in. I have just been making a brief statement. If the hon. Member had addressed any question to the Defence Minister or any other Minister they would have replied. He put it straight to me, and I had to say something. I know as much as anyone else does, and therefore I replied. But, no doubt, if the Defence Minister or any other Minister knows much more—anything more he can reply, if you, Sir, permit. (Interruption).

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. There ought to be an end to this. We are not having any discussion on any particular subject (Interruption). A paper has been laid on the Table of the House. It has to be studied. Enquiry was made whether hon. Members will have an opportunity to discuss it or not. That is before the Government. The Government would consider whether they can find time or not. That would be considered and then that answer would be made. What is there now that can be immediately done to satisfy the hon. Members? We have some other business before us; we should proceed with it. I would request hon. Members to wait.

Shri Vajpayee: I must say, Sir, that this House is being kept in the dark about the new developments that are taking place. I do not know why the Government should shut out a discussion.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: If the hon. Member has any feeling that the House is being kept in the dark, I may say straightaway that I am prepared to have any discussion at any time you, Sir, like... (Shri Braj Raj Singh: Let us have it.)... if there is time.

I do not want any such impression to go abroad. We have placed every single paper here except the last three or four which have come to us. After they are printed, perhaps it would be possible for us to place them before the House-of course, they are being dealt with and examined at the present moment. There is no mystery or secrecy about it. But if the House wants to know what particular steps our military or Defence Forces take, that is not a matter which is normally disclosed.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: They only want to know whether Government could find some time for a discussion.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a question of time. It is your Committee, Sir, that judges it. I am prepared for it.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May I just submit to the Prime Minister, Sir, that besides the treaties from 1954 onwards-I presume the hon. Prime Minister will also place before the House the new documents that have arrived-we would also like to have at least in the library all the documents which have been signed between Tibet, China and India prior to the successor Government which we have inherited. We would like to study them too.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not quite know. They would be there in the form of printed books. There is no secrecy about them. I think the library is bound to have those books.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Our Secretariat shall collect them all from the books and compile them into one volume—we will try to do that.

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85. In the Lok Sabha: Indians Arrested by Chinese Forces¹⁷

Shri PC. Borooah: Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Chinese forces have arrested 14 Indians belonging to Ladakh recently;
- (b) If so, the action taken in the matter; and
- (c) whether there is any information about the whereabouts of the Head Lamas of Hemis and Phiang Monasteries of Ladakh?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: (a) to (c). According to the information received from our Consulate at Lhasa, five Indians are held in custody by the Chinese authorities in Lhasa. It is not clear whether they come from Ladakh. Our Consulate has protested to the Chinese authorities about the arrest of these persons.

We have also received some information about fourteen Ladakhi Lamas being in custody in various prisons in Tibet. But we have received no precise information about them. We have approached the Chinese authorities to permit Muslims from Kashmir as well as Ladakhi Lamas to

¹⁷ Statement, 7 September 1959. Lok Sabha Debates, Second Series, Vol. XXXIV, cols 6612-6616

contact our Consulate in Lhasa and to allow them to return to India if they so wish.¹⁸

Shri P.C. Borooah: May I know whether Government have any information about the number of Indians returning to Ladakh by Lhasa just prior to the starting of the trouble in Tibet? If so, what was the number and how many of them have been permitted to go back home?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: We have no definite information. We have some reports about them. I say we have no definite information because people used to go from Ladakh without any formal papers being taken from us-passports. It is an old practice. Two types of Indians went there; the one were the Lamas and they went for study there; the other were Ladakhi Muslims who used to go there for trade. According to our old practice nobody need get the papers and most of them did not. So, we had no record. Subsequently, when we tried to find out we were told that about 400 Lamas from Ladakh were studying in the various monasteries in Tibet and about 124 families of Kashmiris, that is Ladakhi Muslims, were there. We have not verified these figures. The Chinese authorities have raised the point that these people are no longer Indian citizens if ever they were because many of the Kashmiris-Ladakhi Muslims-have been there for a long long time. That is a matter on which we are conferring with them.

¹⁸ The Statesman reported on 26 September 1959: "A party of 14 refugee lamas, who arrived in India recently from Sigatse said the Chinese have declared that only the very learned lamas would be allowed to continue their studies, the rest must work on roads. The refugee lamas now here are from Tashi Lhempo monastery which houses nearly 3, 000 lamas. The monastery is under Panchen Lama, Chinese appointed ruler. Several groups of lamas from Gya Khanche and Tsu Khainche colleges of this monastery are on their way to India."

Shri P.C. Borooah: Is it a fact that many of the Lamas and Indian traders while fleeing from Lhasa to Ladakh by the incoming route were machine-gunned by the Chinese forces?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: We have had no information about that.

Shri Hem Barua: May I know whether these 14 Ladakhi Lamas who are in custody of the Chinese authorities in Lhasa are so because of mistaken identity? If so, may I know whether Government have taken any steps to establish their identity so that they might be released?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: There is no question of mistaken identity. It is a question of a person establishing his nationality, not identity. Nationality is normally established by papers, passports etc. Now, they have no papers and passports except such oral or other evidence they might give. Immediately it becomes a little less definite although it might be established. It depends upon the authorities taking a strict view or a flexible view about it. They have said quite definitely that they are Indian nationals from Kashmir. It is true that in the past, sometimes to get over preliminary difficulties they have signed papers which, probably, go against them because they got some things done quickly. That comes up against them now.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh:¹⁹ Have Government received any definite information either through the Chinese authorities or through our own Consulate in Lhasa about the charges under which these Lamas are being held up in Lhasa and elsewhere?

¹⁹ Congress, MP from Sasaram-SC, Bihar

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: What charges! I do not know whom the hon. Member is referring to. I do not know who these persons are who it is alleged are in prison. I have no definite information about them. I cannot even definitely say whether they are there or not. Complaints have reached us from their friends or other people taking interest in them. We are enquiring.

But the other case is a general case of their nationality; and, at the present moment, I do not suppose it is necessary to have a precise legal charge to put a person in prison.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: The Prime Minister just now said that persons other than the 14 Lamas are held up there. May I know what action the Government of India are taking to secure the release of these persons and whether any charge has been given to the Government of India under which they have been held up there? May I also know whether we may expect that they shall be released?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I said it is denied that they are Indian nationals.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I ask about the 5 persons except the Lamas.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: We do not know. I have not got the detailed facts about them.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Sir, the matter has been taken up with the authorities but we have not heard from them. Of these 5 Indians, who are registered with our Consul General and the 3 others are not registered. They are held in custody by the Chinese authorities.

Shri Vajpayee: In view of the fact that the MacMahon Line does not extend to Ladakh, may I know what steps are being taken to demarcate the border and to liberate the Indian territory that is now occupied by the Chinese.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That would be a different question.

Shri Vajpayee: May I submit, the hon. Prime Minister...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Boundary cannot be demarcated here in this question which is only a question of certain persons being taken into custody. Order, order. It may be very important but it cannot be the subject-matter of a supplementary question here.

Shri Vajpayee: If we give notice of an adjournment motion it is rejected on the ground that it is a continuing matter.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: All that is not relevant here.

Shri Goray:²⁰ Just now the Prime Minister said that there are certain individuals about whose nationality there is some doubt but there are others about whose nationality there is no doubt. We have made representations about these two categories of people and we have not, so far, heard anything from the Chinese authorities. Is it to be taken that the Chinese Government will behave in this pattern always?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Who can say that?

²⁰ PSP, MP from Poona, Bombay State

Shri Goray: What do we do? We make representations about people about whose nationality we have no doubt. And we make representations about other people also and they do not give us an answer. What do we do?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Well, it is rather difficult for me to answer not on my own behalf but on behalf of other people that is, the Chinese authorities in Tibet. How can I answer on their behalf as to what they might do or might not do? They have done many things which I thoroughly disapprove of.

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86. To Sampurnanand: Don't be Alarmist²¹

September 9, 1959

My dear Sampurnanand,

I have your letter of the 8th September.²² Our relations with China are strained and are likely to remain so for some considerable time. You must have seen the White Paper we issued and you would probably see further correspondence in the press soon.

While this is so, and we have to be vigilant, I do not think it does anyone any good to be alarmist. The news appearing in the press is often based on rumour and without foundation. I do not think any Chinese have entered any part of the Punjab, in Lahaul or elsewhere. Nor do I think there is much chance of the Chinese rolling across the U .P. border with Tibet. It may well be, however, that when your police detachment is withdrawn from Hoti, the Chinese will come and sit there as they did once previously.

The scheme to which you refer, that is putting up buildings at a cost of Rs. 50 lakhs, obviously cannot be given effect to, quickly. What is more important, I should imagine, is a good road to these places.

²¹ Letter

²² See Appendix 6, pp. 316-317

Anyhow I am having this matter looked into.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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87. To K. Ram: Aksai Chin²³

Please acknowledge this letter and thank him for it.²⁴ Tell him that we shall bear in mind what he has said. But, as a matter of fact, it will be difficult for us to take possession of that North-Eastern Ladakh which is called the Aksai Chin area. We have never occupied it except in some kind of vague theory, and the Chinese have been in possession for considerable time. They have always shown it in their maps as belonging to Chinese Turkestan.

2. You might send copies of this letter to:

- (1) the Kashmir Government,
- (2) the Ministry dealing with Geology and Mining, and
- (3) Professor Thacker.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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88. To D.D. Kosambi: NEFA Border²⁵

September 10, 1959

Dear Prof. Kosambi,

²³ Note, 10 September 1959

²⁴ See Appendix 3, pp. 307-308

²⁵ Letter to D.D. Kosambi, an historian

Thank you for your letter of September 8. I agree with much that you say. Certainly the people of an area cannot be neglected or treated as if they were chattel to be taken by whoever is strong enough to do so. As a matter of fact, however, these large areas are hardly populated. In the North-East Frontier Agency (4/5th of which are in a sense claimed by the Chinese) there are primitive tribes sparsely spread out over a vast area. In the other places there may be very few small villages, but generally it is high mountain land.

The general principle adopted in this demarcation was to fix the line at the water-shed. That was a good principle. I think that Sir Henry Twynam's letter in the Times is not very relevant.²⁶ It may only be correct in regard to a narrow alignment here and there. The normal principle should be usage and geographical features, as I have suggested. Most of these areas have been photographed from the air.

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89. In the Rajya Sabha: India-China Relations²⁷

"Motion Re the Present Relations between India and China"

The Prime Minister: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the speakers who have preceded me, even though I do not agree with everything they have said. When we decided to have this debate today, it was because the House considered that a serious situation had arisen on our borders and in regard to the relations between India and China. Since that time, two days ago, something else has happened which has added to the gravity of the situation and highlighted certain aspects which were perhaps under a shadow then. Therefore, in a sense, this debate becomes all the more

²⁶ See item 83, fn 27

²⁷ Statement, 10 September 1959. Rajya Sabhā Debates, Vol. XXVI, cols 3895-3915

important, although perhaps it is being held a little too soon after these developments to permit all of us to consider this new aspect carefully and fully. Speaking for myself, as Foreign Minister, it is my business not merely to read the new reply from Premier Chou En-lai once, but many times, carefully, trying to understand what exactly it might mean.²⁸ Therefore, it would not be proper for me at present to deal with that reply at all fully or to refer to many of the points raised in it. It will no doubt have to be dealt with. As we have now taken Parliament and indeed the public into our confidence by publishing this White Paper, whenever our reply goes, that also would be published. As a matter of fact, only yesterday morning we sent a message to the Chinese Government in continuation of this correspondence and a copy of that message, I believe, has been placed on the Table of the House today. I do not know if hon. Members have read it or seen it. Yes, it is there. It was soon after we had sent this message that we began getting bits of Premier Chou En-lai's reply. It took a considerable time to come through. Therefore, I shall venture only to deal with certain aspects of it referred to by hon. Members which I consider important and not deal with Premier Chou En-lai's reply. One thing, however, I would like to say is, I often wonder if we, meaning the Government of India and the Government of China, speak quite the same language, if using the words or similar words we mean the same thing. Because often enough I do not follow the course or line of thought I hope I could follow a line of thought that is opposite to mine but I just do not follow; whether the basic way of thinking is different, I do not know. Secondly, and I know this from experience, the problem of translating Chinese into any other language is a terrific problem. I remember when Premier Chou En-lai came here for the first time five years ago and we sat down to draft a simple joint communique, it was originally drafted at his instance, on his suggestion, by

²⁸ Appendix 5, pp. 309-316

me.²⁹ He looked at it and he approved of it. He knows some English and then his translator told him. Then it was translated into Chinese and then I was asked by him to change some of the words in the English draft because in the Chinese he did not like them, in the Chinese translation. I told him that I had no objection to changing them because they had no significance but I did not like what he told me in the Chinese draft. The matter was of no great principle or significance but it struck me then how immensely difficult it was to translate an idea from English or any such language into Chinese or vice versa. It struck me also then, and I have never been able to find a complete answer to this question which is troubling my mind, how Marx appeared in the Chinese language. I am quite sure that Marx or others must be different in Chinese from what it was in the original German or their translations in English or any other language.

So there are these difficulties that one grapples with. One grapples with another difficulty. It is all very well for Members here or for me to criticise something that has happened in China as we do and rightly do but I have not forgotten-and I hope nobody will forget-that before I understand what is happening in China or in relation to China, a big fact stares me in the face and that is a tremendous human upheaval in China which was going on there, the Chinese Revolution. My friend Mr. Sapru said something about the failure of the West to recognise the Chinese Revolution. It is not a question of your liking the Chinese Revolution or not liking it. It is a fact, a fact of tremendous significance to the world, by the size of it and by the content of it. Part of it may be good, part of it may be bad according to your thinking or way of thinking. It is neither here nor there but unless one recognises these major facts of history, your appraisal of the situation may be wrong, utterly wrong. So it has been that many of the troubles we have had in the international sphere have been due to the fact of a deliberate

²⁹ On 25-28 June 1954. See SWJN/SS/26/pp. 365-412

attempt not to recognise one of the major things in human history. That is so.

Having said that, I would venture to say that there appears to me to be a lack of understanding or recognition in China of the revolution in India and to that perhaps are due not only some of their misunderstandings but many of their approaches to India and to matters connected with India. It is true that we have been brought up-I am talking about recent history, not the long past-in a different tradition. We have been conditioned by different factors, we in India and they in China. True. Nevertheless, we ought to be wise enough to understand what has happened there, if not agree with it. And they ought to be wise enough to understand what is happening and what has happened here in India even though they do not agree with it. I find this lack of understanding and appreciation. We have tried, I hope, to understand them and to understand what has happened there. May be we have not fully succeeded but I believe we have to a large extent; at any rate there was this great attempt. I am not at all sure that there was even any attempt on the other side and I feel that just like certain Western nations, not now but throughout the 19th and half of the 20th century, in their pride and arrogance, ignored the rest of the world-they thought they were the leaders of the world and the rest of the world should follow them-so also there is a tendency in some of these Far Eastern countries to forget that there are other parts of the world which count. They forget that India is not a country which can be ignored even though she may speak in gentler language, as she has been accustomed to do not only recently but even in the past ages. The other day, some time back-I forget when-in one of our notes to the Chinese Government we said this. It is included in the White Paper and I shall read it out. It is on page 77 here, in the note embodying the conversation with our Foreign Secretary. It was amazing to get the note from China to which this is the answer: The Statement says:

(1) "The Government of India have learned of this statement with regret and surprise. It is not only not in consonance with certain facts, but is also wholly out of keeping with diplomatic usage and the courtesies due to friendly countries. It is a matter of particular surprise and disappointment to them that a Government and people noted for their high culture and politeness should have committed this serious lapse and should have addressed the Government of India in a language which is discourteous and unbecoming even if it were addressed to a hostile country. Since it is addressed to a country which is referred to as friendly, this can only be considered as an act of forgetfulness.

(2) "We have no desire to enter into a lengthy argument about facts or opinions, much less about the discourteous language used in the statement made on behalf of the Chinese Government. It has been the consistent practice of the Government of India to treat other countries with courtesy and friendliness, even though any country might express opinions opposed to theirs. With China they have endeavoured to maintain and develop friendly relations, and they propose to continue to do so in spite of the discourtesy shown to them by the Chinese Government. This is in consonance with India's past culture and background and Mahatma Gandhi's teachings."

And this is because of what seems to us a complete failure of the Chinese Government to appreciate that we have what are called certain civil and democratic liberties here. This is in relation to Tibet and what has happened here, as if we could go and throttle everybody who disagree with us or disagreed with the Chinese Government. Then the note says:

(4) "The Government of India realise that the system of Government in China is different from that prevailing in India. It is the right of the Chinese people to have a Government of their choice, and no one else has a right to interfere; it is also the right of the Indian people to have a Government of

their choice, and no one else has a right to interfere. In India, unlike China, the law recognises many parties, and gives protection to the expression of differing opinions. That is a right guaranteed by our Constitution and, contrary to the practice prevailing in China, the Government of India is often criticised and opposed by some sections of the Indian people. It is evident that this freedom of expression, free press and civil liberties in India are not fully appreciated by the Government of China, and hence misunderstandings arise".

Then again, on another matter it says:

(5) "From the statement made on behalf of the People's Government of China, it appears that, according to them, the Panchsheel or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence may not be applied according to convenience or circumstances. This is an approach with which the Government of India are not in agreement. They have proclaimed and adhered to these Principles as matters of basic policy and not of opportunism. They will continue to hold to these Principles and endeavour to apply them according to their own thinking".

I have read out extracts from that Paper. So there is this difficulty.

Dr. Kunzru³⁰ said that our foreign policy was in the melting pot. He also referred to our non-alignment and to Panchsheel being a slogan and an opiate and so on. I am sorry that Dr. Kunzru has failed to appreciate-he may disagree, but he has failed to appreciate-the basic reasons for our foreign policy. They were not based on merely being friendly to China or some other country although we wanted to be friendly with other countries-but they were also based on a certain mental or other approach to this question. It is a basic thing. These principles are right-and I do claim that they are right and I should like any hon. Member here to tell me wherein they are not right. I have yet to find anyone, not only here but elsewhere

³⁰ R.N. Kunzru, Independent, MP from UP

as well, who can say that they are not right, but only they say it is not right to say this to China or some other country.

But a principle is a principle. It does not become unright or wrong because somebody whom you suspect to be not quite truthful, says it. Therefore, I do not understand what the present situation which has developed, serious as it is, has got to do with putting our foreign policy in what is called a melting pot. So far as I am concerned and so far as our Government is concerned, our foreign policy is as firm as a rock and it will remain so. It will be some other Government that may change it. The present Government will not and the present Government will hold to non-alignment, because it is a matter of principle, not of opportunism or the convenience of the day. That surely does not mean that we should not be vigilant, that we should not protect India's interests or India's border or whatever it is. Surely that would be a foolish inference to draw from it. Dr. Kunzru referred to various mistakes of the past. He particularly referred to our keeping things back from Parliament. Well, Sir, what did we do? He said the other day when there was a debate here about Korea...

Dr. H.N. Kunzru: Tibet.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am sorry, I meant Tibet. He said that then we did not make a full report or a full and comprehensive report to Parliament. Well, Sir, let us go back to that time, a few months ago. That was the time when the message from which I just now read out was sent. I don't quite know what more report we could make at that stage. We could, of course, have said something more. But so far as the border problems were concerned, the position then was as it had been for several years previously, because remember that the recent development, the very recent development, of the last few weeks, is a new development about

the frontier problem. It is true that the Government of China had gone on producing maps which were incorrect maps to which we had taken exception. And they assured us that they would look into the matter and correct them where necessary later, these old maps. That was not an adequate or satisfactory explanation to give. Yet it was some kind of explanation and those maps continuing were an irritating feature in the landscape. Still there it was. We are not going to change maps by shouting about them. After all, in dealing with countries, we deal with them diplomatically or by methods of coercion and war. Where we rule out war and where these methods of coercion are silly in the case of such countries, we have to proceed diplomatically.

Right from the first few months of independence, in the first year or two, repeatedly I stated in Parliament that the MacMahon Line-I use that word for short; really I do not know why it should not be called the MacMahon Line; it simply means the defined frontier-was our frontier. When I say something in Parliament, it is meant for the outside world and it was meant, if I may say so, for the Government of China. We said this to the Chinese Government in communication orally and otherwise too. Their answer was vague. I am talking about the maps. I saw no reason at that time-I am talking of a time about six, seven or eight years ago-to discuss the question of the frontier with the Chinese Government because, foolishly if you like, I thought that there was nothing to discuss. I think in the last letter Mr. Chou En-lai refers to this that I would not even discuss this.³¹ I always recognised that they were minor matters, territories which had been considered disputable even before the Chinese came to Tibet. Those areas were there even in the British period. There were minor disputes and the Chinese inherited them and went on with them. We are prepared to settle those matters.

³¹ See Appendix 5, pp. 309-316

You may say that all the frontier matters might be divided into three parts. One is broadly speaking what is called the MacMahon Line from the Burmese border to the Bhutan border. Then comes Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Lahaul, Spiti and then you go on to Ladakh. You must treat these separately. When I talk about the McMahon Line, obviously it is only that area, not of the Ladakh area which is quite different. I am not going into the long history because I do not want to take the time of the House. It is a complicated thing but we have always looked upon the Ladakh area as a different area as, if I may say so, some vaguer area so far as the frontier is concerned because the exact line of the frontier is not at all clear as in the case of the MacMahon Line. When we discovered in 1958, more than a year ago, that a road had been built across Yehchong in the north-east corner of Ladakh, we were worried. We did not know where it was. Hon. Members asked, why did you not know before? It is a relevant question but the fact of the matter is that we just are not within hundred miles of that area. It is an uninhabitable area and it has not been under any kind of administration. Nobody has been present there. It is a territory where not even a blade of grass grows, about 17,000 feet high. It adjoins Sinkiang. We sent a party, practically of explorers, small group of six or seven or eight or ten, mountaineers and others, to find out about this. One of the groups of this party was apprehended by the Chinese Government and there was correspondence on this. The men belonging to that group were released later on. Now, possibly it was an error or a mistake or wrong on my part not to have brought that fact before the House. I am myself not clear, thinking back on that, what I should have done but our difficulty then was that we were corresponding with the Chinese Government and we were waiting for those people, that little party, to come here and tell us as to what happened to them. It took two or three months for them to come. The group which was apprehended by the Chinese was released later and the

men came back after some time. We thought at that time that it might be easier for us to deal with the Chinese Government without too much publicity of this incident. We might have been wrong but it was not a crisis or anything like that. However, I am prepared to admit that it was my error not to have brought this matter to the notice of Parliament when it occurred. For the rest, there has been no keeping back really of any information and we have kept Parliament fully informed. There have been plenty of questions.

Dr. Ahmad³² said that there are no objective reasons for war. Of course, there are no objective reasons, no practical reasons, no sensible reasons or no reason whatsoever of any kind. Whichever way you approach it, it would be folly of an extreme type for us to fight over such matters. We may get excited about the sacredness of the Indian soil and the Chinese people may get excited about something they hold sacred if they hold anything sacred. That is a different matter but the fact of the matter is that nothing can be a more amazing folly than for two great countries like India and China to go into a major conflict and war for the possession of a few mountain peaks, however beautiful the mountain peaks might be, or some area which is more or less uninhabited. It is not that, as every Member of this House knows. When such conflicts occur, something happens which stirs our innermost convictions, something which hurts our pride, our national pride, our self-respect and all that. So, it is not a question of a mile or two or ten or even a hundred miles. It is something more precious than a hundred or a thousand miles and it is that which brings up peoples' passions to a high level and it is that which, to some extent, is happening in India today. It is not because of a patch of territory but because they feel that they have not got a fair treatment in this matter, they have been treated rather casually

³² CPI, MP from UP

by the Chinese Government and an attempt is made, if I may use the word, to bully them.

Now, the only time that firing took place was in Longju, a few days ago.³³

In his last letter, Mr. Chou En-lai gives a list of places where India has committed aggression.³⁴ We have committed aggression on air and we have committed aggression on land. There is no sea; otherwise, we would have been accused of committing aggression on sea also. I might inform the House that we have received a protest about one of our ships having gone into the territorial waters of China. That ship, I think, was going from Hong Kong to somewhere. That is another matter. So, sea is also not left out. Now, what is aggression and what is not aggression depends, of course, on where you put the line of demarcation. Obviously, we may go on saying that they have committed aggression and they may go on saying that we have committed aggression because their line is different from ours and so long as you do not agree to a line, you can always go on saying this according to our own interpretation and our own methods. There can be no limit to that but Mr. Chou En-lai says in his letter that although they totally deny and repudiate the so-called MacMahon Line, nevertheless, they had not crossed the Line. That is his argument and he says that they won't cross it till this matter is settled by agreement. I won't go into the long argument but take this particular place where actually firing took place. We got one version from our people and they have no doubt got a version from their own people. The two versions do not meet and they conflict with each other but there is just one simple matter I should like to bring to your notice and to the Chinese Government's notice. Over this there has been a protest. There has been a post belonging to the Indian Government at

³³ The first armed clash with China occurred at Longju in the east on 25 August 1959. See SWJN/SS/511pp

³⁴ See White Paper II, pp. 27-33

Longju. It so happened that towards the second half of July, we got news that the officer-in-charge of the check post at Longju was seriously ill. He was supposed to have got at 5 P.M. appendicitis and nobody was available there to deal with him. So we sent a message to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 23rd July, that is, slightly more than a month before this small fighting took place and this was the message to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

"The officer-in-charge of the Indian check post at Longju near the international border in the Subansiri Frontier Division of NEFA is seriously ill. It is essential to send immediate medical relief to save his life. The location of the post is...

Then the exact longitude, latitude etc. were given.

"The Government of India propose to paradrop a doctor at the post. Depending on weather, the paradropping operation may take place on the 24th afternoon or on one of subsequent days. The aircraft has been instructed to take all care not to cross into Chinese territory but the Chinese Government are being informed should there be any error of judgment. The Government of India will appreciate if immediate warning is issued to the neighbouring Chinese posts of this operation".

This was a normal message sent to a friendly Government but the mere normality of it shows that we had no doubt about our post. We gave them the longitude, latitude and we said we were sending a doctor and when they say that this is aggression on our part at Longju, I do submit that that argument does not convince. We can, of course, go into that; I need not convince the House because the House is convinced about these matters. Now, I should like to go back to one thing to which attention has been drawn, I think, by Diwan Chaman Lall³⁵; that is about my talks with Premier Chou En-lai. It is no pleasure to me to contradict Premier Chou. My

³⁵ Congress, MP from Punjab

memory may be wrong; his memory may be wrong. Whatever it is, but it happens I did not trust my memory but a record of the talks I made in an official note within 24 hours of our talk. There is a small quotation given of that. How did this talk arise? How did it take place? It was Premier Chou who started it and the reason for it was that some months previously I had sent him a message, not about the Indian frontier, but about the Burmese frontier. I had no business to interfere on the question of the Burmese frontier but the Prime Minister of Burma who had been here about that time said that he was having this trouble about the frontier and we discussed it and he asked if I could help in any way. I said, it is very difficult to interfere with two other countries of the status they had but still presuming rather our friendly relations with China and with Burma. I sent a message to Premier Chou saying that I was sorry that this small matter of the Burma-China frontier was continuing and was not being settled and I hoped that it would be settled soon. Then I used-I remember very well-a phrase. In it I said Burma is relatively a small country; on either side of Burma are these big countries China and India and Burma naturally feels a little apprehensive of both these countries-I included both India and China-and it is up to us to function in a way to remove all apprehension from the mind of Burma which is a friendly country. We are friends with it. Why do anything carelessly which might increase their fear or apprehension? I included India and I put it in the same level as China in that letter. Then I suggested in that letter-it is not for me to suggest what the frontiers should be-that perhaps he might be good 'enough to invite U Nu who was not at that time Prime Minister and discuss this with him. Premier Chou agreed to my suggestion and invited U Nu. Later U Nu went and they had talks and I believe he came back fairly satisfied with those talks but I regret to say that although this occurred some time ago, 3 ½ years ago, those talks have not borne fruit in Burma yet. It is still there; there is a feeling in Burma that

the assurances given to U Nu about the frontier are not fulfilled by China. So when Premier Chou was discussing this matter over the message we sent about Burma-I had invited U Nu and we had talked in that connection - he said, although we do not recognise this MacMahon Line-it was of British Imperialism and all that-nevertheless we are friendly countries, these things should not go on in this way and therefore, he said,-we have agreed to recognise the MacMahon Line in so far as the Burmese frontier is concerned-we were discussing Burma, remember-and the other few matters will also be settled soon, in that connection he went on to say, also because of our friendly relations we shall accept the MacMahon Line so far as the China India frontier is concerned. That was the whole of the MacMahon Line. Then one or two things he added. One was that he did not think that it was a valid line. Certainly he said that; that the British had gone on extending. Nevertheless, we shall recognise it because of long usage and because we are friendly countries. Now, when I heard this I wanted to be quite sure that I had not misunderstood him. So I think three times in various ways I came back to this subject and made him repeat this. So there was no doubt about it. Because the matter was of some importance to me, when I came away a little later. I put it down in writing and there it is. Now, it is a -matter of sorrow to me that this thing is now, if not denied it is anyhow practically denied-ignored and another line is adopted. Of course, it may be that things have happened in China compelling a change in policy; I do not know. That may happen in any country but however that may be, there it is. And this changeover, it seems to me, has been a progressive changeover; it is not sudden. Even in this White Paper those who read it will see that the answer about this MacMahon Line etc. is not quite so strong, so positive, as in Premier Chou's letter of yesterday. Gradually, step by step, the policy of China in regard to this matter has become more rigid.

Why, I cannot say.

How, this is a matter, Sir, undoubtedly of concern to us, not only because of its consequences but because such developments produce a feeling of lack of confidence in each other's words and assurances. That is a more important thing, as some hon. Members said, than a few yards of territory. If there is that lack of faith, lack of confidence, where are we?

Take another thing. On the one hand we have these maps where large areas of India are marked as if they were China and on the other they say, well, the maps are not precise and accurate. We can change them if necessary but we do not recognise the MacMahon Line. Nobody knows exactly what they may have in mind as to where the Line is. It is an extraordinary position for a great State to take up. Even if we subscribed that, it means leaving the matter vague and the possibility of trouble is always there. So far as we are concerned, administratively we have been there. It is true that there is not much of administration in the high Himalayas but still what there is there. We have our post; we have our officers. We function; we have functioned for years there and to be told that this is aggression or this may be aggression is an extraordinary thing. If we have two sets of opinions about this, the right thing to do for the two countries was and is for them to sit down and talk about it and argue about it and come to a settlement. Now, I have made our position clear on this border issue by statements in Parliament and later by letters, etc. for ten years now. There is no doubt that the Chinese Government knew about it. They remained silent. They did not accept my position, except as I said that we had a talk here in India when Premier Chou came here three years ago, when he accepted the MacMahon Line. But apart from that we have been talking about it, acting upon it. Take even the Sino-Indian Treaty about Tibet, five years ago- I think in 1954.³⁶ Now, we were dealing with Tibet

³⁶ See SWJN/SS/25/p. 468

and we were dealing with such matters as affected Tibet. We were dealing with the various extra-territorial rights we had in Tibet, withdrawing them, some soldiering we had, post office, telegraph office, roads, pilgrim routes, trade, commerce and everything, and what were the passes we should go through. Now, normally one would think that, if there was a problem of a bit of Tibet being in India or vice versa when we were dealing with India-Tibet questions, those matters should have come up for discussion. They did not. I saw no reason why I should push them, because I had nothing to say about them. I accepted the boundary as it was. Nothing was mentioned. And the whole context of those discussions was that we were dealing with all the remaining problems as between Tibet and India in that treaty with China. And to have it at the back of your mind that you were going to change the whole frontier between Tibet and India and later bring it up, does not seem to be quite straight or fair-play. Now, a very favourite word, we often use it too and they use it frequently, but a very favourite word with the Chinese authorities is "imperialism". Well, there is imperialism in the world. We have known enough of it to dislike it very greatly. We have struggled against it. But it seems to me that sometimes this word is used to cover every sin and everything as if that was an explanation of every argument. Just say "imperialism", it answers everything. British imperialism spread, they say. Undoubtedly British imperialism was here. Undoubtedly in the old days, half a century ago, it exercised pressure on Tibet. Those were the days, the House may remember, when China was not strong, but British imperialism was afraid of Czarist Russia. It was really Czarist Russia and British Empire pushing, being afraid of each other. However, they did do that and various things came. Various settlements were made from time to time and, as Diwan Chaman Lall pointed out, also the tripartite treaty of 1919 or 1914. Although China did not sign it, the real Chinese objection was to the border

between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet, and not to this border at all. We were not concerned with that. However, whatever that may be, that was about more than 45 years ago. That is, after that treaty, before that too, there was a vague kind of occupation. Now, to raise these matters now on the ground that many, many long years ago British imperialism functioned there, it does seem to me, is some strange argument. How do countries grow? The Chinese State today is a great, very big, colossal State. Was this Chinese State born as such from the head of "Brahma"? How did it grow so big and great? Surely, in past ages by the ability of its people and the conquests of its warriors, in other words, by Chinese imperialism. There is no doubt about it and I am sure they would not deny it. I am not talking of the present more enlightened days of China, but of the old days surely-and I have the greatest admiration for Chinese history and culture. Not that the world functioned in that way, but the point is that the Chinese State grew in that way, where it came to Tibet. Tibet now is a point at issue, very much so. But where do you draw the line, from which a kind of certainly comes- there is no imperialism after and only before? At times, if one discusses the history of Tibet, well, there were periods when Tibetan armies occupied the Chinese capital. There were periods when the Nepalese Armies occupied the Tibetan capital. You go far enough. We had even in India, peaceful as we are, empires going right over to a large part of Central Asia, in Asoka's time, Chandragupta's time, the Kushan period, and all that. Now, where do you draw the line in history? History is full of changes, full of ups and downs, full of all kinds of things and full of mixtures of people and countries. And if one does go back that way, there is no country in the wide world which may not be shaken to its foundations and split up and certainly the great Chinese State will not survive if that argument is applied. We do not apply that argument. So, it is strange that these simple human factors, apart from constitutional and other factors, do not seem to be appreciated

by the Chinese State and they have valued India's friendship only to a very low extent, in the final analysis.

I think we were right in working for their friendship and, may I repeat and say, we shall continue to work for it. Any person who has the least responsibility for India's present and India's future cannot allow himself to be frightened and angered and behave in fright and anger. No country should do that, more especially in a crisis. People who are frightened and angry can never act wisely. We have to think of the present, of course, but we have to think of the future of these two great countries. To imagine that India can sort of push China about is silly. To imagine that China can push India about is, if I may venture to say so, equally silly. Now, therefore, this idea of settling things by this kind of compulsion and force or by threats and bullying is all wrong and we must accept things as they are. Now, if you will read the letter, the message we sent to the Chinese Government yesterday morning, that yellow paper or pink paper or whatever it is, you will find that we made a suggestion to them there. You need not read it just now. But you will find that we have suggested to them there can be no other way-that we must accept the status quo and let us discuss these individual points. I do not know, and I do not see how we can discuss this kind of broad areas. We can discuss individual points where there might be some dispute and there might be complaint. It is one thing to accept or to adhere to the MacMahon Line but quite another to see the exact alignment here and there. A village may be here and a village may be there. It is not of great importance provided it is done in a friendly way. We are prepared to discuss, we have discussed once or twice. But we say that it is the status quo, as somebody said it is the status quo prior to any recent incursion. Take Longju. We made a very fair offer. We said: "You say that we committed aggression. We don't agree that we did. But we are prepared to agree to neither your forces nor our forces being at Longju. Let us discuss

that matter. Let your forces withdraw and let our forces remain where they are or two or three miles away. We are not prepared to take them back". That is, we want to approach this matter in as peaceful and co-operative a way as possible. Of course, it is fantastic to talk about war etc. in this way and to rush about in a panic. Nevertheless the matter is serious enough. Frankly it is serious because I just do not know how the Chinese mind may think. I just do not know, and I have been surprised at recent developments.

So I do not know. I have great admiration for the Chinese mind, logical and reasonable and relatively calm. But sometimes I wonder if all those old qualities have not perhaps been partly overwhelmed. So we have to be careful. We have naturally to be vigilant, and we have to take such measures as we can to protect our integrity.

One word more, Sir. Very probably these Tibetan developments have angered and soured the mind of the Government of China, very likely. They have been in trouble there undoubtedly, and the Tibetan people have been in much greater trouble of course. And perhaps they have reacted strongly to what we have done. I mean, to the asylum we have given to the Dalai Lama and to certain other factors. We have tried to steer a middle way. We respect the Dalai Lama. Large numbers of people respect him. That does not mean we agree with him in everything. In some ways he is acting wrongly today. In so far as our advice was taken we have strongly told him that he is acting wrongly and no good can come if he goes to the United Nations on Tibet. I have told him personally, I have said so in public, and I hold to that opinion. It will do no good to him or Tibet. There it is. Some others have advised him differently. We have contradicted some statements that he has recently made which were very unwise and incorrect, if I may

say so.³⁷ The other day in a speech he delivered, I think somewhere in Delhi, he talked of the MacMahon Line and the status of Tibet being at the same level which was quite incorrect. So we do not agree with him. We have warned him and I must say in a large measure he has accepted our advice, that is to say, in regard to not indulging in political controversy. But sometimes he has not, and it has been a difficult question for us to decide. We do not want to come in his way. We want to give him freedom of action within limitations. But no doubt all this must have affected and is affecting the Chinese mind, and perhaps it is due to that and not to the logic or the reasonableness of the Chinese position in regard to India, in regard to our frontiers that they are taking up this rigid attitude. Well, we have to be firm, we have to hold to our position. I shall try to do that. But I shall try always to find a way for peaceful settlements because I try to look into the future, and the future is dark if it is to be covered by continuing hostility between India and China.

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90. In the Lok Sabha: The White Paper³⁸

Motion re: White Paper on Indo-Chinese Relations

The Prime Minister: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this debate has brought out a large number of points and I should like to deal with many of them. Yet I feel that it would perhaps be better to lay stress on the highlights of this debate, if I may say so, rather than lose myself in a lot of detail.

³⁷ The Times of India of 9 September 1959 reported that the Dalai Lama had asked for "immediate intervention of the UN and consideration by the General Assembly, on its own initiative, of the Tibetan issue."

³⁸ Statement, 12 September 1959. Lok Sabha Debates, Second Series, Vol. XXXIV, cols 8108-81.29

The recent letter which I received from Premier Chou-En-lai raises many points and naturally we shall have to reply to it after full consideration and not in a hurry, and that consideration is being given to it.³⁹ I do not propose to deal with that letter here in this discussion, partly because this House does not require to be convinced of many of the things that perhaps Premier Chou En-lai might require to be told, and partly also because that would mean losing myself in a great deal of detail.

Now, first of all, let me take up one simple but very basic point that Shri Karni Singhji has raised.⁴⁰ He made a rather remarkable statement that he believed in Panchsheel provided that it was with people whom you agreed with. That is really, if I may say so, a perfectly remarkable statement. "I believe in being tolerant provided you agree with me. Otherwise, I will not knock your head,"-This is his idea of toleration and tolerance. This is his idea of Panchsheel. Some hon. Members said: "We must stand on our own feet". Some other hon. Members said: "You must seek the help of others". Well, people who say this seem to be, in spite of all their gallant language and brave behaviour, weak, timid, panicky and alarmist. That is not how a nation meets the challenge-looking around, seeing "How can anybody help me; who is going to help me"? How is anybody going to help you, if you are not strong enough to face the challenge? I say, let this be clearly understood: I as Prime Minister, and my Government, stand on it-that we will stick to our policy of nonalignment. We will stick to our policy, call it what you like. It is not my policy, it is an axiomatic truth-the Panchsheel-whether we agree, or China does not agree, it is immaterial-it is an axiomatic position, I say. And I challenge anyone to show it is a wrong position. You may say: "If somebody lies, you break his head". That is a

³⁹ See Appendix 5, pp. 309-316

⁴⁰ Independent, MP from Bikaner, Rajasthan.

different matter. You may say "Oh, don't tell the truth because the other fellow lies". Is that your position?

Some of the observations made this afternoon here, I venture to say, were quite extraordinary, even in excitement. I can understand a measure of excitement, even warm feeling and a desire that no one should touch or sully the honour of India, the integrity of India, the self-respect of India-I can understand all that. But Dr. Ram Subhag Singh's talk about bombing hillsmen in the mountains seems to show that he has lost his balance and there is no balance left. He neither understands bombing, nor mountains, nor human beings, nor anything. It is only an exhibition of petulant excitement and anger. And if this country is going to behave in petulant excitement and anger, how would it face a crisis? Is this Parliament going to behave in this way? It is a most extraordinary thing and I am wondering what would happen if we took some of the suggestions made here. Exactly where would we land ourselves if everybody is to break the other's head? And many hon. Members said: not an inch of our territory, not an inch of our territory. All these brave gestures, if you would permit me to say so, have very little meaning. Certainly, not an inch of our territory or anything, if somebody forces or compels me, because we must never submit to compulsion or force in a matter of this kind. It is not a question of an inch, or yard or a mile; it is a question of submitting to compulsion, submitting to force and we will never submit to force, whatever happens to our country. But what do these gestures mean? I dislike this flamboyant language of an inch of territory and all that, sitting here in Parliament, not realising what it means, I dislike this business of going about bombing everybody, because you dislike his face or what he has said or done. There are many things said or done which one dislikes. Acharya Kripalani has accused me of some things. He may be right in his accusation. But I do hope he is not right when he accused me of over-politeness. I am not normally accused of that!

Acharya Kripalani: When we are concerned.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: He talked about Gandhiji. Whatever Gandhiji might have said, he did not shout, as some of us do. His action was strong undoubtedly and firm, but his voice was gentle, gentle to the opponent, gentle to the enemy, gentle to everybody, always trying to win over the other person. We do not pretend to be Gandhis, because we are hardly fit to be even distant followers of his. But I do believe that at any time, in international affairs, it is the gentle and firm voice that should be raised and not this shouting voice that we have got accustomed to, this cold war voice, this just cursing each other, closing everybody's mind-where nothing counts but the bomb of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh. Dr. Ram Subhag forgets....

Acharya Kripalani: If the Prime Minister would not mind, I never said that he should go on abusing everybody. I said: we should be firm and we should make our meaning clear.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I accept that completely. But Acharya Kripalani said something more. He said: you must shout; you must speak in a loud voice.

Acharya Kripalani: I submit I was making only a comparison.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is a small matter. But I would submit that we are dealing with very serious issues, and such issues are not solved by mere exhibition of excitement. Certainly and obviously, at any time, more especially in such moments, we have to be firm. And we have to be firm, realising where one has to be firm. It is not being firm in the air or being firm about everything, good, bad or indifferent. There are important things

and unimportant things. One has to be firm about important things and one sticks to that, come what may.

But if one tries to be firm about everything it means one is not firm at all.

That is only talking firmly which is not acting firmly because there are certain physical and actual disabilities, which you cannot survive. Nobody can. A great country, the United States of America, a great country like the Soviet Union they are the superpowers-know the limitations of firmness. They are very firm countries but they know the limitations of firmness and they stop at a certain limit otherwise they would have gone in for war by this time and would have destroyed the world. We talk loosely. This kind of talk, namely, let us be firm, let us do this, let us fight and let us shed every drop of blood-this kind of thing, may I say, rather takes us away from the main questions that we are discussing, which are difficult. The position is a serious one.

Now I say that Premier Chou En-lai's last letter in some parts is worded in relatively soft language and in some parts he talks about the status quo being kept, talks, negotiations etc.. But basically that letter raises some issues which are very serious and which have been raised in that form officially almost for the first time.

As I was sitting here, I was reading certain reports of discussions in Peking in some Congress that is being held there where Premier Chou En-lai spoke 'more or less on the lines of this letter and where other people spoke. Of course, it does not require any particular brilliance to know that everyone spoke on those same lines, supporting Premier Chou En-lai, namely:

"express their great surprise to find Mr. Nehru defending British imperialism. So-and-so asked Mr. Nehru: On whose behalf was he speaking in defending British imperialism? Now Prime Minister Nehru and the Indian Government treat the aggressive plot of British

imperialism against China in the last century as an accomplished fact.

Does this accord with the five principles advocated by Mr. Nehru"

And so on and so forth. There is plenty of it. Just as many hon. Members have said something about the MacMahon Line strongly saying: stick to it; do not budge an inch etc.-I forget who said it, but I seem to have read it somewhere-they were equally strong against the MacMahon Line there. So, here we are.

Obviously a question like this cannot be solved by resolutions in Delhi and in Peking or by strong language hurled at each other. Other ways have to be found--either peaceful or warlike. Every sensible person here and elsewhere wants to avoid war in such matters or in any matter. It is quite clear. The most powerful nations in the world are trying their utmost today to find a way outside war, and for us to think and talk of war seems rather ridiculous in this context of things.

It is perfectly different for us to say and for the weakest and the smallest nation to say and for an individual to say: I will not submit to evil, come what may. It is quite a different thing. I will not submit to it. I will not submit to coercion. I will not submit to dishonour. That is quite a different thing. Even a single individual can say that, according to Gandhiji's teachings or any teaching. Any country can say that. That is different from a country in the pride of its might saying, "Oh" we shall do this or that with our armies and bombs etc." It is a very different thing. The two approaches are completely different.

Now, what is happening in China today? And I say so, I do not wish to use strong words, but it is the pride and arrogance of might that is showing in their language, in their behaviour to us and in so many things that they have done. It is that.

And it is not a question of this mile on this side of the MacMahon Line or that mile on that side. They are small matters, I say again. But it is not a

small matter, the other thing, that they showed in their maps a large tract of Indian territory and called it Chinese territory. That is not a small matter. Because you may say that you will not give an inch of the MacMahon Line; I will give it if I find that it is wrongly there; what is the good of saying these things-the MacMahon Line is a broad line between Bhutan and the Burma border and it goes on to Burma. In some places it is quite definite; in some places it is not definite, it is not marked in some places. And you have to go by other indications. The broad approach of the man who drew that line was that it should be on the water-sheds. It was a good approach. But we have deliberately left the water sheds in one or two places. Therefore, when I say I stick to the MacMahon Line, what I mean is that I stick to that broad approach. But if by evidence or facts, whatever it is, a slight deviation in the alignment is necessary, it is not a major matter. And that has to be decided by facts and not by anybody's coercion.

And when I talked about so-called mediation and conciliation-and I even used the word arbitration-what did I mean? I meant that in these minor alignments, etc., or in these minor questions that have arisen, wherever they may be, whatever it is-I forget the names of these places; Longju and Hoti and other places, these are the alignments; Hoti is not of course on the MacMahon line, it is on the U.P. side-these alignments can always be talked about in a peaceful way, in a friendly way, and slightly altered here and there if there is enough evidence.

But that is not what we are considering today. We have always been ready for that. We are considering something much bigger, and that is a claim, the claim laid down in the Chinese maps which for the first time, mind you, now in this last letter of Premier Chou En-lai and the speeches delivered now in their Congress is taking shape more definitely. At first, whenever the maps were referred to, it was said, "Oh, these are old maps, we will revise them." It was a totally inadequate answer. Well, it was some kind of

an answer, postponement of an answer if you like. But now the real thing is that this is held out as something more definite. They hold by it—not the exact line, we do not know exactly where their line is, and it is impossible to discover large tracts of Indian territory. That kind of treatment or behaviour does seem to me, if I may use the word, very improper for one nation to treat another, even much more so when the nations have been friendly. And that is the point that has arisen.

The question is, again I repeat, for the moment does not worry about these petty spots. A petty spot is important if coercively and aggressively even a yard of territory is taken from us. Because, it is not a yard of territory that counts but the coercion. But all those petty spots are capable of some kind of solution. Because, it makes no difference to China or India whether a few yards of territory in the mountain are on this side or on that side. But it makes a great deal of difference if that is done in an insulting, aggressive, offensive, violent manner, by us or by them. All that counts.

Now, I have been accused, with some justification, that I have kept matters from Parliament, these important matters. (An Hon. Member: Why some?) I beg of you, you have read this White Paper, point out to me what exactly I have kept. I shall tell you what I have kept. It is only one thing that I have kept, that is, last November, December, when we were dealing with the Aksai Chin area and the road there. That had come to our knowledge apart from our letters about Bara Hoti, about this and that. We cannot come here for every little thing. But, that certainly is an important matter: the road through the Aksai Chin area. We felt its importance. We did not come here at that time.

Hon. Members said-I forget who said-do not our Air Force take pictures and all that. I do not think there is a full realisation of what this area is and where it is. The mere act of taking pictures would have endangered that plane which took it, endangered it not only from the physical features point

of view, but endangered it from the point of view of action, by the other party shooting it down, whatever the risks.

I won't go into details. But, I should like this House to appreciate what these places are. This place, Aksai Chin area, is in our maps undoubtedly. But, I distinguish it completely from other areas. It is a matter for argument as to what part of it belongs to us and what part of it belongs to somebody else. It is not at all a dead, clear matter. However, I have to be frank to the House. It is not clear. I cannot go about doing things in a matter which has been challenged, not today, but for a hundred years. It has been challenged as to the ownership of this strip of territory. That has nothing to do with the MacMahon Line. It has nothing to do with anything else. That particular area stands by itself. It has been in challenge all the time. Our going about taking pictures of it from the air or, as somebody said, bombing it, is not a feasible proposition, we knew it is not an inaccessible place. Of course, people can go there.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: If it does not belong to India, then, there is no question of bombing.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not saying that. That is just it. You make statements without knowing facts. I cannot say what part of it may not belong to us, and what parts may. The point is, there has never been any delimitation there in that area and it has been a challenged area-bits of it: I cannot say which bit is and which not. That is a question which will have to be decided.

Shri C.K. Bhattacharya:⁴¹ The same statement of our Prime Minister on a previous occasion has been used by Mr. Chou En-lai in his letter to prove that this area belongs to them.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Maybe.

Shri C.K. Bhattacharya: A similar statement is used in his present letter in justification of his claim.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is just what the hon. Members feel. Either I must put facts before them or delude them or leave them to make rash statements themselves: what am I to do about it? Many statements that I heard today were far removed from facts. Therefore, I have to say, I distinguish between these frontiers. There is the MacMahon Line. By and large, apart from minor variations, that is a fixed line. In some parts, in the Subansiri area or somewhere there, it was not considered a good line and it was varied afterwards by us, by the Government of India. There are many factors to be seen. But, broadly, it follows the watershed. That is the test. We hold by that, we stick to it subject to minor variations, for special reasons. A mile here or a mile there does not matter provided it is peacefully arranged. It is in regard to that that I said, let us have mediation, conciliation. There can be no mediation, conciliation or arbitration about these demands of the Chinese about large chunks of territory. It is quite fantastic and absurd basing their demand on what happened in past centuries. As I said in the other House the other day, if this argument is applied, I wonder how much of the great Chinese State would survive these arguments. How did the Chinese State, this huge State, mighty State, build itself up-by the doctrine of Panchsheel or what?

⁴¹ Congress, MP from West Dinajpur, West Bengal

In the past it built itself up by conquest obviously, all parts of it. Whether it was a few years ago, a hundred, 200 or 500 years ago, it was built up by conquest, as all great States have been built up by conquest, violent conquest; and if you apply that theory, the Chinese State was not born complete in itself when civilisation began. So, that argument of British imperialism can well be countered with past, if not present, Chinese imperialism which obviously functioned. One might say, as I said the other day, in the old days Asoka's empire, the Kushan Empire and Chandra Gupta's empire spread over half of Central Asia and Afghanistan and all over; therefore, we should lay claim to that. It is an extraordinary argument, this kind of thing. The whole reason of that argument simply takes you back to past ages of history upsetting everything. It really is the argument of a strong and aggressive Power. Nobody else would use it. I have a feeling that as there is a certain paranoia in individuals, sometimes there is a paranoia in nations, and one sees that, so that in this matter let us come to basic facts.

The basic facts are these. Number one, that this Chinese claim which was vaguely set down in maps etc., is becoming more definitely stated now. That is a claim which it is quite impossible for India or almost any Indian ever to admit whatever the consequences. That is quite clear. There is no question of mediation, conciliation or arbitration about that, because that is absurd. As somebody said, Shri Khadilkar⁴² I think, it involves a fundamental change in the whole geography of it, the Himalayas being handed over as a gift to them. This is an extraordinary claim. This is a thing, whether India exists or does not exist, cannot be agreed to. There the matter ends.

Now, having said that, so far as lines of delimitation etc. are concerned, these are matters always for argument provided the approach is a peaceful

⁴² Raghunath Keshav Kadilkar, Mazdoor Kisan Party, MP from Ahmednagar, Gujarat

one. Take Longju. We have said so, you have seen the letter. We think that Longju is on our side of the line, just on our side within about half a mile of it. They say it is not. We think we have a good case, but I leave that out. We have said we are prepared not to go out to Longju. You get out too, and then the matter can be considered by maps, charts, whatever it is, because it is a minor rectification and it does not make such difference provided it is peacefully done. Or, any other minor point like that we are prepared to consider in this day, but not this light demand of handing over the Himalayas to them. That we are not prepared to consider. Again, there is this MacMahon Line that I referred to. There is the border of D.P., Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. There, when we had this treaty about Tibet in 1954, a number of passes were mentioned, that is, passes meant for pilgrims and others to go over, and traders. Those passes themselves in a sense laid down the frontier, and the claim now made here and there, as in the letter, to the Shipki La pass etc., is undoubtedly a breach of that agreement of 1954 in so far as the passes are concerned.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh vaguely said: nobody knows what places, what areas of India the Chinese may have occupied. I beg to inform him that everybody knows it or ought to know it. If he does not know, he should try to find out from those who know, before making such statements. Now, apart from that area in Ladakh, about which I mentioned to you, apart from that area, about the road, for the moment we know exactly where they are there. There is no part of our border at the present moment occupied by the Chinese except that Longju area, that little bit about which...

Shri Hem Barua: May I submit one thing? About Longju, it is said that that MacMahon Line was delimited up to a length of 850 miles by Sir MacMahon.

Longju is on this side of the MacMahon line. So how can they claim Longju now?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Longju is 800 miles....

Shri Hem Barua: The MacMahon line had delimited the border up to 850 miles. The delimitation was done by Sir MacMahon himself....

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Who says that?

Shri Hem Baru: And Longju is, on this side of the border.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: At least, I do not know. I am merely stating the fact. I am stating the fact in so far as I know, that there are no Chinese troops on this side of the MacMahon Line anywhere, except that in two or three or maybe, four miles of Longju, there is a small detachment there. An impression seems to have grown that there are masses and masses of Chinese armies perched on the frontier, or are pouring into the frontier. That is not a correct impression; it is not an easy thing to do, and if it is done, it will be met, whether it is big or small or whatever it may be. Let us realise this; the real danger at the present moment is not of Armies pouring in; the real danger is the words that are being said in Peking. That is the thing which is extraordinary, and these words which I have quoted, we cannot possibly accept, admit or agree to. That is the basic position. Now, all minor things one talks about, one agrees to, one has conciliation, one has this or that as with any country. And our broad approach will always be a friendly approach, even to the utmost or last end, because any other approach is, according to our thinking a wrong approach.

We may lose our tempers. Losing one's temper is not a good thing, but one loses it because one cannot control one-self, but a nation at least should not lose its temper, when it is faced with these serious problems, and must be firm, at the same time, restrained and controlled.

May I also add, to complete the whole picture that it is not merely a question of this, but a question of the treatment given to our Missions in Tibet, our trade agencies? It has been a consistently discourteous treatment by the local authorities. We write, we complain, answers come, long explanations come, but it does seem that it is deliberately done, to make it more and more inconvenient and difficult for them to work there. May I say this here? I would just like to draw Acharya Kripalani's attention to one note in the White Paper-he might note down just the page, I would not read it now-which does indicate our approach to these creations, that is to say, a mixture of politeness and firmness. This is at page 77 of the White Paper, the statement of our Foreign Secretary in reply to the Chinese statement.

May I here say that I should like to express my regret to the Members of the Socialist Party here for a reference to them in one of these statements, and I accept entire responsibility for it. I am sorry. But I was much disturbed by that particular incident which happened in Bombay, because, whatever may happen, the Head of a state is supposed to be above criticism; and it rouses tremendous passions, if you hit the Head of a State. And what was done there in regard to Chairman Mao had made a tremendous difference suddenly to change the atmosphere of China against US.⁴³ It was utilised by all our enemies; and I was moved by that, disturbed by that.

⁴³ See SWJN/SS/48/pp. 502 and 596-598

Shri Braj Raj Singh: May I submit one thing? Was it not brought to the notice of the Prime Minister that just after the occurrence of the incident, it was disapproved by the Socialist Party then and there?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It may be so; but I am trying to express my regret for this reference here; anyhow, it should not have been put in this way. I should like this House to consider this matter, apart from its views about the cold war, apart from its views on communism. Indirectly, communism comes in. In the sense that China is a Communist State, in that sense, it does affect. I think it will make it more difficult for you to understand the situation, if your minds are coloured by this business of the cold, the arguments that go on between communism and anti-communism. What we have to face today is a great and powerful nation which is aggressive. It might be aggressive minus communism or plus communism. Either way it might be there. That is a fact that you have to face.

Therefore, do not confuse the issue. So far as the cold war is concerned, as the House knows, or ought to know, all wise men or most wise men in the world are trying to put an end to it, and it would be a tragedy. If we, who stood up against the cold war, should surrender to its voice and technique, when the countries which started it were giving it up. Therefore, let us not have it. Cold war is an admission of defeat-mental and intellectual defeat. It is not, if I may say so with all respect to the participants of the cold war, a mature way of considering a question. Certainly, I am not speaking in terms of non-violence, although cold war is the negation of non-violence. I say if you are violent, be violent. But nobody has yet, I hope, approved of blackguardly language. That is cold war.

One hon. Member, I think Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, referred to Bhutan and Sikkim. I am glad he did so...

Shri Goray: He is being bombed all right.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: ...because he reminded me of something, about which I wanted to make some mention. In Premier Chou En-lai's last letter, he says: "In your Excellency's letter, you also referred to the boundary between China and Sikkim. Like the boundary between China and Bhutan, this question does not fall within the scope of our present discussion."

I beg to differ from Premier Chou En-lai. It does very much fall within the scope of our present or future discussion. If he thinks that he can deal with it as something apart from India, we are not agreeable to that. We have publicly, rightly, undertaken certain responsibilities for the defence of Sikkim and Bhutan, if they are attacked. Therefore, it is very necessary for us to understand the position there, because if something happens on their borders, then it is the same thing as an interference with the border of India.

One hon. Member, I think Shrimati Renuka Ray,⁴⁴ asked: has there been violation of Bhutan's territory? So far as I know, there has been no violation.

Then there was one question which was put to me-I am sorry to repeat Dr. Ram Subhag Singh's name. It was a very interesting question. In Premier Chou's letter, he had referred to a telegram which we received from Tibet from Lhasa in 1947. It is true. The point which Premier Chou made was that even then, in 1947, that is, soon after we became independent. Tibet claimed territory from us. That was his argument. It is true that we received a telegram from the Tibetan Bureau in Lhasa, which was forwarded to us by our Mission in Lhasa, claiming the return of Tibetan

⁴⁴ Congress, MP from Malda, West Bengal

territory on the boundary of India and Tibet.⁴⁵ A reply was sent by us-it did not say exactly what reply was sent by us in 1947-demanding the assurance that it was the intention of the Tibetan Government to continue relations on the existing basis until new agreements are reached on matters that either party may wish to take up.

Now, what the telegram means, I do not know. But this House should remember that when we discuss these small border disputes, whether it is Migyitun or this or that, all these are standing disputes with the old Tibetan Government, even in British times, certain small areas which were points of dispute between the then Government of India and the Tibetan Government. There were some new disputes too. It may be that this telegram refers to those areas in disputes, relatively small areas.

Here is another instance of what we call the new approach of the Chinese Government to us, or, perhaps, an intensification of that approach. We received a complaint and a protest from them a few days ago about the violation of their territorial waters. I was surprised because the report was that it was one small ship-a frigate I think-which was taking supplies to a ship called Magarcrocodile-(its name is Magar). This frigate was taking supplies; and passing nearby Hong Kong, it did undoubtedly pass across the territorial waters of China, say within 12 miles or so-whatever it was. They protested and said it was challenged and it did not listen to the challenge. The Magar has not come back yet. But we have received a report and it said that there was no challenge when they came across and they did not know and they went on. That is curious enough-petty incident of the Magar going there and being challenged.

But, in this connection another incident is quoted:

⁴⁵ Telegram was forwarded on 16 October 1947 and the details are explained in Nehru's letter to Chou En-lai of 26 September 1959. See White Paper I/, p. 39

"Last year your cruiser 'Mysore' also did the same thing, passed through our territorial waters".

Now, the cruiser "Mysore" had gone last year on a visit of goodwill to China among other countries. That is, it went to Hong Kong, China, Shanghai and it went to Japan and, maybe, it went to some other places also. I do not know. It certainly went to Shanghai. It is very surprising that it should be quoted and quoted a year after. Certainly last year it came to within six or twelve miles. The affair is rather extraordinary.

There are a multitude of questions that arise in this connection and we shall have to deal with them with all care, patience, firmness and forbearance.

And I am sure that this House will show that firmness coupled with forbearance.

If I have erred in the past in some delay in placing the papers before the House, I shall not err again. It is too serious a matter. At that time one wanted the situation not to be worsened by publicity when we were dealing with them, corresponding with them and their answers come after months. This very answer from Premier Chou has come six months after my letter of March. One waits and times goes on. But, anyhow, the situation is such that we have to keep the country, and especially the Parliament in full touch with the developments. I do not expect, and I do not want the House to imagine that something very serious is going to happen on our frontiers. I do not at all expect that to happen. It is not such an easy matter for it to happen either. But the basic difficulty is this apparent change in the attitude of the Chinese Government when it has come out quite clearly with a demand which it is absolutely and wholly impossible for us to look at. But, If you will put that aside, the major demand aside, -they themselves say, the House will notice, that they are not, in a sense, pressing for that now and that they are prepared for the status quo to continue but there is the demand, just as the maps were a constant irritant and a reminder to us

that something may happen and it is now much more obvious-it is only in that sense the situation has worsened and not in the sense that something is going to happen in the border or the frontier suddenly.

I would beg of you not to put this matter in the category of communist or non-communist. The House must have seen the statement issued more or less on behalf of the Soviet Government and this House knows the very close relations that the Soviet Government has naturally with the Chinese Government.

The issue of that statement itself shows that the Soviet Government is taking a calm and more or less objective or dispassionate view of the situation considering everything. We welcome that. It is not for us to divert this major issue between these two great countries, China and India into wrong channels; it will be completely wrong for us to do that and we must maintain our dignity and at the same time deal with the situation as firmly as we can. It is a difficult situation, difficult in the sense, physically difficult, apart from other difficulties.

Remember: if the physical difficulties are on our side as they are-hundreds of miles of mountains and forests with no roads-the same difficulties are on the side of any person who rashly tries to come in. So you can balance the difficulties either way.

Anyhow, our Army and our Defence forces are fully seized of this matter and they are not people who get excited quickly. They are brave people, experienced people and because they have to deal with a difficult job, they deal with it in a calm and quiet way but efficiently. I am sure they will do that.

There are a number of amendments. Naturally, I am not prepared to accept any amendment which is a condemnation of our policy.

Acharya Kripalani: Before you deal with the amendments, may I ask a question? Shri Dange has said that the Dalai Lama is being subsidised by your Government. Is it a fact?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru; I have not referred to the question of Tibet or the Dalai Lama, partly because although it slightly touches these issues and it has affected them, it is a separate issue. So far as the Dalai Lama is concerned, I do not know what is meant by "subsidy". We have spent some money over his remaining there but we have given him no special subsidy. But some money has been spent naturally on his stay at Mussoorie and we are spending money on the other refugees.

Again, as the House knows we have expressed our views in regard to some statements of the Dalai Lama. We have disagreed with them.

Acharya Kripalani: Can this help be called a subsidy to the Dalai Lama?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am merely telling you the fact. He is given no subsidy of any kind but some money has been spent by us on arrangements for his stay in Mussoorie. That is the position.

It has been a difficult problem for us-the problem that was referred to by Shri Dange⁴⁶ and Acharya Kripalani. There was a little controversy as to the freedom to be given to a person who has sought asylum here, and that is quite

. apart from the respect we have for him. Of course, it is a constitutional question. We have great respect, and the people of India have great respect for the Dalai Lama. At the same time, we did tell him many times that he should not make India the seat of activities against a country which is a friendly country. I wish to say this: by and large, for a considerable

⁴⁶ CPI, MP from Bombay Central, Bombay

time, he has observed a good deal of restraint considering the stresses and strains he suffered from. But sometimes, he has gone beyond that and we had to contradict some of his statements. We did not wish to enter into trouble about it, but because some of his statements did appear to us to go much too far that we had to contradict them.

I cannot accept these various amendments naturally because they are in effect a condemnation of our policy. But there is one amendment tabled by Shri Naldurgkar⁴⁷ which is acceptable to me if the House so wishes.

Shri Hem Barua: The people inhabiting N.E.F.A., about 30,000 sq. miles of whose territory are claimed by China as shown in their map, still preserve, due to the British policy of isolation, a sort of separatist psychology; and during all these years of freedom, we could not create in them a comprehensive Indian mind and as such those people are easily susceptible to Chinese propaganda. May I know from the Prime Minister what steps do the Government propose to take to see that this thing does not happen in N.E.F.A.?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Now, there is education, publicity, and all that, there. Most of the N.E.F.A. region had no administration even in the old times. Gradually, administration has spread there. Now, administration, education and all that are spreading there.

Shri P.K. Deo:⁴⁸ I am grateful to the Prime Minister for the firmness with which he has spoken and dealt with the Chinese situation. He has rightly diagnosed this Chinese malady to be the arrogance of might. Imperialism is no longer the monopoly of the west. It can also spread to the east, though

⁴⁷ V.S. Naldurgkar, Congress, MP from Osmanabad, Bombay

⁴⁸ Ganatantra Parishad, MP from Kalahandi, Orissa

it has got a different name, they call it liberation. We have seen what liberation means to Tibet. Whatever be the imperialism, this imperialism should be nipped in the bud. Unless it is nipped in the bud, it will grow because it has got a cancerous and malignant growth.

From the analysis of history we have seen that all policies of appeasement have failed to stop the growth of imperialism. Sir Neville Chamberlain⁴⁹ has failed in his policy of appeasement to stop Hitler from his aggressive imperialist designs at Munich in 1939 or so. In his particular case also, I think our Prime Minister will deal with the Chinese situation firmly and the whole country will stand behind him.

Lastly, I would like to express my thanks to my friend and comrade, Shri Dange, for the guarantee he has given on behalf of China, that there will be no aggression. I would like to know what he is to China. Is he the accredited agent to China and whether it is the Chinese or the Indian speaking. Anyway, I request him to be more realistic and more patriotic in his approach to the situation.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Some hon. Member mentioned or enquired if the Chinese had built an airfield in Indian territory. There is no such thing. There is only one airfield in the eastern Ladakh, Chushul, built 4 or 5 years ago.⁵⁰ I went there and it was an exciting trip to the borders of Tibet. But there is no Chinese airfield there.

* * *

⁴⁹ Arthur Neville Chamberlain, a British Conservative politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from May 1937 to May 1940

⁵⁰ The highest airfield in the world, built in 1952

91. To MEA: India-China Border Controversy⁵¹

There has been a good deal of talk in Parliament and elsewhere about our controversies with China. In fact, so much has been said that there might well be some confusion in people's minds. That confusion was apparent in the course of the debate yesterday in the Lok Sabha, and many members were greatly excited about the situation.⁵² I have no doubt that they represented the general excitement in the public. This morning a number of little children came to see me from the schools, and they appeared to be excited over this affair. I am, therefore, putting down some points which might help us to clear our own minds and guide us in the near future. In a changing situation one cannot lay down any fixed instructions. But the broad lines of our approach should be more or less clear.

(2) It should be clearly understood by our civil and military officers and others that we must avoid actual conflict unless it is practically forced down upon us. That is to say, we must avoid armed conflict not only in a big way, but even in a small way. On no account should our forces fire unless they are actually fired at.

(3) Our armed forces and others should keep clearly within our side of our frontier, that is, the MacMahon Line or elsewhere. If they happen to be on the other side in any particular place, they should withdraw to our side. They should not withdraw beyond that. In the event of any Chinese armed detachment coming over to our side, they should be told to go back. Only if they fire should our people fire at them.

(4) Our frontier with Tibet-China can be divided up broadly into three parts:

- (i) the MacMahon Line from Burma to Bhutan,
- (ii) the frontier between Tibet and Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and the Punjab, and

⁵¹ Note to SG, FS, and CS, 13 September 1959

⁵² See the previous item in this volume

(iii) the Ladakh frontier.

These three involve a slightly different approach. So far as the MacMahon Line frontier is concerned, I have referred to it above.

(5) In regard to (ii), that is, UP, Himachal Pradesh and the Punjab, our check-posts should be vigilant and, where necessary, might be reinforced. About Hoti area, we have some understandings which are not always kept. We should adhere to these understandings. This particular frontier is largely conditioned by the reference to various clauses in the 1954 Agreement. We should adhere to that frontier.

(6) So far as the Ladakh frontier is concerned, this may be divided up into two parts: (a) Chushul and round about area and (b) the Aksai Chin area. In the Chushul area we should have strong detachments at our check-posts and more especially guard the Chushul airfield. We should avoid actual conflict as far as possible. The Chinese have put up some kind of a check-post within our boundary and not far from Chushul. We should not take any aggressive armed action against this check-post, but we should prevent any advance towards the Chushul airfield or indeed any other part nearby.

(7) The Aksai Chin area has to be left more or less as it is. We have no check-post there and practically little means of access. Any questions relating to it can only be considered, when the time arises, in the context of the larger question of the entire border. For the present, we have to put up with the Chinese occupation of this North-East sector and their road across it.

(8) Broadly speaking, we should be prepared for talks in regard to any minor deviation from the border as accepted by us throughout the three areas mentioned above. That is, we can discuss these matters if the time arises. But any question relating to major changes such as are envisaged in the Chinese maps cannot be considered by us in this way.

(9) Thus, on the whole, the status quo that has existed for some time should be maintained throughout the frontier. It has been disturbed at Longju and Tamadem and perhaps one or two other minor places. We have already made a proposal about Longju that both sides should retire from this place and discuss the exact border there, through proper representatives. That proposal stands.

At Tamadem we have issued instructions already for withdrawal of our detachment because, in our opinion, this area is on the other side of the MacMahon Line frontier. This instruction should hold.

(10) Our general instructions to our people on the border should be that they should avoid any provocative action, but should remain firmly on our side of the line and not allow themselves to be pushed away easily. I think it is unlikely that the Chinese forces will take up any aggressive line on this frontier, that is, try to enter into our territory any further. If they should do so, they will have to be stopped and the matter reported to us immediately for instructions.

(11) A carefully drafted reply to Premier Chou En-lai's last letter should be prepared. On my return from Tehran, we shall consider this and then send it.

(12) As for the other points in controversy, chiefly about the behavior of the Chinese authorities towards our missions inside Tibet, wherever any answers are necessary, they can be sent without waiting for any return.

(13) Papers relating to our relations with China, subsequent to those published in the White Paper, should be got ready. We should aim at publishing this collection early in October.

(14) When General Thimayya comes back from Shillong, FS might have a talk with him and find out what the position is and what arrangements have been made. I had a talk with him two days ago on the lines of this note. Nevertheless, a copy of this note might be given to him.

(15) So far as possible, general indications of our attitude in these matters might be informally and privately given by Foreign Secretary to some of our important newspapers. While the situation is undoubtedly serious in the long run, there is no need to exaggerate it or to speak or write in an alarmist manner. Criticisms of general policy are always permissible, but attacks on China should be avoided.

(16) Our Ambassador in Moscow as well as our Heads of Missions in the East European countries might be kept informed of our general policy and developments. Also some of our other important Missions abroad. They are likely to be constantly approached by the Governments to which they are accredited as well as by the press, and they should, therefore, know what to say in reply.

* * *

92. To D.D. Kosambi: Border Demarcation⁵³

September 23, 1959

Dear Professor Kosambi,

I have your letter of the 19th September. I shall bear in mind what you say. As a matter of fact, however, there is no difficulty about the passes being guarded. The example of Goa does not apply here. These Himalayan passes are high and inaccessible and are in fact easily controlled on either side. There are no Tibetans coming over now. Indeed, they cannot come over because the Chinese authorities effectively stop them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

* * *

⁵³ Letter

93. To S. Dutt: India-China Boundary⁵⁴

I have rather hurriedly read through your draft letter addressed to Premier Chou En-lai together with the notes attached to it. I should like to congratulate you on these drafts. They are excellently done.

2. I should like to read these papers a little more carefully and perhaps discuss some matters with you. There are one or two points, however, to which I should like to draw your attention:

(1) When we mention the MacMahon Line to begin with, we might say something to the effect that we do not like referring to your frontier as the MacMahon Line, but, for convenience, we use this phrase even though we do not approve of it. We would just like to call it the existing frontier.

(2) It might be worthwhile to state that all our frontier posts have been manned by Police or Territorials, and not by the Army. (I think Territorials would be a correct description of Assam Rifles). Indeed, our Army Command was not even in charge of these border posts as they were treated as local police matters. This itself indicates how peaceful our intentions have been all along. Even now, our regular Army soldiers have not been stationed anywhere in these posts. But, very recently, we have given the overall charge to our Army Command.

(3) I wonder if it would be worthwhile to say something about the reports of speeches by Chinese officers or authorities in Tibet, to which I think we have already drawn the attention of the Chinese authorities. These reports have been to the effect that the next step to be taken by the Chinese is going to be to take Ladakh, Bhutan, Sikkim and the N.E.F.A. I do not think we have had any kind of an answer from the Chinese authorities to this matter.

⁵⁴ Note, 24 September 1959.

(4) I should like to see the telegram that was sent to us by the Tibetan Bureau in Lhasa in 1947 and our answer to it. I am rather surprised to see the quotation from; this telegram, with its reference to the river Ganges etc.

(5) At page 15, para. 15, of your draft letter, you lay some stress on the border tribes inhabiting the area south of the MacMahon Line as being of the same ethnic stock as the other hill tribes of Assam and having no kinship with the Tibetans. This is a valid point. But if we lay stress on ethnic stocks, could not the Chinese say that the Tibetans living in that part of India belong to the ethnic stock of Tibet and, therefore, that are should be included in Tibet?

(6) At page 18, para. 18, you point out that while Premier Chou En-lai says that the Sino-Indian boundary is about two thousand kilometers in length, in fact it is well over two thousand five hundred miles in length. I think it might be advisable to give the equivalent in kilometers also where you say two thousand miles. I imagine that will be about four thousand kilometers.

(7) At page 20, end of para. 18, you say that "our forces have also been there in support of the civil administration". It might be better to indicate here also that our forces were police or territorials.

(8) At page 25, near the bottom, you say that these large areas have been "under the administrative jurisdiction of India for years". "For years" may mean a few years or many years. If we cannot indicate the period, we might at least say for many years.

(9) Note on Aksai Chin: Here you say "when we protested... about the serious and continuing occupation of our territory". Did we protest the next year or the same year? Does "next year" refer to after 1957 or 1958?

3. These are just some hurried points for your consideration. It should be easy now to finalise this letter. But I rather doubt if this will be possible tomorrow before I leave. I should discuss this matter with you tomorrow.

4. I am engaged from 10 o'clock to lunch time tomorrow. I shall come to the office soon after 9 and perhaps we could have a talk then. I shall come again for some time in the afternoon, but it seem to have a number of engagements.

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94- Letter from the Prime Minister of India to the Prime Minister of China

New Delhi; the 26th September, 1959.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I have received your letter of September 8, 1959. I must say that I was greatly surprised and distressed to read it. You and I discussed the India-China border, and particularly the eastern sector, in 1954 in Peking and in 1956-57 in India. As you know; the boundary in the eastern sector is loosely referred to as the McMahon Line. I do not like this description, but for convenience I propose to refer to it as such. When I discussed this with you, I thought that we were confronted with the problem of reaching an agreement on where exactly the so-called McMahon Line in the eastern sector of the boundary lay. Even when I received your letter of January 23, 1959, I had no idea that the People's Republic of China would lay claim to about 40,000 square miles of what in our view has been indisputably Indian territory for decades and in some sectors for over a century. In your latest letter you have sought to make out a claim to large tracts of Indian territory and have even suggested that the independent Government of India are seeking to reap a benefit from the British aggression against China. Our Parliament and our people deeply resent this allegation. The struggle of the Indian people against any form of imperialism both at home

and abroad is known and recognised all over the world and we had thought that China also appreciated and recognised our struggle. It is true that the British occupied and ruled the Indian sub-continent against the wishes of the Indian people. The boundaries of India were, however, settled for centuries by history, geography, custom and tradition. Nowhere indeed has India's dislike of imperialist policies been more clearly shown than in her attitude towards Tibet. The Government of India voluntarily renounced all the extra-territorial rights enjoyed by Britain in Tibet before 1947 and recognised by Treaty that Tibet is a region of China. In the course of the long talks that we had during your last visit to India, you had told me that Tibet had been and was a part of China but that it was an autonomous region.

2. You have suggested in your letter that the Government of India have applied all sorts of pressure on the Chinese Government, including the use of force, to make the Chinese Government accept the Indian demand: This is the reverse of what the Government of India did. We did not release to the public the information which we had about the various border intrusions into our territory by Chinese personnel since 1954, the construction of a road across Indian territory in Ladakh, and the arrest of our personnel in the Aksai Chin area in 1958 and their detention. We did not give publicity to this in the hope that peaceful solutions of the disputes could be found by agreement by the two countries without public excitement on both sides. In fact our failure to do so has now resulted in sharp but legitimate criticism of the Government both in Parliament and in the press in our country. Far from using force, we sought the peaceful settlement of the disputes. You must be aware of the prolonged negotiations between the Indian and Chinese representatives over Bara Hoti in 1958 and of the notes exchanged between our two Governments on the other disputes. I need hardly tell you

' that there is great resentment in India at the action of your troops in overpowering our outpost in Longju on our side of the McMahon Line, and although you have up till now not withdrawn your troops have not sought to reoccupy the post.

3. You have referred to the maintenance of the long existing status quo on the border. The Government of India have always been in favour of it. It is the Chinese Government who have violated it repeatedly in recent years. I can refer, for example, to the construction of a 100-mile road across what has traditionally been Indian territory in the Aksai Chin area, the entry of Chinese survey parties in the Lohit Frontier Division in 1957, the establishment of a camp at Spanggur in 1959; the despatch of armed personnel to Bara Hoti in 1958 and stationing them there in winter against customary practice and last, but not least, the use of force Longju.

4. It is true that the Sino-Indian boundary has not been formally - delimited along its entire length. Indeed the terrain of the Sino-Indian border in many places makes such physical demarcation on the ground impossible. But the entire length of the border has been either defined by treaty or recognised by custom or by both and until now the Chinese Government have not protested against the exercise of jurisdiction by the Government of India upto the customary border. You have yourself acknowledged the fact that no armed clash ever occurred along our border until the beginning of this year. All Chinese Governments have respected the Indian border. The fact that previous Chinese Governments were weak is no answer. Not even a protest was registered in accordance with established state practice in this regard, as was done in the case of Burma between 1908 and 1937.

5. Concerning the boundary between Tibet and Ladakh, it is incorrect to say

that the then Chinese Central Government did not send anybody to participate in the conclusion of the treaty between Tibet and Kashmir in 1842. The treaty was signed by the representatives of both the Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China. Kalon Sokon, one of the signatories, though by birth a Tibetan, had Chinese rank. Even the Tibetan version of the treaty makes it clear -that China was a party to it. Thus, it asserts that "there will never be on any account in future till the world lasts, any deviation even by the hair's breadth and any breach in the alliance, friendship and unity between the King of the world Siri Khalsaji Sahib and Siri Maharaj Sahib Ra.ja-i-Rajagan Raja Sahib Bahadur, and the Khagan of China and the Lama Guru Sahib of Lhasa."

6 It is true that the 1842 treaty referred merely to the "old established frontiers". This was because these frontiers were well-known and did not require any formal delimitation. Even the treaty of 1884 between Ladakh and Tibet stated that "the boundaries fixed in the beginning, when Skyid-Ida-ngeema-gon gave a kingdom to each of his three sons, shall still be maintained." References in the Ladakhi chronicles of the 17th century indicate that the boundary was well-established. Cunningham, whom Your Excellency has referred to with approval, toured the area in 1846. He stated in 1854 that the eastern boundary of Ladakh "is well-defined by piles of stones, which were set up after the last expulsion of the Sokpo or Mongol hordes in A.D. 1687 when the Ladakhis received considerable assistance from Kashmir." (Ladakh, 1854, page 261). Thus it is clear that for nearly two centuries the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet was well-known and recognized by both sides There was ; a constant flow of trade between Ladakh and Tibet during these : centuries as provided for by these treaties, and no boundary conflicts ever arose.

7. It has been stated in your letter that China never ratified the 1842 treaty. That China recognised the treaty is clear from the fact that the Chinese official in 1847 informed the British Government: "Respecting the frontiers I beg to remark that the borders of those territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed, so that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them." There was no suggestion that the Chinese Government regarded the treaty as invalid. It is also clear from the statement quoted that not merely was the boundary known, but the boundary was distinctly and sufficiently fixed and there was no divergence of opinion as to where it lay.

8. Further evidence of Chinese acceptance of the 1842 treaty is provided by the fact that the other provisions of the treaty regarding exchange of goods and presents were in operation right up to 1946 without any hindrance from the Chinese Government.

9. It is incorrect to say that down to 1899 the British Government proposed formally to delimit this section of the boundary but that the Chinese Government did not agree. No proposals were made between 1847 and 1899 for any such formal delimitation. The proposal made in 1899 by the British Government referred not to the eastern frontier of Ladakh with Tibet but to the northern frontier of Ladakh and Kashmir with Sinkiang. It was stated in that context that the northern boundary ran along the Kuen Lun range to a point east of 80° east longitude, where it met the eastern boundary of Ladakh. This signified beyond doubt that the whole of Aksai Chin area lay in Indian territory. The Government of China did not object to this proposal.

10. So Ladakh, Tibet and China had all accepted that the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet was the customary boundary. You have stated that the boundary as shown in the Chinese maps follows more or less, that shown in the map of "Punjab, Western Himalaya and adjoining parts of Tibet" compiled by Walker and attached to Cunningham's book published in 1854. Walker's Map states in the Compilation Index that the document used for this sector is the "Map of Ladakh and Nari Khorsum by Capt. H. Strachey". Now Strachey toured only a part of Ladakh in 1847-48. He knew little nothing about Aksai Chin, having never visited the area, and drew the boundary where he thought the main water-parting; which was the natural and old established frontier in this area, lay. Thereafter a number of exploration and survey parties were sent by the Government of India to this region. These parties ascertained the customary frontier on the basis of natural features and such local evidence as was available. Johnson visited the area in 1865 and Frederick Drew, an Englishman in the employ of the Maharaja of Kashmir as Governor of Ladakh, in 1869. Other survey parties in the nineteenth century were those of Hayward, Shaw and Cayley in 1868, Carey in 1885-87, Hamilton Bower in 1891, Littledale in 1895, Welby and Malcolm in 1896, Deasy and Pike in 1896, and Aurel Stein in 1900. Accurate maps of the whole Ladakh area thus became possible only from 1865, after the afore-mentioned surveys had ascertained the exact lie of the watershed; and it is significant that most of the maps since that date show the customary boundary in accordance with the line shown by us in our map rather than that claimed by China. The later Map of Turkiestan of Walker himself published in 1867-68, Drew's map attached to this book Jammoo & Kashmir Territories (1875), Johnston's Atlas (1882), and maps attached to the Gazetteers of Kashmir published from 1890 onwards all showed boundary lines more or less similar to our present frontier. Even official Chinese maps of the late nineteenth century showed a boundary

approximating to our line. It is only in official Chinese maps of the twentieth century that the Chinese Government included large parts of our territory. On the other hand, *The New Atlas and Commercial Gazetteer of China*, published in Shanghai sometime after 1917 by the *North China Daily News* and *Herald* on the basis of authoritative surveys, shows a boundary in the north-west similar to our alignment and a boundary in the north-east which approximates to what later became known as the McMahon Line. I may add that the Chinese maps do not follow even Walker's Map of 1854 where it does not support the assertion made on behalf of China. Thus Walker shows the areas north of Demchok and north of Pangong in India but recent Chinese maps have not followed Walker's map in regard to these areas.

11. You have referred to the sector of the boundary between what is known as the Ari area of Tibet and India. We are told that Ari, which is an abbreviated form of Ngari Khorsum, is south-western Tibet. This is the sector of the boundary between the Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in India and the Tibet region. You have stated that the boundary in this sector has never been formally delimited. In fact, there should be little doubt about the boundary in this sector. Article IV of the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement specifies six passes in this area. There was discussion of these passes between the Chinese and Indian representatives before the Agreement was concluded. Your original draft contained the following: "The Chinese Government agrees to open the following passes." On behalf of India, Mr. Kaul then said that these were Indian passes. After some discussion both sides agreed on the following text: Traders and pilgrims of both countries may travel by the following passes. Your Vice-Foreign Minister remarked in that context. "This was the fifth concession on our part". This was recognition of the passes as border passes. In fact the

Government of India have always been in control of the Indian ends of the passes.

12. I am particularly surprised by your statement that "the so-called McMahon Line was a product of the British policy of aggression against the Tibet Region of China". You further state that the agreement in regard to the frontier between India and Tibet was concluded between the British representative and the representative of the Tibet local authorities and that it has never been recognized by any Chinese Central Government. From this you draw the conclusion that the agreement is illegal. The facts, however; are otherwise. The arrangements for the Simla Conference were made with the full knowledge and consent of the Government of China. The Foreign Minister of China wrote to the British representative on the 7th August 1913 that the Chinese plenipotentiary would proceed ' to India "to open negotiations for a treaty jointly with the Tibetan and British plenipotentiaries. It is clear from the proceedings of the conference that not only did the Chinese representative fully participate in the conference but that the Tibetan-representative took part in the discussions on an equal footing with the Chinese and the then British Indian representatives. Not only were the frontiers of India with Tibet discussed at the conference, but also the boundaries between Inner Tibet and China, and Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. At no stage, either then or subsequently, did the Chinese Government object to the discussions on the boundary between India and Tibet at the conference. In the circumstances the agreement which resulted from the conference in regard to the McMahon Line boundary a between India and Tibet must, in accordance with accepted international practice, be regarded as binding on both China and Tibet. In fact this was not the first occasion when Tibet concluded an agreement with other countries. In 1856 Tibet concluded an agreement on its own with Nepal The Convention signed

by Britain and Tibet in 1904 was negotiated by the British and Tibetan representatives with the assistance of the Chinese Amban in Tibet.

13. You have stated that for a long time after the exchange of so-called secret notes between Britain and Tibet Britain did not dare to make public the related documents. You have also contended that the McMahon Line "was later marked on the map attached to the ' Simla Treaty". I am afraid I cannot agree either with your facts or your conclusion. . The Chinese representative at the Simla Conference was fully aware of the McMahon Line boundary between India and Tibet. This particular line was discussed between the Tibetan and British Indian representatives, but when the draft convention emerging from the conference was presented on the 22nd April 1914 e for signature by the British Indian, Tibetan and Chinese representatives it had attached to it a map showing the McMahon Line boundary as well as the boundaries between Inner Tibet and China, and Inner ' Tibet and Outer Tibet. Later, the Chinese Foreign Office in a memorandum, dated the 25th April 1914 listed a number: of objections to the boundaries between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet and China. It did not raise any objection to the boundary between Tibet and India as shown in the map attached to the tripartite Simla Convention. Thereafter, on the 27th April, the Chinese representative initialed both the convention and the map without any objection. Subsequently, in their memorandum, dated the 13th June 1914, the Chinese made fresh proposals regarding the boundaries of Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. It is significant that no mention was at all a made in this memorandum of the boundary between Tibet and India. Almost five years later, on the 30th May 1919, the Government of China again suggested some modifications of the Simla Convention with a view to reaching a final settlement. These modifications related only to the boundaries between Inner Tibet and China

and Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet. No reference at all was made to the boundary between Tibet and India (McMahon Line). Looking into the old papers, we find that the British Government withheld the publication of the Simla Convention for several years in the hope that there would be an agreement about the status and boundary of Inner Tibet. The Simla Convention was published in the 1929 edition of Aitchison's Treaties and the McMahon Line was shown in the official maps from 1937 onwards. These maps were circulated widely but neither then nor subsequently was any objection raised by the Chinese authorities.

14. I entirely disagree with the inference drawn by you from the exchange of two communications between the Tibetan Bureau in Lhasa and the new Government of India in 1947. The facts are that our Mission in Lhasa forwarded to us a telegram, dated the 16th October 1947 from the Tibetan Bureau. The telegram asked for the return of alleged Tibetan territories on boundaries of India and Tibet "such as Sayul and Walong and in direction of Pemakoe, Lonag, Lopa, Mon, Bhutan; Sikkim, Darjeeling and others on this side of river Ganges and Lowo, Ladakh etc. up to boundary of Yarkhim." It will be seen that the areas claimed by Tibet had not been defined. If they were to be taken literally, the Tibetan boundary would come down to the line of the river Ganges. The Government of India could not possibly have entertained such a fantastic claim. If they had the faintest idea that this telegram would be made the basis of a subsequent claim to large areas of Indian territory, they would of course have immediately and unequivocally rejected the claim. Not having had such an impression, they sent a reply to the following effect: "The Government of India would be glad to have an assurance that it is the intention of the Tibetan Government to continue relations on the existing basis until new agreements are reached on matters that either party may wish to take up. This is the procedure adopted by all

other countries with which India has inherited treaty relations from His Majesty's Government". It would be unfair to deduce from this reply that India undertook to negotiate fresh agreements with Tibet on the frontier question. When the British relinquished power and India attained freedom on the 15th August 1947, the new Government of India inherited the Treaty obligations of undivided India. They wished to assure all countries with which the British Government of undivided India had treaties and agreements that the new Government to India would abide by the obligations arising from them. All that the Government of India intended to do in the telegram mentioned in Your Excellency's letter was to convey an assurance to that effect to the Tibetan authorities. There could be no question, so far as India was concerned, of reopening old treaties with Tibet with a view to entertaining, even for purposes of discussion, claims to large areas of Indian territory.

15. It is wrong to say that the frontier east of Bhutan as shown on Chinese maps is the traditional frontier. On the contrary, it is the McMahon Line which correctly represents the customary boundary in this area. The water-parting formed by the crest of the Himalayas is the natural frontier which was accepted for centuries as the boundary by the peoples on both sides. The tribes inhabiting the area south of the McMahon Line—the Monbas, Akas, Dafias, Miris, Abors, and Mfshmis are of the same ethnic stock as the other hill tribes of Assam and have no kinship with the Tibetans. The Tibetans themselves regard these tribes with contempt and group them all together as "Lopas". It is true that the boundary of two adjacent countries is not determined by the ethnic affiliations of the people—living in—these countries. Some sort of cultural intercourse between the peoples living on both sides of the frontier is also not uncommon. All the same it is significant that the tribes mentioned above have not been affected in the

slightest degree by any Tibetan influence, cultural, political or other, and this can only be due to the fact that the Tibetan authorities have not exercised jurisdiction at any time in this area. On the other hand, Indian administration gradually moved up to these areas. Agreements were signed with the Akas in 1844 and 1888, the Abors in 1862-63 and 1866 and with the Monbas in 1844 and 1853, extending the authority of the Government of India over them. It was the British Government's policy generally to leave the tribes more or less to look after themselves and not seek to establish any detailed administration of these areas such as was to be found in the rest of British Indian territory. All the same British Political Officers visited these areas for settling disputes and such like purposes. Finally, the Sadiya Frontier Tract, approximately 10,000 square miles in area, was formed in 1912, and the Balipara Frontier Tract also comprising about 10,000 square miles, was formed in 1913, i.e., before the Simla Conference~ met. The Atlas of the Chinese Empire, published in London by the Chinese Inland Mission in 1906, shows as the frontier in this area an alignment which is almost identical with what was settled at Simla in 1914. The area was extensively surveyed in 1911-13. The~ Lohit area was surveyed by the Mishmi Mission in 1911-12, the Dibhang Valley was surveyed in 1912-13 and the Abor area in 1913. Captain Bailey carried out extensive surveys of the southern limits of Tibetan jurisdiction in the whole area in 1913-14. It was on the basis of all the detailed information that the boundary was settled between India and Tibet in 1914. It is clear, therefore, that the McMahon Line was not an arbitrary imposition on a weak Tibet by the Government of India. It formalized the natural, traditional, ethnic and administrative boundary in the area.

16. Your Excellency has referred to a map published by the Survey of India in 1917 and a map in the 1929 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. The

Survey of India map shows the line claimed by China but on the same sheet, in the index map, the McMahon Line is also shown. The reason for this is that the British Indian Government were reluctant to issue new maps of India showing only the McMahon Line in the hope that China would accept the Simla Convention as a whole. As for the map in the ~ 1929 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, it is true that in the eastern sector it shows roughly the line now claimed by China But the same map shows the whole of Aksai Chin as part of Ladakh. It would therefore be unfair to quote the authority of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in support of the Chinese claim in one sector of the boundary and to reject it in respect of the other. In fact, if maps published privately in other countries are to be cited as evidence, we can refer to a large number of such maps in our support. For example, the map of *Asie Meridionale* published by Andriveau-Coujon in Paris in 1876 and the map of *Asie Orientale* published by the same firm in 1881 show the whole tribal area as outside Tibet. The Atlas of the Chinese Empire published by the China Inland Mission in 1906 shows a boundary which approximates to the McMahon Line. The British War Office Map of the Chinese Empire published in October 1907 shows almost the entire tribal territory 'in India. The map in Sir Francis Younghusband's volume India and Tibet published in London in 1910 shows the Tribal area in India; and so does the map in Sir Charles Bell's book *Tibet Past and Present* (Oxford 1924).

17. It is not clear to us what exactly is the implication of your statement that the boundaries of Sikkim and Bhutan do not fall' within the scope of the present discussion. In fact, Chinese maps show sizeable areas of Bhutan as part of Tibet. Under treaty relationships with Bhutan the Government of India are the only competent authority to take up with other Governments matters concerning Bhutan's external relations, and in fact

we have taken up with your Government a number of matters on behalf of the Bhutan Government. The rectification of errors in Chinese maps regarding the boundary of Bhutan with Tibet is therefore a matter which has to be discussed along with the boundary of India with the Tibet region of China in the same sector. As regards Sikkim, the Chinese Government recognised as far back as 1890 that the Government of India "has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State". This Convention of 1890 also defined the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet; and the boundary was later, in 1895, demarcated. There is thus no dispute regarding the boundary of Sikkim with the Tibet region.

18. You have stated that the Sino-Indian boundary is about 2,000 kilometres in length, is wholly undelimited, and that it is not Chinese maps but British and Indian maps that have been unilaterally altering the Sino-Indian boundary. In fact the Sino-Indian boundary (apart from the boundary of Sikkim and Bhutan with Tibet) extends over 3,520 kilometres. It is wrong to say that this long boundary is wholly undelimited. The frontier east of Bhutan has been explicitly delineated on the 1914 treaty map. The frontier of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh has been clarified by implication by the mention of six passes in the 1954 Agreement. As for the charge that British and Indian maps have been unilaterally altering the boundary, the fact is that early British maps showed the boundary roughly where the British thought the water-parting was at the time. Later, as more topographical as well as local information about the water-parting was obtained, the boundary was shown with greater precision on the subsequent maps. The discrepancies between the earlier and later maps are also explained in part by the fact that British cartographers as a rule showed in their maps the administrative boundaries irrespective of the

actual alignment of the frontier Therefore, as administration was gradually extended in the frontier areas, corresponding changes were made in the boundaries on the later maps. Thus the map of India published by the Survey of India in 1895 (1"-128 miles) showed the un-administered areas of northern Burma and north-eastern India upto what subsequently came to be known as the McMahon Line by a light orange colour wash as distinct from the deeper colours used for the rest of the Indian territory. The Memorandum on Native States in India published by the Government of India in 1909 has a map in Volume II showing this whole tribal area as part of India. The fact is that the present frontiers of India have always been the historic frontiers but administration in the British period was only gradually extended up to these frontiers. Shortly after India attained independence' in 1947 the Government of India decided, as a matter of policy, to bring these frontier areas under more direct administrative control to enable them to share in the benefits of a welfare state subject to the protection of their distinct social and cultural patterns. It is not true to say that it was only after the recent Tibetan crisis and the entry into India of a large number of Tibetans that Indian troops started advancing steadily in the North-East Frontier Agency. In fact administrative personnel, civil and police had been functioning in these areas right up to the McMahon frontier for several years before the recent disturbances broke out in Tibet. However, we did not have any military force anywhere in the border areas. There was only an armed constabulary in support of the civil personnel and even the frontier posts were manned by this constabulary. It was only when our outpost at Longju was overpowered by superior Chinese military force and our personnel elsewhere along the frontier were being intimidated by Chinese .forces that we decided to place the responsibility for the protection of the frontier on our army.

19. It should be clear from what has been stated in previous paragraphs that it is the Chinese maps that have altered the boundary alignments through the years to include large areas of Indian territory in China. It should also be stated that Chinese maps published even after 1949 have not adhered to any definite frontier: Different maps show different alignments in the same sector.

20. I am sorry to have to say that it is the Chinese Government who have been trying unilaterally to change the long-existing state of the border. There is no other explanation for the presence of Chinese personnel in Bara Hoti and of Chinese troops in the Aksai Chin area, Khurnak Fort, Mandal, Spanggur, Khinzemane and Longju, and for Chinese intrusions in the Spiti area, Shipki pass, the Nilang-Jadhang area, Sangcha, Lapthal, and the Dichu Valley. Nor is it correct to say that Chinese troops have never crossed the McMahon Line. Both Khinzemane and Longju are south of this line.

21. The Government of India emphatically repudiate the allegation that in recent times they have "invaded and occupied" a number of places in the middle sector of the boundary. In fact it is the Chinese forces which have made persistent efforts in recent times to come into and occupy indisputably Indian territory. Details of intrusions and attempted intrusions by Chinese forces have been given in the attached note. These intrusions have been particularly marked in the Spanggur area, where Chinese forces have been pushing forward in an aggressive manner during the last year two in disregard of the traditional frontier. The Chinese have only recently established a new camp near the western extremity of the Spanggur lake at a point which even according to some official Chinese maps is in Indian territory. It is not for us to comment on the reports of large-scale movements of Chinese forces in the Tibetan frontier areas. We hope that

these moves do not signify a new policy of actively probing into Indian territory along the whole length of the Sino-Indian frontier.

22. Reports have reached us that some Chinese officers in Tibet have repeatedly proclaimed that the Chinese authorities will before long take possession of Sikkim Bhutan, Ladakh and our North-East Frontier Agency. I do not know what authority they had to make these remarks but I would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to them as these remarks have naturally added to the tension on the frontier.

23. Your Excellency has spoken of Indian parties having trespassed into Chinese territory. Nowhere have our personnel done so. Even if they had done so through an error of judgment at any point in the barren wastes of some far-flung frontier region, we would have expected that a friendly Government would promptly bring it to our notice for remedial action. Instead, last year when an Indian party was engaged on routine administrative patrol near Haji Langar in Ladakh, your forces arrested them and did not inform us a of the arrest until we had enquired of you almost five weeks later. In the meantime our personnel were subjected to threats, harsh treatment and severe interrogation. Surely this is not the manner in which the personnel of a friendly Government should have been treated.

24. The charge that India has been shielding armed Tibetan rebels in the frontier areas in the north-east is wholly unfounded and we firmly reject it. On the contrary, our personnel disarmed the Tibetan rebels as soon as they crossed the frontier into Indian territory and insisted on their moving well away from the frontier areas. The few who showed disinclination to do so were told that they would not get asylum in India and made to leave our territory finally.

25. There is no truth in the allegation that Indian aircraft have repeatedly violated Chinese territorial air in this area. We have issued definite instruction to all our aircraft to avoid trespass into Chinese air space and we are assured that this instruction has been carefully observed. You will appreciate, however, that aircraft engaged in supply dropping missions to a frontier outpost may accidentally cross the international frontier or appear to do so even though it has not actually crossed the frontier. Our anxiety to respect the Chinese territorial air space would be clear from the fact that when in July last the officer in charge of our outpost at Longju fell seriously ill we informed your Government that we would be para-dropping a doctor. The object of our giving the information to your Government was to ensure that you would not misunderstand it if by error of judgment our aircraft should cross into Chinese territory in flying over a frontier outpost. For the same reason we also gave you information in advance that survey operations would be carried out from the air on our side of the border during the months from November 1959 to February 1960. Incidentally, the information that we gave you about Longju would disprove any suggestion that we had surreptitiously started an outpost on Chinese territory. Had we done so, we would not have given its location your Government.

26. I have looked into the allegation that the boundary drawn on Indian maps includes in many places even more territory than the McMahon Line, but have been unable to discover any basis for it: If you have in mind the Sino-Indian frontier shown in the Indian maps in the Migyitun area which differs slightly from the boundary shown in the Treaty map, the position can be easily explained. As settled between the British and the Chinese representatives at the time of the Simla Conference, the boundary was to follow the natural features, but a reservation was made that Migyitun (and

a few other places) would be within Tibetan territory. This was done in order to leave within Tibet the two sacred lakes of Tsari Sarpa and Tso Karpo which were places of pilgrimage for Tibetans and the village of Migyitun from which the pilgrimage started. At the time of the Simla Convention, the exact topographical features in this area were not known. Later after the topography of the area had been definitely ascertained, the actual boundary followed the geographical features except where a departure was necessary to leave Migyitun within Tibetan territory. The actual boundary as shown in the Indian maps, therefore, merely gave effect to the treaty map in the area based on definite topography. This was in accordance with established international practice.

27. I entirely disagree with your view that the tense situation that has arisen on the border has been caused by Indian trespassing and provocation. In fact, as the attached note will show, it is the Chinese who have trespassed into Indian territory across the traditional border at a number of places in recent years. You have mentioned that we in India have staged a second so-called anti-Chinese campaign. This, if I may say so, is the reverse of the actual position. Despite the regrettable happenings on the frontier of our two countries, we in India have conducted ourselves with great restraint and moderation. At a number of places your forces assumed a threatening attitude; at others they actually came into our territory. Such incidents concerning as they did the integrity of India were very serious, but in our anxiety not to create feelings against your Government we deliberately avoided giving publicity to them. Questions in Parliament had, however, to be answered and the facts could not be withheld. When the facts thus became known the reaction both in Parliament and among the public was one of dismay and great resentment. There was criticism of our Government both in Parliament and the press for

our failure to give publicity to these developments at an earlier stage. Under the Indian Constitution Parliament is supreme. India has also a free press and the Government could not restrain public criticism. In the circumstances, to allege that the Government of India built up pressure on China in any manner is a complete misreading of the facts of the situation. It is also based on complete misunderstanding of the constitutional procedures under which the Government, Parliament and the press function in India. Needless to say, such an allegation is entirely baseless.

28. I have stated before and wish to affirm once again that the Government of India attach great importance to the maintenance of friendly relations with China. They have hitherto sought to conduct their relations with China, as with other countries, in the spirit of Panch Sheel. This indeed had always been India's policy even before the five principles were enunciated. It is therefore all the more a matter of regret and surprise to us that China should now have put forth claims to large areas of Indian territory inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Indian nationals, which have been under the administrative jurisdiction of India for many years. No Government could possibly discuss the future of such large areas which are an integral part of their territory. We however recognise that the India-China frontier which extends over more than 3,500 kilometres has not been demarcated on the ground and disputes may therefore arise at some places along the traditional frontier as to whether these places lie on the Indian or the Tibetan side of this traditional frontier. We agree therefore that the border disputes which have already arisen should be amicably and peacefully settled. We also agree that until a settlement has been reached the status quo should be maintained. In the meantime both sides should respect the traditional frontier and neither party should seek to alter the status quo in any manner. Further, if any party has trespassed into the other's territory

across the traditional frontier, it should immediately withdraw to its side of the frontier. So far as the Government of India are concerned, at no places at present have they any personnel, civil, police or military, on the Tibetan side of the traditional frontier. There was only one outpost, that at Tamaden established some months ago, which, subsequent enquiries showed, was somewhat north of the McMahon Line. In keeping with our earlier promise we have already withdrawn it to a point south of the Line. There can therefore be no question of withdrawing any Indian personnel at any other place. We would now request that in the same spirit your Government should withdraw their personnel from a number of posts which you have opened in recent months at Spanggur, Mandal and one or two other places in eastern Ladakh. Similarly, your forces should also withdraw from Longju which they forcibly occupied on the 26th August and which they still continue to occupy. No discussions can be fruitful unless the posts on the Indian side of the traditional frontier now held by the Chinese forces are first evacuated by them and further threats and intimidations immediately cease.

29. Mr. Prime Minister, I regret that I have had to write to you, length and in such detail. But I must frankly say that your of the 8th September has come as a great shock to us. India was one of the first countries to extend recognition to the People's Republic of China and for the last ten years we have consistently sought to maintain and strengthen our friendship with your country. When our two countries signed the 1954 Agreement in regard to the Tibet region I hoped that the main problems which history had bequeathed to us in the relations between India and China had been peacefully and finally settled. Five years later, you have now brought forward, with all insistence, a problem which dwarfs in importance all that we have discussed in recent years and, I thought settled. I appreciate your

statement that China looks upon her south-western border as a border of peace and friendship. This hope is promise could be fulfilled only if China would not bring within the scope of what should essentially' be a border dispute, claims to thousands of square miles of territory which have been end are integral part of the territory of India.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

* * *

95. To U Nu: Border Troubles with China⁵⁵

29th September, 1959

My dear U Nu,

Your letter dated the 19th September reached me on the eve of my departure from Delhi for a meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Chandigarh in the Punjab. I returned from Chandigarh this morning and I hasten to reply to your letter.

First of all, let me say that I was happy to hear from you. It is always a pleasure to have news of you and from you. I hope you are keeping well. The border troubles with China have been distressing. What has distressed me more in the actual argument about the border has been the general attitude of the Chinese authorities. This comes out in a variety of ways. Chou En-lai's letters to me as well as other communications from the Chinese Government have often been even lacking in normal politeness. Our Trade Agents in Tibet are constantly harassed and it is difficult for them

⁵⁵ Letter to U Nu, Prime Minister of Burma

to carry on their normal work.⁵⁶ And then there are the repeated organised propaganda campaigns against India. All this indicates a definite attitude. I can only imagine that this is, partly at least, due to Chinese resentment at India's attitude in regard to events in Tibet and the Dalai Lama. This has produced strong reactions in India and the old days of "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai" are no more. In fact, I have tried to tone down these reactions to some extent.

As a Government, we have tried to function correctly in so far as Tibet is concerned. We cannot stop public criticisms of Chinese actions in Tibet and some of our opposition parties more especially have taken advantage of these developments to condemn our Government. As for the Dalai Lama, we have treated him with respect and given him our hospitality but we have made it clear to him that we do not approve of his using Indian soil for political activities against China. It has, however, been rather difficult to draw the line. Some people in India have been inciting him to do various things, such as to raise the Tibetan question in the UN. We advised him against it. But the pressure on him was great and this question is apparently coming up in the UN. It can do no good except to drag Tibet into the cold war.

It has seemed to me that the new rigidity and aggressiveness of Chinese foreign policy is partly associated with developments within China. As you must know, within China also the situation has changed repeatedly and grown more and more rigid. This has done them little good and they have been compelled by circumstances to slow down the pace of change of the communes etc. They have also had to admit that many of the figures of progress in regard to production made last year were greatly exaggerated.

⁵⁶ *The Tribune* of 9 September 1959 reported that GOI had complained to China on 7 September 1959 that Indian trade posts at Yatung and Gyantse in Tibet "cannot function in the way envisaged in the Sino-Indian agreement." This Note was not reproduced in the White Paper II.

In addition to all this, China appears to have suffered greatly by floods this year.

From all the information we have received, it appears that the Soviet Government has not approved of these developments in China. They think that many of these internal policies are rather adventurist and not based on experience and careful thinking. They do not approve of the attempt to spread communes everywhere at this stage. The Soviet Government also has obviously not approved of the aggressive attitude of China in regard to India. This is a new development because thus far in any controversy between a communist government and a non-communist one, the Soviet has always fully sided with the communist government. On the present occasion, they have taken up a middle attitude, which itself is an indirect criticism of the Chinese position.

I cannot discuss our whole border problems because that is a complicated matter. We have a border with China now of 2,500 miles. Part of this is what is called the MacMahon Line which you have in Burma too. Other parts are governed either by old treaties or conventions and usage. To us it does seem absurd that these major claims on large areas of our territory should be made by China now. I could understand minor disputes about the proper alignment of our frontier in these high mountains. No Government in India is going to agree to the Chinese claims, whatever the consequences might be. But we are always prepared to discuss particular cases of alignment where a dispute might have arisen.

We have issued a "White Paper" containing correspondence between India and China during the last few years. We propose to issue another one giving subsequent correspondence. If you are interested in this matter and wish to see these brochures, our Ambassador in Rangoon will, I am sure, be able to supply them to you.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Lalji Mehrotra

You suggest in your letter that some of my close associates might be sent to China to create a suitable political climate for discussing these problems. You are even good enough to suggest that you might yourself take the trouble of going there for this purpose. I am very grateful to you for this suggestion. I think, however, that no purpose will be served by people going to China with this end in view at this stage. Indeed, I am inclined to think that it might have adverse reactions, both in China and India. In India, any such approach by us would be sharply criticised. In China, it would create a feeling that we are alarmed by these developments and are anxious to find some way out. Probably this will lead not to a softening of the Chinese attitude but to greater rigidity.

The time will no doubt come when direct talks will have to take place. But there can be no question of direct talks when the demand made is for large areas of India to be handed over to China. For the present, therefore, we shall continue our correspondence with the Chinese Government.

I am sorry to say that my feeling is that the Chinese Government does not think too much of sweet reason or logic and can only understand a strong attitude.

Our attitude, therefore, has been and will continue to be firm but with always a desire to come to peaceful settlements by discussions. I do not think there is any real chance of a major conflict on the border but there is a possibility of petty conflicts here and there. I hope even these will be avoided. But if the Chinese authorities try to push forward in any of our areas, they will be resisted.

As you know, Mr. Khrushchev is going to Peking for their October Celebrations.⁵⁸ Very probably he will discuss, among other matters, this question of the India-China border. He is not interested in the actual alignment but he is interested in peaceful relations between India and

⁵⁸ He was in Peking from 30 September to 4 October 1959

China and he thinks, I believe, that the Chinese attitude has been unnecessarily aggressive.

I feel, therefore, that matters should be allowed to rest where they are except that we shall carry on our correspondence with the Chinese Government. Also we have necessarily to take precautions in such of our border areas as might be threatened.

All good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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96. To Chou En-lai: National Celebrations⁵⁹

On behalf of my colleagues in the Government of India and on my own behalf, I have pleasure in sending your Excellency and, through you, to the Government and the people of the People's Republic of China, our felicitations on this day of your national celebrations together with our sincere wishes for the progress and prosperity of your people.

I take this opportunity to express the hope that the friendly relations between our two countries will grow stronger in the years to come.

(c) Tibet

97. In the Lok Sabha: Referring Tibet to the UN⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Report of message, 30 September 1959. From the National Herald, 1 October 1959.

⁶⁰ Statement, 4 September 1959. Lok Sabha Debates, Second Series, Vol. XXXIV, cols 6536-6554

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the Resolution moved by the hon. Member⁶¹ appears to be a fairly simple one, simply-worded. But as the course of this debate has shown, behind that Resolution lie high international issues and big problems with big consequences.

Now, I suppose everyone in this House has a feeling of the deepest sympathy to the sufferings of the Tibetan people. There is no doubt about that. As everyone knows, we have given refuge and asylum not only to the Dalai Lama but to nearly 13,000 others. In fact we have given refuge to everyone who came. I cannot remember the case of a single person whom we denied refuge in this case, in regard to Tibet. That itself was evidence of our feelings in this matter.

But feeling apart, our sympathy for the Tibetans apart, what exactly should we do about it? What exactly should we do even, let us say to give expression to those feelings of sympathy? Some hon. Members have delivered rather brave speeches as to the evil deeds perpetrated by other countries. It is easy enough to talk about them and it is easy enough to find many faults in the ways the countries behave. But, if a country like India has to function, we have to function in a mature way, in a considered way, in a way which at least promises some kind of results. It is absolutely-I should say respectfully-pointless for us to make brave gestures and it is worse than pointless if these brave gestures react and rebound on us and injure us or injure the cause which we seek to promote.

So far as this question of Tibet is concerned, we may look at it from many points of view: historical, cultural and other contacts with India, China, etc. It is a long and chequered history and one need not go into it. When a country has

⁶¹ A.B. Vajpayee

had a long and chequered history, it supplies enough material for any party to support any claim. The Chinese claim that Tibet was subject to their sovereignty or suzerainty-I do not know what word they use-for hundreds of years. The Tibetans claim that they were independent for many periods except when they were forced into some kind of subservience. Now, really this may be interesting to the historical students, but it does not help us. It is fact, of course, that for a period of 40 years or so, for all practical purposes, ever since the Manchu Dynasty fell or a little after that, Tibet was practically independent; even so not hundred per cent, even so China never gave up her claim. But in effect it was independent.

As I said, it does not help us very much. Of course, if this question arose in the International Court of Justice at the Hague (of course, it will not) such questions do not arise there because nation States do not take them there. China, anyhow, has nothing to do with the International Court of Justice at the Hague-they might consider all these questions irrelevant.

The two or three main considerations are that internationally considered, Tibet has not been considered as an independent country. It has been considered an autonomous country but under the suzerainty or sovereignty of China. That was the case before India became independent, with the United Kingdom, with Russia-not only the Soviet Union but the Czarist Russia previous to that-and these were the main countries concerned. The rest of the world did not pay the slightest attention to Tibet except that it was some kind of a land of mystery.

That being so, when India became independent and we inherited more or less the position as it was in British days. We carried on both the advantages and the disadvantages of it. We did not like many things there-I mean to say the extra-territorial privileges that we have there which certainly were relics of British Imperialism in Tibet. We did not like that

particularly, but we were too busy for the first year or two to interfere with anything.

Then came this Chinese incursion or invasion into Tibet. At no time had we denied Chinese overlordship of Tibet, you might call it what you like. That has been the position all along. Even in recent years we have not denied it. Even after independence, even before the People's Government of China came there we had not denied it. In fact, we had somewhat functioned as if we accepted it.

Now, when this came we had to face a difficult situation in law, and constitutionally speaking we could not say anything because of the positions we had accepted and the world had accepted. Nevertheless, we were rather pained and upset at the way things were happening- armies marching, and what appeared to be a forcible conquest and occupation of Tibet. We sent some notes in those days, some one or two notes politely worded, expressing the hope that this question would be peacefully solved. I am afraid, the replies we got from the Chinese Government were not equally politely worded at that time. I am speaking from memory...

An Hon. Member: That is a fact.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a fact. I am talking about the sequence of events; that I am speaking from memory.

Then, a country, El Salvador, a member of the United Nations sponsored some kind of a motion on Tibet in the United Nations. It was a motion for the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the General Assembly and with it was a draft resolution condemning, what they called, the unprovoked aggression in Tibet and suggesting the appointment of a committee to study the appropriate measures to be taken.

Now, there was some discussion on this question of the inclusion of the item on the agenda. The representative of India, and I believe the representative in this particular case was the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar, pleaded that this matter might be settled peacefully and it would be better not to take it up in this way. He added; "I believe, that we had received some assurances from the Chinese Government that they wanted to settle it peacefully by negotiation, and therefore the inclusion of this item on the agenda be adjourned". This suggestion was supported by the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Soviet Union, and for its own reasons no doubt, even by what might be called Kuomintang China in Formosa. The item was postponed. The postponement was agreed to. On what basis did the Jamsaheb say that we had received assurances from the Chinese Government? I am sorry I have not got the exact papers with me, but so far as I can remember, we had received a message from the Chinese Government in answer to our requests to the effect that they wanted to settle it by negotiation and in a peaceful way. In fact, I think they had stopped the march of their army somewhere near the eastern borders of Tibet.

Also, some representatives of the Tibetan Government sent by the Dalai Lama were to proceed to Peking to discuss this matter. In those days, until quite recently, the easiest and simplest way for a person going from Lhasa to Peking was via India. It was much more difficult to go via the Gobi desert and all that. In fact, even after the People's Government of China came into power, on several occasions they sent their representatives or their other people via India to Tibet. It was simpler: from Calcutta right up to Gangtok in Sikkim and through Nathu La onwards. The Tibetan representatives, on their way to Peking, came to Delhi. It was more or less natural. Also, I suppose, they wanted to consult us. This happened ten years ago, and I have no very clear recollection of the sequence of events. I know they

remained in Delhi for rather a long time; why exactly it was not clear to me. Anyhow they did. It was this sequence of events that led us to make that suggestion in the United Nations, and the matter was not discussed. Afterwards, as a matter of fact, there was no proper negotiation with the team that the Tibetans sent. Long before they reached Peking, the other developments took place in Tibet. I think the Chinese army started marching again and the Dalai Lama and his representatives came to an agreement with them. May be, of course, the agreement might have been under compulsion of events, under pressure, but it was an agreement signed on behalf of the Dalai Lama etc.

May I say this in this connection? The hon. Member Shri Vajpayee stated that the Dalai Lama came to the 17-point agreement with China because of certain assurances that I gave him and further that this was after the Chinese Prime Minister's visit to India. He has got these things rather mixed up. There was no question of my giving any assurance, and the Chinese Prime Minister had not come to India and I had not gone to China. I had not met the Chinese Prime Minister at the time of this so-called 17-point agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama's Government, whatever it was. So, the question of any assurances from us does not come in at all. The only thing that we accepted was based on the message received from the Chinese Government-what the Jamsaheb said in the United Nations Security Council, namely, that the Chinese said they wanted a peaceful settlement of this question and on the basis of that, it was not considered.

After that, there was this 17-point agreement in which some stress was laid on the autonomy of Tibet. Again it would be wrong to say that this stress on autonomy was included there because of our pressure and our desire. Certainly, it was our desire undoubtedly, but when the agreement was concluded, we were not there; we were not asked to express our opinion. It

was between the Chinese Government and the Tibetans. So, it is not correct to say that they had given us any assurance which they broke later. What happened was that, several years afterwards when Premier Chou En-Lai came here, we had talks about Tibet and the Dalai Lama too was here at that time. The talks, I believe, were really initiated by Premier Chou En-Lai and he wanted to explain to me-he did explain-what their position was in regard to Tibet, not because he was answering some charge made by me or because he thought that it was incumbent on him to do so, but because he felt-I take it-that we had friendly relations and he had to try to convince me of China's position and case.

He began by telling me that Tibet had always been a part of the Chinese State, 'always' meaning for hundreds and hundreds of years. Occasionally, when China was weak, that sovereignty was not exercised properly, but he said Tibet had always been a part of Chinese State. That was his case. He further added: but Tibet is not China proper. It is a part of the Chinese State. There is no Han people there. Chinese are the Han people, but there are the Mongols, Manchus, Tibetans, etc. Tibet, he said is not a province of China. It is an autonomous region of the Chinese State and we want to respect that autonomy. That is what he told me. In fact, he went on to say that some people imagined that we want to thrust communism on Tibet. That is absurd, because the Tibetans, socially speaking, are so backward that communism is very far from the Tibetan state of affairs now. But, he said, certainly it is a very backward State and we want to make them progress socially, economically, etc.

Even then, that is, three years ago, some trouble had started internally in Tibet or rather on the eastern border of Tibet, particularly in an area which was not in Tibet proper. It was Tibetan inhabited area called Kham, which was on the eastern border of Tibet. The portion had been incorporated in China a little while ago; I forget when-not now anyway, but previous to all

this. The Tibetans there, the Khampas, did not take kindly to certain Chinese measures, because although the Chinese Government left Tibet proper more or less untouched in the sense of any so-called land reforms or any other reforms-politically they held Tibet firmly. But they did not interfere-that is what Premier Chou En-Lai told me: "We do not wish to interfere; let them gradually develop themselves". But in this eastern part which was considered a part of China-they treated it as part of China-this ultimately led to the Khampa rebellion there, a kind of guerilla rebellion, which had already lasted for a fair time, a year or more, when Premier Chou En-Lai came here three years ago. We did not discuss that. But he referred to it and said: we do not wish to interfere with the Tibetans, with their internal structure, internal autonomy, social custom, religion or anything; but we would not, of course, tolerate rebellion and foreign interference, etc. Well, I do not know what he meant or thought when he said foreign interference or imperialist interference, but I find that they had some kind of a kink in their minds, not so much, I think, of India having anything to do with it, but of foreign countries, United Kingdom or America somehow making incursions into Tibet, because they had got those countries in their mind. They have not quite realized that the United Kingdom has absolutely no interest in Tibet since they left India. They just cannot reach it. They have no means, no representative there; they have nobody there even to give them any news. And, to my knowledge, neither has the United States, in fact. The only representative in Tibet of any other country is that of India, the Consul-General; probably the Soviet Union also; possibly also Mongolia. But what I meant to say was there were no Europeans or Americans. Anyhow this is what he told me: the rebellion is going on. So, we had this talk and you may call it what you like. But it was more an explanation to me. It was not some kind of assurance extracted by me from Premier Chou En-Lai. I say this because people might say: oh, you

did this because of that guarantee given to you. It was not a guarantee in that sense. It was certainly something which, when I heard, pleased me, about the autonomy of Tibet etc. But I have no business to call him to account saying: "you guaranteed and you are not doing it", in that sense, though I must say that I was pained when, because of other developments, the structure of the autonomy broke down completely.

Well, this internal revolt in Tibet gradually spread month after month, year after year. It spread slowly from the east to westwards. And I have personally little doubt that the great majority of Tibetans, even though they did not participate during this period, sympathized with it; I have no doubt about it. And that is for obvious reasons, not on any high grounds but for the simple reason that the Tibetans, like others, have a strong nationalist sense, and they resented those whom they considered outsiders coming in and upsetting their life and all the structure in which they lived. So, this spread and then other things happened.

One need not go into the detailed history but the trouble in Lhasa itself, partly of course, I think, may have been caused by various activities of the Chinese governors. Where a ruler, an outsider, an alien ruler has to deal with the population which is not friendly, well, the relationship can well be imagined. It is not a healthy relationship. The ruler is afraid, the people are afraid, both for each other. And when fear governs the relations of two parties, it is likely to lead to bad results. In fact, wherever a country is a subject country, that is an unhealthy relationship. Well, that led to this upheaval in Tibet and the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa, coming to India and so on and so forth. After that I have no accurate news of what has happened.

I think we may broadly say that there has been strong military pressure on several parts of Tibet and the Tibetans enjoy far from autonomy under the military government there. It may be that the stories that we hear about

happenings inside Tibet are exaggerated, because most of the stories inevitably come from refugees, and refugees, however good they may be, having suffered themselves, are apt to give rather a coloured picture and not what they have seen or what they have heard. So, it goes on increasing. So, it may be that the stories are exaggerated. But as a responsible person, I cannot repeat those stories till I have some kind of a proof. But whether they are exaggerated or not there can be little doubt that a great deal has happened in Tibet which is deplorable and that the people of Tibet have suffered much and that it can certainly not be said that it is a happy family living together.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Previously when this matter came up before this House I said that our approach to these problems was governed by two or three factors. Among these mentioned two-our sympathy for the Tibetan people and our desire to maintain friendly relations with China. Now that may appear to be something contradictory and it does in the present context slightly contradict each other. That is the difficulty of the situation. But that does not get away from our basic approach which is governed by these two factors. The third factor, of course, is and always will be the integrity of India and the freedom of India. It is our first duty to protect that. Why do I say that? Because I want to repeat that any step that we may take now cannot be taken in a huff, if I may say so, because we are angry and we do something regardless of the consequences of that step. We work not only in the present but for the future-for the distant future. I have always thought that it is important, even essential if you like, that these two countries of Asia, India and China, should have friendly and as far as possible co-operative relations. It is a remarkable fact of history- and I do

not think you will find it duplicated elsewhere at any time- that during these two thousands years of relationship between India and China they have not had any kind of military conflict. It has been a cultural relationship. It has been to some extent a trade relationship. It has been a religious association. Throughout these long periods, they were not passive countries. They were active, positive countries. They went in those days, not like the later days in India when we did become a passive, inert country, tied down by caste and do not cross the seas and do not touch this man and do not see that man-that type of country we developed-our people went to adventures. They went all over the south eastern seas. They established, not imperialist colonies, but independent colonies. In fact, the effect of India all over the south eastern region was tremendous. You see it today. So also was the effect of China there. So these two great big powerful countries were constantly meeting and yet there was no conflict. It is a remarkable fact of history. Certainly nowhere in Europe will you find such a thing or, for the matter of that, in Asia.

Now it seemed to me that in the future it would be a tragedy not only for India, and for China, but for Asia and the world if we develop some kind of permanent hostility. Naturally friendship does not exist if you are weak and if you are looked down upon as a weak country. Friendship cannot exist between the weak and the strong, between a country that is trying to bully and the other who accepts to be bullied. Whether it is an individual or a group or a country that does not happen. It is only when people are more or less equal, when people respect each other that they are friends. So also nations. But subject to that we did work for the friendship of India and China. May I say that in spite of all that has happened today, that is still our objective and we shall continue to work for it. That does not mean that we should surrender in anything that we consider right or that we should hand over bits of territory of India to China to please them. That is not the

way to be friends with anybody or to maintain our dignity or self-respect. But, in the long run, it is of importance for these two great countries, whatever their internal structures and policies might be, to be friends. I know that, sometimes, it is difficult to feel friendly when one hears things that irritate, that anger, when we see that our people have not been treated even courteously, when we receive communications from the Chinese Government, which are singularly lacking in even ordinary politeness. All that is irritating. But, then, it is easy enough for any one to get angry and irritated. It is necessary for people who hold responsible position not to allow themselves to be irritated, certainly to maintain the dignity of the country and the continuity of our policy too.

Many people charge us: "What about your famous Panch Sheel, where are those five principles; dead and gone and buried or cremated?" Call it whatever you like. That indicates a completely wrong approach to this question. What is Panch Sheel? Panch Sheel or the five principles, -they did not become principles because they were embodied in a treaty between India and China-they stand by themselves, principles of international relationship which we hold to be correct and we shall hold to them even if all the world says 'no' to them. Of course, it is obvious that if the other party does not agree to them, that relationship does not subsist. The principles remain true all the same. When people are wise enough, they come back to them. Therefore, there is no question of Panch Sheel failing. It may be, if you like, the question of India failing or China failing. But, the principles remain. This is the outlook.

If you will permit me to go slightly outside the purview of this Resolution, we have to face certain difficult situations on our borders and elsewhere: the treatment accorded to our people in Tibet by the Chinese authorities. I may inform the House that the first thing that I do every morning is to open a bunch of telegrams, a pretty big bunch. I should imagine that in

every bunch there are at least five or six dealing with this affair either from Peking or Lhasa or Gyantse or Yatung, just the latest happenings, the latest developments. Of course, the telegrams we get from Gyantse, Yatung and Lhasa cannot tell us about the happenings in Tibet, because they have no communication with the rest of Tibet. They can only see more or less round about the Consulate or the Trade agency and tell us what are the happenings today. There are petty problems arising. Almost every morning, usually, at least, I start the day not in a too pleasant mood, because of these messages. I try to overcome that. I am getting accustomed to some extent to do that.

We have got to deal with these difficult problems, these border incidents. If anyone asks me, as they sometimes do, what do the border incidents indicate. Frankly, I do not know what might be in the minds of the other party: whether it is just local aggressiveness or just to show us our place, if I may use a colloquial phrase, so that we may not get uppish, or whether it is something deeper. I do not know.

I might inform the House that only last evening, we received a fairly long reply from the Chinese Government. That is a reply to the protest I had sent a few days ago about these incidents on the North East Frontier border. It is a fairly long reply. It will, naturally, require very careful consideration. But, broadly speaking, the reply is a repudiation of our charge that they had come on our territory, that they had started firing on our patrol there and charging us with having come on their territory and having opened fire on them: that is, complete conflict in the facts, reversal of the facts here.

An Hon. Member: Reversal of the MacMohan Line.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Of course, we shall examine that reply carefully because it is a long and more or less argued note, with lots of places mentioned and other things. And we shall send them a reply fairly soon, that is, in the next two or three days.

May I also repeat what I said here that before this House rises in this session, I hope to place a White Paper before the House containing correspondence between the Chinese Government and our Government ever since the treaty between India and China in regard to Tibet was signed, that is, during the last five years, so that the House may have the background of what has been happening?

Now, all this is there. We have, on the one hand, naturally to protect our borders. And when I say that, I want to hold myself, and somewhat restrain my powerful reactions so as not to go too far, in, let us say, military measures and the like; because, when nations gets excited and all their prestige is involved; then, step by step, they are driven often in wrong directions. So, we try, at any rate, to balance, balance in the sense of a firm policy where we think we are in the right, nevertheless, with always a door open to accommodation, a door open to a settlement, wherever this is possible.

Broadly speaking, in regard to this border, that is, the border incidents, as I have just mentioned, they say that we have committed aggression. Now, it is a question of fact, whether this village or that village or this little strip of territory is on their side or on our side. Normally, wherever these are relatively petty disputes, well, it does seem to me rather absurd for two great countries or two small countries immediately to rush at each other's throat and to decide whether two miles of territory are on this side or on that side, and especially, two miles of territory in the high mountains, where nobody lives. But where national prestige and dignity is involved, it is not the nation's dignity and self-respect that become involved in it. And,

therefore, this happens. But I do not wish, in so far as I can, to press the issue so far that there is no escape for either country, because their national dignities are involved, except a re-course to arms. That is not, I hope...

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: What is the boundary, according to the latest report? What is the boundary which they have indicated according to the latest reply that we have received from them?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: How can I say that without a large map, all kinds of little things about villages and all that? The present dispute about that matter is relatively a small matter: whether it may be two miles this side or that side is not a very big thing; but I do not know what their map is, here, there and elsewhere. So far as I am concerned, I have often stated how our frontier from the Burma border right up to the Bhutan border is the MacMohan Line; we hold by that.

Shri Achar (Mangalore): Do they...

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Please allow me to continue. Please do not attach too much importance to what appears in the newspapers. I speak with a little greater authority on this subject.

That is the MacMohan line, and we hold by it, and we think it is highly objectionable, highly improper for the Chinese Government to go on issuing maps colouring half of the North Eastern Frontier Agency, one-third Assam and one-third of Bhutan as if they belong to China. That is really an affront. I can understand something happening for a little while, and some mistake; but a continuing thing, to be told year after year for ten years that 'Oh, well, we shall look into it when we have leisure' is not a good enough answer. That is so.

But having accepted broadly the MacMohan line, I am prepared to discuss any interpretation of the MacMohan line, minor interpretation here and there; -that is a different matter-not these big chunks but the minor interpretation whether this hill is there or this little bit is on that side or this side, on the facts, on the maps, on the evidence available. That I am prepared to discuss with the Chinese Government. I am prepared to have any kind of conciliatory, mediatory process to consider this. I am prepared to have arbitration of any authority agreed to by the two parties about those minor rectifications, where they are challenged by them or by us, whichever the case may be. That is a different matter. I say this because I do not take up that kind of narrow attitude that whatever I say is right and whatever the other person says is wrong. But the broad MacMohan Line has to be accepted and so far as we are concerned, it is there and we accept it. The position about Ladakh is somewhat different. The MacMohan Line does not go there. That is governed by ancient treaties over a hundred years old between the then ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Gulab Singh, who was a feudatory of the Sikh ruler of the Punjab at the time-this was in the thirties of the 19th century-on the one side, there was the treaty of 1842 and on the other side, the ruler of Lhasa and the representative of the Emperor of China, which resulted in Ladakh being recognized as a part of Kashmir State.

Now, nobody has challenged that. Nobody challenges it now. But the actual boundary of Ladakh with Tibet was not very carefully defined. It was defined to some extent by British officers who went there. But I rather doubt if they did any careful survey. They marked the line. It has been marked all along in our maps. They did it. As people do not live there, by and large, it does not make any difference. It did not make any difference. At that time nobody cared about it.

Now, the question arose. We are prepared to sit down and discuss those minor things. But discuss it on what terms? First, treaties, existing maps etc secondly, usage, what has been the usage all these years and thirdly, geography. By geography, I mean physical features like water-sheds, ridge of a mountain, not a bit of plain divided up. Those are convenient features for international boundaries.

I have gone out of my way to refer to these various matters in connection with this Resolution which deals with a simpler issue. Coming back to this particular Resolution, quite apart from the sympathy which the hon. Mover and some other hon. Members feel for the Tibetans, if we take an action, it should be justifiable in law and in constitution and we should hope for some results, some results which will help us to achieve the objective aimed at. Looking at it from the point of view of justification, the United Nations may come into the picture for two reasons. One is, violation of human rights and the other, aggression. Now, violation of human rights applies to those who have accepted the Charter of the United Nations, in other words, those members of the United Nations who have accepted the Charter. Strictly speaking, you cannot apply the Charter to people who have not been allowed to come into the United Nations.

Secondly, if you talk about aggression, aggression is by one sovereign independent State on another. As I told you, in so far as world affairs are concerned, Tibet has not been acknowledged as an independent State for a considerable time, even long before this happened-much less after.

Therefore, it is difficult to justify aggression.

Now, you may say that these may be rather legal pleas. But I am merely pointing out a constitutional aspect of and difficulties and the procedures involved.

Then, I come to a certain practical aspect. And that is what good will it achieve? Suppose we get over the legal quibbles and legal difficulties. It

may lead to a debate in the General Assembly or the Security Council wherever it is taken up, a debate which will be an acrimonious debate, an angry debate, a debate which will be after the fashion of cold war. Having had the debate what then will the promoters of that debate and that motion do? Nothing more. They will return home. After having brought matters to a higher temperature, fever heat, they will go home. They have done their duty because they can do nothing else.

Obviously, nobody is going to send an army to Tibet or China. If that was not done in the case of Hungary which is in the heart of Europe and which is more allied to European nations, it is fantastic to think they will move in that way in Tibet. Obviously not. So, all that will happen is an expression of strong opinion by some other countries denying it and the matter being raised to the level of cold war-brought into the domain of cold war-and probably producing reactions on the Chinese Government which are more adverse to Tibet and the Tibetan people than even now. So, the ultimate result is no relief to the Tibetan people but something the reverse of it.

The question, both from the constitutional and the legal point of view, is not clear. In fact, persons who have examined it think that it is difficult to bring it there. And, from the practical point of view also there is no good result. Then, what exactly is the purpose of taking that subject, except maybe to satisfy some kind of urge to show sympathy or to show that we are angry. I can understand that urge certainly. But we must not allow the urge to take the reins into its hands and take us away with it to unknown regions and dangerous regions. Therefore, I am unable to accept this resolution and I would suggest to the House also not to accept it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. This is not the first time that the hon. Member is moving his motion. He has moved his motion and spoken on it. If any explanation has to be given to what has arisen out of the speeches that

have been made for or against, he can do so by explaining a few points. He cannot make a second speech as the one which he made at the time of moving motion.

Shri Vajpayee: I am only explaining a few points.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is not doing that. He has reopened the whole thing.

Mr. Speaker: There is an amendment moved to this motion.

Shri Gohokar: I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.
The Amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

“This House is of opinion that Government should refer the Tibetan issue to the United Nations”.

The motion was negative.

* * *

98. In the Rajya Sabha: Disabled Tibetan Refugees⁶²

Shri P.N. Rajabhoj:⁶³ Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Tibetan refugees in India who are physically handicapped; and
- (b) whether any special arrangements have been made by Government to rehabilitate the disabled refugees?

⁶² On 8 September 1959. Rajya Sabha Debates, Written Answers, Vol. XXVI, col. 3229

⁶³ Congress, MP from Bombay

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:

(a) According to our information there are 42 physically handicapped Tibetan refugees in our camps.

(b) Yes, Sir. We are considering a proposal to make special arrangements for these disabled refugees in Bombay under the supervision of the All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.⁶⁴ The World Veterans Federation has offered to finance this scheme.⁶⁵

* * *

99. To K. Ram: Rest House for Tibetan Refugees⁶⁶

I had looked upon this proposal really as a kind of a resting house or sarai for Tibetans and other Buddhists from our north-east frontier who come here. They have no place to stay and they cannot easily mix with others. The addition, a kind of prayer room, library, was made for their convenience. It was not the prayer room or the temple that was the important thing. I felt, however, that if we had such a place for Tibetans to stay, it would be a good idea. At any time it would have been good, but owing to recent developments and a large number of Tibetans who have sought asylum here, it became a little more important.

2. I realise the difficulty of Government providing money for a temple as such. That would not be a good precedent. It might be that Government could provide the money for the quarters and library etc. and a separate private fund may be raised for the temple. I do not quite know how this will be separated in financial terms. You might enquire from the WH&S people to give us a rough estimate of this division.

⁶⁴ Set up in 1959

⁶⁵ Founded in 1950; based in Paris

⁶⁶ Note, 12 September 1959. File No.2 (314)/59-67-PMS

3. Meanwhile, this matter might stay till the Finance Minister comes back and we can discuss it then. The land that has been earmarked for this should continue to be kept in reserve.

4. A copy of this note might be sent to the Finance Ministry.

* * *

100. To M.C. Setalvad: International Committee on Tibet⁶⁷

September 24, 1959

My dear Setalvad,

I have just received your letter of the 21st September about the activities of the Committee on Tibet established by the International Jurists' Commission.⁶⁸ I shall certainly meet Shawcross when he comes to India.⁶⁹ I have not met in this connection Purushottam Tricumdas, but he has seen our Foreign Secretary more than once and discussed this matter. You know that our relations with the Chinese Government are very strained and they have accused us practically of organising the rebellion in Tibet and of continuing to encourage it. This is a fantastic accusation. But there it is,

⁶⁷ Letter to M.C. Setalvad, Attorney General of India

⁶⁸ The Legal Inquiry Committee of the International Commission of Jurists, set up under Tricumdas, on 29 August 1959, issued its report Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic in Geneva in July 1960. It noted: "Tibet was at the very least a de facto independent State when the Agreement on Peaceful Measures was signed in 1951. In 1950 there was a people and a territory, and a government which functioned in that territory, conducting its own domestic affairs free from outside authority. From 1913 to 1950 foreign relations in Tibet were conducted exclusively by the Government of Tibet and countries with whom Tibet had foreign relations are shown by official documents to have treated Tibet in practice as an independent State." See the official website of the International Commission of Jurists <http://www.icj.org/category/news/press-releases/page/93/> (accessed on 28 February 2013).

⁶⁹ Sir Hartley Shawcross, Member of the Legal Enquiry Committee on Tibet

and we have to be rather careful about all our steps. As you yourself say, we cannot associate ourselves even remotely with the work of this Committee on Tibet.

I do not understand how any kind of proper enquiry can be held in the circumstances that prevail here. Obviously, the Chinese Government will not permit the Committee to go to Tibet. The enquiry, therefore, will be confined to refugees from Tibet. Normally, refugees are not good witnesses. They are much too excited and personally involved to be able to give any correct account. So far as these Tibetan refugees are concerned, I have found that the situation is even worse, and their idea as to what is fact and what is not is very vague indeed. Every vague rumour is stated as a fact, and there is no means of verification. Nearly all the refugees in India came away from Tibet in the early days of the rebellion there. They have no personal knowledge of subsequent happenings except vague rumours that may have reached them. An extraordinary statement has been made by some of these refugees, that the Chinese are deliberately sterilizing the Tibetans. I am wholly unable to find any justification for this.

If Purushottam Tricumdas wishes to see me, I shall of course meet him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

* * *

Sampurnanand to Nehru⁷⁰

[Refer to item 86J

Lucknow September 8, 1959

My dear Jawaharlalji,

⁷⁰ Letter. File No. 28(IE) BST/59, pp. 1-2/corr., MEA

There is a very important matter about which I wanted to speak to you, but as we were very busy, it was not possible for me to do so. People in the State, particularly those living near the Indo-Tibetan border, are greatly disturbed by news of Chinese infiltration in Indian territory. The matter has been raised in the Legislature also. Today's papers carry the news of the Chinese having entered a part of Punjab somewhere on the Lahaul side. This may not be correct; even if it is a rumour, it is enough to add to the already existing alarm. It is felt that the strength of our police on the border is not sufficient and that, in any case, there is nothing to prevent infiltration during the winter months when the police retires from its forward positions. You might remember that some time ago, you had yourself suggested that all-the-year-round police arrangements should be made in that area and we had been asked to prepare a scheme for that purpose. We did so and received the assurance that it would be sanctioned in its entirety. I do not know what has happened to it as I have not heard anything about it for the last several months.

The idea was roughly this: It may not be possible for the police to remain in the winter season in places which it occupies in other parts of the year as the area is swept by snow and blizzards and remains completely cut off for weeks together, but a little further back a line of check-posts can be maintained. This area also is not particularly attractive from the point of view of the weather there are heavy snow-falls-but with proper arrangements it can be held. Expenditure will have to be incurred, however, on putting up buildings and making such arrangements as will ensure a steady flow of supplies during the worst weather. That scheme was to cost about 50 lakhs. We had prepared it on the assumption that, if it was sanctioned, it would come into operation next year. But if it is felt that, in the conditions obtaining at present, this area has to be policed at all costs to prevent possible infiltration, it might be possible to do something in the

few weeks remaining till winter actually sets in. It requires your immediate attention. I do not know which department of the Government, External Affairs, Defence, Home or Finance is studying the matter. But I thought the best thing would be to write to you personally.

I cannot say, of course, what the Chinese intend to do, but if their idea is to infiltrate and gain footholds in those parts of our territory which they claim to be their own, it seems to me that the winter months would provide the most suitable opportunity, because that is the time when our frontiers remain completely unguarded.

Yours sincerely,
Sampurnanand

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Krishna Menon to Nehru⁷¹

[Refer to item 119J]

Reference my immediately preceding telegram No.216 dated the 27th September. Text of Irish draft Resolution on Tibet follows:

Begins:

"Recalling the principles set forth in the Preamble and in articles 1.3,13.

I(B), 5(C), 56 and 73 of the Charter as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

2. Considering that fundamental human rights proclaimed in the said Declaration include the Right to Religious and Civil Liberty for all without distinction;

3. Mindful also of the guarantees of aspect for the Political, Religious and other Liberties of the People of Tibet contained in an Agreement dated 23rd

⁷¹ Telegram No. 217, New York, 27 September 1959. File No.5 (28)-UN-II/59, pp.4-8/corr., MEA

May, 1951 between the representatives of the People's Republic of China and representatives of Tibet;

4. Deploring recent events in Tibet as a result of which the people of Tibet have been deprived of these Liberties in violation of their fundamental Human Rights and of the guarantees afforded them;

5. Deploring further effect of these events in increasing international tension and embittering relations between peoples;

6. Reaffirms the right of dependent peoples of respect for their culture, just treatment and protection against abuses, and

7. Condemns the violation of the fundamental Human Rights of the Tibetan People and the destruction of their Civil and Religious Liberties."

Ends.